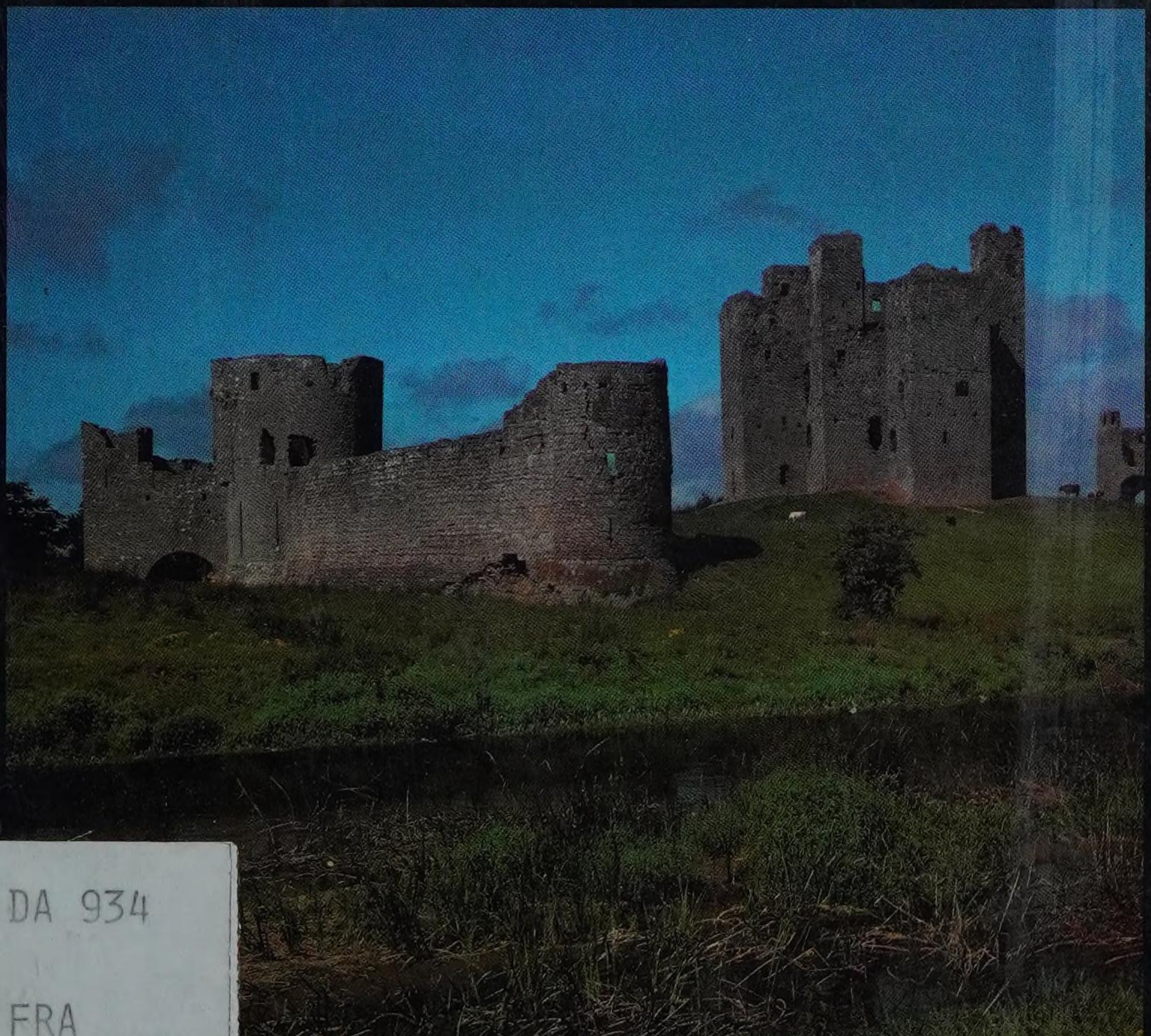
HELICON HISTORY OF IRELAND

Colonial Ireland, 1169-1369

Robin Frame



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ROBIN FRAME

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for
Emily
William
Eleanor
and Tom

Foreword

The growing interest in the history of Ireland in recent decades has led to a substantial increase in the number of scholars engaged in research and study. Old and cherished interpretations have been questioned, as historians discover new sources or ask new questions of the old. Much of this new thinking is, however, hidden from the public in learned journals, which are not easily accessible. The aim of this series of ten volumes is to make available to a wider readership the fruits of the most recent researches. Each volume is self-contained, and each author, a specialist in the field, has been free to put forward his own analysis of the period with which he deals. Taken together they form a lucid and stimulating account of Ireland's history from the earliest times.

Each author has also been asked to select a number of documents to illustrate his period. These will appear separately as the Helicon Documentary History and will, we hope, make available to a wider audience the basis upon which the study of our past rests.

Art Cosgrove
Elma Collins
General Editors

Preface

When introducing her magisterial *A History of Medieval Ireland* in 1967, Professor A. J. Otway-Ruthven remarked that 'on almost every aspect of the middle ages in Ireland there is still an infinity of work to be done'. Despite some important achievements since then, her statement remains true. In attempting to write in a generalising way about the medieval lordship, I am all too aware of the fragile foundations upon which my judgements often rest, and uncomfortably conscious that many a plausible paragraph is likely to disintegrate at the first touch of intensive research. I am therefore doubly grateful to those who have surveyed the whole field before me, and to those who have explored corners of it in detail. I have used their work shamelessly – occasionally, I suspect, in the service of arguments with which they would not necessarily agree.

The title of the book is significant in two ways. It seeks to emphasise (if emphasis is still needed) that during this period Ireland underwent, not merely a superficial and incomplete military conquest, but a deeper colonisation; and it is designed to indicate that I am chiefly concerned with the colonists rather than with their hosts. Another, possibly more urgent, study remains to be written, dealing with the impact of conquest and settlement on Gaelic Irish society. I have not the expertise to write it, though I hope that the little I have ventured to say on the subject is not too wide of the mark. In trying to discuss two centuries in a short volume, I have concentrated on some themes at the expense of others: the Church (to which there are excellent guides already available) and the economy (the study of which is still in its infancy) have received particularly short measure. At the same time, within the limits of the space available, I have made an effort to do some justice to two important features of the lordship. Ireland, like most medieval societies, was highly regionalised; its political and military history cannot be viewed from Dublin in the way that the history of England is conventionally viewed from Westminster. On the other hand, we cannot hope to understand this period by gazing upon Ireland alone: the history of the lordship, though distinctive, frequently makes best sense when it is placed in a wider setting.

A question of nomenclature may require a brief explanation. There is

no entirely satisfactory descriptive term for those who came to Ireland in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, for in them English, French (including Norman), Welsh and Flemish strains mingled together; moreover the flavour of the assortment differed at different social levels. Despite recent arguments for 'Anglo-French' or 'English', I have preferred to retain the more traditional 'Anglo-Norman' which, because of its very familiarity, seems less assertively categorising.

I have received many kindnesses in the course of writing the book. The editors and publishers of the series have been consistently efficient and helpful. They have also been generous in their hospitality, as have my friends in Dublin. Dr Edward McParland of Trinity College, Dublin went to much trouble to obtain the cover-photograph of Trim for me. Professor P. D. A. Harvey of the University of Durham read chapter 4 – which deals with subjects where I am especially a novice – in draft, making valuable suggestions and saving me from several slips. Professor W. L. Warren of The Queen's University, Belfast, and Dr Katharine Simms of T.C.D. very kindly allowed me to read important papers in advance of publication, as did Dr Adrian Empey. To Dr Empey I am indebted in two further respects – for reading and commenting on chapter 4, and, still more, for providing me with the drawing and information upon which the map of Thurles is based. Needless to say, the responsibility for errors and over-simplifications remains wholly mine. As ever, my primary debt is to my wife and children, who have shown remarkable fortitude in putting up with the abstraction and grumpiness inseparable (I fear) from my attempts to write.

University of Durham *Robin Frame*

Introduction

The Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland in the twelfth century has normally been regarded as the first act in the prolonged, frequently miserable, drama of relations between England and Ireland. Given the irresistible power of hindsight, perhaps it is bound to appear in that guise. But there is another – and for the historian more appropriate – way of seeing it: as an episode in European history. Between 1169 and about 1240 Ireland was partly colonised by an international upper class, ecclesiastical as well as secular, which had over the previous hundred years conquered England and advanced into Wales, and which was still engaged in infiltrating Scotland. This phenomenon was connected with a wider scattering that had deposited nobles, knights and clergy from Normandy and other parts of northern France in Sicily, Antioch and Palestine. The monarch whom the invaders may be said to have dragged to Ireland after them was Henry II of England. But Henry was also duke of Normandy, count of Anjou and duke of Aquitaine, the ruler, in other words, of the greater part of western France; he spent only some fourteen years of his reign of almost thirty-five years within England; and he was buried at the abbey of Fontevrault in the valley of the Loire. The aristocratic colonisation of Ireland was accompanied by a widespread, though patchy, settlement by peasants and artisans, chiefly from England and Wales. This too was part of a broader current: the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were a time when rising population enabled lords to expand cultivation, patronise developing urban centres, and increase their own wealth. As early as 1200 Ireland, which had long-standing cultural and religious connections with the continent, had entered Europe in a new fashion.

In Scotland the Anglo-Normans were rapidly absorbed. They had arrived under the wing of Scottish rulers who were themselves deeply affected by French and English influences, and who presided over a blending of traditions; indeed by the fourteenth century Robert Bruce, whose ancestors had come to Scotland from Brix in Normandy by way of Yorkshire, could present himself as the champion of Scottish nationhood. In England the political and social dominance of the Normans was unquestioned. It is true that in the seventeenth century antiquarian lawyers, in an attempt to counter the authoritarianism of

Charles I, promoted the myth of a primitive English constitution that had been subverted by the Norman Conquest, a notion that left its mark on the writings of some nineteenth-century historians. But in general the Normans have been accommodated happily enough in the English historical consciousness. In Ireland, however, it is quite otherwise. The Anglo-Norman invaders and settlers continue to be cast in the role of alien intruders, and this despite the fact that their blood must run in the veins of almost every family in modern Leinster and Munster at least. The explanation of this idiosyncratic state of affairs lies largely in the course of Irish history between the sixteenth-century Reformation and the Gaelic revival of the nineteenth century. But the origins of the emotional rejection of the Anglo-Norman tradition, and of the identification of it with English domination, are to be found within the medieval period itself. The incomplete nature of the conquest left Irish lords in control of large parts of the country. The learned classes were available to clothe the essentially local activities of their aristocratic patrons in national garb, and thus to articulate hostility to the incomers, and to assist in the preservation and intensification of the sense of common Gaelic identity. In Wales in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, bards, historians and jurists played a similar role. But traditional Welsh political leadership was crushed by Edward I in the 1280s; and the Tudors had some success in offering themselves as the fulfilment of such millenarian hopes as survived into the sixteenth century. In Ireland, where no total suppression of leadership took place, the native tradition remained both vigorous and above-ground.

There were other reasons, more germane to the central themes of this book, for the failure of the Anglo-Norman tradition to be fully naturalised. In the late twelfth century the lordship of Ireland was one of several areas that felt the impact of a land-hungry upper class whose leading members belonged to an international *élite*. But by the fourteenth century it had become an English colony, and the pattern of the future was in important respects already set firm. The process of change was complex. Among the contributory causes was the loss by the king and the Anglo-Norman baronage in the early thirteenth century of their possessions in northern France, an event that ultimately helped to produce a political order centred on England. More important was the growth of English common law and administrative systems, and the attempt to export these to Ireland; for this had the effect of drawing a line around the settlements, marking them off, in theory, from the Gaelic areas, where Irish custom continued to be observed. At the same time there emerged a distinctive colonial population, shaped on the one hand by the progressive weakening of the role of the magnate

families that held land both within Ireland and outside it, and on the other by the adaptation of the descendants of the settlers to their Irish environment. Despite official theories, the colonial and Gaelic worlds were tied together at local level by a host of interrelationships. But if we stand back, the broad picture we see by the 1360s is the familiar one of an English political authority operating from Westminster and Dublin, a self-conscious Gaelic society, and, in between, an Anglo-Irish population afflicted by problems of identity and confidence.

1 Invasion, 1169–1185

In Ireland the period from 1169 to 1185 was one of momentous political change. When Dermot Mac Murrough, the dispossessed king of Leinster, set sail for Bristol in 1166 to seek outside help, the country was dominated by a handful of provincial dynasties which competed for wealth and manpower, and for the prestige associated with the title 'king of Ireland'. The Norse city-states, among which Dublin was pre-eminent, possessed fleets, troops, riches and overseas contacts, prizes whose significance was not lost on the provincial kings: when the Dubliners withdrew their allegiance from King Dermot, and transferred it to Rory O'Connor the high king, Dermot was deprived of a crucial support. In 1169 and 1170 small bands of Anglo-Normans arrived from South Wales in answer to Dermot's call, and gained rapid military successes. In 1171–2 Henry II visited Ireland. His visit was accompanied and followed by a further influx of barons and knights. And by 1185, when Henry's son John visited what was intended to become his kingdom of Ireland, the country presented a very different picture. The cities of Dublin, Waterford and Cork, with their immediate hinterlands, were in the possession of the king of England. Leinster and Meath, together with the eastern seaboard of modern Ulster and also parts of Cork, were in the hands of Anglo-Norman lords, who were securing their control by building timber castles and apportioning land to sub-tenants. In consequence some once-powerful dynasties, notably the Mac Murroughs themselves, had been reduced to local significance; others, including the O'Connors, found their scope much reduced. This partially-conquered land had, with the approval of the papacy and of most of its own ecclesiastical and secular leaders, been added to the collection of territories that King Henry and his sons tried to govern. In 1185 Ireland's political future remained uncertain in important respects, but it was already unlikely that what had been done could be undone.

All studies of the invasion rely heavily on two sources. The more important is the *Conquest of Ireland* by Gerald of Wales, or Giraldus Cambrensis. Gerald, archdeacon of Brecon, was a brother of Robert and Philip de Barry. Through their mother, Angharad, the Barrys were members of the Geraldine clan, which played a leading part in the inva-

sion. Since Gerald spent part of his life in Wales, he was familiar with the ways of a frontier; he was also an educated cleric with court experience, and a fierce controversialist. His *Conquest*, which was completed as early as 1189, describes events from Dermot's exile to the expedition of John, whom Gerald accompanied to Ireland in 1185. The book was written as a sequel to his *Topography of Ireland*, which he had produced after a visit to the country in 1183. His works – with their patronising assumptions about the barbarity of the Irish, their blunt presentation of indelicate aspects of Irish society, their delight in exotic tales, and their glorification of some of the participants in the invasion – provoked furious reactions from patriotic writers of later ages. But we must place him in his own time. Recent commentators have shown him to be, on the whole, an accurate and intelligent, though deeply partisan, witness of the events he chooses to describe; not only that, his observations on Irish (and Welsh) society have more of the curiosity of the anthropologist, and less of the hostile dogmatism of the reformed churchman, than we have any right to expect. There are aspects of the *Conquest* that must be approached with caution. Gerald is concerned to celebrate the achievements of his kinsmen; he is cool towards Strongbow and bitter towards many of the men whom Henry II introduced into Ireland after 1171. He puts fictional speeches, full of improbable literary artifice, into the mouths of Anglo-Norman and Irish leaders. And in similar conformity with the conventions of his day, he does not hesitate to fabricate the texts of letters that he had not seen. There is another, less emphasised, drawback to his work. The *Conquest* is a selective account; its very effectiveness as a piece of writing may lull us into imagining that we know more than we actually do. There was much that Gerald was not aware of, and much that he had not the room or inclination to tell us. Despite these reservations, the *Conquest* provides a remarkable view of the way in which a gifted contemporary regarded the enterprise in which his relatives participated.

The second source is a poem in Norman-French which has become known to historians as *The Song of Dermot and the Earl*. The *Song* is very different in flavour and quality from Gerald's work, but shares his outlook in its glorification of military prowess and desire to preserve the memory of those involved in the invasion. Its value has sometimes been doubted, since it can be shown to have been committed to writing no earlier than 1225; but it contains older material, passed on orally in a society well used to remembering the past without the assistance of pen and ink. In some ways it provides a counterpoise to the *Conquest*: its early parts contain important information relating to King Dermot, about whom Gerald is both ignorant and hostile; while the whole work,

though far from centred merely on Strongbow ('The Earl'), is more favourably disposed towards him than is the *Conquest*. The poem also presents a roll-call of the beneficiaries of the invasion, which helps to balance Gerald's concentration on the Geraldines. We should imagine the *Song* being recited in the castles of thirteenth-century Leinster and Meath, to the delight of the descendants of those whose deeds and endowments it records.

It will be evident that the *Conquest* and the *Song* have an important characteristic in common: their sympathies lie with the Anglo-Norman lords, especially those in the vanguard of the invasion, who committed their futures to a strange land. Gerald frequently praises the marchers or frontiersmen, and is scornful of those whom Henry II employed in Ireland, and who in Gerald's opinion skulked in the coastal strongholds and avoided the rough-and-tumble of the borderlands. This is an over-simplified and prejudiced view. But it reveals an important distinction – between those who made their way to Ireland of their own accord in 1169–70, and those who went there with the king or under his direction from 1171 onwards. For the invasion of Ireland consisted of two phases: the brief but critical years of individual enterprise, and the much longer period that followed Henry's intervention in a process that had begun to perturb him.

Gerald and the *Song* tell essentially the same story about the origins of the invasion. But they offer no adequate account of Dermot Mac Murrough's behaviour, attributing his discomfiture to the vengeance taken upon him by Tiernan O'Rourke of Breifne, whose wife Dervorgilla he had carried off in 1152 but long since released; and they make no attempt to explain why he went in search of Henry II. Dermot had found himself the victim of a shift in the balance of provincial forces in Ireland. In recent years his security had depended on the protection afforded him by Murtough Mac Loughlin, the ruler of the north, under whose shelter he had expanded his power into Meath. In 1166 Murtough fell, and Rory O'Connor replaced him as the dominant king. Rory was allied with O'Rourke, who had his own ambitions to fulfil in Meath. They mounted sufficient military and political pressure to convince the Dubliners, the men of Wexford, and Dermot's resentful vassal-chiefs that the time was ripe to abandon him. The king of Leinster was left with little option but to seek backing elsewhere.

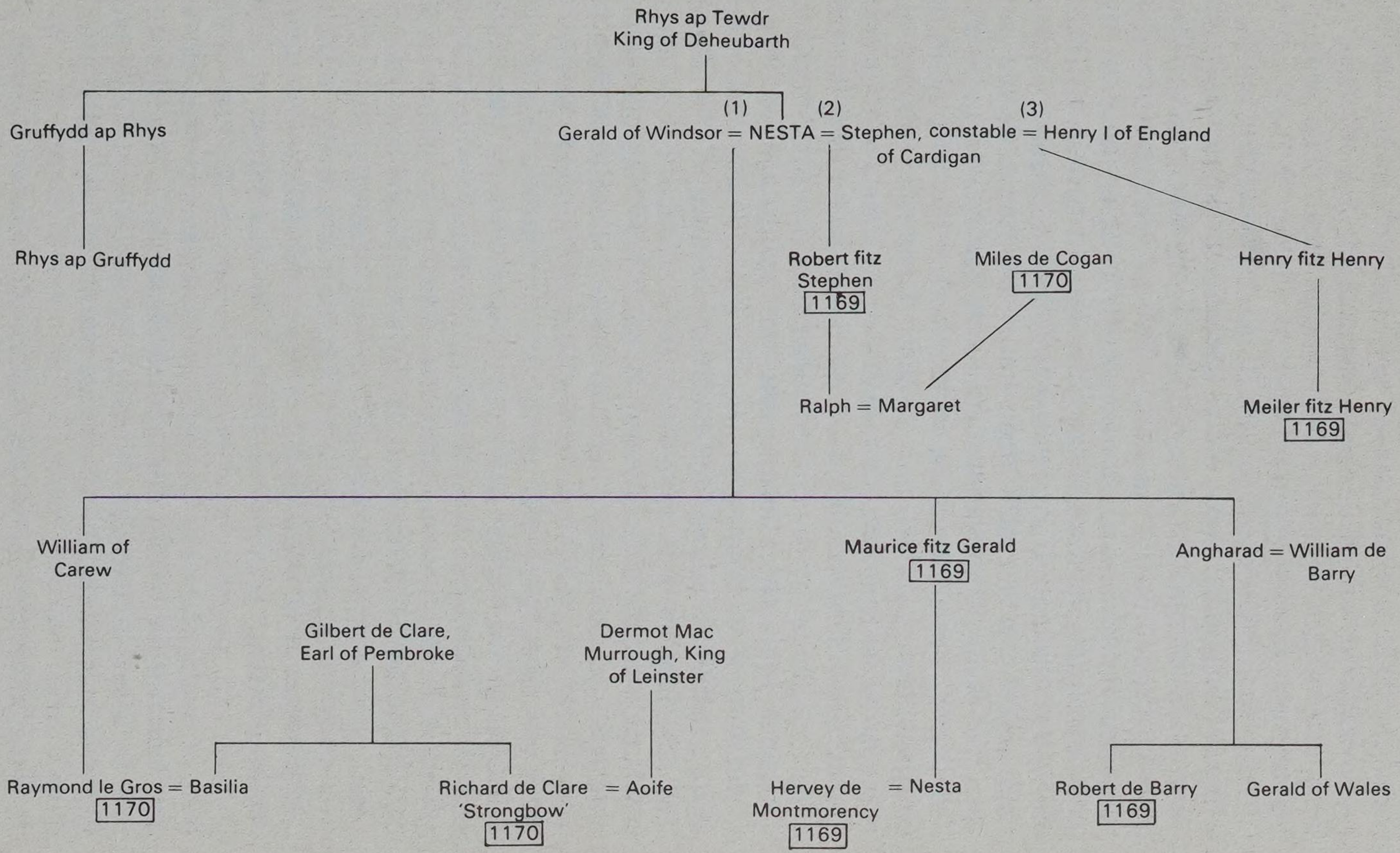
Mac Murrough was a controversial figure in his own day; because of the consequences of his flight, he has remained so. Historians, having freed themselves of the anachronistic view that he was a traitor to

Ireland, have been unsure what to make of him. The most helpful approach may be to regard him as a moderniser, in a part of the country that was particularly open to outside influences. He patronised reformed religious houses; he tried to exploit the wealth and power of the Norse communities of Leinster; he employed a chancellor and interpreter and issued Latin charters. Gerald makes the intriguing remark that 'he treated his nobles harshly and brought to prominence men of humble rank',[1] a charge laid against rulers, including Henry IV of Germany and Henry I of England, who showed an interest in the business of government and favoured their administrative personnel. That a man of Dermot's stamp should seek out his powerful neighbouring ruler, and then attempt to recruit forces in South Wales, was entirely natural. The Danish and Norman nobles of England had in the past found refuge and help in Ireland; Dublin and Wexford had long-standing contacts with western England and the Scandinavian settlements in the Gower peninsula; and the church of Dublin had until recently possessed strong connections with Canterbury. As lately as 1165, when Dermot still exercised lordship over the Norse areas, Dublin and other cities had sent fleets to assist Henry II in his unsuccessful campaign in Wales.

Dermot had to travel to Aquitaine to find King Henry. Gerald tells us that he submitted to him, and in return received off-handed permission to recruit assistance among his subjects. This may have been a good deal less than Mac Murrough had hoped for; moreover when he returned to Wales he had little immediate success in persuading marchers to join him. During 1167 he went back to Ireland with a tiny band of Flemings from Pembrokeshire, and managed to re-establish himself in his ancestral territory of Uí Cennselaigh. Not until May 1169, when Robert fitz Stephen arrived, did he receive significant Anglo-Norman support. No doubt it was the success of Robert and his companions, and news of the rewards they were receiving, that led other men to cross the sea during the succeeding months. Many of those who made the journey were connected by kinship, and they all shared a common experience of life in South Wales. This first stage of the invasion was very much a family affair; in that respect it had much in common, not just with eleventh-century Norman enterprises in southern Europe, but also with the early infiltration of Norman influences into England and Scotland in the wake of royal marriages. The family relationships of the main leaders mentioned by Gerald can be seen from the accompanying table. Gerald's lack of enthusiasm for Strongbow and positive dislike of his uncle, Hervey de Montmorency, should not lead us to divide the invaders into two clearly-demarcated groups. Hervey, Strongbow's sister Basilia and his daughter Aline all made Geraldine

Some Family Relationships of the Early Invaders

Dates in boxes are those of first arrival in Ireland.



marriages. It is more accurate to speak of competition within a single group of closely-linked Pembrokeshire families, all of which had connections with Strongbow, whose father had been made earl of Pembroke by King Stephen in 1138.

The characteristics and outlook of the first invaders, and the reasons why they eventually responded to Dermot's overtures, can only be understood against the background from which they sprang. Even before 1066 England was a country with an established tradition of monarchical authority. On the borders with Wales, however, royal control was fragile and indirect, chiefly because the need for defence against the Welsh demanded strong, territorially-concentrated local powers. Especially in the time of William Rufus, Norman lords had penetrated deep into Wales. The encroachment was particularly successful in the valleys and coastal belt of the south, where in the early twelfth century lordships such as Brecon, Strigoil (Chepstow), Glamorgan and Pembroke were emerging. Despite Henry I's expansion of his authority, South Wales remained an area where nobles and their dependants were less hedged about by royal interference than in most of England. It was a frontier zone where lords made war against the Welsh and took tribute from them, built castles, encouraged settlement, and entered into alliances that cut across the boundary between Anglo-Norman and Welsh society. In such an environment more than one generation had grown rich. By the time of Henry II, however, Wales offered fewer opportunities to the families that had made it a centre of their interests. They were hampered from two directions. During the civil war of Stephen's reign, the weakness of royal authority, and the need for members of the higher nobility to concentrate on their interests in England, had made possible a significant Welsh recovery. By the time of Dermot's flight, power had accumulated in the hands of Rhys ap Gruffydd, king of Deheubarth. Henry's campaigns had failed to check Welsh expansion; and indeed he was soon to come to terms with Rhys, so putting a temporary end to any prospect of a revival in the fortunes of the barons of South Wales. The other restriction lay in Henry's own attitude; like his grandfather, Henry I, he was anxious to subject the marchers to a tighter royal bridle. Whereas in the time of the elder Henry royal power was asserted in circumstances that offered some compensation in the form of licensed expansion in Wales, in the 1160s and 1170s such conditions no longer existed: Henry's concordat with Rhys represented the junction of the two forces inimical to marcher fortunes.

These influences can be seen at work in the careers of those who took part in the early stages of the invasion. One of Rhys's successes was the

capture of the castle of Cardigan in 1165; neighbouring Cilgerran also fell to him, together with its constable, Robert fitz Stephen. Robert was the child of a liaison between Stephen, constable of Cardigan, and Rhys's aunt Nesta; at the time when King Dermot was seeking recruits in South Wales, he remained in the custody of his Welsh kinsman. Rhys eventually released him on condition that he removed himself from the scene. For Robert fitz Stephen Ireland represented an opportunity to rebuild a career that had been destroyed as a result of the recent Welsh recovery. The diminution of opportunities on the Welsh frontier served to exaggerate one of the most acute problems faced by aristocratic families at this period, that of finding room for the ambitions of their members. Landless younger sons, and their elder brothers during their fathers' lifetime, were an energetic but unstable element in society; the literature of the time, with its emphasis on quest, feats of arms, and courtly love, reflects the search for reputation, patronage and heiresses. The Geraldine clan, with its brood of legitimate and bastard males, faced that difficulty in marked degree; a favourable turn of events enabled it to find an outlet in Ireland.

Up to a point, Strongbow's career was shaped by the same pressures. Richard de Clare was the head of a junior branch of a great baronial house. His cousin, Roger earl of Hertford, had seen his holdings in west Wales swept away by Rhys. Richard's interests in Pembroke had also suffered. But unlike the Geraldines, he was a man of more than local importance, possessing lands in England and the relatively secure Welsh lordship of Strigoil. For him, events in south-west Wales were not of themselves decisive. His misfortunes were in part the consequence of an old political error: he had made the mistake of sticking to King Stephen for too long; as a result, Henry II, while not attempting to destroy him, had failed to show him the favour that was essential to baronial prosperity in a world dominated by a powerful monarchy. For Strongbow Ireland represented a calculated risk: success there might enable him to achieve the position denied him in England and Wales; the question was, whether he could succeed in Ireland without offending King Henry to the point where he might forfeit his possessions on the other side of the water.

The record of these early invaders was to be one of remarkably rapid military success and attainment of material rewards. With the help of Robert fitz Stephen and his associates, King Dermot reasserted his authority over Wexford (which he gave to Robert) and over the chiefs of Leinster; the arrival of Maurice fitz Gerald, one of Robert's half-brothers, later in 1169 reinforced his position further. When Raymond le Gros, a nephew of Maurice, landed in the spring of 1170, he es-

tablished himself near Waterford, with the result that Strongbow, arriving during August, was able to capture the city. At Waterford the earl married Dermot's daughter Aoife, and was promised Leinster after his father-in-law's death. Within weeks Dermot and Strongbow had ridden north to Dublin and had managed, not merely to reaffirm the submission of the city, but to drive out its Norse ruler, Asgall, and install an Anglo-Norman garrison. Before King Dermot's death at Ferns in May 1171, he and his allies had even resumed his attempts to expand his authority into Meath.

Historians have naturally been concerned to find explanations of the invaders' success, and of the failure of those who had humiliated Dermot in 1166 to offer adequate resistance to them. These questions appear the more urgent since there is evidence to suggest that the position of the newcomers was precarious, and that their relations with the host society were uneasy. The *Song's* account of Maurice de Prendergast, a Fleming about whom Gerald is silent, enables us to gauge the atmosphere. Maurice quarrelled with Dermot and sold his services to his opponent, Mac Gillapatrick of Ossory, whom he assisted against the Mac Murroughs and the O'Mores. But he soon found himself endangered by the jealousy of Mac Gillapatrick's leading subjects:

> And the men of Ossory
> Were much discontented
> That they had to hire soldiers
> And to give pay to the English . . .
> They resolve to betray Maurice
> And to part his treasure among them;
> For their gold and silver
> They resolved to murder these men . . .
> Accordingly they came before the king . . .
> 'Hear us, king, good lord!
> Maurice we wish, at length, to put to death;
> We have a sufficiently good peace;
> Of them we have no further need.'[2]

The *Song* also presents a vivid picture of Dermot after the arrival of his allies: in peace and in battle he is portrayed as being closely hedged about by Anglo-Normans. They supplied the military stiffening he lacked, secured him against his local enemies, and provided him with a novel source of power; in doing so they sharpened the resentment of some of his own people. Dermot's Anglo-Normans had enabled him to upset the balance of advantage in Leinster. Above all, in promising Strongbow the kingship after him, he had thrust Irish custom and his

own kin aside. When he died, the forces hostile to him revived. His nephew Murtough asserted his claims to the kingship; many Leinster Irish, together with the men of Wexford, besieged Robert fitz Stephen in his stronghold at Carrick-on-Slaney and took him prisoner; and Strongbow only just managed to hold off Rory O'Connor who, with the help of Gottred king of Man, had besieged Dublin. A fresh round of punitive raids was necessary before the earl was able to enter into the inheritance that Dermot had promised him. But the fact remains that this burst of resistance had petered out before Henry II arrived in October 1171; indeed Strongbow was able to leave Ireland in order to meet and placate the king.

Gerald of Wales and most recent commentators attribute the success of the invaders to their superior military techniques. Medieval writers are notoriously imprecise about numbers, and the figures given in the *Song* and the *Conquest* should not be treated with undue solemnity. For instance, we may suspect Gerald of exaggeration when he says that Strongbow landed with 200 knights and 1,000 other troops. But the sources normally speak of scores or a few hundred, and such a scale seems credible, even if the tendency was to over-estimate. To modern eyes such numbers appear improbably small. But we should remember that the population-groups attacked by the invaders were also small; that the Anglo-Normans fought from the start with Irish allies, to whom were to be added Norsemen from the cities; and that in our own time we have witnessed the disproportionate impact of small contingents of skilled outsiders in the employ of rulers of traditional societies. What really mattered was the character of the troops. There seem to have been three main elements involved: heavy cavalry, the *élite* of contemporary west European armies; light cavalry, some of them armed with bows; and foot-archers, who were probably of Welsh origin. If the Irish, who had neither heavy cavalry nor archers, could be manoeuvred into fighting on open ground – *en dur champe et en la plaine*, as the *Song* has it[3] – the man-at-arms on his charger could scatter them without difficulty. Archers were able to hold the Irish spearmen and slingers and the Norse axemen at a distance, and so nullify the effect of their weapons. The invading forces, moreover, were adaptable and used to fighting in difficult terrain: Gerald is not merely patriotic when he contrasts the Welsh marchers' skill in this sort of warfare with the inflexibility of those who had learnt their trade solely on the plains of northern Europe. Skill is also apparent in their use of the earth-and-timber fortifications that had acted as advance-bases in the process of conquest in Wales: Raymond's construction of a promontory-fort at Dundonnolf, for example, was a necessary preliminary to the taking of Waterford. Despite the episode of

Maurice de Prendergast, we may add to these advantages the camaraderie and discipline of groups of men from a shared background, who had little immediate option but to remain together. The dispersal of Irish opponents in the Leinster countryside was one thing; the storming of Waterford and Dublin, on the other hand, demanded determination of a high order. Once those centres, with their communications by sea, had been secured, the invaders would not be easily dislodged.

The achievements of the Anglo-Normans must also be seen in relation to the resistance they encountered. Within Leinster King Dermot faced, not a united opposition, but a number of enemies who could be brought to submission one by one. In Ireland as a whole, there was no authority capable of mobilising general resistance; it may be questioned, indeed, whether any leader was likely to see such a course as a priority. Rory O'Connor had attained supremacy after a very recent struggle. Of necessity he had achieved his position by trampling on the rights of others, the O'Briens as well as the Mac Murroughs. Everywhere there were men who would regard the foreigners as a shield against the O'Connors.

For Rory's response to the invasion and his dealings with Dermot and Strongbow, we are heavily reliant on Gerald; and this is an area where the *Conquest* should be used with special caution. But in its broad outlines Gerald's story rings true. Rory saw the invasion not as a threat to the theoretical interests of Ireland, but as one more complication in what was for him, as for all high kings, an endless round of opportunities and pressures. Once Dermot recovered his power in Leinster, O'Connor accepted that fact, just as in 1167 he had accepted his return to Uí Cennselaigh. Probably late in 1169, Rory led a force to Leinster and exacted submission, taking Dermot's son Conor as a hostage; by these actions he asserted his overlordship as convention demanded, just as he had recently been asserting it in Munster and in the north. If we may trust Gerald, he also compelled Dermot to make a secret agreement to send his Anglo-Normans home – but only after his position in Leinster had been secured. When, eighteen months later, Rory returned to invest Dublin, he still seems – and here the *Song* rather than Gerald is our witness – to have thought along traditional lines. Strongbow, who was in a weak position after Dermot's death, offered to hold Leinster under his overlordship. Rory rejected the offer, and proposed instead that the earl should keep only Dublin, Wexford and Waterford, an offer that Strongbow in turn refused. Rory's suggestion would have created a balance in the south-east between the earl and the Irish, thus producing the sort of division that earlier over-kings had, for their own advantage, tried to arrange in other places; it would also have restricted the Anglo-

Normans to regions that had long been in the hands of outsiders. In retrospect O'Connor may seem to have misread the significance of the invasion. But it is pointless to criticise him for failing to step outside the bounds of his time.

The events of 1169–70 owed almost nothing to Henry II's initiative; and it seems clear that the king went to Ireland in the autumn of 1171, not primarily out of a desire to extend his dominions westwards, but because he was anxious to impose control upon a process of conquest that was taking place almost despite him. Such an attitude was in accord with that which his predecessors had adopted towards similar problems in Wales. It is implicit in the *Conquest*, where Gerald dwells on the measures the king took in the winter of 1170–1 to prevent further men and supplies going to Ireland, and the unease Strongbow felt about the likely royal view of his acquisitions. The *Song* tells us that representatives from Wexford approached Henry with complaints against his 'felon' Robert fitz Stephen, and were graciously received.[4] English chroniclers too had no doubt that the king disapproved of what had been occurring in Ireland. William of Newburgh states that Strongbow had crossed the sea against Henry's express prohibition, and that the king had reacted by seizing his English lands; while Gervase of Canterbury claims, tantalisingly, that one spur to Henry's expedition had been the arrival of an embassy from among the Irish, protesting about the earl's activities.

Despite the evidence, twentieth-century historians have arrived at this view of the king's attitudes hesitantly and laboriously. There seem to be two explanations of this odd state of affairs. A long tradition of nationalist polemic regarded it as axiomatic that the invasion was the work of a malevolent English monarchy. The power of this assumption is evident in the defensiveness with which the late J. F. O'Doherty, writing in the 1930s, sought to argue a contrary opinion. More important, the idea that Henry intervened without enthusiasm seemed to fly in the face of the fact that as early as 1155 he had sought and obtained from Pope Adrian IV the grant of Ireland recorded in the bull *Laudabiliter*. Two chroniclers tell us that in the autumn of that year the king considered leading an expedition to Ireland in order to provide an endowment for his youngest brother, William. It was not unnatural that later writers should have seen Henry's actions in 1171–2 as the fulfilment of a long-delayed ambition. But there was more to the events of 1155 than meets the eye.

For Henry II to propose an expedition to Ireland in 1155 was

strange. In October, when the project was discussed, he had been king of England for no more than a year. To her twelfth-century rulers England mattered chiefly as a source of cash, manpower and prestige for use in the defence and expansion of their interests on the continent. Henry's first task upon succeeding Stephen was to recover the position that the monarchy had lost during the recent civil war; that accomplished, he was likely to spend the greater part of his time across the Channel. An expedition to Ireland was an improbable diversion from the mainstream of his interests. The Norman chronicler Robert of Torigny inadvertently makes the point by sandwiching his brief remarks about the Irish project between a description of Henry's dealings with recalcitrant barons in the Welsh marches, and an account of his departure for the continent, where he was occupied in curbing the activities of his brother Geoffrey. Recent work has shown that the scheme was in all probability not Henry's, but rather an idea suggested by the Church at Canterbury. John of Salisbury, at that time secretary to Archbishop Theobald, tells us that it was he who procured the papal grant for the king; and a continuator of the chronicle of Sigebert of Gembloux says that the project was supported by 'bishops and certain religious men'.[5] According to Robert of Torigny, Henry's mother, the Empress Matilda, opposed the plan; since nothing came of it, the lay magnates may have been equally unimpressed.

Laudabiliter authorised Henry to take control of Ireland in order 'to enlarge the boundaries of the Church, to proclaim the truths of the Christian religion to a rude and ignorant people, and to root out the growths of vice from the field of the Lord'.[6] The topic of ecclesiastical reform and the papal role in the invasion of Ireland is one that has presented writers with special problems, touching as it does on that most sensitive of nerves, the relationship between nationalism and Catholicism. In Ireland, as in some other parts of early medieval Europe, the Church had succeeded in adapting to a society very different from the Roman one in which it had been nurtured. Irish monks had been in the forefront of European religious life in the late sixth and seventh centuries; in the eleventh century they were still welcome in the conservative religious houses of Anglo-Saxon England and imperial Germany. Time, however, was running out for them. The century from 1050 to 1150 saw a growth in papal power and government, an attack on lay control over churches, and the refinement of a universal canon law that sought to regulate the Church and the moral life of Christendom. By about 1100 even the most old-fashioned European churchman was likely to be shocked by the absence in Ireland (as in Scotland and Wales) of an ordered scheme of territorial dioceses and hence of Church

government as it was conventionally understood, by the persistence of blatant lay influence, and by eccentric local customs, especially in relation to marriage, which appeared as gross contraventions of the canon law. In an age of uniformity and ecclesiastical bureaucracy, a Church with a strong local colour was bound to be seen as a Church riddled with abuse.

After the Norman conquest of England the archbishops of Canterbury, Lanfranc (1070–89) and Anselm (1093–1109), had played a part in ecclesiastical reform in Ireland, consecrating bishops to the Norse dioceses of Dublin and Waterford, and writing admonitory letters to Irish kings and churchmen. They did so in the belief that they possessed metropolitan jurisdiction over the whole region of Britain, a view that echoed the imperial phraseology of the charters of tenth-century Anglo-Saxon kings. Pressure for reform, however, was present inside the Irish Church itself. And by the time of Henry II's accession in England, major changes had taken place. The 1140s saw the appearance in Ireland of continental religious orders, particularly the Cistercians, whose arrival was assisted by the friendship between Malachy of Armagh and Bernard of Clairvaux, the dominant European churchman of his day. The period also saw the delineation of territorial dioceses; and at the Synod of Kells in 1152 Cardinal John Paparo, legate of Pope Eugenius III (a pontiff deeply influenced by Bernard), sanctioned metropolitan sees at Armagh, Dublin, Cashel and Tuam. That event marked a defeat for Canterbury's claims to primacy, which were also receiving setbacks in Scotland. At the time of the Synod, King Stephen's relations with the papacy were bad. By 1155, however, circumstances had changed. Bernard was dead. Pope Adrian, though an exacting reformer, was not part of the Cistercian nexus. And there was a new king in England, who owed much to Archbishop Theobald. The time was ripe for a reassertion of Canterbury's claims. This was the background against which King Henry briefly toyed with the notion of intervention in Ireland.

The events of 1155 may have been sterile at the time, but they are not irrelevant to what happened in 1171–2. When Henry was in Ireland he received the support of many of the Irish higher clergy, and held a reforming synod at Cashel. News of his activities was quickly sent to Pope Alexander III, with whom he was negotiating in the aftermath of the murder of Thomas Becket. In September 1172 we find Alexander addressing the bishop of Lismore, who was his legate in Ireland, and the four Irish archbishops thus:

> with what shocking abuses the Irish people are infected and how, lapsed

> from the fear of God and reverence for the Christian faith, they follow those things that lead to the peril of their souls, has been made known to us in a series of letters from you, and also has often come to the knowledge of the Apostolic See by the trustworthy accounts of others.[7]

Alexander's letters, like *Laudabiliter*, seem to ignore the successes of the native reform movement, which have been dwelt upon by modern writers; and it is sometimes assumed that the papal fulminations sprang from a regrettable error of judgement, if not from misleading information maliciously supplied. The truth may be more straightforward: some aspects of Church life had proved amenable to reform, but others had not. It was one thing to introduce new religious orders and to refashion the upper tier of ecclesiastical government, but quite another to bring about changes at the many points where what the reformers glibly dismissed as abuses were really reflections of the traditions of Irish society; for of course religious change could not occur in a vacuum. Several of the decrees of the Synod of Cashel were directed at precisely those areas that were likely to cause difficulties: the absence of canonical marriage; the rights of tribute and hospitality demanded of churches by powerful laymen; the involvement of clergy in the payment of the compensation owed by their kins for homicide; the need to organise the payment of tithe, something that demanded the development of a parochial system (which seems on the whole to have post-dated the Anglo-Norman invasion). The exactions of chiefs and the marriage-customs of the Gaelic nobility were to trouble the clergy to the end of the middle ages. Henry II was an international figure who could count on the acquiescence of religious leaders, who were content to see the Irish Church exposed to any influence that might help it into conformity with European norms.

It is scarcely surprising that the Irish kings, with the probable exception of Rory O'Connor and some of the northerners, submitted to King Henry with little hesitation. They were aware that he had come to Ireland because of concern about his own subjects' behaviour, not theirs; they saw him as a protector, not only against the Anglo-Norman lords, but also in some cases against O'Connor; they understood that the ecclesiastical element in society was well-disposed towards him; and they knew that, if they resisted, the most impressive army that Ireland had seen could be turned against them. Gerald describes the submissions of the Mac Carthy and O'Brien kings, which took place shortly after Henry's landing at Waterford, as follows:

> King Dermot of Cork arrived. He was drawn forthwith into a firm alliance by the bond of submission, an oath of fealty and the giving of

> hostages; an annual tribute was imposed on his kingdom; of his own free will he submitted himself to the king of England. The king moved his army from [Waterford] and went first to Lismore, where he stayed for two days, and from there continued to Cashel. There, on the next day, Donal king of Limerick met him by the river Suir; when he had petitioned for the king's peace, tribute was imposed on his kingdom also, and he too showed his loyalty to the king by entering into the very strongest bonds of submission.[8]

Gerald's words describe a familiar phenomenon: the establishment of a formal relationship between parties who belonged to different societies. We may find parallels in, for example, the dealings of English kings with Welsh princes, of German kings with Slavonic leaders on their eastern frontiers, or even of Spanish rulers with Muslim communities of the reconquered districts. A personal bond was created between superior and inferior, secured by signs – hostages, tribute, the giving of gifts – whose meaning was understood by both sides. But the subordinate polity was left intact; there was no immediate thought that it could or should be assimilated to that of the overlord.

Henry was no doubt well content to receive these and other submissions, since his main purpose in going to Ireland was to bring a measure of regularity to what was taking place there; moreover, like all such relationships, they left open the possibility of a gradual intensification of overlordship in the future. His main concern, however, was with his own people. He resolved his chief worry by a straightforward arrangement. He kept for himself Waterford and the Norse areas of Leinster, and granted the remainder of the province to Strongbow in return for the service of one hundred knights, so in effect reversing the proposal made to the earl by Rory O'Connor a few months before. At the same time he granted Meath to Hugh de Lacy, who had accompanied him to Ireland. The establishment of Hugh in Meath would accomplish a double purpose, preventing Strongbow from expanding in that direction, and stopping O'Connor from sweeping into Leinster as he had done in 1169 and 1171. The king's limited measures at this time epitomise his approach to Ireland: he tended to trail in the wake of events, making efforts to restrain the headstrong and to balance conflicting interests. Hugh de Lacy and Strongbow were to share power in the lordship until the earl's death in 1176.

The arrangements made by Henry before he left Ireland in April 1172 did not, of course, amount to a comprehensive or stable programme of government. Although Hugh and the earl might be expected to concentrate on securing the large endowments the king had given them, the frontiers of the emerging colony remained fluid, and the country still

lay open to bands of ambitious soldiery. The atmosphere of the period is revealed in Gerald's stories about Raymond le Gros, the kinsman whom he most admired. It was under Raymond's command that the first effective inroads were made into Munster. Gerald's description of that episode discloses something of the dynamics of Anglo-Norman expansion, which may have owed as much to the pressure upon leaders, faced with maintaining the morale of their men and fulfilling the traditional role of open-handed lord, as it did to cold-blooded acquisitiveness. During 1173 Strongbow and other leaders had left Ireland to assist the king in suppressing the rebellion of his eldest son. When the earl returned, he found that Irish risings had placed his troops on the defensive:

> in a very short time the supply of money which the earl had brought with him was used up, and the soldiers' pay ceased. So the earl's troops who, under the command of Raymond's rival Hervey, acting as constable, were no longer able to profit by taking booty in the usual way, at last made a united approach to him. Speaking with one voice, they threatened that if Raymond were not reinstated as their leader, they would all forthwith and without fail abandon the earl, and either return to England, or even worse, desert to the enemy. But once Raymond was given command they took heart, and immediately making an attack on the Uí Faelain, they began to build up their resources again by taking vast quantities of booty, and to re-equip themselves most handsomely with arms and horses. From there they advanced on Lismore. Having plundered and ravaged the city and the territory belonging to it, they brought immense quantities of booty back to Waterford by the coastal route.[9]

In 1175 Raymond was leader of a force that Strongbow sent to seize Limerick. By that time Henry was experiencing once more the disquiet he had felt in 1170–1. He sent four commissioners to Ireland, two of whom were to remain with Strongbow, while the others escorted Raymond to his presence. But a siege of Limerick by O'Brien, and the death of the earl, meant that Raymond stayed in Ireland after all, and that the impetus of spontaneous expansion into Munster slackened.

It was in this climate that King Henry had made an agreement at Windsor in October 1175 with the representatives of Rory O'Connor. The so-called Treaty of Windsor was a practical arrangement, reflecting the circumstances of the moment; we should resist the temptation to erect it into a constitutional document. As in 1171–2 Henry wished to bring some order to an untidy state of affairs. He did so by reserving Dublin, Leinster, Meath, and Munster from Waterford to Dungarvan for himself and his barons, and by encouraging the subjection of the rulers of the rest of Ireland to Rory. His aim was that of other govern-

ments dealing with a politically-fragmented neighbouring society: to simplify matters by favouring a single leader through whom he could work, and upon whom responsibility might be fixed. In return for the confirmation of his position in Connacht and his claim to overlordship in the north and south-west, Rory was to pay an annual tribute in hides, and to surrender hostages on his own behalf and that of his vassals. It would be his task to extract the tributes and hostages from those beneath him, though Henry did promise him the support of his representatives in Ireland against any (and there would be many) who resisted his authority. The Treaty of Windsor had much in common with the agreements that kings from William the Conqueror onwards had made with Welsh leaders, sometimes in a similar desire to limit the expansion of marcher barons.

There was little possibility that the Treaty could work smoothly, still less prove permanent. Rory had not the means to enforce his side of the bargain, while Henry, amidst his multifarious commitments, was unlikely to find the time and resources necessary to restrain his vassals from spilling over into O'Connor's sphere of influence. There was bound to be friction between Anglo-Norman leaders and the Gaelic kings whom Rory could not in practice control. Nor was Rory's attitude a simple one. Because of past hostility between his dynasty and the O'Briens, for instance, his reaction to the movement of invaders into north Munster was ambiguous. And when in 1177 John de Courcy invaded Down and Antrim, Rory is unlikely to have been perturbed unduly by the fate of a region that was well beyond his control in any case. There are some signs that the agreement made in 1175 continued in a limited way to govern the relations between Henry and Rory until 1183. But in that year Rory abandoned the kingship of Connacht and entered religion. He partially recovered his position two years later, with Anglo-Norman help; but for almost two decades Connacht was to be the scene of bitter strife between his various would-be successors. There was, in short, no power with which sustainable arrangements could be made.

Given the passions that these remote events are capable of arousing, it is understandable that historians have been inclined to search for breaches of faith in the subsequent treatment of the Irish kings who accepted Henry II's overlordship in 1171–2 and 1175. But it is probably unrealistic to expect Henry to have formed stable relationships with Gaelic leaders. Gerald talks of the 'fickleness' and the 'treachery' of the Irish (and the Welsh).[10] This is as close as he could come to describing what we should see, not as character-flaws, but as differences between societies. At the political level, there was a crucial contrast in systems of succession. Western Europe had its share of disputes over inheritance,

and there was no universal custom of succession. But in Anglo-Norman society the trend had long been in favour of primogeniture, and the existence of a powerful monarchy at the head of a developing legal system facilitated the orderly passage of property from one generation to the next. In Ireland, as in Wales, the number of potential heirs, and the frequent outbreaks of violent competition between them, gave the outsider an impression of alarming instability; these were, as Gerald remarks, worlds in which fratricide seemed normal rather than exceptional. The constant segmentary violence gave political society in Ireland a kaleidoscopic quality. All Henry could do was to accept submissions from those who mattered at the moment; these relationships would end with the next shift of power in the Irish areas, just as arrangements with Welsh leaders were transient. It is revealing to compare the Treaty of Windsor with the Treaty of Falaise, which Henry concluded in 1174 with King William of Scotland. Because of the English and Norman marriages of William's ancestors, and the patronage offered to Anglo-Norman families by the Scottish royal house, William was fully of Henry's own society; moreover, again thanks to outside influences, he was a king who governed in a way that Henry understood. The Falaise agreement was unlike that with Rory, not merely in its terminology, but also in the simple fact that it was intended as a perpetual arrangement, binding on the heirs of both parties. In an Irish context such a provision would have made little sense.

By 1177 it was obvious to Henry that the arrangements he had so far made in Ireland would have to be replaced by something more durable. The Windsor agreement was unsatisfactory; Strongbow's death had left a vacuum in Leinster; and the continued restlessness of the resident barons meant that an attitude would have to be struck towards Munster at least. At the Council of Oxford in May 1177 the immediate territorial questions were tackled. The king, as he had earlier done in relation to Leinster and Meath, made formal grants of the regions that were being infiltrated. The cities of Cork and Limerick, with their adjoining cantreds, he kept for himself. Robert fitz Stephen and Miles de Cogan were to share the kingdom of Cork. Limerick, which Raymond le Gros had abandoned, was eventually assigned to Philip de Briouze, a member of a great baronial house. Robert and Miles quickly occupied parts of Cork, but Philip retreated in the face of the power of Donal O'Brien. Since Strongbow had left an infant heir, Leinster was in Henry's custody. He arranged for it to be administered in three portions, controlled respectively by Hugh de Lacy from Dublin, William fitz Audelin from Wexford, and Robert le Poer from Waterford.

These measures were accompanied by a decision that was intended to

determine the future of Ireland as a whole: Henry announced his intention of giving it to John, his youngest son, who was then in his tenth year. This would eventually, he hoped, solve the problem of managing a complicated and militarised land from a distance. The king's action serves to clarify the place of his newest dominion in the whole span of his interests. Henry possessed an unwieldy assemblage of territories that now stretched from Connacht to the Pyrenees. He had four sons whom he expected to assist him, and who in turn demanded the status and power that were their birthright. England and Normandy (Henry's inheritance through his mother) and Anjou (his inheritance from his father) were the core of his dominions, and were destined for his eldest son. Aquitaine (which he had acquired by his marriage to its duchess, Eleanor), Brittany (over which he claimed suzerainty), and Ireland were to provide scope for, respectively, Richard, Geoffrey and John. Each region posed problems of control that were best coped with by a resident ruler. The grant of Ireland to John thus made sense as family policy, as a response to recent events in the lordship, and as part of the provision for the vast, sea-linked supremacy that Henry intended to endure.

John's youth meant that his father's plans were bound to remain in suspense. From 1177 to 1185 shifts and expedients continued. For most of the period the dominating figure was Hugh de Lacy, whose career illustrates the character of the infant lordship. Hugh was the head of the Herefordshire branch of the de Lacy family; but he was not a marcher in the same sense as the Geraldines, for he had estates elsewhere in England, and also important holdings in Normandy. He was established in Meath as a royal protégé. Ireland, however, presented opportunities and challenges that were almost bound to encourage able men to grow in power beyond the limits that the twelfth-century English monarchy was in the habit of tolerating. De Lacy was King Henry's representative at Dublin for the bulk of the period 1177–84. By about 1180 Henry was growing suspicious of him, just as earlier he had entertained fears about Strongbow and the Geraldines. Hugh had married as his second wife a daughter of Rory O'Connor, and English chroniclers report rumours that he intended to make himself king of Ireland. These stories were almost certainly ill-founded: the obvious motive, on Hugh's side, for the marriage was the protection of Meath's western boundary with Connacht; furthermore it is inherently improbable that a man with his cosmopolitan background would have considered cutting himself adrift from the outside world and sacrificing his English and French interests. Nonetheless the tittle-tattle may accurately reflect the disquiet that was felt at court. Henry sent agents to supersede de Lacy in 1181–2 and

again in 1184; and the desire to contain him may have precipitated the dispatch of John to Ireland in 1185.

We know less about John's expedition than about many earlier episodes. The *Song* breaks off in 1175. And although Gerald accompanied the king's son to Ireland, he is – despite a superficial appearance to the contrary – reticent about what happened, perhaps because the affair was still controversial when he was writing. He criticises John roundly, telling the often-repeated story of how he and his callow entourage insulted Irish leaders who had come to submit; he mentions military reverses and the lack of martial vigour of John's men; and he is typically bitter about the treatment the resident barons received from the new arrivals. The impression left is of a purposeless fiasco. The inadequacy of Gerald's handling of the subject has recently been demonstrated. Henry II was scarcely the man to send a group of feckless youths on a serious enterprise. The expedition had been organised by Ranulf Glanville, his experienced justiciar of England; and it was accompanied by administrators and men of the royal household, including John Cumin, the new archbishop of Dublin, Gilbert Pipard, and Bertram de Verdon, who was to act as John's steward in Ireland. Moreover, once John established himself, Henry intended that he should become king of Ireland, and to that end had approached the pope about providing him with a crown.

The fact that the expedition was such a weighty affair makes John's precipitate return to England, and the unanimous verdict of chroniclers that he had failed dismally, the more intriguing. The most probable explanation may be that Hugh de Lacy's influence was at this time so great that John found himself unable to take full control of Ireland without a direct confrontation, and that he and his advisers chose not to risk such a step. Hugh's power among the Irish, rather than juvenile ill-manners on John's part, may be the real reason why the Gaelic leaders shunned the new lord of Ireland. The Irish concept of allegiance was intensely personal. Hugh's well-established position in Meath, the control he had exercised over Dublin and north Leinster for long periods as King Henry's minister, together with his own evident political skills, had made him the focus of a network of relationships. Irish annalists refer to him as 'king of Erinn' at the time of John's visit, and as the recipient of the tribute of Connacht.[11] By the time he was killed, in an obscure local brawl, in 1186, John had turned his back on Ireland. He did not revisit the lordship until 1210; when he did return, his main action was to dispossess Hugh de Lacy's sons, though for reasons unconnected with his youthful humiliation.

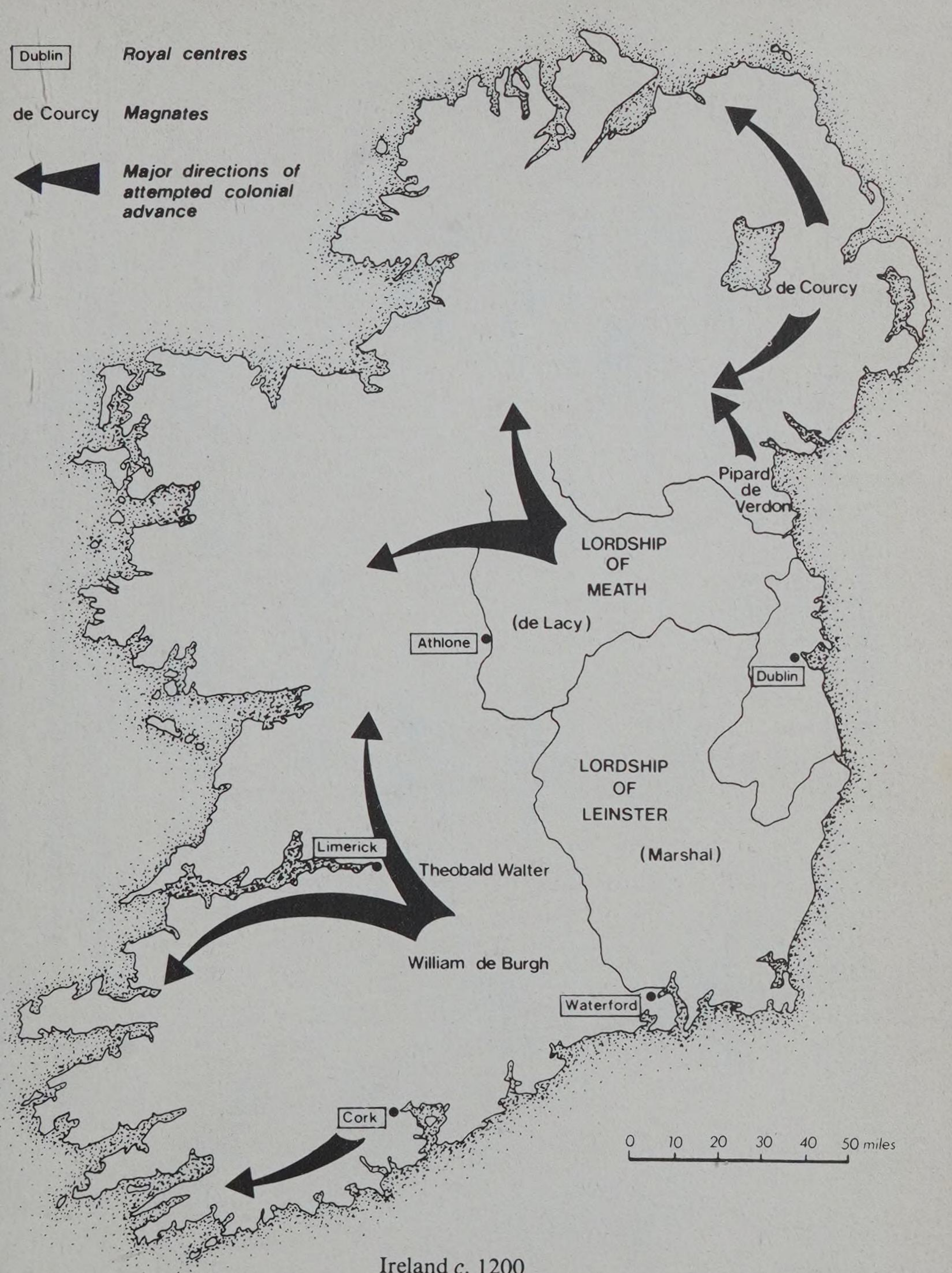
John's expedition marked both an end and a beginning. Although it

was not obvious in 1185, Henry's plan for a kingdom of Ireland was to come to nothing. It was always likely that a son of Henry II would be drawn away from the remote and barbarous west to the centre of his family's interests, in northern France; the death in 1186 of the king's third son, Geoffrey, three years after that of his eldest brother, made that likelihood a certainty. But his visit had a more positive significance. Each royal intervention in Ireland gave rise to fresh grants, which added to the number of actual or potential Anglo-Norman landholders. John's expedition was no exception: much of what was to become County Louth was soon granted to Bertram de Verdon and Gilbert Pipard; and territories approximately amounting to the later county of Tipperary were given to Theobald Walter, nephew of Ranulf Glanville and ancestor of the Butler family, William de Burgh, the ancestor of the de Burghs, and Philip of Worcester, who had been sent to replace Hugh de Lacy as King Henry's representative in 1184. These endowments meant that the whole coastal region from Antrim round to Cork was now, at least in theory, in Anglo-Norman hands. The planting of another layer of king's men had the effect of separating John de Courcy's developing lordship in the north from that of Hugh de Lacy, and of protecting more fully the royal centre at Waterford. In addition, Gerald's passing remark that during John's stay in Ireland the established settlers were preoccupied with legal business rather than their true profession, war, may suggest that 1185 marked a stage in the creation of what was to grow into the royal administration of the lordship. But William de Burgh was soon to show that the road to wealth and power that had been followed by Strongbow, de Lacy, de Courcy and others was still open.

2 Colonial Expansion and Irish Resistance, 1185–1315

The decades that followed John's departure in 1185 saw a process of territorial expansion that carried the power of the new aristocracy far beyond Leinster and Meath. It was never to result in the complete domination of the island by the Anglo-Norman magnates. They were checked by difficult terrain, by Irish resistance, by lack of resources, by their own quarrels and family misfortunes, and also at times by the disfavour of the king, whose attitude towards the conquest remained ambiguous. But the colonial advance did mean that during the thirteenth century no part of the country remained unaffected by their activities; for even where they failed to obtain a firm grip, the environment inhabited by Gaelic leaders was altered by their proximity.

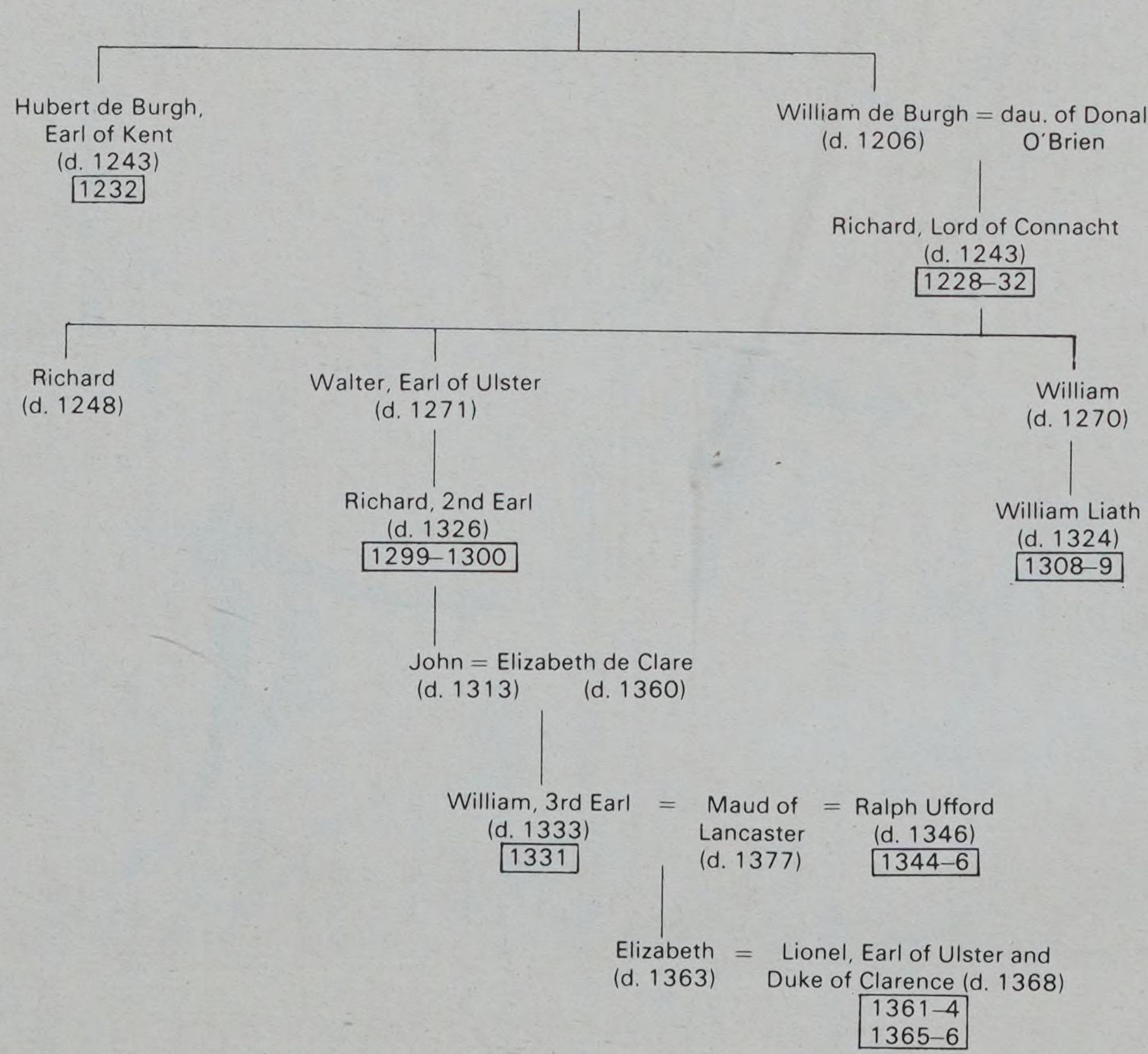
The men who brought Anglo-Norman authority into the modern provinces of Ulster, Munster and Connacht cannot be neatly categorised. But though some of them had court connections, they were on the whole younger sons, or men without significant inheritances. In this they differed from Strongbow and Hugh de Lacy, who were leading members of baronial houses with lands not only in England and Wales but also on the continent. The creators of the earldom of Ulster, John de Courcy and Hugh de Lacy II, were, respectively, a junior member of a Somerset family who possessed only a small estate in England, and a younger son of the first lord of Meath, with his way to make in the world. William de Burgh and his son Richard were the most dynamic force in Munster and later also in Connacht. They were brother and nephew of Hubert de Burgh, justiciar of England from 1215 to 1232, and earl of Kent from 1227; but in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries the de Burghs, by origin Norfolk gentry, were still clawing their way to wealth and position. Munster also offered scope for the descendants of Maurice fitz Gerald of the conquest. They reveal a pattern apparent in other parts of Europe, by which the eldest branch of the family, which inherited the patrimony (in this case the barons of Naas who retained interests in Pembrokeshire) were outstripped by the cadet branches, which were forced to take risks; the most successful of the latter were the lines of Gerald and Thomas, younger sons of Maurice fitz Gerald, which in the early fourteenth century were to acquire the earldoms of Kildare and Desmond.



Ireland *c.* 1200

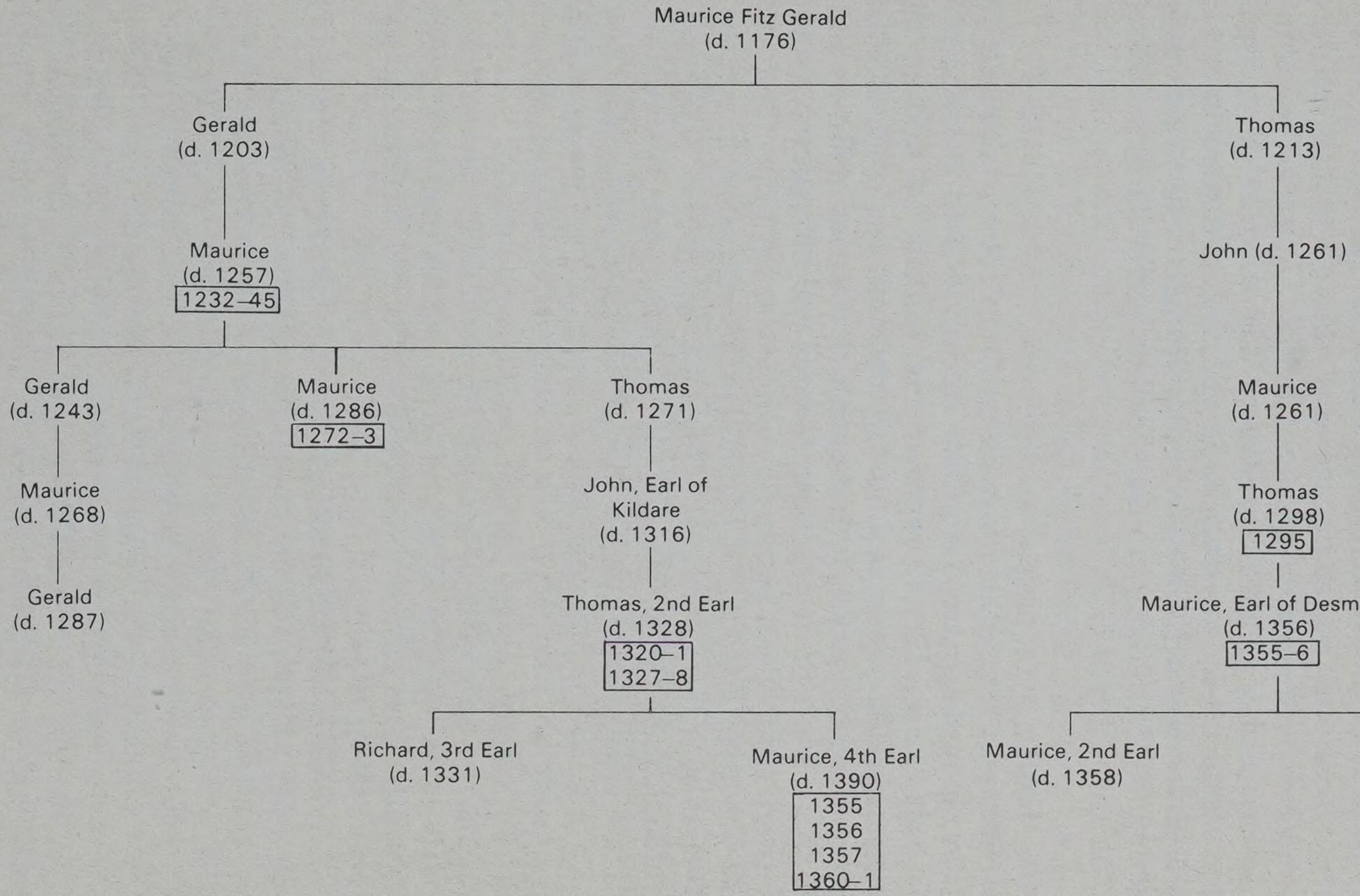
The De Burghs

Dates within boxes represent periods of service as chief governor of Ireland



The Geraldines of Kildare and Desmond

Dates within boxes represent periods of service as chief governor of Ireland



By the time of the death of Hugh de Lacy I in 1186, Leinster and Meath were already passing beyond the raw frontier stage, as land was distributed to sub-tenants, the settlement of dependent cultivators began, and the tenurial matrix became established. In the more distant parts of Ireland, however, careers could still be made, to some extent, by the sword; the social climate was akin to that which had briefly prevailed in the south-east prior to 1171, and in Wales in the late eleventh century. Since the advance derived most of its impetus from the enterprise of individual lords, and since resistance was localised, it will make most sense if we consider the main regions separately, before trying to identify some common features of the Gaelic response.

The North

The most improbable expansion of the colony began early in 1177 when John de Courcy, who had recently arrived in Ireland in the entourage of King Henry's representative William fitz Audelin, left Dublin with a handful of companions and made his way north to Uladh, a territory roughly equivalent to the modern counties of Down and Antrim. Within a short space of time de Courcy had brought this area under his military control and begun, through his castles, to lay the foundation of the medieval earldom of Ulster. His achievements in Ireland confirm Gerald of Wales's portrayal of him as a bold warrior and single-minded, puritanical man of action. His success in the north is at first sight startling; so too is the way in which he made for himself – more readily than any other of the first conquerors – a virtual principality in Ireland. But we should not attribute to him an exceptional desire for independence, a notion largely foreign to this period: any magnate who established himself in the north of Ireland was bound to have a fairly distant relationship with the king, and to pursue his own local policy. John's successes were related to the character of the area that he and his followers entered.

The collapse of the Mac Loughlin overlordship in 1166 had removed any political cohesion the north had possessed. Although the power of the O'Neills grew by fits and starts in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it was outdistanced by the authority of the Anglo-Norman earldom, and frequently threatened by a Mac Loughlin revival, and by the resistance of the O'Donnells of Tyrconnell. From the beginning, therefore, John de Courcy did not have to contend with a united opposition. In 1177 he defeated Rory Mac Dunlevy, the king of Uladh; and there was no adequate superior to whom Rory could turn for protection. In subsequent years, though de Courcy met reverses as he tried to

extend his authority inland, he was able to sustain himself by alliances as well as by force of arms. Mac Dunlevy's dispossession earned him little sympathy among his fellow chiefs: in 1181, for instance, he and O'Flynn were defeated in a conflict with Mac Loughlin; and in 1196 we find him allied with the invaders against Mac Loughlin and O'Hanlon, possibly in the hope of finding compensation in the west for his lost kingdom. Similarly, Aedh O'Neill, the most powerful northern leader of the first quarter of the thirteenth century, seems to have advanced his position as much by co-operating with de Courcy and his successors as by resisting them; indeed it was to O'Neill that John fled after his Anglo-Norman enemies overcame him in 1204.

John de Courcy's adaptability is apparent in other respects. He tried to identify himself with the potent ecclesiastical traditions of the north. In June 1177 Mac Dunlevy attempted to recover his kingdom. His army was accompanied to Down by relics which, it was hoped, would bring victory; defeat ensued, and the relics passed into Anglo-Norman hands. Many of them, including famous crosiers, were retained, though John did restore the most precious item of all, the Book of Armagh, to the church there. De Courcy also attempted to use the cult of St Patrick to his advantage. According to Gerald of Wales,

> St Columba and St Brigit were contemporaries of St Patrick; and the bodies of all three were deposited in Ulster, in . . . Down, where they were discovered in [1185]. They were lying in a vault, containing three recesses, the body of St Patrick lying in the centre and those of the other two on either side. John de Courcy was then governor, and under his direction these three noble treasures were discovered, through divine revelation, and translated.[1]

Probably at about the same time, de Courcy struck halfpence at Downpatrick; they bore his own name on the obverse, and on the reverse – eloquently – a crosier, and the single word PATRICIUS. This was propaganda, but we ought not to dismiss it as cynical. John was a munificent patron of the Church. In northern France, England and Wales the Normans had rapidly adopted some of the more reputable local saints. John de Courcy was entirely conventional both in his belief in the efficacy of saints and relics, and in his eagerness to deploy their power in his own interests; they symbolised the draining of divine favour from the old world, and legitimated his new dominion.

A further side of de Courcy's career introduces us to a sustained theme in the history of the north. His lordship was a sea-girt one, more readily in touch with south-western Scotland and the Isle of Man than with the south of Ireland. In consequence he was at once involved, not

so much with the king of Scots – whose power in the west was limited – as with the maritime lords of the Strathclyde region and the Norse dynasty of Man. Probably about 1180, he married Affreca, daughter of Gottred king of Man, the ruler whose fleet had besieged Dublin ten years before. The link became important at the end of de Courcy's career, when Reginald king of Man, Affreca's brother, sailed to the coast of Down in an attempt to rescue his brother-in-law's fortress at Dundrum. Moreover an English chronicler tells us that in 1197 John rewarded Duncan son of Gilbert of Galloway, who had given him military help, with a grant of lands belonging to Irish chiefs who had opposed him. De Courcy and his lordship were becoming an important element in the network of relationships that criss-crossed the North Channel.

By the time of his accession in 1199, King John had a well-developed suspicion of de Courcy, who seems to have sided with Richard I in 1194–5, after the exposure of John's conspiracy with the king of France. Apart from that, there is little doubt that de Courcy's rule, like that of Hugh de Lacy in the 1180s, had in its power and freedom of action gone beyond the limits that the English monarchy regarded as acceptable. Moreover his position in Ulster was specially sensitive because at the beginning of the reign relations between John and William the Lion of Scotland were bad. Two references in the chronicle of Roger of Howden disclose the impression John de Courcy made on English minds. In 1197 Roger describes him as 'prince of the kingdom of Ulster in Ireland'; and in 1201, having listed the rulers of the Christian world from Jerusalem to Denmark, he ends his account, incongruously, with the king of Man 'and John de Courcy in Ulster'.[2] Between 1201 and 1205 de Courcy's power was undermined by a series of attacks by the younger Hugh de Lacy, whose actions King John seems to have connived at. De Courcy was dispossessed; and although the king's hostility towards him subsequently abated, he did not regain his remarkable position in Ireland, and died in comparative obscurity before September 1219. In the meantime, however, de Lacy – whom John had made earl of Ulster in 1205 – himself became ensnared in baronial politics, and was driven out of Ulster by the king's army in 1210. King John had accomplished his destruction with the help of Scottish lords from Carrick and Galloway, whose troops and naval power he had hired. In return he rewarded them with extensive grants of land from Larne round to the Foyle. He seems to have had two purposes in mind: to provide a counterpoise to the existing Ulster tenants, and to gain help to secure control of the north by subjugating Aedh O'Neill, who had failed to give hostages when he was in Ireland. Despite a major campaign in 1212, in-

volving the Scots, O'Donnell and the royal justiciar, O'Neill's power was not permanently reduced. When in 1223 Hugh de Lacy tried to recover his position by force, Aedh was available to assist him. The years of vacancy point to a lesson that was to be learnt during subsequent periods of royal custodianship: Ulster of all parts of Ireland was most in need of a resident lord.

Hugh de Lacy governed his earldom with only minor alarms from his restoration in 1226–7 until his death towards the end of 1242. In his last years there were signs that Anglo-Norman lordship might come to embrace a greater proportion of the north of Ireland than had been the case so far. From 1232 to 1245 Henry III's justiciar was Maurice fitz Gerald, lord of Offaly. Maurice and Hugh were on the best of terms. Maurice held lands in Sligo by de Lacy's gift; Hugh also endowed him with territories in Fermanagh by the shores of Lough Erne, and with a title to Tyrconnell. Maurice was able to bring official resources to bear in the north in an effort to make a reality of these speculative grants. Had they been fully realised, he and the earl of Ulster would between them have held O'Neill's land of Tyrone in a pincer grip. Initially the prospects seemed favourable. Aedh O'Neill had died in 1230, and his death had been followed by renewed competition between the O'Neills and Mac Loughlins. In 1238 Hugh and Maurice were able to enter Tyrone and impose their own candidate for the kingship. Even after Hugh's death and the removal of Maurice from the justiciarship, the momentum was maintained for a time. The new justiciar, John fitz Geoffrey, consolidated Anglo-Norman control around Coleraine and in western Down, while in 1252 Maurice was able to build a castle at Caol Uisce on the Erne, a crucial link between his holdings in Sligo, Fermanagh and Tyrconnell.

It was always unlikely that this Geraldine thrust, impressive as it appears, would result in the creation of a firm lordship in the north-west, comparable to that in the north-east. It was being made along the Atlantic coast, from no very firm base, and into districts where much of the terrain was inhospitable. It involved, moreover, a clash with Irish dynasties which already co-existed with difficulty and much bloodshed in a region that afforded them little scope. But that the expansion came to an end so rapidly and conclusively was largely the result of a series of accidents that handicapped the colonial interest. Hugh de Lacy left no male heirs, and until the advancement of Walter de Burgh to the earldom in 1264, Ulster was in royal hands. From 1258 royal authority was distracted by the baronial reform movement and subsequent civil war in England. Maurice fitz Gerald died in 1257, leaving his influence to be shared between his grandson and heir and his younger sons. And

from 1264 the first of a number of disputes between the Geraldines and de Burghs ended any possibility of a revival of the partnership that had existed in the time of Maurice and Hugh de Lacy.

In these favourable conditions the Irish dynasties that had recently been threatened began to recover; their recovery did not undo the work of de Courcy and de Lacy, but it did check the Anglo-Norman advance of the 1230s and 1240s. Maurice fitz Gerald's activities had menaced the O'Donnells. In the year that Maurice died, Godfrey O'Donnell destroyed the castle at Caol Uisce, pillaged Sligo, and defeated the colonists in a skirmish at Credran where, however, he was mortally wounded. But it was around the O'Neills that resistance came to focus. When Hugh de Lacy and Maurice fitz Gerald had attacked Tyrone in 1238, one of their purposes had been to expel the recalcitrant Mac Loughlin ruler; in his place they had set up Brian, nephew of Aedh O'Neill. Brian was soon driven out by his rivals; but in 1241, with O'Donnell's help, he succeeded in re-establishing himself, securing his position by killing Mac Loughlin and, it seems, marrying his daughter. For a further decade O'Neill's position was ambiguous: although as early as 1248 the Annals of Ulster describe him as 'high-king of the north of Ireland',[3] he was intermittently tributary to the Anglo-Normans. During the 1250s, however, he broke free from control, subjecting lesser chiefs, refusing to submit to Maurice fitz Gerald in 1253, and destroying the castle of Magh Cobha in western Down. In 1258 his reputation drew Aedh O'Connor, son of the king of Connacht, and Teig O'Brien, son of the king of Thomond, to a meeting at Caol Uisce, so symbolising not only his own authority, but also the collapse of Geraldine power in the north-west. At Caol Uisce Aedh and Teig are said to have accepted Brian's overlordship, though Thomond tradition has it that Teig refused to accept from him the *tuarastal* or 'royal gifts' that were a sign of the superior's munificence and the vassal-chief's subordination.

O'Neill's achievements, and also their limitations, become clear in 1260. In that year he moved against Downpatrick, the historic centre of the earldom of Ulster. With him he had members of northern dynasties subordinate to him, and also – in witness to the spread of his influence – Aedh O'Connor and a Connacht force. On the other hand, his own house was divided; and his rival Aedh Buidhe, a grandson of Aedh O'Neill, seems to have been supported by O'Donnell, who was not in Brian's camp. At Down, Brian's coalition was defeated, and he himself killed, not by a royal force, but by the local colonists. So ended the brief career of the man who, in the words of Henry III, 'had presumptuously borne himself as king of the kings of Ireland (*rex regum Hibernie*)'.[4] The battle of Down was a testimony to the strength of what John de Courcy

and Hugh de Lacy had built, as well as to the survival of Irish resistance to it.

The long years of de Burgh dominance, under Earl Walter (1264–71) and his son Earl Richard, the 'Red Earl' (1280–1326), make the dramatic final phase of Brian O'Neill's life appear an untypical interlude. Even before Walter's advancement to the earldom, Aedh Buidhe O'Neill had entered into formal subjection to royal representatives, from whom he received a fee. In 1268 his tributary position was enshrined in a written agreement with the earl, in which he undertook to deliver cattle and hostages. Should he fail to perform his obligations, 'the lord earl shall be free to throw me out of the kingship . . . without hope of obtaining grace or mercy, and to give it to whomsoever it shall please him, without resistance or vengeance on my part or that of my men'.[5] Earl Richard more than once interfered in the succession of O'Neill chiefs; and although he had eventually to accept the permanence of Brian O'Neill's son Donal (who was later to play a part in procuring the Bruce invasion), there is little to suggest that during the twenty years before 1315 Donal was able to challenge his overlord. There are many signs too that lesser leaders were under de Burgh control: in Fermanagh, for instance, Maguire chiefs succeeded one another peacefully, sheltered by the earl from the unwanted claims of both O'Neill and O'Donnell.

The extents taken by the royal government when Richard's successor, Earl William, died in 1333 lay bare a scheme of organised relationships which in its outlines probably went back beyond the time of the de Burghs. Most of the chiefs of the north owed the earls maintenance for fixed numbers of troops, or a financial equivalent. For instance, the O'Neills were assessed at eighty men, the Mac Mahons at fifty, and the O'Cahans at twenty-five. Services of this sort could only be exacted by effective provincial lords, as the de Burghs plainly were. Their power was increased by the fact that they were not merely earls of Ulster but also lords of Connacht; indeed it has been suggested that they occupied in relation to the Irish a position that no Gaelic leader had attained since the death of the Mac Loughlin over-king in 1166. But they were not, of course, strictly comparable to Irish overlords. Their authority radiated into the Gaelic interior from a chain of castles and manorial settlements around the Ulster coasts. It was given substance, too, by a society of sub-tenants. Some, such as the Savage family, were descendants of men who had gone north with de Courcy. Others seem to have been recruited from Scotland: in the 1240s, for example, the Bissets, who had fallen victim to Scottish baronial quarrels, were given lands along the Antrim coast. The earldom also possessed an ad-

ministration, staffed by officials who were often drawn from the leading settler families; as in any compact lordship, opportunities for office-holding fostered further a sense of community.

On the eve of the Bruce invasion it is hard to detect any perceptible weakening of the colonial position in the north. Earl Richard, on the contrary, had recently acquired new holdings in Derry and Inishowen, building his castle of Northburgh on the Inishowen peninsula; he had thus strengthened his influence at the crucial point where the power of O'Donnell bordered that of O'Neill. Like de Courcy and de Lacy, he had cultivated useful connections with the Scottish aristocracy, marrying his sister Jill to James Stewart, and his daughter Elizabeth to Robert Bruce, at a time when the latter was still on good terms with Edward I. Moreover, he had succeeded, unlike some of his predecessors, in furthering his own position at court and in English magnate society. He had married another daughter to the earl of Gloucester, a grandson of the king, and his son and heir to the earl's sister, Elizabeth de Clare. In 1315 he was a man of vast authority in Ireland and considerable influence outside it. In many ways he was a conventional noble; but the nature of his power in Ulster – bordered by the Irish on one side and the Scots on the other – demanded versatility on his part, and gave his rule a distinctive local flavour.

The South-West

The history of the modern province of Munster in this period bears some resemblances to that of Ulster: the Anglo-Norman advance began very shortly after the invasion itself, and the expansion of the colony received a check in the mid-thirteenth century. But the differences are at least as striking. Ulster from the beginning was the possession of one lord; Munster, by contrast, was parcelled out piecemeal by the crown to numerous grantees. In Ulster, except in periods of minority or forfeiture, the royal stake was very small; in Munster, on the other hand, the king retained the cities of Waterford, Cork and Limerick; and this, together with the absence of a single noble overlord, meant that instead of possessing a central administration, the region came to be divided into a number of royal shires. Above all, the territorial control of the invaders penetrated more deeply in Munster than in Ulster: Waterford was largely an Anglo-Norman preserve, as was southern Tipperary; the coastal regions and river-valleys of eastern Cork were heavily settled; so too was the Shannon basin in Limerick.

The grants of the kingdoms of Cork and Limerick made by Henry II in 1177 had very different immediate results. In Cork, Robert fitz Stephen and Miles de Cogan rapidly succeeded in making a partial

reality of their endowments: Robert took three cantreds east of the city, while Miles had four in the more exposed region to the west; the tribute of Mac Carthy, whose kingdom they were thus dismembering, was to be shared between them. It was natural that Robert and Miles should give sub-tenures to men with whom they were already associated in South Wales. Unfortunately the evidence, not just for such early grants but even for the passage of Cork itself to the Carews and de Courcys (who seem to have succeeded to it in the thirteenth century), is fragmentary, and badly in need of fresh study. But the broad outlines are clear enough. Before King John's death in 1216 what were to prove the main landholding families in Cork in the thirteenth century, and in some cases throughout the middle ages, were already in possession: the Barrys, the Roches, the Barretts, the Geraldines of Offaly (at Imokilly), the Prendergasts, branches of the Cogans, and the Cauntetons (Condons). Some of these families were later to give their names to the baronies where their power was centred.

In Limerick, by contrast, Philip de Briouze made no headway; and the main colonial advance was delayed until the last years of the twelfth century, largely thanks to the power and shrewdness of Donal Mór O'Brien. The dominant figure in the early part of the movement was William de Burgh, to whom John granted lands in south Tipperary and the east of modern County Limerick at the time of his 1185 expedition. Other magnates, notably Theobald Walter, Philip of Worcester, and Hamo de Valognes (John's justiciar in Ireland from 1195 to 1198), were also active in the area. For Anglo-Norman expansion, Donal's death in 1194 was crucial. He left three sons who, though they are sometimes to be found co-operating, often competed with one another for control of Thomond; they were also involved in constant disputes and alliances with the O'Connors of Connacht to the north and the Mac Carthys of Desmond to the south. William de Burgh in particular benefited from these conditions. He had married one of Donal's daughters, thus insinuating himself into Thomond politics, and was in an excellent position to lend support – at a price – to one or other, or all, of his brothers-in-law. His power was also increased by a period spent in charge of the city of Limerick. By the turn of the century much of County Limerick had been granted by John to William de Burgh, Hamo de Valognes and other lords; and the O'Briens had little alternative but to acquiesce in the endowment of men on whom they were frequently dependent. Although in 1201 the king resurrected his father's intention of granting much of Limerick to the de Briouze family – with the result that disputes arose between William de Briouze and some of the lords already established in the region – this did not seriously impede the spread of

settler control. In any case de Briouze soon quarrelled with the king, and so lost his position as overlord.

The newcomers had quite rapidly absorbed much of O'Brien's kingdom of Thomond, and had removed eastern Cork from Mac Carthy's control. During the second decade of the thirteenth century, when the Mac Carthys like the O'Briens suffered from dynastic competition, colonial power reached further west. A settler presence, which was to prove resilient, was established in north Kerry; and outposts were created on the coast of west Cork, and in the area of the Kerry lakes. Perhaps the most significant development in the earlier thirteenth century was the gradual accumulation, by stages that are still obscure, of possessions in the hands of the cadet branches of the Geraldines. Thomas fitz Maurice and his son John fitz Thomas acquired lands in Limerick, Kerry, Cork and Waterford, thus creating the nucleus of the later supremacy of the earls of Desmond. At the same period their kinsmen in north Kerry and Limerick were founding the fortunes of the lines of the lords of Kerry and the knights of Glin. Moreover from 1214 Richard de Burgh built on his father's work, creating in Tipperary and Limerick a platform from which in the 1220s and 1230s he was able to launch his advance into Connacht.

Throughout the first half of the thirteenth century the O'Briens and Mac Carthys continued to be hedged about by Anglo-Norman power. Donough O'Brien (d.1242), his brother Murtough (d.1239), and his son Conor (d.1268) continually negotiated – the first two at times as rivals – with Henry III for formal grants of the remains of their diminished kingdom. The brothers Dermot (d.1230), Cormac (d.1248) and Donal (d.1251) Mac Carthy, for their part, frequently sought the protection of Henry or of the resident magnates. During the 1250s, however, when Brian O'Neill was taking advantage of the power-vacuum in the north of Ireland, there were bitter conflicts between the Irish and the settlers in Munster, in which the latter suffered reverses. At this time King Henry, while bargaining with Conor O'Brien, had made several speculative grants of land north of the Shannon, in the modern County Clare. It may be that the threat of further inroads on his territory provoked Conor, and more especially his son and would-be successor Teig, to resistance. In 1257 they are said to have won a victory over the colonists, and it was in the following year that Teig went to meet O'Neill at Caol Uisce. That encounter appears to have had little practical result in Munster, and in any case Teig died in 1259. The main assault came further south, from the Mac Carthys. In 1251 King Donal of Desmond had been killed by John fitz Thomas, who in 1259 was to obtain a grant of Desmond and the Decies. Donal's son Fineen spent the intervening

years building up his power, not by co-operation with the magnates or the king, but by the alternative course of repeated raids on the settlers. By 1261 the threat he posed was such that the justiciar, William Dean, joined John fitz Thomas on campaign against him. In a battle at Callan the colonial forces were defeated; John, his son and heir, and David de Barry were killed. But Fineen, like Teig, did not live to pursue (or abandon) his confrontation with the settler aristocracy. Before 1261 was out, he attacked the de Courcy fortress at Ringrone, where he was slain. In the following year his brother and successor, Cormac, was killed by the justiciar and Walter de Burgh. The leadership of the Mac Carthys passed to their cousin Donal who – filling the role that had been played in the north by Aedh Buidhe O'Neill – had been with John fitz Thomas at Callan. Donal was to retain his position for forty years.

The rapid revenge that was taken for Callan needs to be stressed. For although the careers of Teig and Fineen were a setback for the magnates of Munster (and the battle itself a tragedy for the Geraldines of Desmond), we should beware of making too much of them. They did not represent the sudden ending of an otherwise inevitable progress towards the complete conquest of the south-west. The invaders had been in occupation of much of Cork and Limerick and part of Kerry for several decades; the regions still controlled by the Gaelic leaders contained mountainous and agriculturally-marginal terrain that was difficult to conquer, and unattractive to settlers; and relations between Anglo-Norman and Gael in Munster had long settled into a pattern of mingled competition and co-existence. Although the balance of advantage might shift one way or the other, the incomers were unlikely to dispossess the local chiefs totally, and equally unlikely to be driven out by them. The solidity of the colonial position after 1261 is if anything more marked than any weakness. During the next fifty years the Geraldines suffered two long minorities. But it is hard to see that John fitz Thomas's grandson and successor, Thomas fitz Maurice, or his great-grandson, Maurice fitz Thomas, earl of Desmond, were when they came of age any less powerful in relation to the Irish than he himself had been.

In the south-west the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries saw, moreover, the last attempt by a newly-arrived aristocratic family to establish a lordship in Ireland. When in 1274, two years after his accession, Edward I returned to England from crusade, he had around him a cluster of loyal dependants. Among them was Thomas de Clare, a younger brother of the earl of Gloucester and lord of Kilkenny. Thomas was without an adequate inheritance, and had already spent some time in Ireland, where the king seems to have encouraged him to find room

for his talents. In 1276 Edward made him a grant of Thomond (a term now restricted to the remains of the O'Brien kingdom), and bought out those who already possessed a foothold north of the Shannon. From 1277 to 1287 Thomas de Clare made a strenuous effort to consolidate his position around the Fergus, and to expand further into Thomond. His death in the latter year was followed by a long minority; but after 1310 his younger son Richard, who succeeded his elder brother in 1307, took up his work. The royal records of the period allow us to see more of the de Clares' activities than those of the earlier invaders. But the most striking evidence of the family's impact is contained in the Irish tract *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh*. This work was probably first set down in writing in the mid-fourteenth century. Its wordy, bombastic style – and the fact that it was once thought to be of much later date – led some historians to doubt its value. But its account of events (though not its interpretation of them) is in general supported by other evidence.

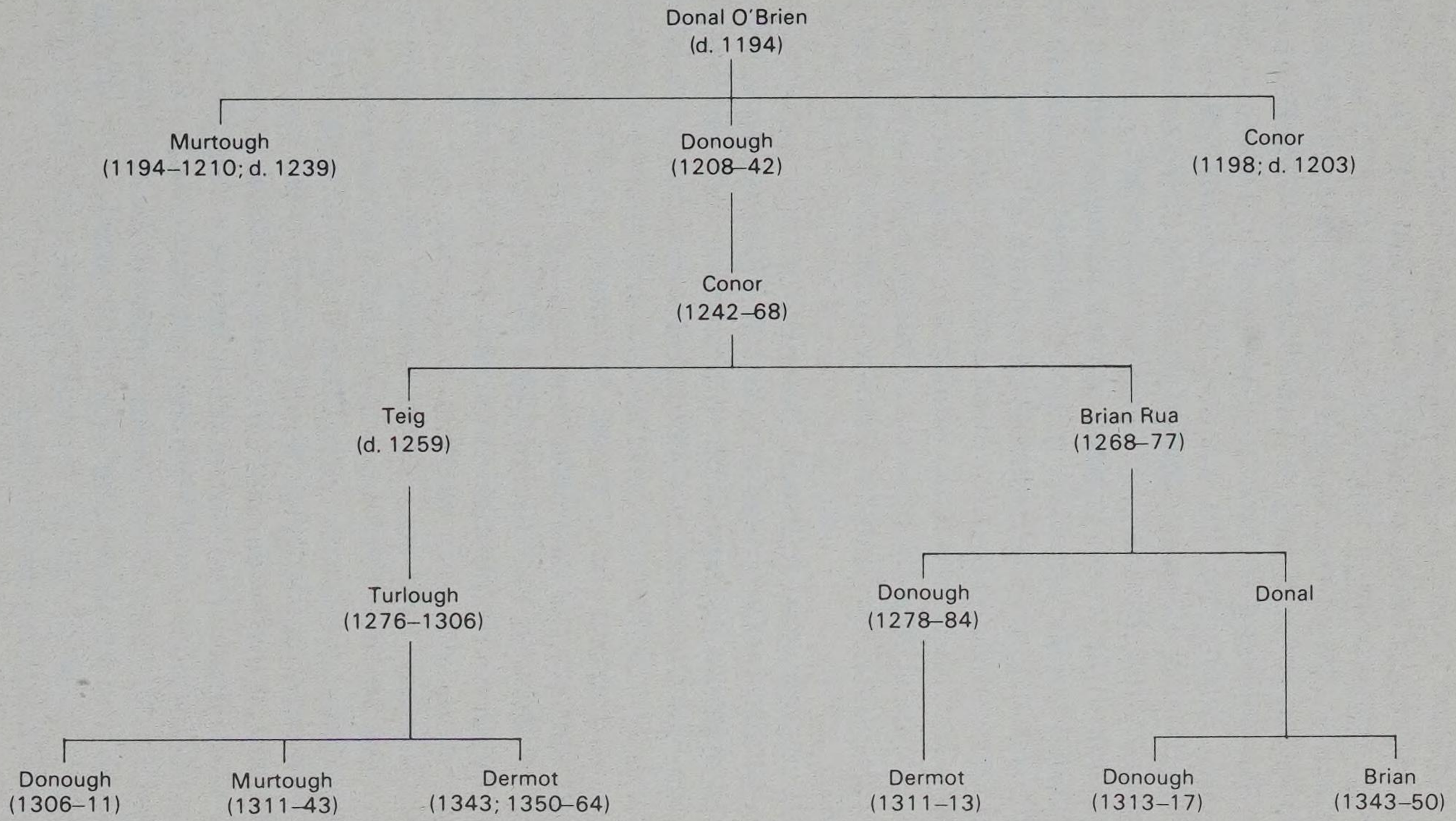
The *Caithréim* celebrates the deeds of the O'Briens, especially those of Turlough Mór (d.1306), and sustains a thumping invective against the invaders. But it is immediately clear from its account that Thomas de Clare, like his predecessors, achieved what he did largely by exploiting Irish rivalries. In that respect the timing of his grant of Thomond was fortunate for him. After Conor O'Brien's death in 1268, he had been succeeded by his son Brian Rua, a younger brother of the Teig who had gone to Caol Uisce. By 1277, however, Teig's son Turlough was challenging his uncle for supremacy. Thomas began by making an alliance with Brian; but when Brian failed him, he had him killed at Bunratty. Since Turlough proved unmanageable, de Clare – perhaps regretting his hasty action – rapidly offered his support to Donough, one of Brian's sons. In the words of Standish O'Grady's highly individual translation of the *Caithréim*,

> by this time de Clare within himself had mused that, Turlough being chief, it would be all to no profit that from the king of England he had procured a chartered right to the lands of Thomond. The resolve at which he stood, accordingly, was to nourish this same schism between the noble scions until such time as, they and their vassal-chiefs being enfeebled mutually, he might step in and filch the country from both. To Donough mac Brian anon he dispatches a plausibly dulcet message signifying how great was his sorrow for the death of Donough's good father; and that he could not have for him a compensation-payment better or more worthy than his own induction to the chiefry of Thomond, which indeed by right was his.[6]

By about 1283 de Clare seems to have been strong enough to intervene

The O'Brien Kings of Thomond

Showing the rivalry between the descendants of Teig and of Brian Rua



in the manner of the old over-kings, and arrange a partition between Turlough and Donough. But during his absence in England in the following winter, Turlough killed his rival; and after an unsuccessful expedition against him in 1285, Thomas appears to have struck a bargain by which Turlough was to hold of him seven cantreds and sixteen vills in Thomond at an annual rent of 182 marks. Meanwhile de Clare had been strengthening his hold on those parts of Thomond that he himself occupied. In this task, his standing with the king helped him. Probably in 1279, he had a grant of the knight service of Ireland, which was summoned to Quin, near Ennis, where he was building a new castle; and, apparently in 1281, the justiciar himself led an expedition to assist him. A valuation of the extensive manor of Bunratty, made shortly after his death, shows that he had had some success in attracting settlers to his territories. Although the rent owed by O'Brien accounted for more than two-thirds of the revenue the manor was supposed to generate, several free tenants of knightly rank were holding lands in the area; more striking, there were 226 burgess families in the town adjacent to Bunratty castle.[7]

The minority that followed Thomas's death came close to dislodging the new colony. Quin was attacked in 1292, and in 1298 the justiciar had to organise an expedition to rescue Bunratty itself from Turlough O'Brien. But the lordship of Thomond was not swept away. Richard de Clare shared his father's good fortune in beginning his career at a time of troubles among the O'Briens, for shortly after Turlough's death the dispute between the descendants of Teig and of Brian broke out again. It was to the latter that Richard, like Thomas, gave his support. But the main threat to his position came, not from the Irish but from the de Burghs who, with their interests in Limerick and southern Connacht, chose for their own reasons to support the other O'Brien segment. There thus arose in 1311 a quarrel which, like many since the beginning of the colony, cut across the national divide. Nonetheless, when Robert and Edward Bruce led their Scottish army to the outskirts of Limerick in the early months of 1317, Richard de Clare withdrew his backing from Clan Brian, who had made overtures to the Scots; and by supporting Murtough son of Turlough, whom the de Burghs also favoured, he played a crucial part in closing the south-west to the invaders. In doing so he was not alone. The Anglo-Irish aristocracy of Munster proved at the time of the Bruce emergency the robustness of the colonial presence in that region of Ireland.

The West

As in Ulster and Munster, so in Connacht Anglo-Norman involve-

ment had its own character. To begin with, despite the fleeting nature of the relationship established by the 1175 agreement at Windsor, the O'Connor kings managed to retain a favoured position in the eyes of the English monarchy. It is true that in or about 1194 the Lord John gave a title to Connacht to William de Burgh; but it was 1227 before Henry III executed an unambiguous grant of much of the province to William's son Richard. Long before this the colonial lords were no strangers to the warfare and complicated politics of the west of Ireland. Down to about 1200, however, their role seems to have remained that of hired assistants, rather as it had been in Leinster in 1169–70; the Irish annals several times refer to *sersénach*, or mercenaries, in the pay of the Gaelic leaders.[8] The death of William de Burgh in 1206, and the eclipse first of de Courcy and then of the de Lacys, postponed the moment when they would become more than that. And so the 'conquest' of Connacht – a patchy and incomplete affair – happened much later than the occupation of parts of Ulster and Munster. Connacht betrays a second individual feature. The eventual expansion of the de Burghs took place from the south, and resulted in the formation of a strong colonial presence in areas of modern County Galway, and a less secure overlordship in Mayo and Sligo. But in addition the king came to have a considerable holding on the borders of modern Roscommon and Westmeath, where royal castles were built at Athlone, Rindown, and later at Roscommon itself. This position was established in the context of direct dealings with the O'Connors, and in a desire to protect Meath and north Leinster, into which the Connacht rulers of the twelfth century had frequently marched. In the end, the work of the de Burghs and the families associated with them proved more enduring than that of the king.

The initial inroads of the period 1189–1203 were made against the background of furious dynastic disputes in Connacht, which arose from the failure of Rory O'Connor to manage his vigorous kinsmen. In 1202–3, however, Cathal Crovderg, the most enduring of Rory's brothers, emerged victorious from a struggle with his great-nephew, Cathal Carrach; Crovderg was given an opportunity to secure his hold by the misfortunes of the magnates and the favour of King John, who perceived the Irish king as a useful balance to the aristocratic families he mistrusted. In 1210 John's representative, the bishop of Norwich, built a new castle and bridge at Athlone. With that base secured, John went as far as any English monarch was likely to do towards assimilating an Irish ruler's status to that of one of his own vassals. In September 1215, shortly after the issuing of Magna Carta, Cathal was

granted all Connacht apart from Athlone, to hold to himself and his heirs for an annual payment of 300 marks; in the spirit of the Charter, they were not to be dispossessed without a formal judgement in the king's court. The grant was, however, hedged about in two ways. On the same day a charter was made out for Richard de Burgh, granting him the lands in Connacht of which his father had never actually taken possession. This charter was not executed; the intention seems to have been to keep it in reserve as an encouragement to Crovderg to behave himself. Secondly, Cathal's own charter qualified his grant with the phrase 'during good service'.[9]

After the accession of Henry III in 1216, Cathal remained eager to prove his reliability. And as he approached the end of his long career in 1224, he was anxious that his favoured son Aedh should obtain in his turn an explicit title to Connacht; for although his charter included his heirs, there was likely to be doubt in English minds as to who his heir was. His unease was not misplaced. At this time Hubert de Burgh was dominant at court, and certain to seize any opportunity to advance the interests of his nephew in Ireland. In the event Crovderg's death was followed by a fresh outbreak of competition within the O'Connor dynasty. Richard de Burgh intervened, as his father had done in similar circumstances thirty years earlier. And in June 1226 Hubert de Burgh, in King Henry's name, wrote to the justiciar in predictable terms:

> that he cause to be summoned Aedh, son of Cathal late king of Connacht, to be before the justiciar at the king's court to surrender the land of Connacht, which he ought no longer to hold on account of his father's and his own forfeiture; by the charter of King John granted to Cathal, he held that land only so long as he should faithfully serve the king.[10]

By May 1227 Richard de Burgh's title to Connacht had been confirmed in a fresh royal charter.

As we shall see, Richard lost Connacht for a time during the early 1230s as a result of political events in England. When he recovered his title in 1234, he had once more to exploit O'Connor rivalries in order to make it a reality. Nonetheless the charter of 1227 may be regarded as having set the general pattern of the political history of the west of Ireland for a century to come. Richard had received the bulk of Connacht (amounting to twenty-five cantreds) at a rent of 300 marks for the first five years and 500 marks thereafter. The king had reserved to himself five cantreds near Athlone, which included the heartland of the O'Connors' power. By the 1240s most of this latter area was leased by

Henry to Felim O'Connor, a younger son of Crovderg who had come out on top during the recent succession-disputes. The O'Connors were thus bordered by de Burgh power on one side, and by royal authority, represented by the Shannon castles, on the other. These arrangements came to be broadly reflected in the administrative organisation of the west of Ireland into two sheriffdoms: Roscommon (roughly coterminous with the King's Cantreds), and 'Connacht', which embraced the area of the de Burgh lordship.

Connacht history in Richard de Burgh's time, as we read it in the annals, appears as a story of raids and counter-raids. But there was another side to it: the movement of colonial landholding families into western Ireland. In the absence for the moment of detailed modern studies, we can glimpse only the outlines of the process. For the de Burghs, southern Galway was a natural extension of their existing interests in Tipperary and Limerick, and it was that region that Richard and his successors kept most directly under their own control. They had castles at Galway itself, Loughrea, Meelick and Portumna. Further north, Richard seems to have apportioned land in large blocks to the families, most of them already established in Leinster and Munster, whose members had helped him in his enterprise. Among those who benefited were the de Berminghams, who came to hold Athenry and Dunmore in Galway, and Carra in Mayo; the Cogans, who gained lands in Claregalway; and the Barretts, who obtained holdings in Tirawley in Mayo. But the most significant beneficiaries were the Geraldines of Offaly, who were already neighbours of the de Burghs in Limerick. Richard endowed Maurice fitz Gerald with lands in southern Galway; and indirectly Maurice gained additional possessions which were to make his descendants uncomfortably powerful in the eyes of their overlord. Richard had given Hugh de Lacy five cantreds, amounting very roughly to the modern county of Sligo, so renewing a grant made by his father some forty years earlier. Hugh regranted his acquisition to various magnates, but chiefly to Maurice fitz Gerald, who established the huge manorial lordship of Sligo. It was from there, as we have seen, that he was able to strike north-east into Fermanagh and Tyrconnell.

In Connacht, as in Ulster and Munster, the middle of the thirteenth century saw the colonial advance falter. In the later 1240s Aedh son of Felim O'Connor and a group of nobles, called in the Irish annals 'the kings' sons of Connacht', were raiding from Sligo in the north to Dunmore and Athenry in the south.[11] Maurice fitz Gerald, Peter de Bermingham and other leading sub-tenants of the de Burgh lordship, which had been suffering a minority since Richard de Burgh's death in 1243,

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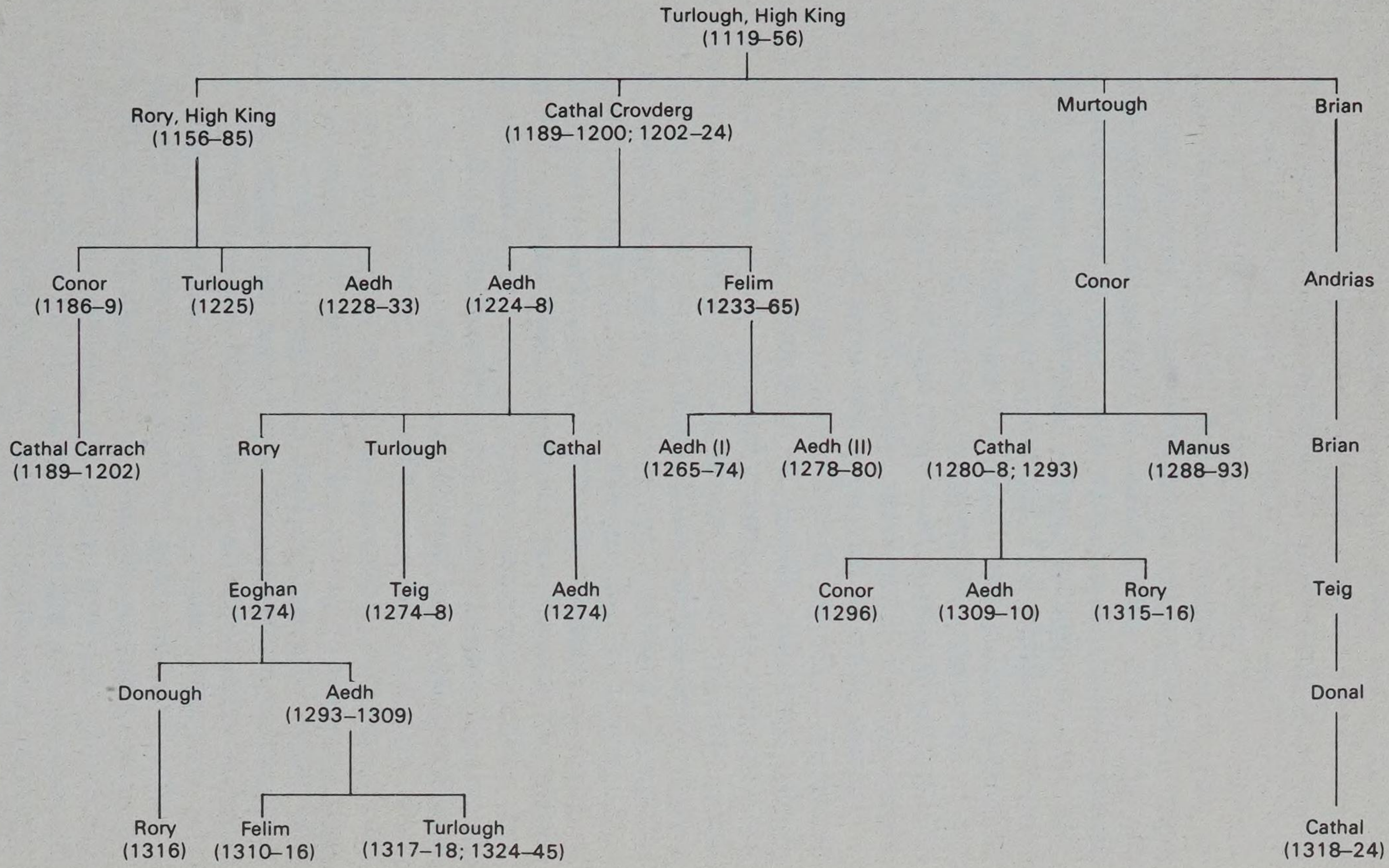
resisted strongly; and King Henry reacted by making further grants within the five eastern cantreds, so threatening to curtail the O'Connor kingdom even further. In these circumstances, Aedh from about 1253 onwards sought territorial compensation to the north-east in Breifne, the debatable land, disputed between the O'Rourkes and O'Reillys, which lay between the spheres of influence of the O'Connors and the O'Neills. Remarkably, this did not spark off a conflict with Brian O'Neill; instead, after the meeting at Caol Uisce, Aedh and Brian made agreements which created an unwontedly broad Gaelic front in the north. Aedh also found another source of strength. In 1259 he travelled to Derry where he married a daughter of Dugald Mac Sorley, a Hebridean leader; she brought him as a marriage-portion, we are told, 160 warriors. This was one of the first of the gallowglass bands which were to provide the chiefs of the north of Ireland with the military stiffening that they had once sought through alliances with the Anglo-Normans.

The defeat of Brian O'Neill at Down in 1260 put an end to the Gaelic coalition. But Aedh O'Connor proved more enduring than his contemporaries in the north and the south-west, probably because the colonial grip on Connacht was more recent and less firm. But he was helped also by the feud between the de Burghs and the Geraldines. Walter de Burgh seized the Geraldine lands in Galway; and in 1265 Aedh, who had just succeeded Felim as chief, destroyed Geraldine castles in north Connacht, possibly with Walter's connivance. After that he conducted a spectacular raid eastwards, penetrating into Offaly, the centre of Geraldine interests in Leinster. In 1266 his raids within Connacht seem to have become indiscriminate. His career reached its high point in 1270–1. In the former year he killed Earl Walter's brother William, and attacked Roscommon and Rindown; then upon Walter's death in the latter year, he again raided Sligo and Roscommon, and succeeded in burning Athlone itself and in breaking the bridge there. A cursory reading of the annals would suggest that the colonial position in Connacht was on the verge of collapse.

Yet, as in Ulster and Munster, it is important that we preserve a sense of proportion. Aedh's attacks affected the King's Cantreds and the Geraldine lands, but seem to have had little impact on the main centres of de Burgh power. Moreover Aedh was a very traditional figure, who had built up his authority by a career of raiding and plundering; when he died in 1274 he left nothing very solid behind him. Between that date and 1315 no fewer than six descendants of Cathal Crovderg and four descendants of his brother Murtough (whose line had hitherto been excluded) occupied the chiefship of the O'Connors. Several of Aedh's successors, especially during the 1280s and 1290s, were 'made', whether by

The O'Connor Kings of Connacht

Showing the effects of segmentary competition



Earl Richard of Ulster, by the Geraldine John fitz Thomas of Offaly, or by the Dublin government. And it is noticeable that when during the 1290s there was a renewed outbreak of feuding between the de Burghs and Geraldines, the O'Connors were unable to take advantage of it. At the turn of the century the feud was patched up, and the earl of Ulster as part of the settlement gained the Connacht lands of his erstwhile enemy. From that time onwards he and his kinsmen were without doubt the most potent political force in the west of Ireland; indeed they were able to compensate in part for the waning of royal influence beyond the Shannon, as justiciars were compelled to devote more time and resources to Edward I's Scottish campaigns and to the disciplining of Irish chiefs in Leinster. In 1308, for example, William Liath de Burgh, the earl's cousin, led an army that contained Rory O'Connor, Teig O'Kelly and Eoghan O'Madden to fight for the king in Wicklow. And in 1310 we find William, in the middle of one of the disputes that tore the O'Connors apart, encamped – with royal licence – in their traditional territories; in the words of the Annals of Connacht, 'there was not one of their townlands without its permanent quartering, nor a tuath free from exaction, nor a prince free from oppression, so long as William Burke was in control of them'.[12] It was William, moreover, who together with Richard de Bermingham was to rescue the colonial interest at the battle of Athenry during the Bruce invasion.

At the risk of over-simplification, we may say that the authority of magnates in Ireland during the thirteenth century took two main forms: control of the wealth and services of settler communities, and a military and political supremacy over the Irish. In Connacht manorial and burgess settlements existed, primarily perhaps in southern Galway, but also dotted here and there in the vicinity of the castles of the lords in Mayo and Sligo, and around the royal castles on the Shannon. But it is fair to say that in the west of Ireland Anglo-Norman authority was predominantly of the second variety. The de Burghs, de Berminghams and others intervened in Irish quarrels and, rather than dispossessing Gaelic rulers to the extent that had occurred in much of eastern Ireland, acted as their overlords. A more solid settlement would have required vast resources; much of the area was likely to strike newcomers, whether from England or from other parts of Ireland, as remote, dangerous and unprofitable; and in any case the lords who ventured there did not have access to English and Welsh manpower as Strongbow, the Marshals, or the de Lacys had. It is unhelpful to measure colonisation in the west against the deeper and more widespread settlement of parts of Leinster, Meath and Munster, and to regard the advance into Connacht as a failure; in its own terms it was a

success. The toughness and adaptability of the landholding families that took part in the westward expansion, and remained to rule significant areas of Connacht for centuries, deserves more emphasis than it sometimes receives.

Irish Responses

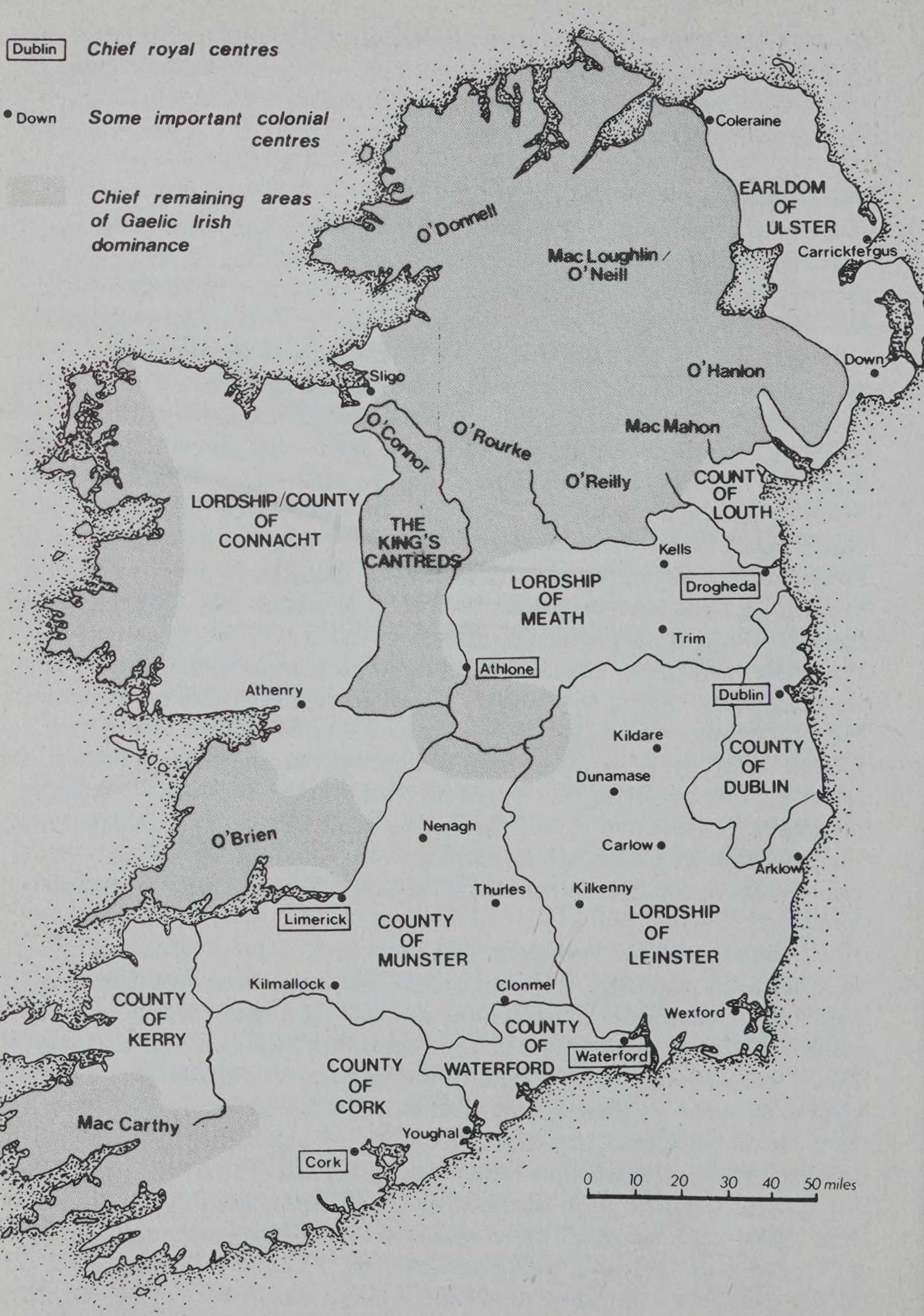
Despite the regional character of Anglo-Norman expansion in the thirteenth century, the foregoing survey discloses some common themes. One of these – the attitudes of the monarchy towards Ireland – will be the subject of the next chapter. Another, relatively neglected in recent times, is the reaction of Irish leaders to the invaders. Once Strongbow and Hugh de Lacy had established their control in Leinster and Meath, an overlordship of the sort exercised by the O'Briens and O'Connors was no longer possible. The provincial kings were, one by one, also challenged. In Leinster the Mac Murroughs were reduced to local significance in north Wexford. In Meath the kingship of the O'Melaghlins had disintegrated even before the invasion, and the de Lacys were a stronger cohesive authority than the region had recently known. Thus it was primarily in Ulster, Munster and Connacht that magnates and Irish provincial dynasties faced one another. To understand the interaction between the newcomers and the existing powers, we must grasp that terms such as 'Connacht', 'Thomond' or 'Desmond' did not denote stable political entities. These kingdoms, like much of Europe only more so, are best thought of as intricate networks of relationships, involving the over-king, his – often resentful – kinsmen, his highly competitive vassal-chiefs, and their kinsmen and clients. Into such a mesh of alliances and conflicts an Anglo-Norman lord, or occasionally the representative of the king of England, could readily insert himself.

To Irish leaders or would-be leaders incursions from outside were not necessarily unwelcome, any more than they had been to Dermot Mac Murrough. Magnates represented military strength, and might offer reinforcement to a faltering ruler, or advantage to his dynastic rivals or other enemies. In 1193 we hear that the Anglo-Normans in Thomond built a castle 'with the consent of O'Brien, if the general report be true, as a check on Donal son of Mac Carthy';[13] and in 1201 there was 'a mighty hosting this year in Desmond by William [de Burgh] and other foreigners, together with the royalty of all Munster, that is, including Murchertach O Brien, Conor Ruad, and Donnchad Cairprech [the sons of Donal Mór O'Brien], and many others'.[14] Those who were involved in the ceaseless competition of the Gaelic world were subject to pressures that made any assistance hard to refuse; had a man chosen to

Dublin — *Chief royal centres*

• Down — *Some important colonial centres*

Chief remaining areas of Gaelic Irish dominance



Ireland *c.* 1240

forgo Anglo-Norman help (and there is little to suggest that many considered that they ought to spurn it), he would have known that his opponents would be less fastidious. Even the endowment of the invaders might not seem to exact too heavy a price, at first. King Dermot had begun by granting Robert fitz Stephen and Maurice fitz Gerald lands in the vicinity of Wexford; and the Ostmen of Wexford had in the past opposed Mac Murrough. We lack detailed studies of Anglo-Norman settlement in relation to previous Irish occupation. But in any part of Ireland, room could be made for incomers by dispossessing families that were enemies of their hosts. For instance, in 1178 Donal Mór O'Brien had driven the O'Donovans and O'Collinses out of Thomond; their removal may have made the later Anglo-Norman occupation of land south of the Shannon less disruptive than it might otherwise have been. But once magnates had intervened, displayed their might, built castles, and obtained formal grants from the king of England, the process was hard to reverse. They ceased to be auxiliaries in Irish power-struggles, and became instead regional pivots around which those struggles revolved; like Gaelic over-kings, they could advance their interests by fanning the flames of segmentary competition. Just as their intervention reversed what trends there had been towards a kingship of Ireland, so it encouraged the disintegration of native political structures at provincial level.

It is one of the commonplaces of Irish history that chiefs, while willing to accept the overlordship of the king of England, resented that of the lords who often lay between them and royal authority. There is a measure of truth in the argument: most Irish leaders rushed to submit to Henry II, John and, much later, to Richard II; and they might complain to the king about oppression by the magnates. To a secure chief, the usually distant supremacy of the king could appear preferable to interference by an Anglo-Norman neighbour; and if royal ministers were willing to shield a chief against a magnate, such an attitude was tenable. In 1261, for instance, Felim O'Connor addressed Henry III in these words: 'we give your royal majesty boundless thanks for the many honours you have shown us, and especially for helpfully writing on our behalf to William Dean your justiciar of Ireland, of happy memory, to obtain compensation for us for the damage Walter de Burgh and his followers did in our land of Tirmany'.[15] Not only that, there are signs that in the early thirteenth century O'Brien and O'Connor leaders realised the possible advantages of holding land of the king, and gaining his support for its transmission to a designated heir, as Cathal Crovderg tried to do in 1224. In contemporary North Wales, Llywelyn the Great (d. 1240) was trying to arrange the peaceful succession of Dafydd, his son

by King John's daughter, and to avoid the customary partition; and the thirteenth century saw Llywelyn and his grandson Llywelyn ap Gruffydd (d.1282) build up their authority within the Welsh areas by adopting ideas and governmental practices from the outside world. But in western Ireland the power of the Anglo-Norman magnates was too strong, and that of the crown too weak, to offer the O'Briens and O'Connors the breathing-space they needed. It is also the case that the impression of co-operativeness towards the king, and hostility towards the magnates, is partly an optical illusion created by the sources. Occasional letters such as Felim's survive in the English archives; chiefs were bound to address the king in respectful terms, and likely to write to him when they desired his support against his own subjects. We have few equivalent documents to disclose their relations with the magnates; yet it was with them that their daily dealings took place. If lords constituted a more present threat, by the same token it was from them that the most effective backing normally came. In 1292, for example, the earl of Ulster 'made a hosting against Manus O'Connor and came as far as Roscommon; but he returned without having exacted pledge or hostage; Manus, in spite of the opposition of Connacht, followed him to Meelick and made submission, and all his petitions were granted by the earl'.[16] It is hard to believe that magnates did not receive as fulsome messages as did the king, and more frequently.

The major dynasties thus adapted, sometimes painfully, to new and more cramped conditions. Lesser ruling families also had to make adjustments. In the east, the experience of the dynasties that once occupied the lowlands of Kildare was not untypical: they were expropriated at an early stage and moved into the hills and glens of Wicklow, whence they emerged, in the guise of the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles, to raid the lowland settlements in later times. But this was by no means the whole story. In places, by breaking the control of the overlords of the past, while not fully replacing it with their own authority, the colonial magnates created a more favourable, if sometimes more perilous, environment for lesser dynasties. This was the case in the borderlands of Ulster, Connacht and Meath. There chiefs such as O'Hanlon in Armagh, O'Reilly in east Breifne, and Maguire in Fermanagh had to find their way in circumstances where, except when the earls of Ulster were at their most effective, there was no single overlord to oppress or protect them. They did so by co-operating with whatever power, of either nation, seemed to offer them most at any moment, whether an O'Neill, a de Burgh, or (in the case of O'Hanlon) a justiciar at Dublin or a de Verdon in Louth. If the actions of such chiefs appear inconsistent, unheroic and devious, their future demanded

alertness to shifting political realities. The end result was the emergence of several Gaelic lordships which had a history that stretched into the sixteenth century. A not-dissimilar pattern is apparent in western Leinster, in the cases of the O'Connors of Offaly and O'Mores of Laois.

The Irish response to the colonial powers was characterised, therefore, by extreme disunity, even at the most local level, and by a willingness to associate with the invaders. But in this general scheme of things one period seems to stand out as exceptional. In the middle of the thirteenth century some younger leaders in Ulster, Connacht and Munster mounted what appears to have been a self-conscious resistance, even making a brief effort to co-ordinate their activities. When sketching the history of the individual regions, we glimpsed some possible explanations of the timing of the burst of opposition. By the 1240s the colonists were advancing into unpromising territory; equally, the stage had been reached where the great dynasties could afford to lose little more if they were not to share the fate of the O'Melaghlins and the Mac Murroughs. During the 1250s further inroads appeared to threaten, yet at the same time a number of things weakened the colony. In these circumstances, careers could be built on opposition. There has been a tendency to romanticise the episode, and to speak of the discontent of a vigorous younger generation with the pliancy of their defeatist elders. But we should resist the temptation to attribute to the participants fine feelings that the older leaders unaccountably lacked. Given the uncertainties of the Irish system of inheritance, the best guarantees of political success were reputation and wealth. Both could be obtained by attacks on the settlers, and at this time it may have appeared that existing chiefs or their predecessors had exhausted the benefits to be won by co-operation. Brian O'Neill sought to turn the situation to his advantage by reviving the northern claim to overlordship. Aedh O'Connor and Teig O'Brien, in search of a future, were prepared – in Teig's case with reservations – to go along with him. Aedh's subsequent history shows that opposition was indeed a possible way forward, in the medium term; the fate of Brian, and of Fineen Mac Carthy, suggests that it was not always the wisest or most profitable course. The ways of the immediate past were unlikely to fire the imagination of poets and annalists; but they had something to be said for them.

Amidst the ebb and flow of events and the criss-cross of alliances and feuds, we may seem to look in vain for national sentiment. Yet the Irish annals speak consistently in terms of Gael and foreigner, and the *Caithréim* lauds the deeds of Irish leaders and excoriates the invaders. There seems to be a gulf fixed between men's political actions and the outlook of the Gaelic sources. This apparent contradiction may trouble

us largely because we are the unconscious heirs of a long tradition that associates the nation with the state. We find it difficult to envisage the two apart, though they can exist quite independently. The Irish inhabited a distinctive society on the edges of Europe, and had a strongly-developed national consciousness; it was expressed in language, custom and dress, and was fostered by the learned classes, with their stake in the cultural heritage of the past. But there were no adequate institutions at national or provincial level through which it could be given a political or military form. In this respect Ireland may have differed in degree rather than in substance from other parts of Europe in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries: but it was a significant degree. One of the less attractive successes of the powerful monarchies of England and France in the later middle ages was the way in which they harnessed their subjects' sense of identity and hostility to outsiders in their own interests. The Gaelic polity, especially as damaged by Anglo-Norman intervention, by contrast, provided no base from which coherent resistance could be organised. Thus a feeling of common identity and shared oppression permeated a world marked by ready compromise with the invaders. There is no reason to suppose that such feelings were any less alive in Aedh Buidhe O'Neill, who relied on the support of Dublin or of the earl of Ulster, than they were in Aedh O'Connor, who seized the opportunity to take a less dependent line. Unless we grasp this, we shall be in danger of peopling thirteenth-century Ireland in an anachronistic way with fleeting heroes and more durable collaborators; and we shall fail to appreciate the skills of numerous leaders, from Cathal Crovderg O'Connor downwards, who looked steadily at an unattractive prospect, understood it, and survived.

3 Royal Policy towards Ireland, King John to Edward I

Any discussion of royal attitudes towards the lordship of Ireland should start from an obvious point, which is not always sufficiently stressed: Ireland was only one of the several territories, continental as well as insular, possessed by the rulers whom we think of – a little misleadingly – first and foremost as kings of England; and it was a peripheral one at that. It is sometimes said that a chief reason why the conquest of Ireland was not pushed to a conclusion was the failure of the monarchy to devote time and resources to the task. If John, or Henry III, or Edward I had made Ireland the centre of his activities for a decade or more, the subsequent history of the country might indeed have been different. But to accuse these kings (and all their medieval successors apart from the egregious Richard II) of neglecting Ireland is not very illuminating. From the beginning the monarchy's involvement in Ireland had been hesitant and limited. The lordship was bound to be seen in relation to other, more important and much older, commitments. Moreover the outlook of twelfth- and thirteenth-century rulers was dynastic and international; it is doubtful whether a concept such as 'English interests' would have conveyed anything to them, and meaningless to condemn them for failing to show a keen awareness of the interests of the lordship of Ireland. What is true of the kings is also true of many of the noble families with whom they shared authority in Ireland, for their interests ranged over England and Wales, and to begin with in some cases France as well. The *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, a verse-biography of Strongbow's son-in-law William Marshal, earl of Pembroke and lord of Leinster, which was written within a decade of his death in 1219, reveals Ireland as it appeared to high-born contemporaries: as one corner of that part of the courtly French-speaking world which happened to owe allegiance to the king of England. The same point is made by the thirteenth-century romance, *The Legend of Fulk FitzWarin*, in which the scene of the outlawed Fulk's exploits shifts from Wales, to England, to Brittany, to Ireland, to the Scottish borders, to the court of Philip Augustus of France, and to the lands of the Saracens.

When Henry II effectively assumed the lordship of Ireland in 1171–2, his action did not mean that Ireland became a dominion of the

English crown; such an idea is anachronistic. Henry was king of England, but also duke of Normandy, count of Anjou and duke of Aquitaine; he exercised in addition a potent overlordship in Wales, Scotland and Brittany. He presided, not over an empire centred on England, but over an assemblage of lands, each with its own traditions and customs. From 1177 his intention was that his youngest son, John, should inherit Ireland, his family's latest acquisition. When in 1185 John went to his lordship, it was assumed that he would become king there, no doubt remaining subordinate to his father, and eventually to an elder brother. Although John's expedition was a political fiasco and the kingdom of Ireland failed to come into existence, he remained lord of Ireland until his death in 1216. Had the future turned out as King Henry envisaged it, Ireland would have descended in a cadet line of the Plantagenet house. Instead a sequence of deaths made John king of England, duke of Normandy and count of Anjou in April 1199, so leaving Ireland in the hands of the senior branch and thus more closely connected to the other Plantagenet dominions.

At this stage the fate of the lordship of Ireland remained uncertain: had John successfully retained all his father's lands, it might still have formed an endowment for a junior branch of the royal house. By 1204, however, John had been deprived of his northern French possessions by King Philip. As a result, he, his son Henry III and his grandson Edward I – though they still held substantial lands in south-western France and remained cosmopolitan in outlook – resided mostly in England, which gradually became the governmental hub of their territories. Thus the political structure within which Ireland existed became somewhat smaller, and considerably tauter. Two things may illustrate the change. In 1254 Henry III endowed the future Edward I with wide territories, including Gascony, the earldom of Chester, the royal conquests in Wales, and the lordship of Ireland. His aim was to provide his son with an income, and to harness his energies in the management of the outer parts of what were still, despite losses, vast and scattered dominions. The lands were granted 'to hold to him and his heirs, on condition that they never be separated from the crown of England and that no-one, by reason of this grant, may at any time claim any right therein, but that they remain wholly to the kings of England for ever'.[1] In other words, even when giving Ireland to the son who would presumably become king of England, Henry made assurance doubly sure by stating that it must merge again in the crown, of which it was now seen as part and parcel. In the later years of Edward's own reign, records of business done in parliament reveal the implications of these changing assumptions. In his English parliaments Edward entertained petitions from his

subjects everywhere. For convenience, the petitions were sorted into groups according to their area of origin. In 1305, for example, receivers were appointed for petitions of Scotland (where the monarchy was in abeyance), Ireland, Gascony and Guernsey, as well as for those of England. The thirteenth century, like the twelfth, was a period during which the political future of Ireland was decided, and almost as much by developments in the world outside as by what occurred within the lordship itself.

King John and Henry III, 1199–1245

John's accession to the throne of England was an important moment in Irish history. His reign was also to leave a deep impression on the lordship; for it saw a greater degree of royal involvement in Ireland than almost any other period during the middle ages. As a result, the royal stake in the colony, still very restricted in 1199, was much expanded. John has come to be regarded, more than Henry II, as the creator of the medieval lordship. From the monarchy's point of view, it is possible to portray his reign as an age of promise, which petered out in the collapse of his authority after 1212 and in the long minority of Henry III. But such a view raises difficult questions.

John's dealings with Ireland make no sense if we see them in isolation. John came to the throne with an ill-starred past and with, in his nephew Arthur of Brittany, a potential competitor whom the king of France could manipulate. His rapid failure against Philip Augustus was a political catastrophe from which he never recovered. War was still a prime measure of successful kingship; the defeat damaged John's reputation further, and reduced his resources. This in turn deprived him of the capacity to exert a natural dominance over the baronage, many of whom had suffered the loss of Norman lands in the *débâcle*. Since many powerful figures held lands in Ireland, quarrels spilled across the Irish sea; and John's attention as a result was continually drawn to the lordship. In addition, the defence of Normandy and Anjou, and later the king's determination to regain them, created immense financial pressures. These were made worse by a major inflation of prices which occurred between *c.*1180 and *c.*1220, forcing both the monarchy and the baronage to turn their resources to full account. England possessed an unusually well-developed administration. In his search for security and cash, John – now insistently present in the country – drove it hard, exacting his rights as he saw them, exploiting vaguenesses in the law, and intervening in outlying areas such as the north of England, which had been comparatively immune from the attentions of royal government. It comes as no surprise to find northern barons and knights in the

forefront of the opposition at the end of his reign. John's assiduity has led some historians, failing perhaps to distinguish between active government and good government, to praise his diligence and dexterity as an administrator. It was against this tense background that the growth of royal administration in Ireland, which will be discussed more fully in a later chapter, received an important impetus.

Once John became responsible for the whole span of Plantagenet interests, he displayed the same unease shown in relation to Ireland by his father, and in relation to Wales by most of his predecessors, about the opportunities a distant frontier region provided for lords to grow in power with scant reference to the wishes of the ruler. His concern is evident in the south-west, where he quickly made efforts to balance various interests. William de Burgh, whom John himself had planted in Tipperary to help protect the royal centre of Waterford against the O'Briens, was now, with O'Brien help, increasing his hold in Limerick and threatening to expand into Connacht. In 1201 the king revived the de Briouze claim to Limerick, in favour of William de Briouze, the greatest lord in South Wales, and at that time one of his intimates. But he reserved from the de Briouze grant the overlordship of the de Burgh lands, and the allegiance of the Irish. For this circumscribed endowment, William de Briouze was to pay 5,000 marks. When William de Burgh proved recalcitrant, John briefly deprived him of his lands, and in 1203 transferred to de Briouze the keeping of the city of Limerick which de Burgh had held. And when, in the same year, de Burgh's lands were restored, the king – typically – kept hostages in his hand. Proceedings of this sort had the smack of authority about them; but when indulged in repeatedly, and at times capriciously, they spread resentment and fear in the baronial society upon which the king's power ultimately depended.

As we have already seen, the undoing of John de Courcy, more dramatic and permanent than that of William de Burgh, sprang from similar royal disquiet. Again an agent was to hand. Hugh de Lacy, whose elder brother, Walter, was William de Briouze's son-in-law, possessed by marriage lands and claims on the southern borders of Ulster. With the king's support, Hugh destroyed de Courcy. The fact that Ulster was immediately transferred to Hugh de Lacy suggests that King John was concerned to see the end of an individual he had mistrusted rather than to extinguish a united Anglo-Norman lordship in the north of Ireland. In the summer of 1205 the de Lacy-de Briouze connection was in high favour: the justiciar, Meiler fitz Henry, was to defer to the advice of Hugh and Walter in military matters, and William de Briouze was confirmed in the keeping of the city of Limerick.

In these early years there are also signs that John was increasing his direct grip on Ireland, and was eager to tap its resources. In 1203 and 1204 large amounts of cash and bullion passed from the lordship to Normandy; and in the late summer of 1204 Meiler fitz Henry was instructed to build a castle at Dublin, not just for the defence of the city and the dispensing of justice, but also because the king 'had no place in which to deposit royal treasure'.[2] Moreover, with the emergence of Cathal Crovderg in Connacht, John seems to have been toying with the idea of exploiting the west of Ireland on his own account. Cathal, perhaps with the fear of de Burgh intervention still present in his mind, offered to surrender two-thirds of the province to the king and to hold the remainder at a rent of 100 marks. John instructed the justiciar 'to select for the king's use the two-thirds in which lie the best towns and harbours', and 'to strengthen castles, found towns, and assess rents in those parts'.[3] The plan was hardly realistic, and came to nothing; but it does show the direction of the king's thoughts.

John's involvement in Ireland grew stronger from 1205–6 onwards, primarily because particular constellations of circumstances demanded a response. Since Robert fitz Stephen and Miles de Cogan had not left direct male heirs, he was already in possession of the kingdom of Cork. By 1206 William de Burgh and his neighbour Theobald Walter had died, leaving heirs under age and their lands also in royal custody. Then in 1207 William de Briouze quarrelled bitterly with the king, and his forfeiture brought the lordship of Limerick into John's hands. The south-west was there to be managed in the royal interest. At the same time Ireland was becoming the residence of men whom the king mistrusted. The de Lacy brothers, so recently in favour, were under suspicion because of their links with de Briouze. And in 1206–7 William Marshal, at odds with John over the fate of Marshal's lands in Normandy, came to Ireland and stayed there for most of the next six years; William may well have been eager to encourage the economic development of Leinster, as a compensation for the Norman wealth that for the moment lay beyond his family's control. By 1208 the tensions were clearly marked. The Marshal and Meiler fitz Henry had come into conflict over territorial claims in Offaly. The king abandoned a disciplinary expedition to Ireland only when Walter de Lacy travelled to court. He gave Walter and the Marshal fresh charters for Meath and Leinster which defined their jurisdictional rights more strictly. Although the king did not go to Ireland in person at this stage, he did dispatch one of his most trusted agents, John de Gray bishop of Norwich, for whom he had tried unsuccessfully to obtain the see of Canterbury, to replace the elderly Meiler fitz Henry as justiciar.

The bishop's arrival was a significant moment. Since Henry II's visit to Ireland in 1171–2 there had been a royal representative at Dublin. But although Henry had on occasion sent special emissaries to supervise his interests, he, and John when lord of Ireland, had generally relied on settler lords, such as Hugh de Lacy, Strongbow or John de Courcy, who had served for the greater part of the period 1172–92. Meiler, one of the last survivors of the original conquest, was in the same tradition. The appointment of John de Gray, who remained in office until 1213, meant that for the first time the lordship was in the hands, not of a magnate, but of a career royal servant, of a type that had become increasingly familiar in England and Normandy during the twelfth century.

The flight of William de Briouze across the Irish sea during the winter of 1208–9 turned the lordship, in John's view, from an area of nagging unease into a nest of enemies. Upon his arrival, William was sheltered by the Marshal; he then took refuge with the de Lacys. The lords of Leinster, Meath and Ulster thus appeared to be leagued with the former lord of Limerick in opposition to the king. John at this time had entanglements in Wales and Scotland, as well as quarrels with the king of France and Pope Innocent III. Nonetheless during 1210 he led an army to Ireland, where in a matter of weeks he accomplished his essentially straightforward purposes. Having landed at Waterford during June, he rode through Leinster to Dublin, and the politic Marshal made his peace. From Dublin the king passed into Meath, which he took into his hands despite Walter de Lacy's attempts to dissociate himself from his father-in-law and brother. John then continued north by Carlingford and Downpatrick to Carrickfergus, where the fall of the castle spelled the end of Hugh de Lacy's resistance. That Ulster fell into the king's grasp so easily was partly the result of John's dealings with the king of Scots during 1209. He had overawed William the Lion; this gave him access to the military and naval power of the nobles of south-western Scotland, while depriving de Lacy of a possible source of support. As John and his mercenary captains from Carrick and Galloway began to dismember the earldom of Ulster, Hugh left Scotland for France, where during 1212 he took part in the crusade against the Albigensian heretics. The king did not linger long in Ireland: by late August 1210 he was arranging his departure. It fell to John de Gray to follow up his military victory and to confirm a royal presence in the spaces left by the death and destruction of so many notable figures in recent years. A new castle was begun at Athlone before the end of 1210, and a major campaign organised, with the help of the Scots, against Aedh O'Neill in 1212. By 1211–12, too, the gaps in the south-west had been filled by the

creation of a shire organisation, based on the traditional division between the kingdoms of Cork and Limerick.

Throughout his reign, but particularly in its later years, John did not hesitate to use Gaelic Irish leaders in his efforts to increase his authority, contain magnates whom he mistrusted, and raise money. His father had been similarly eclectic in his alliances; and rulers from William the Conqueror onwards had, when it suited them, employed Welsh princes to restrain the undesired aggrandisement of marcher lords. Quite apart from that, the collapse of various magnate interests between 1205 and 1210 of necessity brought John and his ministers into more direct relations with Irishmen. The sources are exceedingly patchy. But we know, for instance, that in 1210 the king knighted Donough O'Brien and gave him a charter for Carrigogunnel; that in the same year Donough's brother Murtough joined the royal army in Ulster; and that after his return to England the king willingly entertained financial offers for lands made by Murtough, Cormac Mac Carthy and others. We have seen too, that after much haggling over money John abandoned his idea of trying to exploit much of Connacht directly, and instead leased it to Cathal Crovderg O'Connor. The favour available, at a price, to Irish kings sprang largely from the fact that John's inability to manage Anglo-Norman baronial society without inordinate strife led him to cultivate support outside it. His dealings with Gaelic leaders were cool and hard-headed. Like his father and his son he must have been well aware that arrangements with Irish dynasties tended to be unstable. This had the advantage of keeping the future open: agreements could be broken or allowed to lapse without significant legal problems, and without giving rise to tensions that might transmit themselves to Wales or England.

Between 1204 and 1212 the king had shown energy and ingenuity in his efforts to overcome the problems that encompassed him. Ireland was only a small part of that broader picture. From 1212, however, the accumulation of pressures gradually overwhelmed him. Political society in England was deeply divided, with powerful interests unwilling to support John's expensive diplomatic and military exertions to recover his continental inheritance: the end, we should remember, to which all his activities in the British Isles were ultimately subordinate. In 1214 his defeat by King Philip's forces at Bouvines left his cause in ruins. After that events in England moved swiftly. From an immediate political viewpoint, Magna Carta in 1215 was a peace-settlement that failed. And when John died in October 1216 much of eastern England was in the hands of his enemies, and a French force led by Philip's son Louis was offering men an alternative focus for their allegiance.

The repercussions in Ireland of these events are plain to see. John's actions lost their aggressive edge, and he became eager to repair his relations with many of those who had recently fallen foul of him. William Marshal was already fully reconciled, and was to prove a chief bulwark of the Plantagenet house during the years of political tension, civil war and minority government. In Ireland he received, among other advantages, the restoration of his castle of Dunamase in Laois; and Thomas fitz Anthony, his seneschal of Leinster, was given custody of the county of Waterford and Cork, together with Cork city. In 1214 Richard de Burgh, now of age, was granted his father's lands with the exception of Connacht; and the drawing-up of a charter for Connacht in the following year must have given him reason to hope that he might shortly be encouraged to oust King Cathal. Walter de Lacy and his Meath tenants, in return for large fines, were admitted to John's grace and restored to their lands. By 1216 Walter was keeping Hereford for the king. In the last months of John's life, Ireland remained firmly attached to the royalist cause; indeed on the morrow of his death it was being considered as a possible refuge for the widowed queen and her younger son.

King John remains a highly controversial figure, and estimates of his rule in Ireland as elsewhere are bound to vary. There can be no doubt that the years 1199–1212 saw the enlargement of the royal holding in Ireland, through the king's visit, the justiciarship of John de Gray, the construction of castles, and the administrative shaping of the south-west. Nor is there any question that the king's political impact was vigorous. But it is necessary to keep before us the circumstances in which these things took place. Writers on Ireland have often caught the English disease of instinctively regarding monarchical authority as, in essence, beneficent, and aristocratic authority – which represents a greater diffusion of power – as regrettable. On that assumption, it is tempting to see John's actions, especially between 1208 and 1212, as amounting to a policy that gave promise of a lordship with a strong central power ruling even-handedly over a disciplined society containing both Anglo-Norman magnates and Irish kings. Yet we should remember that the events of those years sprang directly from the disintegration of normal political relationships. John contrived from month to month. Some of his actions were, from the monarchy's viewpoint, plainly misconceived: for instance the endowment of his Scottish supporters with large tracts of Ulster carried the danger of divided allegiances when relations between the English and Scottish kings next deteriorated. Nor were the de Lacys, de Burghs and the rest natural enemies of royal authority: they were potentially the most important

component of it; for government, especially in Ireland, was less about bureaucratic inventiveness than about the harnessing of powerful men. Since no king was likely to reside in Ireland for any length of time, the maintenance of the lordship, like other regions where the monarch rarely came, was bound to depend primarily on the aristocracy, whose authority was, in the codes of the period, as innate as that of the crown. John's rule in Ireland may best be presented, not as an alternative programme, but as an aberration, though one that had some positive consequences for royal power in the lordship.

In his last years John had conducted negotiations with Hugh de Lacy as well as with other lords, but these had broken down, apparently over the size of the fine that the king had demanded. The problem of de Lacy was to dominate the dealings of the minority government with Ireland for almost a decade. The circumstances in which Hugh had originally gained Ulster have led historians to regard him with little sympathy; their attitudes may also have been affected by the feeling that his fall gave the king an opportunity to extinguish the earldom, and to manage north-east Ireland by some means other than through a single aristocratic family. But Hugh was more than a provincial rebel. He was a member of a distinguished baronial house whose branches served the monarchy in England, Normandy, Wales and Ireland from 1066 until the death of Henry de Lacy earl of Lincoln in 1311. King John had given him an unimpeachable title to Ulster, and had rudely dispossessed him; in his own – not unreasonable – estimation, he had a right to pursue.

In 1217 we hear that William de Lacy had seized Carlingford and Dundrum. William was the half-brother of Walter and Hugh, being the son of the first Hugh de Lacy's marriage to Rory O'Connor's daughter. If Hugh was in search of his rights, William was seeking power commensurate with his high birth. The English government tried to use Walter de Lacy, who was anxious not to lose his recently-recovered lands, to discipline William. By 1221 negotiations for Hugh's restoration were once more under way. In the following year he was allowed to regain lands that he held of Walter in Meath and in right of his wife on the borders of Ulster, but the earldom itself was withheld from him. Shortly afterwards we learn that an arrangement had been made by which, apparently as a preliminary to full restoration, Ulster was to be committed for five years to Walter de Lacy and three English earls. Hugh, however, seems to have lost patience, and during 1223 he invaded Ulster with the assistance of William de Lacy and Aedh O'Neill. The king reacted by once more showing favour to the Scottish earls of Carrick and Atholl, whose position in Ulster Hugh particularly

resented. By 1224 the situation appeared so serious that William Marshal the younger, who had succeeded his father as earl of Pembroke and lord of Leinster, was sent to Ireland as justiciar. William had recently been engaged, with the approbation of Hubert de Burgh the English justiciar, in recovering the marcher position in South Wales, which had been severely damaged by Llywelyn the Great during the years when royal power was in eclipse. William de Lacy was married to a daughter of Llywelyn. The quarrel over Ulster thus reached into English, Scottish and Welsh aristocratic society.

On his arrival the Marshal acted swiftly, sending troops north, and himself attacking William de Lacy who had taken refuge on O'Reilly's crannog, an island fortress in Breifne. His presence gave royal authority the weight it needed to bring about the settlement that was always the sensible answer to the dispute. Hugh agreed to accept the territorial claims of the Scottish lords, and to undergo a probationary period during which he would be under the tutelage of his brother Walter, whose relations with the Marshal were good. When in April 1227 the king eventually restored his earldom to him, it was left to Walter to decide whether the Ulster castles should be included in the restoration, or for the moment taken into the king's hand. Room was also found for William de Lacy. Far from being adrift among his Irish or Welsh cousins, he appears as keeper of Ulster under Walter in 1226; and in 1230 he was serving Henry III in Gascony. The restoration served to heal a sore that had been festering since 1210; under the guidance of Hubert de Burgh and the Marshal a dangerous conflict was made amenable to royal control. Hugh de Lacy remained attached to the court for the rest of his life, and in his later years colonial dominance in the north of Ireland was to reach its height.

The settlement of the dispute with Hugh de Lacy was quickly followed by the involvement of the lordship in a more important conflict which had its origins in England and Wales. The events reflect little credit on Henry III, whose political judgement was always uncertain, or on those who supported him in Ireland. But amidst the treachery and violence, we can perceive the significance for the monarchy of the accord reached in the years 1212–27 with the families that mattered in the lordship. It was always unlikely that a magnate with such widespread interests as William Marshal would remain justiciar of Ireland for a long period. But his removal seems to have been connected with a clash that arose between him and Richard de Burgh over the future of Connacht. The Marshal was dismissed in 1226; shortly afterwards Hubert de Burgh, then at the peak of his career as justiciar of England, gave his nephew the grant of Connacht that Richard and his father had been

denied since early in John's reign. Two years later Richard de Burgh was himself advanced to the justiciarship of Ireland. The specially close connection between English and Irish affairs at this time meant that the fall of Hubert in 1232 was bound to have repercussions in the lordship. After a brief gap, the de Burghs were ejected from the justiciarship of Ireland in favour of Maurice fitz Gerald. Richard's career in Connacht suffered a predictable setback. In 1231 he had captured Felim O'Connor; Henry now ordered Felim's release, and seems to have contemplated using him against his captor. Richard forfeited Connacht, and only by virtue of some adroit manoeuvring did he regain it in September 1234.

Hubert de Burgh's influence passed to Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester, an old servant of King John and Henry III's former tutor, and to his nephew (or son), Peter des Rivaux. The king, eager to assume full control of his own affairs and improve the efficiency of the administration in order to generate cash, placed Peter des Rivaux in charge of a large number of offices in England and Ireland. More important from a political point of view, Henry appeared to take counsel only from a narrow circle of dependants, to the exclusion of many of the magnates who were traditionally regarded as his natural advisers in great matters and as the embodiment of the community of the kingdom. The link between these tensions and Ireland was provided by the Marshal family. William Marshal II died in 1231. His heir was his brother Richard, who hitherto had accepted the lordship of the king of France so that he might hold the Marshal lands in Normandy. Because of the problem of allegiance, Henry was suspicious of Richard from the first, but did in the end permit him to succeed to his inheritance in the British Isles. Richard rapidly emerged as the chief opponent of the king's new advisers. He may have had sincere objections to the style of Henry's government; more certainly, he resented the spread of the new counsellors' tentacles into South Wales. In the winter of 1233–4 the March was in uproar. The opposition of the Marshal and other lords, together with the influence of the higher clergy, persuaded the king to dispense with his advisers in the following spring. By then, however, Richard Marshal had departed for Ireland, to Henry's consternation.

Richard's probable reasons for going to Ireland are revealing. In the summer of 1233 Henry had been sufficiently worried about the disaffection of Richard de Burgh to begin preparations for an Irish expedition. In August, however, Richard had shown himself willing to come to court, and the campaign had immediately been cancelled. He had decided to try to redeem himself by co-operation with the new regime, and by distancing himself from his disgraced uncle. Maurice fitz Gerald

held the justiciarship and with his powerful kinsman, John fitz Thomas of Desmond, was attached to the king. Then in December Henry sent Walter de Lacy to Ireland. It seems to have been the threat presented to Leinster by these royalist lords that drew the Marshal across the sea at this juncture. On 1 April 1234, at a parley arranged with his opponents on the Curragh, Richard Marshal was mortally wounded. The act was out of harmony with the standards of an age in which kings and nobles quarrelled and were reconciled without usually proceeding to extremes. Opinion in England was shocked, the more so since rumour had it that letters sealed with Henry's seal had been sent to magnates in Ireland implying that the Marshal's removal would not be unwelcome. The king denied knowledge of what had been done in his name, and turned in anger against Peter des Roches and Peter des Rivaux; we shall never know whether his wrath arose because he genuinely believed that he had been deceived by them, or because he had a bad conscience about the affair. The fact remains that a magnate reputedly hostile to the king had been resisted in Ireland by a group of families, some of which had suffered under John, and whose subsequent revival has sometimes been regarded as inimical to royal interests in the lordship.

For several years after Richard Marshal's death colonial society and Anglo-Irish relations were marked by a measure of harmony that had rarely if ever been known before. The dismissal of Henry's ministers brought a rapid disarming of the quarrels they had provoked. Within weeks of the affray on the Curragh, the Marshal's brothers, Gilbert, Walter and Anselm, were going to England under safe-conduct. As early as 25 May Gilbert was advanced to his brother's dignities; and although Henry was worried by what he thought were signs of further unrest in 1235–6, Gilbert and Walter, who succeeded him in 1241, had on the whole equable careers. During 1234 many other men who had been associated with Richard Marshal in Ireland agreed to pay fines and were received into the peace. The magnates who had been of the king's party continued in favour. Maurice fitz Gerald remained justiciar until 1245. Hugh de Lacy, now a very senior figure, was summoned to advise Henry in 1234 and again in 1237. Richard de Burgh was consolidating his grip on Connacht, and in doing so offering many second-rank families employment and patronage. Hugh, Maurice and John fitz Thomas were extending their influence in the distant parts of the lordship where they had territorial interests. The calm was reflected in the fact that Richard de Burgh was able to serve with the king in Poitou in 1242–3, and in the presence of Maurice fitz Gerald with a large force of colonists and Gaelic Irish on Henry's expedition to North Wales in 1245.

Henry III and Edward I, 1245–1307

When surveying the history of the outer parts of the lordship, we identified the middle decades of the thirteenth century as a crucial period. It should now be evident that the renewed territorial advances of the late 1230s and 1240s were in some degree a product of the fact that the colonial world was at peace with itself and with the king. Those advances, however, were not maintained. Among the contributory reasons for this were the deaths of Hugh de Lacy in 1242 and of Richard de Burgh in 1243. Hugh's sons had predeceased him; and – presumably because the arrangements made at the time of his restoration in 1226–7 had excluded female succession – Ulster fell in to the crown. Richard's sons were under age, and a minority ensued in Connacht. At the same time the character of the political relations between England and Ireland was altered by the misfortunes of the Marshals and of the senior branch of the de Lacys. The medieval nobility found male succession hard to sustain for the simple reason that boy-children were more difficult to rear than girls; and since English law prescribed primogeniture among males but equal division among females, the dispersal of laboriously-constructed dynastic empires was a frequent occurrence. Walter de Lacy died in 1241, having outlived his son and grandson, leaving Meath to be shared by his two grand-daughters. Walter and Anselm Marshal both died childless, like their three elder brothers, in 1245, so extinguishing the male descendants of the great William Marshal. The Marshal inheritance in England, Wales and Ireland was left to be divided between their five sisters or their heirs. Although Meath and Leinster were in consequence eventually split into a number of lordships, these were still substantial in size and value, and hence of interest to the families to which the various heiresses carried them. Nevertheless the disappearance of the vast unitary lordships of the past was highly significant. Between 1199 and 1234 baronial politics had more than once transferred themselves to Ireland precisely because the country contained important lands belonging to men who were powerful elsewhere. Some of those who succeeded the Marshals and the de Lacys were of less moment; and where they were of the first rank – as in the case of the de Clare earls of Gloucester and lords of Glamorgan and Kilkenny – their Irish holdings represented a far smaller proportion of their total interests. As a result, the king's attention was less likely to be drawn to Ireland as John's had been in 1208–10 or Henry III's in 1233–4. Royal records relating to Ireland survive in increasing bulk from about 1272 onwards; but this should not lead us to conclude that the lordship was of greater consequence than it had been in the past.

The kings of the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries were as preoccupied as any of their ancestors by pressures and projects in Britain and beyond. Between 1258 and 1267 Henry and Edward (who was now of course lord of Ireland) were entangled in a political crisis that involved unwelcome reform, civil war, and then a complicated settlement. There are some signs that the factional strife in England in 1264–5 between the royalists and the supporters of Simon de Montfort may have been reflected in the quarrel in Ireland between the de Burghs and Geraldines; but the possible links await detailed investigation, and anyway the Irish disputes were soon contained without intervention from England. Edward was on crusade from 1270 to 1274, and absent in Gascony between 1286 and 1289. His energies during the intervening period were devoted to the conquest and encastellation of North Wales, and there were further Welsh risings in 1287–8 and 1294–5. The extinction of the main line of the Scottish royal house in 1290 involved the king in protracted judicial processes concerning the succession. And the final phase of Edward's reign, from 1294 to 1307, was dominated, first by war with Philip IV of France, and then by war in Scotland. These conflicts were complicated by a Franco-Scottish alliance, by quarrels with the papacy, and by constitutional disputes in England, sparked off by royal demands for military service, supplies and taxation. It is hardly surprising that the lordship of Ireland, which appeared to present few major or urgent problems, occupied a very lowly place on the royal agenda.

During the later years of Henry III and the reign of Edward I Ireland impinged on the king in many ways, though these were mostly less dramatic than had sometimes been the case in the past. For a generation and more after 1171 the lordship had been a convenient place for Henry II and John to reward men they trusted, and by so doing to counterbalance established families whose power seemed to be growing too uninhibitedly: it was in this way that Hugh de Lacy had been introduced in 1172, William de Burgh and others in 1185, and William de Briouze in 1201. But as early as 1227 the big decisions about landholding had already been made; the lordship offered less room for newcomers; and the standards enshrined in Magna Carta meant that kings meddled with property rights only cautiously and subtly. Nonetheless rulers still possessed extensive powers of patronage, and were expected to place advantages in the way of those around them. This could mean that men gained Irish lands while remaining distant from colonial society. Geoffrey de Lusignan was one of Henry III's half-brothers, the offspring of the second marriage of King John's young widow. The Lusignans clustered round their powerful relative in the hope of ad-

vancement, and in doing so rendered themselves obnoxious to the English aristocracy. During the 1250s Henry proposed granting Geoffrey large tracts within the King's Cantreds in Connacht, so alarming Felim O'Connor. Little came of this; but in 1256 Geoffrey did obtain the town of Louth and other holdings in eastern Ireland. His descendants retained these lands for several generations, but were normally resident in France and played little direct part in the lordship's affairs. Upon the outbreak of the Hundred Years War in 1337 they were dispossessed as enemy aliens; and shortly afterwards, in a repetition of the pattern, some of their lands were regranted to John Darcy, the steward of Edward III's household, who had served as justiciar of Ireland on several occasions between 1324 and 1336.

The operations of royal patronage could also provide the colonial aristocracy with valuable new recruits. The most obvious case is that of Thomas de Clare, whose career we have already discussed. Thomas was in some respects a throwback to the past: a king's man planted in a fringe region where a lordship might still be carved out by the sword. Another significant acquisition was Geoffrey de Joinville, who arrived in Ireland by a more conventional route. Geoffrey was a brother of Jean de Joinville, who wrote a biography of Louis IX, the crusading king of France. He made his career at the court of Henry III, and by 1252 was married to Matilda, one of the heiresses of Walter de Lacy. She brought him lands in the Welsh marches, and the half of Meath that became known, from its chief castle, as the lordship of Trim. Between the 1250s and his retirement, at a great age, in 1307 in favour of Roger Mortimer, who had married his grand-daughter, Geoffrey spent much time in Ireland. He was chief governor of the lordship in 1264–5 (when he succeeded in assuaging the quarrels of the magnates) and again from 1273 to 1276. The frequent presence in the lordship of Thomas de Clare or Geoffrey de Joinville, alongside Earl Richard of Ulster, who had spent his minority in England, and men such as Theobald Butler IV (d.1285) and Theobald V (d.1299), who had English lands, meant that Edward I had there figures whom he knew, and could usually trust. His rule was also supported by visits made to their Irish properties by the heirs of the Marshals. In 1279, for instance, Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk and lord of Carlow, was in Ireland, and assisted the justiciar in his attempts to pacify the Mac Murroughs. Edward, while often governing through resident magnates or higher clergy, from time to time reinforced his authority by appointing to the justiciarship royal servants, or men attached to his household; the most notable of these were Robert Ufford, justiciar from 1268 to 1270 and again from 1276 to 1281, and John Wogan, who arrived in Ireland in December 1295 and remained in of-

fice until the end of the reign.

One of the chief duties of the monarch was to provide justice; in the upper levels of society, this meant that he should show the ability to resolve the quarrels of a competitive (and in Ireland of necessity highly militarised) aristocracy. During the 1290s that capacity was put to the test by two closely-linked disputes, each involving John fitz Thomas, lord of Offaly. John was the son of the third son of Maurice fitz Gerald, the former justiciar; by making arrangements with the heiresses of his uncles, and by force, he was acquiring most of his grandfather's lands. Trouble arose when in 1290 the king appointed as justiciar William de Vescy, lord of Kildare, a Marshal heir, and overlord of Offaly. John and William became involved in a bitter conflict, which in 1293 led the justiciar to contemplate using the military resources of the lordship against his enemy. At the same time John's aggressive pursuit of his interests in Connacht brought him into collision with his overlord there, the earl of Ulster, who aligned himself with the justiciar. Late in 1294, when de Vescy had been removed from office, John fitz Thomas actually captured Earl Richard, and held him prisoner for a time. But King Edward, with John Wogan's help, was able to bring these disputes under control, and to facilitate a remarkably successful redefinition of spheres of influence. William de Vescy, now out of favour, was persuaded to surrender Kildare and receive it back for his lifetime only, with reversion to the crown. When he died in 1297 the lordship was turned into a royal shire, which John fitz Thomas in practice came to dominate; in return John's energies were employed against the O'Connors of Offaly, with whom he had recently allied against de Vescy. John for his part was brought to surrender his Connacht lands to the earl of Ulster, who in 1300 began to build a castle at Ballymote in the former Geraldine manor of Sligo. These arrangements did not represent a hasty or short-sighted capitulation to noble power. They took place gradually, under royal management; they removed sources of friction; and John fitz Thomas's readmission to favour occurred only after he had served the king in Scotland in 1296 and in Flanders in 1297–8. Edward's approach was realistic, and his control sufficiently tight.

Perhaps the most obvious aspect of the attitude of Henry III and Edward I to Ireland was their assumption that the lordship should contribute to the resources at their disposal. They expected their representatives to provide them with revenue and, on occasion, military support: that, after all, was what any king or noble demanded of his inheritance. From the earliest point at which records survive, we can trace a proportion of the king's Irish revenues passing to England, Normandy or Gascony, just as, between 1066 and 1453, a sizeable part of the

revenues raised in England found their way to France or the Netherlands in the context of the wars and alliances of Norman and Plantagenet rulers. We possess only a patchy knowledge of the sums that went from Ireland to Henry III's wardrobe and English exchequer. But, for example, between March 1230 and November 1253 Henry can be shown to have received £26,747 – that is, an average of about £1,100 a year – from the lordship. This was a useful supplement to the income of an always-needy monarch, but not of a dimension likely to stimulate the king's advisers to press for a major investment of energy or resources in Ireland. During his reign – for which the financial records are fuller – Edward I received at least £52,821 from the lordship: roughly the proceeds of a single parliamentary subsidy in England. His average annual income from Ireland was thus some £1,500, and it rose to about £1,900 during the period of the Anglo-Scottish wars.[4] In Edward's time the Dublin administration was intermittently involved in campaigns against the Irish of Wicklow, and it can be argued with hindsight that the money he drew from Ireland would have been better spent supporting his ministers' military activities within the lordship. But a king who was straining every resource of cash and political goodwill in his struggle with the Scots and French could hardly be expected to see it in that way.

On a number of occasions troops from Ireland, led by the justiciar and individual magnates, or by magnates alone, served Henry III and Edward I in Wales, Scotland or on the continent. As far as Wales and Scotland were concerned, the participation of Irish forces was a natural occurrence, and of obvious advantage to the monarchy. It was as easy to move men (though not horses) by water as overland, and much easier to carry bulky supplies by sea. And, of course, the geographical position of Ireland enabled pressure to be put on the enemy from an additional direction. In 1257, for instance, when the Lord Edward was fighting in Wales, troops from Ireland mustered at both Chester and Cardigan; Edward also employed workmen – ditchers and smiths – from Ireland; and, like his father in 1245, he had large quantities of timber shipped to Wales from the south-eastern ports. In 1296, in the early stages of the Scottish war, more than 3,000 troops, led by John Wogan, the earl of Ulster, John fitz Thomas and others, sailed from Dublin, Drogheda and Carrickfergus, probably to Whitehaven in Cumberland. From there they went on to serve with the king at Roxburgh and Stirling, before travelling back to Ireland in two contingents, from Ayr and Furness respectively. Service on the continent – such as we have seen Richard de Burgh perform in Poitou and John fitz Thomas in Flanders – was less plainly related to convenience and

strategy. But it too was entirely natural, springing from the simple fact that the magnates of Ireland were the king's subjects. Although they did not owe their lord unpaid service outside Ireland itself, there were many reasons – apart from pay – why they might go abroad when he desired them to do so. Military service brought them to his attention, and could result in favours and rewards; similarly, failure to serve might retard a man's career. And for a lord who was already in disfavour at court, military service was the most straightforward and effective route to rehabilitation. The absence of magnates might temporarily weaken parts of the colony, but it strengthened the connections between the king and those who dominated Ireland.

In retrospect it is tempting to see the history of Anglo-Irish relations in the thirteenth century as one of missed opportunities on the part of the English monarchy. Such, indeed, has been the view of almost all those who have written on the subject; even H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, pre-eminent among the few English historians to take a serious interest in the medieval lordship of Ireland, have stated flatly that 'the lord of Ireland failed to discharge the responsibilities of lordship'.[5] Only King John – like Richard II, an improbable exemplar of political wisdom – has found modern advocates. This approach risks becoming sterile. It may spring from a radical problem of perception: the unspoken assumption that the course of Irish history is somehow to be regretted predisposes us to measure historical actualities against a, usually unrealistic, vision of how the past should have been. Every king from Henry II to Edward III paid special attention to Ireland only when compelled to do so; the pattern of aristocratic landholding meant that this happened not infrequently before the 1240s, and more rarely thereafter. We must face the unappealing fact that the lordship was an unsought commitment, far removed from the normal arenas of Plantagenet activity. The kings saw it at all times as a detail in a broad and crowded canvas. Understanding will be better served by considering why rulers thought and acted as they did, than by lamenting their failure to behave as we may think they ought to have done.

4 Settlement

The late twelfth and earlier thirteenth centuries saw the formal distribution and practical occupation of the Irish land that was being won by the military energies and political skills of the Anglo-Norman invaders. From surviving charters we can see something of the ways in which the great lords and their followers shared the spoils. But the partial conquest was not merely an occupation by a new aristocracy that sought to inherit the position of the Irish rulers it displaced; had it been no more than this, it is probable that, despite the intervention of the monarchy, the newcomers would have merged into the host society, or (where they had the option) chosen to abandon the rigours of the Irish marches in favour of their more peaceful lands elsewhere. The toughness and durability, amidst all its troubles, of the medieval lordship of Ireland sprang from the fact that the power of its ruling groups had in many places a firm foundation in the immigrant population of numerous boroughs and manorial villages. It is only in comparatively recent times that historians have begun to emphasise and, together with geographers and archaeologists, to explore the nature and significance of the movement of lesser men from England and Wales to Ireland, a movement that followed close on the heels of the military successes of the invaders. One reason for the neglect of this important subject is the shortage of direct evidence concerning it; as so often in the medieval period, what we should most like to know is most thoroughly hidden from us. Only in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when manorial documents begin to survive, is the silence decisively broken. From that somewhat firmer ground the historian must begin to ask questions about the obscure events that occurred a hundred and more years earlier.

It is essential to view colonisation in Ireland in a European setting. The twelfth and early thirteenth centuries were a period of rising population, though not of overpopulation. That alone explains little: the medieval peasant was unlikely to find the initiative and resources to cross the sea. But it did create a climate favourable to the enterprises of lordship, the most potent social force of the time. On the eastern frontier of Germany new settlements were being established under the direction of ecclesiastical and secular magnates, who employed agents to mark

out sites and attract people from older areas to new districts. In Spain efforts were being made to encourage Christian resettlement in lands reconquered from the Moors. In France new towns and villages were springing up in the countryside. In England lords responded to the economic conditions, which included rising prices, by taking into their own hands land that had formerly been leased to tenants; instead they exploited it directly, drawing on a plentiful supply of cheap labour, and selling on a buoyant market. It was against such a background that the conquerors in Ireland encouraged settlers to occupy the lands that they were winning.

Settlement in Ireland thus took place within the controlling framework of lordship. But although that lordship owed much to the sword, magnate initiative was regularly disciplined by royal action, which helped to demarcate and limit spheres of influence. To begin with, the king's direct stake in the colony was small. Henry II kept for himself the Ostman cities of Dublin, Waterford, Cork and Limerick, together with County Dublin. By dint of a series of charters he and his successors gave the cities privileges which were useful in encouraging immigration; in any case these centres, with their long-established contacts with Britain and beyond, were likely to prove attractive to traders and craftsmen from the outside world. The work of parcelling County Dublin out to knightly tenants seems, if we may judge from the number of families that held both there and in Meath, to have owed much to Hugh de Lacy as King Henry's representative in the years 1177–84. Leinster was in royal hands between the death of Strongbow in 1176 and the succession of William Marshal in 1189, and that period saw the establishment of some king's men in the area. And John, as lord of Ireland and as king, was to play a major part in distributing land in the south-west and in the Louth region to a number of his or his father's adherents, such as Theobald Walter, William de Burgh, Philip of Worcester and Bertram de Verdon. But many of these grants were themselves substantial in scale, leaving to their recipients the job of creating knightly sub-tenures. Despite spasmodic royal interference, this was even more the case elsewhere. In Leinster, Meath and Ulster, and eventually in Connacht too, most of the decisions that shaped the tenurial future were taken, not by the crown, but by Strongbow, William Marshal, the de Lacys, John de Courcy, or Richard de Burgh.

The broad pattern of landholding as it developed owed a good deal to the Irish past; precisely how much will become clear only when detailed regional studies of the pre- and post-invasion decades have been made. Henry II gave Meath to Hugh de Lacy to have 'as Murrough O'Melaghlin or anybody else before or after him best held it'.[1]

Strongbow's charter for Leinster (which has not survived) may well have been on similar lines: a grant of Dermot Mac Murrough's kingdom, minus the Ostman portions. The grants of Cork and Limerick made in 1177 reflected the existing division of Munster between Mac Carthy and O'Brien. John de Courcy in practice took over Mac Dunlevy's sub-kingdom of Uladh. Sub-infeudation too seems, in places, to have followed Irish territorial boundaries. The Normans used the term 'cantred' (akin to the Welsh 'cantref') to describe smaller units, which they also employed when making grants. For instance, in 1172 Strongbow gave an area in Upper Ossory to Adam of Hereford, using language very similar to that of King Henry's grant of Meath: 'know that I have given and granted to Adam of Hereford half the vill of Aghabo together with the whole half-cantred of land in which the vill is situated, and with everything pertaining to it, as Dermot Ochelli best held it'.[2] Royal grants in Tipperary and Limerick were likewise made on the basis of existing divisions; the manors that emerged should be regarded as sizeable lordships, dependent on the centres such as Nenagh, Dunkerrin, Thurles, Knockgraffon, Castleconnell or Grean, from which they came to take their names. On a still smaller scale, the term 'theodum' was sometimes used to denote a knight's fee; it represented the Irish *tuath*, a word that once denoted a minor kingdom, but by the twelfth century seems to have described a tiny subordinate lordship. Thus although the occupation and settlement brought with them profound political and social changes, there were elements of continuity: a fragmented land remained fragmented, and in some degree along the same lines as in the past. As they had done in England and Wales, the Normans tended to step into the shoes of the previous rulers and landholders. Existing territorial divisions may have proved more durable in the west than in the east. The Marshals, for example, organised Leinster into administrative shires attached to their castles of Kildare, Kilkenny, Carlow and Wexford, an arrangement that owed little to Irish antecedents. But the whole question of continuity is one that remains in need of urgent investigation.

What happened in Ireland was in harmony with the European experience, was controlled by lordship, and was influenced by existing patterns. It was also shaped by the facts of physical geography. Lords and settlers alike were, of course, interested in profitable land, and primarily in good arable; hence intensive occupation tended not to occur in areas above the 120m. contour line, or in boggy lowlands. Since these were the regions most difficult to control and defend, there was a clear connection between the military and economic frontiers. This consideration is extremely important if we are to grasp the political

significance of settlement. We may say accurately enough that the south and east of Ireland were more heavily settled than the north and west. But unless that statement is at once qualified, the subsequent history of the lordship makes little sense. There were, as we have seen, significant colonial footholds in Ulster, Connacht and western Munster. By the same token, there were parts of Leinster, Meath and eastern Munster where colonists barely penetrated, and where the power of the magnates and of royal government never amounted to more than a loose overlordship. The Wicklow mountains in the east and the marshy ground of Offaly and Leix in the west stopped the invaders from occupying all Leinster; Meath, west of Trim and Kells, was much more lightly settled than the richer, lower-lying land to the east, especially the Boyne valley; similarly, Tipperary may be divided into two zones: the lowlands of the Suir valley to the south, and the northern uplands, where occupation was thinner and the colonial hold less secure. The patchwork created by lordship lay over another patchwork, formed by the character of the land itself.

The initial problem faced by those wishing to win and exploit land was that of security; indeed security was to remain a prime consideration in many parts of the lordship of Ireland throughout its history. The answer that was likely to suggest itself to twelfth-century kings and nobles, from Wales to the Holy Land, was the building of castles. Castles in this period had complex functions. We think of them primarily as defensive structures; but in the setting of invasion, their role was aggressive. Their construction frequently ran ahead of conquest; in them small bands of armed men could survive for a time amidst hostile country, begin to dominate it, and prepare the way for more thorough occupation. As the frontier moved outwards some early castles might become redundant. But castles were not merely military strongholds; they were centres from which authority radiated outwards, a visible sign of the power of those who sought to rule the land. In Ireland, as in England and Wales after 1066, the first castles were of the 'motte-and-bailey' variety. The motte was an earthen mound, sometimes revetted with stone, which carried a wooden fortress; at its summit or foot it might have a stockade. The bailey (or 'bawn') was the associated enclosure, containing further timber buildings, and defended by a ditch and palisade. The wooden outworks were known as 'bretaches', a word that seems to be the origin of the Irish place-name 'brittas'.

The disappearance of the timber structures has left us with a misleadingly primitive mental image of these early castles; in fact they

could be substantial, even comfortable, residences. Their great virtue was that they could be erected quickly, by unskilled labour. They were more vulnerable to fire than was a stone castle; but equally, they could be replaced rapidly, as happened at Trim after a raid by Rory O'Connor destroyed the first castle there. The motte-and-bailey castles were the work of the settler lords and their chief vassals, but their construction was not a haphazard or entirely individualistic activity. Comments by Gerald of Wales show that lords brought a measure of organisation to castle-building, and that contemporaries were well able to think in strategic terms. In 1181, when Leinster was in the king's hand,

> there arrived in Ireland two men who had been sent by the English king to take joint control of the government ... Before Hugh [de Lacy] should leave, they joined with him in building a very large number of castles throughout Leinster. For hitherto very many castles had been built in Meath but few in Leinster. So first of all a castle was built for Raymond [le Gros] in Forth, and another [? at Knocktopher] for his brother Griffin. The third castle was built at Castledermot in Uí Muiredaigh for Walter de Ridelisford, the fourth for John de Clahull on the river Barrow not far from Leighlin, the fifth for John de Hereford at Collacht [? Celbridge].[3]

Later on Gerald reflects that

> the less remote part of the country, as far as the river Shannon, which divides the three eastern parts of the island from the fourth region in the west, should be secured and protected by the construction of many castles ... it is far, far better to begin by gradually connecting up a system of castles built in suitable places and by proceeding cautiously with their construction, than to build large numbers of castles at great distances from each other, sited haphazardly in various locations, without their forming any coherent system of mutual support or being able to relieve each other in times of crisis.[4]

The siting of castles was determined by various considerations, including the occasionally inconvenient fact that a lord's stronghold had to be built within the area that he had been granted by his superior. Frequently mottes were placed so as to control a river-crossing, or to command a stretch of rich land; sometimes an existing natural feature or an older earthwork might be used or adapted to save the trouble of building a fresh mound. The relationship between mottes and settlement, and some of the influences that governed their siting, can be seen if we take County Kilkenny as an example. Mottes have been identified at many of the manorial centres in Ossory that Strongbow and his successors either retained in demesne or granted to sub-tenants. In the first

category are the mottes at Castlecomer, Callan and Kilkenny itself. Adam of Hereford seems to have constructed castles at Laragh and Donaghmore, within the half of Aghabo that Strongbow gave him. At Tullabarry, in the manor of Ballyragget, a castle was built on an existing escarpment. The castle at Skirk in Upper Ossory made use of an older man-made feature. The motte at Inistioge on the river Nore secured an important crossing-point. The remains of the motte at Kells, built by Geoffrey fitz Robert, the first grantee, overlooks valuable meadows. Similar patterns can be detected in many parts of eastern Ireland.

On the whole the distribution of mottes (and many more remain to be identified and mapped) mirrors the distribution of colonisation. But there are some apparent anomalies. The latest map to be published shows almost no mottes in Munster west of Tipperary; yet Cork, Limerick and north Kerry were at least as heavily occupied as eastern Ulster, where a multitude of mottes survive.[5] This may in part reflect the fact that more field-work has been done in Antrim and Down than in the south-west. But that cannot be the whole explanation. The erection of mottes seems to have been a feature, primarily, of the earliest stages of occupation. The expansion of Anglo-Norman power in the south-west came somewhat later; it also took place, to a remarkable extent, with the acquiescence of Irish leaders, notably the O'Briens from 1193 onwards. There was not in the south-west the same degree of insecurity, and hence of urgency, as there had been in Meath during the 1170s or in Ulster after 1177; as a result, the invaders may have had the leisure to build, where necessary, in stone from the first. The uneven distribution is paralleled in southern Scotland, where mottes are specially thick on the ground in Galloway, an area where Anglo-Norman penetration met stiff native resistance.

One common feature of the Irish countryside may provide us with some clues about the environment inhabited by landholding settlers below the castle-builders in wealth. There have so far been identified about 750 moated sites, of a type familiar in England and north-west Europe in the period 1150–1350. No fewer than 382 exist in the four counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford and Tipperary, and these have recently been analysed. The moats, which have an average width of from three to seven metres, typically enclose an area of about half an acre. The function of the enclosures, which will once have possessed fences and gates, was to prevent animals from straying and to protect them from predators. The sites await archaeological investigation, but some show traces of square buildings. Possibly certain of them were baronial hunting-lodges or monastic granges. But it seems likely that many represent the residences of substantial freeholders who could not

afford to build castles, yet lived in areas where some provision for defence was necessary. The Irish sites, more so than those in England, seem to have been chosen with protection in mind: they are often in upland areas; the moat may enclose a raised platform; and a commanding view, as well as a reliable water-supply, seems to have influenced their location. They are typical of zones mid-way between the river-valleys which attracted castles, and the hills and glens where only the hardiest settlers penetrated. Unfortunately we are as yet unable to date them accurately. It has been suggested that a cluster in County Wexford should be associated with woodland clearance and an expansion of settlement organised in the time of Earl Richard Marshal (1231–4); and it may be that moated sites represent a secondary phase of colonisation.

The replacement of mottes by stone castles was a gradual business; and since the building of a castle was exceedingly expensive, beyond the means of all but the royal government and the greater lords, there were many more mottes than there were to be stone castles. Lesser lords no doubt occupied motte-and-bailey structures for longer than did their more wealthy fellows, or replaced them merely with stone houses. The castles erected in Ireland in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries were, with a few exceptions, smaller than their English and continental counterparts; but on the whole they followed contemporary architectural and engineering trends. Those built before about 1250 usually had keeps, whereas those of later date relied instead on strong outer walls which had towers, in particular high gate-towers, incorporated in them. The massive castle at Carrickfergus, with its rectangular keep, was almost certainly begun by John de Courcy between 1180 and 1204; while the castle at Dundrum, County Down, which had a cylindrical keep, was probably the work of Hugh de Lacy during his first period as earl of Ulster (1205–10). The motte-and-bailey fortress at Trim was replaced in the early thirteenth century by a large stone castle with a square keep and substantial curtain walls; the keep was extended upwards, and possibly provided with its unusual square angle-towers, by Geoffrey de Joinville, who seems to have used it as a regular residence between the 1250s and his retirement from the world in 1307. The royal administration built the impressive keepless castle, with its double moat, at Roscommon around 1269, restoring and strengthening it during the 1280s after the ravages of Aedh O'Connor. Magnates who constructed castles at this period often built in a similar manner: Thomas de Clare's castle at Quin (*c.*1277–80), and that of Richard de Burgh at Ballymote in Sligo (*c.*1300) were both keepless. The thirteenth century thus saw the landscape of Ireland dramatically marked by the power of the new aristocracy.

The construction of strong-points went hand-in-hand with the apportioning of land to lords' kinsmen, followers and associates. These men expected to be rewarded; more important, territory was of little use without the presence of vassals to control and exploit it, and delegation was a characteristic feature of the period. In Meath, for example, the *Song of Dermot* records the establishment of sub-tenant families, some of which were to survive to form the gentry of the late medieval and early modern county: Richard le Fleming at Slane, Adam de Feypo in Skreen, Hugh de Hussey in Galtrim, William le Petit at Mullingar, Robert de Lacy at Rathwire, Geoffrey de Costentin at Kilbixy, Richard de Tuyt at Granard, and many more besides. One of the most important tasks still awaiting Irish historians is the systematic detection of the origins of such men in England and Wales, and ultimately in northern France and Flanders, a line of investigation that has shed much light on the contemporary Anglo-Norman colonisation in Scotland. For the moment, however, we are dependent on fragmentary impressions, which tend to confirm what we should expect: that many of the sub-tenant families came to Ireland from areas where their overlords were influential. Adam de Feypo (or Futipo), for example, who prospered in Meath, was in 1166 a minor landholder of the de Lacy honor of Weobley in Herefordshire. And the de Valles (later Walls), who came from Dale in Pembrokeshire, gained their foothold in Wexford by surrendering lands in Wales to the Marshal earls of Pembroke and lords of Leinster. The vassals held their lands in return for precise levels of military service. In Irish conditions the military aspect of lordship was not merely notional. We find, to take just one example, Geoffrey de Joinville and his barons of the lordship of Trim making a detailed agreement about the sharing between them of preys captured in the border warfare that they took absolutely for granted.

From the earliest stage secular authority was reinforced by the presence of the Church, to which the new landholders gave (or in a disguised fashion, sold) endowments. The granting of tithes from a lord's demesnes to a particular church established a close link between lay and ecclesiastical organisation, often symbolised by the proximity of castles and church buildings; it was by such grants that parishes – in origin the districts over which churches had the right of tithe – were created. Parochial organisation in Skreen, for instance, first began when Adam de Feypo assigned tithes to the chapel of St Nicholas which he had founded at his castle there. Lords also gave endowments to monasteries with which they had connections, so extending into Ireland the complex web of monastic property which since 1066 had stretched from Normandy into England, Wales and Scotland. The Augustinian houses of

Llanthony prima, in Monmouthshire, and Llanthony secunda, near Gloucester, had a close association with the de Lacys; both were richly endowed in Meath, not just by Hugh de Lacy and his sons, but also by many of their vassals. Early in the thirteenth century, for example, William le Petit, constable of Meath, who had gone to Ireland with Hugh, gave churches to both priories, 'for the salvation of my soul and those of my ancestors and my heirs, and for the salvation of the soul of my lord, Hugh de Lacy'.[6] New religious houses were also established in Ireland. In 1193 John de Courcy's Norse wife, Affreca of Man, founded Grey Abbey in County Down for the Cistercians. Nor were new foundations the monopoly of the greatest families. The Costentins founded the Augustinian priory of Tristernagh at Kilbixy in western Meath, granting it lands there, and also in the county and city of Dublin. Throughout the lordship of Ireland ecclesiastical estates were interspersed with those of secular landholders; the Church provided careers for the younger sons and brothers of the settler lords; and the alliance, while it exacerbated the tensions between the Anglo-Norman and Gaelic ecclesiastical establishments, strengthened the colonial grip on the more heavily occupied parts of the country.

The magnates needed vassals to hold their land; by the same token, great lords, sub-tenants and ecclesiastics all needed labour if their acquisitions were to be exploited economically. The immigration of large numbers of peasants marks the experience of Anglo-Norman Ireland off from the earlier Norman conquest of England. In England a new ruling element had displaced much of the existing landholding class, but had been content to divert to itself the labour and produce of the indigenous rural population. When the Normans had expanded into Wales, however, they had established new communities, which came to be known as 'Englishries', in the valley floors, while confining the Welsh inhabitants, by and large, to the uplands. The explanation was, not that the Normans were more hostile towards the Welsh than towards the Anglo-Saxons, but rather that Welsh rural society, with its pastoral emphasis, was not geared to the satisfactory working of arable land. In much of England, by contrast, there were village communities whose inhabitants produced the grain, especially wheat, that was the foundation of the economy of northern Europe. To Anglo-Norman eyes, Ireland presented a picture not dissimilar to Wales: proper use of the potentially-productive lowlands of Meath, Leinster and Munster required a population equipped to grow the corn-crop on which the profitability of newly-acquired lordships depended; it may also have re-

quired a larger population than those regions possessed in the twelfth century.

The process of rural settlement in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries is hidden from us. It may be that, as in Germany and Spain, some of the greater lords used agents or sub-contractors to publicise new communities and arrange the movement of people; but there seems to be no direct evidence of this. All we have are occasional royal charters that speak of magnates going 'to colonise' their lands.[7] The *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh*, describing Thomas de Clare's later efforts to secure his hold on Thomond, may convey something of the likely atmosphere:

> at Bunratty in the interval de Clare had built a castle of dressed stone ...; this settlement then he, with common English so many as by bribes and purchase he was able to retain, proceeded to inhabit. ... after expulsion of the ancient dwellers on the soil of Tradree, he assigned that region to plebeian English and the kerne of the Gael of his allies, to squat there.[8]

There is no doubt, however, that Ireland displayed features characteristic of other 'new' areas of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. One of these was the comparative lightness of labour services. Occasional ploughing, hoeing, reaping and carting services were required of unfree tenants and also of some small freemen; but there is almost no trace of the week-work on the lord's demesnes typical of English villein-tenures. Also typical is the frequency with which settlements in Ireland were given the status of boroughs. By the late twelfth century burgesses enjoyed a freer existence, less hedged about by lordly interference than was normal in older communities. In England, Wales, and now in Ireland, these privileges were often associated with the Law of Breteuil, which took its name from a small town in northern France. William fitz Osbern, the lord of Breteuil, had come to England with the Conqueror, who gave him extensive lands on the southern Welsh borders. William gave the customs of Breteuil to his town of Hereford, and they served as a model for urban privileges elsewhere. Borough custom involved a range of liberties that might vary in detail from place to place. Usually such liberties included the possession of a burgage-plot at a rent of one shilling a year, freedom to pass the plot on to one's heirs without the payment of any render to the lord, freedom to sell the plot without hindrance, and freedom for the community to regulate its affairs in the hundred court of the borough without being compelled to plead in the lord's court elsewhere. A recent study has identified no fewer than 172 boroughs in medieval Ireland, which possessed charters from magnates or from the king. Some of

these, as we shall see, developed into towns; many others were never more than small agricultural settlements, dignified by urban privileges.

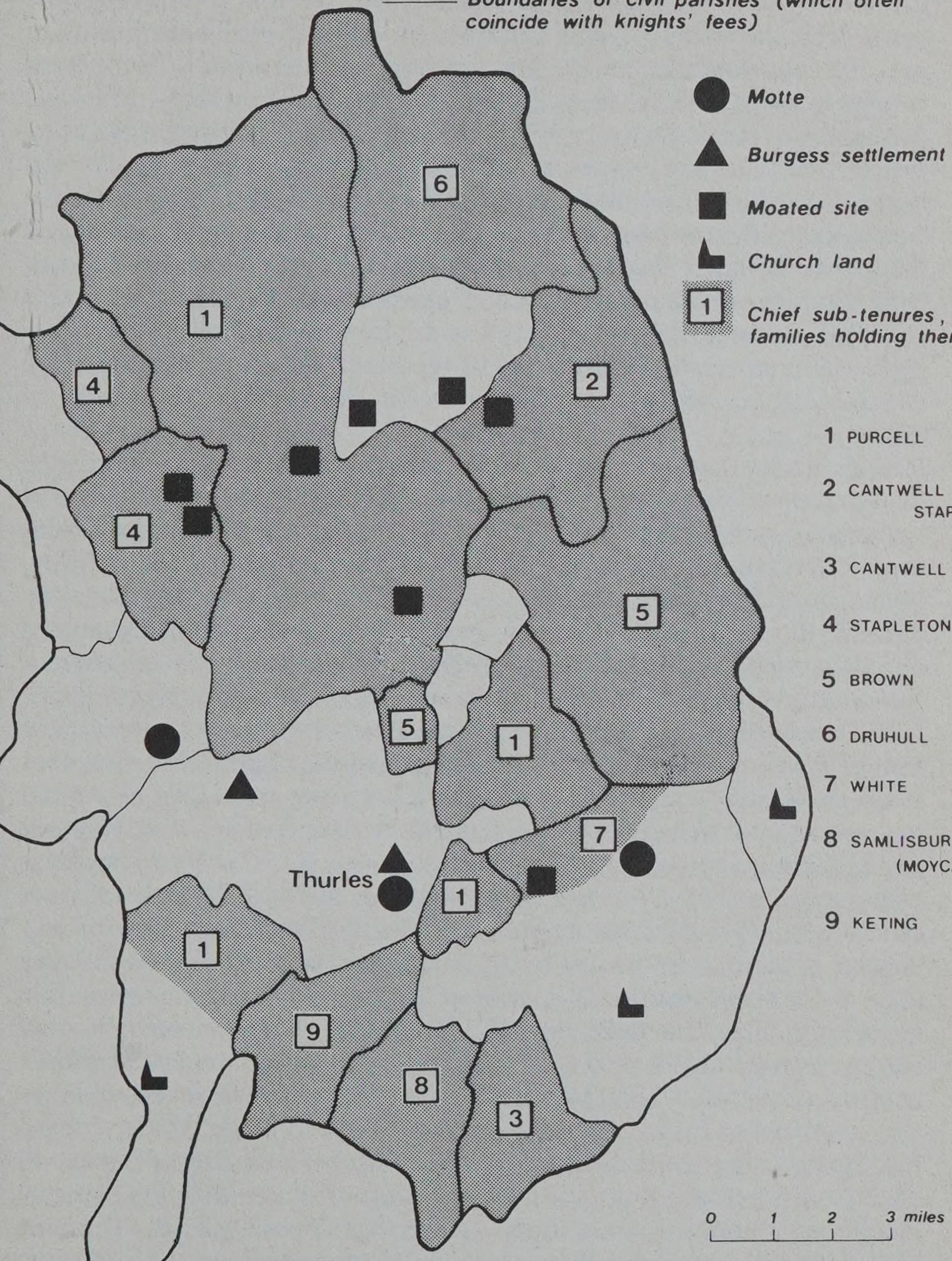
One of the few regions of Ireland where the pattern of colonisation has been closely examined is Meath, a rich and accessible area where settlement was in places intensive. In Meath there were twelve major boroughs, five of which (Trim, Kells, Navan, Athboy and Drogheda) were walled; there were at least ninety-eight other settlements, which included small boroughs such as Colpe in the barony of Duleek, as well as the much more numerous manorial villages without borough status. The distribution of settlement was affected by obvious influences, such as altitude and defensibility, which gave modern County Meath a distinct advantage over Westmeath. At a more local level, there were other forces at work. Navigable rivers, such as the Boyne or Blackwater, attracted settlements, especially at fordable points; and the existence of Gaelic monastic houses – as at Trim, Slane or Duleek – was also significant, not least since these tended to occupy what were in any case good sites. A great many of the villages and smaller boroughs were deserted in the later middle ages or after, and may now be marked only by a motte or ruined church. It is a departed world, which is only beginning to be recreated for us through a combination of field-studies, aerial photography, and the critical use of documents.

One early-thirteenth-century source provides an impression of the vigorous enterprise of the period. This is the pipe roll of the Dublin exchequer for 1211–12, a copy of a lone survivor of a series of official documents long since lost. By a fortunate chance it dates from the time when King John had seized the de Lacy lordships of Meath and Ulster into his own hands, and as a result brings us closer to the countryside than would otherwise be the case. Lords and their ministers had already done much towards organising rural life for their own advantage. The king's steward of Meath accounted for some 20,000 bushels of wheat, of which nearly half had to be reserved for the next sowing, since medieval yields were low; he also accounted for 30,000 bushels of oats, of which slightly more than half was held back. He dealt with large quantities of stock, above all cattle, many head of which were taken from the forfeited lands of Walter de Lacy and his tenants, such as Richard de Tuyt and Hugh de Hussey, and captured as preys or levied as fines from the Irish. Walter and his men had also possessed numerous oxen, the normal plough-beasts of the period; the steward, into whose hands they had come, redistributed most of them to the manorial centres: for instance, Trim was supplied with oxen sufficient for nine eight-ox teams, Rathwire and Nobber for six each, and Kells for two. Wool-production was also well established: Richard de Tuyt,

for example, had owned 750 sheep.[9] The roll reveals the construction of new mills (whether for grinding corn or for fulling cloth), new granges, new bridges, new lime-kilns, new fish-ponds, as well as castles and town-walls, at places as far apart as Antrim, Downpatrick, Carlingford, Ardmayle and Limerick.

The character of settlements as they had come to exist a century and more after the invasion is revealed, in a patchy but invaluable way, by manorial documents, especially extents made by lords themselves or by the royal government. No more in Ireland than anywhere else was there a 'typical' manor; it will bring us closer to realities if we consider a handful of examples than if we attempt schematic generalisations. In 1303 an extent was made of the manorial barony of Thurles in County Tipperary, which belonged to Edmund Butler, a descendant of Theobald Walter, and father of the first earl of Ormond.[10] Among the major free tenants, who owed rents, military service, and attendance at the lord's court, were members of many of the leading Tipperary families: Sir Hugh and Robert Purcell, Sir John Druhull, Sir William St Leger, William and Roger Cantwell, Richard White of Arklow (another Butler manor), Sir James Keting, Richard son of Miles de Burgh, Grimbald de Samlisbury, and John Haket. At Thurles itself and at Ballihail there were burgess communities. Grimbald de Samlisbury held one knight's fee in Moycarkey of the manor of Thurles, owing for it, in addition to the normal services and in testimony to the insecurity of the area, the service of five armed men 'to keep the peace' whenever hue and cry was raised. The survival of an extent of Grimbald's own subordinate manorial organisation in Moycarkey, made in 1304, enables us to descend to a lower level in the hierarchy of dependence.[11] Grimbald, whose ancestors had evidently not possessed the resources to build a castle, had a house, courtyard, garden and mill. He retained in his own hands 248 acres of arable, twelve acres of meadow and pasture, a wood of twenty acres, and a rabbit-warren. He held a manor court which his tenants were bound to attend. They ranged from major freeholders, such as William Cantwell and Lady Sibyl de Salle who had a hundred acres or more, through small freeholders with less than ten acres, to cottagers with no land at all. Perhaps the most striking thing about the tenants is that of the sixty-two who are listed, no fewer than fifty-nine have names that suggest an English or Welsh, rather than an Irish, origin. Certainly some Irishmen may have taken English names; but the weight of evidence of this and other similar documents points to a sizeable immigration by, in the contemptuous words of the *Caithréim*, plebeian English.

The character of small burgess communities can be illustrated from



The Manor of Thurles in the early fourteenth century

many sources. Among them is a partition, made in 1341, of four Limerick manors between the sisters and heirs of John Multon of Egremont, which reveals the lands and services assigned to Elizabeth Multon and her husband Walter de Bermingham at Aherlow.[12] This serves further to emphasise the point that peasant settlement was by no means confined to eastern Ireland. Walter and Elizabeth were given seven free tenants, thirty-seven burgesses, and ten cottagers. The names of the burgesses include John Brasse, Roger Chepman, Simon Warram, John Backystyre, Adam Stede, William Stabiller, Roger Pettit, Roger de Westoun, Richard Payn, William Selman, and William Beauchope, together with others that suggest an English origin. The only indubitable Irishman among the thirty-seven was Finnor McBrene, who was presumably a member of the clan of the Mac Briens of Aherlow. Most of the cottagers too appear to have non-Gaelic christian names and surnames.

The district dependent on the manorial centre of Aherlow contained distinctively Irish regions, grouped by those that drew up the partition under the heading 'land of the Irish'. There Walter and Elizabeth were given 'a certain township (*villata*) called "the bottom of Ballykely", the township of Kilglyn, and the township of Clonmalyn, as they lie in the parts of the Irish, with all woods, groves, meadows, feedings, pastures, marshes, turf-bogs, fishponds ...'.[13] If the phraseology may be taken at face-value, it suggests that the 'land of the Irish' lay, as we might expect, in the areas that were least promising agriculturally. The general question of the position of the Irish inhabitants in the regions that saw considerable settlement is an important, and obscure, one. The new lords had, of course, not the slightest interest in slaughtering or driving out the existing rural population, as distinct from the Gaelic aristocracy. Manpower remained a precious commodity, and immigration was not on such a scale that landholders could afford to dispense with any source of labour and wealth. Irish families and small communities stayed on under the lordship and protection of the newcomers. We repeatedly meet the term 'betagh' (*betagius*) in the sources. It now seems securely established that this word represented the Irish *biatach*, or 'food-provider', which described a class of semi-freemen whose function had been to make food-renders to the native nobility. Under Anglo-Norman rule the word 'betagh' seems to have been used more loosely to describe Irish tillers of the soil who were regarded as unfree dependants, hereditarily bound to their lords, rather like English villeins. The pipe roll of 1211–12 confirms that the Anglo-Normans valued their betaghs: corn was provided by the steward of Meath 'to relieve the poor betaghs of Rathwire'; and the steward also gave thirty-two cows to the betaghs

of Kells, 'who had been despoiled by Mac Mahon and burdened by carting-service'.[14]

In the thirteenth century the betaghs formed a distinct element in rural society, living in their own hamlets. Investigations in Meath have disclosed settlements of the 'clachan' type – that is, small, irregular clusters of dwellings. These appear to have been associated with, but apart from, the sites of boroughs and villages; and they may well represent the settlements of betagh communities. These Irish family-groups had their own allotments of land, from which they supported themselves; they were also available to do services for their lords. On the de Burgh manor of Lisronagh, north of Clonmel, there were in 1333 forty-three betagh households, holding a total of 560 acres; for each acre Elizabeth de Burgh received an annual rent of fourteen pence. The betaghs appear to have resided on six granges distributed within a radius of about a mile of Lisronagh castle. They owed ploughing, reaping, hay-making and carrying service. Elizabeth was an absentee, but when her ministers were in residence, the betaghs were to supply fuel free of charge, and to make meat, fowl, corn and straw available for purchase if required. Like villeins in England, they owed a heriot, consisting of either their best beast or twelvepence.[15] Possibly some betagh settlements that existed at the time of the organisation of manors may have been absorbed as they stood; but it is more probable that, as English and Welsh colonists moved in, the native cultivators were shifted to wherever it was convenient for the lord to have them.

Rural settlement in Ireland was diverse and complex; and what we have said above has done no more than touch hastily and rashly on a series of matters, any one of which poses enough problems to occupy a scholarly lifetime. There is a particular point that requires emphasis. Our examples, naturally perhaps, have been taken from regions that saw considerable immigration from outside Ireland. But the intensity of settlement, the social complexion, and the modes of magnate control varied from area to area. This is apparent if we compare, for example, the neighbouring royal manors of Bray and Obrun in modern County Wicklow, as they are revealed by extents made in 1311.[16] Bray included a prosperous belt of coastal lowland; it possessed a stone house, various English free tenants, and a burgess settlement with thirty-two households. Obrun, in the uplands to the west, was almost entirely Irish in population: it had three English free tenants, but besides them only twenty-two betagh households, and nine cottagers. Here a veneer of royal lordship had been extended over an existing social and economic structure. As we move to the northern and western extremities of the colony, we encounter a world where Anglo-Norman lords concentrated,

to a greater degree than their eastern counterparts, upon exacting services and renders from a largely undisturbed Gaelic society. The extents of the de Burghs' lands in Connacht, taken in 1333, freely employ the terms 'cantred', 'theodum' and 'vill'; the impression they leave is of broad swathes of countryside, dependent on castles such as Portumna and Meelick, where a handful of sub-tenants had inserted themselves above the Irish population, and tapped its wealth. Alongside these landholders were Gaelic leaders, such as the O'Kellys and O'Maddens, who continued to do the same thing, while owing rent to their colonial overlords.[17] The fate of the various parts of the lordship of Ireland in the fourteenth century was to depend on many things; but among them was undoubtedly the relative extent and intensity of the original settlement.

Medieval Ireland was overwhelmingly rural, as was England. But a notable feature of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the growth of towns. The Anglo-Norman settlement coincided almost exactly with the period when the foundation of new towns, and the giving of formal recognition to those that had already come to exist, was at its height in England and Wales. It was an age when lords and kings grasped that more could be gained by favouring communities that might generate wealth than by insisting, against the grain, on older dues and rights. Initially the awarding of a borough charter might do no more than encourage a handful of victuallers and craftsmen to congregate in the vicinity of a castle, in order to provide supplies and services for the garrison. But every burgess community contained within it the possibility of growth. Though many Irish boroughs failed, some developed sufficiently as local centres of trade and crafts to become poised (to the categorising modern eye) on the boundary between a village and a town; others, through a combination of the advantages of their sites and the power of their lords, grew into urban centres possessing not only charters, but also walls, a considerable number of inhabitants whose incomes did not arise chiefly from agriculture, and a feeling of difference from the rural society that surrounded them. If successful country towns were tiny by twentieth-century standards – containing perhaps a thousand souls – that made them not dissimilar to many of their English and Welsh counterparts.

A prime example of urban success was New Ross, at the confluence of the Nore and Barrow just above Waterford. New Ross owed its prosperity partly to the favour of the Marshals – William Marshal built a splendid bridge there before 1210 – and of their successors, the Bigod lords of Carlow; equally significant, it was in a perfect position to ex-

ploit an agricultural hinterland whose communications with the outside world were provided by the rivers that the town could control. In the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries Waterford had to appeal frequently to the king to prevent much of its trade being throttled at source. The growth of New Ross is illustrated, vividly and uniquely, by a poem in Anglo-Norman French, recounting the walling of the town in 1265. The building of the walls took place against the background of the feud between Maurice fitz Maurice and Earl Walter de Burgh, which threatened to throw much of Ireland into turmoil. The poet, who was possibly an English or Anglo-Irish Franciscan, recounts the story thus:

> the townsmen were fearful of a war
> that was going on between two barons;
> here are their two names in writing:
> lord Maurice and lord Walter.
> I shall tell you the name of the town:
> 'Ros' you are to call it,
> it is the new bridge of Ross.
> What they feared was that they had no town walls.
> To their council one day they went
> and the whole commons assembled.
> They made a resolution thus:
> that a wall of stone and mortar
> they would build around the town,
> for that war was causing them concern.
> At Candlemas they began;
> to mark out the fosse they went;
> how the wall was to go,
> the chief citizens went to mark it out.[18]

When hired labourers proved useless, we are told, the burgesses agreed to build the walls themselves, tackling the job on a rota, by which the various trades (vintners, mercers, merchants, drapers, tailors, dyers, tanners, butchers, and so forth) would work on particular days of the week. Even if much of this is fanciful, there is no reason to doubt that the walling took place for the motives described. The poem provides a credible picture of a self-conscious community, used to managing its own affairs, and possessing a well-developed suspicion of the powerful lords who dominated the countryside.

Apart from the coastal cities, the town about which we know most is Kilkenny, which was probably the largest inland town in Ireland. Much of our information comes from the *Liber Primus Kilkenniensis*, a volume still in the possession of the municipality, which contains

transcripts of early charters, and records of court proceedings from the early fourteenth to the mid-sixteenth century, together with a handful of items of earlier and later date. Kilkenny's development as an Anglo-Norman town may be dated to 1192, when William Marshal began to replace Strongbow's motte with a stone castle. Within a decade the Marshal's seneschal of Leinster, Geoffrey fitz Robert, lord of nearby Kells, had established a burgess settlement and fixed its rents. From the period 1207–11 dates the first charter preserved in the *Liber*.[19] In it William gave his men of Kilkenny a number of common but important privileges associated with the Law of Breteuil; he also freed them of all tolls and charges throughout his lands (that is, throughout not only all Leinster, but also Pembroke and other places in South Wales, England and Normandy); and he assured them some control over transactions, for no outsiders were to sell bread or wine in Kilkenny for more than forty days without their leave. The burgesses were in addition allowed to have a guild merchant; in other words, they could form themselves into a closed body, to which newcomers could gain admission only with their agreement, and after paying a fee. In another entry in the *Liber*, dating from 1230, we have a glimpse of the way in which the townsmen came to arrange their own government. On 27 September in that year the community met and agreed that every Michaelmas they would gather 'to elect their sovereign and the twelve who are best, and can govern and counsel their sovereign to the profit of the said community, and are sworn to do this'.[20] The town was a self-governing community which could, under its sovereign and council, make by-laws and tax itself in local emergencies.

Kilkenny's development sprang not just from its status as one of the chief centres of the lordship of Leinster and the episcopal capital of the diocese of Ossory, but also from its situation on the Nore, in the midst of a good agricultural area. It was a natural point for the collection of the wool, hides, corn and other produce that would find their way down-river to New Ross and Waterford. At the same time, as a place of lay and ecclesiastical administration, it was a centre of consumption, providing income and employment for craftsmen and purveyors of foodstuffs. The town's success is reflected in its church buildings. During the first half of the thirteenth century the existing cathedral was replaced by the present St Canice's, arguably the most beautiful and certainly the best-preserved of Irish medieval cathedrals. It is small by English standards, but large by Irish; and although its architects built simply, they made skilful use of light and space. In Kilkenny, William Marshal founded a priory of St John the Evangelist for the Augustinian canons, and also a Hospital of St John the Baptist for the military order

of St Thomas of Acre, which had recently been established in the Holy Land in commemoration of Thomas Becket. More significant as a pointer to the urban character of Kilkenny was the presence of both the new mendicant orders, the Dominicans and Franciscans, which gravitated towards towns. The Dominican priory of the Holy Trinity was founded about 1225 by William Marshal II; and it was there that his brother Richard, wounded on the Curragh in 1234, was buried. It may have been Richard himself who founded the Franciscan friary at Kilkenny.

Other Irish towns have left less documentation. In the north, the most notable centre was Carrickfergus, about whose development archaeology is beginning to teach us a good deal; its main outside contacts were with south-west Scotland and north-west England. Carrickfergus from 1264 was a de Burgh town; so too was Galway, the most significant borough in Connacht, which had direct links with the continent. In the south, Youghal which belonged successively to the Geraldines of Offaly and the de Clares, was a considerable wool-exporting centre. More typical than these were the many small inland market towns, such as Trim, Kildare, Clonmel and Mallow, which were primarily involved in local buying and selling, but also formed links in the commercial chain that led to the coastal cities.

When Henry II reserved the cities to himself, he did something entirely natural. The Ostman settlements represented Ireland's chief connection with the world beyond its shores; viewed from England, they were the obvious entry-points into the country; they were also rich, and (to outside eyes) less strange than the Gaelic areas. Each of the cities has its own individual history; the chief common factor is that those histories have until lately been sadly neglected by professional historians. Recently, however, fresh light has been thrown on Dublin, and it is possible to make some provisional comments on the place of one city in the general pattern of colonisation.

At the time of its occupation by Strongbow, Dublin was already an old settlement. It had been a monastic centre before the Viking period; subsequently the Norwegians built a thriving commercial town, which had its own mint and widespread international contacts. The river Liffey provided a good harbour, while the higher ground in the vicinity of the later Dame Street was a ready-made defensive site. In 1170 the course of the Liffey ran further south than is the case today, and one of the contributions of the Anglo-Norman settlers was to reclaim land in the area of the modern southern quays. The heart of the medieval city remained to the south of the river, though there were settlements and important religious houses – including the Dominican priory on the site

of the Four Courts – on the northern bank. It was on the strategic ridge to the south that King Henry constructed his wooden hall in 1171–2; and there in the early thirteenth century was built the stone castle which, with many additions and alterations, was to serve as the centre of English administration in Ireland from the time of King John down to 1922. During his stay Henry had granted Dublin the first of its numerous charters. In it he gave his new city to the men of Bristol – a place with which Dublin already had many links – to colonise, and to hold on the same terms as they held Bristol itself. The latter provision implied primarily that Dublin should have a merchant guild with a monopoly over trade. Henry's grant was confirmed by John when he arrived as lord of Ireland in 1185. Seven years later, during the reign of Richard I, a fresh charter from John set out the privileges of the men of Dublin in some detail, delimiting the boundaries of the city, and emphasising the exclusion of outsiders from its trade. The references in this charter of 1192 to building in 'vacant places', and to structures 'upon the water' and 'upon the bank', suggest that reclamation and settlement were in full swing.[21]

Whereas for the personnel of rural settlement we have to rely on late evidence, for Dublin we are fortunate in possessing lists of those enrolled as members of the guild merchant, and as free citizens, during the late twelfth and earlier thirteenth centuries. These documents, though published (not altogether satisfactorily) more than a century ago, still await full analysis. In England similar material has been used to study the recruitment of the inhabitants of towns. The general conclusion seems to be that most boroughs drew men chiefly from their own neighbourhoods, though London's citizens had, as might be expected, more diverse origins. The first Dublin roll, which may date from 1200 or even before, contains in excess of 1,600 names. Many men were known simply by their trade, or by their father's christian name; but a fair number had names that disclose their places of origin. The inhabitants of Dublin who had gained admission to the guild merchant included a handful of Irishmen, some men of Norse ancestry, and some from the Netherlands and from northern France. There were a few Scots and occasional men from north-west England. There were in addition a sizeable number of immigrants from London, and smaller groups from the Home Counties, Northampton and Leicester. But the preponderance of names point to origins in South Wales and the March, south-western England, and the west Midlands, suggesting that Bristol had made Dublin known throughout its own broad hinterland. There were some immigrants named after Bristol itself, but not many. The most common names to appear are Cardiff, Gloucester and Worcester.

Among the places that contributed three or more names to the list were, in Wales, Haverfordwest, Cardigan, Kidwelly, Pembroke and Brecon; in south-western England, Exeter, Winchester, Bodmin, Taunton, Bath, Dunster, Barnstaple and Marlborough; and in the west Midlands and the Welsh marches, Hereford, Chepstow, Ludlow, Warwick, Oxford, Shrewsbury, Coventry, Weobley, St Briavels and Leominster.[22]

Documents from the first half of the thirteenth century disclose many aspects of Dublin's development. A roll of those admitted to citizenship between 1225 and 1250 shows, amidst the many names from outside Ireland, much evidence of the recruitment of burgesses within the country itself. Some citizens came from quite far afield – from Athlone, the Ards, Lismore, Waterford, Cashel or Cork; others originated from places in the middle distance, such as Drogheda, Trim, Mullingar, Kilkenny or Wexford; many more were drawn from the city's natural neighbourhood – from Clondalkin, Naas, Kildare, Wicklow, Ratoath or Castledermot. Among the 525 names recorded are found most of the crafts and trades common to large medieval towns, and some typical of major regional or national centres: bakers, cooks, spicers, taverners, millers, brewers and fishermen; tailors, dyers, fullers, weavers, skinners, furriers, glovers, hatters and tanners; painters, goldsmiths, scabbard-makers, carpenters, joiners and masons.[23] Dublin's growing population lived in the predictable communities. Within the Anglo-Norman city, men tended to reside in streets occupied chiefly by fellow-members of their trade: the modern Winetavern Street (site of the medieval Guildhall), Fishamble Street and Cook Street, for instance, tell their own tale. There was also a division on national lines, reflected in the separate district known as the *villa Ostmannorum* (Oxmantown), the community of those of Norse descent. Ostmen, like Irishmen, were not excluded from citizenship: the roll of 1225–50 includes 'William the axe-man (*le hachur*) of the town of the Ostmen', and 'Padyn the Irishman, cobbler' (*Padinus Hibernicus sutor*). But such admissions do not seem to have been common. In 1229 Dublin achieved the goal desired by all cities of the period, when Henry III, rather than repay a loan made to his justiciar by the Dubliners, granted them the right to elect a mayor annually. The mayor, in association with a council of twenty-four on the model of London, governed the city and represented it in relations with the crown and with the exterior world at large.

Dublin's wealth arose in part from its domination of the north Leinster hinterland. The two Droghedas (sited on opposite banks of the Boyne) – which began as magnate foundations but came under royal lordship in the early thirteenth century – were the main outlet for the produce of (and chief supplier of the imports consumed by) the Meath-

Louth region; Waterford fulfilled the same role for the Barrow-Nore-Suir basin, Cork for the valley of the Lee, and Limerick for the area around the lower Shannon. Waterford probably had the greatest economic potential, which it was to realise to the full in the late middle ages. But Dublin – like Kilkenny, though on a much grander scale – was a focus of secular and ecclesiastical government. The castle was the home base of the itinerant royal justiciar; in its vicinity were housed the exchequer and the court of common pleas. From 1181 the city was in addition the seat of the powerful Anglo-Norman archbishops, such as John Cumin (d.1212), and his successor Henry of London (d.1228), who served as justiciar from 1213 to 1215 and again from 1221 to 1224, and whose name stands second only to that of Stephen Langton of Canterbury in the list of witnesses to Magna Carta.

The social and political significance of Dublin, which was closely intertwined with its economic growth, is well illustrated by its ecclesiastical buildings. When John Cumin arrived to succeed Archbishop Laurence O'Toole, there already existed a cathedral of Christ Church, served by Augustinian canons following the rule of Arrouaise. John, like Anglo-Norman prelates elsewhere in Ireland, soon set about reconstructing the church in a more modern and imposing fashion. Building seems to have continued from the 1180s to about 1240, and it included work in both the late Romanesque and early Gothic styles. Christ Church shows traces of the handiwork of masons from the west country and from the Worcester area, reflecting the general pattern of immigration from England, and also perhaps Cumin's own association with the abbey of Glastonbury. Dublin was thus provided with a cathedral which, though it could not rival the greater English cathedrals in scale or workmanship, was grandiose indeed by Irish standards. Christ Church had, however, one drawback from the standpoint of the administrator-bishops of the king's selection who were to occupy the metropolitan see almost continuously during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: since it was a monastic cathedral, the members of its chapter were not available to undertake secular administrative tasks. It seems to have been for this reason, as well as out of a shrewd desire to identify himself with Ireland's patron saint, that Cumin encouraged the development of the church of St Patrick, a short stroll away. As early as 1191–2 he had endowed it with prebends, or livings capable of supporting a college of canons who were not in regular orders. Soon St Patrick's was a cathedral in all but name. Archbishop Henry equipped it with the dignities of dean, chancellor, treasurer and precentor appropriate to a non-monastic cathedral church; and before his death he had begun the building of the fabric which, much vandalised over the

centuries, still stands. Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the canonries of St Patrick's were used, rather like those of St Paul's in London, to support ministers of the king, many of whom were clerks. Among the other foundations testifying to Dublin's importance were the Augustinian abbey of St Thomas, established by Henry II in 1177 as one of many acts of contrition for the death of Becket, and the Priory of St John at Kilmainham, founded around 1174 by Strongbow for the Knights Hospitallers of Jerusalem. Kilmainham came to be the head of a network of Hospitaller houses in Ireland. Like St Patrick's, it was closely associated with royal government, especially in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when several of its priors held the chancellorship and even the justiciarship of Ireland.

The last paragraph may seem to have taken us far from our original theme. But that is not really so. Settlement in Ireland embraced many things: the planting of English and Welsh cultivators – some possessing burgess status, some not – on Irish soil; the occupation of large parts of the country by a new ruling class, some of whose members were sufficiently wealthy to build the castles that remain as a visible reminder of their power, while others could manage only a moated house that has left little trace on the ground; the immigration of merchants, small tradesmen and artisans into the major urban centres, which expanded in order to accommodate them; the arrival of foreign bishops, monks and priests, and the erection of the new buildings that they considered appropriate for the worship of God; and the gradual entrenchment in Dublin of a small but influential ministerial establishment. Colonial Ireland was as varied socially as it was scattered geographically.

5 English Institutions

The period of settlement and the decades that followed saw the implantation in Ireland of English law and institutions. In this respect as in so many others, the invasion and colonisation occurred at a crucial time. Just as the arrival of the new ruling groups should be seen in the context of the scattering of the upper classes of northern France, and the more general colonising movement against the background of rising population and effective seigniorial enterprise, so the growth of law and government was in harmony with a European trend towards closer definition of custom and greater elaboration of administration. This occurrence, itself connected with a restricted but highly significant spread of education and literacy, is visible in places as different as the papal curia and the courts of the French higher nobility. In England, where there was a tradition of kingly government going back to the tenth century, it was most notably a royal affair.

The arrival of conquerors did not necessarily bring in its train new systems of government. In the earlier middle ages invaders typically absorbed much of what they found in the areas they came to rule. Such had been the case with the Germanic kings who displaced Roman authority in Italy, Spain and southern Gaul in the fifth and sixth centuries. The Normans were themselves products of a similar process. Normandy, though ruled from 911 by a Danish ducal dynasty, was in its customs and institutions by 1066 French rather than Scandinavian. When the Normans acquired Sicily, they exploited the remnants of Byzantine and Islamic government. In England they inherited the powers of the Anglo-Saxon monarchy. In Wales, the political fragmentation of Welsh society was perpetuated in the patchwork of lordships of South Wales and the March; and in these lordships there emerged local blends of Anglo-Norman and Welsh custom. The Irish experience was not totally different. We have seen that the territorial settlement tended to follow the lines of existing political divisions. Moreover from the early thirteenth century, Anglo-Norman lords in Ireland exploited rights of billeting, which seem to have been normal throughout the Celtic areas of the British Isles, in order to support their soldiers, and began to turn them into the financial renders that came to be known in the late middle ages as 'coign'. But at the level of royal government there were almost no links with the Irish past.

The reasons for this discontinuity are complicated, but two explanations stand out. Whereas the magnates could in some respects inherit the position of their Gaelic predecessors, there was little that the king could take over: no monarchy of a recognisable late-twelfth-century type, and in consequence no stable scheme of allegiances and no administration. The absence of an Irish kingship equipped with useful institutions such as Edward the Confessor had bequeathed to William I left the new lord of Ireland little choice but to make a fresh start. Secondly, the establishment of the colony took place a hundred years after the Norman incursions into Wales. In the time of Henry II and John the common law of England and the scale of royal administration were growing fast, and government was more pervasive and systematic than it had been in the time of the Conqueror and William Rufus. In short, by the early thirteenth century there was a pattern of English government to which Ireland might be subjected. A similar imposition of English administrative forms was to occur in North Wales after its conquest by Edward I in the 1280s.

If we look forward to 1300, we encounter in Ireland most of the officers and administrative structures typical of England at the same, or a slightly earlier, period. The king was represented by a justiciar, who was advised by a council which normally included a handful of senior ministers and magnates. The justiciar asserted his authority through assiduous itineration. With him there travelled round the country a chancery, or writing-office, with its chancellor and clerks. At Dublin sat the exchequer, presided over by a treasurer, and possessing barons of the exchequer, chamberlains and lesser officers. There were two central courts of justice: the justiciar's bench, which like the chancery was itinerant; and the common bench, which sat at Dublin. And the justiciar had by this time long been in the habit of summoning parliaments. At local level there existed shires, with their county courts, sheriffs, coroners and other officers. The counties were interspersed with great liberties or franchises – areas where many royal rights were exercised by lords, whose seneschals filled the role that the king's sheriff filled elsewhere. Governmentally as in other ways, Ireland had by the end of the thirteenth century been pulled into the north European mainstream. These developments influenced decisively the future course of Irish history: the country was given, among other things, the rudiments of a scheme of local government, the basis of a parliamentary tradition that was to last until 1800, and an inheritance of common law that has remained unquestioned to the present day.

Yet it is necessary to strike a cautionary note. The reception of Anglo-Norman institutions did not mean that in other ways Ireland

conformed to English models, or that the power of central authority in the lordship was ever equivalent to that of royal government in England. The forms were there; but the substance, though far from negligible, was often weak. In the middle ages royal authority was at its most effective in regions where the king frequently resided, and there is no shirking the importance of the fact that Ireland remained unvisited by a king between 1210 and 1394. Moreover much of the lordship had a frontier character that tended, as in the Welsh marches, to favour magnate power. There is a danger that because royal records are by far our richest source of evidence, especially from 1272 onwards, we may give to the Dublin government a centrality that it never had. The vigour of the colony cannot be measured by the elaboration of its administration: the king's government probably reached its greatest refinement in the later years of Edward I; but at that time the areas with which the administration was closely involved were probably less securely held and less prosperous than they had been sixty years earlier, when government was simpler and less intrusive, and the large, undivided lordships of Leinster and Meath still existed. In this respect there is a significant contrast between Ireland and Scotland. The Scottish kings had borrowed Anglo-Norman practices; these existed alongside older forms of authority, and were adapted freely to political conditions. For instance, under the king there were regional justiciars, who were often local magnates who also wielded power in their own right. In Ireland, where English law and administration were taken over wholesale, there was a deep-seated tension between legal and institutional forms on the one hand, and social and political realities on the other.

The establishment of English institutions in Ireland reflected the underlying assumption that the law of the lordship should be identical to the law of England. The English common law developed rapidly during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, particularly as a result of the work of Henry II, who had been anxious to ensure order, and eager to enjoy the prestige and revenue that the expansion of the king's part in judicial matters brought with it. Through his itinerant justices, Henry had become increasingly involved in the uncovering and repression of crime. More important, by offering procedures for the swift and effective settlement of disputes over property, he and his successors had drawn to their courts an increasing weight of cases involving the upper levels of society. Since serious disorder was most commonly caused by competition for land and the wealth and honour it implied, the role of the king and his courts in promoting social peace was an important one.

In Ireland the principle of identity of laws found its most coherent expression during King John's visit to the lordship in 1210. We have no strictly contemporary details of what then occurred, but Henry III repeatedly adverted to the fact that his father had decreed that English laws and customs should be observed in Ireland. In 1228 he wrote to the justiciar in terms that make it clear that John had held a formal council on the subject:

> we command you, firmly enjoining that on a certain day and at a certain place you cause to come before you the archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, earls, barons, knights, and all the free tenants and bailiffs of the several counties, and before them cause to be publicly read the charter of the lord King John our father, to which his seal was appended, which he caused to be made and to be sworn to by the magnates of Ireland, concerning the observance of the laws and customs of England in Ireland.[1]

Access to the courts was gained through writs – royal letters in standard forms, initiating a range of legal actions, some of the most important of which had been introduced by Henry II's assizes. The use of royal writs in Ireland is thus a crucial sign that English law was current there. Until the time of John, it seems that those seeking redress had to purchase writs in England or wherever the king happened to be. In 1204, however, John gave his justiciar permission to issue certain writs in Ireland under his own seal; two of them show very well the importance of what was happening. These were the writs known as *novel disseisin* and *mort d'ancestor*, which were necessary to begin King Henry's most successful assizes. *Novel disseisin* was the bedrock of English property law in the thirteenth century. It enabled a man who believed himself to have been dispossessed ('disseised') of his freehold to have an efficient remedy: a jury of knights was asked to state whether he had been in peaceful possession, and whether the defendant had ejected him; if the answer was affirmative, he would be restored by royal authority. This procedure, which allowed none of the delays typical of older legal forms, thus worked to the disadvantage of those who took the law into their own hands. It remained open to the other party to prove that he had in fact a better title, by using the more cumbersome writ of right, which was also made available in Ireland in 1204. But the simplicity and prestige of *novel disseisin* gradually rendered other procedures redundant. *Mort d'ancestor* protected, by a similarly expeditious process, the position of the legal heirs of men who had died in peaceful possession of their property. In 1246 the availability within Ireland of all the rapidly increasing number of English legal procedures was placed

beyond doubt by Henry III when he informed the justiciar, John fitz Geoffrey, that 'the king wills that all writs of common law which run in England should likewise be current in Ireland'.[2] And there is evidence to suggest that a register of English writs may have been sent to the lordship at this time.

Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the law in Ireland was kept in step with English law by another method, the transmission to the lordship of English legislation. It is true that from 1278 at the latest legislation peculiar to Ireland was promulgated in Irish councils and parliaments. On the whole, however, the measures agreed and published there were concerned with administrative organisation, the keeping of the peace, or the regulation of the marches; substantive changes in the law, on the other hand, normally arose outside the lordship. The earliest example of the dispatch of what we should regard as a body of legislation was the transmission of Magna Carta: the version of the Charter approved by the minority government of Henry III shortly after King John's death was sent to Ireland in 1217. The Charter was followed by a long succession of English enactments, beginning with the Statute of Merton of 1236. Most of the important statutes made by Edward I were delivered for publication and observance in Ireland. Sometimes there was a delay; for instance the Statute of Winchester of 1285, the basis of police organisation in later medieval England, was not published in Ireland until 1308. But there are indications that the assumption that the law of Ireland was the law of England was strong enough to bring about the use of certain English measures even without their formal transmission. Administrators in Ireland were anxious that the law should be kept up to date: in the Dublin parliament of 1320, for example, it was decided that the council should review and publish all English legislation, and that anything contained in it that was relevant or useful should be observed in the lordship. From the fifteenth century onwards, the application of English legislation to Ireland was to be controversial, touching as it by then seemed to do upon the respective authority of the English and Irish parliaments. But later controversies are beside the point. In this period legislation was made by the king with the advice of his council, and enforced by his authority, which applied in Ireland just as in England; the extension of English legislation to the lordship raised no questions of constitutional propriety.

Law implied a structure of courts. In the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries many Irish cases were heard in England. This could happen if, for instance, the matter at issue touched the king closely, or if the litigants were important figures. But courts developed in Ireland itself, by stages that we can glimpse only dimly because of the

patchiness of the sources. In twelfth-century England an important role was played by the general eyre, an itinerant commission of justices instructed to deal with both civil and criminal cases, and, in addition, to supervise local officers and enquire into the king's rights. In Ireland under Henry III a group of itinerant justices seem to have constituted the judicial establishment, such as it was. Between 1228 and 1254 we can trace them holding courts at Dublin, Drogheda, Cork and Limerick, and in Tipperary and Connacht. The recurrence of the same names – Walrand of Wellesley was active from 1242 to 1264 – suggests a measure of professionalism. By 1248 there seems also to have been a court of common pleas (dealing, that is, with civil cases) at Dublin. To begin with this Dublin bench was staffed, as had been the practice in England at an earlier period, from the same small reservoir of talent that manned the eyre; and in consequence it adjourned when the judges went on circuit in the localities. But by the 1280s the connection between the bench and the eyre seems to have loosened. The eyre itself, perhaps because like its English counterpart it was overwhelmed by business, petered out as a regular institution soon after the death of Edward I.

The main focus of English law in Ireland came to be, not the sedentary bench, but the chief governor who, like the king he represented, was himself a dispenser of justice. Whereas the king came to exercise his judicial role almost entirely by proxy, the justiciar, operating on a smaller stage, remained active. By the late thirteenth century he presided over a court 'of pleas that follow the justiciar of Ireland', where he was assisted by one subordinate judge, and from 1324 by two. Fortunately we have versions of many of the rolls of the justiciar's court covering the last dozen years of Edward I's reign and the first decade of the reign of Edward II. They record a wide variety of matters. The justiciar heard pleas of the crown, the more important criminal cases – such as homicide, robbery and rape – that could be dealt with only by royal justices. He also entertained common pleas, ranging from the assizes of Henry II to cases of trespass and debt. He reviewed cases heard initially in other courts. And the rolls of his own court were used to record much miscellaneous business transacted before him: instructions to make payments from the treasury, proofs of the age of heirs, commissions appointing royal ministers, and much else besides. The court was in a real sense the pivot of government in Ireland. It travelled the country, amounting in effect to a king's eyre. In 1306, for example, under John Wogan, we find it sitting, between 7 January and 13 July, successively at Drogheda, Ardee, Kells in Meath, Dublin, Leixlip, Dublin, Naas, Dublin, Castledermot, Athy, Dublin, Naas, and then Dublin once more; in the second half of July Wogan set out for Munster, holding

sessions at Cashel, Kilmallock and, on the return journey, Kilkenny; during the autumn he was at war in the Wicklow mountains, and managed only a handful of sittings, at Dublin, Ballymore and Castledermot; and finally, in the last few weeks of the year, he sat at Dublin, Swords, Trim, and then Swords once again.[3] Although the law of Ireland was the common law, it is clear that there were wide differences between its administration in the two countries. The Irish judicial organisation was much smaller than the English, of course. It was also old-fashioned in its dependence on the personal role of the king's representative and the assiduity with which he traversed the countryside.

In most thirteenth-century kingdoms, and notably in France and Germany, the historian's map would mark the lordships of the higher nobility. In England, however, a map of political and administrative divisions would show the shires, the districts within which royal sheriffs operated. The difference highlights the degree to which the king's administration penetrated the English regions, and also the fact that, except in the northern and western extremities, the aristocracy tended to control, not consolidated lordships, but lands scattered in several parts of the country. In the time of Henry III only Durham, ruled by its bishop, and the earldom of Chester (after 1237 in any case in the hands of the royal family) constituted liberties amounting to a whole county. In Ireland too shires developed, and a map of the lordship at the end of the thirteenth century can bear some resemblances to an administrative map of England at the same period. But the contrasts are at least as important. The shiring of Ireland took place very gradually, and was never completed. Every shire contained, or lay adjacent to, Gaelic Irish areas. And a large proportion of the lordship was at all times occupied by great liberties.

The growth of the shire organisation in Ireland was spasmodic, and far from neat. In 1211–12 there were still only three sheriffs – of Dublin, of Waterford and Cork, and of Munster, the last-named being based at Limerick. At this stage the shires were not clearly-delimited territorial units, but rather, fluid regions dependent on the king's cities. By 1232 there was a sheriff of Kerry, by 1233 a sheriff of Louth, and by 1247 a sheriff of Connacht. The second half of the thirteenth century saw the sheriffdom of Munster divide into the separate shires of Limerick and Tipperary, and also the creation of a shire of Roscommon, distinct from that of Connacht, and possibly dating from the rebuilding of the castle there in 1280–1. These shires were added to in

1297, when a reorganisation took place. The lordship of Kildare, which had come into the king's hand, was shired; the de Verdon half of Meath, which had lost its liberty status, was removed from the ambit of the sheriff of Dublin, and erected into a separate county with its court at Kells; and the church lands or 'crosses' of Ulster, which were exempt from the earl's franchisal jurisdiction, were likewise provided with their own sheriff.

Within the shire the sheriff fulfilled the central role. He collected most of the royal revenue; he administered justice, summoning men to the king's courts and gathering juries; he presided over the county court itself, where minor justice was dispensed and a host of administrative tasks were performed; he commanded the *posse*, or levies, of the county in pursuit of malefactors. Most counties were divided into administrative cantreds, the equivalent of the English hundreds. Each cantred had its serjeant who was nominated by the – often hereditary – chief serjeant of the shire, but carried out his local duties under the sheriff's supervision. Side-by-side with the sheriff were the coroners, who kept a record of the cases arising in the county court which the court itself was not competent to hear, and which had to be kept back until the arrival of the eyre or of the justiciar's court; the coroners also performed their more familiar task of holding inquests into cases of sudden death and treasure-trove. Further description of the structure of local government would only confirm that, despite minor differences, it adhered fairly closely to the English pattern.

To turn from the forms of shire government to its personnel and practicalities is to enter a region that is still almost totally unexplored. But it is vital to place institutions in their social setting, and not to rest content with a theoretical description. Even in Dublin, Meath and Louth, the sheriff's work had a strong military aspect. County Dublin possessed its southern mountain frontier; and Meath and Louth, rather than ending in clear boundaries, faded out to the north and west as they encountered the zones of Mac Mahon, O'Reilly or O'Hanlon influence. The county of Roscommon had at best a fleeting existence. Connacht may in theory have been a royal shire rather than a liberty; but it was in essence a de Burgh lordship, and its sheriffs, when they were not de Burgh cadets, were frequently drawn from the leading sub-tenants, such as the de Berminghams and Exeters. In the south-west, the joint shrievalty of Waterford and Cork was granted as an inheritance to Thomas fitz Anthony in 1215. In 1259, together with Kerry, it passed into the hands of John fitz Thomas of Desmond. Although John's grandson and heir lost it, he retained the hereditary chief serjeanty of Waterford and Cork, which passed to his son, the first earl of Desmond.

And when, in 1329, the newly-created earl was given Kerry as a liberty, he also received a fresh grant of the shrievalty of Waterford and Cork. Local government in Ireland everywhere involved war, was in many places fragile, and in others may have been a vehicle of the prestige and power of the magnates who wielded social influence and military might.

The liberties at all periods made up at least half of the territorial area of the lordship. Franchises were not, strictly speaking, regions of private jurisdiction; in thirteenth-century official theory, their lords exercised delegated royal rights, for the proper use of which they were accountable to the king. A great liberty, therefore, appears very much like royal government in miniature. Before 1300, for instance, the liberties of Ulster, Meath and Leinster possessed chanceries and exchequers; and Ulster and Leinster, because of their size, had been divided into shires. It was important both for the standing of the lord and for the convenience of the inhabitants of the franchise that he should gain access to new legal procedures as they developed. Above all in the thirteenth century this meant the authority to hold the assizes of Henry II. We know that these were available in Leinster before 1224 and in Trim by 1257. The Irish liberties, like those of England, were subject to royal control. Except in Meath, the king reserved to himself the four pleas of arson, rape, forstal (assault on the king's highway), and treasure-trove; the officers of the franchise had to serve royal writs when appropriate, though neighbouring sheriffs could not enter in order to do so; if a disappointed litigant procured a royal writ of error, a case might be taken from the liberty court to the king's court; and serious misbehaviour or neglect by a lord or his officers could lead to the seizure of the franchise itself, as happened in the restored liberty of Kildare in 1345, and in Trim on various occasions. The liberties of Ireland were thus part of the common law system, and of the general scheme of royal administration; in this they were unlike the lordships of the Welsh marches, where the common law did not apply, and the king's writ did not run.

But as in the case of shires, we need to set legal theories firmly in the context of political actualities. The sheer number of liberties in Ireland is an accurate indication of the character of the lordship, which knew nucleated magnate supremacies to an extent that the kingdom of England did not. In 1330, when Leinster and Meath had long since been dismembered, there still remained the Leinster successor liberties of Kilkenny, Carlow and Wexford; the liberty of Trim, accounting for half of Meath; the earldom of Ulster; and the recently created or revived liberties of Kildare, Tipperary and Kerry. It was the existence of these large privileged lordships, we may suggest, that gave the royal escheator – the minister responsible for lands and rights coming into the king's

hands through minority, forfeiture or episcopal vacancy – a position of unexpected importance in the late thirteenth and earlier fourteenth centuries. Where a lord was normally resident in Ireland, or took a strong interest in his Irish lands, his liberty rights were a useful complement to a position that was based on other forms of power and influence. This was the case in Ulster under Hugh de Lacy and the de Burghs, in Trim under Geoffrey de Joinville, in Leinster under the Marshals, and, later, in Tipperary under the Butler earls of Ormond or in Kerry under the Geraldine earls of Desmond. It is noticeable that the formal extinction of a liberty did not necessarily alter the underlying realities: the shiring of Kildare after 1345, for example, did not change the fact that the Geraldines of Offaly were overwhelmingly the most important figures in the region.

This fragmented land, where royal control was patchy and often mediated through a territorialised aristocracy, was given some governmental cohesion by the visitations of the justiciar and his court. It was also held together by institutions which drew men to a central point. Of these the most permanent was the exchequer, which sat at Dublin until 1361, when it was briefly and unsuccessfully moved to Carlow, in an attempt to bring it closer to the cities, shires and franchises of the south. In England the exchequer had been the first branch of government to become detached from the king's itinerant household; in the twelfth century it served as the centre of administration when the monarch was on the continent. By the fourteenth century it had been joined at Westminster by the chancery and the two benches. In Ireland much more of the government remained itinerant, and the exchequer was, with the Dublin bench, the only sedentary part of the administration. Its basic task was to receive and disburse the Irish revenues, and – above all – to bring royal ministers, especially the sheriffs, to account. By 1300 it kept four main series of rolls: the receipt and issue rolls which, as their titles suggest, were records of income and expenditure; the memoranda rolls, which recorded outgoing exchequer correspondence, proceedings concerning accounts, and other miscellaneous matters; and the pipe rolls, which contained the final, audited accounts of the king's officers. Each accountable minister was supposed to appear at Dublin twice a year, at Easter and Michaelmas, to make his payments; on the second occasion he was subjected to the process of audit by the treasurer and barons of the exchequer, which would result in the drawing up of the pipe roll account.

The Irish pipe rolls, apart from two which were transcribed before

their destruction in 1922, now exist only in the form of inadequate summaries and extracts. Nonetheless they disclose something of the effectiveness and limitations of royal government, as it attempted to make the localities obedient to central authority. If we take at random the roll for 20 Edward I (1291–2), we find that accounts were recorded for the counties of Connacht, Louth, Tipperary and Dublin, the liberties of Kildare and Wexford, the cities of Cork, Dublin and Waterford, the royal manor of Chapelizod, County Dublin, and for the Irish customs.[4] The roll for the following year has accounts for the shires of Tipperary, Waterford, Limerick and Dublin, the liberty of Carlow, the Louth portion of the dual borough of Drogheda, and again for Chapelizod.[5] An examination of most of the surviving pipe roll evidence will confirm that accounts tended to be made, not annually but more intermittently; and that, on the whole, the further a shire or liberty lay from Dublin, the less frequently its officers accounted. In 1291–2 the sheriff of Connacht made his account for a five-year period, and the city of Waterford for a span of three years. And neither of our rolls contains accounts for Roscommon or Kerry, or for the franchises of Ulster, Trim and Kilkenny. The exchequer undoubtedly kept a watchful eye on much of the lordship outside the far north and west; but it was no well-oiled machine regulating a responsive land.

The other chief agents of unity, ultimately much more important than the exchequer, were councils and parliaments. For centuries in Europe rulers had performed solemn acts with the advice of their great men. In the thirteenth century the term 'parliament' – originally meaning no more than a discussion or parley – was sometimes applied to large, formal sessions of kings' councils. In England under Henry III such parliaments, attended by magnates and leading ministers, acquired a certain regularity; in time of parliament knotty legal matters were dealt with, and petitions from the king's more influential subjects heard. The business was judicial in form but often political in significance, since legal cases frequently concerned property, and petitions asked for the royal grace. In the period 1258–65, when the upper levels of English society were divided into supporters of the king and of the baronial cause, knightly representatives from the counties were summoned to parliamentary assemblies, largely because the factional leaders were seeking support. Edward I in his turn found parliament a useful occasion for the publication of legislation. And in the later years of his reign, when war created a need for taxation and military service, he found it convenient to ask for general subsidies in parliaments attended by knights of the shire and burgesses of the towns, who were empowered to consent on behalf of their communities.

Not dissimilar developments are apparent in thirteenth-century Ireland. In the time of John and Henry III we find references to the 'magnates' or 'barons' of the lordship, who formed a body that could advise the justiciar, or consent – as had been the case in England in the early part of the century – to taxation. In July 1248, for instance, King Henry wrote as follows:

> The king to the barons of Ireland, greeting. We have heard all the matters which your messengers explained on your behalf, and have with due deliberation, and the advice of our council, agreed to part of what they placed before us. But because those messengers told us that they had not full authority from you to finalise the business in hand, unless we granted all that they asked, we are sending under our seal to our dear and faithful John fitz Geoffrey, our justiciar of Ireland, details of the liberties that we are prepared to grant you …; we are ordering him to inform you fully of those details, and to ascertain your opinion; after that, he is to let us know your answer, and the amount you are willing to pay us for those liberties.[6]

We are not told who the 'barons' were, though we know that in 1212 twenty-seven magnates, ranging from William Marshal to the major sub-tenants of Leinster and Meath, had given their formal support to King John. Nor do we know what privileges had been asked for or granted. But the document shows that there was in Ireland a baronial community, capable of corporate action, and meeting in assemblies of the sort that John fitz Geoffrey would presumably convene before answering the king. The word 'parliament' was applied to such a meeting, certainly in 1264 and possibly as early as 1234–5; though throughout the period and beyond the term 'great council' (*magnum concilium*) was used to describe assemblies that seem to have differed from parliaments only in requiring less than forty days' notice, and thus in practice usually drawing to them men from a more restricted geographical area.

There may well have been representatives of shires or boroughs at some councils or parliaments in the reign of Henry III and the earlier years of Edward I. But the first indubitable evidence of their presence dates from the final decade of Edward's reign. To the Dublin parliament of 1297 the justiciar summoned by individual writs the higher clergy and lay nobles; he also instructed the sheriffs of the counties and the seneschals of the liberties to arrange the election of two local knights, who were to attend together with the sheriffs and seneschals themselves. It is probable that the authorities wished to give the fullest possible

publicity to the peace-keeping measures and major rearrangement of shire government which were the main work of the parliament. In 1300, when the king wanted a subsidy for the Scottish war, the justiciar summoned to the Easter parliament at Dublin, not merely knights of the shire, but also burgesses of the towns – where, of course, there was wealth to be tapped. From this time onwards, Irish parliaments and great councils often had a representative element; but they by no means always did so; nor can there be any doubt that in the fourteenth century as in the thirteenth the magnates remained the dominant component. In England too, the king's parliament was the hunting ground of lords and royal ministers, and the commons played a restricted and deferential part; but the frequency of taxation did ensure that representatives had a place in all parliaments after 1330. In Ireland it may be that the role of the commons was even smaller because until the 1350s general taxation was comparatively rare.

Irish parliaments and great councils above all formed a setting in which the justiciar could bring the magnates together in an atmosphere of ceremony and kingly authority, persuade them to set aside their quarrels, and encourage them to co-operate in the fostering of those scarce commodities, peace and order. The conflict between the Geraldines and de Burghs in 1264 was resolved in an assembly at Dublin in April of the following year; there Geoffrey de Joinville, the acting justiciar, and the lords swore to observe various ordinances, including a crucial one that guaranteed to all men their property-rights as they had held them before the troubles. The dispute between the earl of Ulster and John fitz Thomas of Offaly in the 1290s was harder to settle, but we know that John Wogan used the Kilkenny parliament of January 1296 as an occasion for mediation. In 1310 the Dublin annalist tells us that 'a parliament was held at Kilkenny ... by the earl of Ulster and the justiciar of Ireland, and other lords, in which a major dispute that had arisen between various magnates was appeased'.[7] In 1333 the Dublin parliament was the scene of the formal release from custody of the earl of Desmond, who had been captured by the justiciar in an unusually firm assertion of royal authority; in parliament the earl's fellow-magnates publicly became sureties for his good behaviour. Historians have talked a great deal about the judicial, fiscal and legislative sides of parliaments and councils; but early Irish assemblies mattered not least as a political and social focus in a localised and competitive world. In the middle of the fourteenth century this aspect of their functions was to be extended, when they became the mouthpiece through which the whole community of the lordship, including representatives as well as magnates, addressed protests and appeals to the king.

This chapter has proceeded so far almost without mention of the Gaelic Irish. That neglect springs from a simple fact: the laws and institutions we have discussed were a facet of life in which Irishmen had little or no place. Irishmen did not hold office in central or local government under the king. Gaelic leaders, with the exception of the higher clergy, were not summoned to parliaments and councils alongside the colonial lords. This exclusion reflected the basic assumption – that the law of the lordship of Ireland was the common law of England, and that the Irish did not have English law, but continued to live according to their own customs.

The legal status of the Irish, raising, as it may appear to do, an acute question of principle, has received more attention over the centuries than most other topics. Sir John Davies, the lawyer and antiquary of the time of James I, confident in the virtues of the Tudor and Stuart state, saw the failure to extend English law to the Irish as a chief cause of the absence in Ireland of the coherent, civilised polity that he believed existed in England. Later writers of a very different outlook, as they ransacked the past for missiles to hurl at their opponents, were unlikely to neglect such a promising grievance as the denial of common law to Irishmen. Professional historians too have become heated on the subject, Edmund Curtis, for example, lamenting the lack of 'a general and generous enfranchisement'.[8] Regret or indignation, however, do not help us to understand the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The Plantagenet kings presided over territories that contained many peoples and a rich variety of law and custom. Law was integrally bound up with social structures, cultural identities, traditions and rights. The notion of subjecting Irishmen as a whole to English law would have been quite foreign to the period. It would also have been totally impractical: a sweeping legal change could not be accomplished without an accompanying revolution in Irish society; that, after all, was what churchmen, in their efforts to impose the prescriptions of canon law in the face of Irish custom, had already discovered.

The proper question to ask is, not why the Irish were denied English law, but rather why Irish law was not given a recognised place in the legal and administrative organisation of the lordship. Wales provides an illuminating contrast. There, during the years preceding the Edwardian conquest, judicial commissions appointed by the king had included Welshmen; these commissions had heard cases by common law, by the customs of the marches, or by the laws of Wales, as the region or the identity of the litigants demanded. No similar flexibility appears in Ireland. The explanation of the difference may lie chiefly in the respective dates and circumstances of Anglo-Norman penetration. Norman

intervention in Wales had occurred at a time when the common law was in its earliest infancy, and there was no rigid scheme to which the emerging lordships there could be expected to adhere. The barons of South Wales and the March, well used to diversity of custom, were not opposed to Welsh law, and their lordships saw the growth of mixed customs. By the thirteenth century the crown had no alternative but to tolerate long-established patterns, little as it may have liked them. In the early years of Edward I it is clear that the king and his lawyers, with the encouragement of Archbishop Pecham of Canterbury, were hostile to Welsh law, and particularly to its criminal side, which involved compensation-payments and bloodfeud. That hostility found its expression in the Statute of Wales of 1284, which sought to regulate the king's lands in Wales after the conquest: although Edward was prepared to countenance Welsh procedures concerning property, he sought to replace the obnoxious processes of the criminal codes by English law.

The occupation of Ireland was in full swing in the early thirteenth century, when English law was developing and hardening rapidly; it was natural that royal intervention should involve the insistence that the colony should observe that law. Moreover the lords who participated in the conquest were, unlike their predecessors in Wales, well used to the common law. In this climate there was little likelihood that the monarchy would show any voluntary indulgence towards Irish custom. Although kings from John onwards expressed respect for 'the law and custom of those parts',[9] they had in mind, not Gaelic custom, but English law as used in Ireland. Quite apart from the moral matters that had long troubled the clergy, Irish law, like the laws of Wales, involved compensation-payments for homicide and other felonies, and sanctioned vendetta. In 1297 the Dublin parliament legislated against settlers who adopted Irish dress and hairstyles

> whereby it frequently happens that some Englishmen reputed as Irishmen are killed, although the killing of Englishmen and of Irishmen requires different modes of punishment. And by such killing, the roots of enmity and rancour are generated amongst many. The kindred also, as well of the slayer as of the slain, are often by turns struck down as enemies.[10]

Though these practices still flourished in many parts of Europe and had once been general, they struck the English legal mind of the late thirteenth century as barbaric. It was chiefly this, we may suspect, that moved King Edward, at the time when he was grappling with the problem of the laws of Wales, to declare that 'the laws which the Irish

use are detestable to God, and so contrary to all law that they ought not to be deemed laws'.[11]

For the Irishman who lived under an Irish lord in an essentially Gaelic milieu, the fact that the courts of the lordship did not recognise Irish law was normally of little consequence. The absence of recognition did, however, affect two categories of Irish profoundly. The first was the Irish aristocracy, who were without legal protection for what property they still retained. Fourteenth-century sources refer to the fact that the so-called 'Five Bloods' – the former provincial dynasties of O'Neill, O'Melaghlin, O'Connor, O'Brien and Mac Murrough – were permitted to use English law. Presumably this grant gave them notional access to the royal courts; it certainly did not mean that they lived or held their lands by English custom; and there is little or nothing to suggest that during the thirteenth century they used the privilege, or were in practice treated differently from the dynasties, such as the Mac Carthys, who were not so advantaged. The relations of important Irishmen with the crown depended, as we have seen, on individual bargains and grants, which tended to be short-lived, not just because of royal duplicity but also because of the unpredictability of Gaelic succession-systems. Where Irish leaders were tributary to magnates, they used their courts, and held their lands by arrangements which those courts (of whose proceedings we know virtually nothing) would presumably uphold. Fourteenth-century documents show chiefs of Ormond and Ely owing attendance at the courts of the earl of Ormond; and a series of earlier agreements made between the earls of Ulster and northern Irish leaders, which were dated at the main centres of the earldom, were probably solemnised in open court. But such arrangements had no standing beyond the lordships themselves; if they were breached, the Irish could not normally seek redress from the king. The proprietorial attitude of the magnates is frequently visible. In the 1290s, for instance, we find John fitz Thomas of Offaly speaking casually of '*his* Irish of Offaly', and Thomas fitz Maurice of Desmond accusing the justiciar of dishonestly releasing a hostage he had taken from Mac Carthy and compelling him to grant the Irishman his peace.[12]

The second category who were injured were those lesser Irish that lived within, or immediately adjacent to, the colonial areas. The status of the Irish betagh was assimilated to that of the English villein. The villein was not a slave, but had sunk into unfreedom because he had been denied the use of common law procedures as they had developed in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Like him, the betagh (unless he happened to live on the royal demesnes and so had the king for his lord) could not plead in the royal courts but only in his lord's manorial

court; and he and his descendants were hereditarily tied to the lord's service. He was, of course, afforded some protection in practice, since his well-being was of interest to the lord who depended on his labour; and magnates frequently proceeded by law against those who had injured their betaghs. It may be too that, like English villeins, betaghs were shielded by manorial customs, which the lord was wise to respect. Certainly, in the light of thirteenth-century attitudes, we should not regard the Irish servile population as specially oppressed. The real anomaly was that the legal disabilities of the betagh were in many respects shared by Irishmen who were personally free. Their tenures, like those of the aristocracy, were not protected by the king's courts. They could not proceed in those courts against Englishmen: to claim successfully that a would-be plaintiff was an Irishman (*hibernicus*) was sufficient to refute any accusation he might bring. And if a man of English blood killed or injured an Irishman, he was not guilty of a felony in English law and thus subject to the death-penalty; at most a compensation-payment – seventy shillings in the case of homicide – was payable to the dead man's lord, and nothing at all to his kin.

Scholars of the last forty years, after a painstaking examination of the judicial records, have on the whole tended to minimise the disabilities of the Irish who lived within the colony, and to strip the subject of its emotional overtones. They have emphasised that Irishmen's lives were no worse protected than in the past, since compensation-payments were the established system in Gaelic society; that from an early stage in the history of the lordship, some individual Irishmen and their families were granted charters of English law and liberty; that although an unchartered Irishman could not plead on his own behalf, his English lord might plead for him; and that in the early fourteenth century there are signs that the king's justices sometimes took a dim view of English defendants who flatly refused to answer on the grounds that their accuser was Irish. All this is true, of course; but it is a line of argument that can be taken too far. Although charters seem to have been awarded by great lords such as William Marshal in the period following the Anglo-Norman invasion, in the time of Edward I they could only be gained by petitioning the king in England, which was an expensive and time-consuming business. This was not changed until 1319, when in the atmosphere of conciliation that followed the Bruce invasion, the justiciar was empowered to grant them. Though compensation might have to be paid by Englishmen who killed or maimed Irishmen, the fact remained that the Irish now lived in a more complex society, alongside settler families and communities who were more stringently protected: status, after all, is by its nature relative not absolute. And since one of

the cardinal points of English common law was that the freeman could use the king's courts even against his social superiors, it was a limited comfort to the Irishman that his English lord (if he had one) might choose for his own reasons to plead on his behalf.

There can be no doubt that the failure to give official sanction to Irish law, and the simultaneous denial of English law to the generality of those Irish who might have found it useful, fed a sense of oppression. In 1317–18 Donal O'Neill and his allies, who supported Edward Bruce in his attempt to gain the kingship of Ireland, wrote to Pope John XXII on his behalf. Their 'Remonstrance' made a host of complaints against English rule, laying heavy emphasis on the dispossession of the Irish. The document was, of course, a piece of conscious propaganda. But propaganda must reveal the assumptions of those who compose it. And not only did O'Neill and his advisers raise the question of legal status, they itemised with some accuracy most of the disabilities that modern historians have identified in the records. From the same period we have another testimony to the Irish outlook, possibly more revealing since it sprang from less unusual circumstances. In 1320 the earl of Ulster obtained a grant of English law for Eoghan O'Madden of Uí Maine, who had remained faithful to him during the Bruce invasion. The event was celebrated in a barbed fashion by O'Madden's court historian. The grant, he said, gave his master 'equal nobility' with the settlers, in that it excepted him from the general rule 'that the Gael should be ignoble though a landholder, and that it should be said that the Saxon was noble, though without rearing or lands'.[13] The legal question was intimately connected with the sense among the Irish of being made outsiders in their own country.

Between the Welsh war of 1276–7 and the greater conflict of 1282–3 that resulted in the reduction of North Wales, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, the prince of Wales, resisted Edward I's efforts to have his dispute with the Welsh lord of Powys heard by English law rather than by the laws of Wales. Since in Ireland there was no question of the royal courts proceeding by Irish law, Gaelic resentment of the existing conditions took the form of demanding that English law should be made available to the Irish. In the years 1276–80 a group of Irish prelates (who were themselves entitled to use the common law when litigating on behalf of their churches) approached Edward I and offered him 8,000 marks for a grant of English law to all Irishmen outside Ulster. They were led by David Mac Carwell, the archbishop of Cashel, whose metropolitan see spanned an area inhabited by both nations. It is difficult, despite some recent arguments to the contrary, to resist the conclusion that the ecclesiastical leaders shared the unease of their twelfth-century predeces-

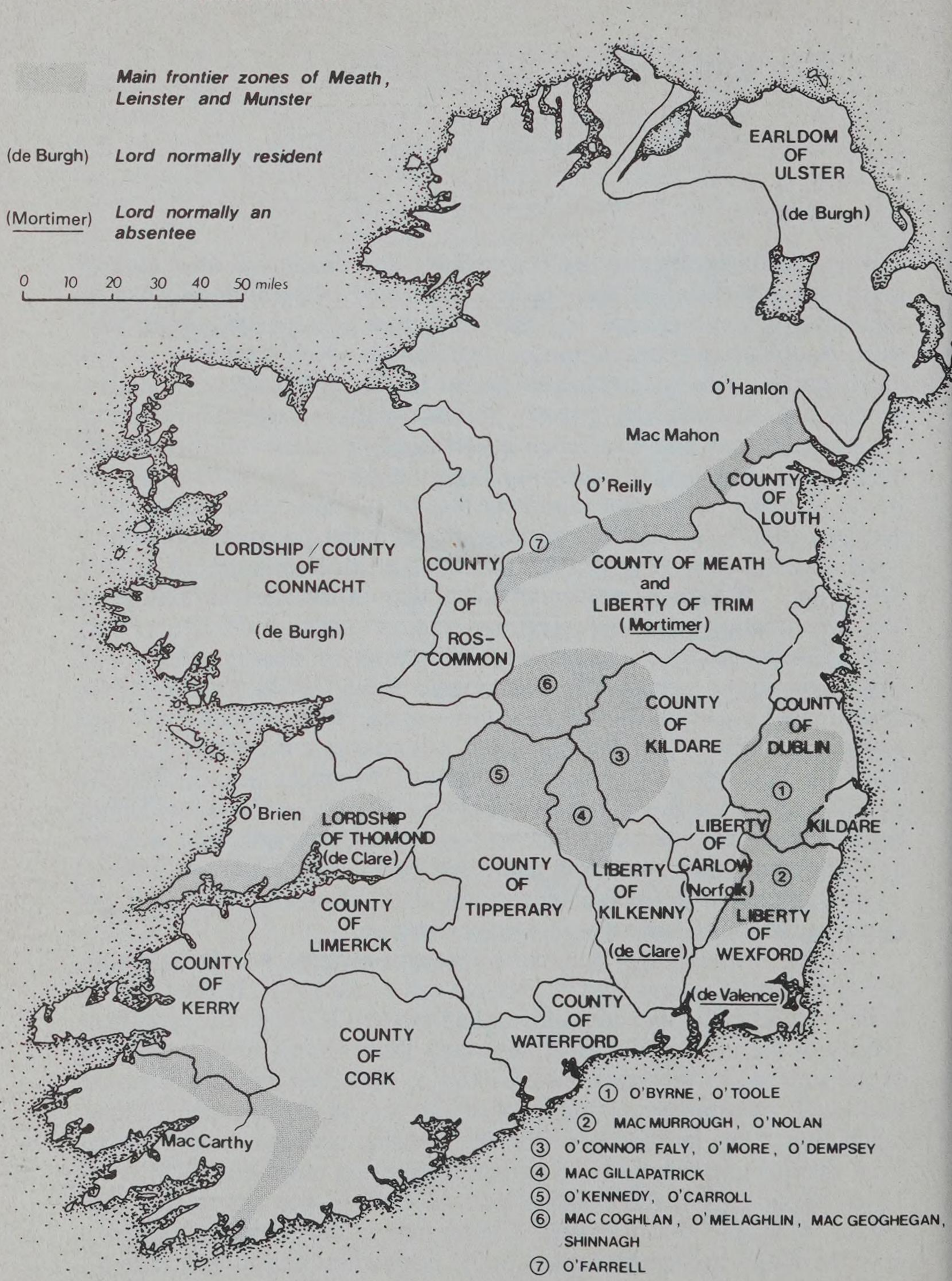
sors, and of Archbishop Pecham in relation to Wales, about the discordance between aspects of Celtic custom and the laws of the Church. The negotiations broke down, probably because the sum offered was not enough to convince King Edward that it was worth pressing the matter in face of the opposition of the colonial lords, whom we know to have been consulted. Magnates were not averse to the careful granting of English law to individual Irishmen; in 1319, indeed, the earl of Kildare and the future earl of Louth were to urge that the justiciar should have authority to award it, and that they themselves should have similar power in relation to the Irish of their own marches. But this was a different matter from the wholesale granting of common law to the Irish at large. In 1331 Edward III did make such an award, significantly, perhaps, by an ordinance sent from England. For a year or two the measure seems to have been very cautiously observed. Thereafter it passed into oblivion. Legislation could not of itself alter long-established social patterns, or sweep away inherited attitudes.

Ireland thus remained a land shared by two self-conscious societies. The official outlook could not, of course, stop interaction between men and customs, which proceeded apace; but it did prevent that interaction from taking the accepted institutional forms that it had assumed, to the benefit of all concerned, in the Welsh marches. A theoretical boundary encircled the colonial world, with its English law and government; the Irish lay beyond that boundary, and so did the healthy compromises that existed in the border zones. This attitude was to have important consequences in the fourteenth century. As the geographical area of common law contracted, and the regions of mixed law expanded, the question of the legal status of the Irish lost some of its urgency. At the same time, governmental rigidity hampered a mental adjustment to changing circumstances. The result was the growth of the concept of an embattled 'English land', which perceived itself surrounded by enemies of English as well as of Irish blood.

6 War and Society, 1315–1369

During the thirteenth century the military and economic enterprise of magnates and their sub-tenants had confirmed colonial dominance in eastern and south-central Ireland; lords had also pushed north and west, establishing zones of looser supremacy, which contained within them islands of considerable settlement. In this favourable climate the crown had fostered the growth of institutions of central and local government, and had succeeded in obtaining a useful return from an overseas dominion that others had created for it. As our knowledge stands, it would be unwise to assume that by the end of the century any decisive, island-wide deterioration of the colonial position was taking place. The age of easy gains had ended two or more generations earlier. Since the 1240s the internal political history of the lordship had been one of competing local supremacies – Anglo-Norman and Irish – which expanded and contracted in response to a variety of circumstances. It is easy to comb the increasingly rich records of the Dublin administration in search of evidence of war and crime in the regions with which the government was deeply involved; and it is certainly necessary to challenge G. H. Orpen's notion of an era of 'Norman peace'. But the decades before the Bruce invasion saw the authority of the earl of Ulster bestride the north and west of Ireland as far as Derry and Sligo, and the de Clares threaten to establish a lordship north of the Shannon. Ireland was a complex of regional balances, not all of which were tipping in the same way or in the same degree at any one time.

For the lordship, however, the fourteenth century was to prove an age of territorial retreat, and of political and social stress. Ireland shared in the natural calamities that afflicted all western Europe. The economic history of the colony is a sadly neglected subject; and given the nature of the sources, its investigators are likely to find even the little precision that has been attained in studies of other parts of Europe beyond their reach. But there is no doubt that the lordship suffered severely, both from the bad harvests and consequent famine and mortality of the years 1315–18, and from the Black Death of 1348–9 and the further outbreaks of plague that followed it. Everywhere the fourteenth century saw the long-established expansion of population cease, and then go



Ireland in 1314

into a reverse so serious that it may have reduced the population to two-thirds of the size it had attained by 1300. Since the pestilence affected most severely those living at close quarters in towns and nucleated villages, there is no reason to disbelieve contemporary claims that it struck the settler communities of eastern Ireland more drastically than it did the Gaelic world. The period also saw sustained and large-scale wars, waged by powerful monarchies which were able to command the resources of their subjects in a manner that had scarcely been seen in the West since the collapse of Rome. In a limited but significant way, the lordship shared that experience also. The Bruce invasion of 1315–18 marked the transference of the Anglo-Scottish war to Irish soil, with serious implications for the colony in Ulster.

The lordship also suffered from its own distinctive troubles, the chief of which was recurrent border war. Such warfare was, of course, nothing new; indeed it should be seen as one of the characteristic features of the lordship of Ireland throughout its history. But, even when we make allowance for the distortion created by the growth in the available evidence, there can be little doubt that during the fourteenth century it became endemic in regions that had been comparatively immune in the time of Henry III. The royal records tell us a good deal about Leinster. There the Irish and march areas were enlarging at the expense of what was called 'the land of peace'; that expansion seems to have accelerated during the 1350s, probably because of the effect of the Black Death on the colonial population. These developments were accompanied, and accentuated, by a further fragmentation among English noble families of several of the lordships of the south and east.

This accumulation of difficulties faced the royal government – through whose eyes we mostly see the colony – with perplexing pressures. The weakening of established power-centres left gaps that the Dublin administration was ill-equipped to fill. And English officials did not find it easy to accept the social patterns and practical compromises which life in a frontier society had always encouraged, and which were inescapable in fourteenth-century conditions. So it is that the records of the government leave an impression of friction, disintegration, and even panic – an impression that is deeply marked in modern writings about the period. The troubles were real enough. But there is a danger that we shall regard the age through too dark a glass. The fourteenth century saw a range of social and political adjustments which, though some of them are presented as malign in the official sources, were necessary to the colony's survival. Moreover it was in the midst of stresses that an Anglo-Irish identity emerged, and found its expression through institutions that were important for the future.

The Scottish intervention in Ireland, which was to coincide with the famine, sprang from the political situation in the British Isles in 1314–15. In 1306 Robert Bruce had murdered John Comyn, a chief supporter of the rival Balliol party, and re-established the Scottish kingship. The death of Edward I in the following year, and the problems that dogged his inept successor, gave Bruce a breathing-space during which he ruthlessly imposed his rule on Scotland. Then in 1314 he humiliated Edward II at Bannockburn. He was not strong enough to press home his advantage by a direct attack on the main centres of English power; Ireland appeared as an obvious weak point that might be probed. Bruce knew Ireland better than had most recent Scottish kings. While still co-operating with Edward I, he had married a daughter of the earl of Ulster, whose support his grandfather had sought when the possibility of contention over the Scottish succession had first arisen in 1286. His family had inherited the earldom of Carrick, and with it claims, going back to King John's time, to lands in eastern Ulster. He himself had ranged the western seas in recent years, landing in Ulster in search of supplies in 1313. The immediate decision to mount an invasion may have been made after approaches from Donal O'Neill of Tyrone, who seems to have promised to deliver Gaelic support. Donal was a son of the ill-fated Brian of Down. For some thirty years his power had been overshadowed by that of Earl Richard of Ulster. In return – we must suppose – for a promise of increased scope in the north of Ireland, he was willing to accept the overlordship of King Robert's brother Edward, who was to lead the expedition.

There seems little reason to accept the old view that Robert Bruce launched the Irish enterprise as a way of ridding himself of a turbulent brother. He had as yet no sons, and Edward had long been one of his main lieutenants. Throughout the Irish campaigns he supplied Edward with troops, and early in 1317 joined him in Ireland for more than three months. The idea that Edward was a potential rival, whose ambition led King Robert into a rash commitment, and whose misjudgements were largely responsible for the failure of the invasion, seems to have originated from the statements of John Barbour, who wrote a celebratory verse-biography of Robert Bruce in the 1370s. Barbour, who tended to disparage those who had no descendants living in his own day,[1] may have used the half-forgotten Edward as a scapegoat for one of the less successful episodes in Robert's career. Robert Bruce's attitude towards the invasion was probably elastic: at the least, it would put additional pressure on the English king, and perhaps persuade him to accept Bruce's kingship of Scotland; if on the other hand Edward Bruce made his rule in Ireland a reality, his brother would rejoice in the

creation of a family empire which might threaten Plantagenet dominance in the British Isles, and so render Scotland less vulnerable.

Edward Bruce's main achievement was to occupy the earldom of Ulster, though even there his control was not unchallenged. From Ulster he led a number of plundering raids into the midlands and south. These provoked risings by some Gaelic leaders, harassed the colonial magnates and the Dublin government, alarmed the English authorities, and left a predictable trail of destruction. They had much in common with the *chevauchées* launched into the French interior by Edward III's commanders in Gascony and Brittany during the 1340s and 1350s. The difference was that the Scots returned from them with weakened forces, and without extending the area of their authority.

The Scots landed near Larne in May 1315. They were joined by many Irish leaders of the north, and rapidly moved southwards, reaching and storming Dundalk. It seems to have been at this point that Edward underwent a form of inauguration as king of Ireland. On being faced by the forces of Edmund Butler, the justiciar, coming from Dublin, and of the earl of Ulster, arriving from Connacht, the Scots retreated. Reports reaching England suggested that they had been ignominiously dispersed. But when the earl, who had been joined by some sections of the royal army, pursued them, he was defeated in battle near Connor, to the astonishment of contemporaries. Bruce encouraged the O'Connors to take advantage of the discomfiture of their overlord, and the west of Ireland descended into confusion, slipping from Earl Richard's grasp. Later in the year the Scots again moved out of Ulster. The destruction that attended their progress through Louth and Meath was probably made worse by the tightening grip of the famine. At the end of January 1316, near Athy, the assembled magnates of southern Ireland failed to defeat them, but managed to prevent any confederation with the Irish of eastern Leinster, who were threatening south Dublin and raiding the Barrow valley. Bruce and his allies retreated north once more, this time under intense pressure from lack of supplies. For almost a year they remained in Ulster where, after a long siege, they captured the de Burgh stronghold of Carrickfergus.

At this juncture the invasion appeared to have become becalmed, and it was probably to give it renewed impetus that King Robert took the risk of sailing to Ireland at the beginning of 1317. He and Edward set out on a third expedition southwards, in the hope that a display of strength by the king of Scots and the 'king of Ireland' would spread fear, gather in allegiances, and bring about the collapse of Anglo-Irish morale and of English government in Ireland. The brothers approached Dublin, but it held out against them. Lacking the means to attempt a

siege, they continued south and west, intending to join forces with the O'Briens. But Edmund Butler and the Munster lords held the countryside, and, wisely rejecting the risk of a battle, left the starving Scottish force little option but to retrace its steps. The retreat was followed by eighteen months of military inactivity on Edward Bruce's part, during which Roger Mortimer, whose arrival as king's lieutenant in April 1317 may finally have convinced King Robert that the game was up, reasserted English authority through campaigns and eyres in Meath, Leinster and Munster. In the autumn of 1318 the Scots emerged from the north once more, in what looks like a last throw. At Faughart near Dundalk Edward Bruce committed himself to battle with a local force led by John de Bermingham. There, close to the scene of his inauguration, he was defeated and killed.

It is difficult to regard the invasion as other than a failure. In 1315 Robert Bruce had a foothold in Ireland, a strong naval presence on the Irish sea, and the capacity to create alarm in Wales. After 1318, apart from the exceptional months that followed Edward II's deposition in 1327, his power in the west was much diminished. Moreover the death of his brother left the future of the dynasty itself in jeopardy: Robert's last years were dominated by an attempt to reach a settlement that would guarantee the succession of the son belatedly born to him and Elizabeth de Burgh in 1324. If he had been concerned to end Ireland's contribution to the English war effort and to push Edward II towards recognising him, his success in these respects too may be doubted. The military energies of the English court between 1314 and 1318 were everywhere enfeebled by political disputes and by the famine. The Irish emergency made little difference, and may even – like the Scottish occupation of Berwick – have strengthened Edward's resolve to resist Bruce's claims. Not only that, sizeable Irish contingents joined English armies against the Scots in 1322, 1333 and 1335, just as they had done in the time of Edward I.

The failure of the venture tells us a good deal about the nature of the political forces in Ireland at this period. There was no possibility of small Scottish armies achieving a military occupation of the island; success could come only if the Bruces won over a large number of those who mattered, and formed them into a coherent coalition. From the start their efforts were directed, with Donal O'Neill's help, at the Gaelic leaders. Robert Bruce, like many members of the Scottish nobility, was in the main of Anglo-Norman descent. But the new elements in Scottish society had given themselves legitimacy by identifying with the historical and legendary past of Scotland. The Bruces' propaganda made use of the Celtic kinship of the Irish and Scottish peoples; and it

may well have been with their encouragement that Donal O'Neill drew up his Remonstrance to Pope John, in which he sought to justify recent events in Ireland. The Remonstrance spoke of a long succession of independent kings of Ireland in ancient times. It impugned Adrian IV's motives for granting the lordship to Henry II, and went on to accuse Henry's successors of disregarding the terms of *Laudabiliter*, and the colonists of a series of crimes against the Irish. In this way Donal – in his own estimation the heir to the old kingdom – and his fellow-chiefs attempted to vindicate their withdrawal of obedience from Edward II, and their decision to submit themselves to Edward Bruce.

The Remonstrance appeared to emanate from Gaelic Ireland as a whole, and we know that Donal had sent copies to leaders in other parts of Ireland, seeking their endorsement. But although it expressed genuine and widespread feelings, it did not represent a practical political programme. In that respect it differed from the baronial letter sent in 1320 from Scotland to Avignon in support of Robert Bruce. This document, generally known as the Declaration of Arbroath, presented to John XXII a superficially similar justification of the existence of an independent Scottish monarchy by reference to a largely mythical past. But it was drawn up in vindication of a continuous and conventional tradition of kingship, which possessed substance in the form of an organised hierarchy of dependence within Scotland and a range of governmental institutions. In Ireland there was nothing of the sort on the Gaelic side for Edward Bruce to take over. O'Neill could not guarantee the allegiance of Irish leaders outside the north; and the Scots found themselves confronted by a bewildering fragmentation of authority, and in many places a degree of segmentary competition that precluded united action even at regional level. In Connacht, for instance, the cousins and rivals, Felim and Rory O'Connor, both courted – or were courted by – Bruce. The result was a revival of the dynastic conflicts that had marked O'Connor history since the 1180s. Bruce gained no positive support from the west of Ireland, where energies were directed inwards; and in 1316 at the battle of Athenry the resident magnates managed at least partially to reimpose their authority. When the Bruce brothers went to Munster in 1317, they did so with the encouragement of the excluded Clan Brian branch of the O'Brien dynasty. Upon arriving near Limerick, they found, not the welcome that they may have been led to expect, but the rival segment firmly in possession, and co-operating with Richard de Clare in order to keep Clan Brian – and thus the Scots – at bay. If Donal O'Neill had persuaded the Bruces that a Celtic alliance was a realistic goal, he had deceived them, or was himself deceived.

The Celtic emphasis of the Bruces' activities (which is also visible in their attempts to stimulate unrest in Wales) made it doubly certain that, barring some dramatic and unlikely military triumph, they would receive little backing among the Anglo-Irish. For the ruling groups of the colony, Scottish successes carried the threat of dispossession; and the magnates had in their midst northern refugees such as the earl of Ulster, Sir Thomas de Mandeville and the bishop of Connor, lest the point should be lost on them. Historians have stressed the attachment of Dublin and other towns to the English crown. But it has not always been sufficiently emphasised that, with a handful of exceptions, the landholders of Meath, Leinster and Munster also consistently supported Edward II. The military response to the invasion is apt to strike modern observers as hesitant and disorganised. But magnates had local pressures to contend with; the Dublin government was desperately short of cash; and the famine made defensive operations more than usually difficult to mount. The performance of the English government and of the northern English lords at the same period was no more impressive. In Ireland, armies were gathered, disasters were on the whole avoided, and in the end a collection of provincials provided Edward II with his only triumph over his external foes.

The years of invasion and famine were bad ones for Ireland as a whole. The colonial world was damaged in one serious respect. The power of the earl of Ulster, which had given political coherence to the west and north and connected them in an acceptable manner to Dublin and England, never fully recovered. Earl Richard was almost sixty in 1318; his eldest son had died five years before, and the heir to the de Burgh interest was his grandson William. The old earl died in 1326. When William, who was brought up in England, came to Ireland at the age of sixteen in 1328, he had to try to assert himself over his kinsmen and tenants, and to take control of a northern earldom which in 1327 had threatened once more to fall into the Scottish sphere of influence. In 1333 quarrels, provoked by the aggressiveness of his rule, led to his murder by Ulster lords, some of whom took refuge with the Scots. William's only child was an infant daughter, who in 1342 was married to Edward III's son Lionel of Antwerp, the future earl of Ulster and duke of Clarence. These events did not mean the immediate or total collapse of the lordships of Ulster and Connacht. Some urban communities and many sub-tenant families (including cadet members of the de Burgh lineage in the west) remained powerful and wealthy. William's English mother, Elizabeth de Clare, drew considerable income from the Ulster

manors that she had received as part of her marriage settlement. And the king, or Queen Philippa, to whom he gave the custody in 1346, exercised authority in places through their ministers. But all this was a mere shadow of the power wielded by Richard de Burgh or Hugh de Lacy; when Lionel came to Ireland as his father's lieutenant in 1361, he seems to have been unable to make much impact in either the north or the west.

The weakening of old-established noble lordship, on which the colony had depended so much, is apparent in other parts of Ireland too. Meath and Leinster had, of course, been partitioned among co-heiresses as long ago as the 1240s. But the thirteenth-century successor lordships were large enough to make social and military sense, and to retain the interest of their new lords. In the early fourteenth century, however, a further chapter of dynastic accidents destroyed the tenurial stability. After the death at Bannockburn of the last de Clare earl of Gloucester, Kilkenny was divided between his three sisters. The death of Theobald de Verdon in 1316 was followed by the partitioning of his lands in Meath and Louth among his four daughters. Richard de Clare was killed at the battle of Dysert O'Dea in 1318; his young son survived him only until 1321, when the de Clare lands in the south-west were divided between Richard's two sisters; then in 1338 one of these two shares was sub-divided into four portions. The death of Aymer de Valence, earl of Pembroke and lord of Wexford, in 1324 led to a tripartite division of his lordship. Finally in 1338 Carlow, which had belonged to the earl of Norfolk, was inherited by his two daughters. This dismemberment of old units meant that royal lordship in Ireland was, with one or two exceptions, no longer supported by an active aristocratic interest that also spanned the sea; for although the new landholders were far from wholly neglectful of their Irish properties, these were not normally sufficiently substantial to be of more than peripheral interest to them. Within Ireland the change meant that, at a time of military emergency when local centres were of prime importance, lordship was becoming less concentrated, and so was losing some of its vigour and social meaning. Royal ministers and other influential residents in Ireland increasingly criticised what historians have come to call 'the absentees' for being more concerned to gather what profit they still could than to share the burdens of defence. Such criticisms are understandable; but so too is the attitude of the families who found that heiresses had brought them not just useful endowments in England or Wales, but also distant lands in a country with which they had no traditional connection.

The retreat of the English aristocracy facilitated the emergence of a distinctive colonial nobility, which was one of the most positive develop-

ments of the fourteenth century. From the beginning of the history of the lordship there had been important families whose possessions were mostly concentrated in Ireland. For a century and more they had shared power with men who had significant, and often predominant, interests in Wales, England and France. As the stake of the latter in Ireland shrank, the former stood out more clearly as the natural leaders of a society which we can begin confidently to describe as Anglo-Irish. That process was markedly advanced between 1315 and 1330. The Bruce invasion led Edward II to make many grants to lords and towns in Ireland, to encourage loyalty, and to compensate for losses incurred and wages of war unpaid. The most striking of these involved the creation of two earldoms. In 1316 the king made the elderly John fitz Thomas of Offaly earl of Kildare, and in the following year revived the liberty of Kildare for his son, the second earl. In 1319 he rewarded John de Bermingham, the victor of Faughart, with the earldom of Louth, turning that county too into a liberty. The extraordinary political circumstances that prevailed in England in the late 1320s resulted in the belting of two more Anglo-Irish lords as earls. Edward II was defeated and deposed in 1326–7 by his estranged wife, Isabella of France, and her favourite, Roger Mortimer, who then proceeded to rule in the name of the young Edward III. In an effort to secure support and bring an unruly Ireland under control, Mortimer made James Butler, the son of Edmund Butler, earl of Ormond in 1328, and Maurice fitz Thomas, the most powerful of the Munster Geraldines, earl of Desmond in 1329. They were endowed, respectively, with the liberties of Tipperary and Kerry.

For nearly twenty years after he took authority into his own hands in 1330, Edward III hesitated to endorse these and other grants fully. In 1331–2, indeed, he was so disturbed about recent events in Ireland that he arranged an expedition, which was cancelled at the last moment because of the renewed outbreak of hostilities with Scotland. In Ireland as in England he very properly regarded the acts of the disreputable Mortimer regime as void. And in 1341, in the midst of a financial crisis sparked off by the early campaigns of the Hundred Years War, he briefly considered cancelling all grants made in Ireland since 1307, though in the end wiser counsels prevailed. The uncertainty and suspicion caused by his attitude was partly responsible for a series of quarrels between Anglo-Irish magnates and the crown during the years 1332–46. The tension was made worse in the case of the earl of Desmond by a bitter dispute about the overlordship of former de Clare territories in the south-west. The fact that several of the de Clare heirs were influential at court contributed to serious estrangements between the earl and both

Dublin and Westminster. These in turn created a climate in which royal officials were willing to listen to lurid accusations by Desmond's enemies, to the effect that he was plotting to make himself king of Ireland. The tensions were eventually assuaged during the late 1340s and 1350s. By that time King Edward, who was normally a shrewd manager of men, had gained some personal acquaintance with the nobles of Ireland, and a better grasp of the realities of the country. He accepted most of the endowments that he had earlier thought to challenge. Not only that, between 1346 and 1360 he admitted, first John de Bermingham's nephew Walter, and then the earls of Desmond, Kildare and Ormond to the justiciarship. The emergence of the earldoms, and the employment of the earls in government, meant that actual power and formal authority were being brought into harmony.

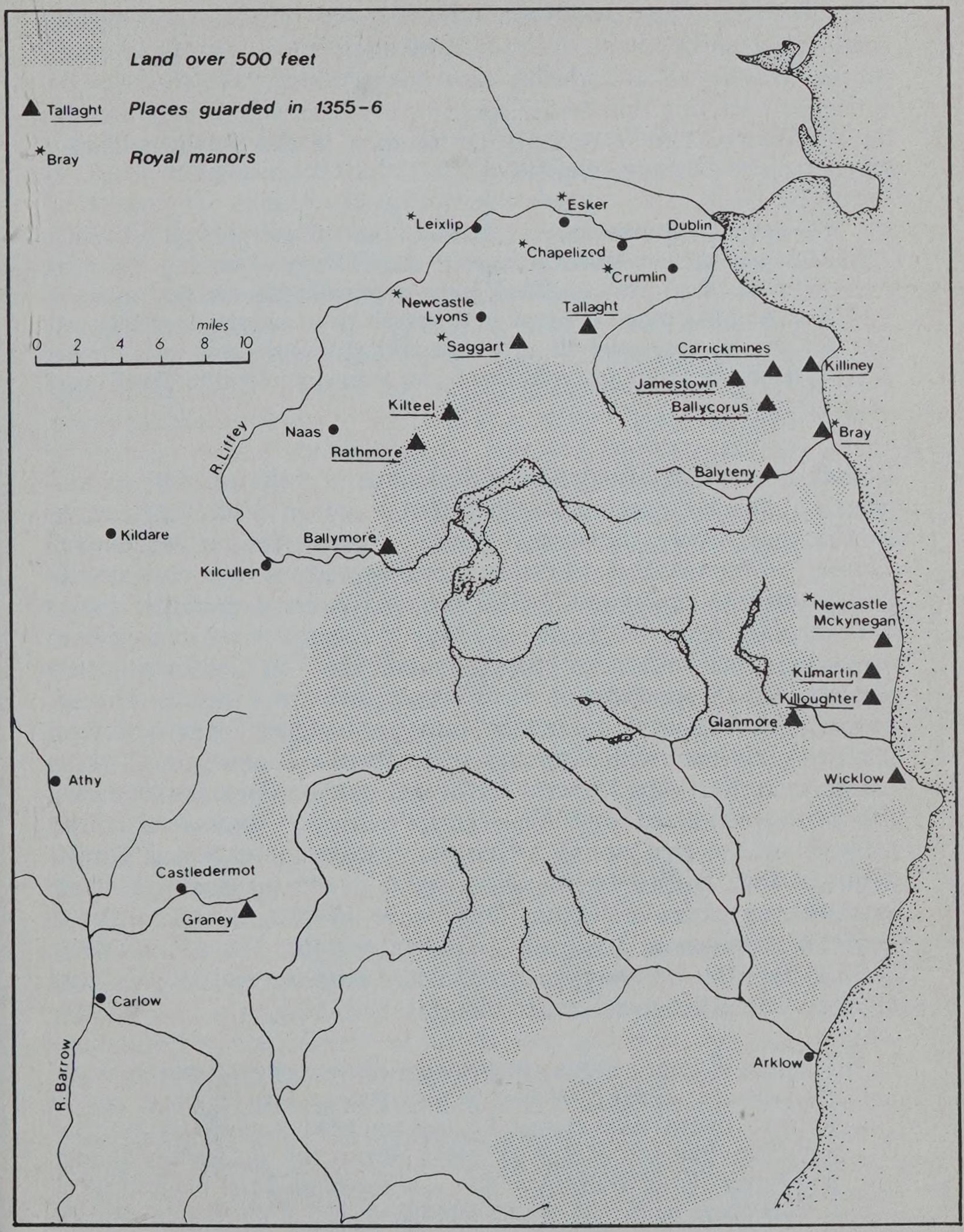
The earldom of Louth expired in 1329, when its first holder died without sons. But the three remaining earldoms proved enduring, that of Desmond lasting into the Elizabethan period, and the Kildare and Ormond titles surviving to the present day. The new Anglo-Irish aristocracy, in other words, proved more stable than had the older noble houses. There was a technical reason for this. The earldoms created in England and Ireland during the later middle ages were granted in tail male; that is to say, they descended in the male line only. The change meant that, as long as a family bred successfully, it retained its titles and associated endowments, rather than seeing them dispersed among female heirs. At the same period the rise of a number of devices in English law enabled families more easily to settle as they wished the descent of lands they already held, perhaps excluding females in perpetuity, or creating portions for younger sons. In Ireland lordship had a strong military tinge, and lordships tended to be real social and political units. Anything that favoured male succession was advantageous. One of the more notable features of the later middle ages was the durability and vigour, not merely of the comital houses, but of a host of Anglo-Irish lineages, such as the Savages in Ulster and the Burkes (de Burghs) or Berminghams of Athenry in Connacht, the Tuyts in Meath, the Powers (le Poers) in Waterford, the Purcells in eastern Munster, and the Barrys, Cogans and Roches in Cork. A large part of the history of the later medieval lordship lies hidden in the relatively unexplored structures and activities of these and other families.

Just as in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries the expansion of the lordship of Ireland was the work of magnates, so in the fourteenth the problems of defence and management fell to their successors, as well as

to the king's government at Dublin. The difficulty from the historian's point of view is that the latter has left a much more voluminous record of its activities, and it is not easy to gain a balanced picture of the lordship as a whole. The royal records permit us to see in detail the marchlands of eastern Leinster, where Edward III's ministers were most heavily involved. Between the 1270s and the 1350s there was a recovery, intermittent to begin with but later more sustained, of the Irish dynasties that had been subdued and confined since the 1170s, particularly the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles of Wicklow and their would-be overlords the Mac Murroughs. Their advances, like those of chiefs in other parts of the lordship, were not a united movement; they took the form of raids by individual leaders, who thereby increased their wealth and reputation. Governmental involvement arose from the obvious fact that the Irish of the region posed a threat not only to Dublin itself and the king's manors to the south of the city, but also to the line of the Barrow valley, which was the crucial artery of communication with the cities and counties of the south. It sprang in addition from patterns of lordship. In western Leinster and on the Leinster-Munster borders, the earls of Kildare and Ormond provided a measure of cohesion and leadership. But County Dublin had always been in the king's hand, and the lordships of Carlow and Wexford, which were very exposed, had not seen the growth of large new powers to compensate for their fragmentation among absentee heiresses.

This Irish recovery loosened the colonial hold on the marginal areas that had not been heavily settled, and in consequence turned once-secure communities, such as Castledermot and Gowran, into frontier posts. Surveys and valuations made of the archbishop of Dublin's manors in 1326 provide a glimpse of the prevailing conditions. The manor of Tallaght, for example, ran from the modern south Dublin suburbs into the lower reaches of the mountains. The more northerly parts, around Templeogue, were unaffected by war; Tallaght itself, where the archbishop had built a castle in 1323, was said to be near the Irish, and therefore of no value in wartime; in the uplands, in the area of the modern Glenasmole, it was no longer possible to take profit, and Glassavullaun and Glassamucky were described as 'waste and among the Irish'.[2] By the 1350s the Gaelic advance had gained sufficient momentum to make it difficult to travel the Barrow route without a considerable armed guard. And Art Mac Murrough had exploited the conditions to emerge as the leader of a coalition, thus preparing the ground for his successor to present himself as a major enemy to Richard II in the 1390s.

Royal officials responded to these pressures, not with a war of recon-



A Frontier Zone: South Dublin and Wicklow in the 1350s

quest (for which they lacked the resources), but by mounting repeated, small-scale expeditions designed to instil discipline by chastising chiefs, seizing livestock, and imposing reparations. Since there was no possibility of pacifying this border society, they dealt with it very much in its own terms. This is evident, for instance, in the Dublin annalist's description of a campaign in 1329:

> Sir John Darcy, justiciar of Ireland, went to the area of Newcastle McKynegan and Wicklow against the O'Byrnes; and ... the more notable of the Irish were killed, many were wounded, and the remainder fled. And Murrough O'Byrne gave himself up as a hostage together with his son, his uncle, and his uncle's son. But afterwards they were released in return for other hostages, that is, for the more important members of their kin.[3]

Like Irish overlords, justiciars applied force in order to elicit submissions and hostages; with hostages lodged in Dublin castle, leaders such as Murrough would, they hoped, remain at peace, and act as agents of stability on the marches. Stipends were frequently paid to co-operative Irish leaders, to encourage loyalty and to signalise their subordination to royal authority: as early as 1313 Mac Murrough seems to have been in receipt of an annual fee of forty marks. The king's silver no doubt strengthened the position of chiefs within their own society. The administration became skilled, as the magnates had been from the first, at exploiting the recurrent outbreaks of competition between and within Gaelic dynasties. Almost every army that operated in Leinster during this period contained Irish contingents, and often these were led by members of the clan against which the expedition was aimed. Similar methods were applied by the government to the management of the stock-rearing settler families that lived in the uplands, and had begun to conform as much to Irish as to English custom. The south Dublin lineages such as the Harolds, Archbolds, Lawlesses and Howels were regularly compelled to surrender hostages. In 1350

> John son of Henry Harold, Maurice son of Alexander Harold, John son of Alexander Harold, William son of Robert Harold, Hugh son of Robert Lawless, Peter Howel, Richard son of Michael Howel, Matthew Archbold, Ellis son of Robert Walsh, Robert son of Geoffrey Harold, and Roger son of Daniel Harold ... in the presence of the justiciar of Ireland chose upon oath Walter Harold as chief of the Harold clan; the same Walter ... took an oath that in the future he would well and faithfully remain in the peace of the lord king in all things, and would conduct himself peacefully.[4]

Chiefs of the Archbolds and the O'Byrnes were confirmed at the same time, and there is no doubt that the king's ministers frequently supported favoured candidates for office among the Irish as well as the Anglo-Irish.

Although the balance of advantage in Leinster had changed in favour of Gaelic and gaelicised leaders, royal officials contrived in some degree to contain the damage. Despite much alarmist talk, when the tide of Irish expansion slackened (as it may have done quite early in the fifteenth century), the king's authority, walled towns, and gentry families still remained in the lowlands. Moreover it may be misleading to regard the pattern of limited military action, negotiation, submission, the holding of hostages and the awarding of stipends primarily as war against an enemy, though that is how the phraseology of the government records invites us to see it. It was, viewed in another way, a form of lordship. It may strike us as far removed from 'government'; but it had much in common with forms of indirect rule that were normal in much of Europe before the twelfth century. In Leinster we can see the area of conventional administration shrink. Authority, however, did not so much collapse, as change its nature.

The part played by the government in the south-east was played, with occasional royal assistance or interference, in some other regions of Ireland by the great lords. They exercised a similar sort of dominance over the march zones inhabited by Irish and Anglo-Irish lineages, and provided shelter – sometimes of an oppressive sort – for urban and village communities. A number of formal agreements made between the earls of Ormond and Kildare and Gaelic leaders survive, permitting us a close view of relationships in border regions. To Ormond, for example, fell the task of managing the uplands of north Tipperary. In 1358 we find the second earl taking with him to his Surrey manor of Shiere Vachery Edmund O'Kennedy of Ormond, whose very name is a testimony to the social influence of the earl's grandfather, Edmund Butler. In return for his release from custody, O'Kennedy promised to make substantial payments in cash or kind. These tributes were to be guaranteed by the delivery of his six sons and two nephews, and possibly also his brother, as hostages 'for his good and loyal bearing at the will of the earl'. He was to attend Ormond's courts as his ancestors had done; to serve him in war in his own area without charge, and to supply a hundred horsemen and sixty foot at the earl's wages for expeditions further afield; to surrender to him any of his own followers who committed offences in Ormond's territory, or, failing that, to pay compensation both to the earl and to the injured party; and to keep his armed retinue under control. In return, the earl granted him lands in Ormond

at rent, undertook to exact compensation on his behalf from any of English descent who committed trespasses against him, and to see that justice was done to him by his seneschal.[5] In Tipperary, as in Leinster, such agreements may have been made against a background of some territorial retreat. But they involved a vigorous assertion of overlordship, and amounted to a form of government.

During the thirteenth century Henry III and Edward I had shared authority in Ireland with men, some of whom were of their own stamp and background. Edward III and his ministers, by contrast, were faced by an essentially Anglo-Irish society, with which they had fewer natural links. The king's administration, too, now operated in a less hospitable setting. The justiciar's court still travelled, approximately south and east of a line drawn from Drogheda, through Trim, Kildare, Kilkenny and Limerick, to Cork; but it did so less readily because of the disturbed condition of the countryside and the preoccupation of senior officials with the day-to-day demands of the south-east. This in turn made royal justice harder to obtain, except for those who lived within easy reach of Dublin. By the same token, the collecting power of the exchequer diminished: the revenue, which had averaged some £5,000 or £6,000 a year in the time of Edward I, hovered around £2,000 for much of his grandson's reign. These figures ought not to be taken as accurate indicators of declining wealth in the colony as a whole. In 1341 an assembly at Kilkenny, when sending criticisms of royal officials to the king's council in England, is alleged by the Dublin annalist to have spoken thus: 'we are tenants of the king; we are, and shall remain, his subjects; and we say to you in good faith that we take profits from our lands: now tell us the reason why he who is sovereign lord over us all takes nothing'.[6] It is likely that the revenues of lords, gathered at local level, contracted less sharply than those of the king – if, indeed, they contracted at all. The shrinking royal revenues point to the fact that the state of Ireland was now even more inimical to the operations of central authority than it had been in the past.

As far as the king's government was concerned, fourteenth-century conditions placed a premium on adaptability. We have already seen that Edward III came to terms with actualities in his dealings with the small group of higher nobles, and that his ministers did so when coping with the problems that beset them in Leinster. There are some signs of similar common sense in their attempts to maintain royal influence in the lordship as a whole. The land that faced them was composed, at one level, of county and liberty communities, which were in places

dominated by a great lord, or informally grouped together under his supremacy. All of them knew war. From 1297, and probably before, the government tried to exercise control over that warfare by giving magnates authority to make truces. Out of this habit grew during the fourteenth century the office of keeper of the peace (*custos pacis*). The keepers of the peace were responsible for the preparedness of the community; together with the sheriffs and seneschals, they acted as its captains in march warfare; and they made agreements on its behalf with the Irish and Anglo-Irish leaders who threatened it. By giving commissions of the peace the government was not so much devolving power to the localities as trying to harness, legitimise and strengthen the more trustworthy local men who were powerful in any case. In nearer shires, such as Dublin, Meath or Louth, with a fair number of reputable families and no single predominant lord, gentry would serve on the commission. Further away, the role of the magnates would be confirmed. When Earl Richard of Ulster died in 1326, the government treated his lordships as two great supremacies. In Connacht, with which were associated the Limerick and Tipperary lands of the de Burghs, a commission of the peace was given to Edmund de Burgh, the earl's surviving son, and to Walter de Burgh, his cousin. In Ulster, where the cadet de Burghs were not established, commissions were given to Henry and Richard de Mandeville, the leading members of the most important subtenant family. The same approach is revealed later in the south. In 1357 the earl of Ormond was made chief keeper of the peace in Kilkenny and Tipperary, and in the next year throughout all Munster.

Regarded from a different point of view, the lordship appeared less as a collection of territorial communities than as a society of lineages, whose leaders possessed an inborn authority that might also be employed in the king's interests. Early fourteenth-century parliaments saw solemn promises by lords to discipline their kinsmen and adherents, and to render them up to royal justice when required; legislation enshrined the same idea. In 1324, for instance, the community of magnates, headed by the earls of Ulster, Kildare and Louth, took such an oath in parliament at Dublin. In 1347–8 the same principles are visible at a lower social level and in a less grand setting. Extracts preserved from the lost rolls of the justiciar's court tell us that

> Robert son of Hugh Lawless and nine others of the surname of the Lawlesses came into court and undertook that they and all their family and kin would in future well and faithfully remain in the king's peace; and if they do not do so, they accept that they will give to the king for each offender whom they do not produce in his court when summoned, £40 in silver at the king's will.[7]

At the same time the Meath lineages of Telyng, Betagh, Drake, Cruys and Pettit gave similar assurances. On occasion the leaders of families did fulfil their obligations. Patriarchal authority and concern for the public honour of the lineage are apparent in court proceedings in 1316–17, when a chief of the le Poers delivered an offending kinsman up to royal justice, and succeeded in having his punishment take place in private rather than on the gallows-tree in the manner of a common criminal:

> William son of David le Poer was convicted of felony and adjudged to be hanged. Afterwards, because the baron of Donoil (who is named John le Poer) captured the said William and brought him to court, at the petition of the same baron, on the grounds that William is of the lineage of the le Poers, it was agreed and granted that William should not be hanged, but should be sent back to gaol, to be kept there without food or drink till he should die.[8]

Royal government and leaders such as the baron of Donoil, though traditionally presented by historians as opposing forces, could find their interests coinciding. Lords of lineages were, potentially, agents of order, who provided an acceptable connection between the king and the localities. In return, royal endorsement and backing could help a magnate to assert authority over his own unruly followers. In this area at least, the government's attitude had the advantage of being in accord with social actualities. Once again we should beware of dismissing changing forms of royal influence merely as signs of governmental decay. Indeed, had we for the thirteenth century the type and quantity of evidence that exists for the fourteenth, we might discover that these expedients had a longer and more reputable ancestry than is commonly supposed.

Alongside adaptability, however, there existed serious tensions. Between the 1330s and the 1350s a series of English justiciars arrived in Ireland with English ministers and military forces in their train. As we have seen, they had an ingrained suspicion of the Anglo-Irish lords. Their presence led to friction over patronage, since the English companions whom they trusted tended to engross minor offices and such custodies of lands and rights as were in the king's gift, to the discomfiture of existing ministers and the Anglo-Irish. In the years 1344–6, for instance, the administration of Ralph Ufford, an East Anglian banneret of the king's household who had married the widowed countess of Ulster, saw the swift dismissal of some long-serving officials, the temporary destruction of the power of the earls of Desmond and Kildare, and the distribution of forfeitures to men who included English knights

of the justiciar's retinue. Although King Edward restored the earls, the consciousness of a gap between Anglo-Irish residents and English intruders remained marked. By 1357 the king, in response to petitions from Ireland, was concerned to salve the disputes that had arisen between 'those English born in Ireland' and 'those born in England and dwelling in Ireland'.[9] Significantly, his effort was made on the eve of the departure for the lordship of Amaury de St Amand, an English justiciar who was taking with him forty English knights and other men-at-arms, and one hundred mounted archers.

During the same period the increasingly clear-cut Anglo-Irish community learned to use assemblies, whether parliaments or great councils, as occasions when collective views could be formulated, and if need be sent to the king and council in England. Most often this was done in collaboration with royal ministers, but it could also take place against their will. In 1341 Edward III's attempt to revoke grants brought a storm of protest about the head of John Morice, the deputy justiciar, in the October parliament at Dublin. The session was adjourned to Kilkenny. When it resumed, Morice and his fellow-ministers were frightened to attend. Their absence deprived the meeting of official standing: but it remained an assembly of those who had been called together for parliament. At Kilkenny, the higher clergy, nobles and commons of the lordship addressed a long series of complaints to the king about the conduct of his servants in Ireland, while urgently assuring him of their own loyalty. Edward, anxious to remove an irritation that was distracting him from his renewed war effort in France, retreated from the revocation, and answered most of the Anglo-Irish petitions favourably. During the 1350s, when the needs of defence led justiciars to bargain frequently for taxation, the habit of common action was further established. Then in 1359–60 the community turned its political experience to good account, when it pressed for a commitment of English troops and money to Ireland.

By that time the ravages of plague and the stresses of border war in Leinster and elsewhere had created a mood of pessimism among the Anglo-Irish, and also in official circles in Dublin. During 1359 a small parliamentary subsidy was raised to send the chancellor to court to try to procure help. In the following year, when the second earl of Ormond was justiciar, a more determined effort was made in a great council that met at Kilkenny in July. King Edward was warned of the imminent collapse of the lordship, and urged to send at once a noble lieutenant, equipped with English troops and money. Ormond and others travelled to England to force the message home. There was more to all this than meets the eye. In 1359, when setting out on his last great expedition to

France, Edward had shown himself impressed by the earlier appeal from Ireland. In 1360 the Anglo-Irish were well aware that the recent conclusion of the Treaty of Brétigny with the French had untied Edward's hands; they also knew that Lionel, earl of Ulster had just come of age and was a natural candidate for office in the lordship. In the event Lionel was dispatched as his father's lieutenant in September 1361, and was provided with a small army whose wages were paid chiefly from English sources. Not only that, the king acceded to the Anglo-Irish request that the absentee lords and ladies should support this effort in person, by deputy, or at least financially.

Apart from an eight-month absence during 1364, Lionel remained in Ireland until November 1366. Militarily he achieved little of permanence. It seems clear that the king and his advisers imagined that it would be possible, through some increase in manpower and resources, to achieve a victory over the Irish enemy about whose depredations the Anglo-Irish had told them so much. The expectation proved ill-founded. Lionel merely played, from a slightly stronger position, the part filled by the justiciars of the recent past: he punished chiefs, took submissions, gathered hostages, gave gifts, and paid for the guarding of some strategic points. The lordship absorbed his men and money with no difficulty. The truth was, of course, that there was no coherent enemy to defeat; the scattered border zones of the colony each required constant, skilled management. The main result of Lionel's lieutenancy, a cynic might say, was to accustom the English government to providing, and the Anglo-Irish to receiving, financial assistance. The effort that was made to reanimate the lordship of the absentees was scarcely more successful. Ralph earl of Stafford, to whom had descended one third of Kilkenny, accompanied Lionel to Ireland. But the majority of absentees failed to cross the sea either in 1361–2 or in 1369, when a similar summons marked the beginning of the term of office of William of Windsor, the next English chief governor. And within a very few years of Lionel's arrival a number of absentee landholders sold out to resident noble and gentry families. The application of pressure in an effort to restore past conditions merely reinforced the changes that had taken place over the previous half-century; the distinctively Anglo-Irish character of the lordship was further accentuated.

The most interesting facet of Lionel's lieutenancy is the light it sheds on the question of identities. English help had been urgently requested by the Anglo-Irish. But the presence of the king's son, his entourage and troops meant the intrusion into the lordship of an unusually large body of outsiders. The result was the recrudescence of tension between the colonial ruling groups and what a later age would have described as

'new English'. Some sentences of the Dublin annalist catch exactly the Anglo-Irish outlook:

> Lord Lionel, after he had entered Ireland and rested for a few days, made war against O'Byrne, proclaiming in his camp that nobody born in Ireland should join his army; and a hundred of his paid soldiers were killed. Seeing this, Lionel at once brought the whole people, of England and of Ireland, together, and made good headway, engaging in many wars on all sides against the Irish, with the help of God and of the people of Ireland. And he dubbed many knights of England and of Ireland.[10]

God would bless Lionel's undertakings against the Gaelic Irish only if he showed proper regard for the Anglo-Irish, who were in the annalist's view the *populus Hibernie*, the 'people of Ireland'. The Anglo-Irish wanted English help, and delighted in the social prestige that King Edward's son could bestow. But these advantages had their price. When, just before he left Ireland for the last time, Lionel presided over the parliament that gave birth to the Statute of Kilkenny, he sanctioned an enactment which, like his father's ordinance of 1357, condemned disputes between the old English and the new, and insisted that the former were entitled to be treated as well as the latter. The statute points to an ambiguity that was to persist in various forms down to our own day. The fourteenth-century Anglo-Irish had their own identity; it was first and foremost an English identity, for that alone seemed to guarantee their right to be where they were and hold what they had; but their outlook was not an English one, nor did they welcome all the implications of the presence of Englishmen in their midst.

This background may make it easier to understand the increasing concern expressed in Irish legislation about the phenomenon known to historians as the 'gaelicisation' of the Anglo-Irish population. The fourteenth century was a period in which national identities were becoming more sharply etched. Although the French and English upper classes still met and mingled socially as well as on the battlefield, the Hundred Years War, and the royal propaganda associated with it, made men more conscious of exclusive political affiliations. English was ousting French as the normal vernacular in court circles, and had re-emerged as a favoured literary language, soon to provide the vehicle for Chaucer's poetry. English officials and soldiers found the Irish environment hostile. Anglo-Irish townsmen behind their walls, and perhaps also the inhabitants of the comparatively quiet coastal belt from Drogheda to Dublin, could share their unease. Even the earls of Ormond, who had English lands and frequent experience of the king's court, could feel that the conditions which they exploited and mastered

in Tipperary contained within them a threat to the English inheritance that they held dear. As we saw in another context, in 1297, in one of the earliest surviving signs of alarm, the Dublin parliament had legislated against the use by the colonists of Irish dress and hairstyles, since these tended to confuse the principle of duality of laws. By the mid-fourteenth century anxiety had intensified. In 1346–7 messengers sent by the Irish government to the English council asked that marriages between the two nations should be outlawed. The answer was, 'it is the king's will that a writ be sent to make proclamation that no marriages shall take place between English and Irish without the special licence of the king or justiciar'.[11] This order set the pattern for the more familiar and wider-ranging enactments of later years.

The Statute of Kilkenny of 1366 is remembered, of course, not for the clause about relations between English born in England and those born in Ireland, or for its summing-up of the peace-keeping legislation of the preceding seventy years, but for its attempt to preserve the Englishness of the Anglo-Irish by excluding the Gaelic influence that seemed to threaten it. This is as it should be. Recent writers have stressed that some of the relevant clauses repeat enactments made, also at Kilkenny, in 1351. But the legislation of 1366 was much more clearly directed. In 1351 alliances made with 'the English or Irish enemies of the king' through marriages or the fostering of children had been prohibited, unless a royal licence was obtained.[12] The Statute of Kilkenny singled out the Irish enemies, and insisted in addition that the Anglo-Irish should speak only English among themselves, should forswear Irish forms of their names, and should even shun the Gaelic musicians and story-tellers whom they had patronised for generations. And whereas the legislation of 1351 had been prefaced by conventional references to the need to maintain the peace and punish malefactors, the preamble to the Statute of Kilkenny presented it as a conscious programme designed to defend a society and culture that appeared to be threatened:

> now many English of the said land, forsaking the English language, fashion, mode of riding, laws and customs, live and comport themselves according to the customs, fashion and language of the Irish enemies; and they have entered into numerous marriages and alliances between themselves and the aforementioned Irish enemies; whereby the said land and its liege people, the English language, the allegiance due to our lord the king, and the English laws there, are subordinated and diminished, and the Irish enemies exalted and raised up, contrary to right.[13]

The statute represented a standard towards which the Anglo-Irish

publicly and collectively aspired. It was in that spirit, we may suppose, that the great lords, who had little option but to transgress some of its prescriptions in practice, assented to it in 1366, and to its repeated confirmation in times to come.

The statute of 1366 and its predecessors raise problems that historians have scarcely begun to tackle. We need not dispute the reality of gaelicisation in order to wonder whether legislation may not tell us more about the state of mind of those who made it than about the conditions to which it was to be applied. From the earliest days of the lordship, the expansion and defence of its borders had involved magnates and others in intimate connections with the Gaelic world; and in Ireland as in Wales, Anglo-Norman lords had proved susceptible to aspects of the host culture. In an optimistic, expansive era, men could take such things in their stride. By the fourteenth century Gaelic influence had intensified; but equally, it was being watched by ministers and townsmen who feared being engulfed by it, who had a more developed consciousness of what it meant to be English, and who were too ready to suppose that some external traits of Irishness necessarily called a man's allegiance into question. Even more important, the particular viewpoint of colonial legislation, when allied with the determined archaism of many Gaelic sources, may disguise the degree to which acculturation was a two-way process. French loan-words had passed into the Irish language, and English terms were being borrowed into Irish law. Chiefs frequently gave their sons Anglo-Norman names: as well as Edmund O'Kennedy, we meet, for instance, Henry O'Neill, and William, Richard and Henry O'Nolan. If Anglo-Irish boys were fostered in Gaelic households (a practice not so far removed from the forms of education that prevailed among the nobility throughout Europe), so too Irish youths were brought up in royal and noble custody as hostages. Irish leaders had familiarised themselves with the use of coins, which they obtained through trade as well as plunder and subsidies. And it would be surprising if the Gaelic lordships of the late middle ages owed nothing to the reception of ideas and techniques from the outside world: these, after all, had been crucial to the state-building enterprises of Scottish kings and Welsh princes in earlier times. In these matters as in so many others, the historian of later medieval Ireland needs to struggle against the perspective imposed upon him by his sources. But though the established picture may be incomplete or distorted, it is much too early to suggest a satisfactory alternative.

Though much remains to be explored, there can be no doubt that the Statute of Kilkenny took a simplified and categorising view of an intricate and fluid Anglo-Irish society. Among the practices that it con-

demned as un-English was the use of march or brehon (that is, Irish) law among the colonists. Legislators seem to have had in mind above all the system by which men, families and lords parleyed, made use of arbitrators, and in the last resort had recourse to feud, in order to settle their disputes and exact compensation for injuries done to them. Such was the pattern that obtained in relations between Anglo-Irish and Irish leaders, and indeed, with variations, in most European societies that lacked the strong public authority and unified legal system that prevailed in much of England. To say, as a succession of enactments did, that the Anglo-Irish should not employ these practices among themselves, but should instead use the common law, ignored the fact that, without accessible courts capable of carrying their judgements into effect, English law was scarcely to the point. March law was essential if many of the local societies that made up the lordship of Ireland were to retain a measure of stability and order.

The complexities of colonial Ireland are apparent during the years after Lionel's departure. When he left, the lordship needed a man of status and power at its head. Early in 1367 such a one was found, in the person of Gerald fitz Maurice, third earl of Desmond, who remained chief governor until William of Windsor arrived in June 1369. The earl's rule involved no abrupt change in the government's style or outlook. Yet this was 'Gerald the Rhymer', a Gaelic poet and patron of poets. Gerald's career had been forwarded by King Edward in 1358–9, when he had accepted his succession to the earldom in place of his imbecile elder brother. To Gerald in later decades was to be entrusted the formal keeping of the peace throughout much of the south-west. Men's cultural complexions and political attitudes were subtle things; and we should resist the temptation placed in our way by the Statute of Kilkenny, to reduce them to neat formulas. The lordship of Ireland had begun as one of the diverse lands of the French-speaking Henry II. It was now an outlying dominion of the essentially English monarchy of his great-great-great-grandson. During the intervening generations its inhabitants had acquired special characteristics. They lived in a state of tension between two traditions and social modes. Different regions, communities and families stood at varying points on the path that led from Englishness to Irishness; and strong signs of gaelicisation could mark a man without extinguishing his sense of being 'English by blood', just as Gaelic leaders could absorb aspects of French or English society without abating their Irish identity. Even within a family there could be marked divergences. In 1371–2 John son of William le Poer was imprisoned because he knew no English; he was released when a senior – and by implication English-speaking – member of his lineage stood

surety for his undertaking that he would do his best to learn it.

The Anglo-Irish begged for English assistance, yet rejected the agents of that assistance. They spoke of an Irish enemy that threatened to overwhelm them, but were discovered in close and often harmonious relations with that enemy. They proclaimed themselves English, and yet at the same time 'the people of Ireland'. Some of them regarded others as gaelicised and unreliable; yet it was on the latter that English influence in much of the lordship chiefly relied. And to cap it all, many of the Gaelic Irish leaders presented themselves, as they had done from the first, not as foes, but as eager allies of the king's representatives. It is small wonder that those whom Edward III sent to Ireland found the king's subjects there hard to comprehend and hard to help.

Footnotes

In general I have used the system of abbreviations set out in 'Rules for Contributors to *Irish Historical Studies*', *I.H.S.*, Supplement I (1968).

Chapter 1 (pp 1–21)

1 *Expugnatio Hibernica: The Conquest of Ireland,* ed. A. B. Scott and F. X. Martin (Dublin, R.I.A., 1978), pp 40–1.
2 *The Song of Dermot and the Earl,* ed. G. H. Orpen (Oxford, 1892), pp 94–7.
3 Ibid., p. 50.
4 Ibid., pp 184–5.
5 Quoted in D. Bethell, 'English Monks and Irish Reform in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Hist. Studies,* viii (1971), 135.
6 E. Curtis and R. B. McDowell, *Irish Historical Documents, 1172–1922* (London, 1943), p 17; D. C. Douglas and G. W. Greenaway, *English Historical Documents, 1042–1189* (London, 1953), p 776. Latin text in *Pontificia Hibernica,* ed. M. P. Sheehy (Dublin, 1962), i, 15–16.
7 Curtis and McDowell, pp 19–20; Douglas and Greenaway, pp 777–8; *Pontificia Hibernica,* i, 19–20.
8 *Expugnatio Hibernica,* pp 92–5. I have amended the printed translation at one point: Gerald does not use the term 'homage' *(homagium)* when describing Dermot's submission.
9 Ibid., pp 134–7.
10 J. J. O'Meara (ed.), 'Giraldus Cambrensis *In Topographia Hibernie', R.I.A. Proc.,* 1ii (1949) C, 166; Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales; The Description of Wales,* ed. L. Thorpe (Harmondsworth, 1978), pp 256, 271.
11 *A.L.C.*, 170–1.

Chapter 2 (pp 22–50)

1 O'Meara (ed.), 'Giraldus Cambrensis *In Topographia Hibernie',* 165.
2 *Chronica Rogeri de Hovedene,* ed. W. Stubbs (Rolls Series, 1868–71), iv, 25, 162.
3 *A.U.*, ii, 310–11.
4 *Close Rolls, 1259–61*, p. 64.
5 Hist. MSS Comm., *MSS of Lord De L'Isle and Dudley* (London, 1925), i, 32.
6 *Caithr. Thoirdh.*, ii, 10.
7 *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1285–92,* pp 207–8.
8 E.g., *A.L.C.*, i, 190–1, 196–7, 206–7, 224–5, 226–7.
9 *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1171–1251,* no. 654.
10 Ibid., no. 1402.
11 *Ann. Conn.*, pp 90–1, 98–9, 100–1.
12 Ibid., p. 223.
13 *Misc. Ir. Annals,* pp 74–5.
14 *Ann. Inisf.*, pp 328–9.

15 *Royal and other Historical Letters illustrative of the Reign of Henry III,* ed. W. W. Shirley (Rolls Series, 1862–6), ii, 199.
16 *Ann. Conn.*, pp 186–9.

Chapter 3 (pp 51–68)
1 *Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1247–58*, p. 270.
2 *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1171–1251,* no. 226.
3 Ibid., no. 222.
4 J. F. Lydon, 'Edward II and the Revenues of Ireland in 1311–12', *I.H.S.*, xiv (1964–5), pp 54–7.
5 Richardson and Sayles, *Admin. Ire.*, p. 69.

Chapter 4 (pp 69–91)
1 *Gormanston Reg.*, p. 177.
2 Orpen, *Normans,* i, 394–5.
3 *Expugnatio Hibernica*, p. 195.
4 Ibid., p. 249.
5 R. E. Glasscock, 'Mottes in Ireland', *Château Gaillard*, vii (1974), p. 97.
6 *Ir. Chartul. Llanthony*, p. 74. Cf. p. 216.
7 *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1171–1251,* no. 120. Cf. nos. 886, 1677.
8 *Caithr. Thoirdh.*, ii, 7–8.
9 *Pipe Roll Ire. 1211–12,* pp 20–47.
10 *Red Bk Ormond,* pp 69–83.
11 Ibid., pp 56–60.
12 *Gormanston Reg.*, pp 111–12.
13 Ibid., p. 111.
14 *Pipe Roll Ire. 1211–12,* pp 32, 38.
15 E. Curtis, 'Rental of the Manor of Lisronagh, 1333, and Notes on "Betagh" Tenure in Medieval Ireland', *R.I.A. Proc.*, xliii (1936) C, 46–7.
16 *Red Bk Ormond,* pp 23–5.
17 E.g., H. T. Knox, 'Occupation of Connaught by the Anglo-Normans after A.D. 1237', *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, xxxii (1902), pp 393–8.
18 H. E. Shields, 'The Walling of New Ross: a Thirteenth-Century Poem in French', *Long Room*, xii–xiii (1975–60), p. 28.
19 *Liber Primus Kilkenn.*, pp 71–4; *Liber Primus Kilkenniensis,* trans. A. J. Otway-Ruthven (Kilkenny, 1961), pp 5–7.
20 Ibid. (trans. Otway-Tuthven), p. 25.
21 *Hist. and Mun. Doc. Ire.*, pp 51–5.
22 Ibid., pp 3–48.
23 Ibid., pp 112–23.

Chapter 5 (pp 92–110)
1 *Stat. Ire., John-Hen. V*, pp 23–4.
2 Ibid., p. 35.
3 *Cal. Justic. Rolls Ire., 1305–7,* pp xiii–xiv.
4 *P.R.I. Rep. D.K. 37,* 45–9.
5 Ibid., 50–2.

6 *Close Rolls, 1247–51*, p. 118.
7 *Chartul. St. Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 294.
8 Curtis, *Med. Ire.* (1938 edn.), p. 161.
9 E.g., *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1171–1251*, nos. 505, 619.
10 *Stat. Ire., John-Hen. V*, pp 210–11.
11 *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1252–84*, no. 1408.
12 *Rotuli Parliamentorum Anglie Hactenus Inediti*, ed. H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles (Camden Soc., 1935), pp 35–6, 44–5.
13 *Hy Many*, pp 141–2.

Chapter 6 (pp 111–135)

1 I owe this point to Professor A.A.M. Duncan.
2 *Cal. Archbishop Alen's Register*, ed. C. McNeill (Dublin, R.S.A.I., 1950), pp 180–2.
3 *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 371.
4 E. Curtis, 'The Clan System among English Settlers in Ireland', *E.H.R.*, xxv (1910), pp 116–17.
5 *Ormond Deeds, 1350–1413*, no. 46.
6 *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 384.
7 Cambridge University Library, Add. MS 3104, f.37^{ii}.
8 Ibid., f.35.
9 *Stat. Ire., John-Hen. V*, p. 417.
10 *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 395.
11 P.R.O., Ancient Petitions, S.C.8/238/11900.
12 *Stat. Ire., John-Hen. V*, pp 430–1.

Suggestions for Further Reading

What follows is selective; it reflects my own preoccupations and judgements, and on the whole emphasises more recent work. For a comprehensive bibliography, see P. W. A. Asplin, *Medieval Ireland, c.1170–1495: A Bibliography of Secondary Works* (Dublin, R.I.A., 1971).

General

The standard history from the Anglo-Norman side is A. J. Otway-Ruthven, *A History of Medieval Ireland* (London, 1968; repr. 1980); it is excellent on institutions and presents an indispensable narrative. J. F. Lydon, *The Lordship of Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 1972) is readable and wide-ranging. G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans, 1169–1333* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911–20) is still the fullest account of the period. Orpen's work is marked by contemporary Anglo-Irish prejudices; but it is learned and (such are the vagaries of fashion) in its emphasis on families and regional lordship more 'modern' than some of its successors. E. Curtis, *A History of Medieval Ireland* (London, 1923; 2nd edn. 1938) embraces both the colonial and the Gaelic worlds; it is not always accurate in detail and is, in places, very dated in approach; it may best be used by those who already know something about the period. Likewise, M. Dolley, *Anglo-Norman Ireland* (Dublin, 1972) contains many insights but is scarcely a book for beginners. E. Curtis and R. B. McDowell, *Irish Historical Documents, 1172–1922* (London, 1943) includes translations of important texts, ranging from *Laudabiliter* to the Statute of Kilkenny.

The history of Gaelic Ireland in this period has scarcely begun to be studied; furthermore Irish history in the pre-Norman centuries is undergoing a reappraisal whose outcome remains unclear. D. Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin, 1972) is a good introduction; D. A. Binchy, 'The Passing of the Old Order', *Proceedings of the International Congress of Celtic Studies 1959* (Dublin, 1962), 119–32 is a classic essay, while D. Ó Corráin, 'Kingship and Nationality in Pre-Norman Ireland', *Hist. Studies,* xi (1978), 1–35 is a refreshingly revisionist one. K. Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 1972) is first-rate, but is based largely on evidence from a later period than the one considered here; its conclusions should not be casually projected backwards, any more than those of works on the pre-Norman period should be projected forwards. The colonial church may be approached through two books by J. A. Watt: *The Church and the Two Nations in Medieval Ireland* (Cambridge, 1970) which contains an extensive bibliography, and *The Church in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1972). C. Mooney, 'The Church in Gaelic Ireland, 13th to 15th Centuries', *A History of Irish Catholicism,* ed. P. J. Corish (Dublin, 1969), vol. II, ch. v, is a pioneering work. A. Gwynn and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses, Ireland* (London, 1970) is a gazetteer of religious houses, and is accompanied by a fine historical map.

Chapter 1

The invasion period is covered in considerable detail in all the general histories. The student could do worse than turn at once to Giraldus Cambrensis, *Expugnatio Hibernica, The Conquest of Ireland,* ed. A. B. Scott and F. X. Martin (Dublin, R.I.A., 1978), which contains much useful editorial matter. On Gerald, see F. M. Powicke, 'Gerald of Wales', in *The Christian Life in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1935), 107–29, and M. Richter, *Giraldus Cambrensis: The Growth of the Welsh Nation* (rev. edn. Aberystwyth, 1976). *The Song of Dermot and the Earl,* ed. G. H. Orpen (Oxford, 1892) is also worth reading; on its composition, see J. Long, 'Dermot and the Earl: who wrote the Song?', *R.I.A. Proc.,* lxxv (1975) C, 263–72. The English background is dealt with in W. L. Warren, *Henry II* (London, 1973), which makes use of the same author's controversial 'The Interpretation of Twelfth-Century Irish History', *Hist. Studies,* vii (1969), 1–19. The Welsh background is less well served, but see L. H. Nelson, *The Normans in South Wales, 1070–1171* (Austin, 1966). There are pertinent comments on Dermot Mac Murrough in F. J. Byrne, *Irish Kings and High Kings* (London, 1973); while F. X. Martin, 'The First Normans in Munster', *Cork. Hist. Soc. Jn.,* lxxvi (1971), 48–71, explores the south-west. For the ecclesiastical context, see, in addition to the works of J. A. Watt cited above, M. P. Sheehy, 'The Bull Laudabiliter: a Problem in Medieval *Diplomatique* and History', *Galway Arch. Soc. Jn.,* xxix (1960–1), 45–70; D. Bethell, 'English Monks and Irish Reform in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Hist. Studies,* viii (1971), 111–35; and M. Richter, 'The First Century of Anglo-Irish Relations', *History,* lix (1974), 195–210. Established views of John's expedition are skilfully demolished in W. L. Warren, 'John in Ireland, 1185', *Essays presented to Michael Roberts,* ed. J. Bossy and P. Jupp (Belfast, 1976), 11–23.

Chapter 2

The fullest account of this neglected period is still to be found in the relevant chapters of Orpen's *Ireland under the Normans,* which subsume most of his earlier articles; for Ulster and Connacht there is a series of studies by Orpen and H. T. Knox, based on the 1333 extents of the de Burgh lordships, and scattered through *R.S.A.I. Jn.* for 1902, 1903, 1913–15, 1920–1; R. D. Edwards, 'Anglo-Norman Relations with Connacht, 1169–1224', *I.H.S.,* i (1938–9), 135–53, is also useful. Recent articles by Katharine Simms demonstrate the dividends of patient research: 'The Medieval Kingdom of Lough Erne', *Clogher Record* (1977), 126–41; 'The O'Hanlons, the O'Neills and the Anglo-Normans in Thirteenth-Century Armagh', *Seanchas Ardmhacha,* ix (1978), 70–94; 'The O'Reillys and the Kingdom of East Breifne', *Breifne* (1978–9). The serious student may wish to turn directly to the Irish annals. Of these, the best-edited are *The Annals of Inisfallen,* ed. S. Mac Airt (Dublin, 1951). But more material is to be found in, for example, *Annals of Connacht,* ed. A. Martin Freeman (Dublin, 1944), *The Annals of Loch Cé,* ed. W. M. Hennessy (2 vols, London, 1871), and *Annals of Ulster,* ed. W. M. Hennessy and B. Mac Carthy (4 vols, Dublin, 1887–1901). For Munster, see *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh,* ed. S. H. O'Grady (Irish Texts Society, 2 vols, London, 1929); it should be read with T. J. Westropp, 'On the External Evidences bearing on the Historic Character of the "Wars of Torlough" by John, son of Rory MacGrath', *R.I.A. Trans.,* xxxii (1902–4) C, 133–98; L. F. McNamara, 'An Examination of the Medieval Irish Text "Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh" ', *N. Munster Antiq. Jn.,* viii (1958–61), 182–92; and K. Simms, 'The Battle of Dysert O'Dea and the Gaelic Resurgence in Thomond', *Dal gCais,* v (1979), 59–66.

Chapter 3

Apart from the standard histories, there has been distressingly little work on the subject-matter of this chapter; the reign of Henry III in particular is almost derelict. On John, I have benefited greatly from two articles by W. L. Warren, though I have been so rash as to draw rather different general conclusions from them: 'The Historian as Private Eye', *Hist. Studies,* ix (1974), 1–18, and 'King John and Ireland' (forthcoming). The best guide to politics under Henry III is still F. M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward* (Oxford, 1947), which contains a fair amount about Ireland. J. F. Lydon has made the subject of English use of Irish resources his own: see 'Three Exchequer Documents from the Reign of Henry III', *R.I.A. Proc.,* lxv (1966–7) C, 1–27; 'An Irish Army in Scotland, 1296', *Ir. Sword,* v (1961–2), 184–90; 'Irish Levies in the Scottish Wars, 1296–1302', ibid., 207–17; and especially, 'Edward II and the Revenues of Ireland in 1311–12', *I.H.S.,* xiv (1964–5), 39–57. G. J. Hand, *English Law in Ireland, 1290–1324* (Cambridge, 1967) has valuable comments on John Wogan; while R. Frame, 'The Justiciar and the Murder of the Mac Murroughs in 1282', *I.H.S.,* xviii (1972–3), 223–30, examines one unsavoury incident. For the general context, see J. Le Patourel, 'The Plantagenet Dominions', *History,* 1 (1965), 289–308. Much of the source-material is conveniently collected in H. S. Sweetman (ed.), *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland, 1171–1307* (London, 1875–86), which is also valuable for the themes discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 4

The classic study of rural settlement is A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The Character of Norman Settlement in Ireland', *Hist. Studies,* v (1965), 75–84; see also her 'The Organization of Anglo-Irish Agriculture in the Middle Ages', *R.S.A.I.Jn.,* lxxxi (1951), 1–13, and, for a study of one area, B. J. Graham, 'Anglo-Norman Settlement in County Meath', *R.I.A. Proc.,* lxxv (1975) C, 223–48. For mottes see in general G. H. Orpen, 'Motes and Norman Castles in Ireland', *R.S.A.I.Jn.,* xxxvii (1907), 123–52, and R. E. Glasscock, 'Mottes in Ireland', *Château Gaillard,* vii (1974), 95–110; and, as an example of many local studies, G. H. Orpen, 'Motes and Norman Castles in Ossory', *R.S.A.I. Jn.,* xxxix (1909), 313–42. T. B. Barry, *The Medieval Moated Sites of S.E. Ireland* (British Archaeological Reports, xxxv, 1977) is pioneering and very good. The enfeoffment of one region is examined in C. A. Empey, 'The Settlement of the Kingdom of Limerick under John, 1177–1216' (forthcoming); while military tenures and the formation of parishes are discussed in two articles by A. J. Otway-Ruthven: 'Knight Service in Ireland', *R.S.A.I. Jn.,* lxxxix (1959), 1–15, and 'Parochial Development in the Rural Deanery of Skreen', ibid., xciv (1964), 111–22. Boroughs are considered by B. J. Graham, 'The Towns of Medieval Ireland', in *The Development of the Irish Town,* ed. R. A. Butlin (London, 1977), 28–60. On New Ross, see G. H. Orpen, *New Ross in the Thirteenth Century* (Dublin, 1911), and on Kilkenny, *Liber Primus Kilkenniensis,* trans. A. J. Otway-Ruthven (Kilkenny, 1961). H. B. Clarke (ed.), *Focus on Medieval Dublin* (Dublin Arts Festival Programme, 1978) contains useful essays; and the same author has prepared an illuminating map: *Dublin c. 840-c. 1540: The Medieval Town in the Modern City* (Dublin, Ordnance Survey, 1978). The best introduction to the buildings of the period is R. A. Stalley, *Architecture and Sculpture in Ireland, 1150–1350* (Dublin, 1971); also useful are H. G. Leask, *Irish Castles and Castellated Houses* (Dundalk, 1941), and the same author's *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings,* ii (Dundalk, 1960). F. H. A. Aalen, *Man and the Landscape in Ireland* (London, 1978) contains a view of the period by a geographer; and P. D. Sweetman, 'Archaeological Excavations at Trim Castle,

County Meath, 1971–4', *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxxviii (1978) C, 127–98, may stand as an example of the growing number of archaeological reports relevant to the Anglo-Norman period. The European background may perhaps best be approached through G. Duby, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West* (London, 1968).

Chapter 5

Law and institutions have been more comprehensively covered than most subjects. The best introduction is chapter v of A. J. Otway-Ruthven's *A History of Medieval Ireland*. The structure and personnel of central government are dealt with in H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, *The Administration of Ireland, 1172–1377* (Dublin, 1963). For English law, see G. J. Hand, *English Law in Ireland* (cited above), and the same author's 'English Law in Ireland, 1172–1351', *N.I. Legal Quart.*, xxiii (1972), 393–422. The standard work on parliament is Richardson and Sayles's *The Irish Parliament in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1952; repr. 1964); its conclusions are summarised in their *Parliament in Medieval Ireland* (Dundalk, 1964). There is as yet no adequate study of the exchequer, but see Richardson and Sayles, 'Irish Revenue, 1278–1384', *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxii (1962) C, 87–100. Local government may be approached by way of A. J. Otway-Ruthven's articles, 'Anglo-Irish Shire Government in the Thirteenth Century', *I.H.S.*, v (1946–7), 1–28, and 'The Medieval County of Kildare', ibid., xi (1958–9), 181–99. The legal status of the Irish is discussed by G. J. Hand in the works already mentioned. See also A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The Request of the Irish for English Law, 1277–80', *I.H.S.*, vi (1948–9), 261–70; the same author's 'The Native Irish and English Law in Medieval Ireland', ibid., vii (1950–1), 1–16; A. Gwynn, 'Edward I and the Proposed Purchase of English Law for the Irish , *c.*1276–80', *R. Hist. Soc. Trans.*, 5th ser., x (1960), 111–27; and B. Murphy, 'The Status of the Native Irish after 1331', *Ir. Jurist*, new ser., ii (1967), 116–38.

Chapter 6

More work has been done on the fourteenth century than on the thirteenth, though coverage is very patchy. On the Bruce invasion, see J. F. Lydon, 'The Bruce in Invasion of Ireland', *Hist. Studies*, iv (1963), 111–25, and R. Frame, 'The Bruces in Ireland, 1315–18', *I.H.S.*, xix (1974–5), 3–37; J. R. S. Phillips has published important letters in 'Documents on the Early Stages of the Bruce Invasion of Ireland, 1315–16', *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxxix (1979) C, 247–70; J. A. Watt, 'Negotiations between Edward II and John XXII concerning Ireland', *I.H.S.*, x (1956–7), 1–20, considers the papal aspect; the Scottish background is best studied in G. W. S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland* (2nd edn., Edinburgh, 1976). Later relations between England, Scotland and Ireland are the subject of articles by R. Nicholson: 'A Sequel to Edward Bruce's Invasion of Ireland', *Scot. Hist. Rev.*, xlii (1963), 30–40, and 'An Irish Expedition to Scotland in 1335', *I.H.S.*, xiii (1962–3), 197–211. G. O. Sayles, 'The Rebellious First Earl of Desmond', *Medieval Studies presented to Aubrey Gwynn, S.J.*, ed. J. A. Watt, J. B. Morrall and F. X. Martin (Dublin, 1961), 203–29, exploits a rich vein of new evidence, while remaining unsympathetic to its subject. Particular periods are discussed in R. Frame, 'The Justiciarship of Ralph Ufford: Warfare and Politics in Fourteenth-Century Ireland', *Studia Hib.*, xiii (1973), 7–47, and A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'Ireland in the 1350s: Sir Thomas de Rokeby and his Successors', *R.S.A.I.Jn.*, xcvii (1967), 47–59. I have attempted to analyse war and diplomacy in Leinster in 'English Officials and Irish Chiefs in the

Fourteenth Century', *E.H.R.*, xc (1975), 748–77, and to essay a general interpretation of the period in 'Power and Society in the Lordship of Ireland, 1272–1377', *Past and Present*, no. 76 (1977), 3–33. Approaches to the relations between the colonial and Gaelic worlds are to be found in J. F. Lydon, 'The Problem of the Frontier in Medieval Ireland', *Topic: A Journal of the Liberal Arts*, no. 13 (1967), 5–22, and G. Mac Niocaill, 'The Contact of Irish and Common Law', *N.I. Legal Quart.*, xxiii (1972), 16–23. My forthcoming *English Lordship in Ireland, 1318–1361* (Oxford, 1982) is a detailed study of aristocratic society, royal government, and Anglo-Irish relations.

Glossary

banneret lord entitled to have a banner, and drawing higher wages of war than an ordinary knight.

barony name given to administrative divisions of certain counties: see also 'cantred'.

bloodfeud conflict between kin-groups, arising from an attempt to exact vengeance or compensation for a previous injury.

burgess member of a borough community, sharing in its communal privileges.

cantred name applied by Anglo-Normans (usually when making grants of land) to pre-existing territorial units; later used of administrative divisions of certain counties: see also 'barony'.

chevauchée fast-moving campaign, inflicting damage on countryside, partly in the hope of obtaining the allegiance of its inhabitants.

common pleas legal cases concerning private rights, as distinct from criminal pleas.

crosses church lands within a liberty, exempt from the jurisdiction of the lord of the liberty, and administered by a royal sheriff.

demesne lands and rights retained for direct exploitation by lord or king rather than being granted out to others.

extent survey and valuation of property, made by its lord or by the royal government.

eyre from the Latin *iter,* a journey; usually applied to circuit of royal judges.

fosse ditch accompanying palisade or wall in fortifications.

free tenant freeman, most commonly holding land by knight-service, whose tenure was protected by the royal courts.

grange farm-buildings, usually at a distance from manorial centre.

heriot death-duty, payable to deceased's lord.

hue and cry noisy pursuit of criminals, as a legal duty falling upon local communities.

keep strong central tower within outer walls of castle.

knight-service unpaid military service, usually of forty days' duration, owed to lord or king in return for tenure of land.

manor unit of rural lordship, varying greatly in size.

mark money of account, worth thirteen shillings and fourpence, or two-thirds of a £.

metropolitan archbishop having jurisdiction over a province containing several dioceses.

Ostman man of Norse descent.

prebend cathedral benefice set aside for support of member of chapter.

primogeniture system of inheritance by which the first-born son succeeds to all his father's landed property.

roll membranes *(rotuli)* of parchment stitched together to form a record.

segment branch of dynasty, often in open or latent competition with other branches.

seneschal steward or chief officer of lord.

shrievalty office of sheriff.

sovereign term applied to chief citizen of certain towns.
sub-tenant free tenant holding land of intermediate lord rather than directly of king.
tithe tenth part of agricultural produce, owed for support of local clergy.
vill township, local district; small unit of lordship or fiscal assessment.
villein peasant bound to lord or estate; in England regarded as unfree from about 1200.

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Robin Frame is a lecturer in Modern History at the University of Durham.

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