The origins of the lordship of Leinster and the role of William Marshal:

perceptions and reality

by

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Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

AC	Mageoghagan, Conell, *The Annals of Clonmacnoise being Annals of Ireland from the earliest period to A.D. 1408* (1627), ed. Denis Murphy (Dublin, 1896, repr. Felinfach, 1993)
AFM	*Annála Ríoghachta Éireann: Annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters from the earliest period to the year 1616*, ed. and trans. John O'Donovan (7 vols, Dublin, 1851)
AI	*The Annals of Inisfallen* (MS Rawlinson B503), ed. and trans. Seán Mac Airt (Dublin, 1951)
ALC	*The Annals of Loch Cé: a chronicle of Irish affairs from A.D. 1014 to A.D. 1590*, ed. and trans. William Maunsell Hennessy (2 vols, London,1871)
ATig.	'The Annals of Tigernach', ed. Whitley Stokes, in *Revue Celtique* xviii, xvi (Paris, 1895–7)
AU	*Annála Uladh: the Annals of Ulster*, ed. William Maunsell Hennessy and Bartholomew MacCarthy (4 vols, Dublin, 1887–1901)
Byrne, *Ir. kings*	Byrne, F.J., *Irish kings and high-kings* (London, 1973; repr. Dublin, 2001)
CDI, 1171–1251 etc.	*Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1171–1251*, ed. H.S. Sweetman and G.F. Handcock (5 vols, London, 1875–86)
Curtis, *Med. Ire.*	Curtis, Edmund, *A history of medieval Ireland* (2nd ed., London,1938)
DIB	McGuire, James and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish biography: from the earliest times to the year 2002* (9 vols, Cambridge, 2009)
Flanagan, *Irish society*	Flanagan, Marie Therese, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers,Angevin kingship* (Oxford, 1989)

Gesta Henrici	William Stubbs (ed.), *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatas; or, The chronicle of the reigns of Henry II and Richard I A.D. 1169–1192* (2 vols, London, 1867)
Giraldus, *Expugnatio*	Scott, A.B. and F.X. Martin (eds), *Giraldus Cambrensis, Expugnatio Hibernica: the conquest of Ireland* (Dublin, 1978)
Giraldus, *Topographia*	O'Meara, John F. (ed.), Gerald of Wales: *The history and topography of Ireland* (London, 1982)
History	Holden, A.J., ed., *History of William Marshal* (3 vols, London, 2004)
Hoveden	Riley, Henry T. (ed.), *The Annals of Roger de Hoveden, comprising the history of England and of other countries of Europe, from A.D. 732 to A.D. 1201* (2 vols, London, 1853)
La geste	Mullally, Evelyn (ed.), *La geste des Engleis en Yrlande: The deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, formerly known as The Song of Dermot and the Earl (Dublin, 2002)
NHI	*A new history of Ireland*, under the auspices of the RIA, ed. T.W. Moody, T.D. Williams, J.C. Beckett, F.X. Martin, F.J. Byrne, W.F. Vaughan, Art Cosgrove, J.R. Hill and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (9 vols, Oxford, 1976–2005)
Orpen, *Normans*	Orpen, Goddard Henry, *Ireland under the Normans* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911–20, repr. Oxford, 1968)
Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire*.	Otway-Ruthven, A.J., *A history of medieval Ireland* (London, 1968)
Song	Orpen, Goddard Henry (ed.), *The song of Dermot and the Earl, an Old French poem* (Oxford, 1892, repr. Felinfach, 1994).

repr.	reprint/reprinted in
RIA	Royal Irish Academy

The origins of the lordship of Leinster and the role of William Marshal:

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Abstract

This thesis examines the transformation of the Gaelic provincial kingdom of Leinster into an Anglo-Norman feudal lordship and explores the role William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke played its subsequent development. There are several strands to this study. It begins with an investigation of the way Marshal –whose role in English history was always relatively well understood by English writers– was perceived by Irish chroniclers and antiquarian scholars writing from the mid-thirteenth century to the 1800s. After this the thesis returns to the origins of the lordship of Leinster where it charts the turbulent rise of the Uí Chennselaigh kings and the campaigns through which they consolidated their hold on the provincial kingdom. While the last of the Uí Chennselaigh kings of Leinster, Diarmaid Mac Murchada, played a well known part in involving Anglo-Norman adventurers in Irish affairs but his motivations and aspirations warrant re-appraisal. The foremost of these adventurers, Strongbow, was not only a formidable military leader but he also set in motion the process of transforming Leinster into a feudal lordship with all the administrative innovations and redistribution of land that this implied. This process was continued by William Marshal who had acquired Leinster by marrying Strongbow's daughter and heir, Isabella de Clare. Marshal would ultimately rise to the top of Angevian politics but this was only after surviving a series of crises which would engulf the Leinster Lordship. As well as his political and military legacy this study will also look at the physical remains of his time as lord of Leinster; his castles and the religious houses that he founded.

The origins of the lordship of Leinster and the role of William Marshal: perceptions and reality

Introduction

There are two principal aims to this thesis.

The first aim is to examine the political pressures that shaped the eleventh and twelfth-century kingdom of Leinster and the process by which it was transformed into the feudal lordship that William Marshal would eventually govern.

The second aim is to see how the actions of William Marshal during the period that he was lord of Leinster compare with how he was perceived by Irish chroniclers and antiquarian scholars writing from the late thirteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century. This requires a re-evaluation of the relevant material relating to Marshal in order to create a coherent and balanced study to which the views of antiquarian writers can be compared.

<u>Why this merits attention</u>

Leinster was the first of the Irish provincial kingdoms to fall under the control of the initial wave of Anglo-Norman adventurers. This was achieved through an advantageous marriage and disputed inheritance, shrewd alliances and a campaign of conquest on the part of Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare (better known as Strongbow). While the story of the conquest of Ireland is well known, events in Leinster, a sometime independent kingdom under Diarmaid Mac Murchada and earlier Uí Chennselaigh kings, warrant a reappraisal in the context of its history as a separate polity in its own right. With this in mind it is necessary to examine how the rise of the Uí Chennselaigh in the eleventh century and their interactions with both Irish and Hiberno-Norse rulers gradually shaped the political fortunes of the kingdom. This background, taking in the geographic boundaries, the tribal or factional as well as ethnic divisions, is required to

understand Diarmaid's fateful decision to recruit among the Anglo-Normans of south Wales and ultimately the difficulties and opportunities faced by Strongbow at the beginning of May 1171 when Diarmaid died at Ferns.

It is in this light too that Strongbow's campaigns should be looked at again, with a particular focus on how they influenced his consolidation of the territory. For a brief period it seemed that an independent Anglo-Norman kingdom centred on Leinster was a possibility or at the very least feared at the court of Henry II, requiring direct intervention in 1172. This was an intervention that perhaps served as a model for King John's own response to overweening Irish barons in 1210. Despite Henry's fears the lordship of Leinster survived more-or-less intact and would do so through the minority of Isabella de Clare, Strongbow's heir. When she married William Marshal in 1189 he gained control of her father's lands in England, Wales and Ireland and eventually his title as earl of Pembroke. In Ireland he became lord of Leinster, an Anglo-Norman lordship still based on Isabella's grandfather's kingdom which still contained a client but much-diminished Uí Chennselaigh kingdom within its borders.

There is generally broad consensus among modern historians on the course of William Marshal's long career, from his successes on the tournament circuit of northern France in his youth to his role in supporting King John against his disaffected and rebellious barons – this despite John and Marshal's often fractious and violent past relationship – and final role as elder statesman and regent of England. Where there is disagreement it tends to be over his loyalties and motivations rather than his actions. There are probably few medieval figures outside of royalty that have so many tomes dedicated to them. Yet until quite recently Marshal's exploits in Ireland and his role as lord of Leinster have often been treated as an aside and were largely overlooked. A re-examination of his career with a particular eye on his activities in Leinster is required not only to understand how his roles as military leader, politician and builder impacted his Irish lordship but also to see how these served him in his rise to the top of English government. Arguably some of his toughest lessons were learned in Leinster and in many ways these shaped the man who would be instrumental in ending the Barons' Revolt on becoming regent to Henry III in 1216. It is perhaps fitting that the completion of this thesis coincides with the 800th anniversary of Marshal's death in 1219.

One aspect of Marshal's method of controlling Leinster that has not previously been systematically investigated is his policy of encastellation. He was the most prolific builder of stone castles in early thirteenth-century Ireland. Marshal's castles in Leinster incorporated design elements that had become popular in France and were only beginning to appear in England and Wales but had not up yet reached Ireland. These made Marshal's Leinster castles the most technically advanced in terms of military architecture to be built in Ireland while equal to anything then being built in Britain. This was a massive investment on Marshal's part and shows something of the importance of the lordship to him and his commitment to holding it. An examination of the archaeological evidence relating to his surviving castles sheds further light on this important and sometimes underestimated element of his career.

The second element of this thesis – the comparison between William Marshal's role in Leinster's history and how this was perceived by Irish antiquarian writers – needs some explanation. English historians have never been in any doubt as to the importance of the role played by Marshal in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For later writers he would become 'the flower of chivalry', a romantic and heroic figure whose virtues were not questioned (until the late twentieth century). For these writers, however, his Irish exploits were all too often unknown. It was not until the late nineteenth century that a manuscript came to light which chronicled Marshal's life. This would eventually be published by a French linguist and historian, Paul Meyer, as *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal, compt de Striguil et de Pembroke*, *Régent d'Angleterre*.[1] It was this that transformed our understanding of Marshal's life and career and in particular shed new light on the lordship of Leinster. Returning to Irish antiquarian scholars writing prior to these revelations, they were sometimes aware of Marshal's reputation in English history but even when this was the case, often they chose not to acknowledge it. Instead they were influenced by different historical traditions that were sometimes insular in outlook. For them, Marshal's role in English history was of less importance than the few fragmentary traditions that survived in Ireland. It is this sometimes very different perception of Marshal that merits comparison with what is now known about his role in Leinster and in Irish history more broadly.

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[1] Paul Meyer, 'L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal, compt de Striguil et de Pembroke, Régent d'Angleterre' in *Société de l'Histoire de France*, cclv, cclxviii, ccciv (Paris, 1891, 1894, 1901).

There are four main groups of primary sources for this study. The first are the works of Irish antiquarian writers. While these would not traditionally be considered primary sources in the strictest sense – indeed they cannot be considered as such for the period 1189–1219 – they do qualify as primary sources for pre-nineteenth-century perceptions of the role played by William Marshal in Irish history. These sources span a period of five hundred years beginning between 1272 and 1274 with the *Annals of Multyfarnham*, and ending with Thomas Leland's *The history of Ireland from the invasion of Henry II*, *with a preliminary discourse on the antient state of Ireland*, which was published in Dublin in 1773.[2] There is a limited number of works on Irish history written before 1800 and these for the most part are general histories of Ireland. Understandably, the medieval period, with the paucity of sources available to these writers, was sometimes overlooked or dealt with only cursorily. The period when Marshal was involved in Leinster is skipped over by many, and particular mention of events that involved him are absent in many more. Marshal himself is not always named as a protagonist and sometimes suffers from confusion with other actors. A few of these works such as Geoffrey Keating's 1634 *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* or *The History of Ireland* and James Ware's 1633 *Antiquities and history of Ireland* are still well known.[3] Others like Edmund Borlase's 1675 *The reduction of Ireland to the crown of England* and Walter Harris's 1747 *Hibernica; or, Some antient pieces relating to Ireland* are more obscure.[4]

The second group of primary sources are the Irish annals. These are the only historical resource available for the period prior to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland and they continue to be useful into the period concerning Marshal and Leinster in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. Their style can be terse and abrupt; often their entries simply record the deaths of kings and bishops (there was a multiplicity of

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[2] Bernadette Williams (ed.), *The 'Annals of Multyfarnham': Roscommon and Connacht provenance* (Dublin, 2012); Thomas Leland, *The history of Ireland from the invasion of Henry II. with a preliminary discourse on the antient state of Ireland* (3 vols, Dublin, 1773).

[3] Geoffrey Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* or *The history of Ireland*, Vol. III, ed. Patrick S. Dineen (London, 1902, repr. London, 1987); James Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland* (Dublin, 1705).

[4] Edmund Borlase, *The reduction of Ireland to the crown of England* (Dublin, 1675); Walter Harris, *Hibernica; or, Some antient pieces relating to Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1747, repr. Dublin, 1770).

both prior to the Anglo-Norman arrival). Their authors were simply recording events as they viewed them and offer little in the way of context or analysis although their entries tend to get longer towards the end of the twelfth century.

There is always a regional bias in the various Irish annals that needs to be considered. As the name implies, *Annála Uladh: the Annals of Ulster* were clearly focused on the internal politics of the province, its princes and prelates.[5] Sometimes events further south, that would turn out to be pivotal in the course of Irish history, are omitted. In a similar vein, both the *Annals of Loch Cé* and the *Annals of Tigernach* are iterations of the same annals originating in Connacht.[6] Likewise, the *Annals of Inisfallen* originated in Munster.[7] While the Connacht and Munster annals show a similar regional bias, they are far less parochial than those of Ulster, whose kings could often stand aloof as dynastic strife embroiled the other provinces. It is in fact really only in these periods of serious unrest that we can learn about events in Leinster.

Unfortunately, no Leinster annals survive nor do any from Meath (the often-forgotten fifth provincial kingdom). Why this is so is not known. If they did once exist in some form, their loss may be connected to the early occupation of these provinces by the Anglo-Normans, but it could equally just have been bad luck when the very few manuscript survivors of the other annals are considered. The best known of the Irish annals, the *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann: Annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*, was a much later (1632–6) composition incorporating the three regional annalistic strands mentioned above.[8] It does shed new light on events in Leinster but this seems to come from Anglo-Norman sources rather than any lost annals.

The third group of primary sources are those written by the Anglo-Normans. This is by far the largest group and encompasses a wide range of material, from poems

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[5] *Annála Uladh: the Annals of Ulster*, ed. & trans. William Maunsell Hennessy and Bartholomew MacCarthy (4 vols, Dublin, 1887–1901).

[6] *Annals of Loch Cé: a chronicle of Irish affairs from A.D. 1014 to A.D. 1590*, ed. & trans. William Maunsell Hennessy (2 vols, London, 1871); 'Annals of Tigernach', ed. Whitley Stokes, in *Revue Celtique*, xvii (Paris, 1896), pp 119–236, 337–420 and *Revue Celtique*, xviii (Paris, 1897), pp 9–59, 150–97, 267–303.

[7] *Annals of Inisfallen*, ed. & trans. Seán Mac Airt (Dublin, 1951).

[8] *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann: Annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters from the earliest period to the year* 1616, ed. & trans. John O'Donovan (7 vols, Dublin, 1848–51).

to royal acts. For the period that includes the arrival of the Anglo-Normans and the establishment of the lordship of Leinster, two sources warrant particular mention.

The first of these was a previously unnamed *chanson de geste* or a song of deeds, which Goddard Henry Orpen called *The song of Dermot and the earl* when he translated and published it 1892.[9] It had survived as a single manuscript among the Carew papers in Lambeth Palace. It was probably written no later the 1220s and its author states that he was told the story it contains by Maurice Regan, King Diarmaid's former interpreter and ambassador. It devotes considerable space to events just before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans and explains in some detail the reasons for Diarmaid's exile from Ireland. The rest of the text is an account of the early phases of the conquest of Ireland and Strongbow's adventures right up to the capture of Limerick in 1175, where the text ends abruptly with the town about to be stormed.

The second source for this period is Giraldus Cambrensis's *Expugnatio Hibernica* (The conquest of Ireland).[10] Written in 1189, it is one of the earliest works on Ireland by a historian and the first by a person who was not Irish. Like *The song of Dermot and the earl*, Giraldus's account begins with Diarmaid's exile and continues through Strongbow's lordship and the minority of Isabella and ends with Prince John's ill-fated expedition to Ireland in 1185. Giraldus was unusually well placed to write about Ireland, having accompanied John in the role as an advisor and also having visited Ireland in 1183. He was a de Barry, a branch of the extended Geraldine family group that included the fitz Geralds, fitz Stephans, Carews and Mieler fitz Henry.[11] This family connection heavily influenced his writing and his account favours his kinsmen, downplaying the role of Strongbow and others.

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[9] Goddard Henry Orpen (ed.), *The song of Dermot and the earl, an Old French poem* (Oxford, 1892, repr. Felinfach, 1994); there is also a more recent translation: *Deeds of the Normans in Ireland: La geste des Engleis en Yrland: a new edition of the chronical formerly known as The Song of Dermot and the Earl*, ed. Evelyn Mullally (Dublin, 2002).

[10] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Expugnatio Hibernica: the conquest of Ireland, by Giraldus Cambrensis*, ed. A.B. Scott and F.X. Martin (Dublin, 1978).

[11] Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales, 1146–1223* (Oxford, 1982), p. 26.

The most important source regarding William Marshal is *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal, compt de Striguil et de Pembroke, Régent d' Angleterre*.[12] In 2004 the Anglo-Norman Text Society published a three-volume version, the *History of William Marshal*, which was edited by A.J. Holden and translated by S. Gregory, with historical notes by David Crouch.[13] It is this version that is used throughout this study. The *History* was completed *c.*1226, and had been commissioned by William Marshal's eldest son and namesake. It is written in the style of a *chanson de geste* and, true to type, paints a positive picture of its chief protagonist. Despite this bias, which is achieved more often by the careful omission of inconvenient episodes rather than by altering facts, its author could rely on the personal recollections of many of Marshal's followers and in particular John d'Earley his companion from 1188 and executor of his will. The *History* spans the entirety of Marshal's long and remarkable life from *c.*1145 to 1219 and the narrative follows Marshal across France, England, Wales and Ireland.[14] Such works were usually reserved for monarchs. It is exceptionally long (19,215 lines), which means that more is known about William Marshal than about any of his contemporary barons.

The final group of Anglo-Norman sources can be loosely termed official acts and letters. These are important because it is against them that the more narrative-based sources can be checked. Most of these are the records of English government correspondence relating to the administration of Ireland and begin in 1171 with requests for ships and provisions, preserved in the exchequer records, for Henry II's impending expedition to Ireland. As the English administration further established itself in Ireland during the following decades, the volume of records grew exponentially. The bulk of these records relating to Ireland survive in the chancery's patent and close rolls. In 1875 the *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1171–1251* was published under H.S. Sweetman's editorship.[15] Despite some shortcomings and pitfalls, this made the work of future students of medieval Irish history immeasurably more straightforward. There is

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[12] Paul Meyer, 'L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal, compt de Striguil et de Pembroke, Régent d'Angleterre' in *Société de l'Histoire de France*, vols 255, 268, 304 (Paris, 1891, 1894, 1901).

[13] A.J. Holden (ed.), *History of William Marshal* (3 vols, London, 2004).

[14] Keith Busby, *French in medieval Ireland, Ireland in medieval French: the paradox of two worlds* (Turnhout, 2017), p. 170.

[15] H.S. Sweetman (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1171–1251* (5 vols, London, 1875–86).

also a substantial array of surviving records, the majority of which are charters and land grants, relating to the Marshal family. These have been collated and edited by Crouch in *The acts and letters of the Marshal family: marshals of England and earls of Pembroke, 1145-1248* which was published in 2015.[16]

<u>Secondary sources</u>

There are several important secondary works that proved extremely useful, if not integral, to this thesis. Looking first at broad historical surveys of the period, Orpen's seminal *Ireland under the Normans* has yet to be superseded.[17] First published between 1911 and 1920 against a background of nationalist rebellion in Ireland, it and its author (an Anglo-Irish unionist) were soon attacked by nationalist academics, for portraying the native Irish in unfavourable terms. It is true that Orpen saw the Anglo-Normans as a stabilising force in Ireland but the real controversy was over terminology. When describing Ireland at the time of the Anglo-Norman arrival, he stated that 'Ireland was still in a tribal state'. He described the powerful Irish dynasties as 'tribes' and sometimes referred to their leaders as chiefs rather than kings.[18] This, his detractors believed, was akin to equating the Irish of the late twelfth century with 'savages' from darkest Africa or further afield. In fact, looking at Orpen's work now it is clear that he was not seeking to offend but rather trying to differentiate societal structures. Controversies aside, *Ireland under the Normans* remains one of the most detailed studies of the Anglo-Norman conquest, Orpen utilised all the written sources, both Irish and Anglo-Norman, then known as well as his own interpretation of archaeological remains and their distribution to construct his magnum opus.

Edmund Curtis's *A history of medieval Ireland, from 1086 to 1513* was published first in 1923 but with a heavily revised second edition fifteen years later.[19] It aimed in part to address the perceived biases of Orpen's work by attempting to shift the focus away from the Anglo-Normans and on to the Gaelic Irish. A shorter work than Orpen's and addressing a longer period, Curtis's work covers many events in less depth

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[16] David Crouch (ed.), *The acts and letters of the Marshal family: marshals of England and earls of Pembroke, 1145–1248* (Cambridge, 2015).

[17] Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911–20, reprint Oxford, 1968).

[18] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 20.

[19] Edmund Curtis, *A history of medieval Ireland, from 1086 to 1513* (2nd ed., London, 1938).

but it is still valuable for it contrasting perspective. Like Curtis's work, Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven's 1968 *A history of medieval Ireland* is a detailed survey of the period.[20] Like Orpen's, her work focuses on the Anglo-Normans (for whom better records survive). Where her work differs from both that of Orpen and Curtis is the inclusion of a detailed investigation into how Anglo-Norman society was structured in Ireland and the functioning of the colony's government.

James Lydon's 1972 *The lordship of Ireland in the Middle Ages,* like Orpen's and Otway-Ruthven's work mentioned above, focuses on Anglo-Norman Ireland in another detailed survey.[21] It also introduces and addresses the question of identity and the growing estrangement of the Anglo-Norman settlers in Ireland and those across the Irish Sea, both groups increasingly self-identifying as culturally English. Michael Dolley's *Anglo-Norman Ireland,* also published in 1972, provides a concise and accessible overview of the period.[22] Robin Frame's *Colonial Ireland, 1169–1369* was first published in 1981, then substantially revised and enlarged for a second, illustrated, edition in 2012. [23] Frame's work in many ways addresses similar themes to Otway-Ruthven's as well as in part being a broad survey of the period. He too takes a detailed look at the institutions of government in the English colony as well as attempting to understand changes in direction of royal policy towards Ireland. Also valuable in this work is its exploration of Anglo-Norman settlement patterns. These aspects of the colony's structure and administration are examined in further detail by Marie Therese Flanagan in her, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship* (1989).[24]

For the earliest period examined in this thesis, the kingdom of Leinster before 1169, there are a number of important works. Pre-eminent among these is Francis J. Byrne's 1973 *Irish kings and high-kings*.[25] Apart from serving as an excellent historical overview and piecing together coherent and detailed genealogies for the major royal families in medieval Ireland (quite an achievement in and of itself), Byrne's model for how kingship worked and evolved is of huge value in understanding the power

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[20] Otway-Ruthven, *A history of medieval Ireland* (London, 1968).

[21] James Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 2003).

[22] Michael Dolley, *Anglo-Norman Ireland* (Dublin, 1972).

[23] Robin Frame, *Colonial Ireland, 1169–1369* (2nd ed., Dublin, 2012).

[24] Marie Therese Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship* (Oxford, 1989).

[25] Francis J. Byrne, *Irish kings and high-kings* (London, 1973; repr. Dublin, 2001).

dynamics in Ireland. Although the book ends in 1169, its findings on kingship can still be applied to the Irish kings dealing with Anglo-Norman expansion in the latter twelfth and early thirteenth century. It was though a concept of kingship that was being rapidly eroded by both internal and external pressure. Seán Duffy's 2013 *Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf* charts the rise of Brian Boru, arguably the last *de facto* rather than *de jure* high-king.[26] Darren McGettigan's *The Battle of Clontarf, Good Friday 1014*, also published in 2013, deals with the same issues.[27] It was the pyrrhic victory of Clontarf which eventually led to a collapse of Ua Briain overlordship in Leinster, creating the conditions that allowed the Uí Chennselaig to become the dominant provincial dynasty.

Byrne also wrote several chapters for *A new history of Ireland I: prehistoric and early Ireland*, two of which are of particular relevance. The first, 'Ireland and her neighbours, *c.*1015–*c.*1072, is important because it examines the complex relations between Irish rulers and their contemporaries in Britain and Scandinavia.[28] It was against this background that the Uí Chennselaig became the most powerful dynasty in Leinster. The second, 'The trembling sod: Ireland in 1169', gives an authoritative overview of the causes of political instability that beset Ireland in the decades prior to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans.[29] Also in *A new history of Ireland I* is a chapter by Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition, 1072–1166', which looks at the struggle for dominance among the provincial kings.[30] Mac Murchada's expulsion from Ireland was ultimately caused by backing the wrong faction in the last phase of this recurrent conflict. The failure of Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair to rally successful resistance to the Anglo-Normans when their numbers were still small was also in part due to this perpetual animosity among rival Irish kings. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín's *Early medieval Ireland, 400–1200*, first published in 1995 with a revised edition in 2017, also warrants

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[26] Seán Duffy, *Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf* (Dublin, 2013).

[27] Darren McGettigan, *The Battle of Clontarf, Good Friday 1014* (Dublin, 2013).

[28] Francis J. Byrne, 'Ireland and her neighbours, *c.*1015–*c.*1072' in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (ed.), *NHI*, i: *prehistoric and early Ireland* (Oxford, 2008), pp 862–98.

[29] Francis J. Byrne, 'The trembling sod: Ireland in 1169' in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *NHI*, ii: *medieval Ireland, 1169–1534* (Oxford, 2008), pp 1–42.

[30] Marie Therese Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition, 1072–1166' in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (ed.), *NHI*, i: *prehistoric and early Ireland* (Oxford, 2008), pp 899–933.

a mention.[31] It is a thematic study, which looks at various aspects of medieval Irish society. For the most part it examines issues chronologically outside the scope of this study but when Ó Cróinín tackles the arrival of the Anglo-Normans and the first decades of the colony, his primary interest remains with the Irish kings.

Nicholas Furlong's often overlooked 1973 *Dermot: king of Leinster and the foreigners* charts the tumultuous career of Diarmaid Mac Murchada and seeks to rehabilitate this much-maligned ruler.[32] In doing so, Furlong dispels many popular myths surrounding Mac Murchada and provides an excellent account of the first phase of Anglo-Norman activity in Ireland. Perhaps the most insightful account of these same events is that by F.X. Martin in two chapters in *A new history of Ireland II*.[33] Martin is able to shed light on how a relatively small group of Anglo-Norman mercenaries successfully became (albeit briefly) an independent faction in control of Leinster. Strongbow's marriage to Aoife Mac Murchada and questionable adoption as Diarmaid's heir by no means guaranteed his position. Martin had previously provided extensive and detailed notes for *Giraldus Cambrensis, Expugnatio Hibernica: the conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis* (mentioned above), which are helpful in understanding the course of events.[34]

There are two more chapters by Martin in *A new history of Ireland II*. The first of these, 'Overlord becomes feudal lord, 1172–85', examines the early years of the colony under Henry II, its administration and expansion.[35] The second, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', looks at the two contrasting phases of John's impact in Ireland. The first, when he was lord of Ireland 1185 to 1199, nominally in charge yet still subject to interference from first his father and then his brother, Richard. The second period is from 1199 to 1216 when, as king, he was free to check the growing power of

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[31] Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland, 400–1200* (Harlow, 1995); Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland, 400–1200* (2nd ed., London, 2016).

[32] Nicholas Furlong, *Dermot: king of Leinster and the foreigners* (Tralee, 1973).

[33] F.X. Martin, 'Diarmait Mac Murchada and the coming of the Anglo-Normans' in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *NHI*, ii: *medieval Ireland, 1169–1534* (Oxford, 2008), pp 43–66; idem, 'Allies and an overlord, 1169–72' in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *NHI*, ii: *medieval Ireland, 1169–1534* (Oxford, 2008), pp 67–97.

[34] F.X. Martin, 'Historical notes' in *Giraldus Cambrensis, Expugnatio Hibernica: the conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, ed. A.B. Scott and F.X. Martin (Dublin, 1978), pp 285–357.

[35] F.X. Martin, 'Overlord becomes feudal lord, 1172–85' in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *NHI*, ii: *medieval Ireland, 1169–1534* (Oxford, 2008), pp 98–126.

his vassals in Ireland. It was during this second phase that John's relationship with William Marshal reached its lowest point.

There have been several notable biographies of William Marshal as well as other works dealing with elements of his life and career. Among the finest and most readable of the biographies is Sidney Painter's 1933 *William Marshal: knight-errant, baron and regent of England.*[36] While it is heavily reliant on *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal, compt de Striguil et de Pembroke*, *Régent d'Angleterre*, Painter also consulted a large number of other contemporary sources in his research. The portrait that emerges of Marshal is not hagiographical but is still broadly positive: a brave and honest knight and military leader, a successful feudal baron loyal to his men and receiving their loyalty in return and finally a reluctant politician and administrator.

Jessie Crosland's 1962 *William the Marshal: the last great feudal baron* is not nearly as detailed a work as Painter's, which is something Crosland readily admits.[37] Rather than using Meyer's translation, Crosland based his work exclusively on the original Anglo-Norman text. The result is neither quite a biography, nor a historical study. Instead it is closer to being an English prose translation of the *chanson de geste*, an undertaking not without merit. It manages to capture something of the spirit of the thirteenth-century writer's largely uncritical celebration of Marshal's life.

Georges Duby's 1985 *William Marshal: the flower of chivalry* (it was first published in French as *Guillaume le Maréchal* in 1984) relies almost entirely on Meyer's *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal, compt de Striguil et de Pembroke*, *Régent d'Angleterre* and is not nearly as comprehensive an investigation of Marshal's life as Painter's earlier work.[38] Instead, Duby uses a series of episodes from *L'Histoire* as a vehicle for presenting his views on the declining role of chivalry in the feudal society of the time. While there are limitations associated with this approach, it is not without invaluable insights into the late twelfth-century and early thirteenth-century French and Norman world.

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[36] Sidney Painter, *William Marshal: knight-errant, baron and regent of England* (Baltimore, 1967).

[37] Jessie Crosland, *William the Marshal: the last great feudal baron* (London, 1962).

[38] Georges Duby, *William Marshal: the flower of chivalry* (New York, 1985).

David Crouch first published *William Marshal: court, career and chivalry in the Angevin empire, 1147–1219* in 1992 but a substantially revised and enlarged edition *William Marshal: knighthood, war and chivalry, 1147–1219* appeared in 2002.[39] It is this second edition that has come to be recognised as the definitive study of William Marshal. It is by far the most critical investigation and nowhere does it shy away from challenging long-held beliefs on Marshal's attributes. On reading Crouch's work it becomes clear that he dislikes Marshal. With a cynic's eye he spots holes in Marshal's accepted narrative, particularly that part relating to the latter half of his career. It is where he sees Marshal as a shrewd and calculating courtier that Crouch is at his most insightful. Through Crouch's research it becomes apparent that Marshal was a formidable politician who, prior to the Barons' Revolt, built up a network of supporters at court strong enough to successfully resist the intrigues of a capricious King John. Crouch was able to use many previously unknown charters of the Marshal family to develop a much broader picture of William Marshal as a feudal magnate and administrator. Crouch also (for the second edition) had access to a new translation of *L'Histoire f*or which he provided the historical notes (this was published in 2002 as the *History of William Marshal;* see above).[40]

The last five years have seen several books published on William Marshal. One, Richard Brooks's 2014, *The knight who saved England: William Marshal and the French invasion, 1217*, is a book of two halves.[41] The first part is biography of Marshal (up to 1214) that manages to balance Painter's romantic portrayal with the more sceptical insights of Crouch, although he does lean towards the former. The second part of the book is focused on the campaigns and battles of the Barons' Revolt. Here Brooks, a military historian, is less reliant on earlier biographies and is able to add considerably to our understanding of Marshal as a tactician and the military aspect his career.

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[39] David Crouch, *William Marshal: court, career and chivalry in the Angevin empire, 1147–1219* (London, 1990); idem, *William Marshal: knighthood, war and chivalry, 1147–1219* (2nd ed., Harlow, 2002).

[40] *History.*

[41] Richard Brooks, *The knight who saved England: William Marshal and the French invasion, 1217* (Oxford, 2014).

Thomas Asbridge's 2015, *The greatest knight: the remarkable life of William Marshal, the power behind five English thrones* reads like an adventure novel or perhaps as popular history at its best.[42] It is in many ways similar to Painter's biography (on which many parts are based) in its romantic portrayal of Marshal; however, it is also heavily reliant on Crouch's work although it avoids his more damning conclusions on Marshal's character. Like Brooks's work, it is when dealing with the Barons' Revolt that Asbridge offers his most original insights.

2017 saw the publication of *William Marshal and Ireland*, a collection of ten essays edited by John Bradley, Cóilín Ó Drisceoil and Michael Potterton.[43] Several of these essays were of particular interest. Crouch's 'William Marshal in exile' looks at the period from 1207 to 1213, much of which Marshal spent in Ireland.[44] This was a few years encompassed a revolt by Meiler fitz Henry (against Marshal), and the arrival of a fugitive William de Braose (who was initially sheltered by Marshal) which would eventually lead to King John invading in order to put down a revolt by the de Lacy earls of Meath and Ulster (who had supported Marshal against fitz Henry).

Adrian Empey's 'The evolution of the demesne in the lordship of Leinster: the fortunes of war or forward planning?' tackles the difficult task of untangling Anglo-Norman settlement patterns and land distribution in Leinster.[45] This was a process begun by Strongbow and continued under Marshal. Just to what extent Marshal was responsible for the lordship's eventual shape and in particular the distribution of its demesne lands is a question that is addressed by Empey with considerable skill. Empey also looks at whether this was the result of an over-arching plan for developing the lordship or random events. Three subsequent essays by John Bradley and Ben Murtagh, Billy Colfer, and Cóilín Ó Drisceoil investigate further aspects of this broad theme of

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[42] Thomas Asbridge, *The greatest knight: the remarkable life of William Marshal, the power behind five English thrones* (London, 2015).

[43] John Bradley, Cóilín Ó Drisceoil and Michael Potterton (eds), *William Marshal and Ireland* (Dublin, 2017).

[44] David Crouch, 'William Marshal in exile' in Bradley et al., *William Marshal and Ireland*, pp 29–40

[45] Adrian Empey, 'The evolution of the demesne in the lordship of Leinster' in Bradley et al., *William Marshal and Ireland*, pp, 41–77.

settlement and development of the lordship. [46] Ben Murtagh's essay, 'William Marshal's great tower at Pembroke, Wales: a view from Ireland', is of particular interest for the final chapter of the present thesis. It examines how innovations in military architecture (such as cylindrical keeps) originating in France reached England, Wales and eventually Ireland. The essay also devotes considerable amount attention to the building and original plan of Kilkenny Castle, Marshal's principal castle in Leinster. [47]

Thesis structure:

Chapter 1: Perceptions of William Marshal

This chapter surveys early historical and antiquarian sources written in Ireland between 1272 and 1773 that relate to Marshal or events with which he was connected. 1272 is the first time Marshal is written about as a historic figure in Ireland while 1773 was the last time Marshal was written about prior to a somewhat arbitrary cut-off point of 1800. After this date the specifically Irish antiquarian viewpoint becomes more-or-less indistinguishable from a more standardised historical narrative. Where relevant, the works of the few contemporary English historians who write specifically on Ireland are also included.

Chapter 2: From kingdom to lordship: the origins of the Leinster lordship

This chapter begins by charting the decline of the north Leinster dynasties, the subsequent rise of the Uí Chennselaig kings and the establishment of Leinster as a coherent political and geographical entity. It traces and evaluates the series of conflicts and political entanglements that culminate in Diarmaid mac Murchada travelling abroad to seek support for his plans to regain his lost kingship. This is followed by the arrival of the first Anglo-Norman adventurers in Leinster allowing Diarmaid to re-establish himself as king of Leinster, yet in effect allowing the Anglo-Normans to permanently establish themselves in Ireland.

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[46] These are: John Bradley, and Ben Murtagh, 'Willian Marshal's charter to Kilkenny, 1207: background, dating and witnesses', pp 201–-48; Billy Colfer, 'Monastery and Manor: William Marshal's settlement strategy in Co. Wexford', pp 249–68; Cóilín Ó Drisceoil, 'Pons Novus, villa Williemi Marescalli: New Ross, a town of William Marshal', pp 268–314 all in Bradley et al., *William Marshal and Ireland* .

[47] Ben Murtagh, 'William Marshal's great tower at Pembroke, Wales: a view from Ireland' in Bradley et al., *William Marshal and Ireland*, pp 111–182.

Chapter 3: The lordship of Leinster

This examines Strongbow's attempts to secure his position as Diarmaid's adopted heir in the face of a revolt in Leinster by Murchad Mac Murchada. Also investigated is the brief interlude during which it seemed possible that Strongbow might establish an independent Anglo-Norman kingdom, Henry II's intervention and the emergence of the Leinster lordship as a stable base from which to launch a campaign against the Munster kings. This chapter also explores how, following Strongbow's death, the lordship survived the appointment of a series of royal administrators while his daughter, Isabella de Clare, remained a minor and a royal ward.

Chapter 4: William Marshal and Leinster 1189–1208

This begins with Marshal's marriage to Isabella de Clare as a reward for his loyalty to Henry II in a war against his rebellious sons. It was the new Richard I who allowed the marriage to go ahead, overnight making Marshal a wealthy and powerful landed magnate and it was under Richard that Marshal's political climb began. Marshal was an important supporter of Richard, first during John's failed attempt to seize power and subsequently in Richard's war against Philip of France. On Richards death in 1196 Marshal supported John's succession over that of Arthur of Brittany and his political fortunes seemed secure. Gradually relations with John deteriorated, culminating in a revolt in Leinster instigated by Meiler fitz Henry, the king's justicar.

Chapter 5: William Marshal and Leinster 1208–1219

This chapter analyses a series of crises that faced Marshal after surviving the manoeuvres of fitz Henry and John. The first of these was the dramatic fall from royal favour of the great marcher lord, William de Braose, a friend of Marshal. De Braose fled to Ireland in 1209 where he was first sheltered by Marshal before moving on to seek the protection of the powerful de Lacy earls of Meath and Ulster. In 1210 John arrived in Ireland at the head of a powerful army, intent on tracking down de Braose but also determined to punish those lords who had supported the fugitive. The next great crisis to face Marshal was the Barons' Revolt of 1215. Marshal remained a loyal and prominent supporter of the king throughout. When John died in 1216 Marshal was made regent and played a crucial role in bringing the war to an end.

Chapter 6: The castles and religious foundations of William Marshal

The building of castles and the founding of religious houses was an important part of Marshal's policy in Leinster. The first part of this chapter will adopt an interdisciplinary approach, examining both historical and archaeological evidence that link Marshal to a series of important thirteenth-century castles. It is also argued that innovations in military architecture adopted by Marshal connect all his castles and that he was responsible for introducing to Ireland a particular design type, the 'towered keep'. The second part of this chapter, taking the same approach, examines the major religious houses founded by Marshal.

Chapter 1

Perceptions of William Marshal

William Marshal has been recognised as being of major importance by commentators on and writers of medieval English history as far back as Matthew Paris (*c*.1200–1259). This is easily understandable considering his many achievements. His rise, from what must have seemed a position with limited prospects, to ultimately becoming regent of England is the stuff of legends. His career on the tournament circuit, his time fighting for a succession of English kings and reputation for loyalty, particularly to John during the Barons' Revolt, made him a figure who could not be ignored and, who was held up for emulation. His reputation as 'The flower of English chivalry' was not undeserved, yet this was to some extent limited by geography. This chapter explores how he was viewed from an Irish perspective in the medieval and early modern periods.

For Irish chroniclers, historians and writers on medieval Irish history, the influence of William Marshal in Leinster in particular and on Ireland in a broader sense has been recognised inconsistently. Despite his undoubted impact in Ireland he was often seen as a figure of minor significance, overshadowed by many of his Anglo-Norman contemporaries. This chapter analyses writings from the late thirteenth century, when Marshal was already an established historic figure, up to the late eighteenth century when antiquarian views on Marshal's role in Ireland ceased to have a distinct regional character.

The *Annals of Multyfarnham*, written between 1272 and 1274, offer one of the earliest Anglo-Norman histories concerned with Ireland. Written by Stephen of Exeter, a Franciscan friar, they offer something of a counter to the Hiberno-centric perspective of the Gaelic Irish annals. As is to be expected with the approach commonly taken to recording annual events, entries in the Multyfarnham annals can be brief. For those entries concerning the period when William Marshal was active in Ireland, they are unfortunately sparse. For the year 1208 we are told 'England was put under a general interdict 8 kal. April [25 March], William de Braose was expelled from England and

came to Ireland. There was a Massacre at Thurles.'[1] This massacre at Thurles on the western border of the Leinster lordship might relate to the conflict that pitted Meiler fitz Henry, the king's justiciar, against Marshal, Geoffrey de Marisco and Hugh de Lacy or it could relate to conflict with the Ua Briain of Thomond.[2]

The entire course of the civil war or Barons' Revolt in England is covered by just three entries. With laudible succinctness, the entry for 1215 states: 'There was a war between King John and the barons.'[3] Then for the year 1216: 'John, king of England, died and his son Henry [III] followed. Louis, the son of the king of France, came to England.' The final entry concerning the war is for 1217 and tells us of 'A great massacre of the barons at Lincoln.'[4] The sole entry for 1218 relates to Cardinal Pandulf's arrival in England which is followed by the only direct mention of William Marshal which informs us of his death in 1219: 'William marshal, the elder, died. Damietta was captured.'[5] That his death is in fact mentioned at all suggests his importance must have been recognised when the paucity of the entries for the late twelfth and early thirteenth century in the Multyfarnham annals is taken into consideration. The reference to the fall of Damietta is not surprising considering the presence of Francis of Assisi, the eponymous founder of Stephan of Exeter's order, in the crusader camp.[6]

There is a significant lacuna in Irish historical writing before the appearance of Friar John Clyn, another Franciscan, and his *Annals of Ireland*, compiled up to 1349. That this work somehow omits any specific mention William Marshal seems rather surprising given Clyn's background and position. Having initially been guardian of the friary of Carrick, Clyn moved to the Franciscan friary of Kilkenny sometime after 1336.[7] Clyn was clearly aware of the Marshal family and could hardly have been

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[1] Bernadette Williams (ed.), *The 'Annals of Multyfarnham': Roscommon and Connacht provenance* (Dublin, 2012), p. 146.

[2] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 266.

[3] Williams (ed.), *Annals of Multyfarnham*, p. 148.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., p. 150.

[6] James M. Powel, 'The fifth crusade to 1291: the loss of the Holy Land' in Thomas F. Madden (ed.), *Crusades* (London, 2008), p. 150.

[7] Bernadette Williams (ed.), *The Annals of Ireland by Friar John Clyn* (Dublin, 2007), p. 56.

unaware of William Marshal's role in Kilkenny's development in particular. He does, however, record the death in 1233 of William's second son, Richard who, according to Clyn, was killed at the battle of Kildare through treachery on the part of the Geraldines.[8] He includes a verse which gives the date of the battle as Saturday 1 April 1233 and laments 'A sorrow imposed by Fate – the earl Marshal was killed by the blows of a stake'.[9] While the omission of William Marshal is indeed odd, one explanation could be the influence or perceived requirements of Clyn's patrons.[10] Perhaps such a prominent figure would overshadow the achievements of the Ormond Butlers who would eventually make Kilkenny their caput and principal residence on acquisition of the castle in 1391 and other Despenser possessions by the third earl of Ormond.[11]

In Edmund Campion's *A Historie of Ireland* (1571), he first briefly mentions William Marshal while giving his account of Strongbow's death in 1175:

> The meane while dyed Strongbow, as some say, betrayed and wounded, he layeth buried in Body of Christ Church in Divelin, leaving behind him one onely daughter Isabel, marryed after 14. Years to William Earle marshall.[12]

In a later passage regarding Hugh de Lacy, the building of castles in Leinster is specifically mentioned: 'This Lacye builded a sort of castles and forts throughout all Leinster and Meth'.[13] This almost certainly relates to De Lacy's period as *procurator generalis* from 1177 to 1181 or in the winter of 1181–2 when he was reinstated.[14] Because Leinster is specifically mentioned, there is a possibility that some of Marshal's Leinster castles have been conflated with those of De Lacy who was also a prolific builder. De Lacy's son, also Hugh, was justiciar for some time in 1208: this would tie in chronologically with Marshal's castle building but it seems very unlikely that Campion

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[8] James Lydon, 'The expansion and consolidation of the colony, 1215–54' in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *NHI*, ii: *medieval Ireland, 1169–1534* (Oxford, 2008), p. 168.

[9] Williams (ed.), *The Annals of Ireland*, p. 140.

[10] Ibid., p. 56.

[11] H.G. Leask, *Irish castles and castellated houses* (Dundalk, 2003), p. 57; Brian De Breffny, *Castles of Ireland* (London, 1977), p. 159.

[12] Edmund Campion, *Two bokes of the histories of Ireland* (Dublin, 1571), p. 93.

[13] Ibid., p. 96.

[14] T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin and F.J. Byrne (eds), *NHI*, ix: *maps, genealogies, lists: a companion to Irish history, II* (Oxford, 1984), p. 470.

would confuse father and son. Campion then mentions that in the 'next six years continually devout gentlemen erected sundry Abbeyes, as the Abbey of Roseglasse, of Donbrothy by Hervy a Welchman.'[15] Presumably Marshal qualified as a 'devout gentleman' and some of the 'sundry Abbeyes' could be those founded by Marshal at a slightly later date.

In his third chapter, 'The Titles of Crowne of England to every part of Ireland, and to the whole diverse ways', Campion uses Marshal to support the crown's claim to Leinster and, by implication, to Ireland as a whole. A rather lengthy passage opens with 'I will begin with the pedigree of William Earle marshall, for thereupon depend many records in Ireland, and the Queenes right to Leinster.'[16] Campion goes on to explain the De Clare line of descent from one Walter fitz Richard, 'who came from Normandy, with William Conqueror'. This Walter, he tells us, 'died Lord Strongbow of Stirgule alias Chepstow without issue'. He was succeeded by his nephew (by his sister) Gilbert the first earl of Pembroke, who

> had issue Richard the inheritor of Leinster, by covenant and marriage of Eva the sole daughter of Mac Murrough King of Leinster. This Richard conveyed to Henry the second all   his title, and held of him the Lordship of Leinster in foure counties, Wexford, Catherlagh, Ossory and Kildare. Richard left issue, a daughter Isabel, married to William Earle marshal of England, now Earle   of Pembroke, Lord Strongbow, and Lord of Leinster.[17]

For Campion, establishing the legitimacy of Marshal's acquisition of Leinster was important as it served to support the claims of many great families, some with connections to the sixteenth-century Tudor monarchs.

After this explanation Campion explained how Marshal's descendants, often on the female line, can be connected to these families:

> William had five sonnes, who died without issue, when every of them, except the youngest, had successively possessed their fathers lands, and five daughters, Maude, Ioana, Isabel, Sibil, Eve, among whom the patrimony was

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[15] Campion, *Histories of Ireland*, p. 96.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., pp 101–3.

parted in an. 31. H. 3. Of these daughters bestowed in marriage,are descended many noble houses, as the Mortimers, Bruises, Clares &c. Born subjects to the Crowne of England, paying over to the King his dutyes reserved.[18]

For Campion, Marshal was a crucial historical figure to be cited in support of the argument for the legitimacy of English and Tudor rule in Ireland. Referencing him might also have been a way of supporting Elizabeth's own legitimacy, often questioned in this period, particularly among disaffected recusants in Ireland.

In Stanihurst's 1584 *De Rebus in Hibernia Gestis* he first mentions William Marshal's connection with and his involvement in Ireland as one of those whom Henry II planned to use as a counter to Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare's (Strongbow's) growing strength in Leinster and Ireland as a whole. These events according to Stanihurst took place before Henry II's departure from Ireland in 1172. The others mentioned in this context are Raymond le Gros, Milo de Cogan and Hugh de Lacy.[19] Stanihurst, it would seem, is out chronologically by twenty-odd years and is willing to introduce a rather young Marshal into the Irish historical narrative much earlier than most. At this period in 1172 Marshal was not in Ireland, nor was he in Henry II's service directly but rather in the retinue of his eldest son, Henry, 'the young king'.[20] Despite the obvious inaccuracy, there is logic to his inclusion in this select group who were 'outstanding in the military ... and devoted in their loyalty and loving reverence to their king'. Marshal, as the archetypal chivalrous knight with his unrivalled reputation for bravery and loyalty, would have been relatively well known to those familiar with English histories. Implanting his name among those involved with the conquest of Ireland could have been a means to improve their standing. It might be, too, that connecting a figure clearly identified as being English with those ancestors of many of the great Anglo-Norman, or 'Old English', families, as they began to identify themselves, was a means of downplaying the cultural differences of the late sixteenth century.

The next and last mention of William Marshal is attached to a description of Strongbow and his family. It references his daughter by Eva, Isabella, 'a beautiful sweet

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[18] Campion, *Histories of Ireland*, p. 103.

[19] Richard Stanihurst, *De Rebus in Hibernia Gestis*: *Book 3*, ed. John Barry and Hiram Morgan (Cork, 2013), p. 241.

[20] David Crouch, *William Marshal* (2nd ed., Harlow, 2002), pp 41–2.

girl, clothed in modesty and good manners'. He then states that at fourteen, she was married to William Earl Marshal.[21] It is also worth noting that Stanihurst attributes the building of Ferns Castle to the sons of Maurice fitz Gerald during the justiciarship of William fitz Audelin, perhaps as early as 1173.[22] It is unclear whether he is referring to the building of an earth-and-timber castle or one of stone on an earlier motte, from the rather ambiguous line 'This being founded on the substructure of a large motte'.[23] Either way, this suggests that he was aware that the Marshal castle at Ferns was built on the site of an earlier Anglo-Norman fortification. This does seem to be a feature of sites chosen by William Marshal for his castles and will be discussed later in more detail.

Annála Ríoghachta Éireann (1632–6), more commonly known as the 'Annals of the Four Masters', compiled by Mícheál Ó Cléirigh, Cú Choigcríche Ó Cléirigh, Fearfeasa Ó Marl Chonaire and Peregrine Ó Dubhgeannain, offer a rare Gaelic-Irish take on historical events of the thirteenth century. As this work was based very heavily on earlier contemporary Irish annals, the perspective and focus is often considerably different to that of the more numerous Anglo-Norman or Old English writers. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is limited interest shown in the exploits of William Marshal. There are probably two reasons for this. The first is the fact that earlier Irish annals were particularly deficient in their reporting on events in Leinster. The second, perhaps a more speculative one, is that the authors of *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann* were attempting to create a more Hiberno-centric narrative where interlopers such as Marshal are relegated to the sidelines.

There is only one specific mention of William Marshal in *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann*:

> A great war broke out among the English of Leinster; i.e. between Meyler, Geoffrey Mares, and William Mareschal. Leinster and Munster suffered severely from them. Another great war broke out between Hugo de Lacy and Meyler; and the result was, that nearly all Meyler's people were ruined.[24]

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[21] Stanihurst, *De Rebus*, p. 29.

[22] Ibid., p. 301; F.M. Powicke (ed.), *Handbook of British chronology* (London, 1939), p. 107.

[23] Stanihurst, *De Rebus*, p. 303.

[24] John O'Donovan (ed.), *Annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters* (2nd ed., 7 vols, Dublin, 1856), iii, 155.

Clearly the conflict between Meiler fitz Henry and Marshal was considered important. While conflict between two Anglo-Norman lords in itself was noteworthy, the following entry suggests that more was involved: 'Meyler Oge, Murtagh O'Brien, and Turlough, the son of Roderic O'Conor, made a predatory incursion into Tir-Fachrach Aidhne, and plundered fifteen ballys (townlands)'.[25] The long-established view is that the conflict between Marshal and Fitz Henry was an extension of King John's unpredictable dealings with his barons and that Fitz Henry had appropriated lands connected to the Leinster lordship with, at the very least, the king's tacit approval. Mícheál Ó Cléirigh and his colleagues, however, probably did not know whether Fitz Henry had been acting independently to some degree or if the king was aware of how the dispute manifested itself on the ground. An alliance of Fitz Henry with Muirchertach Ua Briain and Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair would add another layer of complexity to this affair. It does raise the intriguing possibility that King John was willing to sanction an alliance with Gaelic princes, indeed two of the most powerful, against his own professedly loyal barons. Given the king's often-deserved reputation for scheming, this does not seem beyond the realms of possibility.

The next and final entry relating to this episode refers to events in Meath rather than in Leinster: 'The sons of Hugo de Lacy and the English of Meath marched to the castle of Athnurcher [now Ardnurcher], and continued to besiege it for five weeks, when it was surrendered to them, as was also the territory of Fircal; and Meyler was banished from the country.'[26] It is possible that Marshal's forces were involved in the continuation of fighting into Meath; however, it seems that at least as far as the authors of *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann* were concerned there were two, possibly three, distinct periods of conflict involving Fitz Henry. What is unclear is if Marshal's forces were involved directly in all of them.

Meredith Hanmer, though Welsh rather than Irish, warrants recognition as his *Chronicle of Ireland* is one of the earliest historical works focused on Ireland. It was posthumously published by Ware in 1633 in Dublin (although composed before 1604). Hanmer proposes that familial the name of Maxfield pre-dated that of Marshal and then proceeds refer to William Maxfield throughout. It is not made clear this conclusion was

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[25] Ibid., 155–7.

[26] Ibid., 157.

come to. Hanmer is also much more familiar with the subject of William Marshal in a broader 'British' context and uses this knowledge to greatly enhance his account of Marshal's role in Ireland. Hanmer introduces 'William Maxfield, Lord Maxfield, Earle Marshal of England' in an insertion into his account of 1177 to explain that Richard I had given him in marriage Isabella, daughter of Strongbow and granddaughter of Diarmait Mac Murchada.[27] Of this William Maxfield, Hanmer tells us that '(God Willing) I shall have occasion to speake further, when I come to his time'.[28]

Hanmer does return to Marshal, stating that in the first year of his reign King Richard, 'gave the Lady Isabell, sole daughter and heire of Richard, surnamed Strongbow, Earle of Penbroke, to William Maxfield, Lord Maxfield, and Earle Marshall of England, Anno 1189'.[29] For Hanmer then it seems that Marshal's connection with Ireland begins in 1189. He does not seem inclined to mention Stanihurst's earlier suggestion that Marshal was in Ireland in 1172 although it seems highly unlikely that he had failed to notice this in Stanihurst's work. Hanmer, it would seem, had a firmer grasp of English history based on a familiarity with the works of earlier English historians, such as Mathew Paris, something earlier Irish historians did not always have.

Hanmer goes on to stress that 'Marshall' was not his surname 'as Sir John Plunket his collection hath laid downe'; rather it was Maxfield.[30] It is Hanmer's contention that 'with *William* the Conqueror, there came into England to his ayde, one *Walter Maxfield* a Norman, that was his Marshall'.[31] Where he came across this Walter Maxfield is not explained but the name itself does not fit the standard Norman model. There is no patronymic or geographic prefix, *fitz* or *de*. Maxfield would suggest an English topographical surname which would seem an unusual adoption for a Norman arrival in 1066.

Hanmer then explains that 'this Walter had issue, William, William had issue, Walter, Walter had issue, John, John had issue, this William Maxfield'.[32] He goes in to

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[27] Meredith Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland* (Dublin, 1633), p. 294.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*, p. 343.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., p. 344.

some detail regarding William Maxfield's (Marshal's) career, recounting that he was a favourite of King Richard and that as well as giving him 'the Lady Isabell to wife', he also honoured him at his coronation where he 'bare a regall Scepter before the King, in the top whereof was set a Crosse of gold'. Richard also made him 'third govenour of the Realme' before departing for Normandy and then on to the Holy Land.[33] After Richard's death, 'John Earle of Morton', following his coronation on 27 May 1199, granted William, 'his full creation to the Earldome of Penbroke, and girded him with the sword'.[34] Hanmer states that William was sent as an ambassador to the French king and that he was in great favour with Henry III, 'as shall be shewed when I come to his raigne'.[35]

Returning to William's family, Hanmer notes that he had five sons and five daughters, and that all his sons succeeded him to the 'Earldome of Penbroke, and office of Marshalsie, together with the Principality of Leinster' and that all died without issue.[36] He then explains that all of Marshal's possessions in Ireland and Wales were subsequently divided between his daughters.

With regard to Marshal's time in Ireland Hanmer has surprisingly little to say; in fact only mentioning him directly three times. What he does tell us is that 'William Earle Marshall' came to Ireland in 1207 and built the castle of Kilkenny as well as giving the town a charter 'with priviledges which they enjoy to this day'.[37] The second mention of Marshal's time in Ireland is to credit him with founding the monastery of the 'blacke Fryers'. Interestingly, Hanmer has Marshal die in London in 1220 and then has him buried in 'the temple of his Lady Isabell at Tinterne in Wales'.[38]

Moving on to Marshal's sons, Hanmer gave a series of rather brief obituaries. He states that his eldest son, also William, died in Kilkenny in 1231 and was laid to rest in the monastery his father had founded. Marshal's second son, Richard, who fell in battle in Kildare, was buried with his brother at 'blacke Fryers at Kilkennye'. Hanmer

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., p. 345.

[38] Ibid.

explains that their tombs, along with those of eighteen knights who 'came over at the Conquest', were destroyed during the suppression of the monasteries and were re-used by the inhabitants [of Kilkenny] some even as 'swine-troughs'. The only surviving effigy of a knight bares the Cantwell arms, yet it is known as 'Ryddir in Curry' or 'the knight slaine at th Curraghe'. It is this memorial Hanmer tells us that John Clyne mistakes for the grave of Richard Marshal. He recounts how Gilbert Marshal died due to a fall at a tournament in 1241 and was buried in 'the new temple Church at london'. Walter Marshal died at Godrike Castle in 1245 and was buried at Tintern. The fifth son, Anselm, died in England and was also buried at Tintern.

Hanmer goes into considerable detail to explain a prophecy concerning William Marshal's sons. He states that one Florilagus wrote about a prophecy of the Countess Isabella who foresaw that all five sons would in turn be earl, yet without issue. He explains that 'Mathew Paris wrote of the story at large', that is, the story of how the Earl Marshal took from 'an holy bishop two mannors ... as if he had wonne them with the sword'. This is the third and final mention of Marshal's actions in Ireland, although Hanmer seems sceptical as to whether he is recounting historical fact or fiction. Continuing with this prophesy, the offended bishop subsequently excommunicated the earl. There follows a detailed tale wherein the bishop of Ferns travels to Henry III shortly after Marshal's death to seek restitution of his lost lands. At the tomb of the earl, in the presence of the king, the 'waspish' bishop vowed to absolve the earl and posthumously lift his excommunication or, taking the king by surprise, damned the earl to remain in hell if the said lands are not returned. The eldest son (also William) on hearing of this, despite the apparent risk to his father's soul, declines to consider giving back those lands to the 'old doting bishop' as he felt these lands were gained legally, 'for that which is gotten by the sword, may lawfully be enjoyed'.[39] This is followed by a detailed account of the division of the Marshal territories between the five daughters of the earl; Joanna, Mathilda, Isabell, Sybil and Eva. He also gives details of their respective marriages and their descendants.[40]

For the year 1208 there is a very limited account of the conflict with Meiler fitz Henry. As Hanmer tells it, there is no mention of William Marshal's involvement.

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[39] Ibid., p. 352.

[40] Ibid.

Instead, he notes that, as 'I finde it in Dowlinge and Grace', Hugh de Lacy 'laid siege to Castle Meiler, wane it, brake it down, and made it even with the ground.'[41] From Hanmer's perspective then, it seems that the 1208 conflict was limited to Fitz Henry and De Lacy and possibly geographically confined to Meath.

A year after Hanmer's work was published, Geoffrey Keating completed his 1634 *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn.* Keating's work is decidedly different in outlook. This can be observed clearly in his opinions on later arrivals to the island. Keating is from the start more critical of twelfth-century Anglo-Norman arrivals than Giraldus Cambrensis, whom he openly attacks. This is perhaps understandable as his aim was 'to remove before, those false and injurious representations concerning the ancient Irish', and correct an imbalance in the writing on Irish history up to that point. Campion and Stanihurst are also blamed for having 'industriously sought occasion to lessen the reputation' of the Gaelic-Irish but also those 'Old English' who had been in Ireland since the reign of Henry II.[42] This is interesting considering that his opinion of those Anglo-Normans left in charge of Irish affairs on Henry II's departure who engaged in 'the plundering of churches and clerics, bloody deeds of treachery and violent tyranny' is in stark contrast to Stanihurst's who is much more sympathetic. While Stanihurst might focus on the great deeds of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland, Keating is primarily concerned with their misdeeds. He also differs from Stanihurst in making no mention of William Marshal being present in his account of Henry II's departure from Ireland.[43] Keating believes that the proof of their misdeeds is that most failed to leave behind a son and heir.[44] It is against this rather negative backdrop that Keating chooses to introduce 'William Maruscal' to his account. He is concerned with the failure of any of Marshal's five sons by Isabella de Clare to father a son, in effect yet more proof of the continuation of the curse down three generations.[45] Keating relates Hanmer's account of the specific curse relating to William's confiscation of manors that belonged to the bishop of Ferns. It is interesting that Keating credits Hanmer with this, suggesting that

[41] Ibid., p. 370.

[42] Geoffrey Keating, 'Preface' to *General history of Ireland*, trans. Dermod O'Connor (Dublin, 1861), p. xv.

[43] Geoffrey Keating, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn; or, The history of Ireland* (London, 1908), p. 359.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., p. 361.

this 'Bishop's curse' story enters the Irish historical narrative with Hanmer only and was not a popularly held view. There is also the possibility that Keating was conscious of animosity towards perceived Catholic superstitions and is, therefore, willing to ascribe the origins of the tale to a figure who had become deeply involved with the Protestant hierarchy in Ireland.

Keating also interestingly has William involved in two separate conflicts after the death of King John in 1216. The first is between the young Hugh de Lacy and William Marshal in which 'they destroyed Meath, and many Gaels fell on either side helping them'. He also describes a 'great war ... between Myler and Geoffrey Moireis and William Maruscal' in which 'many men of Leinster and Munster were destroyed'.[46] These two conflicts would seem to be the conflict of 1208 conflated. If the second conflict is indeed that of 1208, the fact that on both sides 'Gaels' were involved seems to echo *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann* and suggests an alliance of Fitz Henry with Muirchertach Ua Briain and Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair.[47] It is possible that the first conflict mentioned between Marshal and De Lacy is a reference to the eldest son, William Marshal the younger, and later tension between the Leinster and Meath lordships on the return of Hugh de Lacy the younger in 1223.[48]

The view expressed in the preface of the 1705 translation of the 1645 *Antiquities and History of Ireland* by Sir James Ware is that

> The Writers of the History of Ireland, for the most part utterly ignorant or negligent of the Genuine Remains of Antiquity, have obtruded on the World a multitude of uncouth, incoherent and ridiculous Fables and legends instead of Authentick Relations of Matters of Fact.[49]

This makes it abundantly clear as to what he perceived as the inadequacies of earlier writers on Irish history. Ware is considered to be an exception in this regard, however, at least by those responsible for this translation.

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[46] Ibid., p. 365: Meiler fitz Henry, Geoffrey de Marisco and William Marshal.

[47] O'Donovan, *Annals of the kingdom of Ireland*, iii, 155–7.

[48] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 91.

[49] James Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland* (Dublin, 1705), preface.

In his chapter 'An Account of the Monasterys of Ireland, of their Origin and Antiquity', Ware systematically goes through each county, identifying religious houses, who they were founded by and, where he can, a date for their foundation. The first mention of Marshal is in reference to the house of Killrush at Kildare, 'founded by Marescall Earl of Pembroke for Regular Canons: he made it the Cell of the Priory of Carthmel in Lancashire'. Attached to this is a reference to 'S. Mary Abby at Monaster-Evin, otherwise called Rossglass and de Rosea Valle'. It is unclear whether Ware is linking these two foundations because they are geographically close or because he considered the latter to also be connected to Marshal in some way.[50] Moving on to Wexford, Ware identifies two monasteries founded by Marshal. The first reference is to the 'Priory of S. John and S. Bridget, in Wexford, by the Irish call'd Logh-Garmon, Founded by William Marescall Earl of Pembroke for knights of the Hospital'.[51] It is not clear whether Ware attributes the founding of this monastery to William Marshal or his son of the same name because unlike the next entry, he does not specify that it was the elder William Marshal. With regard to the founding of Tintern de Voto, Ware gives what becomes the standard version of its origin:

> Abby of our Lady of Tintern, or of the Vow. William Marescal the Elder, Earl of Pembroke in the year 1200 having Escaped a great Tempest, in performance of his Vow built this Abby on the Sea-shore, indowed it and Supply'd it with Monks of the Cistercian Order from Tintern in Monmouth-shire in Wales, and made John Torrel their Abbot. This Abby is called by Chrysostòme Henriques, the Lesser Tintern.[52]

While the story of a tempest or near-shipwreck is entertaining and dramatic, might not the idea of vowing to build a monastery before embarking on a dangerous voyage be more plausible? Regardless, after Ware it is this dramatic tale that becomes firmly established.

With regard to religious foundations in Kilkenny, Ware states that the 'Priory or Hospital of S. John the Evangelist in Kilkenny' was 'founded in the year 1211, on the

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[50] Ibid., p. 79; Aubrey Gwynn and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses: Ireland* (Dublin, 1970, repr. 1988), p. 142: it was given its charter sometime between 1177 and 1181.

[51] James Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland* (Dublin, 1705), p. 80.

[52] Ibid., p. 82.

East side of the Town, by William Marescall the Elder, Earl of Pembroke, for Canons of the Order of S. Augustin.'[53] Regarding the Abby of Duiske, we are told 'William Marescal, the Elder, Earl of Pembroke founded in the year 1207, or, as some, in 1204 and supply'd it with Cistercian Monks from the Abby of Stanly in Wiltshire in England.'[54] It is worth noting that in both of these entries, Ware names William Marshal the Elder, unlike the entry for the Priory of St. John and St. Bridget in Wexford. We are also told that the Priory of S. Mary at Kells was founded by 'Geofry Fitz Robert' the 'Senescal' of Leinster during the reign of Richard I.[55]

In the chapter entitled 'Of the Colonies sent out of England and Wales into Ireland, in the time of Henry II. And of the Lands granted to them', Ware states that

> a copy of the Confirmation of the Charter granted by King John to William Marescal Earl of Pembroke, who married Isabel Daughter and Heir of Earl Richard, is in the Roll of Charters in the ninth year of King John, among the records in the Tower of London.[56]

In the appended 'Chronological Table of the Chief Governors of Ireland from the Conquest in 1168 to the Year of our Lord God 1704' (the table has been updated by the editors for the 1705 translation) Ware for the year 1191 has the entry: 'William Marshal and William Pettet, L.J. (Lord Justices)'.[57] During this period Marshal was in fact one of four 'co-justiciars' in England ostensibly overseeing the rule of Chancellor Longchamp.[58] William le Petit was to become justiciar in 1192 but for 1191, the position was held be John de Courcy, earl of Ulster.[59]

In his *Annals of the Affairs of Ireland*, Ware gives a similar account to Hanmer's but with some differences and interesting new details. Ware recounts how Richard, earl of Striguil (Strongbow) was called to Normandy to fight for Henry II against his son Henry (the young king). This raises the intriguing possibility that Strongbow fought

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., p. 83.

[56] Ibid., p. 117.

[57] Ibid., p. 154.

[58] David Crouch, *William Marshal* (2nd ed., Harlow, 2002), p. 77.

[59] F.M. Powicke (ed.), *Handbook of British chronology* (London, 1939), p. 107.

against his future (albeit posthumous) son-in-law, William Marshal, who was then in the service of the young king. According to Ware, Strongbow was made guardian of the town of Gisors for his trouble.[60] In the year 1189, the year Richard I was crowned, Ware states that

> About this time William, called Mareschal (because his Ancestors were Hereditary Mareshals of the Kings Palace) Married Isabel, only Daughter of Richard Strongbow, by which Marraige he had great Revenues in Ireland, and Title of Earl of Pembroke.[61]

Ware, who had published Hanmer's earlier work and must have known it in detail, was unwilling to include any mention of Hanmer's assertion that Maxfield was the original surname of the Marshal family. For the year 1192 Ware writes 'In Leinster the Castle of Kilkenny was built.'[62] This presumably is a reference to the earthwork castle that pre-dated the stone castle built by Marshal in the early 1200s. For 1202 Ware notes that

> Meler Fitz. Henry, whose Father was the base Son of King Henry the First, founded the Abby of Cownal. He came into Ireland with the first Conquerors, being a young stripling, and was highly commended by Cambrensis for his Valour, and Worthines in Martial Prowess.[63]

We are also told in almost the same wording as Hanmer that

> Sir Hugh de Lacy the younger being Lord Justice, offer'd him battle, he laid Siege to Castle Meiler, won it, broke it down, and made it even with the Ground, but he lost there more Men (say the Irish) than he took away with him, the chief Rebel was Jeffery mac-Moris, alias Morich.[64]

It is interesting that the 'Geoffrey Moireis' of Keating's earlier account, now 'mac-Moris', is regarded as a chief rebel. Richard Cox later also describes this Mac Moris as

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[60] Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland*, p. 10.

[61] Ibid., p. 31.

[62] Ibid., p. 33.

[63] Ibid., p. 41.

[64] Ibid.

the chief rebel.[65] Some of the Irish annals refer to Geoffrey de Marisco being involved in this conflict but on the same side as De Lacy and Marshal, which does in fact appear to have been the case.[66] Ware's account is somewhat confused. He regards Mac-Moris (de Marisco) and, by implication, Fitz Henry as rebels. This makes sense if they were fighting the 'Lord Justice' Hugh de Lacy; however, at this stage Fitz Henry was still justiciar and would be replaced by Hugh de Lacy only after the conflict between him and Marshal had ended in his defeat. Ware, as with Hanmer, has identified all of the belligerents involved but is confused as to which side De Marisco was involved with.

John Lynch's 1662 *Cambrensis Eversus* is, in part, a refutation of Giraldus Cambrensis's anti-Irish bias in his *Expugnatio Hibernica*, and was used as a model for a Catholic history of Ireland by later writers.[67] Lynch, as an 'Old English' Catholic, is keen to express the loyalty this group had shown to the crown in the tumultuous decades of the mid-seventeenth century. Lynch mentions Marshal only twice in his work. The first reference concerns the ancestry of James I:

> King James is also descended from the kings of Leinster and other Irish kings in the following line: Edmond Mortimer, earl of March, daughter of Eva de Braos, third daughter of William Marshall the Elder, earl Marshall and Pembroke, by a daughter of Richard Earl Strongbow, count of Strigul and Eva daughter of Diarmaid Mac Murchada, King of Leinster, son of Donnchad, son of Murchad, son of Diarmaid, King of Ireland, son of Donnchad, surnamed Moelnambo.[68]

The only interest Lynch has in Marshal is as a means of showing how closely connected James and presumably his grandson, Charles II, are with Ireland. By connecting James with Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó 'Moelnambo', the last Leinster king to be acknowledged as high-king of Ireland, Lynch is surely making an argument in support of Stuart rule in Ireland.[69] Marshal, through his marriage to Isabella de Clare, is a crucial link.

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[65] Richard Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana* (London, 1689), p. 49.

[66] F.X. Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216' in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *NHI*, ii: *medieval Ireland, 1169–1534* (Oxford, 2008), p. 137.

[67] *DIB*, v, 628.

[68] John Lynch, *Cambrensis Eversus*, ed. Matthew Kelly (3 vols, Dublin, 1852), iii, 61.

[69] This refers to Donnchad Máel na Mbó (d. 1006).

Lynch later stresses the close historic links between Ireland and England. After describing the marriage of one hundred Scottish ladies to French nobles under James I (of Scotland) as a means of securing French–Scottish ties, he extends this to intermarriage between Irish and English families. The final mention of Marshal by Lynch is as an example of such a marriage: 'William Marshall, earl of Pembroke, married Isabella, Strongbow's daughter'. Lynch, it seems, is willing to consider Isabella as Irish, and to dismiss distinctions between Irish and Old English. He might well be unique in considering this marriage an Anglo-Irish union.

In his *Ogygia; or, A chronological account of Irish events*, written in 1665 but published in 1685, Roderick O'Flaherty fails to include any mention of William Marshal. However, in a passage on the descent of the Stuart monarchs, he does include the following:

> Richard Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke and Strigule, had Eva, the daughter of Diermot, King of Ireland, Elizabeth, the mother of Eva Breos, whose daughter Matilda was the grandmother of Roger Mortimer, the first Earl of March.

It is clear that Elizabeth here is Isabella, Marshal's wife. Like Lynch before him, O'Flaherty was keen to stress the Stuart connection to Ireland through the Mortimer line. Perhaps because the descent is through the female line, Marshal seems to have been regarded as unimportant.

Edmund Borlase fails to mention any of the exploits of William Marshal in his *Reduction of Ireland to the crown of England* of 1675. This work is a chronological account based on the actions of the chief governors of Ireland from the time of Henry II. There is one brief mention of William Marshal but only as a means of identifying his son: 'a certain King of Connaght knowing the King of England, and William Marescallus the great Marshal of Pembrokes son, to be busily imployed in Marshal affairs abroad'.[70] This suggests that Borlase was aware of Marshal's reputation, though perhaps unaware of his impact in Ireland. Borlase was interested in highlighting the achievements of English governors in Ireland and by extension the benefits of English rule in Ireland. For Borlase, the son of an English officer, the chief governors were a civilising force. The clash between Meiler fitz Henry and Marshal would have perhaps

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[70] Edmund Borlase, *The reduction of Ireland to the crown of England* (Dublin, 1675), p. 19.

proved an embarrassing anomaly for Borlase's narrative and this might explain its omission.

Of works written on Ireland in the seventeenth century, Sir Richard Cox's *Hibernia Anglicana* of 1689 offers perhaps the most expansive accounts of William Marshal's Irish exploits. It is for the year 1189 that Marshal first appears in Cox's narrative:

> This Year Isabel, only daughter of Strongbow, by Eva Princess of Leinster, was married to William Lord Maxfield, Earl Marshal of England: He was a great favourite to King Richard; and at his Coronation carried the Regal Scepter, whereon was a Cross of Gold. He was afterward by King John, created Earl of Pembrook; and had five sons who were successively Earls, and all died without Issue; and he had five Daughters, among whom his Estate was divided.[71]

It is clear that Hanmer's work was used extensively by Cox as the above passage suggests, with the description's of the coronation being almost identical. Cox was unique in accepting Hanmer's contention that the earl's name was Maxfield. That being said, Cox cites Maxfield only once and did not feel the need to elaborate as Hanmer had. Cox is also willing to describe Eva as a Princess which is unusual as earlier writers, though willing to describe Dermot as King of Leinster for the most part, do not seem to use a royal title in describing his daughter although later writers follow Cox's example. Cox, in a further reference to Marshal's marriage to Isabella, states: 'Isabel was fourteen Years a Ward to Henry II; That her Husband William, Earl Marshal, was created Earl of Pembrook, 27 May 1199; and that she dyed anno 1221, and was buried at Tintern Abbey; and that he dyed 16 March, 1219'.[72] Cox here is able to correct a long-held misconception regarding the age of the Leinster heiress at the time of her marriage. Stanihurst had given her age as fourteen at the time of her marriage but Cox attributes fourteen years to the period of her wardship. Cox here also gives 1219 as the year of Marshal's death although strangely this changes to 1220 in a later passage.

Like Ware, Cox believed that Marshal held the office of justiciar or governor in 1191: 'William Earl of Pembrook, and Earl Marshal of England, came over Lord

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[71] Richard Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana* (London, 1689), p. 44.

[72] Ibid.

Justice or Governour of Ireland.' The reasons he gives for Marshal's selection for such a position are indeed plausible:

> he was the third of the Temporal Assistants, King Richard had left to the Bishop of Ely, for the Government of England; he was a Valiant Man, and had a great Estate in Ireland; and therefore was thought fittest Governour for that Country, in this Critical Time, whilst King Richard was Prisoner in Austria, and Earl John was engaged in Troublesome and Ambitious Designs in England.[73]

The description of Marshal as a 'Valiant Man' is also noteworthy since it is an early example of his reputation, well established in England, coming across in an Irish history. This reputation is then referred to directly: 'It seems the Reputation or Power of this Noble Governour was sufficient to keep Ireland quiet; for we read of little or no Disturbance there, during his Time, which was about six Years.'[74] The claim that Ireland was particularly peaceful between 1191 and 1197 seems difficult to believe regardless of who was governor.

We are told that in the year 1208 King John 'granted William Marshal, the Marshalship of Ireland in Fee, as also the Cantred of Kilkenny'.[75] Then, moving on to the major conflict of that year, Cox states that 'About this time Jeofry Morison (or Mac Moris) was troublesome in Munster: wherefore the Lord Deputy invaded Typerary, and took Thurles; he took Castlemeyler, and demolished it: but the Irish say he lost more men in this Expedition than he brought back'.[76] This account leaves out any involvement by William Marshal, though perhaps his forces are included with those of the 'Lord Deputy'; presumably this is De Lacy. In this account it is clearly Jeofry Morison (Mac Moris) who is regarded as the leader of rebel forces. Meiler fitz Henry is not directly mentioned, although his castle is destroyed. This seems to be based on Ware's rather confused and complicated account of the conflict between Meiler fitz Henry and William Marshal.[77]

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[73] Ibid., p. 45.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., pp 48–9.

[76] Ibid., p. 49.

[77] Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland*, p. 41.

In regard to Marshal's activity on his arrival in Ireland, Cox recounts that: 'In this Time William, Earl Marshal (who came to Ireland anno 1207) was employed in building his Castle of Kilkenny, and the Abbey of Black-Fryers there: He also incorporated that Town by the Name of Sovereign Burgesses and Community; and granted them a Privilege, to be quit of Toll, Lastage and Pontage, and all other Customs throughout Leinster, and afterwards went to England.'[78] This suggests that Cox did not regard Marshal as having played a major role in the previously mentioned conflict since he describes Marshal as being engaged in these relatively peaceful tasks around the same time. Cox is also one of the first to suggest how much Marshal was involved in the administration and development of Leinster.

In his account of the reign of Henry III, Cox tells us that

> William Earl Marshal, who was also Earl of Pembrook, was Protector of the King and Kingdom, and by Proclamation encouraged the Nobility, Gentry, and other the Kings Subjects to continue faithful to him; which they were the more easily persuaded to, because Lewis Prince of France, and his party began to decline, and were solemnly excommunicated (or rather the same Excommunication was published and denounced) every Sunday and Holy-Day.[79]

Cox was evidently more familiar with Marshal's role in England and had access to many English histories of this period. Cox had spent considerable time in London and Bristol in the 1670s and 1680s before returning permanently to Ireland in 1690.[80] Cox would ultimately achieve the position of lord chancellor in 1703.

The next entry of Cox's regarding William Marshal attests to his role as diplomat where an exiled Hugh de Lacy is invited to return by King John 'under the Test of the Earl Marshal'. This presumably meant that Marshal was to act as guarantor of De Lacy's safety.[81] Cox here seems to have confused a successful mission to persuade Walter de Lacy, lord of Meath, to return in 1215, with a later and ultimately

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[78] Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 54.

[79] Ibid., p. 55.

[80] *DIB*, ii, 937.

[81] Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 56.

unsuccessful attempt to convince Hugh de Lacy to return during Marshal's regency.[82] Again referring to administrative affairs, Cox tells us that in 1217, 'About this time, William Earl Marshal, incorporated the Town of Calan'.[83] This is followed by a transcription of the Latin charter which Cox informs us in an annotation is in the library in Lambeth.[84] Despite earlier stating that Marshal died in 1219, Cox includes this curious entry for the year 1220:

> And about the same time died at London, William, Earl Marshal, Protector of the King and his Kingdoms. Some Irish Antiquary was so silly, to think, he was call'd Marshal, quass Mars his Seneschal; for he was indeed a very warlike Man.[85]

Cox unfortunately does not name this Irish antiquary but it seems likely to be a reference to Hanmer's *Chronicle of Ireland*, which includes the memorable lines 'The aforesaid William, as Warlike and stout, called Marshall, as if hee had been *Mars* his Seneschal while in Ireland he gave himselfe to slaughter, and burning'.[86] Hanmer attributes this description to Matthew Paris.

Cox goes on to relate the tale of the bishop of Ferns's curse on the Marshal family. This, it seems, is taken almost entirely from Hanmer, although the wording is slightly changed. He explains how unless the bishop had his lands restored to him, he would not lift the excommunication of William Marshal. Cox, however, fails to include the bishop's prophecy that the sons of Marshal would have no heirs or specifically 'the ill success of the children.'[87] Regarding the bishop's curse, however, Cox does tell us that 'it brought no small Veneration to the Clergy, that this and his four Brethren died without issue; which the Superstitious people thought to be the Effect of that Execration'.[88]

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[82] James Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 2003), p. 77; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 86.

[83] Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 57.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*, pp 349–50.

[87] Ibid., p. 350.

[88] Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 58.

After Cox's *Hibernia Anglicana* of 1689 there is yet another significant lacuna in Irish historiography. It is not until Walter Harris's *Hibernica; or, Some antient pieces relating to Ireland* of 1747 that there is anything approaching a general history of Ireland, let alone any published studies of the medieval period. Harris's first reference connected to William Marshal relates to his wife's family. For the year 1172 he relates that 'The king being departed, the Earl Richard returned unto Fernes, and their (sic.) he gave his Daughter in Marriage to *Robert de Quiney*, and with her the Inheritance of the Duffren, and the Constableship of Leinster, with the Banner and Ensigne of the same'.[89] While this might not have any obvious bearing on Marshal's affairs, it is significant because this is the first and a practically unique mention of Isabella de Clare's half-sister and because it helps to explain how the relative stability within the Leinster lordship might, in part, have been due to familial connections between the Anglo-Normans and Irish families.

Harris's narrative breaks off in 1173 and resumes again only in 1399, completely overlooking the period in which William Marshal is active (or indeed anyone up to the reign of Richard II). That being said, it is not entirely invaluable. Apart from the reference to a probable sister-in-law there is also an interesting account of the sub-infeudation of Leinster by Strongbow prior to Marshal's arrival:

> Unto Meyler Fitz-Henry he gave Carbrie, unto Maurice Fitz-Gerrald, the Naas Offelan (which had been possessed by Mc. Kelan) and Wicklow, which lyeth betweene Brec, and Arckloe; and this was the Land of Killmantan, between Adcleth and Loghgarman. Unto Walter de Ridleford he gave the lands of O-Moretheie. Unto John de Clahul, he gave the Marshallshipp of all Leinster, and the land between Aghboe [Aghevoe] and Leighlin.[90]

Eleven years after Harris's publication James Mac Geoghegan published in Paris his 1758 *Histoire de L'Irlande, ancienne et moderne, tirée des monumens les plus authentique*. It would not be until 1844 that an English version, *The history of Ireland, ancient and modern*, became available. Mac Geoghegan approaches the subject of William Marshal in a now-familiar fashion: 'By his marriage with Eva, daughter of

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[89] Walter Harris, *Hibernica; or, Some antient pieces relating to Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1747), i, 37–8: it is unclear whether this is a daughter from an earlier marriage or an illegitimate daughter.

[90] Ibid., p. 41.

Dermod, King of Leinster, Strongbow had one daughter, called Isabella, heiress of his extensive possessions in that province. Some time afterwards this princess married William Marshal, an English lord.'[91] He goes on to recount that by William Marshal, Isabella had five sons, and as many daughters; the sons all died without issue; the daughters were married to English noblemen who, in virtue of their alliance, claimed extensive estates in Leinster', and that it was 'thus the race of this celebrated man became extinct'.[92] It is after this that Mac Geoghegan strays from the more conventional narrative. While accepting that Marshal had been 'ranked as a hero' by the English, he explains that, in fact, he 'in reality was an extortioner and a tyrant' and that 'it might be said of the wicked man, that having been raised above the cedars of Mount Libanus, there remained no vestige of but a horror for his memory.'[93] The attack on Marshal's character continues: 'of the spoils of the Irish, for which he had evinced such greediness, and left to ungrateful heirs all the riches which he had amassed, at the risk of his salvation; his fall finishes a salutary warning to posterity'.[94]

Although there is brief mention of the coronation of Richard where 'John Comin, archbishop of Dublin, Aubin O'Mulloy, bishop of ferns, and consort bishop of Enaghdun' assisted, there is no mention of Marshal in the proceedings. Mac Geoghegan asserts that at this time 'John, earl of Mortagne, was content with being lord justice of Ireland' and that 'the marriage of William Marshal with Isabella, daughter of earl Strongbow, took place' and 'by which he acquired extensive possessions in Leinster, and the title of Earl of Pembroke'.[95]

The next account of Marshal's piety contrasts sharply with the earlier description of a 'wicked man'. We are given an account of the founding of 'the abbey called little Tinterne' situated 'on the coast of Wexford'. The reason given for its establishment is the familiar one, 'William Marshal, earl of Pembroke, being in danger of shipwreck, on his passage from England to Ireland, made a vow to build a religious house'. As well as the abbey of Tintern according to Mac Geoghegan, 'This nobleman also founded two religious houses, one at Kilrush, in the county of Kildare, for regular

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[91] James Mac Geoghegan, *The history of Ireland, ancient and modern* (Dublin, 1844), p. 278.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid., pp 278–9.

[95] Ibid., p. 290.

canons, and the other at Wexford, for the hospitallers of St. John the Baptist of Jerusalem, and St. Briget'.[96] Mac Geoghegan later adds a third foundation, that of Douske (Graiguenamanagh), in Co. Kilkenny, a Cistercian house called 'Valley of the Blessed Savior', founded by Marshal in 1207.[97] In addition, Mac Geoghegan alludes to the fact that

> At Inistock, in the county of Kilkenny, there was a priory for regular canons of St.Augustin, called after St. Columbanus, founded according to Ware, in 1206, by Thomas, seneschal of Leinster, at the request of Hugh, bishop of Ossary.[98]

When he turns to King John his description shows little sympathy:

> This king was abhorred by all good men, not only for having deprived Arthur of the crown, who was the legitimate heir to it, but also for having imbrued has own hands in the blood of that innocent prince.[99]

This might in some way explain the vitriol piled upon Marshal earlier.

There is no mention of Marshal's involvement in the events of 1208. We are told, however, that one 'Geoffry McMoris or Morich, an Irish nobleman, ... caused a revolt against the English, in the county of Tipperary'.[100] Mac Geoghegan has completed the transformation of De Marisco the Anglo-Norman adventurer into McMoris an Irish rebel chief. Although Meiler Fitz Henry is not mentioned, it is stated that 'Hugh de Lacey marched as viceroy towards Thurles, with all the troops he could collect, where he destroyed the castle, called castle Meiler.' Mac Geoghegan later notes that 'Geoffry de Mariscis' was recalled to England in 1219 and replaced by Henry Loundres as justiciar.[101] The chronology here might be out by a year or two but what is more interesting is that De Marisco/McMoris has become two separate entities, one English and one Irish, in Mac Geoghegan's view of events. Mac Geoghegan, like Ware

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[96] Ibid., p. 294.

[97] Ibid., p. 297.

[98] Ibid., p. 296.

[99] Ibid., p. 295.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid., p. 299.

before him (or because of Ware), knows who the belligerents were but is confused regarding the various alliances involved.

In the year 1210 King John is said to have 'landed at Waterford, at the head of a numerous and well-provided army, to put down the Irish who had rebelled, and were continually pillaging and destroying his English subjects'.[102] Mac Geoghegan qualifies this by stating that John's objectives were 'not only to quell the insurrection of the Irish, but likewise to punish his English subjects who were oppressing them, and exercising an insupportable tyranny every where their authority extended'. This might well include the 'extortioner and tyrant' William Marshal. The rebellious William de Braose, perhaps the immediate catalyst for John's intervention in Ireland, is mentioned only as one of many who fled before John's army. We are told that those who fled included De Braose's 'wife Matilda, his son William, and their whole retinue; but they were seized' and that they were then 'brought to England under a strong guard, and confined in Windsor castle, where, by order of the King, they were starved to death'.[103] As if this was not enough evidence of John's cruelty, we are also told that in 1212 he

> took with him twenty-eight children, of the first rank, as hostages, to secure fidelity of the people; but having heard some time afterwards, that the Welsh were beginning to rebel again, he was so transported with rage, that he had all these innocent victims hanged in his presence, as he was sitting to table.[104]

John Lackland, Mac Geoghegan continues,

> was the most unfortunate of princes; he was despised by foreigners, and hated by his subjects. Having put his nephew Arthur to death, he was summoned before the court of peers in France, to be tried for his crime; but not appearing, he was declared a rebel, in consequence of which his possessions were confiscated, and he himself condemned to death.[105]

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[102] Ibid., p. 298.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid., p. 299.

[105] Ibid., p. 300.

While rumours are indeed said to have abounded regarding John's culpability in Arthur's death (and may have played some part in De Braose's flight to Ireland), the idea of a trial and sentence appears to be Mac Geoghegan's invention.

The next mention of William Marshal relates that 'The wars of Hugh de Lacy the younger, and William Marshal, caused many troubles in Meath. The town of Trim was besieged, and reduced to the last extremity; but the disturbances being quelled, Lacy built a strong castle in that town' probably refers to William Marshal the younger and the conflict of 1223. However, this is followed by what is surely a return to 1208 and the exploits of Marshal the elder, 'The provinces of Leinster and Munster were frequently devastated by the quarrels of Marshal with Meyler Fitzhenry'.[106]

Mac Geoghegan's final account of William Marshal perhaps goes some way towards explaining his initial unflattering description of the earl. He observes that

> according to Hanmer, William Marshal took possession of some lands that belonged to the bishop of Ferns, and on his refusing to restore them, was excommunicated by the prelate. He died afterwards in his own country, whilst under this anathema. His wickedness drew on him the vengeance of heaven: not one of his five sons, whom he had by Isabella, daughter of earl Strongbow, and heiress of Leinster, to whom he was married, having left any posterity.[107]

It is no surprise that Meiler fitz Henry does not escape Mac Geoghegan's scorn. There is no customary description of the great warrior we have become familiar with except perhaps that 'he attacked Cluan-Mac-Noisk, which he took by assault after a siege of twelve days, and put all whom he met to the sword' but coupled with this he is described as 'a naturally cruel man. Independently of the tyranny which he practised against the peoples of his province'.[108]

John Curry's 1775 *Historical and critical review of the civil wars in Ireland, from the reign of Queen Elizabeth, to the settlement under King William extracted from parliamentary records, state acts, and other authentic material* does in fact have an opening chapter entitled 'Of the State of the Irish from the time of the invasion of

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[106] Ibid., pp 300–1.

[107] Ibid., p. 301.

[108] Ibid.

Henry II'. Curry's main concern is the treatment of Catholics from the reign of Henry VIII onwards but he sees discrimination against Catholics as a continuation of discriminatory policies towards the Irish prior to the Reformation. This considered, it is not surprising that the late medieval period is not discussed in very much detail. William Marshal receives no mention but, for that matter, neither does anyone else. The entire period, from the arrival of the Anglo-Normans to the reign of Richard II, is covered by just one sentence:

> Now it is evident from all our records, that after these adventurers got footing in that Kingdom, the British colonies only, and some few septs of the Irish, that were enfranchised by special charter, were admitted to the Benifit and Protection of the laws of England; and that the Irish, as such, were generally reputed aliens or rather enemies; in so much, that it was adjudged no felony to kill a mere Irishman, in time of peace.[109]

Edward Ledwich, writing in *Collectanea de rebus Hibernicus* from 1770 in his 'The history and antiquities of Irishtown and Kilkenny from original records and authentic documents', is particularly interested in the castle of Kilkenny, the Marshal stronghold. Ledwich is keen to focus on the documentary evidence in support of his inquiry and indeed casually dismisses the work of others as 'those exentric wanderings of Keating, O Flaherty, and their followers'.[110]

Ledwich's first account relating to Kilkenny Castle describes events in 1172, when, in the face of the advancing forces of 'Donald O Brien, king of Thomond' and 'Conor Mac Raghry, and the forces of West Connaught', the garrison abandoned the castle and retreated to Waterford, after which 'the town was demolished, and the country wasted'.[111] Ledwich, it seems, is concerned with the early date of 1172: he states that 'in other annals, under the year 1173, we are told that Donald O Brien

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[109] John Curry, *Historical and critical review of the civil wars in Ireland, from the reign of Queen Elizabeth, to the settlement under King William extracted from parliamentary records, state acts, and other authentic material* (Dublin, 1775), pp 1–2.

[110] Edward Ledwich, 'The history and antiquities of Irishtown and Kilkenny from original records and authentic documents' in Charles Vallancey, Thomas Pownall, Edward Ledwich and James Ussher, *Collectanea de rebus Hibernicus* (4 vols, Dublin, 1770-86), ii, 349.

[111] Ibid., 354.

retracted his obedience to Henry, broke down the castle of Kilkenny, and destroyed the English settlements'.[112] The castle, according to Ledwich, was

> among many others at this time ... but by whom we have not been able to discover: but it was probably by Strongbow.[113]

Exactly how quickly a motte can be erected is a matter of conjecture but it would seem likely that 1173 is the correct date for its destruction.

Ledwich's writing is not strictly chronological so it is William Marshal the younger, rather than his father, who is first mentioned, in this case for providing a charter 'to the Augustinian abbey of St John in Kilkenny' in 1220.[114] He proceeds to tell us that 'It is asserted in the life of Hugh Rufus, second bishop of Ossory, that he granted a great part of the city of Kilkenny to William Earl Marshal, reserving to himself and his successors a chiefry of an ounce of gold'.[115] This Hugh Rufus (sometimes Hugo le Rous) was bishop between 1202 and 1218 so this relates to William Marshal the elder. Ledwich thinks that this grant is problematic or flawed because

> It supposes two things; either that the bishop had a paramount right to the soil prior to the English invasion, which however does not appear, or there was some distinct exemption in his favour when those conquerors seized and colonized the country; which is equally destitute of foundation.[116]

There is a logic to this argument, for Marshal himself was infamously able to seize lands from the bishop of Ferns by the sword, at least that is according to tradition. Ledwich goes on to state that Hugh Rufus, as well as 'being an English monk', might have been 'elected perhaps through the interest of the earl of Pembroke'.[117] A close relationship between the bishop and William Marshal might well have facilitated a more peaceable exchange of property.

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[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid., 358.

[115] Ibid., 360.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., 445.

Ledwich later explains what he sees as Marshal's legal position regarding his Leinster lordship. Just as Richard de Clare held all of Leinster, with the exception of the maritime towns, in perpetuity from Henry II so did Marshal. From John these grants were confirmed to William Marshal 'who married Isabella, Strongbow's daughter' and both (Marshal and de Clare) held 'absolute regal jurisdiction and prerogative'. The proof of this enfeoffment was that he was later able to grant the necessary land to St John's priory.[118] The Augustinian foundation too is referred to by Ledwich: here he states that its charter survives 'in the Monasticon' and that it is dates from 1220. He includes his translation of the wording:

> that William Marshall the elder, earl of Pembroke, for the salvation of his soul and those of his predecessors and successors, gives to God and St. John, a piece of ground at the head of the small bridge of Kilkenny, between the small steam of water and the road that leads to Loughmedoran.[119]

While the original charter of incorporation was lost, some of its wording survives in a document from 1328; it states 'that the earl who was lord of Leinster, had in his life time granted to the sovereign, burgesses and commonalty of Kilkenny, for the time being, various liberties and immunities, which they were to enjoy for ever throughout Leinster, as well as the town'.[120] Ledwich then explains something of his own views of William Marshal, 'This excellent nobleman, equally accomplished in the arts of peace and war'.[121]

It is initially in a footnote in Thomas Lelend's 1773 *The history of Ireland from the invasion of Henry II with a preliminary discourse on the antient state of Ireland*, that William Marshal is first referenced. Leland recounts how 'Giraldus makes the son of William Fitz-Gerald marry the earl's daughter by the princess of Leinster, an infant of about four years old', this he understandably finds unlikely and dismisses it with 'all historians, and authentic records agree, that this young lady (the only child which

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[118] Ibid., 360.

[119] Ibid., 528.

[120] Ibid., 361–2.

[121] Ibid., 362.

Strongbow left by Eva) was, at the age of fourteen, married to William earl Marshal'.[122] It is possible that here he is confusing an account of an older half-sister of Isabella de Clare, whom Harris has marrying Robert de Quiney, constable of Leinster, sometime after Henry II's departure in 1172.[123]

Something of the early administration of the Leinster lordship is suggested when Fitz Audelin, then justiciar, on the death of Maurice fitz Gerald, 'had the address to prevail upon the sons of Maurice to exchange their peaceable station in the fort of Wicklow for the castle of Ferns, where they were more exposed to the incursions of the natives'.[124] Leland later tells us that 'Public disorders, and the alarm of wars and commotions, served to cast a suspicion of some want of abilities and vigour on the administration of de Lacy.' It is here that we find the first mention of William Marshal in the main body of the text. Leland mistakenly believed that first William le Petit replaced Hugh de Lacy as justiciar but he was soon succeeded by William, earl Marshal of England.[125] William le Petit was co-justiciar with Peter Pipard between 1192 and 1194 so it is probably sometime after that he thinks Marshal was made justiciar; that being said, both John de Courcy and Philip Worcester had been justiciars between De Lacy and le Petit, so Leland's chronology is awry. Leland follows this with the standard 'this nobleman had married Isabella daughter to earl Strongbow, by the princess of Leinster; and of consequence was invested with large possessions in Ireland'; this, Leland credibly suggests, was

> a circumstance which seems to have made him readier to accept his present charge. A nobleman so connected with the country was likely to be received with favour; and dignity of his rank and character promised weight and consequence to his administration.[126]

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[122] Thomas Leland, *The history of Ireland from the invasion of Henry II, with a preliminary discourse on the antient state of Ireland* (3 vols, Dublin, 1773), i, 106.

[123] Harris, *Hibernica*, p. 37.

[124] Leland, *The history of Ireland*, 136–7.

[125] Ibid., 188. Hugh de Lacy the elder was last justiciar (or rather *custodes*) in 1184.

[126] Ibid.

How accepting the first wave of Geraldine adventurers or indeed the already established earls, De Lacy of Meath and De Courcy of Ulster, were of this newcomer is not considered.

Leland follows this with an account of his imagined administration of William Marshal. First he claims that 'Daniel O'Brien, prince of Thomond' (Domnall Mór Ua Briain), as a continuation of his rivalry with the 'O'Connors' (Ua Conchobair) of Connacht, raised a large army and 'declared hostilities against the English borderers'. That resulted in a pitched battle against the Anglo-Normans at Thurles, where 'victory [was] declared in favour of the troops of Thomond'. Although this must be regarded as a major setback, it did not stop 'the English from continuing the war, ravaging the territories of O'Brien, and erecting several forts to keep their enemies in awe, and to secure their own settlements'.[127] They were also able to mount raids deep into the kingdom of Desmond.[128] The subsequent death of Domnall Mór Ua Briain soon 'enabled them in the confusion of the province, and the distractions arising from a contested succession to pierce into the very heart of Thomond'.[129]

This reversal of Ua Briain fortunes caused 'Cathal, the Connaught prince ... informed of the bloody progress of his enemies', to enter Munster 'at the head of a formidable army, which the English were utterly unable to oppose. They retired precipitately at his approach; and Cathal, with all the triumph of a victorious prince, raised their castles to the ground'.[130] There followed a series of English reversals including the loss of Limerick and Cork. This, according to Leland, 'plainly indicated the weakness of a government which could not even defend those maritime towns that King Henry had reserved to himself as of greatest consequence'.[131] What Leland describes as a 'feeble attempt' to reverse these losses 'served only to discover the real superiority of their enemies'.[132] According to Leland, it was only the internecine warfare that followed Domnall Mór Ua Briain's death that allowed the English to again make inroads into Thomond and make repeated attacks on Desmond. The net result,

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[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid., 189.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid., 191.

[132] Ibid.

however, was 'to waste and ravage the country, without any acquisition of real and permanent advantage'.[133]

Following the above account, Leland offers a considered summation of the administration during the timeframe concerned as

> a period of utmost public confusion and distress; when John de Courcy, and Hugh de Lacy, were employed in their respective provinces, independent of the English government, almost all Munster evacuated by the English, and the province of Leinster with difficulty maintained.[134]

Accepting that Leland has confused who was justiciar and when, this might not be a completely inaccurate account of the administration of le Petit and Pipard between 1192 and 1194 and Pipard's solo term as justiciar between 1194 and 1196, but it paints a rather pessimistic picture of the Anglo-Norman colony.

The administration of Hamo de Valognes (Leland calls him De Valois) which followed was little more successful in Leland's eyes, for he, 'who from harassing the ecclesiastics, proceeded to commit depredations on the laity, amassed considerable riches at the expense both of the subjects and the crown, was removed from his government with disgrace, and obliged to pay the King one thousand marks, as a discharge from his accounts'.[135] Meiler fitz Henry, who succeeded Valognes, was, according to Leland, 'one of the most distinguished barons who had originally adventured into Ireland'. Despite his undoubted abilities, he was not properly supported by the king and received little backing from the Anglo-Norman barons and great lords, particularly John de Courcy and Hugh de Lacy, 'two of the most powerful settlers in Ireland', who 'had for some time affected a state of independence'.[136] Because of this, in Leland's view, 'he was confined to the seat of government, without a force for any brave attempt worthy of his valour and abilities.'[137] It is only when De Burgo 'forgot his allegiance to the crown, and made war and peace by his own proper authority, as a sovereign and independent chief', that Fitz Henry was able to show his formidable

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[133] Ibid., 191–2.

[134] Ibid., 192.

[135] Ibid., 199.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid.

ability.[138] Following a series of interconnected conflicts and fluid alliances that embroiled various Ua Conchobair claimants, De Burgo, De Lacy and De Courcy, Fitz Henry was able to enlist the support of the Ua Briain, 'so that an English governor was now, for the first time seen at the head of the native Irish, marching against his own countrymen', and restore some semblance of order.[139]

Despite the detailed account that Leland gives of both administrations, that of Marshal and of Fitz Henry, there is no mention of conflict between them. The only detail concerning this period is that 'in the year 1208, … Meiler, after some interval of absence, was sent to resume his government'.[140] There is a later reference to 'disorders' that had arisen, 'from the liberal grants made by the crown, the claims of the new settlers, and opposition of the old natives'.[141] While this does appear to tally with later accounts describing the origins of conflict between Fitz Henry and Marshal, Leland here seems to be referring to events after John's intervention in Ireland in 1210. In Leland's account the prime motivation behind John's expedition to Ireland is his desire for revenge against William de Braose and 'the necessity of reducing this out-law and his adherents'.[142]

The next reference Leland makes to William Marshal concerns John's difficulties with his rebellious barons in England. Leland explains that Henry de Londres, archbishop of Dublin, had succeeded John Comyn in 1213 and had been appointed justiciar, although 'for the most part administered by his deputy Geoffry Morris, or De Maurisco (Geoffrey de Marisco), an eminent English settler in Munster'.[143] After several conflicts between John and Rome, there had been a reconciliation before 'the famous contest between John and his barons'.[144] It is at this point according to Leland, De Londres was 'admitted to the king's councils, attending the congress of Runigmede, encamped on the king's side with the few lords who

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[138] Ibid., 202–3.

[139] Ibid., 204.

[140] Ibid., 218–19.

[141] Ibid., 228.

[142] Ibid., 220.

[143] Ibid., 230.

[144] Ibid., 231.

appeared to adhere to him'.[145] Marshal was one of these 'few lords'. Leland explains that despite the fact that both the archbishop of Dublin and Marshal, 'a baron of great weight and extensive property in Ireland', were members of the king's council, to their credit, they did not make any requests for concessions for the king's subjects in Ireland when John was in a particularly precarious position.[146]

After the death of John and succession of Henry III, subsequent signing of the Magna Carta on 6 February, Leland states that a duplicate was sent to Ireland

> under the seals of the legate, and William, earl of Pembroke, the protector, for the benefit of the king's the faithful subjects in this kingdom, and with those alterations only which the local necessities of Ireland required.[147]

The reason he gives for the use of Marshal's and the legate Gualon's (Gaula's) seals is, curiously, that the king writes 'as yet, we have no seal'.[148] Leland then describes in glowing terms the part played by Marshal in government in his role as regent for the young Henry III: 'the realm of England was administered with abilities and vigour by William Marishal earl of Pembroke'. With regard to affairs in Ireland, we are told that as 'a nobleman of vast possessions in Ireland', the English in Ireland felt assured of Marshal's support of their interests but were 'at the same time restricted by the authority of his station and character, from all irregularities, of which they were sensible he would be faithfully informed'.[149] Leland's last mention of Marshal relates to the effect of his death: 'The death of the great earl of Pembroke in the year 1219, deprived Ireland of an useful and powerful patron: from this period at least, her disorders seem to have revived'.[150]

As can be seen from the works referred to above, the perception of William Marshal's role in Ireland was not static; it developed over time. This can be attributed to several factors. An obvious reason for discrepancies between the importance attributed to Marshal in Irish and English histories might simply be geographic or linked to early

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[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid., 232.

[147] Ibid., 236.

[148] Ibid., 237.

[149] Ibid., 241.

[150] Ibid., 243.

concepts of national identity. For some Irish historians, Marshal was a peripheral figure who warranted only limited attention. For others, his importance was recognised clearly. What is perhaps most confusing are those writers – Clyn, Borlase, Lynch and O'Flaherty – who for practical purposes almost ignore William Marshal. In the cases of Lynch and O'Flaherty, interest in Marshal is for the most part limited to his family's place in a tenuous line of descent linking the Stuart monarchs to Diarmaid Mac Murchada. These authors, writing in the aftermath of the violent 1640s and 1650s, had their own political motivations for stressing this connection. Almost a century earlier, Campion had recognised the importance of this same line of descent, albeit in relation to the Tudor queen, Elizabeth I. The omission of William Marshal from Clyn's account is perhaps the strangest and must surely be the result of some peculiarities of local Kilkenny patronage. For the earlier commentators, particularly those writing before the eighteenth century, the very limited references to Marshal must in part be down to the available documentary record in Ireland. Going simply on Irish annals and without reference to the works of Hoveden, Wendover or Paris allows for a very restricted interpretation of events. It is probably Hanmer who is most instrumental in bringing a wider perspective on the importance of William Marshal in English history to bear on related events in an Irish context. The writers of the eighteenth century, aware of both Irish sources and Marshal's recognised significance in an English context, begin to acknowledge the part he played in Leinster, albeit differing as to his impact and hindered by confusion regarding who was justiciar and when during the period of Marshal's long involvement in Ireland.

Chapter 2

From kingdom to lordship: the origins of the lordship of Leinster

The lordship of Leinster, as inherited by William Marshal on his marriage to the heiress Isabella de Clare, daughter of Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare, was the linear descendant of the medieval kingdom of Leinster, which had its origins in Irish prehistory. Isabella was a direct descendant of Diarmaid Mac Murchada, the last Uí Chennselaigh king of Leinster. There are several interconnected aims of this chapter: the first is to chart how the kingdom of Leinster developed as a territorial entity and how as a polity it influenced and was influenced by broader trends in medieval Irish politics in the centuries preceding its transformation into a feudal lordship. The second is to explain how the Uí Chennselaigh dynasty came to dominate Leinster for so long, the role they played in the kingdom's development and how they interacted with their contemporary and rival dynasties. The final aim is to identify inherent structural strengths and weaknesses that survived into the feudal lordship and explore how these might present opportunities or indeed problems.

According to the eminent Irish medievalist Francis J. Byrne, 'The years from 1014 to 1169 have been sadly neglected by Irish historians. They were neither a period of sorry decline from a golden age of sanctity and learning, nor a mere anarchic prelude to the Anglo-Norman invasion.'[1] In seeking to understand the development of the medieval lordship of Leinster, it would be easier to accept that it appears, fully formed, as a self-contained entity out of the ether, sometime around 1170 and simply start from there. This study will show that the history of medieval Irish kingdoms and how they developed, the impact of Scandinavian settlements and the power struggles of the Irish royal dynasties all have a direct bearing on the feudal lordships, where they succeeded them.

It is important to briefly note here that there was limited consistency in the form of spelling of Irish names in the period with which this study is concerned. While there is ongoing debate among historians and linguists, the Middle Irish versions used for the genealogical tables in *A new history of Ireland IX* are probably as close to an accepted standard available and will be used throughout.

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[1] F.J. Byrne, *Irish kings and high-kings* (London, 1973; repr. Dublin, 2001), p. 269.

The kingdom of Leinster was a well-defined territorial entity that closely coincided with the ancient *Cóiced Laigan*, the province or 'fifth' of Leinster. Indeed, *Laigan* was considered to be one of the five proto-historical kingdoms of Irish mythology along with *Mumu* (Munster), *Connachta* (Connacht), *Mide* (the middle kingdom, later Meath) and *Ulaid* (Ulster). Of the five, perhaps only Leinster and Connacht survived as more-or-less intact territorial units into the eleventh century. Ulaid was a shadow of its former self, confined to a strip along the north-east coast. Munster would be divided into Desmond and Thomond while Mide was losing its distinct identity as it was encroached on from all sides. At the heart of Leinster were the three river basins, the Liffey, Barrow and Slaney areas, which contributed to its agricultural wealth. It was cut off from Connacht and the midlands by the bogs of Offaly while the hill country of Osraige provided an often-contested buffer between it and Munster. The mountains of Wicklow and the minor upland kingdoms of Tíre Uí Bairrch and Uí Dróna separated the two major dynasties of Leinster the Uí Dúnlainge of the north and the Uí Chennselaigh of the south. Political power in Leinster had for centuries been centred on the Liffey plains in north Kildare, while the ancient hillfort of Dún Ailinne was perhaps the royal capital of the *Cóiced Laigan* of prehistory and folklore.[2] In more recent times, the Viking towns of Dublin and Wexford had opened up the province to trade, wealth and the benefits and risks that this attracted. The eleventh and twelfth centuries would sometimes see this clearly defined territorial integrity threatened when the ruling dynasties of Leinster were in positions of weakness. The Viking town of Dublin had, as a general rule, been independent in the ninth and tenth centuries and Dublin's hinterland was gradually encroaching on the north Leinster kingdoms. Osraige was more often than not considered to fall within the sphere of influence of the Munster kings or was striving for its own independence. Despite its ancient borders remaining recognisably intact at the start eleventh century, there was no guarantee it would not follow the fate of Ulaid or Mide and be subsumed by its neighbours.

While surviving regnal lists of Leinster kings stretch back into the realms of Irish prehistory and indeed mythology, the first specified date associated with a Leinster king is the year 483, which witnessed the death of Crimthann son of Énna Cennsalach,

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[2] Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 130; Susan A. Johnson and Bernard Wailes, *Dún Ailinne: excavations at an Irish royal site, 1968-1975* (Philadelphia, 2007), p. 204.

progenitor of the Uí Chennselaigh dynasty.[3] While the actual existence of these earliest of historical figures is unverifiable, it is by no means unlikely. Regardless of how accurate the royal genealogies of the fifth and sixth centuries are, what is important in the context of this thesis is that the first dateable king of Leinster was of the Uí Chennselaigh dynasty. The antiquity of their dynasty and descent from the earliest of Leinster kings added legitimacy to their claims to the Leinster kingship in the seventh and eighth centuries as well as during an Uí Chennselaigh resurgence in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In order to understand the form taken by the later Anglo-Norman lordship, it is crucial to recognise the role of the Uí Chennselaigh kings in maintaining Leinster's integrity as an independent kingdom and the means by which they rose to this position in the centuries preceding the death of Diarmaid Mac Murchada in 1171. A detailed discussion of the kingdom of Leinster from its early medieval and possibly prehistoric beginnings is problematic as much of its early history is difficult to discern from limited extant sources. It is also true that the further back one goes chronologically there is less and less likelihood of relevance to the period of transition from kingship to lordship, the main concern of this study. It is in a sense arbitrary to choose a date after 483 and before 1171, the first and last of the dateable Leinster kings respectively, as a starting point, yet there is a particular date which would seem to be an appropriate if not an obvious choice. The Irish political system had been evolving rapidly from at the very least the beginning of the eleventh century where the Dál Cais king Brian Bóruma had made the high-kingship more than an empty title and closer to a national kingship.[4] Good Friday 1014 was not only a decisive moment in Ireland's history and in a nascent nationalist mythology, it was also a crucial moment in Leinster's history.

In its relevance to the development of Leinster, the battle of Clontarf is important for several reasons although not for the more commonly held view that it was a spectacular struggle for the liberation of Ireland or even a clash of Irish and Vikings over who would ultimately rule Ireland.[5] The traditional account of the battle, perhaps the most famous episode in medieval Irish history, has become increasingly confused over time while gradually becoming part of the nation's founding myths. Brian Bóruma, of the Dál Cais of Munster and high-king of Ireland, too old and feeble to lead his

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[3] Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 288.

[4] Marie Therese Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition, 1072–1166' in *NHI I*, p. 899.

[5] Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings in Ireland' in Anne-Christine Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), p. 25.

troops in battle, remained behind to pray in his tent. Treacherously slain with prayer book in hand, the great Christian king did not survive to see perhaps his greatest victory over the pagan interlopers. Ireland was liberated from foreign domination and oppression but only through the greatest of sacrifices. At least that is how the popular version of the story goes. There is even a suitable villain in the tale with Sigtryggr the Viking king of Dublin hiding behind his city walls while his erstwhile allies are slaughtered.[6]

Behind the propaganda expertly created for Brian's descendants in the form of *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* (the War of the Irish with the foreigners) lies a revolt in Leinster against the rule of Brian Bóruma's high-kingship, an illegitimate usurpation in the eyes of some.[7] This was not the first Leinster revolt: earlier in 999 Leinster in alliance with the Dublin Vikings had unsuccessfully risen against Brian Bóruma's over-lordship. In a sign of his growing political power, Brian had been given the hostages of Leinster and Dublin by Máel Sechnaill, of the Clann Cholmáin Uí Néill, high-king of Ireland, as part of their agreement to divide Ireland between them.[8] It is unclear what the reasons for the revolt were but perhaps while being nominally subjects to a high-king with the tributes that it demanded was tolerable, the creation of Brian (then still in theory a provincial king) as overlord of Leinster was a step too far for Donnchad the Uí Dúnlainge king of Leinster. It is worth noting that a Leinster–Dublin alliance was responsible for the assassination of Congalach in 956.[9] Congalach was the last of the Síl nÁedo Sláine Uí Néill high-kings and his death was the result of and caused considerable instability within the Uí Néill high-kingship allowing Brian Bóruma further room to expand his influence. In any event, towards the end of 999 the combined forces of Brian Bóruma and Máel Sechnaill marched into the heart of Leinster where they were met by the armies of Donnchad and Sigtryggr Óláfsson Silkiskeggi king of Dublin at Glen Máma somewhere near either Dunlavin in Co. Wicklow or Naas in Co. Kildare. The result was a crushing defeat for Leinster and Dublin. Donnchad was taken prisoner by Brian while Sigtryggr fled initially to Ulster,

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[6] Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland, 400-1200* (Harlow, 1995), p. 266; Darren McGettigan, *The Battle of Clontarf, Good Friday 1014* (Dublin, 2013), p. 97.

[7] Katharine Simms, *Medieval Gaelic sources* (Dublin, 2009), p. 73.

[8] Byrne, *Ir. Kings*, p. 282.

[9] *AU*, 955 (*recte* 956).

and Dublin was sacked and burned.[10] Eventually both Donnchad and Sigtryggr agreed to give hostages to Brian, recognising him as their overlord. One of the major outcomes of this conflict was that it greatly improved Brian's position relative to his main political rival Máel Sechnaill (and erstwhile ally). Brian now had the taxes and fleets of Dublin at his disposal and in theory at least troops from his subject kings.[11] Another outcome, often overlooked, is that it had the effect of destabilising the Uí Dúnlainge dynasty and weakening their hold on the Leinster kingship, indeed Donnchad was himself deposed in 1003.[12]

With the southern half of the country secured and the wealth of Dublin at his disposal, Brian was now in a position to renew his challenge for the high-kingship with his long-time and only really serious rival, Máel Sechnaill. In the year 1000 Brian's forces, now including considerable contingents from Leinster and Dublin, crossed into the kingdom of the southern Uí Néill, Máel Sechnaill's own heartland. In 1001 Máel Sechnaill allied with Cathal Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht, in the hope of thwarting Brian Bóruma's expansionist ambitions. Brian, always willing to make use of the Limerick and Waterford Viking fleets, was able to launch attacks up the Shannon into the centre of his rival's territory. A barrier was even placed across the Shannon at Athlone to prevent Brian's fleets from reaching Lough Ree.[13] In 1002 Máel Sechnaill and Cathal both submitted to Brian and in so doing gave Brian the high-kingship. Brian was by now clearly the most powerful Irish king and was able to turn his attention northward. By 1005 he was able to lead an army with contingents from Connacht, Munster, the midlands and Leinster as well as from the Viking towns into the north where the northern kings submitted. In 1006 Brian embarked on a circuit of the country as a means of proving that the high-kingship was no longer just a hollow title, which it had become under his predecessor. At this time forces under his control may also have begun raiding the coastal settlements in north-western Britain.[14] By 1011 Brian's political pre-eminence was virtually undisputed; he had secured the submission of all the Irish kings with the exception perhaps of a few holdouts in the far north. Although

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[10] *AU*, 998 (*recte* 999); McGettigan, *The Battle of Clontarf*, p. 57.

[11] Ó Corráin, 'Vikings in Ireland', p. 25.

[12] Byrne, *Ir. Kings*, p. 289.

[13] *AU*, 1001: the description is of a causeway.

[14] Seán Duffy, *Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf* (Dublin, 2013), p.148.

perhaps something of an exaggeration, an entry made in the Book of Armagh for 1005 describing Brian Bóruma as *imperator Scottorum* was not without an element of truth.[15]

Returning to the battle of Clontarf in 1014, it is important to note that this was not an isolated incident; rather it was the culmination of a series of events that began two years earlier when Leinster once again rose in revolt under Máelmórda the Uí Dúnlainge king of Leinster, who had replaced the deposed Donnchad. Sigtryggr king of Dublin also joined the revolt. An elderly Brian's position of pre-eminence was starting to be challenged with his influence over the northern Uí Néill already uncertain. Máel Sechnaill of the southern Uí Néill still accepted Brian's authority and it was his forces who initially attempted to put down the revolt but without success. Brian's forces invaded Osraige and Leinster before beginning a siege of Dublin which lasted from September to Christmas 1013 but without success.[16] A series of raids by a Viking fleet, presumably allies of the Dublin Vikings, put pressure on Brian's forces and he withdrew from Dublin for the winter with the intention of resuming the siege the following spring.

The mythology surrounding the battle of Clontarf follows two strands. The *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* depicts a heroic Brian Bóruma fighting to rid Ireland of foreign oppressors in the form of the Dublin Vikings and their Viking allies from Man, the Western Isles and Orkney. Old Norse accounts such as the *Brennu-Njáls saga* also portray events as a struggle between Christian Irish and Pagan Vikings, hence the portentous date of Good Friday. In both cases the battle is portrayed as an epic struggle for Irish sovereignty, complete with omens and portents such as the otherworldly Aoibheall appearing to Brian and prophesising his doom.[17] The second literary strand is that of the role of Gormlaith as instigator of the conflict. The motif of a spurned or jealous woman serving as the catalyst for conflict appears repeatedly in early Irish literature going right back to the *Táin Bó Cuailgne*; indeed there are parallels between Queen Medb's familial connections with Irish kings of the *Táin* and those of Gormlaith and her contemporaries. It is impossible to know if Gormlaith was in any way complicit

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[15] Ó Cróinín, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 291: *Imperator Scotorum* (Emperor of the Irish or Gaels). This was an insertion into a then 200-year-old gospel book by Maél Suthain, Brian's chancellor, and coincided with Brian depositing twenty ounces of gold on the altar of Armagh.

[16] McGettigan, *The Battle of Clontarf*, p. 89.

[17] Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, *Myth, legend and romance: an encyclopaedia of the Irish folk tradition* (London, 1991), p. 56.

in conspiracies to provoke her brother, Máelmórda, and her son Sigtryggr to revolt against Brian's rule. Gormlaith's position must surely have been of some influence, however, as she was currently married to Brian, had once been married to Máel Sechnaill, was the sister of Máelmórda and was the mother of Sigtryggr from an earlier marriage to Amlaímh Cúarán Sigtryggr's father. Sigtryggr was also married to Brian's daughter Sláine making him both stepson and son-in-law.[18]

From the intermarriage between Irish and Viking elites we are left in no doubt that the Viking rulers of Dublin at least had converted to Christianity long before the events of 1014. Sigtryggr's father Amlaímh had died as a penitent in Iona, while one of Sigtryggr's most famous acts was the founding of Christ Church cathedral in *c.*1030.[19] Sigtryggr would eventually die on his second pilgrimage to Rome in 1042.[20] So it seems that the pagan versus Christian element in the *Brennu-Njáls saga* is a later literary flourish. As for the battle itself, it was far more complicated than a clash of Irish against Viking in a heroic attempt to rid Ireland of foreign oppressors. This was never a battle of national liberation, indeed when one considers the combinations of factions fighting on both sides it seems, as Pauline Stafford succinctly puts it, that it was 'in truth between Irish kings, with Vikings only an additional complication'.[21] Brian's forces, one must assume, contained a sizable contingent of Vikings from Limerick and perhaps Waterford while a major element of the opposing forces would have been the Leinster army of Máelmórda.[22] Even discounting the rebellious Leinstermen, Brian's army was no proto-national army, he could only draw support from Munster and Connacht. The northern Irish kings played no part, perhaps too involved in the internecine fighting which bedevilled the Uí Néill dynasties.[23] Máel Sechnaill, who had initially been

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[18] Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Celtic and Anglo-Saxon kingship revisited: Alfred, Æthelred II and Brian Bórama compared' in John Bradley et al. (eds), *Dublin in the medieval world: studies in honour of Howard B. Clarke* (Dublin, 2009), p. 85; Duffy, *Brian Boru*, p. 101: Duffy suggests that the marriage between Brian and Gormlaith ended before 1013.

[19] Charles Doherty, 'The Viking impact on Ireland' in Anne-Christine Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), p. 35. See also Martin Arnold, *The Vikings: culture and conquest* (London, 2006), p. 114.

[20] Arnold, *The Vikings*, p. 114.

[21] Pauline Stafford, 'Kings, kingship and kingdoms' in Wendy Davies (ed.), *From the Vikings to the Normans* (Oxford, 2003), p. 20.

[22] Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 173: Waterford was then considered to be within the kingdom of Munster.

[23] Ibid., p. 127.

involved when the rebellion broke out in 1012, now chose to absent himself and his forces, effectively revoking his allegiance to Brian.

It is now considered likely that Clontarf was part of an internal Irish conflict for the high-kingship or sovereignty over the whole of the country.[24] This is only true in the sense that Brian Bóruma was trying to hold on to a disintegrating empire. The northern kingdoms had ceased to be under his sway, Leinster and Dublin were in revolt and Máel Sechnaill chose the eve of the battle to show just where his allegiance lay. It seems that there is still a tendency to downplay the role of Leinster as a beligerant, while exagerating Dublin's part in events of 1014, perhaps due to the lingering success of *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* and its very effective propaganda. What is most important in regard to this study is the role of Leinster. Máelmórda, king of Leinster, saw an opportunity, in alliance with his nephew, Sigtryggr, to regain independence for the kingdom of Leinster and indeed for the kingdom of Dublin.

The outcome of the battle of Clontarf was something of a Pyrrhic victory. Brian's death ended the Dál Cais's political hegemony and their high-kingship as his surviving sons began fighting among themselves.[25] It seems that it had been largely down to Brian's personal determination and ambition that he had held the kingdom together for so long. Máel Sechnaill was the most obvious beneficiary of the Dál Cais collapse and was able regain the high-kingship but he did not have the resources to make it a political reality as Brian had done. Máel Sechnaill was to be the last of the Clann Cholmáin Uí Néill high-kings of Ireland and after his death in 1022 Clann Cholmáin's power and influence began a steady decline. For the Dublin Vikings, the battle of Clontarf was significant. Although Sigtryggr was able to continue as king of Dublin until his abdication in 1036 it was as a tributary king to Máel Sechnaill. One overlord had been replaced by another.[26] 1014 marked the end to Dublin's ability to act successfully as an independent power while the wealth and political capital that could be gained from controlling Dublin guaranteed that it would continue to be fought over by Irish kings until 1172.

In the context of this study it is the impact on the kingdom of Leinster that is of particular interest. Defeat at Clontarf can only have weakened the Uí Dúnlainge

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[24] Ó Corráin, 'Vikings in Ireland', p. 25.

[25] Duffy, *Brian Boru*, p. 249.

[26] Arnold, *The Vikings*, p. 115.

militarily while the death of Máelmórda, killed in the battle, and of his successor Dúnlaing the same year had a destabilising effect on internal dynastic politics.[27] After the death of Máel Sechnaill in 1022, Brian Bóruma's son Donnchad was able to temporarily reassert his over-lordship of Leinster and Connacht. This renewed Dál Cais expansion was, however, checked by Flaithbertach Ua Néill of Cenél nEógain. Perhaps the most significant consequence for Leinster to arise from Clontarf was the emergence of a powerful Mac Gilla Pátraic dynasty in Osraige. Osraige had been one of the subject kingdoms of Munster although, as was the wont of many of the smaller Irish kingdoms, it made occasional bids for independence.[28] 1013 had seen Brian invade Osraige as part of his attempts to subdue the Leinster and Dublin revolts. This suggests that Osraige was either attempting to simultaneously achieve its own independence or had decided to switch allegiance to Leinster. The disintegration of Dál Cais hegemony as well as instability within Munster after 1014 combined with pressure from the Uí Néill of Cenél nEógain presented an opportunity for an ambitious Donnchad Mac Gilla Pátraic. He was able to assert his independence even to the point of invading Munster.

By 1033 Donnchad Mac Gilla Pátraic was in a position to seize the kingship of Leinster from the Uí Dúnlainge dynasty, ending centuries of their domination of Leinster.[29] The Mac Gilla Pátraic hold on Leinster would be short-lived, however, and Donnchad would lose control of Leinster to Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó of the Uí Chennselaig in 1042.[30] The Uí Dúnlainge had been weakened by a series of defeats over several centuries. Their power base in north Leinster had been gradually eroded by the

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[27] *ALC*, 1014; Duffy, *Brian Boru*, p. 245.

[28] Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 6.

[29] F.J. Byrne, 'The trembling sod: Ireland in 1169' in *NHI II*, p. 24.

[30] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 899; for an explanation of the name Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó, see Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911–20, repr. Oxford, 1968), i, 37: Orpen suggests *Máel na mBó* means 'chief of the kine' and that *Máel* could also refer to baldness or a tonsure. *Máel* in the form *Maol* is more commonly 'chief': see John O'Donovan, *Supplement to O'Reilly's Irish English dictionary* (Dublin, 1864), p. 675; Donnchadh Ó Corráin and Fidelma Maguire, *Irish names* (Dublin, 1990), p. 129: *Máel* can often be 'servant' or 'devotee': Niall Ó Dónaill, *Foclóir Gaeilge–Béarla* (Dublin, 1977), p. 117; Alex MacBain, *An etymological dictionary of the Gaelic language* (Stirling, 1911), p. 41: it is more likely that *na mBó* translates as 'of the cattle', which would give the plausible moniker 'chief/servant (follower?) of the cattle'.

Dublin Vikings since the ninth century and later from Clann Cholmáin.[31] They had suffered defeat at the hands Brian Bóruma in 1014 and more recently Donnchad Mac Gilla Pátraic had usurped their over-lordship of Leinster, clearing the way for an Uí Chennselaig revival.[32] The Uí Chennselaig dynasty was based in south Leinster in Carlow and Wexford and had to some extent been isolated from such external predations.

Very few Leinster kings had ever been able to succeed in overcoming a seemingly perpetual subordinate status in Irish politics.[33] The extent of the revival of Leinster's fortunes and those of the Uí Chennselaig dynasty under Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó needs to be recognised. Not only did he reassert Uí Chennselaig supremacy over the north Leinster dynasties but he would eventually dominate the politics of the southern half of Ireland. Throughout the 1040s Diarmaid was regularly supported by the Dublin Vikings in his various campaigns. The inhabitants of the smaller Viking town of Wexford had long since come under the control of the Uí Chennselaig, indeed there is no mention of rulers or kings of Wexford in the Irish annals.[34] In 1037 Diarmaid had taken advantage of a weakened Munster to take control of the town of Waterford, effectively annexing Waterford to Leinster and setting a lasting historic precedent.[35] With control and influence over the Viking or Ostmen towns (from this period onwards 'Ostmen' might well be more accurate a term) came trade and associated wealth, which undoubtedly gave Diarmaid a substantial economic base on which to build his political and military success.[36] Diarmaid's contacts across the Irish see must have been

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[31] Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 130. Also Byrne, 'The trembling sod', p. 21; John Bradley, 'Some reflections on the problems of Scandinavian settlement in the hinterland of Dublin' in Bradley et al. (eds), *Dublin in the medieval world* (Dublin, 2009), pp 49–50.

[32] Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 163.

[33] Edel Bhreathnach, 'Perceptions of kingship in early medieval Irish vernacular literature' in Linda Doran and James Lyttleton (eds), *Lordship in medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 2007), p. 42.

[34] Byrne, 'The trembling sod' in *NHI II*, p. 21.

[35] Patrick F. Wallace, 'The archaeology of Ireland's Viking-Age towns' in *NHI I*, p. 840.

[36] Byrne, 'The trembling sod', p. 21; see also Michael Kenny, 'Coins and coinage in pre-Norman Ireland'in *NHI I*, p. 848. Kenny notes that there is no concentration of coin hoards in the Uí Chennselaig home territories for the period when Dublin was under Diarmaid's or Murchad's control. He suggests that this is evidence that Diarmaid's interests were more political than monetary. See also Byrne, 'Ireland and her neighbours, *c*.1014–*c*.1072' in *NHI I*, p. 890. Byrne suggests that Leinster's wealth may have been

significant, for the Welsh annals record him entertaining Bishop Sulien of St David's.[37] It is probably in this period too that connections between Leinster and Bristol were established through long-standing trade links between Wexford, Dublin and Bristol. It is clear that these contacts extended beyond Wales, for in 1051 he received the exiled sons of Earl Godwin of Wessex while in 1066 he gave refuge to the sons of the late King Harold Godwinson. There is also an intriguing reference to *Francaig fognama* 'Franks in service' in an eleventh-century verse, probably from about 1060, which suggests the presence of Frankish or Norman mercenaries in his employ a full century before his great grandson Diarmaid Mac Murchada would contemplate the same.[38]

Diarmaid's main rival in southern Ireland was Brian Bóruma's son Donnchad. Having subjugated Leinster and Osraige by the late 1040s, Diarmaid, in a fortuitous alliance with Niall mac Eochada, king of Ulaid, began to contend with Donnchad for domination of the midlands.[39] There was historic precedence for a 'greater Leinster' encompassing the midlands although this had last been a reality in the seventh century.[40] In early 1050s Diarmaid successfully attacked both Mide and Dublin.[41] Irish kings had often secured the submission of the Ostmen kings of Dublin, securing tribute, the use of its manpower and, importantly, the use of its fleet. In 1052 Diarmait took this a step further by expelling the Ostman king Echmarchach and usurping the position for his son Murchad.[42]

In 1053 Donnchad's Munster forces advanced on Dublin but were repelled by the combined forces of Dublin and Leinster, now both under Diarmaid's control.[43] This may have been a pre-emptive strike on the part of Donnchad against a Leinster king

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connected to its large oak forests, the timber from which would have been in great demand during a period of increased warship building in the British Isles and Scandinavia.

[37] Byrne, 'The trembling sod', p. 22.

[38] Ibid., p. 23. Wallace, 'Ireland's Viking-age towns', p. 840: Wallace suggests that the close contacts between Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó and the Godwinsons explain how he learned of the importance of directly controlling towns.

[39] Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 'Ireland, 400–800' in *NHI I*, p. 194; see also Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 272.

[40] Bhreathnach, 'Perceptions of kingship', p. 42.

[41] Ibid., p. 44.

[42] Byrne, 'The trembling sod' in *NHI II*, p. 22: Echmarcach fled first to the Isle of Man then to Galloway before eventually going on pilgrimage to Rome. See also Byrne, 'Ireland and her neighbours' in *NHI II*, pp 879, 892.

[43] *ATig.*, 1053.

steadily growing in power. In November 1061 Diarmaid invaded Munster causing much devastation by burning houses and granaries. This seems to have had the effect of at least temporarily winning Donnchad's submission.[44] Diarmaid also began supporting Toirrdalbach Ua Briain, Donnchad's nephew, and his claims to the Munster kingship. It is unclear whether or not this was because Donnchad's submission was not genuine or perhaps because Diarmaid felt someone more manageable on the Munster throne would be more beneficial.[45] Toirrdalbach had been fostered by Diarmaid as a child so this probably made him seem an ideal choice for a 'puppet' Munster king. After a succession of conflicts between Donnchad and Toirrdelbach supported by Diarmaid, Diarmaid and Toirrdelbach invaded Munster in 1063 before finally deposing Donnchad in 1064.[46] Diarmaid was now the most powerful of the provincial kings, arguably the first of the 'high-kings with opposition'.[47] At the time of his death in 1072 (he was killed in battle against Conchobar Ua Máel Sachlainn king of Mide), Leinster was clearly the most powerful kingdom in Ireland.[48] Diarmaid's campaigns had effectively annexed the kingdom of Osraige as well as the Ostmen towns of Dublin and Waterford (Wexford was already under the control of the Uí Chennselaig). Much of the north midlands were also under his sway and Munster had been reduced to a client kingdom. Diarmaid had also expanded Leinster's influence further afield, for with the usurpation of the Dublin throne for his son Murchad came claims to the Isle of Man. In 1061 Murchad invaded the Isle of Man to extract a *cáin* or tribute.[49] This does not seem to have caused any conflict with Thorfinn the Mighty, jarl of Orkney and nephew of Malcolm II of Scotland, who would also have had a claim to the Isle of Man.[50] This might suggest that Diarmaid's reputation across the Irish Sea was considered to be

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[44] Donnchad Ó Corráin, 'Ireland, *c*.800: aspects of society' in *NHI I*, p. 563.

[45] Bhreathnach, 'Perceptions of kingship', p. 44: Toirrdelbach seems to have been one of the first recorded with the Ua Briain/O'Brien surname (descendant of Brian). It should also be noted that the phrases 'gaining/winning the throne etc.' to denote becoming king is probably anachronistic as the concept of royal thrones is not embraced by the Irish until the fourteenth century: see Freya Verstraten, 'Images of Gaelic lordship in Ireland, *c*.1200–*c*.1400' in Doran and Lyttleton (eds), *Lordship in medieval Ireland*, p. 51.

[46] *ATig*., 1063–4.

[47] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 37.

[48] Bhreathnach, 'Perceptions of kingship', p. 44.

[49] *ATig*., 1061; Byrne, 'Ireland and her neighbours', p. 879.

[50] Byrne, 'Ireland and her neighbours', p. 897.

formidable enough to avoid confrontation. The record in Welsh annals of the foundering of an Irish fleet in 1052 off the coast of Deheubarth might have a connection with Irish annals describing Diarmaid as 'king of Wales and the Isles and Dublin and the southern half of Ireland'.[51] In the context of later developments in Leinster, it is important to note that Diarmaid shifted the centre of power away from the plains of the Liffey in north Leinster south to the Barrow and the Slaney.[52] It is apparent that the role played in shaping the kingdom of Leinster in the eleventh century by Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó was to have lasting implications. It seems appropriate to allow the words of Francis J. Byrne to succinctly sum up Diarmaid's legacy:

> For thirty years until his death in battle against Conchobar Ua Máelshechlainn king of Mide in 1072, Diarmaid mac Maíl-na-mBó firmly established the dominance of that dynasty and taught his descendants the dangerous lesson that the high-kingship of all Ireland might not even yet be beyond the grasp of a king of Leinster.[53]

The death of Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó on the plains of north Dublin in battle against Conchobar Ua Máelshechlainn would have a profound effect on the kingdom of Leinster and on the fortunes of the Uí Chennselaig dynasty. The fact that Murchad had pre-deceased his father by two years was to be a cause of internal instability while a resurgent Dál Cais of Munster under Diarmaid's foster son and protégé Toirrdalbach Ua Briain would see a dramatic change in the political dynamics of southern Ireland.

In order to understand the disruption and discontinuity caused by the premature death of an heir-designate or *tánaise ríg* such as Murchad, the model of kingship in the eleventh century warrants some explanation. In a system of kingship first examined by MacNeill, eligibility was open to a broad grouping within the ruling sept or *fine*. The right to kingship was reserved for the *derfhine*, a patrilineal grouping descended from a common great grandfather, so it could include uncles, cousins, brothers and sons. This too was based on classical law texts but importantly laws relating to the inheritance of property and not specifically kingship.[54] All *derfhine* could be considered *rigdamai* or

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[51] Bhreathnach, 'Perceptions of kingship', p. 44; Byrne, 'Ireland and her neighbours', p. 890.

[52] Byrne, 'Ireland and her neighbours', p. 884.

[53] Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 163.

[54] Flanagan, *Irish society*, p. 82.

'king material' in the case of a succession dispute.[55] In theory, any able-bodied member of the *derfhine* could gain the kingship. Just how close this model was represented in the reality of eleventh-century Ireland is debatable and varies between dynasties. For some such as the Uí Dúnlainge dynasty of north Leinster this clearly did not work in relation to their provincial kings of Leinster, where a series of inter-related families alternately held the kingship up to 1033. For other dynasties such as the Uí Chennselaig, kingship was increasingly becoming the exclusive preserve of individual families that can only have been helped by a cavalier attitude towards illegitimacy and indeed marriage, which often insured an abundance of male heirs.[56] It should be mentioned that this is only what the surviving regnal lists for Leinster suggest. It has also been suggested that the king would have been elected by the *derfhine* but in practice there was generally an established heir apparent or *tánaise ríg*.[57] It also seems that the *tánaise ríg* was most likely to be the eldest son and this practice was at least superficially similar to the primogeniture practised in the feudal societies.[58] This is clearly not the case where primogenitive succession would favour a minor; there seems to be no evidence for child kings and in those circumstances adult uncles, cousins or more distant relatives might all contend. The fact that there was almost always an abundance of male heirs also meant that there was no mechanism for women to gain the throne, as it were. There seems to have been no instances of women inheriting kingdoms and acting as independent rulers in pre-Anglo-Norman Ireland.[59] This ruled out the merging of kingdoms through marriage, a common enough occurrence in much of medieval Europe, although it did not stop aristocratic marriages as a means of consolidating political alliances.[60] When an established *tánaise ríg* such as Murchad died, the concept of *derfhine* as *rigdamai* could allow for multiple claimants to emerge. Backing a rival claimant to your enemy was a common tactic in medieval Ireland, just as Diarmaid had backed Toirrdalbach Ua Briain against his uncle Donnchad. This does offer some explanation for internecine violence and factional fighting which was endemic within Irish royal houses right into the later medieval period, with multiple

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[55] Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 35.

[56] Kenneth Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 1972), p. 11.

[57] Flanagan, *Irish society*, p. 82.

[58] Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland*, p. 70.

[59] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 95.

[60] Ibid., p. 93.

claimants often emerging from within the extended family. It might well be that the reality of kingship and royal inheritance was fluid, differing in different royal houses, some holding on to older traditions while others opted for political expediency. Orpen's comment that Irish kings 'appear usually to have had to fight their way to the throne, battle-axe in hand' does seem to contain an element of truth.[61]

It is also worth considering that the multiplicity of potential heirs and therefore the near impossibility of wiping out entire dynasties, combined with the impossibility of kingdoms being united through marriage, had in effect ensured the survival of many small subordinate kingdoms.[62] This could also be connected to the fact that for the most part, royal wealth was not calculated in land, but rather in tribute paid by subordinate kings and lords. Conquering land in itself would not bring in more wealth.[63] Even vanquished clans might not be removed entirely, rather a suitably pliable *rigdama* could be imposed to ensure tribute was paid. It is also possible that this practice was necessitated by under-population, which seemed to have been a problem in the twelfth century at least.[64] In the eleventh and twelfth centuries it became common to partition defeated kingdoms but even still it is more often than not members of the original ruling dynasty who are awarded these new divisions. It is also possible to consider subject kingdoms and their kings as having a similar role as feudal lordships and tenancies and to a certain extent this does seem to be true. Where a feudal lord might supply knights or men at arms, minor kings were expected to lead their soldiers into battle at the behest of their overlords. There are numerous references to battles in which several kings are given as casualties; much like a list of nobles killed that might be attached to a contemporaneous continental battle.[65] However, unlike the feudal system where lords owed their position to their king or overlords bound by a personal oath of loyalty, Irish kings, no matter how minor their real standing, held their position simply because their sept or *fine* had always provided kings for defined territories.[66] Their loyalty might only be guaranteed through the holding of hostages and the threat of force. This would merely add to the complicated political struggles that were such a feature of medieval

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[61] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 50.

[62] Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 273.

[63] Katharine Simms, 'Warfare in the medieval Gaelic lordships' in *The Irish Sword*, xii (1975), p. 99.

[64] Giraldus, *Topographia*, p. 102.

[65] *AU*, 1171.

[66] Maurice Keen, *The Penguin history of medieval Europe* (London, 1991), p. 53.

Ireland, as even the most powerful of provincial kings could not entirely rely on their subordinates to remain loyal.

Diarmaid's death in 1072 would see a dramatic revival of Dál Cais fortunes and an eclipsing of Leinster by Munster as the most dominant power in southern Ireland. Toirrdalbach Ua Briain, it would seem, learned valuable lessons from his foster father and began to dominate southern Ireland after Diarmaid's death. Toirrdalbach, now out from under the shadow of his foster father, was free to attempt to emulate the over-lordship of his grandfather Brian Bóruma. The killing in 1073 of Conchobar Ua Máelshechlainn king of Mide removed a potential rival in southern Ireland. Toirrdalbach had Conchobar's remains removed from Clonmacnoise and displayed his head at Kincora, perhaps to emphasise his own desire for the high-kingship or as an act of revenge for the death of his foster father.[67] The killing of Conchobar precipitated a collapse of southern Uí Néill influence, creating a destabilising power vacuum in the midlands.[68] Toirrdalbach was also able to exploit the dissension within the Uí Chennselaig dynasty and was able to dominate Leinster, Osraige and Dublin, with all acknowledging his over-lordship.[69] The death of Murchad Uí Chennselaig in 1070 had allowed an Ostman dynast Gofraid to regain the Dublin throne but this was short lived as Gofraid was expelled in 1074 and replaced by Muirchertach, Toirrdalbach's son, much as Diarmaid had done with Murchad. Murchad's son Domnall was dead by 1075 and was succeeded by Donnchad Mac Domnall Remari, a nephew of Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó. In the years after Diarmaid's death Leinster was becoming increasingly sidelined by its provincial neighbours. Osraige and Dublin were now client kingdoms of Munster while the north midlands were being fought over by newly emerging powers, the Ua Ruairc of Bréifne and the Ua Conchobair of Connacht. It also seems probable that Domnall had been deposed as king of Leinster by Muirchertach and that the Uí Chennselaig kings were temporarily reduced to just kings of the original Uí Chennselaig territory, although perhaps still controlling Wexford.[70] Muirchertach's half-brother Diarmait took control of Waterford in 1093.[71]

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[67] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 900.

[68] Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 268.

[69] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 900.

[70] Flanagan, *Irish society*, p. 62.

[71] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 907.

As Leinster's influence waned, we see fewer references to events there in the Irish annals. This is compounded by regional bias in the annals, none of which, at least those that survive, was composed in Leinster. Sometimes what are now regarded as crucially important events failed to register with those compiling regional annals; as an example, the record of Diarmaid Mac Murchada's return from exile in 1167 is found in the Annals of Inisfallen and nowhere else.[72] Between 1072 and his death in 1086, Toirrdalbach Ua Briain was arguably the most powerful of the Irish provincial kings. Leinster does play a role in events of this period but only an ancillary one. Toirrdalbach was powerful enough to resist advances into the north midlands by Donnchad Ua Ruairc of Bréifne although he was unable to stop Áed mac Airt Uí Ruairc temporarily seizing the provincial kingship of Connacht from the Ua Conchobair.[73] The northern kingdom of Cenél nEógain was beset by regnal instability for much of the eleventh century so could not consistently resist his claims of overlordship.[74] King Donn Sléibe of Ulaid was also growing more powerful but he too was forced on several occasions to submit to Toirrdalbach, even visiting Kincora to make his submission in 1078.[75] There also appears to be little resistance to his overlordship of Leinster, at least nothing comparable to events in 1014. Despite these external projections of power and an ability to seemingly invade Connacht at will, Toirrdalbach did face competition from within his own dynasty from Cennétig and Conchobair Ua Briain who found ready support from Donnchad Ua Ruairc. There is also the possibility that a reference to Donnchad mac Carthaig Uí Chellacháin as 'king of Cashel of the kings' suggests Eóganacht resistance to his rule.[76] Although recognised as 'king of Ireland' on his death, his power and influence failed to match that of his illustrious grandfather.[77]

On Toirrdalbach's death in 1086 a succession dispute between his three sons developed. The youngest, Tadg, died very shortly after his father, and Muirchertach, the eldest son, succeeded in banishing his half-brother Diarmait and becoming king of Munster. It seems likely that as Muirchertach had been installed as ruler of Dublin he was considered to be the *tánaise ríg*, much as Murchad son of Diarmaid mac Máel na

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[72] Ó Cróinín, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 286.

[73] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 900.

[74] Ibid., p. 902.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] *AU*, 1086.

mBó had been.[78] The banished Diarmaid sought refuge in Leinster and it might well be no coincidence that the following year Leinster rebelled against Muirchertach's overlordship. Donnchad mac Domnaill Remair, king of Leinster, was nothing if not persistent in his opposition to Muirchertach, who felt it necessary to mount campaigns into Leinster in 1087, 1088 and 1089. Donnchad even managed to regain control of Dublin for a time. Following Donnchad's death in 1089 his successor Énna, a son of Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó, continued to resist Muirchertach, for again in 1091 and 1092 Muirchertach invaded Leinster.[79] Énna's reign lasted only three years and he was succeeded in 1092 by his son Diarmaid who finally submitted to Muirchertach. Muirchertach Ua Briain spent the first ten years of his reign putting down successive revolts against his overlordship before successfully re-imposing his authority on Leinster and finally expelling Gofraid Méránach from Dublin in 1094.[80] Despite these successes in his bid to re-establish his great-grandfather's high-kingship, the emergence of Domnall Mac Lochlainn, king of Cenél nEógain, marked the first serious Uí Néill contender to emerge since Máel Sechnaill of Clann Cholmáin.[81]

Throughout most of his reign Muirchertach Ua Briain was competing with Domnall Mac Lochlainn for pre-eminence in Irish politics. Initially Domnall had the upper hand, mounting a campaign deep into Munster and attacking Kincora. Muirchertach was forced to submit to Domnall in 1090, as would Ruaidrí na Saide Buide Ua Conchobair of Connacht and Domnall mac Flainn Ua Máel Sechnaill of Mide.[82] Muirchertach, gradually increasing in power, was able to mount successive campaigns into Connacht, even going as far as to impose his own puppet kings, first Gilla na Nóeb Ua hEidin, a minor sub-king, in 1093 then Domnall Ua Ruairc in 1098. In 1106 Muirchertach intervened in Connacht, yet again, to support Toirrdelbach mac Ruaidrí na Saide Buide Ua Conchobair. Despite having suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the combined forces of Domnall Mac Lochlainn and Domnall mac Flainn Ua

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[78] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 907.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Byrne, 'Ireland and her neighbours', p. 864: Gofraid Méránach or Godred Crovan, king of Man, held Dublin between 1090 and 1094; Ó Corráin, 'Vikings in Ireland', p. 26: Gofraid was first ruler of Dublin between 1072 and 1075; the Annals of Tigernach give 1091 as the date for Gofraid gaining control of Dublin: *ATig.*, 1091.

[81] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 907.

[82] Ibid., p. 908.

Máel Sechnaill, king of Mide, in 1094, Muirchertach had soon regained lost ground. He deposed Domnall mac Flainn Ua Máel Sechnaill and effectively partitioned Mide between two rival Ua Máel Sechnaill dynasts, further weakening an already declining Clann Cholmáin. Muirchertach was now in a position to dominate Connacht, Leinster, Dublin and much of the midlands.[83]

Against Domnall Mac Lochlainn, however, Muirchertach was far less successful and in him found an implacable opponent. On at least ten occasions between 1097 and 1113, practically once a year, Muirchertach launched campaigns into the north and each time Domnall Mac Lochlainn could not be forced to submit.[84] In 1101 Muirchertach faced a new threat when a Norwegian fleet began raiding in the north-east of Ireland (Ulaid was often allied with Muirchertach). After initial hostility, Muirchertach and Magnus Barelegs, king of Norway, concluded a treaty in 1102, betrothing a daughter and son respectively, possibly with the intention of enlisting his help against Domnall Mac Lochlainn. In 1103 Muirchertach invaded the north with a combined force from Munster, Leinster, Osraige, Dublin, Connacht and Mide. Even after besieging Armagh for two weeks, Muirchertach could not draw Domnall Mac Lochlainn into battle. Muirchertach then divided his forces, even sending some home. This gave Domnall Mac Lochlainn the opportunity to attack and he inflicted a crushing defeat on Muirchertach. Shortly afterwards Magnus Barelegs was killed by the Ulaid. It seems likely that Magnus had been there at the behest of Muirchertach, possibly with the intention of combining their forces. Donnchad mac Donn Sléibe, king of Ulaid, had been allied with Muirchertach but seems likely to have changed sides on hearing of Domnall Mac Lochlainn's recent victory.[85] There can also have been little love lost between Donnchad mac Donn Sléibe and Magnus as it was Ulaid that had received the brunt of the Norwegian king's raiding in 1101. While Muirchertach was concluding his treaty with Magnus he was also involved in forming another foreign alliance, this time with the great marcher lord Arnulf de Montgomery, sealing the alliance by granting Arnulf his daughter Lafracoth in marriage. Arnulf subsequently rebelled against Henry I of England. When the rebellion failed Arnulf sought refuge with Muirchertach in

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[83] Ibid., p. 907.

[84] Ó Cróinín, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 279: Ó Cróinín gives the years as 1097, 1099, 1100, 1101, 1102, 1103, 1104, 1107, 1109 and 1103.

[85] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 910.

1102.[86] This was perhaps the first time the Normans/Anglo-Normans took an interest in Irish affairs. Henry I, in retaliation for harbouring a rebel, imposed a trade embargo on Ireland which was lifted only on the intercession of Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury.[87]

In 1114 Muirchertach fell seriously ill with some form of debilitating or paralysing illness, possibly a stroke. This not only marked an end to his attempts to dominate the north but also saw Leinster, Connacht, Dublin and Mide all reject his over-lordship by the time of his death in 1119. His brother, Diarmaid, attempted to remove him in 1118 but failed, pre-deceasing him the same year. It would in fact be Toirrdalbach Ua Conchobair, whom Muirchertach had helped install as king of Connacht, who would overthrow Muirchertach. Toirrdalbach invaded Munster in 1118 with forces from Connacht, Bréifne and Mide. In what was becoming a regular stratagem of dynastic politics, Toirrdalbach partitioned Munster, Thomond was divided between Conchobair and Toirrdalbach Ua Briain, sons of Diarmaid Ua Briain rather than Muirchertach, while Desmond was granted to Tadg Mac Carthaig, a descendant of the Eóganacht, pre-Dál Cais, kings of Munster.[88] Toirrdalbach soon expelled Muirchertach's son Domnall Ua Briain from Dublin, taking the city for himself, and in 1119 secured the submissions of Énna Mac Murchada Uí Chennselaigh, king of Leinster, and Mac Gilla Pátraic, king of Osraige.

In 1118 Toirrdalbach had resurrected the ancient festival of Óenach Tailten at Tara. This had always been associated with the Uí Néill high-kings and may have been a calculated sleight aimed at Domnall Mac Lochlainn. It would also have clearly shown just where Toirrdalbach's ambitions lay.[89] Having displaced Muirchertach Ua Briain as the pre-eminent king in the south of Ireland, Toirrdalbach was intent on emulating Muirchertach's attempts to extend his influence northwards. In 1120 Domnall Mac Lochlainn responded to Toirrdalbach's challenge and moved his forces south into Mide. It seems that Toirrdalbach miscalculated and was eventually forced to come to terms with Domnall. If Domnall had any ambitions to permanently extend his influence south it was not to be, as he died in 1121. This left Toirrdalbach free to turn his attention back to Munster where Cormac Mac Carthaig was now the leading power. Toirrdalbach was

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[86] *AFM*, 1102.

[87] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 911.

[88] Ibid., p. 917.

[89] Ibid.

never able to permanently secure his hold over Munster and was forced to mount a whole series of campaigns, perhaps as many as ten, into Munster between 1119 and 1132, never with lasting success.[90] In 1124 Cormac Mac Cartaigh of Munster led Énna Mac Murchada, king of Leinster, Murchad Ua Máel Sechnaill of Mide and Tigernán Ua Ruairc, king of Bréifne, in revolt against Toirrdalbach. The combined army was, however, prevented from crossing into Connacht by Toirrdalbach's forces. Toirrdalbach's retaliation was swift, killing Cormac's son who had previously been given as a hostage.[91] The following year Toirrdalbach attacked Mide and deposed Murchad Ua Máel Sechnaill and divided the kingdom into four, one part going to Tigernán Ua Ruairc, now an ally, while the remaining three parts all went to Ua Máel Sechnaill dynasts.[92]

In 1126 Énna Mac Murchada died, while his brother (perhaps as young as sixteen) succeeded as king of the Uí Chennselaig.[93] Toirrdalbach used this as an opportunity to invade Leinster and install his own son Conchobair as king of Leinster and Dublin. This was not to last and the following year Conchobair was deposed by the men of Leinster. Toirrdalbach then forced another nominee, this time a north Leinster king, Domnall mac Cerbaill Mac Fáeláin of the Uí Dúnlainge dynasty, rather than the Uí Chennselaigh claimant. This was followed by a campaign into Leinster by Toirrdalbach and Tigernán Ua Ruairc, the latter's actions being particularly resented. In 1133 Cormac Mac Cartaigh again organised an alliance against Toirrdalbach. This combined force from Munster, Leinster, Bréifne, Mide and the Ostmen towns forced Toirrdalbach to sue for peace. That Leinster forces were involved suggests that Domnall mac Cerbaill Mac Fáeláin had probably already been deposed by Diarmaid Mac Murchada. Diarmaid was clearly in charge of Leinster by 1134 for he was defeated by the forces of Mac Gilla Pátraic of Osraige that year. Diarmaid, never one to let a defeat hinder his plans, attacked Osraige again the same year, this time aided by the Ostmen of Dublin. Mac Gilla Pátraic was aided by Conchobair Ua Briain and the Ostmen of Waterford but Diarmaid was victorious.[94] The campaign into Osraige suggests that Diarmaid was trying to reassert Leinster claims over that kingdom while

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[90] Ibid., p. 917.

[91] Ibid., p. 918.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Nicholas Furlong, *Dermot, king of Leinster, and the foreigners* (Tralee, 1973), p. 29.

[94] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 47.

the involvement of the Waterford Ostmen indicates that they had returned to the Munster fold. In 1137 Diarmaid, now allied with Conchobair Ua Briain and the Ostmen of Dublin and Wexford, laid siege to Waterford and received the submission of that city and of Donnchad Mac Cartaigh. Conchobair probably wanted recognition as overlord of Desmond at the expense of his Mac Carthaig rivals for his involvement. Diarmaid's ambitions it would seem were not limited to Leinster and he was seeking not only to regain control of Waterford but also to extend his influence into Munster.[95] Diarmaid's interests did not lie in Munster alone, for in 1138 he was allied to Murchad mac Domnaill Ua Máel Sechlainn, king of Mide, and came to his assistance against Toirrdalbach Ua Conchobair, Tigernán Ua Ruairc and Donchad Uí Cerbaill although the opposing armies never engaged in battle. Despite a series of successes, Diarmaid still felt threatened by the Uí Dúnlainge kings of north Leinster. This perceived threat was dealt with in a most ruthless fashion when, according to the Annals of Tigernach, seventeen of the Uí Dúnlainge princes were killed in 1141. This was attributed to Diarmaid's brother Murchad, but it is unlikely that it went ahead without Diarmaid's tacit approval, at the least.[96]

By the end of the 1130s Toirrdalbach Ua Conchobair had been regaining lost ground but attempts to take advantage of the conflict between the Ua Briain and the Mac Cartaigh by invading Munster in 1143 achieved little.[97] Toirrdalbach was again campaigning in Munster in 1145 and in 1146 against Toirrdalbach Ua Briain. In 1149 Toirrdalbach Ua Briain was in a position to invade Connacht and succeeded in destroying a fortress at Galway. The reality was that Toirrdalbach was faced with too many threats on too many sides to have his hopes of securing the high-kingship become reality.[98] The Annals of the Four Masters sum up the year 1144 with the memorably grim description 'great war this year, so that Ireland was a trembling sod'.[99] This could in fact describe any year in the 1140s or 1150s or 1160s. The conflict that was to develop in the 1150s between Toirrdalbach Ua Conchobair and Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn would be as destructive as those of the 1140s and perhaps more so for Leinster in particular.

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[95] Ibid., p. 48; Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 922.

[96] *ATig.*, 1141; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 50.

[97] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 922.

[98] Ibid.

[99] *AFM*, 1144; Byrne, 'The trembling sod', p. 1.

In 1145 Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn had successfully regained the kingship of Cénel nEógain and rapidly began to establish himself as the dominant force in the north. In 1149 Muirchertach invaded Bréifne and was able to take hostages from Tigernán Ua Ruairc, Toirrdalbach Ua Conchobair's long-time ally. This was followed by the submissions of Murchad Ua Máel Sechnaill of Mide, Diarmaid Mac Murchada of Leinster and the Ostmen of Dublin.[100] Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn came south again in 1150 and this time his forces were joined by those of Donnchad Ua Cerbaill, king of Airgialla, and Tigernán Ua Ruairc. Fearing an imminent invasion of Connacht, Toirrdalbach Ua Conchobair sent hostages to Muirchertach. 1151 would see Muirchertach invade Connacht for the first time, where Toirrdalbach, with his forces seriously depleted from fighting in Munster, was forced to again give hostages, as was Diarmaid Mac Murchada, who had been fighting alongside Toirrdalbach. Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn had in effect successfully challenged Toirrdalbach for the high-kingship.[101] The following year Toirrdalbach and Muirchertach made peace, allowing Toirrdalbach the opportunity to restore Murchad Ua Máel Sechnaill to the western half of Mide. Tigernán Ua Ruairc challenged this partition but was defeated by Toirrdalbach and Diarmaid Mac Murchada. Diarmaid used this opportunity to abduct Tigernán's wife Dervorgilla.

It is perhaps surprising that it was against this background of persistant warfare that long running efforts to reform the Irish Church began to bear fruit. This was largely due to the efforts of Máel Máedóc Ó Morgair, Archbishop of Armagh better known as St Malachy.[102] A series of synods were held, culminating with that of Kells in 1152 convened by Cardinal John Paparo the papal legate. The result of this was a drastic reorganising of diocesan boundaries and the creation of four archdioceses: Tuam, Cashal, Dublin and Armagh with Armagh retaining its primacy.[103] Toirrdalbach Ua Conchobair was perhaps the most obvious beneficiary with the new archdiocese of Tuam being territorial conterminous with the kindom of Connacht, potentially allowing

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[100] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 926.

[101] Ibid., p. 927.

[102] Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 23.

[103] *ATig.*, 1152, Malachy had died the previous year; Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 927.

for a closer alignment of political and religious interests within the kingdom.[104] For Diarmaid Mac Murchada the same benefits applied. The new ecclesiastical province of Leinster was in fact greater than the area that he then controlled but Diarmaid was nothing if not ambitious. These new territorial divisions provided an organizational framework for his expanding kingdom and one that would be maintained by his successors. Diarmaid had been an early supporter of religious reforms and inovation and he was one of the first Irish kings to establish houses for continental orders such as the Augustinians.[105]

The peace between such ambitious kings as Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn and Toirrdalbach Ua Conchobair could not last and in 1154 Toirrdalbach attacked the north with his fleet. Murchertach hired a fleet from the Scottish isles but this was destroyed. Muirchertach was quick to respond, however, and sent his army into Connacht, forcing Toirrdalbach to submit again. Toirrdalbach died in 1156 while in the process of organising an alliance against Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn.[106] When Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair succeeded to the kingdom of Connacht in 1156 his first act was to imprison three of his brothers and blind the eldest.[107] This ruthlessness was a sign of things to come and Ruaidrí quickly obtained the submissions of both Tigernán Ua Ruairc and Toirrdalbach Ua Briain.[108] Diarmaid Mac Murchada submitted to Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn around the same time. In 1159 Ruaidrí made his first challenge to Muirchertach and marched his army into what is now Co. Louth but was heavily defeated. That same year Muirchertach retaliated by invading Connacht but could not force Ruaidrí to engage in battle and, after causing much devastation Muirchertach withdrew without having forced Ruaidrí to submit. In 1161, following a campaign into Bréifne by Muirchertach, Ruaidrí voluntarily made his submission, perhaps fearing yet another invasion of Connacht.

Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn was now high-king without opposition, something that had not been achieved since the time of Brian Bóruma. In 1165 Muirchertach faced

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[104] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 927, the dioceses of Bréifne and Ardagh which would have been traditionally considered to fall within Connacht were attached to the archdioces of Armagh, perhaps reflecting the growing strenght of Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn.

[105] F.X. Martin, 'Diarmait Mac Murchada and the coming of the Anglo-Normans', p. 49.

[106] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 928.

[107] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 59.

[108] Ibid., 61.

a revolt against his over-lordship by Eochad Mac Duinn Sléibe, king of Ulaid. The revolt was quickly and easily crushed and Eochad Mac Duinn Sléibe was deposed. The intervention of the archbishop of Armagh led to Eochad Mac Duinn Sléibe being reinstated but while he was apparently a guest of Muirchertach's, Muirchertach had him blinded. This breach of hospitality was compounded by the fact that it had taken place during an Easter peace.[109] Even in these violent decades this breach of social mores would provide an excuse for a wider revolt against Muirchertach's over-lordship. Ruaidrí, it seems, had been waiting for just such an opportunity and once again challenged Muirchertach. Ruaidrí needed allies to have any chance of success so first took his army into Mide where Murchad Ua Máel Sechnaill submitted to him, as did Tigernán Ua Ruairc. This combined army then received the submission of the Dublin Ostmen and then the Uí Dúnlainge kings of north Leinster deserted Diarmaid and submitted to Ruaidrí. Before Ruaidrí could move his army northward, Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn was killed in a minor skirmish with the forces of Donnchad Ua Cerbaill. This left Diarmaid Mac Murchada dangerously exposed in Leinster and he was left little choice but to hand over hostages and he submitted to Ruaidrí.[110] This submission was of little use, as it turned out, due to long-standing tensions between Diarmaid and Tigernán Ua Ruairc, Ruaidrí's principal ally. Diarmaid Mac Murchada and Tigernán Ua Ruairc's mutual animosity was most likely due to the infamous abduction of Dervorgilla, Tigernán's wife, but equally Tigernán's actions in Leinster in the 1130s might have had a part to play. Giraldus Cambrensis claims it was on Tigernán Ua Ruairc's urging that Ruaidrí moved against Leinster.[111] Whatever their motivations, it was not long before the combined forces of Mide, Bréifne and the Dublin Ostmen attacked Leinster, but the absence of a Connacht army might indicate a recognition that Diarmaid had indeed already submitted to Ruaidrí or perhaps that Ruaidrí was less in control than is often

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[109] *ATig.*, 1166: the chronology of events in 1166 is rather confused. According to the Annals of Tigernach this takes place prior to Muirchertach's death and by this point Diarmaid's Leinster's army had been destroyed as an effective force, although by whom is not clear. For alternative versions, see Orpen, *Normans*, i, 65–70 and Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 932.

[110] Flanagan, 'High-kings with opposition', p. 932.

[111] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 25; Ó Cróinín, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 287: Ó Cróinín suggests that Tigernán Ua Ruairc was blamed by many of his contemporaries for Ireland's woes.

suggested.[112] Although greatly outnumbered, Diarmaid attempted to resist but, with his forces suffering heavy losses, he was unsuccessful.[113]

Giraldus explains that Diarmaid's followers deserted him on seeing he was in an unsalvageable position surrounded by enemies but also because of his past injustices.[114] While the abduction of Dervorgilla might be the most dramatic misdeed it was probably the least important in the eyes of Leinstermen. What would undoubtedly have been remembered was the murder of seventeen Ua Dúnlainge princes in 1141 attributed to Diarmaid's brother, Murchad. This might at least explain the rapid desertion of the north Leinster kings.[115] Also of particular interest is Giraldus's description of Diarmaid: 'from his earliest youth and his first taking on the kingship he oppressed his nobles, and raged against the chief men of his kingdom'.[116] Into these actions it is possible to read an attempt to subvert the power of the subordinate dynasties within his kingdom. As is mentioned above, they were quick to desert when it became apparent just how critical the military situation was. It might be that he was imposing his choices of kings on subordinate dynasties much in the fashion of Ua Conchobair interventions in Mide. Perhaps ironically it was an attempt to emulate his more successful contemporaries or reform the governance of the kingship that contributed to Leinster's weakness.[117] It is probable that due to its proximity to England and Wales, Leinster was not isolated from the spread of continental ideas and therefore attempts to modernise were to be expected. The difficulty faced by Diarmaid was that political reform and a more centralised monarchy might well bring about long-term benefits but in the short term the disruption and hostility this could cause might lead to dangerous instability. With his hold on power evaporating, and seeing his 'his forces melting away on all sides', he must have known that time was running out and that he had little choice but to flee.[118] With Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair as high-king allied to Tigernán Ua Ruairc there was probably little chance of sanctuary anywhere on the island of Ireland. Whether Diarmaid

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[112] Michael Dolley, *Anglo-Norman Ireland* (Dublin, 1972), p. 56.

[113] *ATig.*, 1166: 'Mac Murchada marched against them, and gave them battle; but he was defeated, and many of his people were killed there-in'.

[114] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 27.

[115] *ATig.*, 1141.

[116] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 25.

[117] Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 272.

[118] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 27.

voluntarily fled overseas or was expelled is a moot point; in any case his first refuge was to be Bristol before seeking the English king Henry II somewhere in Normandy or perhaps Aquitaine.[119]

Diarmaid Mac Murchada's choice of Bristol for refuge makes sense when one considers the long-standing trading connections between Bristol, Dublin and Wexford. It is also worth noting that ships from Dublin, then under Diarmaid's control, as well as other Irish towns, had assisted Henry in his Welsh campaigns of 1165, although Orpen stresses that they were provisioned by the Ostmen and not Diarmaid.[120] While this may have put Diarmaid in a favourable position with Henry II, it may well have strained relations with Rhys ap Gruffydd, then in the process of expanding his power in north Wales, making support from Rhys unlikely.[121] Rhys also had the perennial problem of incursions from the Marcher lords to contend with as well as the growing power of Henry II. In *La geste* there is a suggestion that Diarmaid initially, although unsuccessfully, sought aid in the Welsh principalities.[122] The Viking kingdom of Man might have provided another destination and possible source of support. Dublin's cultural ties with Man were of long standing, and it had been involved in its trade and repeatedly intervened in its politics since at least the eleventh century.[123] Gofraid Méránach or Godred Croven, king of Man, had also extended his authority to include Dublin for a period before being expelled by Muirchertach Ua Briain in 1094.[124] This option had probably been ruled out when the Ostmen of Dublin, who had only submitted to Diarmaid's rule in 1162, had rebelled against his rule and joined Tigernán Ua Ruairc in invading Leinster.[125] Relations between Diarmaid and the Dublin Ostmen are unlikely to have ever been the most amiable as they were responsible for the death

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[119] *AU*, 1166: claims Diarmaid was expelled by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair while in Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 27: he fled to save himself. See also Orpen, *Normans*, i, 25; *La geste des Engleis en Yrlande, The deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, ed. Evelyn Mullally (Dublin, 2002), pp 208–11. *La geste* describes a plot to capture him by his former supporters in order to sell him to Tigernán Ua Ruairc.

[120] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 25.

[121] Ibid., p. 60.

[122] *La geste*, 320–3.

[123] Mary Valante, 'Viking kings and Irish fleets during Dublin's Viking Age' in John Bradley et al. (eds), *Dublin in the medieval world*, p. 80.

[124] Arnold, *The Vikings*, p. 145.

[125] *AFM*, 1166; Dolley, *Anglo-Norman Ireland*, p. 49.

of Donchad Mac Murchada, Diarmaid's father, in 1115.[126] It seems unlikely that the Vikings of Man would ally with Leinster against Dublin and events of 1171 do seem to show where their sympathies lay. It is just possible that Godred II Olafsson's intervention ultimately had more to do with fear of Anglo-Norman expansion than it did with sympathies for the Dublin Ostmen.

It seems that destinations for the fleeing Diarmaid were limited and Bristol was the most practical choice. What might have been the deciding factor was that it is likely that Diarmaid was well acquainted with Robert fitz Harding, reeve of Bristol, as Fitz Harding was willing to entertain all of Diarmaid's company.[127] This has to be considered in the context of long-established political connections. The Irish and Ostmen of Leinster had on numerous occasions assisted the Welsh against the Anglo-Normans and intervened in their own internecine warfare.[128] As well as seeking refuge in 1066, during the reign of Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó, King Harold's exiled sons mounted unsuccessful expeditions to regain England in 1068 and again in 1069, presumably with Diarmaid's (mac Máel na mBó) backing.[129] Seeking foreign aid was also nothing new to the Irish scene, as Vikings and later those Scandinavians who had settled on the Western Isles, Orkney and Man were frequently used as mercenaries or allies in Irish wars. As late as 1154 Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn of Cenél nEógain had sought the assistance of the fleets of the Western Isles in his war against Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair.[130]

Having tried and failed to gain direct assistance from Henry II, Diarmaid had, however, been granted by him letters patent that in effect allowed him to seek support from all subjects under his rule, be they English, Norman Welsh or Scottish.[131] On returning to Bristol, and being entertained at Henry's expense, it would seem that Diarmaid was frustrated by a failure to find willing recruits.[132] In *La geste* it is suggested that the English king had promised much more in the way of direct support

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[126] *AU*, 1115.

[127] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 78.

[128] Ibid., 25.

[129] Byrne, 'The trembling sod', p. 22; Flanagan, *Irish society*, p. 59.

[130] *AFM*, 1154.

[131] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 84; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 27.

[132] Ibid., p. 29; *La geste*, 308–15.

than was ultimately forthcoming.[133] Whether Diarmaid travelled widely in England and Wales seeking support or remained in Bristol, it seems he met with little success.[134] This was despite offers of money and lands.[135] It was at this juncture that he first encountered Strongbow, and made his famous offer of his daughter's hand in marriage and the succession to his kingdom in return for restoring him to the kingship of Leinster. Whether Strongbow was an impoverished political outcast or, as some have argued, 'one of the greatest of the Norman lords who enjoyed an independent power in the marches of south Wales', it was an extraordinary offer.[136] The offer was successful and Strongbow agreed to gather a force and come to Ireland in the spring.[137] It seems that Strongbow, in his own position of disfavour with Henry, felt it prudent to seek personal approval before accepting Diarmaid's offer. It is likely that Henry was reluctant to grant such a request and Strongbow was delayed in fulfilling his side of the agreement for some two years. His initial agreement with Diarmaid does, though, seem to have encouraged others to take an interest in Diarmaid's plight.

In his description of Strongbow it is clear that Giraldus was at least half right: 'He was a man set apart by his ancestry, born of noble stock of the Clare family, though indeed up to this time he had a great name rather than great prospects, ancestral prestige rather than proven ability, and had succeeded to a great name rather than possessions'.[138] Richard fitz Gilbert was lord of Orbec and lord of Bienfaite until 1153, earl of Pembroke to 1154, lord of Striguil and after 1171 earl of Striguil and lord of Leinster.[139] It was in fact his father, Gilbert fitz Gilbert de Clare, to whom the original sobriquet of 'Strongbow' applied.[140] Strongbow's motivations fall into two broad areas: his tenuous position in relation Henry II and the prospects for substantial gain in an

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[133] *La geste*, 312–15: 'But the English king of England gave Diarmaid, according to tradition, nothing in truth except promises as people say'.

[134] Giraldu*s*, *Expugnatio*, p. 29 states 'He travelled to the town of Bristol and spent some time there', while *La geste*, 320–6 claims 'King Diarmait, you must know, then goes everywhere seeking help: he goes looking for help all over Wales and England. He asks for help all over that kingdom'.

[135] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 29.

[136] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 41.

[137] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 91.

[138] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 55; in *La geste*, 328–9 the description is far more flattering: 'This was a brave earl, courtly, generous and liberal'.

[139] Flanagan, *Irish society*, p. 317.

[140] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 89.

Irish expedition. In relation to Henry II, to say that he was out of favour is something of an understatement. Strongbow's grievances with Henry II originated in the time of his father, Gilbert fitz Gilbert who, in the dynastic warfare that had beset England, had supported Stephen until 1147.[141] During this period, Stephen had created Gilbert earl of Pembroke.[142] His son Richard (Strongbow) had also supported Stephen against Henry then known as Fitz Empress. On Henry's accession in 1154 he refused to acknowledge the title as it was of Stephen's creation.[143] Earlier in 1153 as duke of Normandy Henry granted Strongbow's principal Norman estates of Orbec and Bienfaite to Robert de Montfort.[144] Likewise in 1164 Henry II refused him the inheritance of Earl Giffard.[145] In Wales he had lost land in Dyved, Ceredigion and Caermarthen to a resurgent Rhys ap Gruffydd.[146] Having lost many of his main estates to the vagaries of royal politics and much of his Welsh territory to Rhys ap Gruffydd, there is even a suggestion he was indebted to money lenders.[147] There is also the possibility that Strongbow's financial problems were greatly exaggerated. In light of this loss of land and title in England and Wales, it is possible that there was a reciprocal arrangement as part of their agreement whereby Diarmaid might help restore Strongbow to the lordship of Pembroke, but this would of course have been dependent upon Diarmaid's regaining Leinster.[148] There is no evidence to suggest or indeed deny that an independent lordship or kingdom was ever something Strongbow was considering. What is important, however, is that this was something that Henry II would have feared and therefore could not let happen.

To return briefly to Arnulf de Montgomery, the son-in-law of Muirchertach Ua Briain, it has been argued that, from the already relatively autonomous position within the marcher lordships, he seems to have been trying to establish something of an independent principality prior to his fall from grace in the rebellion of 1102.[149] This and

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[141] Ibid., p. 29.

[142] Flanagan, *Irish society*, p. 114.

[143] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 89.

[144] Flanagan, *Irish society*, p. 114.

[145] Ibid., p. 115.

[146] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 29.

[147] Flanagan, *Irish society*, p. 116: in this light, Flanagan's hypothesis is plausible that financial gain for Aífe and future children through her inheritance in the event of Strongbow's death might have had an influence on negotiations.

[148] Ibid., p. 127.

[149] Ibid., p. 67.

a history of revolts against English kings needs to be considered. Henry could not afford a rival Anglo-Norman kingdom to be established across the Irish Sea. Given the existing connections between Ireland and the rest of the British Isles, the potential for such a kingdom to begin interfering in the affairs of England, Scotland and particularly Wales, due to its geographic proximity, would be very real. For his part, Strongbow, rather than accepting Diarmaid's letters patent, sought personal permission as a means of dispelling Henry's suspicions. This was essential regardless of just how independent Strongbow saw his future position as being. A successful campaign in Ireland would at least initially depend on supplies and troops from across the Irish Sea, which, as would later prove, could be halted at Henry's whim.[150] It is probable that at the very least Strongbow expected to win a position in Ireland through force of arms, much as his forefathers had done in Wales.[151]

Having accepted Strongbow's conditional undertaking, Diarmaid decided not to wait, presumably because regaining Leinster became less likely the longer he stayed away. It is also possible that, being kept informed of the political situation in Ireland through ships arriving from home, he saw some opportunity.[152] On his return journey, Diarmaid travelled first to St David's where he meet with Rhys ap Gruffydd where he appears to have convinced him to release Robert fitz Stephen on condition that he join Diarmaid's cause.[153] Fitz Stephen seems to have been close to the point of switching allegiance from Henry II to Rhys ap Gruffydd before extracting himself from this difficult situation by departing for Leinster.[154] It was to be one Richard fitz Godibert that joined Diarmaid directly on his return to Ireland along with 'knights, archers and men at arms'.[155] A curious reference to the slaying of the son of the king of Britain in 1167, 'who had come across the sea in the army of Mac Murchada', suggests that a son of Rhys ap Gruffydd had also joined him.[156] When in 1167 Diarmaid Mac Murchada

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[150] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 71 states that in 1170 'the English king put an edict to the effect that in future no ship should presume to carry anything to Ireland from any of the lands subject to his rule'. This apparently had the effect of putting Strongbow and his followers in 'a difficult situation, and in dire straits from loss of their men and want of necessary provisions'.

[151] Orpen, *Normans*, i, p. 91.

[152] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 29.

[153] Ibid., p. 31.

[154] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 31; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 32.

[155] *La geste*, 412.

[156] *AFM*, 1167.

returned from England with a force 'of Galls' he regained the Uí Cheinnselaig kingdom, apparently with ease.[157] There is no mention of Murchad, Diarmaid's brother who had been installed as puppet king by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair on his defeat and exile.[158] The reason for this might be simply that Murchad was willing to accept the return of his brother. While the Uí Cheinnselaig kingdom was a far cry from the entire kingdom of Leinster, it gave Diarmaid a base from which he could prepare the ground for a later re-conquest of lost territory and the arrival of reinforcements. This success was short lived, however, as his old enemies Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, Tigernán Ua Ruairc, Diarmaid Ua Máel Sechnaill and the Ostmen of Dublin invaded the Uí Cheinnselaig kingdom. There seem to have been two engagements before Diarmaid, in the face of overwhelming odds, was forced to once again submit to Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair.[159] Diarmaid also agreed to pay Tigernán Ua Ruairc one hundred ounces of gold.[160] The only comparable payment is the much-vaunted donation of Brian Bóruma to Armagh in 1005, which was a mere twenty ounces. After regaining Uí Cheinnselaig, coming to terms with Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair and Tigernán Ua Ruairc and his Anglo-Norman allies having departed, Diarmaid appears rarely in the Irish annals between 1167 and 1169.[161] The suggestion is that he was simply lying low, while waiting for more substantial forces to arrive before continuing in his campaign to re-establish himself as king of Leinster. Despite this, he does not appear to have been able to avoid some level of conflict, as Giraldus and the annalistic sources suggest he was forced to spend the winter of 1168 in hiding.[162] In addition, his son Énna was blinded by Donnchadh Mac Gilla Pátraic in 1168, presumably due to an ongoing dispute with Osraige.[163] It is possible that when Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair had expelled Diarmaid in 1166 he had partitioned Leinster between Murchad Mac Murchada and Donnchadh Mac Gilla Pátraic. This would seem a likely continuation of the Ua Conchobair policy

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[157] Ibid.

[158] *AFM*, 1166.

[159] *AFM*, 1167; *ATig.*, 1167: it seems that the Anglo-Norman forces under Richard fitz Godibert played some role, for two knights were apparently killed.

[160] *AFM*, 1167: most likely reparations for the abduction of Dervorgilla in 1151.

[161] *La geste*, 416–19.

[162] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 31; F.X. Martin, 'Historical notes' in Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 292.

[163] *AFM*, 1168.

of divide and rule, which formed a considerable part of their strategy in controlling Munster and Mide.[164]

Robert fitz Stephen arrived in 1169 with a second and far more substantial force at Bannow Bay in Wexford, then sent word to Diarmaid and awaited his arrival.[165] Despite the bias, Giraldus tends to show towards his relations, it does seem likely that Robert fitz Stephen did indeed lead this force. The Annals of Ulster describe the forces that arrive as 'the fleet of Robert fitz Stephen'.[166] *La geste* simply describes Fitz Stephen as the first to equip himself among many barons.[167] This force it seems though substantial was either not enough to undertake independent action or was under instructions from Diarmaid not to do so. Diarmaid came in great haste to join them with, according to Giraldus, five hundred of his own men.[168] On combining forces, Diarmaid and his allies set out to attack the Ostman town of Wexford.[169] The majority of this army would most likely have been made up of Diarmaid's soldiers and indeed *La geste* describes how 'the king went with all speed and all his forces to Wexford, to attack the town'.[170] Giraldus's account describes the assault on the town as being an entirely Anglo-Norman affair, which would mean that the Irish contingent, indeed the bulk of Diarmaid's forces, simply stood by and watched.[171] What would seem more probable is that Diarmaid 'attacked the city with all his forces'.[172] In any event, while the initial assault was indecisive, the Wexford Ostmen, through the mediation of two

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[164] O'Byrne, 'The MacMurroughs', p. 62.

[165] *La geste*, 459–72; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 33.

[166] *AU*, 1169.

[167] *La geste*, 441–2, 459–60 describes the numbers involved as 'a good three hundred men ... both knights and men of low rank' and Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 31 describes 'thirty knights from among his nearest relations and dependants, and also a further sixty men wearing mail, and about three hundred foot archers from among the military elite of Wales'; *AFM*, 1169: describes the 'fleet of the Flemings' bringing 'seventy heroes dressed in coats of mail'. This is not in fact that far off Giraldus's tally of thirty knights and sixty men wearing mail; presumably un-armoured foot soldiers did not seem important, or novel, enough to mention. *ATig.*, 1169 simply states that 'a large body of knights came oversea to Mac Murchada'.

[168] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 33.

[169] Ibid.

[170] *La geste*, 484–5.

[171] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, pp 33–5.

[172] *La geste*, 486–7.

bishops, decided to surrender after a day.[173] The Irish annals largely ignore this event, with only Tigernach describing the taking of Wexford by force.[174] The choice of Wexford as the first engagement for Diarmaid's newly strengthened forces may have been more than just geographically convenient. It had until 1166 been under the control of the Uí Chennselaigh. As one of the few trading ports it was also an important source of wealth through tribute or taxation. This would have been important for any long-term plans of Diarmaid's. The second tranche of Anglo-Normans that had arrived under Robert fitz Stephen also included Robert de Barry, Meiler fitz Henry and Hervey de Montmorency, according to Giraldus.[175] Miles fitz David and Maurice de Prendergast (who arrived a day later at Bannow Bay) are also mentioned in *La geste*.[176] There seems to be a mixture of motivations and indeed rewards for their supporting of Diarmaid among this disparate grouping. Robert fitz Stephen and Maurice fitz Gerald had earlier been offered the city of Wexford and the adjoining two cantreds.[177] Montmorency too was given territory in the same vicinity.[178] The acceptance of this offer on the part of Fitz Stephen and Fitz Gerald only really makes sense in the light of Strongbow's potential inheritance or acquiring substantial lands in his own right. In the long run, the practicality of holding these relatively small territories surrounded by a potentially hostile country isolated from other Anglo-Normans would prove difficult if not impossible. It might well have been the case that Diarmaid had agreed to grant Strongbow both Dublin and Waterford, should they be recaptured, as part of their original agreement.

After his success at Wexford, Diarmaid returned to Ferns for three weeks before turning his attention to Osraige.[179] Not only had Diarmaid a personal score to settle with Donnchadh Mac Gilla Pátraic who blinded the unfortunate Énna the previous year, but as king of Leinster he would have considered Osraige to fall within his over-lordship.[180]

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[173] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 35.

[174] *ATig.*, 1169: the account given here provides nothing in the way of detail and appears to conflate several events probably between 1169 and 1170.

[175] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 31.

[176] *La geste*, 448–55.

[177] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 31.

[178] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 45.

[179] Dolley, *Anglo-Norman Ireland*, p. 59; F.X. Martin, 'Allies and an overlord, 1169–72' in *NHI II*, p. 68.

[180] *AFM*, 1168; *ATig.*, 1168; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, pp 36–7.

Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó had first annexed Osraige from Munster as far back as 1042.[181] There was also a potential advantage in a campaign against Osraige, for if it was successful more of Diarmaid's former supporters might submit to him peacefully, something that Mac Gilla Pátraic was never likely to do. It seems that already many of his former supporters and followers, convinced of his change of fortunes by his recent success, were now willing to rejoin his cause.[182] He was also able to almost immediately convince the men of Wexford to join him in his attack on Osraige.[183] Considering Diarmaid's growing strength, going against his wishes might not have been an option. The fact that those who were forced to submit were then obliged to join Diarmaid's campaigns belies some of the apparent enthusiasm described by Giraldus.[184]

The campaign against Mac Gilla Pátraic would prove difficult and testing for Diarmaid and his allies but it would also prove the value of the Anglo-Normans in battle in the forests between the Barrow and the Nore south of Kilkenny.[185] The impassibility of this region had allowed it to serve as a natural barrier between Leinster and Munster for centuries. The difficulty faced by the Leinster army was a strategy of occupying easily defensible passes by the men of Osraige.[186] It is also probable that at some of these passes, substantial defensive works were either already in existence or hastily built in anticipation of a Leinster invasion.[187] It appears that after fierce fighting the defences were finally breached: 'the men of Osraige were no weaklings in defence of their homeland'.[188] What followed was a raid deep into Osraige territory where the

[181] Flanagan, *High-kings with opposition*, p. 899.

[182] Giraldu*s*, *Expugnatio*, p. 33: 'and some who lived on the coast, who had previously left Diarmaid's side ... came flocking back to him again now that ... good fortune was returning'; *La geste*, 543–5 states 'before the army set out, three thousand fighting men came to make peace with Diarmaid through fear of the English'.

[183] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 35.

[184] Ibid., p. 33.

[185] Dolley, *Anglo-Norman Ireland*, p. 59.

[186] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 37.

[187] *La geste*, 562–7: here it states that Mac Gilla Pátraic 'had three wide and deep trenches thrown up in front of him. In front of him, in a pass, the rebel had three trenches thrown up forthwith and raised a stockade along the top of each one.'

[188] Giraldu*s*, *Expugnatio*, p. 37; *La geste*, 578–9 describes heavy losses: 'But many men were injured and wounded and killed'.

land was burned and much plunder was taken.[189] Giraldus ascribes this victory to the Leinster army withdrawing from their attack and waiting until the men of Osraige pursued them into the open before the Anglo-Norman knights turned around and charged their erstwhile pursuers. This devastating cavalry charge was followed directly by the Irish infantry, who slaughtered the remaining Osraige army, from whom two hundred heads were taken, according to Giraldus.[190]

After once again withdrawing to Ferns to regroup there soon followed a punitive expedition against Osraige and after three days fighting Mac Gilla Pátraic's forces were again routed. At this stage Maurice de Prendergast, perhaps the most mercenary (in a literal sense) of the Anglo-Normans, switched allegiance to Mac Gilla Pátraic.[191] *La geste* claims it was Diarmaid's refusal to allow him to depart from Wexford that forced him to offer his services to Mac Gilla Pátraic.[192] What might equally have caused De Prendergast to abandon Diarmaid was the approach of Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair and his great army. The assaults on Osraige were bound to draw in Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair to whom Mac Gilla Pátraic had submitted in 1168.[193] It was not long before Ruaidrí and his great army descended on south Leinster.[194] Rather than face Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair in open battle, Diarmaid and his allies retreated to an inaccessible area, perhaps the forests around Mount Leinster, and set about digging trenches and felling trees to make access harder still, 'thus greatly increasing its natural difficulty by artificial means.'[195]

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[189] *La geste*, 588–93.

[190] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 37. See also *La geste*, 644–783, where the account is somewhat different; this great victory took place as the Leinster army was withdrawing from an already successful raid into Osraige. Knowing that Mac Gilla Pátraic had managed to reorganise his army and would be pursuing, an elaborate ambush was set. This version too has the luring of the men of Osraige out into an open plain where they are duly mown down by the Anglo-Norman knights. See also Norman Davies, *The Isles* (London, 2000), p. 237. This would fall into the pattern of a traditional Norman cavalry attack against infantry, where a feigned retreat would draw out infantry in relative disarray where their superiority in numbers could be negated. This was a stratagem that had served the Normans well since Hastings; *ATig.*, 1169: states 'Ossory was ravaged, both church and district by Mac Murchada with foreigners'.

[191] Dolley, *Anglo-Norman Ireland*, p. 60: Dolley suggests that the campaigns in Osraige were not providing grants of land which the Anglo-Normans so coveted and due to this De Prendergast and his followers wished to leave.

[192] *La geste*, 1066–91.

[193] *AU*, 1168.

[194] Dolley, *Anglo-Norman Ireland*, p. 60; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 41.

[195] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 41.

Perhaps they had learned how effective this could be by their earlier exploits in Osraige. In any event, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair was not keen on attacking the combined Leinster and Anglo-Norman forces.[196] His first ploy seems to have been to try to bribe the Anglo-Norman barons into deserting Diarmaid and returning to Wales. When this failed, he tried to convince Diarmaid to betray his foreign allies but this was also unsuccessful. In the end, an agreement was reached whereby Diarmaid was given free rein within Leinster on handing over his son Conchobar as a hostage. As part of this arrangement Conchobar was to wed Ruaidrí's daughter at a later date while, according to Giraldus, a private clause stipulated that Diarmaid should bring no more foreigners into Ireland and those he had should be sent back across the sea once all of Leinster submitted.[197]

Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair had in effect recognised Diarmaid as king of Leinster once again. This agreement left Diarmaid in a relatively favourable position and provided the opportunity to regain control of Leinster without immediate threat of outside intervention. It would seem that most of Leinster was now willing or had little choice but to submit to Diarmaid. Notably, the king of Uí Fáeláin (a minor north Leinster kingdom), Mac Gilla Pátraic, king of Osraige, and the Norse of Dublin refused.[198] It appears that Diarmaid first successfully attacked the Uí Fáeláin in north Leinster before again turning his attention back to Mac Gilla Pátraic in Osraige.[199] It would seem that as part of the arrangement with Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair it was accepted that Diarmaid could continue his campaign in Osraige, tacit recognition perhaps that Osraige fell within Leinster's sphere of influence again. While both Diarmaid and Mac Gilla Pátraic at this point had Anglo-Normans fighting for them, they (the Anglo-Normans) do not appear to have engaged their former allies in pitched battle. Maurice de Prendergast and his men seem to have been preoccupied with raiding deep into

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[196] Ibid., p. 51: here Giraldus explains 'because he was most reluctant to engage the well-armed forces of the foreigners'.

[197] Ibid.

[198] *La geste*, 836–47.

[199] *La geste*, 864–72; *ATig.*, 1169 mentions a 'Hua Faelain, king of the Desi' being captured during the initial surrender of Wexford. The account here seems to be conflating several events so it possibly refers to a subsequent attack on the Uí Fáeláin.

Leinster territory.[200] Early in 1170 Maurice fitz Gerald arrived from Wales and landed in Wexford to reinforce Diarmaid, arguably voiding his peace agreement with Ua Conchobair. It would seem that an attack on Dublin had been planned prior to Strongbow's arrival and Diarmaid marched on Dublin with his allies.[201] This show of strength was enough to force a submission and promise of future loyalty to Diarmaid by the Dublin Ostmen.[202] Through this period, prior to Strongbow's arrival, with the exception of Maurice de Prendergast, the Anglo-Normans had stayed remarkably loyal to Diarmaid and had remained clearly under his control. A measure of this was his willingness to send Fitz Stephen and his men to support his son-in-law Domnall Mór Ua Briain against Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair in Thomond.[203] By supporting Domnall Mór against Ruaidrí, Diarmaid's political aspirations must have been becoming increasingly apparent to his rivals. By challenging Ruaidrí's domination of Munster, even through a proxy in the form of Fitz Stephen, he was also threatening Ruaidrí's position as high-king.

In the next group of Anglo-Norman adventurers, those led by Raymond le Gros who landed at Baginbun Head, we see what might be activity running contrary to Diarmaid's aims. It is important to note that this force may not have informed Diarmaid of its arrival and appears to have been awaiting the arrival of Strongbow rather than Diarmaid. Having landed and established a hastily fortified base, these Anglo-Normans began raiding and plundering the surrounding territory. This provoked a combined attack on their position by Domnaill Ua Fáeláin of the Déise, Ua Riain of Uí Dróna and the Ostmen of Waterford.[204] It is also possible that Ua Fáeláin had already submitted to Diarmaid if the mention of his earlier capture in the Annals of Tigernach is considered.[205] The resulting engagement was a dramatic success for the outnumbered

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[200] *La geste*, 1142–51: for these exploits Maurice de Prendergast 'received the name Maurice of Osraige' from the Irish.

[201] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 53: Diarmaid 'assembled his army and immediately drew up his battle lines and forces for an attack'.

[202] *ATig.*, 1170: states 'Mac Murchada received the kingship of the foreigners of Leinster' also Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 53; Martin, 'Historical notes', p. 298; *ALC*, 1170: 'Ath-cliath was spoiled by Diarmaid Mac Murchada, and by pirates whom he had brought from the east'.

[203] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 53.

[204] *La geste*, 1404–24; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 57: names Máelsechlainn Ua Fáeláin instead.

[205] *ATig.*, 1169: there is also the possibility that the 'Hua Faelain, king of the Desi' mentioned here is not necessarily the 'Domnall Ua Fáeláin of the Déise' in *La geste*, 1420 but the Máelsechlainn Ua Fáeláin

Raymond, although just *how* outnumbered is debatable. *La geste* has Raymond with no more than a hundred men facing a force of three or four thousand. Likewise, Giraldus has Raymond with ten knights and seventy archers facing three thousand Irish.[206] Both accounts agree that, as a result, some seventy of the men of Waterford were captured and executed. This, according to Giraldus, went against the wishes of Raymond and was at the behest of Hervey de Montmorency.[207] Despite the unquestionable brutality of warfare between Irish kings, the execution of prisoners, other than important hostages, is not specifically mentioned in the Irish annals.[208]

On 23 August 1170, shortly after this defeat of the men of Waterford and their Irish allies, Strongbow finally landed near Waterford with a force of possibly fifteen hundred men.[209] This force was indeed far more substantial than anything that had come before it and could operate effectively without the support of Diarmaid's Leinster army if necessary. Without waiting for Diarmaid's forces to arrive, Strongbow's forces united with those of Raymond who had remained encamped at Baginbun and proceeded to attack the city. Giraldus gives an elaborate account of the taking of Waterford, in which he describes what must have been a projecting structure built on to the city wall and supported by an external beam. This was pulled down, bringing a section of wall with it, creating enough of a breach to allow the attackers to storm in.[210] That there was much slaughter of the citizenry and that its most prominent rulers, the two Sitrics, were both killed suggests that the Anglo-Normans did not regard the Ostmen towns as potential

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named in Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 57. There is also the possibility of confusion here between the Ua Fáeláin of Déise and the Ua Fáeláin of north Leinster.

[206] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 57; *La geste*, 1424–7, 1448–67. These accounts also give different reasons for the victory, either driving a herd of cattle into the attackers causing enough confusion to negate the advantage of superior numbers or after a failed sally, retreating to resolutely fight in the entrance way of the fort.

[207] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 65. Giraldus gives two elaborate speeches from Raymond le Gros and Hervey de Montmorency arguing the benefits of showing mercy or ruthlessness respectively.

[208] This is of course not to say that it did not happen. The killing of hostages or named individuals is recorded on a routine basis but specific accounts of the killing of large numbers of prisoners is strangely absent. The solitary account of the killing of prisoners is from 745 when six were killed after the 'profanation of Domnach-Patraicc' and this, it would seem, was only worth recording because they suffered the unusual fate of being crucified: see *AU*, 745.

[209] *La geste*, 1500–4; *Giraldus*, *Expugnatio*, p. 65. Giraldus gives a figure of two hundred knights and a thousand others.

[210] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 67.

reserves of manpower in the same way that Irish kings did. It is also not clear whether Diarmaid had been sent word of Strongbow's arrival but it is unlikely to have gone unnoticed. In *La geste* it claims that Strongbow 'sent word at once to King Diarmait by messenger that he had landed at Waterford and conquered the city'.[211] Giraldus agrees at least that he arrived after the battle.[212] By attacking Waterford, Strongbow was acting very much in keeping with Diarmaid's plans to expand his influence beyond Leinster.[213]

After Strongbow had married Eva, Diarmaid's daughter, in fulfilment of their agreement it would seem that a council of war was held at which 'all the noble knights decided there to make straight for Dublin and attack the city'.[214] Considering that Diarmaid with Fitz Stephen were powerful enough to force Dublin's submission without an actual assault on the city itself, the prospects of Dublin surrendering to Diarmaid's Leinster army combined with that of Strongbow must have been very high. It is also worth remembering that Dublin had submitted to Diarmaid less than a year earlier, so their relationship with him at this stage is unclear or; presumably it re-submitted to Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair sometime in the intervening months.[215] At this juncture, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair sought to intercept Diarmaid and his allies at Clondalkin but they were able to slip past the Connacht army.[216] Although Diarmaid was now in blatant breach of his earlier agreement with Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, the Connacht king decided against pursuit and withdrew his army.[217] This left Dublin effectively at the mercy of Diarmaid and Strongbow. Diarmaid, through his chamberlain O'Regan, began negotiating Dublin's surrender with Archbishop Lorcán Ua Tuathail. While negotiations were ongoing, Miles de Cogan and Raymond le Gros took matters into their own hands and attacked the city, apparently without consulting

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[211] *La geste*, 1516–21.

[212] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 67.

[213] Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 273.

[214] *La geste*, 1554–7; see also Martin, 'Historical notes', p. 302: this might suggest that this was Strongbow's decision rather than Diarmaid's who, with such a large Anglo-Norman force present, would have had little choice but to go along with their wishes.

[215] *ATig.*, 1170; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 53.

[216] Dolley, *Anglo-Norman Ireland*, p. 63.

[217] *ATig.*, 1170: here it states that 'then the king of Ireland returned, with his army unhurt after Mac Murchada and the foreigners refused to give him battle'.

Diarmaid or indeed Strongbow.[218] It is perhaps significant that it was to Strongbow and not to Diarmaid that De Cogan handed over control of the city, as it follows the episodes at Baginbun and Waterford where the Anglo-Norman barons who arrived in 1170 seem to have been fighting for the earl rather than the king.[219] This suggests that Diarmaid had earlier come to an agreement to hand over control of the Ostmen towns to Strongbow, this does have implications as it was more often than not the *tánaise ríg* who was put in control of Dublin; that being said, Diarmaid was never one to be constrained by tradition.[220]

Diarmaid's ambitions had always extended beyond the traditional boundaries of Leinster and there seems little doubt that he coveted the high-kingship or at the very least hoped to emulate the successes of Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó. The explanation for Diarmaid's offer of the Leinster inheritance to Strongbow was that he simply had to make the earl an offer he could not afford to refuse. The fact that there were even rivals within his own family in the form of Murchad meant he needed a reliable force that would not be prone to abandoning his cause if events turned against him. However, Byrne put forward the hypothesis that Diarmaid planned to change centuries-old political dynamics and set himself (and therefore his dynastic heirs) up as a feudal national king who could then afford to grant Leinster to his subordinate son-in-law without affecting the prospects of the Uí Chennselaig dynasty.[221] Such a venture was clearly not without substantial risks but if it failed he must have expected that the Uí Cheinnselaig would accept only one of their own as king of Leinster.

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[218] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 69; *La geste*, 1674–91: both sources stress that neither Diarmaid nor Strongbow had foreknowledge of the attack.

[219] *La geste*, 1708–23 is explicit about this: 'Miles, the renowned knight, gave up the city to the earl; he handed over the city and the earl took possession of it' and 'Richard the rightful earl handed over to Miles, you must know, the wardship of the city [of Dublin]'; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 69: here Giraldus is in agreement: 'the earl spent some days making arrangements about the government of the city and left Miles de Cogan there as governor'.

[220] Martin, 'Allies and an overlord', p. 78. Martin sees things rather differently: 'allies were becoming overlords'.

[221] Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 274; Flanagan, *Irish society*, p. 89. Flanagan suggests that Diarmaid's adoption of Strongbow as his successor had precedence in the concept of 'stranger in sovereignty'. However, the apparent lengths genealogists went to to disguise such political change suggests it was not legally acceptable.

Diarmaid was well aware of the power that Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair could wield as high-king. The death of the Cenél nEógain claimant Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn in 1166 had removed Ruaidrí's most serious challenger with disastrous consequences for Diarmaid. His growing power and policy of partitioning defeated kingdoms had meant a serious weakening of the position of other provincial kings, not least of all Diarmaid. Diarmaid for his part must have suspected that the era of independent provincial kings was ending. He had only to look to England, Scotland and even Wales under Rhys ap Gruffydd to see evidence for the potential of a centralised kingdom. It was probably the case that Ruaidrí was aiming at something similar and for Diarmaid the only long-term option to retain the independence of the Uí Cheinnselaig kings was to mount a challenge for the national kingship. It is from Giraldus that we are given perhaps the only evidence for such aims: 'he would not be deflected from his purpose until he had brought under his control Connacht, which belonged to him by ancestral right, together with the kingship of all Ireland'.[222] The most likely way that Diarmaid could justify such a claim over Connacht was if he was indeed set on achieving the high-kingship. It is also not beyond the realms of possibility that Giraldus or his sources were privy to a historical submission by a Connacht king, most likely to Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó during the late eleventh century.

With the capture of Dublin, the re-conquest of Leinster was complete. All Diarmaid's former subjects had either willingly submitted or been forced to, the exception perhaps being Mac Gilla Pátraic who militarily at least had suffered serious defeats. If any evidence was lacking to show just where Diarmaid's expansionist ambitions lay, he embarked on one last campaign with his Anglo-Norman allies against his long-time enemy Tigernán Ua Ruairc and devastated much of Mide.[223] It seems likely that this campaign beyond the borders of a newly secured Leinster was intended to be the first of many. This attack on Tigernán Ua Ruairc was not to be without consequence, for Giraldus states that for using his foreigners outside of Leinster he forfeited the lives of the hostages, including his son Conchobair and a son of Domnall

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[222] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 69; Martin, 'Historical notes', p. 304: Martin suspects that Giraldus inserted this statement as a means of justifying English claims to all of Ireland.

[223] *ATig.*, 1170: does not mention 'foreigners', in conjunction with 'Mac Murchada', as it had in earlier campaigns; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 69: here also specific Anglo-Norman involvement is not mentioned; *AFM*, 1170: describes an attack by Tigernán Ua Ruairc on Diarmaid's camp where 'he himself was, with Leinstermen and Galls'.

Caomhánach, who were held at the time by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair.[224] Given that he had already been in breach of the terms of his treaty with Ruaidrí since Maurice fitz Gerald had arrived early in 1170 and that Ruaidrí had attempted to halt the advance on Dublin at Clondalkin, the fates of the unfortunate hostages were probably already sealed. Diarmaid then withdrew for the winter to Ferns, where he died at the beginning of May 1171.[225]

The death of Diarmaid Mac Murchada would have profound implications for the kingdom of Leinster, the Uí Chennselaigh dynasty and ultimately for Ireland as a whole. Diarmaid was in his sixties at the time of his death so, in a sense, there was always a very real chance that he would not live to see the fruits of his ambitious plans since his return to Leinster. His failure to seize the high-kingship would prove a disaster for Domnall Caomhánach his eldest, though natural, son.[226] Although 'illegitimate', it seems likely that Domnall Caomhánach, would have been considered to be Diarmaid's *tánaise ríg* by the Uí Chennselaigh. The concept of illegitimacy in medieval Irish dynastic politics was relatively new although it was promoted by religious reformers such as Lorcán Ua Tuathail.[227] Domnall Caomhánach, should he have wished to, seems to not have been in any position to challenge Strongbow over the kingdom of Leinster. Diarmaid's brother Murchad, however, had risen in rebellion against Strongbow's claim over Leinster and refused to accept Domnall Caomhánach as king of Uí Chennselaigh. If Domnall Caomhánach had any plans to challenge Strongbow, these had to be put aside while Murchad was in revolt. This crisis was intensified when Ascall mac Ragnaill meic Torcaill, an exiled leader of the Dublin Ostmen, returned with an army from Man and Orkney to retake the city.[228]

For Strongbow too, the position in Leinster had become tenuous at best. Not only did he now have to confront the threat posed by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair but he also had to contend with a rising against his rule by the Uí Cheinnselaig under Murchad, Diarmaid's brother. The arrival of Ascall mac Ragnaill meic Torcaill added yet another

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[224] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 69; *ATig.*, 1170: here it claims that this was at the instigation of Tigernán Ua Ruairc.

[225] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 46.

[226] O'Byrne, 'The MacMurroughs', p. 160.

[227] Flanagan, *Irish society*, p. 103.

[228] O'Byrne, 'The MacMurroughs', p. 162.

layer to the unfolding crises.[229] Strongbow's only prominent ally, whether by choice or by necessity, was Domnall Caomhánach who had at best limited support of his own among the Uí Chennselaigh. This was further complicated by an edict from Henry II cutting off supplies and possible reinforcements as well as threatening disinheritance and banishment should he fail to return before the following Easter. Strongbow, having achieved so much, was unlikely to simply give it up and return to England or Wales. He sent Raymond le Gros as his representative to Aquitaine to explain his position to the English king. Despite all his titles and claims to great estates, he now had far more in a real sense at stake in Ireland. In a reversal of roles, he fought to retain Leinster as its effective king in all but name, assisted by Irish allies. Henry's censure indicates that the English king had far more faith in the earl's ability to hold Leinster without broad local support, something it would seem Diarmaid did not think possible. Strongbow had gambled on being able to placate the English king while continuing to hold Leinster. It is difficult to imagine him willingly choosing to return empty-handed should his overtures through Raymond have failed.

The most immediate concern for Strongbow, however, was the return of Ascall. He had escaped when De Cogan had captured Dublin and it is probable that he had fled to Man. From there it would seem he began recruiting a force in order to retake the city. Not only did he gather forces in Man and from the Orkneys but there would also seem to have been a Norwegian contingent led by John 'the Wode'.[230] Ascall and his forces arrived while Strongbow was absent. It was the same Miles de Cogan who had expelled Ascall who was left in charge of Dublin. Rather than waiting holed up behind the city walls for relief, he decided to intercept the attackers but, outnumbered and suffering losses, they were forced to retreat into the city. It would appear that Miles's brother Richard then slipped out another gate and led an attack on the rear of Ascall's forces, taking them by surprise. It is probable that those who had retreated into the city then turned around to join the attack, forcing Ascall's forces to fight to their front and to their rear. What advantages in numbers they had dissipated in the confusion and after heavy fighting they were decisively defeated.[231]

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[229] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 79.

[230] Ibid., p. 77.

[231] Ibid.

When Strongbow returned to Dublin it was not long before Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair arrived with a large army and surrounded the city. At the same time the fleet of Godred II Olafson, king of Man, began a blockade. This would suggest that Ascall's earlier expedition was meant to coincide with Ruaidrí's arrival at Dublin. At the same time, Fitz Stephen, who had sent some of his forces to support Strongbow, found himself besieged by a combined force of Wexford Ostmen and Uí Cheinnselaig loyal to Murchad at his castle at Carrick. Giraldus tells us that Domnall Caomhánach arrived with news of Fitz Stephen's position and this spurred the besieged Anglo-Normans into action so they might save Fitz Stephen.[232] However, *La geste* states that Domnall arrived, bringing news of Fitz Stephen's capture.[233] What Giraldus crucially leaves out is that peace negotiations were ongoing between Strongbow and Ruaidrí through such intermediaries as Archbishop Lorcán Ua Tuathail and Maurice de Prendergast. If the account in *La geste* is credible then Strongbow made an offer 'that he would become his man and hold Leinster under him'.[234] If this was the case it showed that Henry II was correct in his suspicions of Strongbow's activity in Ireland. In any event, Ruaidrí rejected this offer but was prepared to allow Strongbow to retain Dublin, Wexford and Waterford with the ultimatum that if this was not accepted he would attack the city the next day.[235] This is perhaps more the reason for the Anglo-Normans' decision to act rather than concern for the plight of Fitz Stephen.[236] In Giraldus's account there is little detail given of what was perhaps Strongbow's most crucial battle. In his account the defenders formed into three companies and suddenly rushed out of the city catching the besiegers by surprise and completely off guard.[237] In *La geste* there is a far more elaborate account which includes Miles de Cogan taking the Irish by surprise at their camp in the vicinity of Finglas. This account also has Domnall Caomhánach and his followers participating.[238] These two points, if true, raise questions

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[232] Ibid., p. 79.

[233] *La geste*, 1788–91.

[234] Ibid., 1840–2.

[235] *La geste*, 1864–74: this offer of Ruaidrí 's is interesting when one considers that it is the complete reverse of the later demands Henry II made of Strongbow: see Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 89. Evidently the English king gave much more importance to holding Leinster's port towns.

[236] Martin, 'Historical notes', p. 307.

[237] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 83.

[238] *La geste*, 1676–87.

about how besieged Dublin was, if Domnall was able to freely join up with the besieged and Ruaidrí's forces were encamped at Finglas. Strongbow would indeed emerge victorious from the battle. Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair had probably missed his only opportunity to effectively eliminate the Anglo-Norman presence in Ireland. If indeed Dublin had been captured only the garrison presumably left behind at Waterford would have remained of the Anglo-Norman forces. The next day Strongbow and his army headed south for Wexford, either to relieve Fitz Stephen or, if *La geste* is more accurate, to free him from his captors. There is also the possibility that the rapidity of their departure was to pursue the retreating Uí Cheinnselaig forces which they engaged and defeated at Uí Dróna.[239]

After basing himself in Waterford, Strongbow was able to enlist the support of Domnall Mór Ua Briain for an attack on Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic in Osraige. This can be seen as an attempt by Strongbow to secure his position as Diarmaid's successor, by attacking those who opposed him within Leinster while reaching agreement with those beyond his borders.[240] It is probable that Mac Gilla Pátraic submitted to and was willing to accept Strongbow's claims to Leinster. This was followed by a return to Ferns where, with the aid of Domnall Caomhánach, the rebellious Murchad Ua Brain was captured and executed. Here, too, Murchad Mac Murchada, the Uí Chennselaig king came to terms with Strongbow. Domnall Caomhánach for his part, having stayed loyal to Strongbow, was given 'the pleas of Leinster', a position Orpen equates with seneschal.[241] It is at this juncture, just as Strongbow was making good his position in Leinster, and having his inheritance recognised by those within the province, that he was summoned to the English king.[242] If indeed Strongbow had been planning a lordship independent of the English crown, this ceased to be a possibility once he crossed the Irish Sea. There, either at Newham or Pembroke, he met the English king with an army in preparation for crossing to Ireland.[243] Any ambitions Strongbow may have had to independence must have quickly evaporated. Strongbow had little option but to accede to the king's demands and surrendered Dublin and much of what is now

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[239] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 87.

[240] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 235.

[241] *La geste*, 2185–6; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 238.

[242] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 217.

[243] Ibid., 249.

County Dublin, and the other port towns: Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow and Arklow. Strongbow also renewed his act of fealty for the rest of Leinster.[244]

On 17 October 1171 Henry, with a formidable army, landed near Waterford. Orpen contends that because it was so late in the year this army was, despite its size, meant as a show of force to induce Irish kings to submit, rather than for a conquest by force.[245] While at Waterford Henry received the submissions of Diarmaid Mac Cartaigh, king of Desmond. He also took the time to deprive Robert Fitz Stephen of Wexford, voiding the grant Diarmaid Mac Murchada had earlier made to him. Then, while progressing to Dublin, he received further submissions from Domnall Ua Briain, king of Thomond, from Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic, king of Osraige, and, on arrival on the outskirts of Dublin, from the Uí Dúnlainge kings of north Leinster.[246] For the Uí Chennselaig claimants, the arrival of Henry and his confirmation of Strongbow as lord of Leinster must have removed any hope of recovering their kingdom. Domnall Caomhánach seems to have made is submission to Henry in the winter of 1171, showing acceptance of the new political reality. Murchad Mac Murchada continued to intermittently resist until his death in 1172, yet his son Muirchertach came to Strongbow after Henry's departure to make his submission. Strongbow's earlier settlement with Domnall Caomhánach, giving him the pleas of Leinster, came with the recognition as a king of the Irish in Leinster. Strongbow now recognised Muirchertach as king of Uí Chennselaig. On the surface, such a settlement, recognising two kings, might seem a fair solution to the feud causing turmoil in Leinster.[247] It also had the effect of driving a permanent wedge between the two Uí Chennselaig strongholds of Ferns and St Mullins. The ancient kingdom of Leinster had been quickly transformed into a feudal lordship, a vassal of the English king, and yet within its borders survived the core of the Uí Chennselaig kingdom albeit with two rival kings. The lordship of Leinster that would develop in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries would retain something of this duality, an English lordship with a related Irish dynasty at its core.

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[244] Ibid., 250.

[245] Ibid., 257: the inclusion of *castellan lignea* among the king's supplies is interesting as these pre-fabricated towers might well be the earliest wooden castles of Norman type in Ireland. These *castellan lignea* could also be a reference to siege towers: bringing into question Orpen's suggestion of peaceful intent.

[246] Ibid., 264.

[247] O'Byrne, 'The MacMurroughs', p. 164.

In the period with which this study is primarily concerned, the territorial integrity of Leinster remained remarkably constant. The only area in which Leinster's borders contracted was in north Leinster where a limited amount of territory of the Uí Dúnlainge kings of Uí Dúnchada, Uí Fáeláin and Uí Muiredaig was slowly absorbed into the hinterland of the Ostman kingdom of Dublin, which itself was often subject to the Leinster kings. In contrast, the Ostman town of Wexford had come under the control of the Uí Chennselaig in the late tenth century and, bar a few minor interruptions, would remain so until 1170. After 1014 the ability of Dublin to sustain its independence rapidly diminished. Even the revolt against Brian Bóruma by Máelmórda, king of Leinster, and Sigtryggr, king of Dublin, had showed how increasingly interdependent the two kingdoms were becoming. During the reign of Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó Dublin became increasingly linked to Leinster politically before finally being taken over directly by Diarmaid in 1052. Under Diarmaid, Leinster would go through a period of substantial territorial expansion. In 1037 Diarmaid had captured the Ostman town of Waterford, which had been under the control of the Dál Cais kings of Munster. Historically, Waterford had always been considered part of the Munster kingdom. In the 1040s a series of successful campaigns in Osraige had effectively annexed that kingdom to Leinster. In 1061 Diarmaid's son Murchad even invaded the Isle of Man while Diarmaid seems likely to have been trying to expand Leinster into the north midlands throughout the 1060s. Diarmaid's reign marked the greatest extent of the Leinster kingdom and after his death many of the gains he had made would be reversed. The rise of the Ua Briain dynasty of Munster under Toirrdelbach would see Leinster lose control of both Dublin and Waterford, while the death of Diarmaid in 1072 had provided the opportunity for both Osraige and Man to re-establish their independence. The high-kingships of successive Ua Briain, Ua Conchobair and Cenél nEógain claimants offered little opportunity for Leinster to engage in any more territorial expansion. It would not be until the reign of Diarmaid Mac Murchada that Leinster would begin to recover territory lost since 1072. Diarmaid had regained control of both Dublin and Waterford before his expulsion in 1166. On his return from exile he rapidly recovered much of his kingdom, retaking first Wexford then Dublin and Waterford before embarking on campaigns against Osraige and Mide.

That the Uí Chennselaig dynasty remained in power for so long is a remarkable achievement. After reaching a high point in their history during the reign of Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó (1042–1072), even perhaps challenging for the high-kingship, the Uí

Chennselaig kings of Leinster would not have the same political influence until perhaps Diarmaid Mac Murchada. What is surprising is that throughout the period of Munster, Connacht and Cenél nEógain high-kings, the territorial core of the Leinster kingdom remained intact and the Uí Chennselaig domination of Leinster was never seriously threatened. The policy of partitioning subject kingdoms between rival claimants that had so destabilised Mide and later Munster was never a feature of respective high-kings' dealings with Leinster at least until 1166. Leinster, despite its subordinate status throughout this period, never had to deal seriously with a major clash of rival dynasties within its borders. Unlike the Ua Briain who had to contend with a growing Mac Carthaig threat, the Uí Chennselaig were always able to dominate the north Leinster Uí Dúnlainge kings. The fact that the Uí Dúnlainge dynasty had split into three distinct branches – the Uí Dúnchada, Uí Fáeláin and Uí Muiredaig – probably made it difficult if not impossible for the Uí Dúnlainge to challenge the Uí Chennselaig dominance. The Uí Chennselaig, too, seem to have been surprisingly immune from the civil wars that were a feature of most of the other major Irish dynasties' internal dynamics. This allowed Leinster a level of stability not seen elsewhere.

Perhaps the greatest strength inherited by the lordship of Leinster from the preceding kingdom of Leinster was its defined territorial integrity. The Uí Chennselaig dynasty had since the 1040s succeeded in maintaining perhaps the most territorially stable of Irish kingdoms and the lordship of Leinster closely matched that of the Leinster kingdom at its high point under Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó. The Uí Chennselaig themselves would prove both a challenge and an asset for the Leinster lordship under Strongbow and later William Marshal. It is a strange anomaly, caused by the events of the early 1170s, that the Leinster lordship that emerges retained a substantial Irish kingdom within its borders. Initially, Strongbow was faced by a series of revolts by some of the Uí Chennselaig but gradually these subsided and Leinster became relatively stable. The close familial connections between Strongbow and later William Marshal and the Uí Chennselaig allowed for a unique coexistence that was to be beneficial to all. The loss of the Ostman towns to the crown was a major blow to the Leinster lordship. The Uí Chennselaig had spent centuries trying to attach them to their kingdom as they had long recognised their economic and political importance. Henry II too had recognised this importance and therefore detached them from the Leinster lordship lest Leinster under Strongbow become too successful. The loss of its major

towns would be one of the major challenges that needed to be surmounted were the Leinster lordship ultimately to be successful.

Chapter 3
The lordship of Leinster

From his arrival in Ireland to the death of Diarmaid Mac Murchada in May 1171 Strongbow was engaged in continuous military campaigning in support of the Leinster king. Following Diarmaid's death the fighting intensified as Strongbow was forced to defend his newly inherited fiefdom against what must have seemed to be nearly insurmountable odds. While Strongbow's credentials as soldier can hardly be doubted his legacy is based on much more than just his ability to win battles. In the few years that he was in Ireland he was able to transform Leinster (or large parts of it) into an Anglo-Norman lordship with the systems of feudal administration that this entailed. It is likely that it was only following Henry II's return to England on 17 April 1172 that Strongbow began the difficult process of consolidating his position in Leinster in earnest.[1] This was in part achieved by a policy of encastellation and undertaking a process of subinfeudation.[2] It was Strongbow's vassals who undertook the challenge of improving and developing their new territorial grants. Not only did this in many cases require the building of castles but it also saw the introduction of the manorial system, the founding new towns and the bringing in of colonists from England and Wales. Importantly too English Common Law was established within the colony although where there were mixed populations within in a territory brehon laws were maintained in parallel and in cases where it was deemed advantages some aspects of them were adopted by the settlers.[3]

The transformation of Leinster cannot have been a straightforward task. Leinster still contained within it the territories of the client Uí Chennselaig kings as well as that of Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic, king of Osraige. Furthermore, Strongbow made repeated efforts to expand his area of influence into Munster, perhaps with the intention of expanding the territory of the Leinster lordship. Strongbow, while having given up on any ideas of an independent fiefdom, was now secure as tenant in chief of Henry as lord of Leinster with its considerable palatinate powers. This was in part because Leinster

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[1] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 319; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 65; Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 64: Curtis gives the date of Henry's departure as 27 April 1172.

[2] James Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 2003), p. 49.

[3] James Lydon, 'A land of war' in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *NHI*, ii: *medieval Ireland, 1169–1534* (Oxford, 2008), p. 270.

was considered sword-land (territory acquired by military conquest) were the conquerors were given a free hand (at least initially) by their sovereign. The Normans had maintained this tradition in their conquests of Wales, Sicily and the Holy Land.[4] These powers and privilages would only be curtailed in 1208 when King John issued a new charter for Leinster to William Marshal. Strongbow's enviable position was, however, balanced by the granting of Meath, the second of the great feudal principalities, to Hugh de Lacy. That was part of a deliberate strategy by Henry II. De Lacy not only served to counterbalance Strongbow's preeminent position but, having been made the first justiciar, it would be through him that royal policy would be enacted or enforced.[5] The establishment of the Meath lordship would also block any designs on northern expansion that Strongbow might have harboured.

The submissions of the kings of southern and eastern Ireland also initially offered some degree of security for the Leinster lordship and the colony as a whole. The two remaining powers that had not submitted to Henry, the Cenél nEógain and Cenél Conaill, were far too busy fighting among themselves to form any core of resistance to the English colony.[6] The relative peace imposed by Henry was not to last long after his departure.[7] Tigernán Ua Ruairc, king of Bréifne, who had been defeated by Diarmaid Mac Murchada in his final campaign of 1170, perhaps with the assistance of Strongbow, was to re-emerge as a threat to the colony.[8] He had been mounting raids into east Meath since 1170, presumably with the intention of unseating Domnall Bregach Ua Máel Sechlainn and regaining the territory awarded to him in the partition of Meath of 1169.[9] Henry II's 1172 grant of Meath to Hugh de Lacy 'as Murchad Ua Máel Sechlainn, the king of Meath who died in 1153, had held it' put him in direct competition with Tigernán Ua Ruairc.[10] It also removed any claim Strongbow might have had to the territory.[11]

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[4] Martin, 'Allies and an overlord', p. 87.

[5] Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, pp 63–4.

[6] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 319; *AU*, 1172: 'he came to land at Port-lairgi and received the pledges of Munster. He came after that to Ath-cliath and received the pledges of Leinster and the Men of Meath and of the Ui-Briuin and Airgialla and Ulidia.'

[7] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 113.

[8] *ATig.*, 1170, see note 219, ch. 1; see also Martin, 'Allies and overlord', p. 79: Diarmaid had replaced Tigernán with Domnall Bregach Ua Máel Sechlainn as king of East Meath.

[9] *ATig.*, 1171; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 320.

[10] Martin, 'Allies and overlord', p. 96.

De Lacy quickly moved to secure his hold over Meath and advanced as far as Fore, looting and burning the town as well as the nearby church of Cell Achaid.[12] Such actions on De Lacy's part, in a territory claimed by Tigernán Ua Ruairc, must have been seen as an act of blatant aggression. Ua Ruairc, 'deedful leopard of the Gaels, Leth Cuinn's man of battle and lasting defence, Erin's raider and invader', could hardly have been expected not to react and conflict with De Lacy must have seemed to be a foregone conclusion.[13] In circumstances that are not entirely clear, a parley was arranged between the two and as a result of some treachery Tigernán Ua Ruairc was killed, beheaded, with his corpse and head sent back to Dublin to be displayed. The Annals of Tigernach and Ulster both have a kinsman of Tigernán's, one Domnall son of Annagh Ua Ruairc, somehow complicit.[14] Giraldus, perhaps as a means of extricating Maurice fitz Gerald from such underhand actions, tells a complicated and convoluted version of events whereby the treachery is on the part of Tigernán with no mention of Domnall son of Annagh.[15] This Domnall son of Annagh makes two more appearances in the Annals of Tigernach, fighting alongside 'the same foreigners' in 1172 before they record him suffering an ignominious death the following year.[16]

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[11] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 53.

[12] *ATig.*, 1172; Orpen, *Normans*, i, p. 320.

[13] Martin, 'Overlord becomes feudal lord', p. 99; *AU*, 1172; *ATig.*, 1172: full obit: 'Tigernán Húa Ruairc, king of Brefne and Conmacni and the greater part of the province of Meath, and warden of the districts of Oriel, lord of the province of Connaught, deedful leopard of the Gaels, Leth Cuinn's man of battle and lasting defence, Erin's raider and invader, surpasser of the Gaels in might and abundance, was treacherously killed by Eoan Mer and Richard, the son of the Earl, and by Domnall, son of Annach Húa Ruairc, at the Hill of Ward, and his body was brought by them to Dublin to be mangled and drawn asunder.'

[14] *AU*, 1172; *ATig.*, 1172.

[15] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, pp 118–19; Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 65: Curtis's explanation that 'some obscure treachery was perpetrated' is apt; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 321: Orpen's view is similar: 'There were charges of treachery on both sides, which it would be useless now to investigate.'

[16] *ATig.*, 1172: this suggests that the version of events culminating in the death Tigernán Ua Ruairc as conveyed in the Irish annals is more plausible than Giraldus's account. Credibility is added to this argument when we read that 'Domnall, son of Annach Húa Ruairc, was killed by the courtiers of Tigernán Húa Ruairc. Gilla Tigernáin, son of Gilla t'Aedóic Húa Mail-Brigte, was the warrior that smote him and struck off one of his hands. Gilla Tigernáin sent this hand to Ruadri Húa Conchobair, who drove a nail through it on top of the castle of Tuam'; *ATig.*, 1173; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 322: adds that this was meant as a warning to traitors.

Much as we have seen De Lacy behave in Meath, after Henry's departure Strongbow too became engaged in more fighting within Leinster. Before Henry had departed Strongbow had withdrawn to Ferns, formerly the Uí Chennselaig royal seat, and there he gave his daughter (from his first marriage) as bride to Robert de Quency whom he had appointed constable of Leinster and who had been granted Duffry in fee.[17] Strongbow soon moved to Kildare, which would become an important administrative centre. From Kildare he began to mount raids against the O'Dempsys of Clanmalier, to the west of Kildare. On returning from one such raid the earl's forces were attacked, perhaps ambushed close to Kildare by Cú Aifne, son of Aed Ua Conchobair Failge, the O'Dempsys' overlord. In this encounter Strongbow's recently appointed constable and brother-in-law was killed.[18] Raymond le Gros, one of Giraldus's heroes of the initial conquest, now sought the constableship and indeed to marry Basilia, Strongbow's sister. This request was refused by Strongbow and he instead appointed his uncle, Hervey de Montmorency as his constable. Hervey had in 1169 received a substantial grant of land outside of Wexford from Diarmaid Mac Murchada, which had been confirmed by Strongbow.[19] Le Gros, seemingly offended at this apparent slight, left for Carew Castle in Wales.[20] We also read in the Annals of Tigernach that 'Murchertach Húa Briain and Murchad Mac Murchada were killed treacherously by the people of the Son of the Empress'.[21] This is likely a reference to the activities of Meiler fitz Henry and might have been related to an earlier attack on Strongbow's soldiers in Kildare by Cú Aifne son of Aed Húa Conchobair Failge. This shows that there was still a level of instability within Leinster. The Annals of Tigernach also inform us that the following

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[17] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 322: Orpen presumes that this was a daughter from an earlier marriage. That she was illegitimate is also probable because when later Isabella, his daughter by Eva princess of Leinster, is recognised as his sole heir, all his possessions and estates and not just those he had acquired through his marriage to Eva went to her. Daughters from an earlier marriage would presumably have been entitled to a share of his Welsh estates; *Song*, 2185–6; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 238, 322. Duffry had been the territory of the rebellious Murchad Ua Brain who had been captured and killed with the aid of Domnall Caomhánach.

[18] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 322; *ATig.*, 1172.

[19] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 323–5. Hervey gave a considerable part of his holdings to the Cistercians from Buildwas in Shropshire. It was not until sometime after 1182 that work would commence on the building of 'de Portu Sanctae Mariae de Dunbrothy'. The foundation was granted protection by John in 1185 and their grant was confirmed and their privileges extended by William Marshal.

[20] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 323; *Song*, 2859–61.

[21] *ATig.*, 1173.

year 'Húa Caellaidi, one of the two kings of Ossory, was killed by Domnall, son of Donnchad Mac Gilla Patraic', which suggests that this instability was not limited to Anglo-Norman/Irish tensions.[22]

Early in 1173 Strongbow and Hugh de Lacy were summoned to aid in Henry's campaigns in Normandy against his rebellious sons who were being aided by the French king Louis VII. This left the colony militarily at risk and politically weakened and as a short-term remedy William fitz Audelin, styled *Regis loco et vice*, was sent over by Henry II to replace Hugh de Lacy as justiciar.[23] Of William Fitz Audelin's activities in Ireland during his first short stint as justiciar little is recorded.[24] As the war progressed in Normandy Strongbow was given control of the fortress of Gisors while Hugh de Lacy was tasked with the defence of the castle and town of Verneuil.[25] The fortress of Gisors was never seriously threatened but the town of Verneuil was taken and burnt down by Louis before the siege could be relieved by Henry. Henry seems to have been satisfied with Strongbow's service in Normandy but perhaps less so Hugh de Lacy. When he returned to Ireland, having been made justiciar, Strongbow appears to have been reconciled with the king and any suspicions towards independence were forgotten. According to Giraldus, Raymond le Gros was also named as his deputy at the earl's insistence. As a further sign of his new-found favour, Strongbow was given the town of Wexford and the castle of Wicklow, both of which had been held by the king since 1172.[26] He was also given custody of Dublin and Waterford.[27] This marks an important change in relations between Strongbow and King Henry. If the strategic importance of these port towns had been the reason for their earlier confiscation, then their return to Strongbow shows a new level of trust on the part of the king.

The king did recall the bulk of his Irish garrisons, however, including Robert fitz Stephen and Maurice de Prendergast, to aid him in combating the first of the revolts by his sons.[28] This and Hugh de Lacy's continued absence in Normandy left the colony

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[22] Ibid., 1172.

[23] F.M. Powicke (ed.), *Handbook of British chronology* (London, 1939), p. 107; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 325; Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland*, p. 50.

[24] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 64.

[25] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 325–6; *Song*, 2886–7.

[26] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 326; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 121.

[27] *Song*, 2904–5.

[28] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 121; Orpen, *Normans*, i, p. 327; *Song*, 2906–39.

in a seriously weakened position.[29] The threat of Irish kings seeking an opportunity to rebel was exacerbated when news of the Henry's ongoing misfortunes reached them.[30] This was coupled with disquiet among the remaining English garrisons and Strongbow's own household knights and soldiers. The cause of this discontent would seem to have been a lack of pay and more importantly a lack of opportunity for plunder with Hervey de Montmorency as constable of Leinster.[31] They threatened to return to England or, worse still, to desert to the enemy (presumably the Irish) unless Raymond le Gros was reinstated as their commander.[32] It is worth noting that this is only according to Giraldus's account although the *Song* does attest to Le Gros's popularity.[33]

Strongbow, having duly appointed Le Gros as their commander, began a campaign against the Uí Faeláin of Déise, 'taking vast quantities of booty' including horses and arms to re-equip themselves.[34] Máel Sechlainn Ua Faeláin was at least nominally a vassal of Diarmait Mac Carthaig, king of Desmond.[35] Both Diarmait Mac Carthaig and Máel Sechlainn Ua Faeláin had submitted in 1172 to Henry II.[36] Diarmait Mac Carthaig must have considered this attack on his vassal Máel Sechlainn as a serious breach of faith and, unusually, Giraldus offers no explanation for this while the *Song* ignores the whole episode.[37] The attack on the Faeláin of Déise seems to have been only the start of a broader campaign into Desmond. It was soon followed by a raid on the important ecclesiastical settlement of Lismore in Co. Waterford. While the raiders were preparing to return with their spoils by boat, they were attacked by an Ostman fleet from Cork under the command of Gilbert, son of Turgerius, but were able to defeat them. Le Gros, who had split his forces, then attacked Lismore again and was

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[29] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 55.

[30] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 135: Giraldus explains this behaviour by the Irish who 'are a race consistent only in their fickleness, a race of which the only stable and reliable trait is their being unstable and unreliable'. Henry II also had to contend with an invasion from Scotland and an uprising in Wales.

[31] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 328–9; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 135.

[32] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p.135; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 329.

[33] *Song*, 3054–5.

[34] Martin, 'Overlord becomes feudal lord', p. 102. Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 137; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 329; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 64: Orpen and Otway-Ruthven understand this to be the Uí Faeláin of north Kildare rather than Máel Sechlainn Ua Faeláin, king of the Déise, in Waterford.

[35] Byrne, 'The trembling sod', pp 32–3.

[36] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 102.

[37] Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 67.

able to drive out Diarmait Mac Carthaig and his forces that had arrived after the initial attack.[38]

Perhaps worried at the successes of the Anglo-Normans, albeit against his perennial rival Mac Carthaig, or seeing their depleted forces as a weakness that he could exploit, Domnall Mór Ua Briain, king of Thomond, chose the end of 1173 to strike.[39] Domnall Mór Ua Briain was willing to accept Strongbow's assistance in his own fights against the king of Desmond and as long as he operated within the confines of the former Leinster kingdom he was content not to interfere. By attacking Desmond and potentially annexing parts of it, Strongbow was indirectly threatening Uí Briain aspirations to the kingship of Munster. Or, as Orpen suggests, Domnall might well have suspected that after persistent attacks on Mac Carthaig, he would be next.[40] Supported by a large force from Connacht led by King Ruaidrí's son, Máenmaigi Ua Conchobair, Domnall Mór Ua Briain marched on Strongbow's castle of Kilkenny. Judging their position hopeless, the isolated garrison abandoned the castle and retreated to Waterford.[41] Domnall's forces were then free to plunder the whole district.[42]

In 1174 in the absence of Raymond le Gros, who had returned to Wales, Hervey de Montmorency was appointed constable of Leinster. Hervey and Strongbow, probably in retaliation for the attack on Kilkenny, led their forces into Munster as some form of punitive action against Domnall Mór Ua Briain. F.X. Martin contends that they were heading for Limerick, then the Ua Briain centre of power.[43] On hearing that Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair was preparing to cross the Shannon in order to assist Domnall Mór Ua Briain, Strongbow called in reinforcements from Dublin. This force of Dublin Ostmen

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[38] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 137; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 331; Martin, 'Overlord', pp 102–3; Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 67: Curtis suggests that Diarmait Mac Carthaig was in conflict with his own son Cormac Liathánach at this point. If so, it would have been an opportune time to mount a raid on Lismore. It is also possible that intervention in the affairs of Desmond was at the invitation of Cormac, much like it was in 1176 when Cormac and his father's positions were reversed.

[39] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 103; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 331.

[40] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 331.

[41] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 103.

[42] *ATig.*, 1173. Orpen, *Normans*, i, p. 332: Orpen suggests that the castle of Kilkenny, probably a 'motte-castle' add been built with the agreement of Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic, king of Osraige in whose territory it was situated. This would then suggest that it was Mac Gilla Pátraic who bore the brunt of Domnall Mór Ua Briain's plundering.

[43] Martin 'Overlord', p. 103.

and the town's garrison marched towards Cashel where Strongbow was awaiting them. Well informed by their scouts, Domnall Mór Ua Briain and Máenmaigi Ua Conchobair, were able to intercept the Dublin force at Thurles where they were routed; according to the Annals of Tigernach, '1700 of the foreigners were slain'.[44] On hearing of this disaster, Strongbow and De Montmorency retreated with their forces back to Waterford in some disarray.[45]

The defeat at Thurles precipitated a particularly precarious point in the affairs of the Leinster lordship and those of the English colony as a whole.[46] However, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, for reasons that are unclear, and not for the first or last time, failed to capitalise on his success and returned to Connacht after the victory at Thurles. Domnall Mór Ua Briain too returned to Limerick.[47] It is probable that Ruaidrí wished to avoid a pitched battle with the main body of the Leinster forces, even in a weakened state. Within Leinster, relations with the Uí Chennselaig were strained but, according to Orpen, there was no general rising and a putative revolt by one of Domnall Caomhánach sons seems to have come to nothing.[48] It is not improbable that this was in fact a rebellion against Domnall Caomhánach by his own son, not an uncommon occurrence in this period.[49]

Giraldus recounts how Strongbow was 'in effect under siege, and did not attempt to go anywhere outside the city of Waterford'. In this predicament, Strongbow sent word to Raymond le Gros in Wales, requesting his return and promising him his

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[44] *ATig.*, 1174; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 333: Orpen puts the figure at 700; Martin 'Overlord', p. 104 goes with Giraldus's figure of 400; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 139; *AU*, 1174: puts it succinctly: 'The battle of Durlus [was gained] by Domnall Ua Briain and by Conchobur Maenmhaighi upon the people of the son of the Empress'; *AI*, 1174: records that of the 'grey foreigners' some 'seven hundred or somewhat more being slain'.

[45] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 333.

[46] Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 67: Curtis describes Thurles as the 'first open victory of the Irish' and would appear to view this as the catalyst for an all-out revolt against the English. Its importance might be exaggerated. While revolts did subsequently break out in the Ostmen towns of Wexford and Waterford, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair can probably be regarded as having been in conflict with the Anglo-Normans since his and Domnall Mór Ua Briain's attack on Kilkenny the previous year. In addition, neither Domnall Mór Ua Briain nor Diarmait Mac Carthaig participated in Ruaidrí's forthcoming attack on Meath.

[47] *ATig.*, 1174.

[48] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 334.

[49] Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, Diarmait Mac Carthaig and Henry II all suffered from ambitious offspring.

sister Basilia in marriage and to restore him to the constableship of Leinster should he do so quickly and with a strong force.[50] At this stage Strongbow and his followers, outnumbered by and suspicious of, the Ostmen, had withdrawn to Inis Teimle, on the Suir, for their own safety.[51]

This offer, if any was needed, was enough to encourage Le Gros's prompt return to Ireland. Arriving at Wexford with his forces in fifteen ships, and accompanied by Meiler fitz Henry, they were just in time to prevent a massacre of the garrison and English population of the town, at least according to Giraldus.[52] After meeting with Strongbow at Inis Teimle they proceeded to Wexford where the marriage of Basilia and Le Gros went ahead.[53] As part of the marriage agreement, as offered to Le Gros as an incentive to return, he was granted the cantreds of Forth and Odrone in fee as well as Glascarrig.[54] According to the *Song*, he was also given custody of the infant daughter of Robert de Quency to 'hold her inheritance' of Duffry.[55] However, in circumstances that are unclear, she was taken by Philip de Prendergast.[56] No sooner had the party departed for Wexford than revolt broke out against the English garrison in Waterford. Fretellus, the governor of Waterford, and some of his men were killed by the Ostmen he had tasked with bringing him down the Suir to follow Strongbow.[57] This was followed by the massacre of any English inhabitants of the town that could be found 'without respect for age or sex'.[58] The garrison was initially able to stay holed up in Reginald's Tower before emerging and putting down the revolt.[59]

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[50] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 139; *Song*, 3012–35: this is explicit in *Expugnatio* and strongly implied in the *Song*.

[51] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 335: sometimes Inis Doimhle, now Little Island.

[52] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 141; *The Song*, 3000–33: has Raymond arrive near or at Waterford, arrange a parley with Strongbow on the Isle of Inis-Teimhne to discuss the conditions of his marriage to Basilia, before then fighting their way to Wexford.

[53] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 335: Orpen suggests that they were refused entry to Waterford at this point.

[54] *The Song*, 3060–9.

[55] Ibid., 3035–9.

[56] Ibid., 3040–3.

[57] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 335; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 141.

[58] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 141; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 336; *AI*, 1174: states that 'The Constable of Port Láirge with two hundred others fell at the hands of the foreigners of the fort itself.'

[59] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 141.

De Lacy's continuing absence was also causing difficulties in the Meath lordship. One of his vassals, Richard le Flemming's castle at Slane was attacked by O'Carroll, king of Uriel, 'the rebel MacDunlevy', O'Rourke and 'the king Melaghlin'.[60] The castle was destroyed and the garrison were slain.[61] Strongbow's position seems to have recovered considerably at this point for he was capable of launching a hosting into Meath apparently in response. Emmet O'Byrne, uses Strongbow's response to the attack on Slane as evidence of discord between Diarmaid Mac Murchada's successors and Strongbow, a description of Domnall Caomhánach and Muirchertach Mac Murchada as 'His enemies of Leinster' when they are with Strongbow on a campaign in Meath. When this line is looked at, with those immediately before and after, the context becomes clearer.[62]

> And the earl had already conquered
> His enemies of Leinster:
> For he had with him Murtough,
> And next Donnel Kavanagh,[63]

Muirchertach Mac Murchada, Domnall Caomhánach might have been his enemies but they have already been conquered and have now joined with Strongbow's forces as tributary kings or allies. There follows a list of the major princes of Leinster.[64] This in turn is followed by:

> And all the hostages of renown,
> The noblest of Leinster,
> The earl, you must know, had with him,
> According to the ancient custom.[65]

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[60] *Song*, 3175–89; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 337–8.

[61] *Song*, 3198–9.

[62] *Song*, 3208–11; O'Byrne, 'The MacMurroughs', p. 167.

[63] *Song*, 3208–11: in his translation he includes a page heading, 'The Earls Allies'.

[64] *Song*, 3211–17: those named are Mac Donnchad, Mac Dalwy, O'More, O'Dempsey, O'Duvegan 'the hoary old man', O'Brien of the Duffry, Gilmoholmock, MacKelan and O'Lorcan of Obarthy.

[65] *Song*, 3218–21.

This, far from suggesting discord, shows that either Strongbow was able to call on military support from the subject kings in Leinster, just as kings of Leinster would according to custom, or that they had given him hostages, again as was customary for those accepting over-lordship.

The exact chronology of events here is uncertain; it is likely that Hugh de Lacy made a return to Meath after the attack on Slane before departing again for England. It is probably after the attack on Slane and not before it that he 'fortified a house at Trim' and left behind a garrison under Hugh Tyrrell.[66] According to the *Song*, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, on hearing of Hugh de Lacy's departure, was angered by the fortifying of the castle at Trim and began raising an army.[67] Regardless of his feelings about the new fortification of Trim, the absence of Hugh de Lacy and the recent difficulties of Strongbow in Leinster and the successful attack on Slane might have appeared to the high-king as an opportunity to drive the English from Meath.[68] It is also possible that Ruaidrí's decision to attack was a response to Strongbow's recent intervention.[69]

Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair's impressive army contained contingents from Ulster, Meath, Breffny, Uriel, Uladh, Cinel Owen, Cinel Connel effectively all of Leth Cuinn, the northern half of the island of Ireland.[70] This force it seems met little in the way of resistance. Giraldus tells us that Ruaidrí 'crossed the Shannon and overran Meath with a strong force. Finding all the castles there empty and deserted, he burned them down and razed them to the ground right up to the very borders of Dublin.'[71] The garrison at Trim

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[66] *Song*, 3222–8; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 338: Orpen points out that the description in the *Song* is important to our understanding of the earliest castles in Ireland:

'Then Hugh de Lacy

Fortified a house at Trim,

And threw a trench around it,

And then enclosed it with a stockade.'

[67] *Song*, 3232–5.

[68] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 338–9; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 65: suggests that Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair and Domnall Mór Ua Briain had been acting together all along. The absence of Domnall in the attack on Meath and Ruaidrí's attack on Thomond the following year (1175) suggest this might not have been the case.

[69] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 338.

[70] *Song*, 3238–59; Byrne, *Ir. kings*, p. 168; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 55.

[71] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, pp 139, 141; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 337: it seems likely that Giraldus is referring to the same campaign by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair in both instances.

under Hugh Tyrell faced with such odds, and having had little hope of holding out in such a position, abandoned the castle.[72] This, and the earlier abandonment of the castle of Kilkenny, show that these early earth-and-timber castles, be they motte or ringwork, were not capable of holding out against the large armies Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair could field.

Ruaidrí's forces, having first burnt the house and levelled the ramparts, then withdrew.[73] At this point having already received word of the attack on Meath, Strongbow assembled the forces of Leinster, both Anglo-Norman and Irish, but arrived too late to prevent the destruction of Trim.[74] They arrived quickly enough to be able to use cavalry to harry the retreating army but only managed to cut off a small number of them.[75] Tellingly, Ruaidrí's forces had no intention to stand and fight a pitched battle, even if as according to the *Song*, the odds were overwhelmingly in their favour.[76] Giraldus would have it that, 'as Ruaidrí had experienced Le Gros valour on previous occasions, he retired to his own territory and did not await the arrival of such a formidable enemy.'[77] Another explanation for Ruaidrí's actions might be the temporary nature of the alliances that had made such a large composite force possible, Martin's description of 'fair-weather allies' might well be fitting. It is also worth noting that despite Ruaidrí coming to the assistance of Domnall Mór Ua Briain against the forces of Leinster under the command of Hervey de Montmorency earlier in the year, there is

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[72] Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 67.

[73] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 339; *Song*, 3300–3: Orpen uses motte in *Normans* but rampart in his translation of the *Song*; Hayden, *Trim Castle*, p. 82: excavations found the remains of an extensive ringwork rather than a mote as the first phase of Anglo-Norman occupation. Two distinct phases of occupation are identifiable, being differentiated by structures destroyed by fire in late 1172 or 1173. They include pallisading and a granary.

[74] Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland*, p. 50: follows Giraldus's lead in claiming it is Raymond rather than Strongbow who drives Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair out of Meath.

[75] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 339–40.

[76] *Song*, 3190–1, 3238–60, of the attack on Richard le Fleming at Slane a, 'Full twenty thousand came upon them – Of the Irish came upon them', while the formidable list of Ruaidrí's army is as follows: 'O'Flaherty, Mac Dermot, Mac Geraghty, O'Kelly, king of Hy Many, O'Hart, O'Finaghty, O'Carbery, O'Flannagan, two O'Monaghans (?), O'Dowd, O'Shaughnessy of Poltilethban, King Melaghlin, king O'Rourke, O'Malory of the Kinel O'Neill, Mac Dunlevy, King O'Carroll, Mac Tierney who was so base, Mac Scelling and Mac Artan, the rebel Mac Garaghan, Mackelan, O'Neill, the king of Kinel Owen and all the kings of Leath-Cuinn'.

[77] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 141.

no mention of any Munster kings involved in Ruaidrí's attack on Meath, while the forces of the Leinster Irish were fighting alongside Strongbow. This was not part of any nationwide resistance against the two earls, rather it was a show of strength on the part of Ruaidrí.[78] It does not seem likely that this was an attempt to regain those parts of Meath lost to Hugh de Lacy but more likely it was a response to Strongbow's raid into Munster, and Hugh de Lacy's expanding Meath lordship. It was both retaliatory and a warning. Ruaidrí as high-king could not sit idly by while the Anglo-Norman lordships of the English colony continued with an expansionistic policy. Nor, it would seem, could he rely on the sustained support of his erstwhile subject kings in a major campaign to recover the Meath lordship, thus threatening the continued existence of the colony. With limited options, all with huge risks, mounting a massive raid, in the tradition of earlier high-kings and traditional Gaelic warfare, was a cautious and calculated response. It acted as a warning (ultimately unheeded) to the Anglo-Norman earls that their actions would not go unchecked. It also served to remind the kings of Ireland of Ruaidrí's paramount position among them. Ruaidrí as high-king could not risk an all-out war with the English colony and possible intervention from the English king nor could he be seen to do nothing. For a brief period, it seemed as if Ruaidrí's gamble would pay off, for Giraldus tells that 'the island enjoyed a temporary period of peace' although he does qualify this by adding that it was 'due to the fear which Le Gros inspired'.[79]

In the temporary absence of Hugh de Lacy it was the forces of Leinster that were crucial in securing the Meath lordship and restoring some order to the colony.[80] This was short-lived. In 1175 we read that 'Maghnus Húa MaelSechlainn was hung by the Foreigners of Dublin and Tulach Ard'.[81] Exactly which foreigners were responsible

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[78] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 105; Curtis, *Med. Ire.*,, p. 67 sees this event as part of a widespread revolt.

[79] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 141.

[80] Ibid., Giraldus credits Raymond le Gros as expected; *The Song*, 3337–8: credits Hugh Tyrrell with re-fortifying Trim.

[81] *ATig.*, 1175; *AU*, 1175: does not mention where he was killed, but in the next sentence describes Meath being wasted, from Athlone to Drogheda; Orpen, *Normans*, i, p. 344: tells us that Magnus O'Meghalin was hanged at Trim, giving *ATig.* as his reference. However, *ATig.*, 1175: states 'do Gallaib Atha cliath' and 'Tulcha Airdi', Dublin and Tulach Ard. Tulach Ard is difficult to locate exactly. It could be Tulcha Airdi / Telcha airdde / (Tullyard 3.2km east of Trim), this it would seem to be the basis Orpen's assumption that it is Trim where Magnus is hanged. Why he ignores Dublin is unclear; see Hogan,

for the Meath king's death is unclear but it would seem likely that this was a reprisal for the burning of Trim the previous year, as 'King Melaghlin' is listed as being among King Ruaidrí's supporters.[82] Ruaidrí appears to have made no attempt to stop the re-settlement of Meath or the re-building of existing castles and erection of new ones. It also seems that he was willing to accept that the lordships of Leinster and Meath were now lost to the foreigners.[83]

Following Ruaidrí's attack on Meath, one of the key events in Giraldus's narrative is Raymond le Gros's capture of Limerick.[84] According to Giraldus, Domnall Mór Ua Briain had committed some unspecified act of treachery and by doing so had broken his oath of loyalty to the king. He had also been conducting himself too arrogantly while not showing enough respect (to whom is also not specified).[85] As a result of this, Le Gros gathered together a force that included 120 knights, 300 mounted archers, and 400 foot archers and launched an attack on Limerick at the beginning of October. As is typical of Giraldus, his account is complete with acts of great heroism by his kinsman Le Gros and his nephew (a knight, David the Welshman) and Meiler fitz Henry.[86]

The final episode in the *Song* is the same assault on Limerick, although the story breaks off before the city is taken. Whereas Giraldus makes no mention of Earl Strongbow in his account, the *Song* includes him in the build-up to the attack. According to the *Song* it is Strongbow, immediately after the recapture of Meath, who

Onamasticon Geodelicum, pp 627, 655; *AU*, 1175 sums up events in Meath succinctly: 'Maghnus Ua Mael-Seachnaill was hanged by the Foreigners. Meath was wasted from Ath-luain to Drochait-atha'.

[82] *Song*, 3189; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 344.

[83] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 344–5.

[84] Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland*, p. 48; Henry II had left behind garrisons in both Limerick and Cork before his departure from Ireland in 1172. What became of them is not known.

[85] Giralus, *Expugnatio*, p. 149; in the chapter immediately preceding the account of the capture of Limerick Giraldus tells us of Irish princes that 'for although they may not hesitate to go back on their word within a very short space of time, thanks to that fickleness which comes of their innately unstable temperament, they are not therefore absolved from this bond of their pledged word and oath of fealty. For men are free to make contracts of this sort, but not to break them.' It might be that this and the subsequent reference to treachery relate to Domnall Mór Ua Briain's attack on Kilkenny in 1173; Orpen, *Normans*, i, p. 345 contends that it was to avenge the 1173 defeat at Thurles that Strongbow authorized Raymond's expedition.

[86] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, pp 149–53; *AU*, 1175 simply states: 'A hosting by the Foreigners to Limerick, so that they overcame it.'

makes the decision to 'march against' Domnall Mór Ua Briain.[87] Orpen concedes that while Strongbow was willing to authorise the expedition it was Raymond le Gros who was in command. This in one sense is true; Le Gros was in charge of the expedition and, as Orpen credibly argues, Strongbow might well have been absent in England at the time.[88] What Giraldus ignores and later Orpen only alludes to is the role played by Strongbow in preparation and presumably planning while leaving the execution to the ablest of his military commanders. This was not a solo run or adventurer's gamble in the vein of John de Courcy two years later.[89]

The *Song* relates how, after Trim was re-fortified by Hugh Tyrrell and perhaps after Hugh de Lacy had returned, Strongbow 'went marching back and forwards' throughout Leinster until he made the decision that he would move against Domnall Mór Ua Briain.[90] While Giraldus deals with both events separately, the *Song* suggests that there is more of a direct connection: it is the success against Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair (in particular his hasty retreat from Meath while being harried by Strongbow's cavalry) that made an attack on the Ua Briain more feasible. There are three connected reasons for this. First it showed that Strongbow's forces, when gathered in strength, were at the very least equal to those that could be mustered by a provincial king. Second, it must have been apparent that the chances of Ruaidrí intervening on someone else's behalf were now small if it meant risking his own forces against those of Strongbow in open battle. Third, the notable absence of an Ua Briain contingent in those forces that joined Ruaidrí's attack on Meath suggested a cooling of relations between Domnall Mór Ua Briain and the high-king. With the threat of Ruaidrí intervening now reduced, for Strongbow, it must have seemed that the chances of successfully expanding his influence in Munster were high.

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[87] *Song*, 3342–7; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 141: the period of peace mentioned here by Giraldus is not referred to.

[88] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 345.

[89] Flanders, *De Courcy*, pp 134–47: there are, however, some similarities between the 1175 attack on Limerick deep within Ua Briain territory and De Courcy's arrival at Downpatrick in February 1177. In both cases the Anglo-Norman forces were able to pass through their enemy's territory unhindered and, perhaps more surprisingly, unnoticed. There the similarities end. Raymond le Gros led an assault on a fortified Hiberno-Norse town while John De Courcy ended up in a pitched battle against the Irish of Dál Fiatach and Ulaid.

[90] *Song*, 3338–47.

In the *Song*, it is Strongbow who summoned what seems to be most of the available forces of Leinster:

> His host he summons, all at once,
> The strongest of Leinster,
> That all should be in attendance,
> Old and young, small and great.[91]

It is this force that Le Gros, Strongbow's vassal and constable of Leinster, is given command of. It also seems that some forces were recruited among the baronage of Meath.[92] The *Song* again makes it clear that this expedition is at Strongbow's behest:

> Knights he retained and a goodly force
> By the earl's command,
> Knight's he had and common soldiers,
> Archers, serjeants, and fighting-men,
> To put to shame and outlawry
> the Irish enemies of the king.[93]

The meeting point for these forces seems to have been in Ossory, where they were joined by those of Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic either as an ally, perhaps being called on for support as a subject king of Leinster. There is no mention of any Uí Chennselaig contingent but this might be connected to the killing, earlier in the year, of Domnall Caomhánach Mac Murchada, perhaps Strongbow's most reliable supporter among the Uí Chennselaig.[94] The Annals of Tigernach tally with the *Song* regarding the presence of Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic and were any other significant Irish kings present they would likely have been mentioned.[95] In the *Song*, Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic was responsible for guiding the combined force as far as Limerick, presumably because his

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[91] Ibid., 3348–51.

[92] *Song*, 3375–7.

[93] Ibid., 3364–9.

[94] *ATig.*, 1175 states that he was killed by the Húa Nialláin.

[95] *ATig.*, 1175 also states that they 'came to Limerick without being perceived by the Dál Cais'; here Dál Cais is used instead of Ua Briain.

scouts were more familiar with the territory.[96] This suggests that getting to Limerick undetected or at least quickly enough, to avoid interception by an Ua Briain force was part of a preconceived plan to capture the town.[97] It seems that there were some doubts regarding Domnall's loyalty but this was allayed by his personal oaths and perhaps more convincingly by his presence in the van.

The actual assault on Limerick is covered in considerable detail by Giraldus and in the *Song*, however this detail focuses on individual acts of bravery rather than offering much in the way of explanation as to how its defences were so quickly overcome. While Giraldus refers to the city walls and the *Song* refers to 'a wall and a dyke', it is apparent from both accounts that it is the River Shannon itself which encircles much of the city that provide its principal defence. After several attempts were made to cross the river, a fordable point was found. Once across, the defenders on the contested riverbank were quickly routed, fleeing back into the city, and its walls were soon overrun. Both accounts are very similar although the *Song* breaks off just as the river is crossed.[98]

The Annals of Tigernach add yet another dimension. From their author's perspective, 'the Foreigners of Dublin and Waterford, and Domnall Húa Gilla Patraic, king of Ossory' were there at the invitation of Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, 'king of Ireland'.[99] Their attack on Limerick coincided with a major hosting of the Connacht

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[96] *Song*, 3386–91.

[97] Ibid., 3413–17: the lines 'They march all night and the next day – Now in woods, now in the open' suggest something of haste being made. A forced marched at night, perhaps through forests and other difficult terrain must have been a formidable undertaking.

[98] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, pp 151, 155–7, 324 (historical notes); *Song*, 3432–59: Giraldus credits a young knight 'David the Welshman' with finding the way across only to return thus allowing Meiler fitz Henry to cross followed by Raymond le Gros and the rest of their force. In the *Song* it is Meiler fitz Henry who leads the forces across the river. Martin suggests that as it is Giraldus who gives the fuller account it can be taken as more accurate. In this instance I feel that the account in the *Song* might in fact be closer to the truth. According to the *Song*, Meiler was a knight of St David's and his repeated war cry was 'St David!' as he rallied his troops to cross the river. The similarity of a knight of St David's, patron saint of Wales and a knight called David 'the Welshman' is suspicious. David 'the Welshman' appears nowhere else in the *Expugnatio*. If both authors were constructing their narratives from similar accounts but at some remove from events one expects some differences and confusion with details. However, the use of David 'the Welshman', by Giraldus, as a means of highlighting Meiler's eagerness for glory suggests he is something of a literary creation.

[99] *ATig.*, 1175.

forces against the Ua Briain, which resulted in the burning of much of Thomond, and ultimately with the deposing and expulsion of Domnall Mór Ua Briain.[100]

The three sources do not quite contradict each other but rather, through selective omission of details, each shows something of its author's differing perspectives. As far as the principal Irish source, the Annals of Tigernach, is concerned, the attack on Limerick was part of wider campaign orchestrated by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair against his sometime ally but more often rival Domnall Mór Ua Briain. Giraldus Cambrensis and the *Song* both ignore Ruaidrí's involvement. Both the Annals of Tigernach and the *Song* recognise the role played by Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic which is ignored by Giraldus.

Because of the difficulties created by inconsistent accounts, some tentative conjecture is required. Working from the few sources that we have it seems likely that this was a campaign planned by Strongbow and not just supported by the Anglo-Norman forces that could be mustered in Leinster but also including one of Strongbow's most important subject kings, possibly the most important at this point as Domnall Caomhánach was killed sometime earlier in the year.[101] The absence of any Uí Chennselaig contingent could also be explained by this death. The fact that Raymond le Gros is charged with leading this attack is not unusual. It is really Giraldus, in his efforts to elevate the role played by his kinsman and favoured protagonist, who suggests an attempt by Le Gros to seize Limerick for himself. In fact Giraldus it seems is careful to explain that this suggestion was in the form of a malicious rumour spread by Hervey de Montmorency, whereby Le Gros was planning to seize not only Limerick for himself but also 'the whole of Ireland'.[102] As this was a rumour created to injure him, it cannot be seen to suggest any real act of disloyalty yet it serves as a means to elevate Le Gros's achievements to the same level as those of Strongbow. It is possible that Henry II took these rumours seriously, much as he did the possibility of Strongbow establishing his independence in 1172.

Strongbow's absence from such a major expedition, while somewhat out of character, is not remarkable in itself, nor is his choosing the evidently capable Le Gros

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[100] *ATig.*, 1175. It seems that Domnall Ua Briain was replaced with a more cooperative or less threatening half-brother Murchad as king of Thomond by the victorious Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair. Domnall however was back in power the following year.

[101] *ATig.*, 1175.

[102] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 159.

in his absence. Orpen suggests that Strongbow was across the Irish Sea with the king around this time.[103] Illness or an injury could equally have been a cause. Perhaps the death of Domnall Caomhánach and the instability that this could cause among the Uí Chennselaig of Leinster would have made any long absence on the part of Strongbow risky, particularly with so much of his military resources engaged in Munster.

This still leaves the involvement of Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair to be explained. From the perspective of the Annals of Tigernach, this was a campaign to strike a major blow against his rival Domnall Mór Ua Briain, perhaps always with the intention of replacing him with a more pliable Ua Briain as king of Thomond. As was so often the case with campaigns by Irish kings, the objective was not to seize territory but rather about securing tribute and reducing rivals to client or subject status. For Ruaidrí, allowing Le Gros's attack on Limerick, either as a diversion for his own forces to utilise or simply as means of weakening Domnall Mór Ua Briain, would both have been useful. Given the history of Anglo-Norman actions in Ireland up to this point it would seem unlikely that the long-term implications of the loss of Limerick to Strongbow's forces can have escaped Ruaidrí. It would also seem unlikely, although not impossible, that Ruaidrí's own animosity towards Domnall Mór or the persistent hereditary rivalry between the Ua Conchobair and the Ua Briain would have allowed him to overlook the threat that Anglo-Normans established on his southern flank might pose.[104] Orpen suggests that Ruaidrí's actions could explain by the terms of the Treaty of Windsor, which was in the final stages of being negotiated at this time.[105] According to the treaty,

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[103] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 350.

[104] *ATig.*, 1175; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 347–8 suggests that it was the blinding of Diarmait and Mathgamain Ua Briain by Domnall in his own house at Castleconnell that might have been the immediate cause of Ruaidrí's decision to invade Thomond. Both Diarmait and Mathgamain were potentially rival claimants to Ua Briain kingship, being members of senior branches of the family. On the same day as Diarmait and Mathgamain were blinded the son of 'the Gilla Lethderg' Ua Conchobair was killed by Domnall. This killing of a kinsman of Ruaidrí's by Domnall would seem just as likely a cause: Byrne, *Kings and high-kings*, p. 297. Diarmait seems to have been a son of Domnall's uncle Tadg Gláe while Mathgamain could have been his own brother or possibly a half-brother: Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 69 suggests that it was Domnall's conflict with Mac Carthaig of Desmond that caused Ruaidrí to intervene in Munster and seek assistance from Raymond.

[105] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 346; Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland*, p. 52: Lydon is more emphatic here: 'it is true that immediately after the treaty was concluded it was invoked by O'Connor against O'Brien of Thomond'.

Ruaidrí would be obliged to remove (and presumably replace) any Irish kings who were 'rebels to the king of England', a broad category into which Domnall Ua Briain would easily fit.[106] Ruaidrí also had recourse to call on the support of 'the constable of the king of England in that land' to remove any such rebellious kings, which could conveniently explain Le Gros's involvement.[107] If the terms of the treaty were to be upheld, and Ruaidrí's position was now guaranteed by King Henry II, this would also remove the potential threat that a permanent Anglo-Norman presence in Limerick could pose. While we cannot know how much trust Ruaidrí placed in the treaty, it does genuinely seem to have been negotiated in good faith. The Annals of Tigernach do offer some insight into how it was optimistically understood from an Irish perspective:

> Cadla Húa Dubthaig came out of England from the Son of the Empress, having with him the peace of Ireland, and the kingship thereof, both Foreigner and Gael, to Rúaidri Húa Conchobair, and to every provincial king his province from the king of Ireland, and their tributes to Ruaidri.[108]

Perhaps helped by Le Gros's success, Ruaidrí 'burnt the greater part of Thomond' and was able to expel Domnall Ua Briain and replace him with an unnamed son of his (Ruaidrí's) half-brother Murchad Ua Briain.[109] Ruaidrí then continued his campaign into Ormond by launching an attack from Loch Derg which resulted in the defeat of the Ua Briain who were forced to surrender hostages.[110] As Domnall had either fled or had been banished into Ormond by Ruaidrí it seems probable that it was he who had surrendered these hostages, in so doing excepting Ruaidrí's overlordship.

Raymond le Gros 'spent some time in arranging the affairs of the city', bringing in provisions and one presumes strengthening its so recently breached defences where possible. Leaving behind a garrison of 50 knights, 200 mounted archers and 200 foot

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[106] Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, pp 68–9.

[107] Ibid., p. 69.

[108] *ATig.*, 1175; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 351: argues that the treaty was from the beginning unworkable.

[109] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 347: Murchad Ua Briain might also have been a half-brother of Domnall Ua Briain.

[110] *ATig.*, 1175.

archers under the command of his cousin Miles of St David's, Le Gros returned to Leinster with the remainder of his forces.[111]

In the spring of 1176 Henry II, who had given some credence to the rumours that Hervey de Montmorency had allegedly been spreading, sent over four envoys, two of whom were to return to England with Le Gros.[112] The spring of 1176 would also herald a change of fortune for the mercurial Domnall Ua Briain who was able to regain his position as king of Thomond, having already made peace with Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair.[113]As Raymond was preparing to depart for England, word reached Leinster that a newly emboldened Domnall Ua Briain, free from the threat of attack from Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, was laying siege to the city of Limerick. According to Giraldus, Strongbow was understandably anxious to come to the assistance of the Limerick garrison. Unlike the campaign into Munster the previous year, where Giraldus, the *Song* and the Annals of Tigernach all give slightly different accounts, we are reliant solely on Giraldus's account of the relief of Limerick in 1176. As can be expected from Giraldus, Le Gros's exploits take centre stage. Strongbow was apparently faced with difficulties when trying to muster his forces. According to Giraldus, his soldiers were disheartened by Raymond's impending departure. Strongbow was forced to intercede on Raymond's behalf with the king's envoys and once again he turned to Le Gros to lead the forces of Leinster into Munster. It does seem that it was in fact serious illness that was the reason that Strongbow could not take command of his forces personally. On this occasion, Le Gros was again joined by King Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic of Osraige and Murchad king of the Uí Chennselaig. Domnall Ua Briain, on hearing that the Leinster army had been mobilised against him, lifted the siege and moved his forces to the pass of Cashel where he hoped to hold them off. An already naturally defensible position was made more so by blocking the path with ditches and a palisade. This, however, was to prove inadequate to halt the Leinster forces. According to Giraldus, on the eve of Easter, Meiler fitz Henry was able to fight a path through the defenders. By the third day of Easter they had arrived in Limerick.[114]

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[111] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, pp 157, 159, 325: Miles was the son of David FitzGerald, bishop of St David's.

[112] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 161.

[113] *ATig*., 1176.

[114] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, pp 161–5.

This was soon followed by what, according to Giraldus, was a series of three-way peace talks involving Le Gros, Domnall Ua Briain and Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair.[115] While the recent actions of Domnall suggested that an understanding of some kind had already been reached between him and Ruaidrí, a more formal agreement seems to have been arranged, perhaps at Le Gros's insistence.[116] Both kings also renewed their pledges of loyalty to the English king, giving hostages to act as sureties.[117] It would seem likely that a formal declaration of peace between the two Irish kings was a prerequisite to their renewed declarations of loyalty. Of this whole process the only part recorded in the Irish annals was that 'Domnall Húa Bríain, king of Thomond, made peace with Húa Conchobair, and gave him hostages'.[118]

With Limerick now seemingly secure, Le Gros was free to become involved in the internecine wars of the Mac Carthaig of Desmond. Diarmait Mac Carthaig, who had been overthrown by his son Cormac Liathánach, sent emissaries to Raymond appealing for help 'as a liege man and loyal subject of the king of England'.[119] Raymond set out with his forces for Cork and was soon able to restore Diarmait. Under the pretext of a truce, Cormac Liathánach was able to capture and then imprison his father and again assume the kingship of Desmond. Diarmait for his part was able to orchestrate Cormac's assassination from his prison. It was against this background of entanglement in Desmond that a messenger brought Le Gros a coded letter from his wife Basilia which read:

> Dearest, be it known to you, my true and loving husband, that that large molar tooth, which   caused me so much pain, has now fallen out. So I beg of you, if you have any thought for   your own future safety or mine, return quickly and without delay.[120]

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[115] Ibid., p. 163.

[116] *ATig.*, 1176.

[117] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 163.

[118] *ATig.*, 1176.

[119] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 109; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 355; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 165; *ATig.*, 1176; both Martin and Orpen claim that Diarmait had already been imprisoned by his son but this seems to stem from an assumption of Orpen's. Giraldus's account makes no such claim. The Annals of Tigernach do mention Diarmait being imprisoned but this would seem to correspond with him being imprisoned after his initial restoration by Raymond.

[120] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 165.

For Le Gros, the meaning of this message was clear: Strongbow was dead; the situation was perilous; get back to Leinster as quickly as possible.

Raymond returned quickly to Limerick where it was decided that, in the light of Strongbow's death, and his own impending recall to England, holding Limerick, as isolated as it was, would be too difficult. For Le Gros, fears of unrest within Leinster or perhaps the threat that might be posed to the lordship and the colony as a whole by Irish kings emboldened by news of Strongbow's death made withdrawal a strategic decision. It allowed him to withdraw and regroup all the forces at his disposal for the defence of Leinster should it prove necessary.[121] The concealment of Strongbow's death for fear that news of it might trigger a rebellion by the Irish shows something how the Anglo-Normans perceived the security of their position. The fragmentary nature of opposition to Anglo-Norman expansion and the continually shifting series of alliances and feuds among the Irish rulers had proved invaluable to the survival of the colony. It must have been a very real fear that something could spark a more unified resistance. Le Gros, with little other option available, granted or rather returned custody of the town to Domnall Ua Briain on the understanding that he would surrender it if commanded to do so by the English king. Despite oaths and hostages being given to guarantee this agreement, no sooner than the garrison had left the town, Domnall broke down the bridge they had just crossed and set fire to the town in four places.[122] According to Giraldus, when King Henry was told of the loss of Limerick he replied: 'The assault on Limerick was a bold enterprise, the relief of the city even more so, but only in abandoning the place did they show any wisdom'.[123]

It is easy to view the burning of Limerick as simply a rash act of treachery on Domnall's part but this is hardly the case. If the Anglo-Normans established themselves in Limerick it would be far too convenient a base to expand further into Thomond. As he had already learned, Limerick, despite its defences, could not be held against a

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[121] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 357.

[122] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 167; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 357: the account of the loss of Limerick as given by Giraldus is plausible if not highly probable. It does, however, allow Raymond to survive the episode with his reputation intact. The loss was through treachery and betrayal rather than as the result of military defeat whereas, according to the Ulster annals, 'The Saxons were expelled by Domnall Ua Briain from Limerick, by a league being made against them': *AU*, 1176. The end result is ultimately the same.

[123] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 167; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 357.

concerted attack by the Anglo-Normans. Aware that they might soon return (as they would the following year), it made sense to deny them the town and if that was not possible at least make sure it was no longer 'well furnished with fine buildings, and overflowing with provisions'.[124]

Could there have been any truth to the suspicions of Henry that Le Gros had planned to keep Limerick for himself as a fiefdom independent of Leinster and indeed England? The position that Raymond found himself in on the death of Strongbow suggests that this was unlikely if not impossible. Raymond had captured the town and held it with soldiers from Leinster, the withdrawal of whom would have left Raymond dangerously exposed, lacking, as he was, substantial forces of his own. His willingness to effectively abandon the town (he surely had doubts about Domnall's reliability) and withdraw the entire garrison to Leinster when the lordship was endangered strongly suggests that that was where his loyalties lay. Henry was pragmatic in his approach to Ireland and the emergence of a third Anglo-Norman lordship as at counter to Leinster and Meath would unlikely have caused him too much concern. His fears were of an Anglo-Norman kingdom being established outside of his control (the exploits of John de Courcy in the following years are a case in point). This seems to never have been something Le Gros planned or would have been able to achieve. It could be that the Leinster lordship, expanding into Munster, was once again being viewed as a potential threat. Recalling Raymond as a means of halting Strongbow's ambitions would therefore make sense. In 1171 in somewhat similar circumstances Strongbow had sent Le Gros in his stead when he had been called back from Ireland.[125]

When Le Gros and the Limerick garrison had returned to Dublin, Strongbow's body, which had been kept unburied on his orders, was buried in the church of the Holy Trinity (Christ Church) with Archbishop (later Saint) Laurence O'Toole officiating.[126] The delay in burial was more than likely part of the ruse to keep news of Strongbow's death secret. Strongbow left behind one child by his wife Aífe, a daughter Isabella.[127]

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[124] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 167; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 357.

[125] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 71.

[126] Ibid., p. 167

[127] *DIB*, ii, 556; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 5; *Normans*, i, 359–61: Orpen is of the opinion that a son Gilbert is a later invention by Stanihurst probably based on a common misconception regarding Strongbow's tomb (Richard Stanihurst, *De Rebus in Hibernia Gestis, Book 3*, ed. John Barry and Hiram Morgan (Cork, 2013), p. 293).

Isabella de Clare could have been no more than five years of age on her father's death. Without an adult heir, the lordship's governance and revenues would have been assumed by the royal administration. Crucially, in the context of Leinster's history, Isabella as a royal ward and heiress was to become a valuable prize. The new situation in Ireland forced the king's envoys to reconsider their original plans. Initially it was considered no longer wise to bring Le Gros back to England to explain his actions in Munster. His removal would have seriously weakened the Leinster lordship and the colony as a whole. The royal envoys agreed to leave Raymond as deputy or procurator, a role he had assumed on Strongbow's death, and returned to England to inform the king of events.[128]

It would seem to be the case that Raymond's temporary governorship also left him in charge of the administration of Leinster as it would his successor, William fitz Audelin. Raymond's governorship was not to last long for Fitz Audelin arrived in a matter of weeks. It may be that suspicions regarding his exploits in Munster had not ended with the loss of Limerick or it may be that Henry preferred to appoint a tried and tested administrator (Fitz Audelin was justiciar briefly in 1173) rather than risk stable government with a headstrong warrior at the helm.[129] Fitz Audelin seems to have already been in Ireland for several months when Giraldus tells us that he was 'stalking about the cities of the coast' when Maurice fitz Gerald died early in September 1176.[130]

With Fitz Audelin, Henry sent ten of his own household knights as well as John de Courcy, Robert fitz Stephen and Miles de Cogan, each with an additional accompaniment of ten knights. The addition of these three added a formidable military dimension to Fitz Audelin's administration. Both Fitz Stephen and de Cogan had been

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[128] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, pp 167–9; Powicke (ed.), *Handbook of British chronology*, p. 107; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 6.

[129] *Gesta Henrici*, p. 125; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 6 states that William fitz Audelin was the king's dapifer.

[130] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, pp 171, 173: Giraldus is quite specific: 'about the calends of September', fitz Audelin was also apparently 'gazing from a safe distance upon the mountainous interior and more remote parts of the country' while concentrating on enriching himself. For an account of fitz Audelin's second short period as governor we are heavily reliant on Giraldus; this has its problems, for fitz Audelin is singled out for some of Giraldus's harshest and most venomous criticism. We are told that 'he was always a snake lurking in the grass, offering men poison in the guise of honey', that 'his words are smoother than oil, but they are deadly as spears', 'he was full of guile, a flatterer and a coward, addicted to wine and lust' and 'although he was greedy for money, he was also ambitious for power at court, and loved the court no less than he did gold'; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 7.

involved in the earliest stages of the Anglo-Norman campaigns in Ireland while all three had fought for the king on his campaigns in France.[131] If we are to accept the Treaty of Windsor as evidence for Henry's plans for Ireland, it would seem that consolidating the existing colony and the revenue that this would secure was then more of a priority than further expansion, however the strong military component to Fitz Audelin's commission suggests that this policy was changing.

When Fitz Audelin and his followers arrived in Wexford, Le Gros came south to meet them. Here he surrendered the towns and castles of the colony into Fitz Audelin's care. He also handed over the hostages 'for the whole of Ireland'. At this meeting it is also likely that he transferred control of the Leinster lordship. Raymond, perhaps as a show of strength, or more likely as a matter of formality, chose to meet Fitz Audelin with a 'splendid array of knights' that included Meiler fitz Henry and other relatives. As far as Giraldus is concerned, this display gained nothing but jealousy from Fitz Audelin. Giraldus, not without cause, felt that there now was some form conspiracy against the Geraldines, perhaps at the instigation of Henry II although he is careful to refer only to 'some sentence passed upon them by higher authority.' He further laments that 'worthy men' were only allowed to keep those lands in wild and dangerous areas, closest to 'their Irish enemies' and that it was the destiny of his family to be sought for and held in renown during times of war yet envied and hated when the crises had passed.[132]

These views seem to be justified by Fitz Audelin's actions following the death of Maurice fitz Gerald in September 1176. Fitz Audelin took the castle of Wicklow out of the custody of Maurice's sons and instead granted them custody of Ferns, this was achieved by trickery according to Giraldus. Ferns was hardly an equal exchange, being isolated and 'surrounded on all sides by enemies.' Maurice's sons were intent on making the most of their new situation and soon began building a castle.[133] Meanwhile, Fitz Audelin's nephew Walter 'the German' was made governor of Wexford. He was apparently bribed by Muirchertach Uí Chennselaig, and through some treachery caused the castle to be destroyed.[134] Muirchertach had been recognised as king of the Uí Chennselaig by Strongbow and possibly still resided at Ferns. Understandably, he would have been reluctant to have a Fitz Gerald castle built there. At this time too,

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[131] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 169; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 58.

[132] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, pp 169, 173.

[133] Ibid., p. 171; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 6.

[134] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 171.

Raymond le Gros was deprived of his lands close to Dublin and near Wexford.[135] It was also at this time that Meiler fitz Henry had territory in Kildare taken from him and was given in exchange much more hostile lands in Laois.[136]

It might have seemed likely that the death of Strongbow would lead to at the very least a slowing down of Anglo-Norman expansion in Ireland but this was not the case. In early 1177 John de Courcy (who had arrived with Fitz Audelin) with a small force left Dublin and after quickly passing through Meath and Uriel began his campaign to take Ulster with a surprise attack on Down.[137] This was the first action in De Courcy's long and ultimately successful campaign to carve out a great lordship for himself, eventually exercising greater power within it than those of the other great palatine lords to his south in Meath and Leinster.[138] It was only by 1181, however, that De Courcy was secure in Ulster.[139] While it has often been seen as a freebooting expedition it is unlikely to have occurred without at least tacit consent from the justiciar.

At the Council of Oxford held in May 1177 Henry named John, who was ten years old, as lord of Ireland. This, it was hoped, would solve two problems faced by the king. The first of these was that it provided a substantial territory for his youngest son whose older brothers had already been well provided for. Henry's eldest son and heir, 'the young king' Henry, stood to inherit Anjou, Maine, Touraine, the Vexin and, of course, England. Richard was already ruling in Aquitaine since 1172 and Geoffrey in Brittany since 1169. John meanwhile had already acquired the sobriquet 'Lackland'.[140] The second problem, which, it was hoped, the appointment of John as lord of Ireland would address, was that a strong prince ruling in Ireland would carry far more weight than the justiciar could and would therefore reduce the risk of his great vassals in Ireland becoming too powerful.[141]

At Oxford the problem caused by the minority of Isabella de Clare in Leinster needed urgently to be addressed. Strongbow had rapidly begun the process, with the

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[135] Ibid., p. 173.

[136] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 37.

[137] Ibid., 10.

[138] Ibid., 22.

[139] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 116.

[140] W.L. Warren, *King John* (London, 1966), pp 42–3.

[141] Warren, *King John*, p. 50; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 61.

assistance of his vassals, of transforming Leinster into a feudal lordship but this was not yet complete. Without an overlord of considerable ability at the reins the project risked stalling or potentially failing. This problem was addressed by dividing Leinster into three custodies. Fitz Audelin was given custody of Wexford along with Carlow and with the southern half of Kildare. Robert le Poer was given custody of Osraige, which was detached from Leinster and joined with the royal demesne lands of Waterford. Hugh de Lacy was given custody of the remaining northern part of Leinster and the crown lands around Dublin as well as being made procurator-general.[142] This strengthened control over Leinster yet more needed to be done to ensure stability in Ireland before John came of age. It is perhaps in this light that Henry's speculative grants in Munster should be considered. These were to trusted men and each of the new grantees was required to swear fealty to John as well as to Henry.[143] The kingdom of Desmond (which stretched from Brandon head in Kerry to the River Blackwater near Lismore) was granted to Robert fitz Stephen and Miles de Cogan. The city of Cork (which was already in Anglo-Norman hands) was to be given into their shared custody. The kingdom of Thomond was likewise granted first to Herbert fitz Herbert and Joel de la Pomerai who later the same year both renounced this grant (on the grounds that the territory had yet to be conquered). It was then granted to Philip de Braose.[144]

It seems that at Oxford, or soon after, De Cogan, Fitz Stephen and De Braose agreed to act together. All three, each accompanied by his own forces, arrived at Waterford in November 1177. They soon advanced into Desmond where they were joined by Muirchertach, a disgruntled son of King Diarmait Mac Carthaig. They were also assisted by King Domnall Ua Briain of Thomond (who was presumably settling old scores). In the face of this strange alliance, Diarmait Mac Carthaig seems to have offered little resistance.[145] After arriving in Cork, Fitz Stephen and De Cogan made a treaty with Mac Carthaig whereby they acquired seven cantreds of the kingdom around Cork city while Mac Carthaig retained twenty-four.[146]

The alliance with Domnall Ua Briain was remarkably short lived. Soon after they had established themselves in Cork, Fitz Stephen, De Cogan and De Braose

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[142] *Gesta Henrici*, p. 164; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 3; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire*., p. 61.

[143] *Gesta Henrici*, p. 165; Martin, 'Overlord', p. 112.

[144] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 112; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 32–3.

[145] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 113.

[146] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 6; Curtis, *Med. Ire*., p. 82.

advanced on Limerick. When they were in sight of the town its inhabitants set fire to some of its buildings. At this point, if Giraldus's account is accurate, Fitz Stephan and De Cogan wanted to try to storm the town while De Braose decided instead to withdraw. Philip de Braose would never return and the grant later passed to Philip's nephew, William de Braose.[147] While there might have been justification for granting away Thomond from the frequently rebellious Domnall Ua Briain, there seems to have been no such justification in Desmond as Diarmait Mac Carthaig had remained loyal to Henry. If this was a flagrant breach of the Treaty of Windsor, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair seems not to have been in a position (or felt inclined) to raise an objection much less intervene. Perhaps Ruaidrí was too preoccupied with internal dynastic disputes then ongoing in Connacht. It could also have been that the weakening of Domnall Ua Briain's power to the south suited him.[148]

1177 also saw the first Anglo-Norman attack on Connacht. Miles de Cogan, after his successful campaign in Desmond and the abortive attack on Limerick, was back in Dublin where he held the position of constable. He gathered together a force of several hundred soldiers including forty knights and marched into Roscommon where he was joined by Murchad, son of King Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair. They advanced as far as Tuam where they burned several churches. After this it seems that they withdrew rather than await the arrival of Ruaidrí's army. This reluctance to give battle might suggest that this was a raid rather than an attempt to win territory. It could also be that Murchad was trying to overthrow his father with De Cogan's backing. Whatever the reason, De Cogan's force suffered only minimal losses but Murchad was blinded on his father's orders.[149]

Hugh de Lacy's governance during his time as procurator from 1177 seems to have been largely successful. Leinster and Meath were stable and for the most part remained peaceful while the colony as a whole was expanding into Munster and Ulster. As part of his policy for Meath, De Lacy encouraged Irish tenants and peasants to return, which was something of an economic necessity. This success and in particular his winning over of Irish supporters seem to have been enough to provoke jealousy and suspicion in his rivals. It was likely that it was his marriage in 1180 to Rose, daughter

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[147] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 39.

[148] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 113.

[149] Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 67.

of Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, that provoked King Henry to act. The suspicion or at least the rumour was that through this marriage alliance he was aiming at ruling all Ireland for himself.[150]

In 1181 De Lacy was recalled to England and was superseded as procurator by a commission of John de Lacy, constable of Chester, and Richard de Pec, an itinerant justice. He also lost custody of the crown lands around Dublin and it seems likely that he lost custody of the northern part of Leinster at the same time.[151] Before De Lacy left for England he cooperated with his successors in building castles at a series of strategic locations in Leinster. These were Castledermot in Kildare, Forth, Leighlin Bridge and Tullow in Carlow and Knocktopher in Kilkenny.[152] That winter, whatever suspicions Henry had regarding De Lacy's ambitions and loyalty had been allayed and he was back in Ireland having been re-instated as procurator. He continued his policy of castle building in Meath and Leinster (which was again in his custody). One of these was the motte at Timahoe in Laois not far from Dunamase. This was built for Meiler fitz Henry who had married his niece.[153] De Lacy held onto the justiciarship until 1184 when he was superseded by Philip de Worcester.

In the summer of 1184 Henry decided that John was now old enough to take responsibility for governing his share of the sprawling Angevin territory. Philip de Worcester was sent to replace de Lacy as justiciar in September to prepare for the arrival of John the following spring.[154] In the spring of 1185 de Worcester marched on Armagh and left the town only when the clergy agreed to pay a large tribute.[155] This raid was probably undertaken at least in part to put pressure on the Irish clergy to accept John as lord of Ireland when he arrived. Early in 1185 Henry knighted John, and equipped him with an army that included three hundred knights as well as clerks and proven administrators from the chancery.[156]

John's well-prepared expedition landed in Waterford on 25 April 1185. He was accompanied by Theobald Walter his butler, Bertram de Verdun and William de Burgo

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[150] Ibid., p. 86.

[151] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 64; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 54.

[152] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 118.

[153] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 65–6.

[154] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 117.

[155] Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 88.

[156] Warren, *King John*, p. 50; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 64.

(brother of Hubert de Burgo later justiciar of England). Things, however, went wrong for John from the start. Irish kings who had previously remained loyal and those seeking to swear fealty were treated with derision and contempt by John's young entourage. Some were deprived of their lands which were granted away to newcomers. Some felt so ill-treated that they went to Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, Domnall Ua Briain and Diarmait Mac Carthaig seeking some form of recompense. If John did manage to antagonise the Irish kings enough to seek a unity of purpose against the Anglo-Normans it was very short lived; the principal dynasties were too busy with internal feuds and perhaps animosity towards old rivals too strong.[157] The Anglo-Norman settlers too stood aloof, no doubt bitter about being passed over for new grants in favour of John's young courtiers. The coin John had been initially provided with by his father for running the lordship, setting up an administration and paying his mercenary soldiers, was soon squandered. His soldiers also suffered from a lack of action. Despite some minor skirmishes, John's army was not involved in any major military campaign, which meant no plunder. To add to his financial woes, the tribute he was expecting from Irish kings was not forthcoming.[158] While some of this may be an exaggeration (based on Giraldus's views), it is clear that John's first attempt at governing Ireland in person was not a success.[159] John did make many new grants during his brief visit. Oriel, the region separating De Lacy in Meath and De Courcy in Ulster, was granted to Bertram de Verdun and Roger Pipard although the barony of Louth was kept as a royal demesne. William de Burgo was granted territory in the northern part of Ormond on the borders of Tipperary and Limerick. Theobald Walter was granted five-and-a-half cantreds in north Tipperary with Nenagh becoming the caput of the Butler lordship. He was also granted the manor of Arklow in Leinster.[160] John also established castles at Tibberaghny, Ardfinnan and Lismore.[161] In December 1185, after eight months in Ireland, John returned to England leaving John de Courcy as justiciar. He is said to have complained that it was De Lacy who had thwarted his plans for Ireland.[162]

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[157] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 123; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 66.

[158] Warren, *King John*, p. 51; Martin, 'Overlord', p. 123.

[159] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 67.

[160] Edmund Curtis (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond deeds, 1172–1350* (6 vols, Dublin, 1932–43), i, 17, p 8, 32, p. 17; Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 90

[161] Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 128.

[162] Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 90; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 67.

In July 1186 Hugh de Lacy was dead. He had been killed at Durrow by an assassin sent by Sinnach Ua Catharnaig, a Meath chieftain, to avenge the killing of his son, Muirchertach, in fighting eight years earlier.[163] De Lacy left two sons by his first marriage and a third by his second. All were minors and it was not until 1194 that the eldest, Walter, assumed the lordship of Meath.[164] Henry seems to have viewed De Lacy's death as an opportunity for making a second attempt at installing John in Ireland and ordered his return as soon the weather would allow for a crossing. Before he could depart, however, word reached Henry that Geoffrey had died in Paris on 19 August as a result of a wound received in a tournament. John's return to Ireland was promptly called off. Henry had to make new arrangements for the future division of his domains.[165] Whatever John's personal ambitions were at this stage, his future prospects had changed considerably. Now only the still unmarried Richard (the eldest son Henry had died in June 1183) and (soon after) Geoffrey's posthumous son Arthur of Brittany stood between him and the Angevin throne.[166]

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[163] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 125.

[164] Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 92.

[165] Martin, 'Overlord', p. 126.

[166] Warren, *King John*, p. 52.

Chapter 4
William Marshal and Leinster, 1189–1208

Between 1189 and 1208 William Marshal went from having no connection with Leinster to becoming arguably its most powerful magnate. During the same period Marshal went from being a respected knight in the service of Henry II (albeit one without any great landed estates) to becoming one of the great marcher lords of Ireland and Wales and a formidable politician under Richard I. This was followed by a dramatic fall from favour during the reign of John I despite initially being one of John's earliest and most important supporters against the claims of Arthur duke of Brittany. 1208 would see Marshal sidelined politically and at risk of losing control of Leinster in the face of a revolt against his rule orchestrated by Meiler fitz Henry, the king's justiciar. This chapter will chart the rise and subsequent fall of Marshal's political fortunes under Richard and John as well looking at the deepening of Marshal's involvement in the affairs of Leinster. It will also examine in detail the events in Leinster of 1207 and 1208 when affairs in Ireland and the politics of John's court, while always connected, became dangerously intertwined.

1189 seems an inauspicious year for William Marshal's connection with Ireland and Leinster to begin. The Annals of Inisfallen inform us that there was 'great warfare and sickness and much bad weather' that year.[1] The Annals of Ulster report that William's liege and benefactor, 'The son of the Empress, king of the Saxons, died'.[2] King Henry, seriously ill, and following a series of military setbacks, was haemorrhaging supporters to his ambitious son Richard count of Poitou, who also had the backing of the French king Philip. Forced into a retreat in the last stages of the war, he withdrew to Le Mans and it was Marshal who was left to fight a rearguard action to allow the king to escape. Richard, always courageous but sometimes reckless, was leading an advance party of his knights when they encountered Marshal and his small force. In the skirmish that followed, Marshal, recognised the prince who was not wearing armour and because of this spared him but killed his horse.[3] It was as the king

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[1] *AI*, 1189.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 202.

lay ill at Le Mans that William was promised the hand of Isabella de Clare, Strongbow's heiress, for his loyal service. Hubert Walter and Ranulf de Glanville (Isabella's guardian) were instructed to give her to William to marry when he could return to England.[4]

Not long after this Henry was forced to sue for peace. Of the harsher conditions agreed, Richard would receive the fealty of his father's barons and Henry promised to pay the French king twenty thousand marks. As well as this, both Richard and Philip were 'to hold certain castles in pledge'.[5] It was only a matter of weeks when, on 6 July, the defeated Henry succumbed to his illness.[6] Marshal, who had stayed with the dead king at Fontevrault, awaited the arrival of Richard, his king. Richard seems to have borne Marshal no grudge, in fact the opposite was the case. Presumably as a reward for his past loyalty to Henry right to the bitter end, Richard took him into his service and sent him to London on an unspecified mission.

It was the chancellor who reminded Richard that the late king had given William 'the lady of Striguil'. Richard replied 'Oh! by God's legs, he did not!'; 'rather, he promised her to him'. Richard however declared that he would now give William 'the maiden and her lands' for 'she will be very safe in his hands'.[7] By way of confirming his late father's gift in this manner, Richard was making clear just to whom Marshal owed his new-found position.

William Marshal, aware of just how valuable his prize was and perhaps conscious of John's designs as lord of Ireland, wasted little time. He and Gilbert Pipard went first to Mouliherne and then 'rode as hard as they could through Maine and Normandy' before arriving at Pays de Caux where Marshal took possession of Isabella de Clare's lands there.[8] This might be seen as presumptuous on the part of Marshal as he was yet to marry Isabella, but the king's promise obviously carried weight and on a more practical level Marshal could not have known when he would next be back in Normandy. Here the *History* points out that Isabella herself had much to gain from this forthcoming arrangement, for 'she subsequently reaped a rich reward' thanks to

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[4] Ibid., pp 201–2.

[5] *Gesta Henrici*, ii, 70.

[6] Ibid., p. 71.

[7] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 202; *History*, 9360–71; Jessie Crossland, *William the Marshal: the last great feudal baron* (London, 1962), p. 71: *par les jambes Dé*, Richard's favourite oath.

[8] *History*, 9439–57.

Marshal, 'who was a worthy and loyal man [she] was raised to a high honour [and he] proved useful to her and her household'.[9]

From Equiqueville in Pays de Caux they travelled north to Dieppe where they had sent word ahead to have a ship made ready, 'for he had no wish to wait a moment longer'.[10] Once in Dieppe, so eager were they to depart that in the subsequent rush to board the ship part of the deck collapsed and, among the casualties, Pipard broke an arm while Marshal seriously injured his leg. Pipard's injuries were significant enough that he was forced to stay behind.[11] Following Marshal's safe arrival in England, he delivered his official messages to Queen Eleanor, 'now a free woman', whom he found at Winchester.[12] It is probable that his first assignment had been to carry orders for the release of the queen from her house arrest.[13] Upon concluding what was effectively his first official act of service for Richard, Marshal, 'being the astute and wise man that he was', did not delay in riding to London. Here, Isabella de Clare, 'the lady of Striguil' both 'worthy and beautiful', was with Ranulf de Glanville her guardian whom we are told was reluctant to hand her over.[14]

Always at the back of Marshal's mind must have been the precarious nature of royal favour. Now that Isabella was in his possession, 'he had no wish to lose her' so he initially planned to go with her to her lands and marry her there.[15] On hearing of this plan, his friend and host in London, Richard fitz Reiner, perhaps aware of the urgency involved, insisted that the wedding should take place there and then in his house. Despite Marshal's protestations about having no provisions for a wedding, Fitz Reiner was convincing, arguing that 'nothing shall be wanting' and 'there will be no need of anything of yours'. As soon as was possible, Marshal and 'that courtly lady of high birth' were married, we are told, 'under a favourable star'.[16] It is at this point, through

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[9] Ibid., 9458–63; Crouch, 'Textual and historical notes', p. 122.

[10] *History*, 9464–8; Crouch, 'Textual and historical notes', p. 122: St-Vaast-Equiqueville was a manor in the honor of Longueville, part of Isabel de Clare's inheritance.

[11] *History*, 9469–99.

[12] Ibid., 9503–11.

[13] George Burton Adams, *The history of England from the Norman conquest to the death of John, 1066–1216* (New Haven, 1905), p. 361.

[14] *History*, 9513–17.

[15] Ibid., 9511–22.

[16] Ibid., 9523–40; *Gesta Henrici*, ii, 73: 'marriage of William Marshal' to daughter of 'comitis Ricardi de Striguil'.

his marriage to Strongbow's heiress that Marshal's long association with Leinster began. Marshal took his new wife to stay with Sir Engelram d'Abernon at Stoke, 'a peaceful spot, well appointed and a delight to the eye'.[17]

Sometime in the middle of August Richard crossed to England. John, despite protests of consanguinity by the archbishop of Canterbury, was married to Isabel of Gloucester.[18] It could be that these concerns were over-ruled by Richard who might have favoured this over a royal marriage for the ever-ambitious John. Richard's coronation, with all due pomp and ceremony, took place on Sunday 3 September.[19] Marshal, *comes de Striguil*, was among those present at Richard's coronation. His new status and position of favour were apparent to all as it was he who carried the royal sceptre during the ceremony.[20] His family seem to have benefited too, for his elder brother John was made escheator around this time, while his younger brother Henry was made dean of York.[21]

John was reluctant – in fact he initially refused – to hand over possession of Leinster and Marshal was forced to seek the support of the king in compelling John to surrender the lordship. William would not prevail in this respect until the winter of 1190.[22] John sought to have those lands he had granted to his supporters excluded, but too little avail.[23] Lands held in wardship could not normally be permanently alienated. Only Theobald Walter, John's butler, seems to have been allowed keep those lands granted to him but even this was on the condition that he would now hold them as a tenant-in-chief of William Marshal.[24] Marshal, having personally taken possession of his new lands in Normandy, England and Wales, did not go in person to Ireland to take possession immediately but instead sent Reinalt de Kedeville as his seneschal. The *History* describes the latter as 'that treacherous man Reginald de Quetteville', indicating that this was not the most considered of choices.[25] The above and the lack of references

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[17] *History*, 9547–51.

[18] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 361.

[19] Ibid.

[20] *Gesta Henrici*, ii, 80–1.

[21] Ibid., p. 91: *Johannem fratrem Willelmi Marescalli* and *Henricus fratrer Willelmi Marescalli*; David Crouch, *William Marshal: knighthood, war and chivalry, 1147–1219* (Harlow, 2002), p. 75.

[22] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 70.

[23] *History*, 9581–908.

[24] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 202–3; *History*, 9609–16.

[25] *History*, 9621–8; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 203.

to Leinster in the *History* until 1207 have been taken to suggest that Marshal's ability to influence or control events in his Irish lordship was less than effectual.[26] It might have been that Marshal did not feel Leinster was important enough to warrant him personally taking possession but his appointment as co-justiciar of England by Richard at this time probably ruled out even a brief journey across the Irish Sea.[27] Other sources suggest that from the beginning, although often from abroad, Marshal had more of a direct role in the lordship's development.

In 1189 Domnall Mór Ua Briain, king of Thomond, had launched a series of attacks on the Anglo-Norman settlements in Munster and Osraige. This was a serious onslaught in which several castles including Lismore in Co. Waterford and Tibberaghny in Co. Kilkenny were razed.[28] What would seem to have been a retaliatory expedition to Thurles the following year ended in disaster, and the death of Geoffrey de Cogan, when it was intercepted by Domnall Mac Carthaig.[29] It was at about the same time, either late in 1189 or early in 1190, that Reinalt de Kedeville was appointed seneschal of Leinster. Following the attack on Osraige and De Kedeville's appointment, there is no mention of affairs relating to the lordship for about two years.

In March of 1190 Richard summoned many of his prominent barons to him in Normandy where he was preparing for his crusade. Among those summoned were William and John Marshal. William stayed with Richard until July, taking his leave of him at Vézelay in Burgundy where his crusaders were assembling before making a new treaty with Philip of France and heading south to Marseilles where his fleet was waiting. While William was in Normandy, his wife gave birth to the first of his sons, William.[30]

Richard had left William de Longchamp, his chancellor, in charge during his absence. The chancellor it seems had little liking for Richard's newly created magnate

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[26] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 71: Crouch suggests that 'it is very much to be doubted that the Marshal exerted any effective control over his Irish estates for ten years and more after he received them'.

[27] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 204. It seems that this appointment was sometimes mistaken for that of justiciar of Ireland.

[28] *AI*, 1189: it was his confederates, Cuilén Ua Cuiléin and Ua Faeláin, who razed Lismore; Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland', pp 128–9: the trio of castles – Lismore, Tibberaghny and Ardfinnan – had been erected by King John in 1185 to protect the royal enclave centred on Waterford. The loss of two of these highlights the precarious position of the Anglo-Normans in Munster.

[29] *AI*, 1190; Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 129.

[30] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 75; Adams, *The history of England*, p. 366.

nor indeed his recently promoted elder brother. Why this should be the case is unclear but David Crouch speculates that it was due to Longchamp's mistrust of flattering courtiers, Marshal being clearly a court favourite, or that he felt the Marshals, through John Marshal, were too close to Prince John, count of Mortain. Perhaps it was as a result of this enmity that he had John Marshal removed from his position of sheriff of Yorkshire following violent attacks on the Jews in York. It also seems likely that he attempted to seize the castle of Gloucester from Nicholas Avenal, William Marshal's under-sheriff.[31] If this was the case, Longchamp overplayed his hand or acted with undue haste. Richard, who had not yet left France, responded by appointing four co-justiciars: Geoffrey fitz Peter (later earl of Essex); Hugh Bardolf; William Briwerre; and William Marshal. These were (nominally at least) assistants to the chancellor but it is probable that they were also tasked with preventing Longchamp making more rash decisions. Despite being eminently capable and loyal he could be arrogant and tactless and had the ability to infuriate others in the king's administration.[32]

From the start, Longchamp's administration faced difficulties. Richard's requests for funding his crusade fell on the chancellor to enforce, making him unpopular with the baronage while his own lavish progresses through the country exacerbated the matter. This then made his more serious problem of containing Prince John's ambitions far more difficult. Richard, backed by his chancellor, had made his nephew Arthur his heir in the event that he died childless.[33] Despite affirmation of Arthur of Brittany as his preferred heir, Richard could not risk bringing John on crusade with him.[34] As Arthur was still a child, John could be seen as a failsafe should Richard die on crusade. French support for the rebellions of Henry II's sons had shown how quickly they could act to exploit any conflict within the house of Anjou. Should Arthur have succeeded to the throne while still a child this could have placed the whole kingdom at risk. As a pragmatic measure, John might well have been viewed as an alternative adult heir should such an event arise. Richard had first tried to secure John's support by granting him substantial lands within England but also felt obliged to extract from him a promise not to visit England but to remain on the Continent.

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[31] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 76; A.L. Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta, 1087–1216* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1970), p. 354.

[32] Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 76–7.

[33] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 354.

[34] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 77.

Within a few months of Richard's departure from France, John had returned to England.[35] John, capitalising on Longchamp's growing unpopularity, was able to stir up a revolt against the chancellor. John seized the castles of Nottingham and Tickhill, while Longchamp captured Wigmore from Roger Mortimer, one of John's supporters, and laid siege to the castle of Lincoln.[36] These events placed Marshal in a precarious position. John was still a possible heir to Richard and his willingness to openly disobey the king boded ill for Arthur's chances of claiming the throne should Richard die childless. While Marshal benefited immensely from his loyalty to Henry II when Richard rebelled, his instincts must have told him that John would be a different matter. To complicate matters for Marshal he held his lordship of Leinster from Prince John, lord of Ireland, rather than Richard, and his brother largely owed his position to John.[37] Possibly at the instigation of Marshal, representations from the barons reached Richard, then in Sicily, complaining about the conduct of Longchamp and conflict that was growing. Richard responded by sending Walter de Coutances, archbishop of Rouen, to mediate between John and the chancellor. He had also been given a commission to supersede the chancellor should the circumstances warrant such a drastic move.[38] De Coutances did not immediately seek to depose Longchamp but rather tried to mediate between him and John. Longchamp, not supported by his co-justiciars, and, probably genuinely having in mind what would be best for the king, was willing to make concessions to John. Perhaps the most dramatic of these concessions was the acceptance of John as Richard's heir in the event that he should die on crusade. For both Longchamp and De Coutances, the priority was to be sure that Richard had a kingdom to return to. John, on the other hand, had only his own interests to prioritise.[39] The jettisoning of Arthur's claims was in fact a very pragmatic decision. It would have been becoming apparent that should Richard die on crusade, the chancellor was not in a position militarily or politically to stop John from seizing the throne. If Richard did return, however, he could always overturn this decision should he so wish.

The peace achieved was to be short lived. In September 1191 Geoffrey, the newly consecrated archbishop of York, and a natural son of Henry II, crossed the

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 355; *Gesta Henrici*, ii, 207.

[37] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 78.

[38] *Gesta Henrici*, ii, 213; Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 355.

[39] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 356.

channel in order to take up his new position.[40] For reasons that are not entirely clear, the chancellor, probably acting on Richard's instructions, had sought to prevent him from entering England. At Dover, Geoffrey was met by Longchamp's sister, the wife of the castle's constable. Geoffrey, after refusing to take an oath of fealty to the king, sought sanctuary in the priory of St Martin. After four days he was 'dragged from the altar of the chapel' and brought into custody in Dover Castle. This was to prove a disaster for the chancellor. Despite his protesting that he had not ordered the arrest, and releasing the archbishop, whatever political capital he had was now spent. John called for a great council to be held between Reading and Windsor and summoned Longchamp. The council first met on 5 October but Longchamp failed to attend. Longchamp had fled to London where he took refuge in the Tower.[41] Meeting a second time, the council agreed to a formal proposal from the archbishop of Rouen to depose Longchamp. On 7 October John, the co-justiciars, the archbishop of Rouen and the rest of the council reached London. Longchamp, besieged in the Tower, had little choice but to submit. The co-justiciars produced the commission allowing for the archbishop of Rouen to supersede the chancellor. Longchamp then surrendered his castles to the custody of the archbishop and, on giving his brothers as hostages, was allowed to leave for Flanders.[42]

If John had hoped to find the archbishop of Rouen as chief justiciar more amenable to his plots and intrigues he was mistaken. This did not deter him, however, and early in 1192 Philip Augustus offered John his sister, Alice, in marriage and all the English continental possessions. John was tempted and was about to cross over to France to discuss the proposal and was stopped only by the intervention of his mother, Queen Eleanor, one of the very few who could exercise any kind of restraining influence over him.[43] The fact that he was already married was of little consideration to him or Philip.[44] Philip, having returned early from the crusade, was keen to capitalise on Richard's absence. First, he planned to invade Normandy but the French barons refused to attack Richard's lands while he was absent on crusade. He also tried to persuade the seneschal of the great castle of Gisors to surrender it through the means of a forged

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 371.

[42] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 358.

[43] *Gesta Henrici*, ii, 236; Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 359.

[44] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 373.

document, but with no success.[45] It seems that Philip would have preferred to acquire Normandy without John, were it possible.

The gradual fall of Longchamp marked the first stage of Marshal's political career. How much of a role he played in the affair is unclear but it was probably significant. His and his fellow co-justiciars' initial failure to support the chancellor allowed John's attacks to increase. Marshal may well have been instrumental in the appointment of the archbishop of Rouen ostensibly as a mediator but with the power to supersede the chancellor. When the fallout from Archbishop Geoffrey's arrest became apparent, Marshal and his co-justiciars were very much in John's camp. The *Gesta Henrici* is explicit that 'the archbishop of Rouen and William Marshall exhibit their commission to supersede the chancellor'.[46] When Longchamp was later made papal legate and Celestine III ordered the excommunication of those who had earlier mistreated him, Marshal was fourth on the list.[47]

We are informed that in the year 1192 'the English of Leinster committed great depredations against Donnell O'Brien'.[48] This seems to have been a major campaign to check the growing power of Domnall Ua Briain, and it was for this reason that Domnall Mac Carthaig on this occasion chose to ally himself with the Anglo-Normans. These combined forces were able to pass through north Tipperary and east Limerick unchecked before crossing the Shannon and encountering Ua Briain's forces at Magh-Ua-Toirdhealbhaig, a plain before Killaloe, the very centre of Ua Briain's territory.[49] The outcome of this encounter is somewhat unclear; according to the Annals of the Four Masters 'The English of Leinster ... were opposed by the Dalcassians, who slew great numbers of them', yet the expedition resulted in the construction of castles at Kilfeakle and Knockgraffon (both in Co. Tipperary, near Tipperary town and Cahir respectively). This confrontation seems to have been followed by another raid on Osraige by Ua Briain.[50] If this was a reprisal, the target is telling as it tallies with the

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[45] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 363.

[46] *Gesta Henrici*, ii, 213.

[47] Ibid., p. 223: the list seems to be in order of importance; the archbishop of Rouen is first, then two bishops followed by the four co-justiciars. John Marshal appears much further down.

[48] *AFM*, 1192.

[49] Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 129; *AFM*, 1192.

[50] *AFM*, 1192; *AI*, 1192 gives a far more succinct account: 'Many castles were built this year against the men of Mumu, and there were great and frequent raids by foreigners on Tuadmumu'.

identification of the 'English of Leinster' as the instigators of the attack deep into Thomond. Why might a seneschal of Leinster organise an attack on Ua Briain? There are a number of plausible reasons. It could have been organised simply as retaliation for the 1189 raid on Osraige but the scale and reach of the expedition suggest it was something more. It could have been a means by which the new lord of Leinster, albeit through his deputies, was able to prove his commitment to the colony by marshalling the Anglo-Normans of Leinster and Munster in order to remove or reduce the threat posed by Domnall Ua Brian. The erection of the two castles in Tipperary as part of the campaign shows that there must have been broad support among the Anglo-Normans of Munster; they would only indirectly benefit the security of Leinster, strengthening an already existing buffer zone of Anglo-Norman grantees between Leinster and Ua Briain and Mac Carthaig territories.

Returning to the 1189 raid on Osraige, it must have made apparent the exposed nature of the north-western flank of the lordship, a weakness that had existed since the abandonment of Strongbow's castle at Kilkenny in 1173. In the 1170s and 1180s the Mac Gilla Pátraic, kings of Osraige, could be relied on for support in the event of either Ua Briain or Ua Conchobair incursions. Perhaps in part because of this, often bearing the brunt of such raids, by the 1190s their power was much reduced. Interestingly, in *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann* it suggests that along with the castles of Kilfeakle and Knockgraffon, the castle of Kilkenny was also either built or refortified at this time.[51] It might be that the rebuilding of the castle at Kilkenny was part of a broader plan to establish Anglo-Norman settlements in central Osraige. Orpen suggests that the subinfeudation of this territory most likely commenced at around the same time.[52] If this was the case Domnall Ua Briain posed the greatest risk to such a scheme. It is possible that Strongbow's castle at Kilkenny was unfinished, which might in part explain its abandonment in 1173. Perhaps the attack on Ua Briain in 1192 was a precaution against

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[51] Ben Murtagh, 'The Kilkenny Castle Archaeological Project, 1990–1993: interim report' in John Bradley (ed.), *Kilkenny through the centuries: chapters in the history of an Irish city* (Kilkenny, 2009), p. 49; *AFM*, 1192 (O'Donovan, 95); Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles in Ossory'in *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, xxxix (1909), p. 316; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 225. A manuscript version of the Annals of Inisfallen (Ann. Inisfallen, Dublin manuscript) rather than Rawlinson B. 503, the better-known version translated by Seán Mac Airt in 1944, is the main source for this date but Orpen also refers to James Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland* (Dublin, 1705), p. 33.

[52] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 225.

the same happening again. Even if he was not completely defeated militarily it could have been enough to provide a pause in fighting long enough to complete the castle, at least to a level where it would be defendable, before Ua Briain was in a position to retaliate. By 1193 he was by no means vanquished but it seems that the attack of 1192 had indeed seriously reduced the threat he posed. He agreed to marry his daughter to William de Burgh (who it seems had built Kilfeakle), which appears to have secured his cooperation with the Anglo-Normans. He also consented to the building of a castle on Breckinish Island in the Shannon estuary. This growing cooperation was seen by some of his contemporaries as a means by which Ua Briain now hoped to check the growing power of Domnall Mac Carthaig, his long-time rival for dominance of Gaelic Munster.[53]

The deaths of two Leinster kings this same year (1193), Murchadh Mac Murchada, of the Uí Chennselaig and Dermot O'Dempsey of Clanmalier, does not seem to have had any destabilising effect on the internal affairs of Leinster, at least none that is recorded.[54] These were two of the most powerful of the subject kings within the lordship, and the fact that no internecine warfare broke out is indicative of Leinster's stability.[55]

When news of Richard's imprisonment reached England and France it was Philip Augustus who was first to take the initiative. Through some treachery on the part of its castellan he was able to take Gisors. This opened up the Norman Vexin which his forces overran before laying siege to Rouen which managed to resist until he was forced to withdraw. John also quickly took the opportunity to attempt to seize the kingdom for himself. He crossed to Normandy to seek support but the Norman barons remained loyal to Richard.[56] John then went to Paris where he did homage for his French fiefs. John promised again to marry Alice and ceded to Philip Norman Vexin. For his part, Philip promised John part of Flanders and his support in taking possession of England

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[53] *AI*, 1193; Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 129; W.L. Warren, 'King John and Ireland' in James Lydon (ed.), *England and Ireland in the later Middle Ages: essays in honour of Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven* (Dublin, 1981), p. 28: Warren suggests that this was part of a strategic plan to create a buffer between the Ua Briain of Thomond and the Mac Carthaig of Desmond who had been responsible for keeping Munster in a state of turmoil.

[54] *AI*, 1193; *AU*, 1193; *AFM*, 1193.

[55] *AFM*, 1193.

[56] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 374.

and Richard's remaining French and Norman possessions. John gathered together a force of mercenaries, then returned to England and seized the castles of Wallingford and Windsor.[57] He was able to secure little support in England and soon found himself besieged in Windsor by the archbishop of Rouen and Marshal, who had brought with him the marcher lords from Wales.[58] Hugh Bardolf refused to take part on the grounds that he was John's sworn man and therefore could not fight him. Marshal could well have used the same excuse with regard to Leinster if he had so wished.[59]

On hearing the news of Richard's release, Philip of France famously sent word to John, 'Take care of yourself: the devil is loosed'.[60] The release of Richard ended any realistic chance John had of seizing the crown. Marshal was at Striguil when news of Richard's landing reached him shortly after hearing word that his own brother John Marshal had died. It is probable that John Marshal, as Prince John's seneschal, had sided with his rebellious lord and had subsequently been wounded when Marlborough Castle, which had declared for John, had been besieged by the archbishop of Canterbury.[61] If this was the case it goes some way towards explaining why Marshal did not attend the funeral of his brother but instead, after sending a detachment of his household knights to escort the body to Cirencester, chose to hurry to meet the king at Huntington. Even if he was obeying a royal summons it is unlikely that a few days delay, in order to bury his brother, would have been criticised. It is probable that Marshal was deliberately distancing himself from his brother's actions in case they brought his own loyalty into question. This was also probably particularly urgent due to Longchamp returning with the king.[62]

On Richard's return to England he quickly began consolidating his position.[63] One way of achieving this was to call upon his baronage to reassert their loyalty. Walter de Lacy was summoned by the chancellor, Longchamp, to do homage for the lordship

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[57] Ibid.

[58] *History*, 9891–904; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 204.

[59] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 78.

[60] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 375.

[61] Thomas Asbridge, *The greatest knight: the remarkable life of William Marshal, the power behind five English thrones* (London, 2015), pp 236–7; Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 80–2. Marshal inherited his brother's lands in Berkshire and Wiltshire and the shrievalty of Sussex.

[62] Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 237; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 82.

[63] Crosland, *William the Marshal*, pp 73–4.

of Meath, which he willingly did. When called to do the same for Leinster, Marshal refused, on the grounds that he held it of John as lord of Ireland. Marshal, though consistently loyal to Richard, argued that he would use force if necessary to defend his liege's (John's in the case of Ireland) rights.[64] Marshal's seemingly legalistic approach to his feudal obligations can be seen as unduly complicated. Yet, in his mind, it could have been straightforward: in England he was Richard's liege man; in Ireland he was John's.[65]

Judging Marshal's effectiveness as co-justiciar is difficult. On the one hand, Chancellor Longchamp was deposed with the complicity of the co-justiciars and Prince John and his supporters had risen in rebellion in an attempt to seize the throne. On the other hand, the co-justiciars and Walter de Coutances had been able to maintain the government of the kingdom and hand it over largely intact to Richard on his return.[66] Marshal had himself played no small role in thwarting John; he had seized Bristol, John's main English stronghold.[67] Marshal seems to have spent most of the remainder of Richard's reign with the king on his campaigns in Normandy and France.[68] After taking Nottingham, a last English holdout for John's cause, in March, Richard could turn his attention to France. In the middle of May Richard gathered a fleet of a hundred ships to transport his forces across the Channel.[69] After arriving in the Norman port of Barfleur, Richard, recognising that holding Normandy had to be prioritised, hastened to Verneuil which was being besieged by Philip of France. Marshal was with Richard and his forces as they travelled through Bayeux and Caen before they reached Lisieux. There Prince John, having abandoned Évreux, which Philip had charged him with holding, surrendered to Richard, begging for clemency. Richard, in a display of what must have appeared to be undeserved generosity, forgave John his past indiscretions. He was pardoned rather than tried as a traitor and allowed to join Richard's army.[70] There were probably more practical than generous reasons for Richard's reconciliation with his brother. Richard was still childless and he might still have been considering

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[64] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 205–6.

[65] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 107.

[66] Ibid., p. 100.

[67] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 80.

[68] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 206.

[69] Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 240.

[70] Ibid., p. 241.

John, despite his rebellion, as his favoured heir rather than Arthur of Brittany. It is also possible that Richard accepted rebellion as part of the course for the Angevin family.

The surrender of John might have ended the rebellion but Richard's long war with Philip was only beginning. This would provide Marshal with the opportunity to prove his military ability and rise even further in the king's favour. The five years up to Richard's death are among the vaguest in the *History*, but an illuminating series of episodes show something of the character of the man.[71] On 28 May 1194 Richard cut off communications to Philip's army at Verneuil, forcing him to abandon the siege. Philip, after capturing the fortress of Loches, advanced towards Vendôme and Richard rushed to meet him. Despite threatening to attack Richard's forces encamped at Fréteval, Philip decided to withdraw rather than risk a pitched battle. Richard pursued the retreating French army but not before ordering Marshal to keep his men in readiness should the French retreat prove to be a feint or in case Philip should rally his troops. The pursuit was successful with many of Philip's army killed or captured, King Philip himself only narrowly evading capture. When Richard returned he assured Marshal that there was no chance of Philip rallying his forces. Marshal still held his force in reserve, not withdrawing until the last of the pursuers had returned. Such a pursuit was an open opportunity for plunder and booty. That Marshal obeyed his orders to the letter, staying at the rear and failing to join in when it was clear that the French were routed and keeping his own knights from doing likewise, showed his reliability and ability as a commander.[72] Three years later Marshal was on a campaign against the bishop of Beauvais with an army led by the now-rehabilitated Prince John. In a surprise attack on the castle of Milly-sur-Thérain, Marshal, now nearing fifty, saw a knight holding on to the battlements while the defenders tried to push him off. Marshal climbed up the ladder and fought off those attacking the knight. He then held a section of the wall, knocking out the constable of the castle in the process.

After these exertions he sat down on the unconscious constable and waited out the rest of the fight.[73] That summer (1197) Marshal and Peter des Préaux were sent as emissaries to persuade Count Baldwin of Flanders and Count Reginald of Boulogne to ally with Richard against the French king. This diplomatic effort was successful and

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[71] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 108.

[72] Ibid., pp 110–11.

[73] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 83.

Marshal was to be found fighting alongside Baldwin at Arras when Philip was captured.[74] Philip was able to buy his release from Baldwin but by the end of 1198 he was ready to sue for peace. In January 1199 Innocent III sent his legate, Cardinal Peter of Capua, to negotiate a peace. Richard refused to countenance a permanent peace while Philip still held some of his lands but was persuaded to sign a five-year truce.[75] At the beginning of March Richard advanced south into the Limousin while Marshal returned to Normandy. On 26 March, while attacking a castle of little strategic importance, due to a dispute over treasure-trove, Richard was hit in the shoulder by a crossbow bolt. Gangrene set in shortly after the bolt was removed by a surgeon.[76] On 6 April, eleven days later, King Richard died.[77]

During Richard's war with Philip, Marshal made only two brief visits to England, once in the spring of 1196 and once in the autumn of 1198. He would have left the running of his estates there to his stewards and bailiffs.[78] The same would have been the case for his estates in Leinster but perhaps with the added necessity to provide security for the lordship as a whole. We do not know for how long Reinalt de Kedeville remained his seneschal, though the description of him as treacherous in the *History* suggests he did not hold the position for long.[79] Orpen speculates that the treachery referred to relates to the intrigues of Meiler fitz Henry, which would have De Kedeville retaining his position until 1199 or 1200.[80] Geoffrey fitz Robert was Marshal's very able seneschal of Leinster from at least 1200 and perhaps from several years earlier. He was most likely granted the barony of Kells in Co. Kilkenny in the early 1190s so would presumably have been available for such a role from then onwards.[81]

There is little in the way of evidence to explain the affairs in Leinster during the period from Richard's return in 1194 to his death in 1199. That is in sharp contrast with Munster, Connacht and Ulster where warfare either between Irish and Anglo-Normans

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[74] Ibid., p. 84.

[75] Painter, *William Marshal*, pp 114–15.

[76] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 386.

[77] Painter, *William Marshal*, pp 117–18; Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 84–5.

[78] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 82.

[79] *History*, 9621–8.

[80] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 204.

[81] Ibid., pp 225–6; Adrian Empey, 'The evolution of the demesne in the lordship of Leinster' in Bradley et al., *William Marshal and Ireland* (Dublin, 2017), p. 59.

or Irish and Irish, sometimes both, was endemic. This can be explained partly by the regional bias of the various Irish annals, none of which originated in Leinster. It is also probably the case that conditions in Leinster remained more settled. If a programme of castle building began in 1192, as suggested at Kilkenny, this might indicate a concerted policy early in Marshal's rule to pacify and secure his territory. This would require able administration in his absence. Notwithstanding the Irish within Leinster, the biggest threat to the lordship was the exposed frontier of Osraige. The death in 1194 of Domnall Ua Brian removed this most immediate of threats.[82] The blinding and castration of his son shortly afterwards by the foreigners of Munster suggest that Domnall's death did indeed precipitate a general decline in Ua Briain power.[83] This is further indicated by the successful capture of Limerick by Domnall Mac Carthaig and a series of other military successes in the years that followed.[84] One of the few episodes we are informed of occurred in 1195 when, according to the annals, John de Courcy and Walter de Lacy were involved in some form of conflict involving the English of Leinster and Munster.[85] This would seem to relate to Cathal Crobderg Ua Conchobair and his invasion of Thomond.[86] Perhaps John de Courcy as justiciar was seeking military support to bolster his own forces. This could be seen as further indication of the relative peace in Leinster, if its garrisons could be readily spared to fight in Connacht and Munster.

On 7 April 1196, one day after Richard's death, news that he had been seriously injured reached Marshal at the castle of Vaudreuil. With this came instructions to secure the city of Rouen. It was three days later when word of Richard's death reached Rouen where Marshal was to be found with the archbishop of Canterbury. The death of Richard left two potential heirs: Prince John now aged 31 and Arthur duke of Brittany who had not yet come of age. At this time a narrower interpretation of primogenital succession had only begun to establish itself.[87] The *History* records a debate between the archbishop and Marshal late that night over who was more suitable to succeed.

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[82] *AU*, 1194; *AI*, 1194.

[83] *AI*, 1194; *AU*, 1194.

[84] *AU*, 1196.

[85] *AU*, 1195; *AFM*, 1195.

[86] Steve Flanders, *De Courcy: Anglo-Normans in Ireland, England and France in the eleventh and twelfth centuries* (Dublin, 2008), p. 162.

[87] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 390.

Marshal came across strongly in favour of John while the archbishop gave a warning, with prophetic accuracy, that Marshal would be sorry for his decision.[88] Interestingly, Richard's dying declaration that John was his heir does not seem to have figured in their deliberations.[89] Having decided on John as the best candidate, it was vital that the news that he was Richard's declared heir reach England as soon as possible. As Marshal was tasked with holding Rouen, this now fell to his trusted knight, John de Earley, who left immediately for England.[90]

Marshal and the archbishop of Canterbury were soon dispatched to England by John. There they received oaths of loyalty to John from the English barons and prelates, albeit often grudgingly. Many took the oath on the condition that their various claims and grievances would at a later date be heard by the king. Marshal then returned to Normandy where he met John and escorted him back to England.[91] While the barons of Normandy and England accepted John as Richard's designated heir, those of Anjou, Maine and Touraine supported Arthur of Brittany.[92]

For this immediate show of proactive loyalty and his support for John's claims to the crown over his nephew Arthur of Brittany, Marshal was to be generously rewarded. Just before John's coronation on 27 May 1199, Marshal was formally invested with the earldom of Pembroke.[93] It seems that up to this point the crown had retained some of the Pembroke lordship. By the end of October 1200 or early in 1201 Marshal had regained all that had belonged to his wife's inheritance including the castles of Cardigan, Cilgerran and Pembroke itself. Importantly, full control of the lordship of Pembroke opened the way for a more thorough involvement in the affairs of Leinster.[94] He was also appointed sheriff of Gloucestershire and granted custody of the castles of Gloucester and Bristol.[95] Marshal's new-found favour also benefited his wider

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[88] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 85.

[89] Painter, *William Marshal*, pp 118–19.

[90] Ibid., pp 120–1.

[91] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 86.

[92] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 378.

[93] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 395; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 86.

[94] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 87.

[95] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 123.

family. John Marshal, an illegitimate son of his older brother, was given a royal ward, the heiress of the Ryes family, in marriage.[96]

Arthur's mother had encouraged her son to give homage to Philip of France for all the Angevin lands. This allowed Philip to do what he did best, pitting rival members of the house of Anjou against each other while furthering his own aims.[97] The conflict had dragged on for almost a year when on 22 May 1200 a treaty was signed. The treaty was largely favourable to Philip who was able to retain much of the territory he had already captured. John's niece, Blanche of Castile, was to marry Louis, Philip's heir. For John's part, he received Anjou and Brittany, with Arthur holding Brittany as his vassal.[98] It is probable that Marshal made a brief visit to Leinster late in 1200. According to an account in the chartularies of St Mary's Abbey relating to the founding of Tintern Abbey, Co. Wexford, Marshal landed in Wexford following a difficult crossing of the Irish Sea. During a storm said to have lasted one day and one night, he vowed to found an abbey should he reach land safely. The *History* makes no mention of this, however, and tells us that although he had made many requests to be granted leave to visit his holdings in Ireland previously, these had all been refused and that he had 'never seen' these before embarking for Ireland in 1207.[99]

Marshal, along with Geoffrey fitz Peter, earl of Essex, and William Longespée, earl of Salisbury, was now among John's most powerful and influential supporters.[100] From late in 1201 Marshal was in Normandy defending its northern borders and by extension his own estates at Longueville against intermittent raiding by Philip's vassals. The relative stability of the first years of John's reign came to an end when Philip, ostensibly acting over John's failure to answer for his actions against the rebellious Lusignans, invaded Normandy.[101] The following year John's position dramatically

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[96] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 89.

[97] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 391.

[98] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, pp 378–9.

[99] *History*, 13311–20; J.T. Gilbert (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin with the register of its house at Dunbrody and Annals of Ireland* (2 vols, London, 1884–6), ii, pp 307–8; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 208; Gillian Kenny, 'The wife's tale: Isabel Marshal and Ireland' in Bradley et al., *William Marshal and Ireland* (Dublin, 2017), p. 318; Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 87–8: both Kenny and Crouch suggest that Isabel accompanied Marshal on this visit. Although this is quite likely it is not mentioned in the *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey*.

[100] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 90.

[101] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 127.

deteriorated when in April 1203 Arthur of Brittany died. The details are murky but rumour had it that John had personally stabbed to death his own nephew.[102] Arthur had been captured earlier that year fighting alongside the rebel Geoffrey de Lusignan and was John's prisoner at Rouen before he disappeared.[103] Whether true or not, this was evidently believable to many of John's contemporaries or at least that John might have had Arthur killed. Arthur, with his own claim to the throne, was always likely to have become a focus of those dissatisfied with John's rule and perhaps more dangerously provided the ideal opportunity for the intrigues of Philip. John, with his own record during Richard's and his own father's reigns, must have been aware of such dangers.

Arthur's death served to crystallise the views of those already aggrieved by John's actions and of those who simply disliked him. There must have been many who had fought against him in his earlier rebellion as well as those who had lost their possessions in Normandy whose opinion of John was low and their loyalty strained. The Breton barons, incensed at the imprisonment and suspected murder of their duke, revolted and were soon joined by the barons of Maine.[104] Philip was quick to capitalise on the situation and renewed his attacks on Normandy.[105] Marshal led an unsuccessful mission late in 1203 to relieve the great fortress of Château Gaillard. Then Marshal failed in his efforts to drive Philip's forces from the Vexin. It seems that on this occasion Marshal's efforts were foiled by William des Barres, whose own chronicler called him 'the flower of chivalry'.[106] John's failure to relieve Château Gaillard shattered the confidence of the Norman barons.[107] Seeing that John had lost the fight they began to make their own bargains with Philip and made little effort to halt his advance; Falaise, Caen, Bayeux, Cherbourg and Barfleur all surrendered without a fight.[108]

During the final stages of the war, with news of constant defeats, John still claimed he would eventually recover all he had lost. This could not be achieved without

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[102] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 91.

[103] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 382.

[104] Ibid., p. 383.

[105] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 91.

[106] Ibid., pp 91–2; Painter, *William Marshal*, pp 134–5: Painter believes that the Marshal's presence in the failed relief of Château Gaillard was poetic licence by William le Breton.

[107] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 135.

[108] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 384.

the support of his Norman barons, and at Rouen Marshal warned him bluntly that 'you haven't many friends' and that he 'paid no attention to the first signs of discontent, and it would have been better for us all if you had'.[109] Marshal was with the king in Normandy during the final months of 1203 before leaving for England on 5 December. By the time Marshal returned some five months later, almost the entire duchy had fallen to Philip; all that remained in English hands were the Channel Islands.[110]

Those of John's magnates who held lands both in Normandy and in England faced difficult decisions. Some chose to do homage to Philip if Normandy was where the majority of their lands were or if that was where their most profitable estates lay. In this way, however, they ran the risk of forfeiture of their English possessions. Others divided their Norman and English possessions, giving those in Normandy to brothers or younger sons.[111] Marshal too was faced with this dilemma but seems not to have rushed into making any decision. In May 1204 Marshal and Earl Robert of Leicester were sent to Normandy to negotiate a peace with Philip. Some form of agreement was in both their interests as Robert too had large estates in Normandy that he stood to lose. Both, it seems, used the opportunity to seek better terms for themselves. King Philip's response was that all Norman landholders must do him homage or lose their lands, giving them a year to decide.[112]

Marshal spent the winter of 1204 campaigning in Wales, and managed to recover the castle of Cilgerran, which had been captured by the Welsh a year earlier. An internecine war between Maelgwyn ap Rhys and his nephews had left the Welsh divided and vulnerable to attack. This was too good an opportunity not to be exploited by John and the marcher lords, Marshal included.[113] By the beginning of 1205 he was back in Normandy. It seems that John had granted Marshal licence to seek favourable terms for his lands in Normandy from Philip. Marshal went further than John could have predicted and he accepted that he was to be Philip's liege man for his Norman possessions. One would assume this arrangement between Philip and Marshal was conditional on Marshal promising not to make war with the French king in Normandy. Despite this, Marshal protested that this did not harm King John's interests. Although

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[109] *History*, 12721–3, 12736–42; Adams, *The history of England*, p. 403.

[110] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 92; Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 384.

[111] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 92

[112] Ibid., p. 93; Adams, *The history of England*, pp 404–5.

[113] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 93.

this was probably not his original intention, it cannot but have raised the question of his loyalty with the always-suspicious John.[114] For John it must have been reminiscent of Marshal's earlier declaration in 1194 to Longchamp that he was John's liege man in Ireland and he would defend the rights of his liege and all that this implied.[115] It was this confusing and flexible interpretation of feudal loyalty that was probably at the root of a developing estrangement from King John. This estrangement quickly developed, as Orpen suggests, with Marshal's reluctance to continue the war.[116] In June 1205 John planned a major campaign to recover his lost possessions in Poitou. He summoned his barons to join him but Marshal refused. This was an open and public breach, with John accusing Marshal of conspiring with Philip of France.[117] Marshal's defence was that he was Philip's liege man and could not fight him in Poitou.[118]

In the period from Richard's death in 1199 to Marshal's breach with John in 1205 we can see a much clearer picture of events in Leinster than in Richard's near-ten-year reign. There are a series of grants in 1199 relating to Leinster. The first of these occurs roughly three months after Richard's death when in July John confirmed a grant of lands in Waterford and Wexford to the Knights Templar.[119] These were probably crown lands, and not an indication of John's willingness to grant away land belonging to the lordship as he had done during the minority of Isabella de Clare.[120] At the beginning of September William fitz Gerald, baron of Naas, paid the king one hundred marks to initiate a case of *Mort d'ancestor* against the abbot and monks of Baltinglass regarding lands of his upon which they had encroached.[121] The abbot was probably Albin O'Mulloy, bishop of Ferns.[122] Fitz Gerald was one of Marshal's principal vassals. The same month the king issued letters of protection for Gerald fitz Maurice (Fitz Gerald) of his lands and possessions.[123] This Gerald was a younger brother of William fitz Gerald and held territory in Co. Offaly from Marshal as lord of Leinster. Finally, on

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[114] Ibid., p. 94.

[115] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 205–6.

[116] Ibid., pp 208–9.

[117] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 96.

[118] Crosland, *William the Marshal*, p. 92.

[119] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 85, p. 13 (16 July 1199).

[120] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 203.

[121] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 89, p. 14.

[122] Aubrey Gwynn and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses: Ireland* (Dublin, 1988), p. 127.

[123] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 102, p. 16.

15 October, John granted the lands of William fitz Maurice (Fitz Gerald) (he had died towards the end of 1199) to John de Gray.[124] The grant to De Gray suggests his son William was a minor at the time.

There are also a series of grants witnessed on 6 September 1199 by Marshal, who was with the king at Rouen. The first of these is a grant to William fitz Gerald, shortly before his death, of a castle and lands in Munster as well as one burgage in Limerick.[125] There is a similar grant to Lambekin fitz William.[126] The last of these grants is to William de Burgh of Arpatrick (Ardpatrick, Co. Limerick) of lands in the cantred Fontymkill in Co. Limerick.[127]

While there is a limited amount of information available for Leinster, with the few pieces we do have it is possible to make some assumptions. The first is that Leinster was largely peaceful that year, and this in itself was probably an achievement when one considers the state of affairs on the rest of the island. The second, perhaps more tenuous, assumption is that William fitz Gerald seeking a legal solution to his dispute with the monks of Baltinglass is evidence of a respect for law and order or a functioning administration. Marshal, although yet to visit his Irish lordship, was probably remarkably well informed about events in Ireland. Not only would he have had his own seneschal and bailiffs keeping him abreast of events, but from his position at court he would have been aware of John's decisions before they reached Ireland.

Marshal may have visited Leinster in the winter of 1200. He was almost constantly with John's court up to the beginning of September but then was absent until March of the next year. It is possible that during this period he crossed to Ireland. In some accounts, after a difficult sea crossing he vowed to found a monastery, *Monasterium de Voto*, or Tintern Minor.[128] Crouch concludes that the *History*'s failure to mention this is because it was somehow a failure. He speculates that the already established Anglo-Norman families in Ireland would have viewed him as something of a blow-in or interloper.[129] This would be in much the same vein as the hostility

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[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid., p. 14: the castle of Karkitel and lands in the cantred of Huhene as a well as a burgage within Limerick.

[126] Ibid., p. 15: lands in the cantred of Huhene as well a burgage within Limerick.

[127] Ibid.: lands in the cantred of Fontimel,

[128] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 206.

[129] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 89.

espoused by Giraldus Cambrensis with regard to effeminate courtiers who received grants disadvantaging his Geraldine relatives in the 1170s and 1180s, or those who achieved high positions in the administration. Whether such attitudes would have persisted almost a generation later is unclear. If this was the case, then the appointment as seneschal of Leinster of Geoffrey fitz Robert, who had married Strongbow's sister, was a shrewd move.

On 25 June 1200 when Marshal, at Chinon, witnessed a grant to William de Burgh of the castle of Tibrach (Tibberaghny in Co. Kilkenny), Meiler fitz Henry was also present.[130] It was probably at Chinon that John decided to appoint Fitz Henry as his chief justiciar although this was not confirmed until October.[131] This was a decision that would later have serious implications for Marshal in Leinster. We are informed that shortly after his appointment Fitz Henry, with characteristic energy, marched with the English of Leinster against Cathal Carragh Ua Conchobair and plundered the town of Clonmacnoise and its churches.[132] Again it is difficult to be certain of the significance of the Leinster involvement. It could be that the barons of Leinster provided the justiciar with soldiers for his campaign and it is possible that Leinster was a broad term used to describe any Anglo-Norman or English forces from the east. If the appointment of Fitz Henry was not a clear sign that John intended to take a keener role in Irish affairs than Richard then John's 28 October order, which 'commands all persons holding lands in the marches of Ireland to fortify their castles before the ensuing feast of St John the Baptist [24 June]', surely was.[133] The order had the added threat that should they fail to do so the king would seize their lands. On 6 November the king granted Geoffrey de Costentin lands in Connacht in exchange for the land of leis and Houkreuthenan (Laois and Ui Cremthannáin), the territory surrounding the Rock of Dunamase.[134] This was then to be given to Fitz Henry. As these were territories within Leinster and included the castle of Dunamase, this would later be among the causes of dispute between Fitz Henry and Marshal.

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[130] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 122, p. 19.

[131] Ibid., 133, p. 21.

[132] *AC*, 1200; *AFM*, 1200.

[133] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 125, p. 19.

[134] Ibid., p. 22; Edmund Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum: locorum et tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae. An index, with identifications, to the Gaelic names of places and tribes* (Dublin, 1910), p. 666.

In 1201 there is no direct mention of affairs in Leinster. There are, however, some events that would have later implications for Marshal's lordship. The first of these was William de Braose's grant of the honour of Limerick for five thousand marks. This had been a speculative grant to Philip de Braose, William's uncle, by Henry II. There are two grants, the first (then cancelled) stipulates a payment of one thousand marks a year while the renewed grant states five hundred marks annually until the whole is discharged.[135] Again this shows that John had a real interest in Ireland. To ensure that De Braose would be successful in his endeavour, on 12 January the king commanded the justiciar (Fitz Henry) not to impede De Braose when he was in Ireland on business regarding Limerick.[136]

Then on 2 November the king commanded the barons of Meath to have faith in what Fitz Henry told them on his behalf.[137] That such a request had to be made is perhaps an early indication of Fitz Henry's ability to antagonise the established barons. This was followed on 22 December by a command to Fitz Henry that if he would not do as requested regarding De Braose, he was to come to the king (then at St Pierre sur Dive) and surrender his castles to Master Humphrey de Tikehull.[138] One presumes he was somehow impeding De Braose.

Fitz Henry was involved in a legal dispute with Adam de Hereford in 1202 over the cantred of Hatebo in Osraige (Aghaboe, Co. Laois). The king had to command him (Fitz Henry) to maintain the peace.[139] De Hereford was one of Marshal's most prominent tenants in Leinster but there is no indication that Fitz Henry's actions were seen, at this stage, as an attempt to undermine Marshal's lordship. The following year Marshal was a witness to the renewal of the grant to De Braose of Limerick. It appears that he was now also liable for money that William de Burgh should have paid. On 28 August Marshal witnessed a letter to the justiciar for the protection of the canons of Cartmel in Lancashire.[140]

In 1204 we can see a dramatic increase in Marshal's activities in Leinster. On 15 January the king commanded Fitz Henry to deliver to Marshal or his representative the

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[135] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 145, 147, p. 24.

[136] Ibid., 148, p. 25.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid., 160, p. 26.

[139] Ibid., 166, p. 27.

[140] Ibid., 186, p. 29.

castles of Lega (Lea) and Geisil (Geashill) both in Co. Offaly. These had been held by Gerald fitz Maurice (Fitz Gerald) and his heir.[141] This was probably the result of a request from Marshal to the king. It is not clear how long Fitz Henry had held these castles, but the annals record Gerald's death in 1200.[142] Marshal was probably not alone in being in dispute with Fitz Henry. On 26 March the king commanded Walter de Lacy, Henry de Loundres, archdeacon of Stafford, Godfrey Lutterell and William Petit to hear complaints against the justiciar (Fitz Henry).[143] In April Fitz Henry was also told to allow Marshal all liberties and free customs to which he was entitled by the king's charter, 'by land, sea and fresh water'.[144]

In the same month, Marshal seems to have intended to reinforce his administration in Leinster. Letters patent were given for John Marshal, his nephew, allowing him licence to go to Ireland in the service of his uncle.[145] At the same time letters of simple protection were given for Michael de Londres, Marshal's clerk.[146] On 9 May a letter was sent to the justiciar and barons of Ireland directing them to aid and counsel John Marshal who had gone to Ireland to receive the stewardship of the lands and castles of his uncle William Marshal.[147] Not only was Marshal intent on developing his lordship, he also had at this stage the full support of the king. In September King John thanked the barons of Leinster for their aid and good service which he had been told about by the justiciar and he expressed his hope that they would continue supporting the justiciar in the same manner.[148] What exactly this praise is in aid of is unclear although it could relate to support given to Fitz Henry in his attempts to seize Hugh de Lacy and confiscate his lands.[149] At the end of August the justiciar advised the king that there was no place to deposit the royal treasure. The king commanded that a castle be built in Dublin 'for the uses of justice in the city, and if need be for the city's defence, with good dikes and strong walls'.[150]

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[141] Ibid., 195, p. 30.

[142] *AI*, 1200.

[143] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 209, p. 32.

[144] Ibid., 211, p. 32.

[145] Ibid., 210, p. 32

[146] Ibid., 212. p. 32

[147] Ibid., 216, p. 33.

[148] Ibid., 228, p. 35.

[149] Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 99.

[150] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 226, p. 35.

On 3 September Marshal, at Woodstock, witnessed a grant to Walter de Lacy allowing him to hold fairs at Lochseveth, Keneles and Adtrum (Lough Sewdy, Co. Westmeath, Kells and Trim both Co. Meath), all to last eight days. This show of favour for De Lacy was short-lived. On 2 November the king commanded him to deliver the city of Limerick to Fitz Henry. He was informed that he could not maintain peace in Connacht and Cork unless the city was in his hands.[151] This could relate to Domnall Mac Carthaig's successes against the foreigners in Desmond that year.[152]

On 13 February 1205 a letter of protection for the lands and possessions of John Marshal while he is on the king's service in Ireland was issued.[153] Why he should be on the king's business rather than Marshal's is not clear. On 10 September the king granted custody of lands previously granted to Richard Marshal (his serjeant) to Owen le Brun.[154] It could be that the surname is a coincidence but it is possible that this was a relative, perhaps a nephew. On 20 December a mandate was sent to the bailiff of William Earl Marshal allowing Regina, widow of Richard de Carr', to have her dower out of her late husband's free tenement in Leinster.[155]

On 30 June the ubiquitous Fitz Henry seems once again to have been reprimanded when the king advised him to rely on Hugh and Walter de Lacy. He also ordered him to wage no war against the marchers unless they advise him to.[156] In what must be another reprimand, on 23 August the king prohibited him from exacting customs (other than those already owed) in the lands of William de Braose, William Marshal or Walter de Lacy. This was followed by an instruction to grant William de Braose custody of the city of Limerick.[157]

Marshal's refusal in June 1205 to join King John on his campaign in Poitou was a clear and very public breach with the king who, as a result, accused him of conspiring with Philip of France. With Marshal now out of royal favour, the *History* depicts the king as intent on revenge for this perceived betrayal, presumably plotting how he could sideline Marshal's position politically as well as reducing his landholdings. The truth is

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[151] Ibid., 229, pp 35–6.

[152] *AU*, 1204.

[153] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 254, p. 39.

[154] Ibid., 274, pp 41–2.

[155] Ibid., 281, p. 43.

[156] Ibid., 268, pp 40–1.

[157] Ibid., 270, p. 41.

probably far more complicated. John, for his part, could not conceivably allow Marshal to escape without some reprimand for fear of encouraging similar refusals elsewhere. John was careful to avoid directly punitive action, however, probably because of Marshal's reputation and standing which afforded him some protection. The death, in 1205, of the earl of Leicester and the division of his estates had left Marshal as one of the most prominent and powerful figures in the kingdom. It might well have been that Marshal was more of a threat to John than vice versa, particularly in light of the ongoing conflict with France. Notably, when John accused him of treason, much of the baronage refused to take sides.[158] It could be that John was also becoming increasingly jealous and suspicious of Marshal's reputation and his ability to act with growing independence and had up to that point been unable to find an excuse to check Marshal's power, but this refusal gave him the opportunity.[159] Initially, the king still needed to be cautious and measured in his response (neither of which he was known for) for fear of pushing Marshal into rebellion. While this might never have been an option that Marshal would consider, for John it would have been a real concern.

Untangling John's motives towards Marshal are always difficult, and his actions often appear contradictory. It could be that this was simply indecisiveness on the king's part. John's first response to Marshal's refusal to join him on his campaign in France was to take Marshal's eldest son, William, as a hostage. Marshal also at this time lost control of the county of Sussex, which had been held first by John Marshal (William Marshal's brother) and then himself, as sheriffs, since 1190. These actions might have been a warning to Marshal and not intended to signify a permanent end of their mutually beneficial relationship. Perhaps to show that this was indeed the case Marshal was soon afterwards given the wardship of Warin fitz Gerold's heir. Marshal, for his part, remained at court for much of 1205. He was also one of three earls sent to escort King William of Scotland to a meeting with King John. This was no petty errand; it was vital for John to secure his northern border before departing for France.[160]

After April 1206 Marshal was no longer a witness to royal acts. While it is unclear why he was absent, it does not necessarily signal a further deterioration of his

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[158] Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 96–9.

[159] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 208.

[160] Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 99, 222. Warin fitz Gerold's younger brother, Henry, was one of Marshal's household knights from at least 1202 until 1219.

standing with the king.[161] On 2 March, however, in a letter to the justiciar, Fitz Henry, the king directed him 'to distrain the lands and chattels of Geoffrey fitz Robert for a debt of 300*l*.' [162] Fitz Robert was not only an important vassal of Marshal's in Leinster but also his seneschal there. While the debt was almost certainly real, the timing of the letter makes it difficult not to suspect that this was intended as a move against Marshal. Perhaps a good indication that John's actions were initially meant as a reprimand rather than being the result of a breakdown in trust is that when in June 1206 he finally left for Poitou, Marshal was one of those assigned to ensure stability in the king's absence. As well as this, in spite of Marshal's own failure to accompany John on his campaign, he was willing to send a considerable contingent of his own knights and sergeants.[163] This somewhat ambiguous relationship is difficult to reconcile with a king bent on revenge but it does show that Marshal's position was less secure. He does not, however, seem likely at this time to have been in any real danger of losing his lordships or of being ruined entirely.[164]

When King John returned from France at the end of September Marshal remained absent from court.[165] Given that John's attitude towards Marshal appears to have been remarkably inconsistent, it could be that Marshal had tired of court intrigues and had withdrawn to the relative quiet of Chepstow Castle in Monmouthshire. This, though, would have run the risk of causing the king to become even more suspicious. While he was absent, Marshal's rivals would have found it far less difficult to convince John of Marshal's disloyalty, if such convincing was necessary. For this reason, it is likely that there was a more specific motive behind Marshal's absence, probably something that resulted in a further deterioration of his relationship with the king. Crouch suggests that it could have been the result of a continued refusal by John to grant Marshal licence to travel to Ireland.[166]

It is also possible that Marshal's refusal to join John on his campaign in France, and the very obvious breach that occurred between the two in 1205, was ultimately the

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[161] Ibid.

[162] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 287, pp 43–4.

[163] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 99.

[164] Ibid., p. 98.

[165] Ibid., p. 99.

[166] Ibid., p. 100; Ella S. Armitage, *Early Norman castles of the British Isles* (London, 1912), p. 125. Chepstow Castle was also known as Estrighoel or Striguil, the centre of Strongbow's earldom.

result of John's policy in Ireland. Since at least 1185 John had been, with varying success, attempting to reduce the power of the great Irish magnates. Marshal through his marriage to Isabella had found himself in just such a position, and was potentially one of the most powerful of these lords. The justiciar, Fitz Henry, was also one of Marshal's principal vassals and they had already clashed over claims on the territory of Uí Fáeláin.[167] Some of the territory in question had been in dispute since at least 1202 when Fitz Henry came into conflict with Adam de Hereford, another of Marshal's Leinster vassals. Fitz Henry had appealed his case to John who later commanded that the territory be seized by the justiciar.[168] Another matter of dispute was the territory held by Gerald fitz Maurice who had married the heiress of Robert de Bermingham. At the time of Gerald's death, his son Maurice was still a minor. The rights of the crown to claim custody of such lands is not clear. The barons of Meath and Leinster protested at such seizures while John seemed to be unsure, first ordering the lands to be handed over to Marshal in 1204, and then having second thoughts.[169] John's vacillating on this issue was also evident in relation to the lands of Theobald Walter. On 3 April 1206 he ordered Fitz Henry to take into his possession the lands that had belonged to William de Burgh and Theobald Walter, both of which were minorities since 1205.[170] Then on 4 April he issued further orders to Fitz Henry to allow the bailiffs of Marshal, along with the king's own bailiffs, to prevent anything being removed from Theobald Walter's former lands, which are described as being 'of the Earl's inheritance'.[171] The phrase 'of the Earl's inheritance', meaning those lands within the lordship of Leinster, is important. This, it would appear, implies recognition of Marshal's rights to custody of these lands. Finally, on 25 May the king notified Fitz Henry that he had in fact granted custody of those former lands of Theobald Walter that were 'of the Earl's inheritance' to William Marshal. The only stipulation was that money owing to the justiciar from the

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[167] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 102.

[168] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 153.

[169] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 78; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 195, p. 30.

[170] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 288, p. 44.

[171] Ibid.; David Crouch (ed.), *The acts and letters of the Marshal family: marshals of England and earls of Pembroke, 1145–1248* (Cambridge, 2015), pp 173–5: these included the town and castle of Arklow in Co. Wicklow, 'the land of Machtalewi' and the town of Tullowphelim in Co. Carlow.

estate of Theobald Walter was to be repaid if Fitz Henry could prove it had not already been repaid.[172]

It seems, therefore, that the dispute over the territory of Uí Fáeláin was not only a matter of principle, at least on John's part. It could be that the dispatch of John Marshal to Ireland in 1204 coincided with a renewed push to break the power of the Irish barons. The fall of De Courcy and the frustration of De Burgh's schemes in Connacht can be seen as the casualties of such a strategy.[173] Marshal, with his large holdings in England, Wales and indeed Normandy, would potentially have been in a more secure position but must surely have been suspicious of the king's ultimate intentions. In 1205 Marshal may have feared that were he to travel to France, he would find it even more difficult to influence events in Leinster than he would have from England or Wales. He might well have already sought licence to travel to Ireland in 1204 or 1205 and been refused. It is not inconceivable that the king, while showing favour to Marshal at court, at least up to mid-1206, was pursuing a concurrent policy of reducing Marshal's hold on Leinster. Marshal would have been aware of such a duplicitous policy and this could explain his refusal to follow the king to France. He had effectively argued in 1199 that his affairs in Leinster, as part of the lordship of Ireland, were not subject to the same rules as the rest of Richard's kingdom. John, in a sense, can be seen as beating Marshal at his own game, applying different rules in different parts of his realm when it suited him. This would help explain the inherent contradiction that developed whereby John was able to maintain Marshal's position in England and Wales, often giving further privileges and rewards, while at the same time seeking to undermine him in Leinster.

By the end of 1206 Ireland was facing into a period of uncertainty. John de Courcy had been banished from Ulster and the successors of William de Burgh and Theobald Walter were still minors, their great fiefs now under the administration of the king's appointees.[174] There was, however, nothing like the power vacuum that had caused such fear on Strongbow's death thirty years previously. The colony possessed a formidable array of Anglo-Norman magnates including the De Lacy brothers Hugh and

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[172] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 296, p. 45.

[173] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 76. William de Burgh appears to have been restored to favour shortly before his death.

[174] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 199. In the case of Theobald Walter's lands, this would appear to be William Marshal.

Walter, lords of Ulster and Meath respectively. William de Braose at least nominally controlled Munster but it was his powerful barons such as Thomas fitz Maurice (who was consolidating his hold in Desmond) and Geoffrey de Marisco (doing likewise in Adare and Killorglin) that were more responsible for holding the territory together.[175] Meiler fitz Henry as justiciar was no cautious administrator but was energetic and bellicose in the style of the early marcher lords of the 1170s. As well as being an important landholder in Leinster, and vassal of Marshal, he was a major landholder in Meath and Munster. It was through him that John had gradually sought to reduce the privileges of the great Irish barons, and in part owing to his actions as justiciar that William de Burgh's ambitions in Connacht were checked and, with the connivance of the De Lacy brothers, that De Courcy was overthrown in Ulster.[176] Marshal was not unique in 1206 in having confrontational encounters with the justiciar on the king's orders. On 30 August the king intervened in a dispute over land between Hugh de Lacy and the church of Armagh. De Lacy was instructed to abide by the decision of Fitz Henry in this regard.[177] That winter, Fitz Henry would also run into conflict with William de Braose, and Walter de Lacy his bailiff.[178]

The Leinster lordship must long have been a concern for Marshal. As early as April 1204 Marshal had sent John Marshal to Leinster as his seneschal for Leinster. This was perhaps to counter the ongoing activities of Fitz Henry. John Marshal was a knight of considerable ability and was on favourable terms with the king.[179] As Sidney Painter points out, by allowing John Marshal's appointment, the king gave the appearance of at least offering some support to Marshal's cause.[180] It could also be that at this time, while he was happy to allow Marshal and Fitz Henry to waste their energies against each other, they were both too valuable to alienate entirely. It is not clear how successful John Marshal was as seneschal but the challenge of countering the justiciar's ambitions would have tested even the most capable.[181] While there is little direct evidence to suggest that John Marshal was successful in containing Fitz Henry,

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[175] Ibid.

[176] Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, pp 96–9.

[177] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 301, p. 45.

[178] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 176–7; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 77.

[179] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 210, p. 32; Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 102–3.

[180] Painter, *William Marshal*, pp 152–3.

[181] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 103.

there is the likelihood that he was involved in a campaign against Áed Méith Ua Néill, king of Tír Eóghain (Tyrone). The combined forces of Hugh de Lacy as well as those of 'the Foreigners of Meath and of Leinster' marched into Tullaghoge (in Tyrone), and burned churches and corn, but failed to obtain hostages or pledges of submission from Áed Méith. It was also probably the same force which attacked Ciannachta (Keenaght, Co. Derry) shortly afterwards, burning all its churches and stealing countless cattle.[182]

Towards the end of the year 1206 Marshal again planned to visit his lands in Leinster. It is possible that souring relations with John made a long absence from court advisable or simply that his presence in the Leinster lordship was long overdue. John was reluctant to give his consent but finally did so.[183] Marshal then sent John de Earley and Henry Hose, two of his most loyal and capable followers, ahead of him as he made his preparations to leave for Ireland. Marshal had got only as far as his castle of Striguil (Chepstow) when news reached him that John, who was already keeping Marshal's eldest son William as a hostage, now required his second son as a hostage. It seems that having granted Marshal permission to go to Ireland, John regretted his decision, but rather than go back on his word he felt that demanding two sons as hostages would force Marshal to change his plans. In fact, John seems to have been initially favourable to Marshal leaving for Ireland or at least wished to appear so. On 19 February the king issued a letter of protection for the lands and tenants of Marshal for 'so long as he shall be in Ireland by the K.'s Licence'. He also instructed that no legal suits be taken against him concerning lands he held before departing. Similar letters patent were issued for Henry Hose and John de Earley, 'who go with William Earl Marshall'.[184] Marshal, perhaps having more trust in John than many, or at least understanding something of his personality, decided to send him his second son Richard as a hostage and proceeded to cross to Ireland.[185] It could have been that his own childhood experiences at the hands

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[182] *AFM*, 1206; *AU*, 1207 [*recte* 1206].

[183] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 208–9.

[184] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 313, pp 46–7; Bradley and Murtagh, 'William Marshal's charter to Kilkenny, 1207', p. 221.

[185] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 208–9; Crouch, 'William Marshal in exile', p. 34. Crouch describes King John as 'neither self-controlled, reliable, trustworthy nor measured'; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 101; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 309, p. 46. Marshal had himself been entrusted with the custody of another royal hostage, Robert le Petit, son of the former justiciar, William le Petit. It is not clear when he had been given as a hostage but he is recorded as being in Marshal's custody *c.*1206–7. Other hostages mentioned at this time included Hugh, son of Robert de Lacy, who was in the custody of Henry Biset, Hugh, son of Richard de

of King Stephen played heavily on his mind. He might have assumed that his sons would be in no real danger or perhaps he was emulating his own calculating and hard-nosed father. He still, after all, had a few sons to spare. There is an irony in John's presumption that giving up a second son as a hostage would be enough to deter Marshal from leaving. It relied on John's own reputation for callousness to be effective yet he had been keen to portray himself as compassionate and honourable; a good king.[186] The latter was a reputation that the king had failed to fulfill, while the former, that of ruthlessness, he was yet to acquire, the murder of Arthur of Brittany being an exception. It is at this stage that Marshal's wife Isabella first emerges from his shadow. Not only was she strongly opposed to the handing over of a second son as a hostage but the fate of Leinster affected her directly. Should Marshal pre-decease her before any of their sons had come of age, the lordship of Leinster would revert to her.[187]

The expedition to Leinster in 1207 was an important milestone in Marshal's long political career. It was during this affair that for the first time since 1189, his position was at serious risk. It is clear that John, already annoyed by and suspicious of Marshal, was now presented with a further opportunity to damage him politically. Marshal's standing among his own vassals was also challenged by the intrigues of Fitz Henry at the behest of John, which in effect amounted to a rebellion against his authority in Leinster, 'the ultimate humiliation for a well-intentioned lord'. This was to prove a serious test of Marshal's abilities. He had the unenviable challenge of dealing with King John's manoeuvres at court while simultaneously containing a revolt in Ireland.[188] For Marshal, there was only a very limited choice in how he could react. If he chose to stay away from Leinster, the risk was losing it for good; if he chose to absent himself from court again, he risked further political isolation. Judging from John's often changeable character, and a sometimes ruthlessly pragmatic streak, it was probably a sensible estimation that royal favour could always be regained whereas the loss of territory in Leinster could prove harder to reverse. Shortly after Marshal's departure,

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Tuit, who was being kept at Winchester, Adam, son of Richard de Capella, who was held at the castle of Salisbury and Maurice, son of Hugh de Husat (Hose), who was held at Windsor. These were all the sons of Meath barons.

[186] Crouch, 'William Marshal in exile', p. 34.

[187] Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 100–1.

[188] Ibid., p. 101.

John took back control of the castles of Gloucester, St Briavels and Cardigan.[189] Although this can be seen as another indication of John's annoyance at Marshal, there is a very practical element to this action of John's; it might not have been regarded as wise to leave the control of important castles in the hands of an absent lord, particularly when the war with France was ongoing and when unrest among the Welsh was always a risk.

In the spring of 1207 Marshal and Isabella arrived in Ireland. According to the *History*, while most of their tenants were glad of and welcomed their arrival, others were privately not so overjoyed.[190] Crouch suggests that Fitz Henry's kinship with the original Cambro-Norman adventurers-turned-settlers was one reason for their animosity towards Marshal and this, he argues, could explain the support that Fitz Henry received from the same group.[191] These Irish barons had been engaged in almost constant warfare for a generation. It is doubtful that Marshal's reputation from his days on the tournament circuit would have overawed them. He was also faced with the difficult challenge of stepping into the role vacant since Strongbow's death in 1176. These were difficult shoes to fill. The amount of support received by Fitz Henry might, however, be over-estimated. Of the Leinster barons, only Philip de Prendergast is named as being a confederate of Fitz Henry. William de Barry and David de la Roche also both benefitted from John's grants after Marshal's recall to England, but there is no certainty that they supported Fitz Henry as a result.[192] Fitz Henry, as a major vassal of both Walter de Lacy and Marshal, and as justiciar, had substantial forces of his own that he could call upon. Those of the Leinster barons that the *History* regards as disloyal to Marshal might not necessarily have sided openly with Fitz Henry. Some could simply have declined to commit their men to either side, preferring to wait and see how events unfolded.[193]

Soon after his arrival, Marshal summoned Fitz Henry (who was his vassal) to appear before his court to justify his actions. Fitz Henry declined, arguing that he had not been acting as a vassal or a baron but as justiciar at the king's command.[194] This legalistic distinction was not dissimilar to those Marshal had himself previously used in

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[189] Ibid., p. 102.

[190] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 209.

[191] Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 103–4.

[192] Curtis, *Med. Ire*., pp 98–9; Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 156.

[193] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 171.

[194] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 154; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 104.

relation to his lands in Leinster and Normandy. Fitz Henry soon asked the king to have Marshal called back to court. He had informed the king that if Marshal were to remain in Ireland for long, it would be detrimental to his plans or more specifically that 'if he allowed him to stay long' then 'the king's own share of power would be worth nothing'.[195] Either shortly before or soon after the justiciar's request to recall Marshal, and some two months after Marshal's arrival in Ireland, a letter was sent to the king from the barons of Meath and Leinster requesting that the justiciar return lands he had confiscated.[196] Although this complaint does not survive, the king's reply does.[197] His response on 23 May takes the tone of a biting rebuke.[198] The king stated that he

> marvels much at what they tell him in their letters, from which it appears that they are about to create a new assize in the king's land ... without the consent of the Prince of that land.[199]

This was addressed to Walter, Hugh and Robert de Lacy, William le Petit, Richard de Tuit, Adam de Hereford, Philip de Prendergast, William fitz Gerald, baron of Naas, John de Clahul, Maurice de London, Thomas de Hereford and the other barons of Meath and Leinster.[200] Marshal's name is notably absent and this has been taken to mean that he was not among the signatories of the original complaint but that is by no means certain. The last six individuals named were all his vassals in Leinster and the king in his response specifically names the land of Uí Fáeláin, which, if it were to be returned, would be returned to Marshal.[201] The king believed that what they asked was clearly without justification, 'unjust indeed, and unusual is what they ask', and that whatever lands Fitz Henry had seized, he had done so on his (King John's) orders and for such actions taken as justiciar, Fitz Henry was not answerable to anyone but the king. The king in his reply required that the demands of the barons be withdrawn and

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[195] *History*, 13436–42; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 103; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 210.

[196] Crouch, 'William Marshal in exile', p. 38.

[197] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 104.

[198] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 154.

[199] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 329, p. 49.

[200] Ibid.

[201] Crouch, 'William Marshal in exile', p. 38.

stated that 'by the help of God he will seek his right according to time and place'.[202] John made it clear that he was supportive of Fitz Henry's actions in Offaly, who was acting in the king's interest, ending any earlier ambiguity.[203] This reply was addressed first to Walter de Lacy, suggesting he was regarded as one of those responsible for the original letter. This probably explains a subsequent separate order, issued by the king to De Lacy on 14 April, instructing him to abide by his judgment and summoning him to appear at court.[204] The De Lacy involvement is significant here because it shows their willingness to side with Marshal against the justiciar.[205]

If this had all been at the instigation of Marshal, as Crouch suggests, Marshal seriously misjudged John's interest in Irish affairs or indeed how the king would react to such a challenge to his authority. Fitz Henry was after all his justiciar. Attempts to challenge or undermine the intentions of a king of John's temperament would always have risks. Whether it was due to Fitz Henry's request or John's annoyance at a perceived interference in his Irish schemes, Marshal was soon recalled to England. John for his part had not wanted Marshal to go in the first place and presumably would have found reason at some point to bring him back. In September 1207 Marshal, along with many Irish barons and indeed the justiciar, Fitz Henry (travelling separately) arrived back in England.[206]

In what was probably an attempt to alienate Marshal from potential supporters in Ireland, John was generous towards many of those barons who had made the crossing. Crouch sees those of Marshal's tenants who accepted gifts and grants of lands from the king as somehow turning their backs on their lord. If this was the case then some of those who should have been Marshal's most loyal supporters were in effect bought off. These included Philip de Prendergast who not only was one of his major tenants in Leinster but was also related to his wife through marriage. Also, perhaps of

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[202] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 329, p. 49.

[203] Painter, *William Marshal*, pp 154–5.

[204] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 328, pp 48–9; the only letters issued by the king to his Irish barons that mention Marshal directly between the letter summoning de Lacy, and Marshal's arrival back in England in September, are dated 20 July and 1 October. The first requests that de Braose allow Robert le Vasovar to recover the dowry of his daughter Matilda who was the widow of Theobald Walter. In the second, it is Fulk fitz Warin (Matilda's new husband) who is to receive the dowry. Both Walter de Lacy and William Marshal were apparently issued with similar letters.

[205] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 104.

[206] Ibid., p. 105; Crouch, 'William Marshal in Exile', p. 39; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 78.

more personal concern, on 12 November John Marshal, his nephew and seneschal of Leinster, was made marshal of Ireland as well as being granted land. Among the witnesses to this were Fitz Henry and De Prendergast.[207] John Marshal also appears as a witness to a series of charters for grants of land made by the king on 8 and 12 November.[208] It could be that suspicions of John Marshal's loyalty and reliability had been one of the reasons Marshal felt it necessary to go to Ireland in the first place.[209] Others of Marshal's more important vassals who benefited were William de Barry, Adam de Hereford and David de la Roche.[210] The focus in the *History* is on those who remained rather than those who accompanied Marshal to England. Crouch suggests that there is little criticism of those who John favoured in the *History* because many would have been still alive and powerful when it was written.[211] It is, however, problematic to consider that all those who received grants from John in November 1207 were betraying Marshal. It is highly unlikely that anyone, no matter where their own loyalties lay, would turn down a gift or grant of land from the king. While this could well have been John's intention to detach Marshal's supporters from him it is difficult to judge how successful such a policy was overall. Even John Marshal was to quickly return to his uncle's service.[212]

When he had received the summons to return to England, Marshal, suspecting something untoward in King John's motives, chose to leave his wife Isabella behind. With her he left most of his household knights including John de Earley, Jordan de Sauqueville and Marshal's cousin, Stephen d'Evreux. As bailiffs, De Sauqueville was

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[207] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 353, p. 53: the land in question was 'the cantred in which the vill of Kylmie is situated', and the other witnesses were Godfrey Fitz Peter, earl of Essex, Ranulph, earl of Chester, Saier de Quency, earl of Winchester, David de Roka, Robert Fitz Martin, Gilbert de Angulo and Eustace de Roka: Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 106, 223. Philip de Prendergast had married Mathilda, daughter of Strongbow from his first marriage.

[208] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 353–6, pp 52–4: these are principally grants to Leinster barons, among them Philip de Prendergast, Adam de Hereford, William de Barry, Gilbert de Angulo, Richard le Latimer, David de Rupe, the brothers Henry, Maurice, Eneas and Audoenus fitz Philip, Eustace fitz Rupe, Jordan Lochard and Richard de Cogan. Also included in this series of grants are the convent of St Mary's of Grane and Dermot Mac Gilla Mo Cholmóc an Irish king (prince) based in south Dublin.

[209] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 153.

[210] Curtis, *Med. Ire*., pp 98–9; Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 156.

[211] Crouch, 'William Marshal in exile', p. 39.

[212] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 106.

given responsibility for north Leinster while De Earley was left in charge of Uí Chennselaig in south Leinster and Osraige with d'Evreux acting as his under-bailiff.[213] It seems that Marshal feared or suspected that the military element of retinue would be needed in Leinster.[214] The bailiffs were also told to heed the advice of Geoffrey fitz Robert, Walter Purcell and Thomas fitz Anthony, all of whom were powerful Leinster barons who Marshal considered loyal. Of his household knights, only Henry Hose accompanied him to England.[215]

Leaving the countess behind made sense for two reasons. The first was for her general safety. She was again pregnant and (although this had not stopped her travelling in the past) the sea journey could have proven dangerous. Not being sure what John's intentions were, Marshal might have believed that keeping the rest of his family (John still held his two eldest sons as hostages) out of the king's immediate reach would be prudent. The second was her own ancestry. If Marshal was unsure of the dependability of some of the Leinster barons to him personally, then he might have gambled that there would have been a lingering sense of loyalty to Strongbow's legacy.[216] In the *History* it is she who is left to govern Leinster in her husband's absence with De Earley, De Sauqueville and d'Evreux answerable to her. It is also probable that the countess was one of those who expressed doubts about John's intentions.[217]

Before he departed for England, Marshal assembled his knights and barons at Kilkenny Castle. Marshal was urged by De Earley to take hostages from his barons to ensure their good behaviour while he was away but thought better of it.[218] Marshal deemed such action as either unnecessary or perhaps counterproductive. There was a chance that coercion would have pushed those of wavering loyalty into supporting the justiciar's cause. Marshal, after all, had left two sons as hostages with the king before departing for Ireland against his wishes, which shows how futile such a policy could

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[213] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 211; Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 106–7; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire*., p. 78; Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 155.

[214] Crouch, 'William Marshal in exile', p. 39.

[215] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 155.

[216] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 107; *History*, 13473–512 states that Reinfrid fitz Payn, Thomas fitz Anthony and William Mallard were also left behind to assist de Earley along with seven of his knights. It is not clear if those named are included in the seven.

[217] *History*, 13362–94.

[218] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 107.

prove. That such action was even considered again suggests that violence of some sort on the part of the justiciar was expected. Marshal, as lord of Leinster, had required no such hostages during the preceding eighteen years.

In his address to his assembled knights and barons before leaving for England, Marshal made it clear that it was through his wife Isabella that he held Leinster. He also stressed that their loyalty was primarily to her because it was her father, Strongbow, who 'once he had conquered the land' had enfeoffed them (or in some cases their fathers). He also appealed to their sense of honour by emphasising the fact of her pregnancy and entrusting her care and protection to them. The *History* also adds darkly that 'some who promised to do the right thing went back on what they had said, for it is always the case that the wicked man is proved to be so by his words and deeds'.[219] It seems that Fitz Henry had planned for a rebellion to begin once the two had left for England.[220] A week after they had landed in Wales, Fitz Henry's forces attacked the settlement of Newtown (probably New Ross, Co. Wexford), burning its barns, looting the town and killing many of Marshal's men.[221]

In January 1208 Fitz Henry persuaded the king to summon De Earley, De Sauqueville and d'Evreux to return to England. He believed that in their absence he would have little difficulty in defeating the remainder of Marshal's supporters. At the same time, Fitz Henry left for Ireland to lead the campaign against Marshal himself.[222] It is unclear exactly what Fitz Henry's aims or orders were. It is likely that by this stage he was trying to seize Marshal's castles and lands rather than simply harassing his supporters through persistent raiding. His longer-term goals are also unclear. He was probably at the very least intent on holding the territory he had seized in Uí Fáeláin.

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[219] *History*, 13532–50; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 108; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 211; Painter, *William Marshal*, pp 156–7.

[220] *History*, 13555–64; Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 157.

[221] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 109; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 212; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 78; *History*, 13564–72: New Ross would have been a symbolic target for fitz Henry as it represented Marshal's commitment to investing in and developing the lordship. It was also at this time without town walls. The settlement attacked is, however, named *la Novele vile*, so this 'Newtown' could be any town considered new and as yet unnamed in 1207. Fitz Henry's holdings were primarily in north Leinster and Meath so this might relate to somewhere closer to his own territory, perhaps Newtown Trim, Co. Meath, although this would mean fitz Henty's initial attack was against de Lacy rather than Marshal.

[222] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 109; Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 156.

John, it would seem, was now intent on the seizure of Marshal's Irish lands, perhaps as a prelude to destroying Marshal entirely.[223]

Fitz Henry, accompanied by the king's messenger Thomas Bloet, arrived back in Ireland to find that all had not gone well for his supporters. At a parley arranged by the justiciar at Castledermot, Bloet presented his summonses to Marshal's bailiffs.[224] They were faced with a difficult decision: should they refuse, they risked forfeiting their lands in England; should they comply, it was probable that opposition to Fitz Henry would collapse. They also risked the loss of honour that failing their lord entailed. They all chose to remain and ignore John's summonses.[225] According to the *History*, De Earley had argued that it would be 'a most disgraceful thing to leave the earl's land, land which he has committed us to guard'.[226] At this meeting, De Sauqueville suggested sending a request to Hugh de Lacy, earl of Ulster, for help. Jordan de Sauqueville held lands from Marshal in Normandy and in Buckinghamshire although not in Leinster. He did, however, hold considerable lands in Ulster from De Lacy.[227] This latter connection could explain why he had been given charge of north Leinster. The earl of Ulster responded to this request by marching south, leading a force of 55 knights, 200 men-at-arms and 1,000 foot-soldiers. While these figures could be an exaggeration, De Lacy was undoubtedly at the head of a formidable host.[228] In the winter of 1206–7, the city of Limerick, which had been held by Walter de Lacy as acting bailiff for his father in law, William de Braose, had been taken by force by Meiler, the son of justiciar Meiler fitz Henry. Relations between the families of De Lacy and Fitz Henry are unlikely to have been warm.[229] De Braose clearly regarded such actions as illegal and complained to the king that his constableship, knights, men, land and chattels had been seized 'although he has not been wanting in right'. John, writing to Fitz Henry on 12 February 1207, seems to have agreed. He conceded that De Braose had served him well and ordered the justiciar to return all with exception of the city of Limerick.[230] While John's response

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[223] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 156.

[224] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 213.

[225] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 110.

[226] *History*, 13720–3.

[227] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 155.

[228] *History*, 13745–78; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 214; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 78.

[229] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 176–7; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 77.

[230] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 310, p. 46.

has the appearance of being conciliatory, the exclusion of Limerick city probably made De Braose's undertaking in Munster unviable, or at least unprofitable. Nine days later, on 21 February, the king issued a further instruction to Fitz Henry reaffirming his intention to keep Limerick and instruct the justiciar to hold it for him. He also stipulated that the justiciar's son Meiler should have to answer for his actions only before him (the king).[231] This again brings into question the legality of the whole affair. Fitz Henry, whether for his own gain or at King John's behest, had managed to alienate many among the Irish baronage.[232]

Marshal, who had remained at court, had received no news of how events in Ireland were unfolding from January to March 1208. There had been bad weather throughout much of the spring and Fitz Henry's ship had been one of the few to make the crossing. Towards the end of January at Guildford the king asked Marshal had he heard any news from Ireland. When he replied that he had not, John, perhaps through wishful thinking or out of vindictiveness, decided to tell Marshal that Countess Isabella had been besieged at Kilkenny Castle by the justiciar's forces. If that was not enough to rile Marshal, he elaborated on his tale by claiming that, in an attempt to break the siege, Stephend'Evreux and Ranulf fitz Payn had been killed while John de Earley, having been injured in the encounter, had later died of his wounds. Marshal and many of those present at court would have been aware that it was unlikely that any news could have found its way back to John since Fitz Henry's departure.[233] If news *had* reached court, it would have been equally unlikely that it had not reached Marshal or his associates independently.[234] The complicated nature of John's story could suggest that it was not entirely his invention and that he had heard some unsubstantiated rumour and chosen to believe it. Alternatively, it could have been just an invention to harass and torment. Whatever the story's origins, if John had hoped to provoke a strong reaction from Marshal he was unsuccessful.

John was clearly intent on inflicting some damage on Marshal and his supporters. He had, as they themselves had predicted, seized the lands in England held by De Earley and d'Evreux. He had also sent a letter to Fitz Henry informing him that he was granting him custody of De Earley's lands in Ireland until such time as De

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[231] Ibid., 314, p. 47.

[232] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 209.

[233] Ibid., p. 215; Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 110–11.

[234] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 158.

Earley complied with the summons issued over two months previously.[235] It appears that John had thought Fitz Henry was already in possession of these lands. It is conceivable that this had temporarily been the case at some point, but it is unlikely. This could again suggest that John was misinformed of events in Leinster, or again it might show wishful thinking on the king's part.

At the end of February 1208, word of events in Ireland finally reached court. Fitz Henry had been defeated by an alliance of Marshal's supporters and the forces of Hugh and Walter de Lacy, earls of Ulster and Meath respectively. The *History* gives no details of the conflict; however, from Irish sources there is some indication of how events unfolded. The Annals of Clonmacnoise tell us that in 1207 'There arose great warrs in Leinster between the Englishmen there'. As far as its authors are concerned, there were two distinct 'warrs'. The first was between Fitz Henry and Geoffrey de Marisco and Marshal. The fighting reportedly caused utter destruction in all of Leinster and Munster. The second war was between Fitz Henry and Hugh de Lacy in which the land of Foherties (Forth, Co. Carlow) was wasted, pillaged and destroyed.[236] The involvement of De Marisco and the destruction in Munster points to a larger conflict than is often thought. That events were seen as two separate conflicts by Irish writers is probably an indication of two phases of fighting. The first could represent events up to the return of Fitz Henry with Bloet: the second being the arrival of Hugh de Lacy and his forces soon afterwards. In this second phase, 'The sons of Hugh Delacie with the forces of the English of Meath lay siege to the castle of Ardnurcher'.[237] The sons here are Walter and Hugh de Lacy and Ardnurcher (Horseleap, Co. Offaly) was Fitz Henry's principal castle. The land had been granted to him by Hugh de Lacy the elder and the castle had been built in 1192. The siege lasted for five weeks before the castle was surrendered.[238] As well as losing Ardnurcher, Fitz Henry was forced to abandon the cantred of Kinealeagh from 'Burr to Killare'.[239] The Annals of the Four Masters contain the same account except that it is the territory of Fircal that he abandons. It also adds that he was banished from the country (Co. Offaly).[240]

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[235] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 111.

[236] *AC*, 1207.

[237] Ibid.

[238] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 214; Armitage, *Early Norman castles*, p. 331.

[239] *AC*, 1207.

[240] *AFM*, 1207.

The justiciar had been captured and his castles had been seized. He had been able to secure his release only by giving his son over as a hostage to Countess Isabella in his stead. Philip de Prendergast (who had also been captured) along with those other knights who had supported Fitz Henry were obliged to do the same. Those who had no sons had to surrender their brothers or nearest male relatives.[241] Isabella, who had been so reluctant to hand over her own sons to John, had no qualms about imposing the same obligations on those who had opposed her and her husband's hold on Leinster. Faced with this news, John made a rapid but pragmatic change in policy. On 5 March, Marshal, who had apparently come without an invitation, arrived at Bristol.[242] Here, John was able to inform him of events in Ireland. It is likely that Marshal was already aware of what had happened through his own sources. Marshal feigned ignorance while they both ignored the king's earlier account.[243] This charade allowed the king to save face. By playing along with him, Marshal gave the king an excuse to restore their earlier good relationship. On 7 March the king informed Fitz Henry that Marshal had 'showed himself sufficiently submissive'. Despite the king expressing his wish that he return to his lands (probably Leinster in the context of the letter), Marshal refused, and accompanied the king to his council at Winchester, where he insisted he was ready to perform the king's will. The king instructed Fitz Henry that he was to 'raise no war against the land or men of the earl', to keep Ireland in a state of peace and to make amends for any raids his people had conducted on Marshal's land, Marshal having undertaken to do likewise.[244] On 19 March the king informed Fitz Henry that Walter de Lacy had made his peace with the king for his lands in Ireland in the same manner as Marshal had. He instructed Fitz Henry to desist from making war against Walter de Lacy, his land or his people. He went on to instruct him 'that he do not until further orders suffer him to be molested contrary to the tenor of the earl's charter'.[245] The following day, 20 March, the king issued further instructions to Fitz Henry. After first informing him that Marshal 'had performed the king's will', he told him that he was sending Philip of Worcester, Master Robert of Cirencester, his clerk, Roland Bloet and William le Petit to Ireland. The justiciar was to do what they advised him on the king's

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[241] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 215; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 112; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 78.

[242] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 375, p. 56.

[243] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 158.

[244] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 375, p. 56.

[245] Ibid. This would be the charter issued nine days later.

behalf and if he failed to do so they 'shall cause it to be done'. This is presumably an indication that these four commissioners were authorised to supersede the justiciar's powers if necessary. The next letter issued to Fitz Henry, on 21 March, directed him to 'cause seisin to be given to William Earl Marshall of the land of Offaly, with its castles', stipulating that Marshal would either pay, or give a guarantee to pay, three hundred marks for the land.[246] There followed two days later, on 23 March, yet another order to Fitz Henry from the king. This, on the advice of Marshal and Walter de Lacy and other unnamed barons of Ireland, issued orders that 'Irish robbers' be expelled from the king's land of Ireland and that they and those who harbour them be brought to justice according to the laws of England.[247] This is interesting for two reasons. First, it shows to what extent roles have been reversed in Ireland. Second, it is an early indication of what was to later become Marshal's policy towards the Irish.

Marshal, now in undisputed control of Leinster, was in a position to safely surrender it to the king knowing he would grant it straight back to him albeit on renewed terms. This was for the benefit of John's reputation: he could claim that Marshal had been brought back into line. On 28 March Marshal was given a new charter for Leinster.[248] John took care to reserve for himself the pleas of treasure-trove, rape, forestalling, felonious breaches of the peace and the right to make higher church appointments. These do not appear to have been reserved as a prerogative of the crown in the original charter of Henry II to Strongbow. Marshal acquired the right to wardship of heirs of tenants-in-chief who were minors, although permission for marriages of such heirs would be the preserve of the crown. This addressed one of the original causes of conflict with the justiciar and it was later to emerge as one of the reasons for grievance among the English barons. John made a similar re-grant to Walter de Lacy for Meath a month later.[249] The resulting grants were something of a compromise, an early form of 'surrender-and-regrant'. Although the contentious issue of prerogative wardships had been settled to the advantage of Marshal and Walter de Lacy they did lose a series of

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[246] Ibid.

[247] Ibid., 380, p. 57.

[248] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 216–17; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 381, p. 57; T.D. Hardy (ed.), *Rotuli Chartarum in Turri Londinensi asservati* (London, 1837), p. 176.

[249] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 233–4; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire*., p. 78; Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 159; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 382, p. 57.

rights dating back to 1172. An important one of these was the removal of their jurisdiction over ecclesiastical tenants. This brought the church within the colony under much more direct supervision of the justiciar's administration. As well as this the courts of the liberties of Leinster and Meath were compelled to conform much more closely with common law. This was achieved by including a provision which allowed appeals to the royal courts which meant that the legal process in the liberties had to be compatible with common law. While these reduced their privileges and their power to act independently, compared to the Welsh marcher lordships, they were far less restricted than their counterparts in England. It was the case that 'Leinster was still a liberty, though a somewhat limited one.'[250]

With the renewed grant, Marshal's title to Uí Fáeláin was recognised and Fitz Henry was forced to surrender it to him.[251] Marshal, in succeeding in his defence of Leinster, had defeated the justiciar and the narrow political support the king had given him. Marshal had been able to rely on the military support of the De Lacys while Fitz Henry was reliant on his own more limited resources and those of the Leinster barons who had sided with him. John, on hearing the news of Fitz Henry's defeat, decided to shift his support to the winning side.[252] It could be that John's willingness to jettison Fitz Henry is an indication that the conflict was more the result of the justiciar's own ambitions than John's express intentions. It could also be that the widespread disaffection of the Irish barons, culminating in war with the justiciar, was indicative of what would follow in England. The causes were the same: the king's policies were seen as capricious, oppressive and sometimes of questionable legality.[253] In April Marshal returned to Ireland, landing at Glascarrig, Co. Wexford. He generally acted generously to those of his own tenants who had opposed him, releasing the hostages held by the countess. Fitz Henry, though, was a different matter. He was forced to give up the formidable fortress of Dunamase, and on his death all his lands were to revert to

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[250] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 160; Hardy (ed.), *Rotuli Chartarum*, p. 176; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 381, p. 57.

[251] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 112.

[252] Curtis, *Med. Ire*., p. 109. As Curtis sees it, a capricious King John made peace with Marshal and Walter de Lacy just as fitz Henry looked to be close to victory, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat, as it were. Just how he comes to this conclusion is not clear.

[253] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 214–15.

Marshal or his heirs.[254] While the latter does seem drastic, Fitz Henry had no legitimate heirs and such an outcome was probably already expected if not accepted.[255]

With the collapse of Fitz Henry's position in Ireland, it was no longer tenable for him to remain as justiciar and at some point that year he was replaced, initially by Hugh de Lacy.[256] This appointment was not to last long and De Lacy was replaced as justiciar by John de Gray towards the end of the year. It is likely that de Lacy's appointment was always intended as a temporary measure while awaiting de Gray.[257]

> John, bishop of Norwich, was sent by the king of England into Ireland as lord justice; and the English were excommunicated by the successor of St Peter for sending the bishop to carry on war in Ireland; so that the English were without mass, baptism, extreme unction or lawful interment, for a period of three years.[258]

These ominous words from the Four Masters announce the arrival of the new justiciar, De Gray, bishop of Norwich and trusted advisor to King John. De Gray was a loyal and efficient administrator. As a cleric from a family of the minor nobility, he did not have the rival political connections and loyalties of the more powerful barons and magnates that had preceded him in the role of justiciar.[259] He was John's man and had been since his accession in 1199. After the tumultuous justiciarship of Fitz Henry, the king probably believed that a calmer and less antagonistic administration was called for. De Gray's justiciarship would be tested from the beginning.

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[254] Ibid., 217–18; Curtis, *Med. Ire*., p. 97: it is not clear if this included the cantreds of Akmikerry, Offerba and Eoghanacht Locha Léin, all near Tralee, Co. Kerry, which had been granted to fitz Henry by John in 1200.

[255] Curtis, *Med. Ire*., p. 109; Orpen, *Normans*, iii, 133: this included fitz Henry's son, Meiler, who had earlier been instrumental in capturing Limerick from Walter de Lacy.

[256] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 217; *AI*, 1189.

[257] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 217. Alternatively, while there does not seem to have been a falling out between John and de Lacy that would explain de Lacy's replacement, it could have been related to John's next target, de Braose.

[258] *AFM*, 1208.

[259] Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 138.

Chapter 5
William Marshal and Leinster, 1208–19

Despite having successfully survived the intrigues of King John and the revolt in Leinster of Meiler fitz Henry the standing of Marshal at court was still low in 1208. Marshal would gradually rebuild his political career and eventually surpass the heights he had reached as a favoured supporter of King Richard. Marshal's rehabilitation was, however, by no means guaranteed. This chapter will first examine how Marshal survived unscathed when a crisis triggered by his friend and fellow marcher lord, William de Braose's dramatic fall from grace ultimately led to John's powerful intervention in Ireland in 1210 and the defeat of the De Lacy earls of Meath and Ulster. Marshal's latter political career will also be examined. Relations between John and many of his barons were always strained and the Barons' Revolt of 1215 saw tensions descend into open warfare. This provided Marshal first with the opportunity to prove his loyalty to John before events put him in a position which allowed for his instrumental involvement in bringing about the war's conclusion as regent of England. Not to be overlooked is that while all of the above was unfolding the development of Marshal's lordship of Leinster continued.

Marshal and John's 1208 reconciliation would generally hold except for a brief interruption caused by the actions of William de Braose. De Braose, a powerful marcher baron and significant landholder in Munster, fell out with King John and temporarily interrupted what was one of the more peaceful periods of Marshal's long and turbulent career. As Crouch suggests, Marshal may have been content to retire to and develop his Leinster lordship.[1] De Braose, a close friend of Marshal's, had also initially enjoyed royal favour under John. He had been a loyal supporter of the king and had quickly become one of his greatest (in terms of landownership) and most powerful marcher barons, holding Brecknock, Builth, Radnor and much of Gwent. Despite his lack of an earldom, he was still one of John's greatest magnates.[2] At some point in 1208, around the same time as the king's and Marshal's dispute was developing into outright conflict in Leinster, a similar process involving De Braose and the king was

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[1] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 113; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, p. 219.

[2] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 414; *History*, 13595–8; Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 297; Graham E. Seel, *King John: an underrated king* (London, 2012), p. 87.

under way.[3] De Braose lacked the political dexterity of his peer, however, and was far less capable of judging John's ambitions.[4] While the origins of the dispute are unclear, as early as 1206 this once-friendly relationship was already under strain.[5] The year began with De Braose and the king (at the very least) on amicable terms, with De Braose acquiring the castles of Grosmont, Skenfrith and Whitecastle (in Gwent) for a fine of eight hundred marks. Later that year, however, the justiciar's forces seized Limerick from De Braose's constable, Walter de Lacy, which could not have happened without the king's tacit consent. The De Braose and De Lacy families seem to have developed a mutually beneficial arrangement whereby Walter de Lacy looked after De Braose's Munster interests while De Braose did the same for De Lacy possessions in the Welsh marches. De Braose was made constable of the De Lacy castle at Ludlow in July 1207. This alliance had been secured originally by the marriage of Walter de Lacy to De Braose's daughter Margaret.[6]

It is probable that John had simply decided that De Braose had become too powerful and had begun either to view him as a threat or perhaps to covet his vast land holdings. John's actions follow a similar path to those he had taken against John de Courcy, William de Burgh, William Marshal and later Hugh and Walter de Lacy. John could facilitate the growth in power of his magnates up to the point where he felt either threatened or jealous. There was no real way the king could then reduce their power without leaving a disgruntled and dangerous potential enemy. For John it was safer to try to destroy their power utterly.

While this would seem a likely explanation for De Braose's fall from favour, the king would later (in July 1210 while in Dublin) justify his actions by explaining that they were as a result of a failure by De Braose to repay the substantial debt that he

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[3] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 115; *History*, 13585–8.

[4] Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 138.

[5] *History*, 14152–6: the writer claims not to know the reason de Braose and the king fell out but then adds rather cryptically that even if he did he would never speak of it; Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, pp 311–12 suggests that the writer of the *History* is alluding to some dark secret. He suggests that de Braose, an intimate of the king right at the start of his reign, was in some way connected with the disappearance and murder of Arthur of Brittany and that this might have played a role in their falling out; Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 138 speculates that de Braose, like Marshal, might have been opposed to John's plans for recovering Normandy. This could explain why they both fell out of favour at around the same time.

[6] Seel, *King John*, p. 87.

owed. This debt was indeed real and substantial. De Braose had been granted Limerick in exchange for 5,000 marks in January 1201, to be paid off over ten years.[7] As a result of this falling out (in 1208), John wanted the debt be repaid. John demanded the 5,000 marks (£3,333) owed for the original grant as well as 500 marks for the farm of the city of Limerick. De Braose had in fact reduced the debt to £2,865 but was nonetheless hopelessly in arrears. This had never been an issue while he was in the king's favour and several years had gone by without further reduction of the debt (he had paid off a total of only 700 marks by 1207).[8] The king also failed to acknowledge that for the years 1206 to 1208 the then justiciar, Fitz Henry, had held the city for the king, presumably collecting revenue in lieu of debt owed.[9]

According to John's account, De Braose had removed valuables that were about to be seized by his bailiffs for the debt he owed. His wife and other family and friends pleaded with the king to allow William to be admitted into the king's presence. This request was granted and an agreement was reached whereby De Braose agreed to surrender his Welsh castles of Hay, Brecon and Radnor, give hostages and mortgage his English lands until his debts were paid.[10] However, De Braose failed to hand over his eldest son, one of the required hostages. This seems to have been in part due to the reluctance of his wife, Matilda de St Valery, who refused to give her son to John believing he had murdered his own nephew Arthur. That she made it known that this was the reason for her refusal made it difficult for her husband to avert John's anger, despite De Braose reprimanding his wife.[11] This attempt at a peaceful solution was short-lived, however, as De Braose soon attempted to retake some of his castles by

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[7] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 145, p. 24; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 172–4.

[8] Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 138, argues that John urgently needed money and that de Braose had shown little sign of ever paying the king what he owed. This would seem to be somewhat harsh on de Braose. While he was on good terms with the king, the debt had simply been allowed to roll over year on year. This can only have happened with the king's consent. De Braose had during this period made loans to the king and paid considerable amounts for further grants of land. The revenue from de Braose's estates would have been substantial and had the king insisted that the original terms of the grant of the Limerick lordship be adhered to it should have been well within de Braose's ability to pay.

[9] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 237–8; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 389, p. 58.

[10] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 238; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 408, pp 65–6.

[11] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 236; Adams, *The history of England*, p. 415; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 408, p. 66; Seel, *King John*, p. 90. Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 138 suggests that perhaps too much emphasis is put on the role Matilda de Braose's sharp comments played in provoking John.

force, albeit unsuccessfully. His forces did burn down half of the town of Leominster, however, killing many of the king's men in the process.[12] However slighted John truly felt, he had been provided with all the impetus he needed to begin acting against a former favourite and once the most powerful of the marcher lords. At the beginning of 1209 John ordered Gerard de Athiis, his bailiff, to seize De Braose's Welsh lands for the debts owed and sent his bailiffs to arrest De Braose and his family but they managed to flee to Ireland having been forewarned of John's intent.[13]

It made practical sense that the De Braoses should seek refuge in Ireland. The alternatives were Scotland and France, but De Braose had vassals in Munster, some of whom might have been trusted to shelter them. More importantly, De Braose was related through marriage to the powerful de Lacys and they, De Braose and Marshal were all connected by their roles and holdings in the Welsh marches.[14] It is likely that the De Braoses were initially attempting to reach Walter de Lacy, lord of Meath, who was also William de Braose's son-in-law, where they could be assured of protection. However, perhaps due to unfavourable weather or because it was simply the quickest route across the Irish Sea, they landed in Wicklow before staying with Marshal, presumably at Kilkenny, for about three weeks.[15] When the justiciar, de Gray, was made aware of this he ordered Marshal to hand over De Braose and his family as they were now regarded as traitors to the king. Marshal, as ever the master of legalistic ambiguity, argued that he was bound to shelter De Braose, who was his lord and for good measure added that he was unaware that De Braose and the king were anything other than on good terms.[16] How exactly Marshal could be regarded as a liege man or vassal of De Braose is unclear but it is possible that this could be explained by Marshal holding some lands from De Braose in Wales.[17]As a result, handing him over to the justiciar would amount to treachery and Marshal refused. Instead, he delivered them safely into

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[12] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 238; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 408, p. 66; Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 312. This episode in particular could be an invention or exaggerated in order to further justify John's persecution of de Braose.

[13] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 236–8; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 408, p. 66.

[14] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 79.

[15] *History*, 14169–98; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 239.

[16] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 239; *History*, 14199–226; Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 139.

[17] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 79; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, p. 239. Crosland, *William the marshal*, p. 103 suggests that Marshal held lands from de Braose in Ireland.

the protection of Walter de Lacy.[18] There was little that the justiciar could do when faced with obstruction by the powerful combination of the earls of Leinster, Meath and Ulster. The justiciar sent word to the king of Marshal's refusal to hand over the fugitives. The king was furious and summoned Marshal.[19] That Marshal was able to risk defying John's demands indicates either, as Orpen suggests, a reckless insistence on acting honourably or how secure Marshal felt his position was having defeated the earlier intrigues of Fitz Henry and King John.[20]

John had been preoccupied with forcing William of Scotland to sign a treaty, while there was the ongoing possibility that discontented northern barons would seek to switch allegiance to the Scottish king.[21] He was also involved in disputes with the Welsh, King Philip Augustus of France and, not least, the papacy. The threat of an impending papal interdict could have provided an excuse for his barons to disobey or even rebel.[22] Now faced with De Braose, who was in effect in open revolt, and the failure of his Irish barons to cooperate in his attempts to capture De Braose, John's authority was being seriously challenged and he had little choice but to take drastic action.[23] Despite having come to terms with Marshal and the De Lacys in 1208 and their apparent return to royal favour with renewed charters for their huge lordships, they had still effectively resisted John's plans for Ireland and remained something of 'a thorn in the royal side'.[24] De Braose's flight to Ireland probably allowed John to suspect that the entire colony might be turned against him. He decided to mount an expedition to Ireland, ostensibly to capture De Braose but with its real aim being to check the power of those Irish magnates who had yet again defied him. John did not make the decision to bring an army to Ireland lightly. He feared that the French and the Scots might invade England simultaneously if a major rebellion broke out in Ireland or the Welsh Marches. Before he could begin preparing for his Irish campaign, he had to deal with the threat beyond his northern border. With a surprising show of energy and organisation, John was able to assemble and then march a substantial army to the

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[18] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 240.

[19] Crosland, *William the marshal*, p. 104; *History*, 14199–226.

[20] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 240.

[21] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 79.

[22] Seel, *King John*, p. 90.

[23] Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 139.

[24] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 78; Ó Drisceoil, '*Pons Novus, villa Williemi Marescalli*', p. 268.

Scottish border in August 1209 and when there he managed to sufficiently overawe William of Scotland into renewed professions of loyalty. He demanded two of William's daughters as hostages, possession of three important border castles and the payment of fifteen thousand marks over two years. With the Scottish suitably cowed, John turned his army around and marched south to tackle the restive Welsh principalities. By October, most of the Welsh princes had submitted to him at Woodstock.[25] With a revolt by his own barons always a real fear for John, he did what he could to secure their support by having all his free tenants swear fealty.[26] John was now free to begin planning in earnest for his campaign in Ireland.

Walter de Lacy had agreed to shelter the De Braose family on the understanding that William de Braose would come to an agreement with the king.[27] De Braose agreed to travel back to Wales in an attempt to make some form of amends with the king. Marshal was with the king at this time so it is possible that Marshal had accompanied De Braose back to Wales. Marshal had earlier been summoned to Pembroke by the king to join his impending expedition. Refusal in such an atmosphere of intrigue and suspicion would undoubtedly have been taken as an act of rebellion. Marshal had no choice but to comply if he wished to avoid becoming, as the De Lacys had, the target for the king's ire. John meanwhile had arrived in Pembroke where he had assembled a substantial army, in preparation for his Irish expedition, which consisted of his feudal levy, which included eight hundred knights reinforced with Flemish mercenaries. He had also mustered a large armada of ships to transport his army and their supplies.[28] This he did with commendable speed. With the army there were also carpenters, quarrymen, ditch-diggers and miners. John was prepared to take by force any castles that resisted him.[29] De Braose through intermediaries (perhaps Marshal?) offered to pay the king the huge sum of forty thousand marks. John responded that William de Braose was not his own master, implying that it was his wife who ran the De Braose household and as she was in Ireland the matter would be decided there and that he (De Braose) could accompany him (King John) to Ireland. De Braose, however, declined this

[25] Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 139.

[26] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 225–6.

[27] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 238.

[28] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 79; *AU*, 1210; *AC*, 1208 [*recte* 1210]; Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 314.

[29] Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 140.

invitation and chose to remain in Wales.[30] It seems that De Braose had been careful not to allow himself to be taken into the king's custody while he was in Wales, but how he managed this while communicating with the king so freely is a puzzle. It might be that the king was at this stage happy to have de Braose at large so as to justify what was to become a campaign focused on the de Lacys. John's decision to proceed to Ireland despite de Braose's journey to Wales shows that this dispute with De Braose had now become a secondary consideration and that the De Lacys were now his real target in this enterprise.

John and his army arrived on 20 June 1210 at Crook outside Waterford, where he was met by the justiciar and his forces. From there they travelled to the town (Waterford), where Donnchad Cairprech Ua Briain made his submission to the king and received a charter for Carrickogunnell, Co. Limerick, and the surrounding territory. The justiciar's presence at Crook and Ua Briain's in Waterford on the day of John's arrival indicate that the timing and destination of John's expedition were widely known in advance. John left Waterford the following day, 21 June, and crossed into Leinster and arrived at its principal port, New Ross, on the same day. It is probable that John and some of his entourage had travelled by boat up the River Barrow.[31] Marshal had travelled from Wales to Ireland with John's army and had clearly managed to dissociate himself just enough to avoid the same fate as the De Lacys and the De Braoses. He was now also expected to join or support the campaign against his recent allies, the de Lacys.[32] John's arrival at New Ross can be no coincidence. Marshal's relationship with the king was still fraught. When Fitz Henry's supporters had earlier attacked and burned the barns at New Ross they did so partly for symbolic reasons. The town had been founded by Marshal and it was at the heart of Marshal's efforts to develop his lordship. For the same reason, John had chosen to visit New Ross with his army; this was not a courtesy visit to inspect the progress Marshal had been making on his new town, it was meant as intimidation and a display of the king's power and authority.[33] John's formidable army was at the heart of Marshal's lordship within two days of landing at Waterford and Marshal would have recognised the implicit threat.

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[30] *History*, 14240–56; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 238; Seel, *King John*, p. 90.

[31] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 244; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 401, p. 60: the town is referred to as *Pontem Novem*.

[32] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 79; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 401, p. 60.

[33] Ó Drisceoil, '*Pons Novus, villa Williemi Marescalli*', pp 268, 278.

On 22 June, John was near Inistioge in the lands of Thomas fitz Anthony, one of Marshal's principal tenants.[34] From there he travelled on to Kilkenny where he and his entourage were entertained with a lavish feast by Marshal. His army was also catered for generously and at great expense for two days before they moved on to Naas.[35] The fact that John stopped for two days at Kilkenny on an otherwise whirlwind campaign might have been for the same reasons that the king had made a point of visiting New Ross: he was reasserting his authority over the wayward lordship. The fact that the king was entertained for two days suggests that whatever rapprochement Marshal had come to with the king before departing Pembroke was starting to pay dividends. It is likely he was allowed to take his leave of the king when he left Kilkenny and only re-joined him when he had returned to Dublin two months later. In respect of the king, the old adage of keeping your friends close and your enemies closer might be relevant here; Marshal had somehow managed to extricate himself from the latter category.

By 28 June John had arrived at Dublin where he was met by five of the Meath barons who had come to offer the submission of their lord, Walter de Lacy. Walter, hoping that the king might 'relax his ire', proposed surrendering all his castles and lands to the king 'to retain or restore as he pleases'.[36] They also sought to distance Walter from the actions of his brother Hugh, who they claimed had caused Walter great losses. John was not in a conciliatory mood and proceeded to Ratoath in Co. Meath to take possession of a barony and castle held by Hugh de Lacy from his brother Walter.[37] John granted Ratoath to Philip of Worcester in a charter witnessed by Richard Tyrrell, Richard de Tuit, William le Petit, Peter de Meset, Richard de Feipo, Martin de Mandeville and Adam Dullard. One of these, De Tuit, had been among those who had pleaded Walter de Lacy's case before the king but had now seemingly joined the king.[38]

From 2 to 4 July John stayed at Trim, the *caput* of the Meath lordship, where Walter de Lacy had his principal castle, which the king duly took into his own

[34] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 245; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 402, p. 60.

[35] *History*, 14258–66; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 402, p. 60.

[36] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 402, p. 60.

[37] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 80; Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 141.

[38] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 247–8; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 80; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 402, p. 60: the other barons who had acted as Walter de Lacy's intermediaries were William Parvus, Richard de Futipe, Richard de Capella and Hugh Hose.

possession. At Trim John was joined by forces from Munster, both Irish and English.[39] Then at Ardbraccan John was met by Cathal Crobderg Ó Conchobair, king of Connacht, who submitted to him and then joined his forces to John's growing army, leading them himself.[40] By 4 July John was at Kells in Meath. The next day a small force led by John Marshal broke off from the main army, presumably to seize or accept the surrender of smaller or more remote castles held by the De Lacys's supporters. John continued his progress, taking possession of the castle of Nobber, Co. Meath, before arriving in Louth on 7 July. The town and castle there were already royal possessions.[41]

At this stage it was becoming apparent to Hugh de Lacy that he did not have the forces necessary to face John's growing army and instead he withdrew north, burning his own castles as he departed rather than let them fall into the king's hands. On 8 July John had reached Dundalk, the castle having already been burned. Here he was joined by Nicholas de Verdun and four hundred soldiers who had switched allegiance and abandoned Hugh de Lacy.[42] At some point on his march across southern Ulster John was also joined by Aedh O'Neill of Tír Eoghain. King John's campaign was increasingly resembling a triumphal royal circuit rather than a military campaign, facing little if any active opposition.[43]

From 9 July to 11 July John stayed at the abandoned De Lacy stronghold of Carlingford. Some attempt had been made to damage the castle before Hugh de Lacy's departure and John immediately began repairs. John never seems to have been interested in a punitive and destructive campaign. It seems likely that Hugh de Lacy had planned to make some sort of stand or at least to delay the king's advance at the castle of Rath (Dundrum). Having crossed Carlingford Lough on a pontoon bridge, John split his troops in two, sending a smaller force through the mountains to advance on it from the south while taking to the sea with the bulk of his army, landing at Ardglas on 12 July. Here he seized the castle of Jordan de Sauqueville. John's fleet seems to have been following his progress for the duration of his campaign. The defenders at Dundrum decided to abandon the castle before they were entirely cut off. By 14 July it

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[39] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 247: *CDI, 1171–1251*, 403, p. 61.

[40] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 249–50; *AFM*, 1209.

[41] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 250; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 404, p. 62; the force assigned to John Marshal consisted of 600 soldiers, 60 foot-soldiers and 102 mounted soldiers.

[42] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 251; *CDI, 117–11251*, 404, p. 62.

[43] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, pp 80–1.

too was in the king's possession. Dundrum, like Carlingford, was not destroyed and John initiated repairs, then giving custody of the castle to Roger Pipard.[44]

By 16 July John had reached Downpatrick and on 19 July he arrived at the most northerly of Hugh de Lacy's castles, Carrickfergus, where the earl of Ulster and his supporters had made their final retreat. Although they were prepared for a siege, the defenders, on seeing the size of John's army and his fleet off the coast, felt they had little choice but to surrender.[45] According to the *History*, they had behaved like cowards.[46] Before the surrender of Carrickfergus, Hugh de Lacy along with De Braose's wife and his two sons William and Reginald fled by sea to Scotland. There they were captured by Duncan of Carrick but Hugh de Lacy and Reginald de Braose managed to escape.[47] On hearing of their capture, John despatched John de Courcy (former lord of Ulster, now again in the king's service) and Godfrey de Craucumbe to bring the prisoners to him.[48]

Matilda de Braose again made the king an offer of forty thousand marks and the surrender of all their lands in exchange for the family's freedom. John initially agreed to the terms, although he was undoubtedly aware of the impossibility of raising such a sum. When the money was not forthcoming, John, now without the earlier legal ambiguities, could proclaim William de Braose an outlaw and seize all his lands and chattels. William de Braose, for his part, had already managed to escape to France where he was to die the next year (1211). Hugh de Lacy too had eventually reached France. The unfortunate Matilda and William de Braose (the younger), already John's prisoners, were, in one of the king's most infamous acts, allowed to starve to death in their prison cell in either Windsor or Corfe castle.[49]

John stayed at Carrickfergus until 28 July, again initiating repairs to the castle.[50] The king then returned south, passing back through Carlingford on 5 August and six

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[44] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 253–4; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 404, p. 62.

[45] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 255; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 404, p. 62.

[46] *History*, 14268–79.

[47] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 256; Adams, *The history of England*, p. 415.

[48] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 257; Flanders, *De Courcy*, p. 165. It would make sense that a reconciled de Courcy, with his intimate knowledge of Ulster, was with the king throughout his campaign against the de Lacys. The former earl of Ulster must have enjoyed the chance to bring down the family largely responsible for his own fall, even if it was King John that would benefit most.

[49] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 258; Adams, *The history of England*, p. 415; Seel, *King John*, p. 88.

[50] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 259; *History*, 14281; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 407, p. 64.

days later he had reached Fore, Co. Westmeath, where he took possession of Walter de Lacy's castle.[51] On 18 August John had reached Dublin where he stayed until departing for Wales six days later, arriving at Fishguard on 26 August.[52] While in Dublin, John, in front of his barons and other notables, accused Marshal of harbouring a traitor, the same accusations that the justiciar had earlier made. Marshal made a similar defence; that De Braose was his lord, and had come to his castle in a state of distress, and that he did not know of De Braose's quarrel with the king. Marshal then proposed that he was prepared to defend his name in a trial by combat. None of the barons or knights present were willing to accept this challenge.[53]

Marshal's persistence in arguing that he could not have been aware of how dramatically relations between De Braose and the king had deteriorated is difficult to believe, and the king was evidently sceptical. There is perhaps more to this than simply being a convenient excuse. Marshal had effectively retired to Leinster (he was probably 64 in 1211) but this might not have been entirely his own choice. By stressing his isolation from and ignorance of events in England and John's court, he was highlighting the detrimental effects of his political exile. It is worth noting too that the king could find no-one to challenge the sexagenarian Marshal. It is possible that Marshal's martial reputation was still enough to deter any such challenge. Or perhaps there would have been little honour gained, from beating the elderly Marshal with only the king's thanks and fickle favour to be won. Another possibility is that while the barons of England, Wales and Ireland were willing to support and, in some cases, join John's campaign in Ireland, as they were obliged to do, many had sympathy for De Braose's plight and that of the De Lacys. John's campaign, while being a dramatic military success (winning a war without having to fight a battle), had the effect of making an already unpopular king further resented by many of his barons.[54] While they could not of course support those who had rebelled against the king, whatever their justification, they may have empathised with Marshal's more ambiguous position.

The king, realising that he had little support in pursuing this allegation of treasonous action against Marshal, decided that he would harm him by other means. John demanded Geoffrey fitz Robert, Jordan de Sauqueville, Thomas de Sandford, John

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[51] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 261; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 407, p. 64.

[52] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 264–5; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 407, p. 65.

[53] *History*, 14282–315; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 265.

[54] Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 315.

de Earley and Walter Purcel as hostages as well as the castle of Dunamase.[55] Marshal responded that seeing as the king already had his sons as hostages and held all his English castles he would willingly surrender all his castles in Ireland as well as giving as hostages the sons of his vassals if that was what it would take to prove his loyalty, arguing that he could afford to be so bold because he intended the king no harm. This dramatic offer was probably more for the benefit of the assembled barons than for John, who withdrew from the assembly to consult with his closest advisors including the justiciar, De Gray.[56] According to the *History*, they advised him that such an offer proved Marshal's loyalty beyond doubt. John's reply was to insist on the five originally named hostages and the castle of Dunamase as sureties.[57] Despite this, Marshal escaped relatively unscathed from the whole debacle. The De Lacys had been driven from their lordships of Meath and Ulster while De Braose's lordship of Limerick had effectively been a lordship in name only for some time. Marshal was the only one of the great magnates left in possession of his Irish lordships.[58]

If Marshal had been given a position in the administration of the English colony he might have successfully directed some of his energy towards its development. King John, however, was always wary of too much power being concentrated in anyone else's hands. Marshal therefore had little to do with the government of the colony, which allowed him to concentrate on his own lordship.[59] He began a programme of development which included infrastructure, building, agricultural reform and feudal reorganisation.[60] From the beginning of 1207 until 1213 Marshal was for the most part resident in Ireland. It was during this period that much of the development of Leinster took place. Kilkenny Castle became his principal residence and the centre of his lordship. It was under his influence that Osraige was developed and brought into the feudal system. Strongbow had earlier made grants of Aghaboe and Iverk on the borders of Osraige. At the same time as he was erecting his own fortifications at Kilkenny, he made grants of the baronies centred on the mottes of Castlecomer and Odagh (the

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[55] *History*, 14319–30; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, p. 265.

[56] *History*, 14331–44; Crosland, *William the marshal*, pp 105–6.

[57] *History*, 14331–62.

[58] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 81.

[59] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 220.

[60] Ibid., 219.

mottes being subsequent to his grants).[61] Marshal was also a generous patron of the church, founding monasteries at Duiske (Graiguenamanagh), Co. Kilkenny, Tintern, Co. Wexford, and Kilkenny. King John too made grants during the minority of Isabella de Clare; Gowran to Theobald Walter as well as to Manasse Arsic and Richard fitz Fulk in the north of what is now Co. Kilkenny. In 1185 John had erected the substantial motte at Tibberaghny on Osraige's south-western border, which was subsequently granted to William de Burgh.[62]

Despite having reached an agreement with Marshal after the defeat of the De Lacys in 1208, John was still unsatisfied and at a later stage took Marshal up on his offer to provide further hostages from his vassals. All were willing to cooperate with the exception of David de la Roche.[63] By 1210 King John had lost almost all of the English territories in France. He had openly clashed with the church, resulting in his own excommunication and England being placed under papal interdict (Ireland seems not to have been included).[64] In 1211 Marshal was campaigning in Wales against Llewelyn of north Wales on behalf of the king. At this point, John, now seemingly convinced of Marshal's loyalty, returned all the hostages he had taken from Marshal and his barons except for Geoffrey fitz Robert who had died while still a hostage.[65] After the Welsh campaign, Marshal returned to Ireland where he remained until early in 1213.

In 1212 Marshal was possibly involved in justiciar De Gray's campaign against the Mac Mathgamna (Mac Mahons) of Oriel.[66] It also seems likely that in the same year Marshal was involved in the ongoing campaigns of the justiciar against Cormac mac Art Máel Sechlainn.[67] Máel Sechlainn had managed to drive the English out of Delvin Mac Coghlan and, in response, the justiciar's forces, allied with Donough Cairbrech O'Brien, fought a battle against him in Fircal but were defeated. Then in 1213 an Irish force including Domnall Clannagh Mac Gilla Pátraic defeated Máel Sechlainn who had up until then been so successful. It appears likely that the Mac Gilla Pátraics were still

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[61] Ibid., pp 222–3; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 113.

[62] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 222–3.

[63] Ibid., 265.

[64] Ibid., 235.

[65] Ibid., 266.

[66] *AC.*, 1211.

[67] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 116.

operating as vassals or subject kings within the Leinster lordship, which would explain their participation in an alliance against an enemy of the English. Later that year Máel Sechlainn was again defeated in Fircal by the forces of De Marisco (perhaps acting as justiciar while awaiting the arrival of Henry de Londres) and the English of Meath.[68]

Domnall Clannagh Mac Gilla Pátraic's involvement in the above battle brings up one of the more confusing elements in Leinster's development, that of the movement – forced or otherwise – of the Mac Gilla Pátraic dynasty within Osraige. After their initial defeat they had become allies of Strongbow and his successors under Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic until his death in 1185. He had been able to hold on to much of his territory in the face of widespread Anglo-Norman expansion.[69] Little is recorded of his successor Maelseachlainn Mac Gilla Pátraic (probably his brother) except for his death in 1193.[70]

At some point in the intervening years, the Mac Gilla Pátraics moved out of central Osraige and established themselves in the north of Osraige near Slieve Bloom. Their departure facilitated the subinfeudation and development of Osraige. There is no record of conflict between Marshal (who was the beneficiary of this migration) and the Mac Gilla Pátraics, which could, as Orpen suggests, have been a relatively amicable arrangement.[71] It has been suggested alternatively that the Mac Gilla Pátraics were driven out of central Osraige by Marshal, with William Carrigan writing in 1905 (just six years before Orpen) that Marshal 'passed against the Mac Gillapatricks the decree of expulsion from their native district, which   he now determined to parcel out among his needy English friends and followers'.[72] Both of these views seem somewhat extreme and the process was likely to have been gradual and far more complicated. While Marshal probably did use an element of coercion; he might also have offered the Mac Gilla Pátraics support in subjugating or dispersing the Irish dynasties already

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[68] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 298. The two battles mentioned could in fact be the same event. Both are said to have taken place at Kilnagrann in Fircal, and Cormac mac Art Máel Sechlainn lost both.

[69] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 223–4.

[70] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 223; *ALC*, 1193.

[71] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 224; Margaret M. Phelan, 'William Earl Marshal, 1144–1219' in *Old Kilkenny Review*, n.s. ii, no. 5 (1983), pp 502–3.

[72] William Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory* (4 vols, Dublin, 1905), i, 69–70: Carrigan also states that 'the right of the Mac Gillapatricks to hold the Kingdom of Tuaisceart Osraige, even as vassals, was declared to have been forfeited, by their Norman over-lord, and a general sentence of eviction from their native territory was passed against the whole Mac Gillapatrick clan'.

established in north Osraige. Despite their differing views as to how it proceeded, Orpen and Carrigan agreed that it was about 1192 that the subinfeudation of central Osraige began. While this might well have been the case, the surviving grants and charters are all slightly later. Orpen suggested that it was in 1192 that Geoffrey fitz Robert was granted the barony of Kells in Co. Kilkenny.[73] However, the first clear indication of this is Fitz Robert's foundation of the priory of Kells in 1203.[74] Marshal founded the priory of St John the Evangelist at Kilkenny sometime before 1202. The priory moved location probably in 1223 following a grant by William Marshal the younger.[75] It was between 1202 and 1211 that Marshal granted a charter of liberties to the burgesses of Kilkenny.[76]

Returning to 1212 and to King John and Marshal, in a further display of loyalty Marshal organised a letter from the Irish barons pledging their support for the king in relation to his ongoing difficulties with the papacy and in light of a conspiracy of northern barons to have the king assassinated.[77] Word also began to reach the king of broader dissatisfaction among his barons, many of whom now hoped for his removal from the throne.[78] In July or August 1212 Marshal had been asked to come to Chester with the justiciar, along with two hundred knights, foot soldiers and necessary supplies.[79] Then in October he was told to remain in Ireland and assist the justiciar.[80] This rather abrupt change of mind on the part of the king seems to have been as a result of John initially suspecting Marshal of involvement in the assassination plot.[81] Around the same time, Marshal was involved in organising a petition by the Irish barons in support of the king in his clash with the pope, which might have gone some way to allay the king's suspicions.[82]

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[73] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 225; Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*, i, 70.

[74] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 226; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 219.

[75] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 229.

[76] Ibid., p. 228.

[77] Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 116–17; *CDI, 1171–1251*, 444, pp 72–3; Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 148; Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 319.

[78] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 420.

[79] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 435, p. 71.

[80] Ibid., 444, p. 72.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid., 448, pp 73–4..

On the face of it, John began doing his utmost to convince Marshal that he believed in and appreciated his loyalty and support. He offered to return his eldest son, William. Should Marshal, however, wish that he remain at court the king informed Marshal that he would require horses and suitable garments (he was now a knight) but offered to provide for this expenses himself (albeit to be repaid at a later date). He also denied a rumour that he was planning to send said William to Poitou to serve in his army.[83] It is possible though that this display of generosity and affection for the Marshal family was intended for a wider audience. For John it was probably almost as important to convince others, namely his disaffected barons, of Marshal's loyalty as was Marshal's loyalty in and of itself.

Marshal did not wish for his son William to remain at court and he was released to John de Earley. The other son that John held as a hostage, Richard, was also released to Thomas de Sandford, the brother of Hugh de Sandford who had been one of Marshal's knights. John de Earley was also to benefit from Marshal's return to royal favour. He was granted the shrievalty of Devon and was made marshal of the royal household.[84]

In May 1213 the king summoned Marshal back to England where his support was now urgently needed. The French king, Philip Augustus, was preparing a navy for an invasion of England with the sanction of Pope Innocent III. Despite an impending invasion, many of John's English barons had been ignoring a call for military service. Marshal soon arrived in Kent with a considerable force from Ireland where he joined the king's army, which then proceeded to Dover where they expected the French army to land.[85] The king held a muster there, on the advice of Marshal, and as many as sixty thousand men are said to have assembled.[86] This was the last great show of support by the barons for the king. As support for John gradually declined, backing from Marshal and the earl of Chester became increasingly important to the king. As a reward, perhaps to encourage loyalty from others, John granted Marshal the castle and port of Haverford in Pembrokeshire, and control of Carmarthen and the Gower peninsula as well as returning custody of the castle of Cardigan. Marshal also replaced Faulkes de Breauté,

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[83] Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 321; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 117.

[84] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 116; *History*, 14534–74.

[85] *History*, 14579–604; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 118; Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, pp 322–3.

[86] Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 148.

who up until then had been responsible for royal possessions in the southern Marches of Wales; this in effect made Marshal justiciar of the southern Marches.[87]

Initially in 1213 events favoured the king. His own fleet was victorious over the French at Damme in Flanders where, according to the *History*, 'never in living memory had a navy suffered such an ignominious defeat'. The threat of invasion in the near future was removed.[88] John was then able to disband his army.[89] He was also soon able to reach a reconciliation with the pope and was able to temporarily placate his rebellious barons with promises of reform.[90] On 20 July at Winchester the king had his excommunication absolved, although England remained under interdict until the vexing question of compensation for losses incurred by bishops whose lands had been seized by the king was resolved.[91]

Had John then remained focused on first solving his problems in England events might have gone better for him but instead he began again to plan for a campaign to retake Normandy with the support of his continental allies. This was always John's priority and he had put huge effort into building an alliance strong enough to take on the French king. John landed at La Rochelle in February. While he remained in Poitou he began assembling an army at Portsmouth but many of his barons refused to accompany him.[92] John had some success against the French, forcing the Lusignons to submit to him and capturing Angers. He had also invested huge sums in support of the alliance ranged against the French but this scheme collapsed when by far the most important and powerful of these allies, Emperor Otto IV (his cousin), suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of the French at Bouvines in July 1214.[93] With the emperor removed as a threat, Philip could shift his focus west. John, left with little in the way of an alternative, signed a truce with Philip on 18 September and was back in England on 15 October.[94]

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[87] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 119; Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 321.

[88] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 426; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 119; *History*, 14618–19; Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 148.

[89] *History*, 14667.

[90] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 119.

[91] Adams, *The history of England*, pp 426–7.

[92] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 461; Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185–1216', p. 148.

[93] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 119; Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 465; Adams, *The history of England*, pp 430–1.

[94] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 468.

Among John's barons, oppressed politically and financially, resentment and disaffection soon resurfaced and indeed grew. The northern barons, who had never been truly reconciled with him anyway, provided a nucleus of resistance to his rule which gradually spread throughout England. Even among those barons still loyal to the king there was a reluctance to pay the taxes and fines he needed to maintain his perennial war with the French.[95] While John was in Poitou, where he had raised a considerable army for his campaign to retake Normandy, he was able to send some of these recruits to England to contain the growing unrest. Large numbers of French and Flemish soldiers arriving in England only hardened the attitude of his barons. He began to make sure his castles were all sufficiently garrisoned and well provisioned and tellingly ordered the construction of siege engines. By the end of 1214 John was preparing for a widespread revolt against his rule. It was not until January that the barons' demands were put to the king who had now returned to London. Marshal along with prominent members of the clergy were to stand as guarantors for the safety of the barons' representatives in the impending negotiations. These, however, were delayed at the behest of the king until after Easter. Another meeting was then proposed for 22 February but this too failed to happen. Finally, on 27 April, Marshal, the archbishop of Canterbury and other prominent clergy met the barons at Brackley in Northamptonshire where they (having lost patience with the delays of the king) had begun to assemble their army.[96]

When Marshal returned to the king with the barons' demands, the king summarily rejected them. When word of this reached them, the barons marched from Brackley to the castle of Northampton, which they promptly laid siege to for a fortnight, then, having failed to take it, they moved on to Bedford. The long-threatened war between John and his barons had begun. Marshal was sent to raise support for the king in the south-west. It was here, close to the southern March, that John would base himself for much of the war, perhaps because of the security that Marshal could provide. The barons quickly moved south and with the help of London's citizenry (who opened the gates), in what was a massive blow for the king, they were able to seize the city, England's economic hub and the administrative centre at Westminster. This early

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[95] Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 119–20.

[96] Ibid., p. 120.

and dramatic success led to many more barons abandoning the king and joining with the rebels.[97]

Marshal was again involved in negotiations, this time those that preceded the events at Runnymede on 15 June. It was Marshal who was sent to London to announce that the king had agreed to the terms of Magna Carta.[98] Marshal and his nephew, John, were among those named in the charter's preamble, although this does not necessarily mean that either was involved in its writing.[99] In contrast to Marshal's commitment to John, his son, William (the younger), had joined with the rebel barons sometime before July 1215, perhaps as early as May. The exact motives for this decision are unclear but he had for many years been a hostage of the king's so he cannot have been short of reasons. It does not seem to have been the act of a rash youth – he was now in his twenties – a baron in his own right and indeed already a widower having been married to Alice the daughter of Baldwin de Béthune.[100] Crouch speculates that this could have been part of a rather devious strategy on the part of the Marshal family, perhaps keeping one foot in each camp. No matter which side ultimately won or lost one of them would have been in a position to protect their interests. Both remained in contact throughout, with the younger Marshal at one point being granted protection to visit his father.[101] How successful such a strategy would have been should John have emerged victorious is debatable. This split loyalty was something Marshal had used to his own advantage in the past; in the rivalry between John and Richard, insisting that he was John's man in Ireland, in relation to his lands in Normandy, happily holding them from Philip Augustus (much to John's anger) and by his insistence that he could not hand over William de Braose and his family because De Braose was his lord.

Despite the attempts to settle differences between John and his barons (which resulted in the Magna Carta), war quickly broke out again. John seems to have genuinely tried for peace but the barons soon failed to fulfil their obligations. Fighting broke out in the north in August, while negotiations between the southern barons and the king were still underway. There was even talk in some quarters of electing a new

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[97] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, pp 470–1; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 120.

[98] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 120.

[99] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 473.

[100] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 121; Adams, *The history of England*, p. 435; Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 331.

[101] Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 121–2.

king.[102] Marshal was with the king at Oxford in July when the barons came to the meeting armed to express their frustration with the king's delaying, and the seriousness of the situation. Privately the king had already decided to abandon the charter and had written to the pope in secret to seek its annulment. By September, those barons still negotiating with the king gave up in their endeavour due to mounting mutual distrust. Marshal soon found himself required in the Welsh Marches where John's growing difficulties had provided an opportunity for a renewed Welsh revolt. An alliance of Maelgwyn ap Rhys, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and surviving members of the once-powerful De Braose family emerged as a serious threat. They were able to gain control of Carmarthenshire, Gower and the north of Pembrokeshire, threatening Marshal's own lands. Marshal was limited in what he could do; if he sent his forces to attack the Welsh he was exposed to the rebel barons to his east and vice versa.[103]

John meanwhile was having considerably more success. He was able to keep much of the rebel forces hemmed in and around London and managed to capture more isolated rebel-held castles and garrisons. One such was the castle of Rochester, which blocked one of the direct routes to the capital. It was taken after a well-planned and executed siege despite the valiant efforts of its defenders.[104] The castle, held by William de Albini, held out for seven weeks before its small garrison, facing starvation, surrendered on 30 November.[105] Perhaps as a result of John's early successes the rebels appealed to Philip Augustus for help, and offered his son, Louis, the English crown in return. Two contingents of French reinforcements soon arrived in London but Louis remained in France for several months. In an attempt to persuade Philip not to send his son to England, John sent ambassadors to France, and Marshal, perhaps because of his earlier dealings with the French king, was prominent among them. It was to no avail and would be Marshal's last visit to France.[106] It is difficult to see what offer John could have made to Philip that could have equalled or bettered that being offered by the barons.

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[102] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 478.

[103] Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 121–2; Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 330.

[104] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 442; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 122.

[105] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 478.

[106] Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 335; Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 479; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 122.

In June Louis finally arrived in England, landing at Thanet. Within a fortnight he had joined the rebels in London. King John meanwhile withdrew from Kent to Winchester on the advice of Marshal.[107] In the north, Alexander of Scotland could not let the opportunity pass and helped the northern barons drive the king's forces out of the entire north of the country. In the south-east only Dover and Windsor remained in the hands of the king's supporters.[108] At this stage William Marshal the younger, who was still with the rebels, tried to have his grandfather's castle of Marlborough restored to him (it had been lost by John Marshal I in 1158). He also tried to have Louis recognise him as marshal of England. Failure on both these counts and perhaps a growing resentment at perceived French arrogance probably contributed to his decision to abandon the rebels and re-join the king. It was hardly an example of opportunism.

The king's position was slowly deteriorating, with his remaining forces gradually withdrawing westwards. The younger William Marshal's decision was in contrast to many who had up to this point supported the king, who now switched allegiance and joined the rebels including the earls of Arundel, York and Surrey and even the king's half-brother, the earl of Salisbury. By October 1216 it seemed that the king's position was close to collapsing. Only four earls remained supporters of the king; Marshal and the earls of Chester, Derby and Warwick. Of them, only Marshal and the earl of Chester had major political and military power of their own to draw on and these two were now the king's principal backers.[109] Then, in a surprise move and acting with the speed and determination he had displayed in 1210, John began to push north with the aim of splitting the forces of the northern barons from those of Louis in the south. The campaign was partially successful, and at the very least had shown that John still had the resources and reserve to continue fighting. Then, at King's Lynn, John became seriously ill and it was soon apparent to him and his supporters that he was dying.[110] The king was brought to the bishop of Lincoln's palace at Newark where he made his last confessions.

As John lay dying, in the spiritual care of the abbot of Croxton, in what were a series of deathbed requests, he asked that Marshal forgive the many injustices that he

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[107] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 484.

[108] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 123.

[109] Ibid.; Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 336.

[110] Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 338; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 123.

had inflicted on him.[111] He then informed those around him that it was his wish that his son and heir, Henry, be given into the care of Marshal.[112] Interestingly, John seems also to have come to regret his cruelty towards the De Braose family and on 10 October he made a grant to Margaret, daughter of William de Braose.[113] While this may have been related to Giles de Braose abandoning the rebels the same month, a slightly cynical view might be that John, aware that he was dying, was attempting to build bridges with those De Braoses still in rebellion for the benefit of his son (Henry). His regret may well have been genuine but he could have been less concerned with his own mortal soul than with the challenges his heir would face. Indeed, had his own soul been his priority it would have perhaps been the papal legate, Gaula, or one of the bishops, to whom he entrusted the care of his son. John's wits were with him to the end and his wish that Marshal care for Henry and the kingdom he represented proved prescient.

John died on 18 October 1216. On hearing of his death, Marshal travelled north from Gloucester to Worcester where he met the barons escorting the late king's body to Worcester. Among them was his nephew, John Marshal, who had remained an intimate of the king since 1207. It was here that they were joined by Gaula.[114] John's body was brought to Worcester Cathedral to be interred in accordance with his final instructions. It was also here that the shrine of the late king's favourite saint, St Wolfstan, to whom he had commended his soul, was to be found. Despite the ongoing war, Marshal and Gaula ensured that John received a funeral service appropriate for a king.[115] This would be the fourth royal funeral that Marshal attended if that of the 'young king' Henry is included.

With John dead, the royalist cause was faced with an existential crisis. The heir was a boy of nine, less than half the kingdom remained under their control, the royal finances were all but exhausted, there was no functioning exchequer and the new king lacked a royal seal. The capital was still in rebel hands.[116] Dover was the only major

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[111] Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 338.

[112] Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, pp 483–4; Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 123–4.

[113] Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 338.

[114] Richard Brooks, *The knight who saved England: William Marshal and the French invasion, 1217* (Oxford, 2014), p. 160; Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 192.

[115] Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 339.

[116] Ibid.; Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 192: Painter points out that a simple end to the crisis would have been to declare Louis as John's successor. This had precedence as King Stephen had disinherited his own

port in the south-east to remain under royal control. Of some 133 barons, as many as 97, nearly three quarters, were in revolt. Although many never took to the field or were willing to commit their forces, this was probably also true for several ostensibly in the royalist camp.[117] John's family were probably at Corfe Castle in Dorset. From there Henry was brought to Devizes in Wiltshire and on from there to Malmesbury, where he was met by Marshal. From there, with the court that was forming around Henry, they moved on to the royal castle at Gloucester, where Henry was crowned on 28 October 1216. In such an unstable political climate it had been crucial that Henry was crowned quickly in order to secure his claim to England. The ceremony, while hardly a lavish affair, was sufficiently dignified. Much of the royal regalia was not to hand and Henry was crowned with a circlet provided by his mother. The archbishop of Canterbury was away in Rome so the ceremony was conducted by Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester.[118]

The Welsh too, led by Llyweln ab Iorwerth, were putting severe pressure on those marchers still loyal to the crown, and Marshal was no exception. During Henry III's coronation feast, word reached Marshal that his own castle at Goodrich was in danger of falling and he had to hastily organise and dispatch a force of knights, serjeants and cross-bowmen to relieve it. Despite this, there were grounds for some optimism in the royalist camp. The new king had been greeted with genuine affection at Gloucester by those barons and clergy present. Among John's executers were powerful and capable men. The presence of Gaula, the papal legate, was important politically as he represented the church's backing of the new king. The papal sanction of the rebels and the succession of a child, who could not be held responsible or complicit for his father's actions, took away much of the rebels' justifications. The appeal of Louis also began to wane as his position started to resemble that of a usurper rather than a saviour. The Welsh, despite their successes, were reluctant to campaign beyond their own historic borders. They were intent on exploiting the situation to retake lands lost to the marcher lords, but were unlikely to mount attacks further to the east.[119]

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son in favour of Henry II in order to end an earlier civil war. At this stage the royalist barons could surely have negotiated very favourable terms with Louis, which suggests that their loyalty was genuine indeed.

[117] Brooks, *The knight who saved England*, p. 180.

[118] Maurice Powicke, *The thirteenth century: 1216–1307* (Oxford, 1962), p. 1; Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 192.

[119] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 251; Powicke, *The thirteenth century*, p. 1.

Crucial to the survival of the royalist cause was the formation of some sort of stable government, headed by regents while Henry remained a minor.[120] Henry might now be king – the concept of a monarch's reign beginning at the moment of the death of their predecessor was not yet established, hence the urgency involved in Henry III's coronation – but he could not be expected to rule. That Gaula would be involved was taken for granted. The weight he carried – both political and spiritual – made him indispensable. There was also the necessity of a temporal counterpart and in particular someone with the military experience required to continue the war. Marshal was seen as a 'strong hand' and might well have offered the beleaguered royalists their best chance of a military victory.[121] His political and diplomatic career too, while somewhat chequered, was probably more impressive than many of his peers. It seems that those assembled at Gloucester decided that Marshal was best qualified for the role. How much John's wishes were considered is not known. It was an evidently practical decision and John had probably made the same considerations.

Marshal was initially reluctant to take on the responsibility, or at least claimed to be so. He felt it prudent to await the arrival of Ranulf de Blundevill, earl of Chester, before accepting. The earl of Chester was perhaps the most powerful of the royalist magnates and would have been an alternative candidate to Marshal for assuming the responsibilities of regent. The earl arrived at Gloucester on 29 October. Marshal proposed De Blundevill as regent, saying the role required a man younger than himself. De Blundevill declined the role, suggesting that Marshal's experience and prestige made him more suitable. By this piece of courtly diplomacy, deferring to a potential rival, Marshal had achieved the effect of securing his support.[122] De Blundevill and the other barons again suggested Marshal assume the position of regent, and Gaula urged him to accept and proposed that the task would be considered as a general penance for all his past sins. Satisfied he had the earl of Chester's and the papal legate's backing, Marshal accepted the role.[123]

Initially there was some confusion as to what exactly the role was, or even what title should be given to the position. The role of justiciar would have been appropriate but this was already filled by Hubert de Burgh. He had been made justiciar by John and

[120] Powicke, *The thirteenth century*, p. 2.

[121] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 193.

[122] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 167.

[123] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 197; Powicke, *The thirteenth century*, p. 2.

was understandably reluctant to give it up. In the end, Marshal was made 'rector of king and kingdom'. It was suitably ambiguous not to be seen to encroach on anyone else's interests yet clearly expressed his newly acquired powers and position. Henry was given into the care of Peter des Roches, the bishop of Winchester, who would take on the role of guardian and tutor. While this seeming concentration of power with Marshal, Gaula and the bishop of Winchester can be seen as a triumvirate, it is more accurate to view them as taking the lead of a council that had formed from the group of barons and advisors that John had come to depend on before his death and remained as influential in the administration. The core of this group was the trio mentioned above (Marshal, Gaula and des Roches), the bishops of Chichester and Worcester, the master of the Temple, the earls of Chester, Derby and Meath (Walter de Lacy had been restored to his lordship by John and had evidently returned to the king's favour) as well as William Brewer, John of Monmouth, Faulkes de Breauté and Savari de Mauléon, castellan of Bristol.[124]

While Henry's coronation removed some of the original causes of rebellion (John's capricious and sometimes arbitrary rule) and Gaula expressed papal support for the royalist cause, this did not trigger a collapse of Louis's support. The rebels, led by the earl of Winchester and Robert fitz Walter, continued to support him. Despite papal sanction, Louis retained the support of powerful clerics including Simon Langton, the brother of the archbishop of Canterbury, while the barons and knights who had followed him from France remained committed. He received continued support from his capable wife, Blanch of Castile, who, as a granddaughter of Henry II, represented Louis's principal claim to England. Louis's position was, however, starting to decline. The excommunication of his supporters was slowly taking its toll, with a gradual trickle of barons switching their allegiance back to the royalists. His father's support too was waning, probably under pressure from the pope, and he was forced to rely on his own followers, what support his wife could muster and the continued alienation of the rebel barons from the crown. He did still control more than half the kingdom and, crucially, London.[125]

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[124] Powicke, *The thirteenth century*, pp 2–3; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, pp 86–9. Walter de Lacy had the lordship of Meath restored to him probably early in 1215 but did not personally take possession until 1220; he instead sent his half–brother William to look after his interests.

[125] Powicke, *The thirteenth century*, pp 8–9.

The council met at Bristol in November, where they were joined by Hubert de Burgh who had been holding Dover against the besieging forces of Louis (some form of a temporary local truce seems likely to have been arranged). At this meeting a revived version of the Magna Carta, sealed by Marshal and Gaula, was issued. This was the first of two reissues during Henry's minority and it was on this that Marshal first used his new title as 'rector of king and kingdom'. The redrafted Magna Carta was not only an attempt to sway faltering rebel barons; it also reflects a genuine desire for reconciliation on behalf of the new government, something not possible while John lived. It was not simply a peace treaty with concessions made only under duress. It was an assurance of political and legal rights given freely. It also served to set out the position of the new king and his backers and suggested a keenness to begin his rule in a spirit of fairness for the common good of all his subjects. While it was much more to the point than the rather long-winded charter of 1215, (it had forty clauses rather than sixty-three) it still upheld its central principles. It set out to stabilize the relationship between the barons and the king while promising to recognise their customary rights and uphold justice. Importantly the fact that it was in part re-drafted by Guala the papal legate meant that it was less likely to be casually disregarded in the future without risking papal sanction.[126] The rebels, though, were unresponsive to such measures. They had thrown in their lot with Louis and, for the moment at least, they believed that he would ultimately triumph in the war.[127]

Louis still held London and controlled the Channel. From such a position he could strike out in any direction and was able to take Berkhamsted, Cambridge, Colchester, Hertford, Orford and Norwich. He also captured the castles of Hedingham and Pleshey in Essex but was unable to make progress further to the west.[128] In February Marshal led a force towards the Channel coast with the aim of cutting Louis's communication with the Continent. Dover was held by Hugh de Burgh for the king but the other Channel ports were still at least nominally controlled by the rebels.[129] The border between Kent and Sussex, known as the Weald (it also includes parts of

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[126] Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, pp 348–9.

[127] Brooks, *The knight who saved England*, pp 85–6; Powicke, *The thirteenth century*, p. 4; Henry Summerton, 'Kingship, *c*.1160–*c*.1280' in Barbara Harvey (ed.), *The twelfth and thirteenth centuries* (Oxford, 2001), p. 222.

[128] Powicke, *The thirteenth century*, p. 9.

[129] Ibid., p. 4.

Hampshire and Surrey), had been a centre of popular resistance to what were in this quarter seen as foreign invaders and its populace had refused to recognise Louis as king. It was through this sparsely wooded and sparsely populated region that the main route to the Channel ports ran.[130] The royalist commander, Philip Daubeny, warden of the Channel Islands (which had been lost to Eustace the Monk), combined his forces with William of Kensham, a royal bailiff organising resistance to Louis and the rebel barons in the Weald and the south-east. Winchelsea soon switched allegiance back to the royalists and Daubeny was able to base himself there and organised a fleet to harass Louis's communications. In the light of these setbacks, Louis was called back to France to confer with his father. While he was absent (perhaps fearing he would not return), more barons of wavering commitment to the rebellion began to seek terms with the royalists. Prominent among these were William Marshal the younger and the earl of Salisbury. Marshal's progress in the south ceased with Louis's return. Louis was intent on putting a renewed effort into his ongoing siege of Dover but events in the north forced him to split his forces.[131]

The earls of Chester and Derby had begun to make progress in the north. They had begun a siege of the castle of Montsorel in Leicester, which belonged to Saer de Quincy, earl of Winchester, one of the leaders of the rebel barons. Louis was obliged to send part of his army north, led by the count of Perch (a cousin of Marshal), to break the siege. When the rebel forces arrived, they found that the siege had already been lifted, and they instead moved on to Lincoln to join a siege there. The town of Lincoln was held by the rebels but its castle held out for the royalists under its castellan, Nicola de la Hay. On hearing this news, Marshal and Gaula, who were then at Northampton, decided to act.[132] Marshal and the earl of Chester had gathered a force together which included 406 knights and 317 crossbow-men and on 19 May they travelled north, bypassing Lincoln and making camp at or near Torskey on the River Trent. This allowed Marshal's force (on the morning of 20 May) to approach Lincoln from the north-west (the corner of the town where the castle was located) and avoid the encampment of the rebels and their newly arrived French allies in the south of the town

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[130] Brooks, *The knight who saved England*, p. 184.

[131] Powicke, *The thirteenth century*, pp 10–11.

[132] Ibid., p. 11.

and crucially a dangerous crossing of the River Witham in full view of the town's southern walls.[133]

On seeing the royalist forces approaching, perhaps overestimating their numbers, the rebels withdrew into the safety of the town. John Marshal was dispatched as an envoy, either with the intention of convincing the rebels to abandon the town or to challenge them to come out and fight (neither of which was likely). While this was happening, one of the castle's commanders, Geoffrey de Serland, was able to reach Marshal's forces by way of a postern gate at the castle. The royalist commander Faulkes de Breauté followed De Serland back into the castle with his crossbowmen and they, with the castle's garrison, began to fire on their besiegers in the town. While this distraction was underway, a previously blocked gate was discovered and quickly broken through, allowing Marshal's forces into the town. Marshal, anxious to be in the thick of the battle, had to be reminded to put on his helmet as he rode towards the gate. This was to prove fortunate for he was to receive several blows of enough force to dent it in the ensuing mêlée. He was now about 70 years of age. Although the rebels outnumbered the royalists (they had some six hundred knights), they were taken by surprise and in the fighting that followed they were forced back through the streets of the town. The count of Perche tried to rally his forces in order to make a stand but when he was killed they continued to fall back towards the town's southern gate. Here they again attempted to make a stand but were routed when a body of knights led by the earl of Chester charged out of a side street into their flank, having entered through the town's now undefended north gate. While a great many of their foot soldiers were killed, fatalities among the rebel knights were remarkably few (only three, indicating the value of their ransoms), however three earls (Hereford, Lincoln and Winchester), forty-six barons and three hundred knights were captured.[134]

This was a major military setback for Louis and the rebels. It is possible that King Philip had already begun to work towards a peace settlement before the battle at Lincoln. The rout suffered by the rebels hastened such moves. The defeat at Lincoln had severe political repercussions for Louis and the rebels. What had been a trickle of defections from their cause was in danger of becoming a flood. One of those to defect was Reginald de Braose, who, in alliance with his father-in-law, Llyweln ab Iorwerth,

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[133] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 130; Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 354.

[134] Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 131–3.

had been a constant threat in the Welsh Marches. Marshal had been trying to persuade him to abandon the Welsh since John's death but it took the victory at Lincoln to convince him.[135]

Louis was forced to abandon his siege of Dover and withdrew with his forces to London. At this stage, Philip's determination to orchestrate an end to the fighting began to make some progress and the archbishop of Tyre along with the abbots of Citeaux, Clairvaux and Pontigny arrived in England to try and broker a peace. Negotiations soon broke down when Gaula refused to extend the general amnesty being proposed to four of Louis's principal church supporters. Rather than sacrificing those who had been loyal supporters, Louis decided to hold out in London and wait for reinforcements to arrive from France. Despite Marshal's ability to move his forces unchallenged throughout much of England and the growing strength of Daubeny's fleet, the royalists were still not in a position to mount a direct attack on the capital.[136] This may have been because they lacked sufficient forces and resources to mount what would surely be a protracted siege or it could be that they were now confident that a negotiated settlement would eventually be reached.

On 24 August Louis's reinforcements, organised by his wife, Blanche and led by Robert de Courtenai, set sail. It was a substantial force that included at least 120 knights, ferried in seven large ships and about seventy smaller boats. The fleet was commanded by the former royalist and sometime pirate Eustace the monk. Eustace's fleet was intercepted by the royalists off Sandwich. This included a large cog belonging to Marshal (who had wanted to be on board but was persuaded to remain on the shore on the grounds that he was too important to risk in such an action). In the engagement that followed, Eustace's fleet was overwhelmed. His own ship was captured and he was executed. De Courtenai and many of his knights were captured. Those ships and boats that were able to, fled back across the channel.[137]

Louis was left with little choice but to renew peace negotiations. Much the same offer as had earlier been made was repeated, but with minor yet important concessions: those clerics who had supported him would now be included in the general amnesty but could still face ecclesiastical censure. This was enough for the French prince, who was

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[135] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 251.

[136] Powicke, *The thirteenth century*, p. 12; Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 133–4.

[137] Powicke, *The thirteenth century*, pp 12–13.

probably tiring of his expensive English adventure and no longer guaranteed his father's support. In return for leaving, he was to be paid the substantial sum of ten thousand marks. This must be seen as a clear sign of how anxious the royalists were for Louis to leave England. Louis for his part promised to never again support English rebels and also undertook to support Henry III's claims in Normandy.[138]

This agreement was not without personal risk to Marshal. At the end of September 1217 Philip, king of France, informed Marshal that if the intermediary, Florence Dives, a merchant and burgess of St Omer, did not receive the first instalment of the indemnity (some six thousand marks) then he would assign to Dives all of the lands that Marshal held of him (Philip) until the debt was repaid.[139] Marshal, one of the few magnates who had managed to hold on to their estates in Normandy, would have been well aware that his land holdings would be in jeopardy of confiscation (whether permanent or temporary) should the obligations to the French fail to be met. Marshal too ran the risk of being accused of securing peace at too great a price and offering too many concessions to former rebels by hardliners in the royalist camp, emboldened by the victories at Lincoln and Sandwich. The rebel barons were given a general amnesty. Lands were restored to those who had held them at the outbreak of the war.[140] All prisoners being held for ransom were to be set free while the Scots and the Welsh were to withdraw from any territory they had occupied during the war.[141] Despite the destruction and disruption the war had caused, order was soon restored. Both sides, it seems, were keen to move on. Many families had been split (Marshal's included), so harsher treatment of the rebels would have proved unpopular if not dangerous even if it were possible. In a sense, there were no real victors.

In the last months of John's reign, despite his involvement in the ongoing war against the rebel barons, Marshal was still concerned with the affairs of Leinster. Now that he was firmly back in the king's favour he was able to use his influence to good effect, and settle his scores with Fitz Henry. On 14 May 1216, one presumes at the

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[138] Ibid., p. 13.

[139] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 801, p. 120; T.H. Lloyd, *The English wool trade in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 15: a compromise was reached whereby half of the outstanding debt was to be repaid on 1 November while the remainder, with an extra 500 marks to cover lost profit, was to be paid by 2 February 1218.

[140] Powicke, *The thirteenth century*, p. 15.

[141] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 134.

request of Marshal, the king wrote from Folkestone to the justiciar, De Marisco, marvelling that the castle of Dunamase had not been handed over to Marshal's emissary as he had previously ordered.[142] It is not clear whether Dunamase was still in the hands of Fitz Henry at this stage or if it been taken into the custody of De Marisco. In another sign of his renewed favour with John, on 19 May the king ordered Jordan de Sauqueville to deliver a cargo of wine to Dublin and Drogheda from a ship from Cardiff (then in the hands of the king's enemies) that had been seized in Pembroke. The ship was to be given to Marshal. That same month the king ordered De Marisco to deliver to Marshal the house at Urney, which had belonged to Adam de Hereford and was part of Marshal's (or his wife's) inheritance of Salmon Leap (Leixlip, Co. Kildare).[143]

In another letter, the king wrote to De Marisco, informing him that if Fitz Henry should 'depart this life or take the religious habit' he was to ensure that all the fees that Fitz Henry held from Marshal were to revert to him. Perhaps this was prophetic, but more likely it was based on common knowledge of Fitz Henry's intentions; he did indeed enter a religious order late in 1216.[144] It seems that Marshal was growing increasingly impatient to gain possession of those lands still held by Fitz Henry and on 26 May de Marisco was instructed by John, writing from Bramber (a manor of the De Braoses in West Sussex), to hand over to Marshal 'all his fees' in the lands then held by Fitz Henry in accordance with the king's charter (presumably Marshal's renewed charter for Leinster granted on 28 March 1208).[145] Two months later on 26 July the king instructed De Marisco to give Maurice fitz Gerald seisin of all the lands his father had held in fee.[146] Maurice, one of Marshal's principal barons in Leinster, had been a minor at the time of his father's death in 1200 and the lands in question (in Co. Offaly) had ended up in the possession of Fitz Henry (the then justiciar) before the king ordered them transferred to Marshal in 1204. As there is no mention of Marshal in the order it is possible that Fitz Henry had never surrendered some of these lands and that they had ended up in the keeping of the justiciars up to De Marisco.

With the death of John in October 1216 and his appointment to the role of regent, Marshal was now in a position to further influence events in Leinster through

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[142] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 684, pp 105–6.

[143] Ibid., 688, p. 106.

[144] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 87.

[145] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 689, p. 106.

[146] Ibid., 702, p. 108.

the now direct pressure he could put on the justiciar. He was intent on finishing the complicated task of untangling and reversing John's confiscations, which, as we have seen, he had begun at the end of John's reign.[147] Marshal, while intent on maintaining the king's rights in Ireland, also instigated a policy of reconciliation with the Irish barons alienated by John. Maintaining support in this quarter was crucial in the light of the precarious military position the royalists found themselves in.[148] This would have been all the more so if part of the reasoning behind the appointment of Marshal as regent was indeed the possibility of withdrawing with the young king to Ireland should the military situation deteriorate. One of the first orders sent to the justiciar, De Marisco, during Marshal's regency relates to Maurice fitz Gerald (as had the last order issued during John's reign). This time, on 26 November, De Marisco was directed to ensure that Maurice fitz Gerald gained possession of his father's lands at Maynooth (Co. Kildare).[149] It seems that Marshal was intent on re-acquiring not only any of his own demesne lands that had been estranged in Leinster but also those of his vassals. Marshal would also extend those rights and privileges won by the barons in the Magna Carta to Ireland, which came into effect in February 1217. With this new spirit of fair treatment for the Irish barons came responsibilities and Marshal sent De Marisco a list of the debts the Irish barons owed to the king.[150]

On 2 December De Marisco was instructed to restore to Marshal (now styled 'rector of king and kingdom') the service Fitz Henry owed for Marshal's land in Leinster, which, the letter states, King John had taken into his hands as a security for his (Marshal's) service. It also reminds De Marisco that Marshal had always proved faithful to the king as he had to his father, John. The letter goes on to state that ships, on the payment of customs, are to be let freely ply their trade to and from the port of Waterford, as they are to and from Marshal's land (presumably New Ross). It seems that as well as securing the land that had been held by Fitz Henry, Marshal was intent on putting the former justiciar firmly in his place. The current justiciar was also mandated to instruct Fitz Henry to answer to Marshal for the service due to him out of his fee and to be as attentive to Marshal as he would to his lord (Henry III). The letter concludes with a glowing account of Marshal: 'in time of need the earl had proved

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[147] Orpen, *Normans*, iii, 19.

[148] James Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin,1972, repr. 2003), p. 76.

[149] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 724, p. 111.

[150] Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland*, p. 76.

himself as gold in the furnace', perhaps as a means of emphasising the importance of his new-found position, just in case this was not apparent in Ireland.[151] Marshal might also have been behind attempts, albeit unsuccessful, to convince the former earl of Ulster, Hugh de Lacy, to return from France where he had joined the French king's crusade against the Albigensians.[152]

In June 1217 the king sent an order to the justiciar that Reginald de Braose, heir of William, should have the city and castle of Limerick restored to him along with the lands his father had held in Munster. Marshal might well have been behind this decision, with his new position of influence, keen to benefit the son of his old friend and ally. This restoration would not have fallen within the treaty that had ended the civil war, as the De Braose lands had been confiscated before it had broken out, but might have been agreed as part of King John's attempts to reconcile the rebel De Braoses before his death. Orpen points out that the justiciar was requested again six months later to restore the De Braose possessions in Munster but adds that there is no evidence that the De Braoses ever regained these estates. De Marisco himself was in possession of Limerick Castle until 1221.[153] As has been evident elsewhere, legal title meant little in Ireland if physical possession did not follow. On 19 July 1217 Maurice fitz Gerald was again the subject of instructions received by the justiciar. On this occasion he was informed that Maurice had 'been girt with the belt of a knight' and was then instructed to deliver to him 'Gallos in Des' (perhaps the barony of Gaultiere in Decies, Co. Waterford).[154]

Six days later on 25 July the king was again forced to act to protect Marshal's interests (or rather, Marshal used the king's name to protect his own interests). On this occasion, some the king's citizens of Dublin along with 'the men of William Earl Marshall of Leinster' together with their goods and chattels had been seized (in this case it seems that this occurred when the galleys they were on were taken at sea). The king ordered his bailiffs of Southampton to release them.[155] Again, in 1218 something of the mercantile importance of Leinster is hinted at when on 13 February Peter Blunt of Drogheda was given protection to trade in his ship throughout the realm. We are told

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[151] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 725, p. 111; Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 269.

[152] Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland*, p. 77.

[153] Orpen, *Normans*, iii, 21; Curtis, *Med. Ire.*, p. 119.

[154] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 793, pp 118–19.

[155] Ibid., 794, p. 119.

that this ship had originally been given to Marshal by King John who then sold it to the above-mentioned Peter. [156] Then on 3 March the constable of Bristol was instructed to send Thomas of Kildare, an Irish merchant, to Marshal's constable at Gloucester. [157] On 15 May Ralph Allard and Peter le Warr of the priory and convent of St Augustine in Bristol were instructed to hand over to Ralph de Norwich and John Marshal all of the money in their custody received from the merchants of Wales and Ireland. [158] While it is likely that the money here is in fact fine or taxes owed to the king, the distinction made between Marshal's own money and that of the king was extremely vague, and this could conceivably relate to a debt owed to Marshal. [159]

On 10 November De Marisco along with the knights, free tenants and others in Ireland were instructed to rectify the course of the River Liffey (Avenlith) in Dublin. This was to allow merchant ships to enter and leave the town and to allow fish to ascend and descend 'as they were wont to do'. [160] This would have been a substantial undertaking involving dredging, securing the river's banks by building revetments, and narrowing the channel to increase its depth. The reference to fish must relate to building a weir with a fishway (fish ladder), the first waterfall being further up the Liffey at Leixlip, Co. Kildare (the falls giving the town its name). Marshal was the sole witness to this order. This would probably have represented one of the most significant civil infrastructure projects undertaken during the period concerned. The last of the mandates sent to De Marisco relating to Marshal's mercantile interests in Leinster was 'to allow ships to ply through' his lands, which was issued on 31 January 1218. [161] Finally, on 12 April De Marisco was instructed to give John Marshal a yearly stipend of twenty-five marks from the exchequer, this having been previously granted as a gift from King John. [162]

Let us return now to 1218, and to what, for many Irish chroniclers, was Marshal's most significant event in Leinster; his clash with Ailbe Ua Maíl Mhuaidh, better known as Albinus, bishop of Ferns. Sometime before John's death, Marshal had

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[156] Ibid., 816, p. 121.

[157] Ibid., 819, p. 122.

[158] Ibid., 829, p. 123.

[159] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 241.

[160] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 854, p. 127.

[161] Ibid., 862, p. 128.

[162] Ibid., 869, p. 129.

gotten into a dispute over land the bishop felt belonged to the see of Ferns, while Marshal evidently believed it belonged to his demesne. The bishop of Tuam intervened on Albinus's behalf and placed his lands under interdict, having first secured papal authority.[163] This does not seem to have caused Marshal much concern initially; with all of England having been under interdict earlier without lasting damage and with an ongoing civil war, the issue seems to have been simply ignored. Then early in 1218 the matter re-emerged. Perhaps Marshal, now in his seventies, was keen to have his spiritual affairs in order. It seems that the matter was still before the ecclesiastical courts in Ireland and on 18 April the king wrote to De Marisco, informing him that the archbishops of Dublin and Tuam and the bishop of Clogher were to be prevented from hearing the plea of Bishop Albinus. The grounds for this were that Marshal claimed to hold the land in fee from the king. As the king was a minor, he could not issue warrants to that effect so the case would have to wait until he came of age. He points out that he is bound to issue such warrants, which presumably would prove Marshal's case. The justiciar was also to prevent Albinus from prosecuting the case.[164] Just to be sure that the message was understood by all, on 20 April the king instructed De Marisco that if the archbishops of Dublin and Tuam and the bishop of Clogher went ahead with hearing the case and ignored the prohibition, they would be forced to appear before the king to explain their actions. Likewise, should Albinus prosecute his case, he too would have to appear before the king.[165] Marshal as regent, issuing mandates in the king's name, was effectively preventing his own prosecution, which was well within the law as it stood.[166] The issue was never resolved, and Leinster was still under interdict when he died. This did not seem to cause Marshal undue concern in his final days.

Marshal was regent for just over a year-and-a-half after Louis's departure, but in that time he was able to begin the long process of restoring law, order and a functioning government to a kingdom damaged by years of war. This he did with a commendable degree of success. The exchequer began to function again, taxes were collected and old debts were pursued. The courts began to operate once more, while the justices resumed their circuits.[167] Marshal's personal work-rate was gruelling, visiting as many as sixty-

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[163] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 268.

[164] *CDI, 1171–1251*, 825, p. 123.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 269.

[167] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 135.

three locations across twenty-two counties in the year following the end of the war. Important for Marshal was the restoration of national unity, crucial if Henry III's reign was to remain secure.[168] Marshal knew that to a large degree the peace had been achieved on the strength of his reputation as a soldier and a statesman. As a figure respected by both sides, he needed to personally travel the country if there was to be a reconciliation that would last. Marshal was not shy of seeking to personally benefit from the role of regent in an ostensibly peaceful realm. Marshal acquired the half of the English lands that had belonged to his cousin, the count of Perche (killed at Lincoln). He also gained the castle and town of Marlborough.[169] Although Marshal was successful in securing peace in England, his own possessions in the Welsh Marches came under threat when Morgan ap Hywel continued fighting despite his cousin Llywelyn ab Iorwerth doing homage to Henry III. Morgan was able to seize the town of Caerleon-upon-Usk before it was eventually recovered by John de Earley.[170]

Towards the end of January 1219, Marshal, then at Westminster, became quite ill; ill enough to render him unable to continue with his duties for several weeks. He seems to have made something of a recovery and on 7 March was able to ride to the Tower accompanied by his wife. There, however, his health deteriorated rapidly and a week or so later, no longer capable of riding, he travelled by boat to Caversham. His condition declined further and on 7 April Marshal decided he could no longer continue as regent. He had probably been aware for some time that he was dying. A council was summoned and was convened around his bed on 8–9 April, where it was decided that Henry (who was present) would be commended into the care of the new papal legate, Pandulf.[171]

Having passed on the reins of government, Marshal was now able to focus on his own affairs. His eldest son, William, would receive all of his mother Isabella's inheritance upon her death, including the lordships of Leinster, Pembroke and Striguil. Richard would receive those lands that Marshal had been granted by Richard I in England and Normandy. Walter would receive Goodrich Castle. Gilbert was then in holy orders so was excluded, while the youngest son Ansel was to be given a pension of £140 a year but was expected to make a career for himself. Marshal's only unmarried

[168] Brooks, *The knight who saved England*, pp 275–6.

[169] Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 136–8.

[170] Brooks, *The knight who saved England*, pp 278–9.

[171] Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 138–9.

daughter, Joan, was to be given £30 worth of land and two hundred marks a year until she married. In his final days, Marshal bid farewell to his wife and daughters before donning the white cloak of Templar and becoming a monk, something he had vowed to do decades earlier.[172] Marshal died on 14 May 1219. His body was first brought to Reading Abbey and from there to lie in state at Westminster Abbey before his funeral, conducted by the archbishop of Canterbury and bishop of London, at the Temple, where he was buried.[173]

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[172] Brooks, *The knight who saved England*, pp 284–6.

[173] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 141.

Chapter 6
The castles and religious foundations of William Marshal

Some of the most enduring reminders of the role played by Marshal in the lordship of Leinster are the remains of the castles he built and the religious houses he founded (although in some cases no visible elements survive). On his marriage to Isabella de Clare and becoming lord of Striguil and later earl of Pembroke, Marshal by the early 1190s had begun a programme of substantially improving the defences of his newly acquired Welsh castles at Usk, Chepstow and Pembroke. Here he was able to incorporate into his plans the most advanced features of military architecture, with which his experience of campaigning in France had familiarised him. It would a further ten years before he was able to pursue a similarly ambitious strategy in Leinster. His Irish castles were some of the most impressive built in the thirteenth, or for that matter any, century. As well as being a prolific castle builder, William Marshal invested considerable resources in developing his 'spiritual portfolio', particularly following his first visit to Ireland in 1200.[1] He made substantial grants to the Cistercians, Augustinians and Hospitallers in order for them to found new houses within his lordship. Marshal was not unusual in this regard; the Anglo-Normans had founded around eighty monasteries, priories and nunneries in Ireland by 1230.[2]

Kilkenny Castle

A church founded by or dedicated to St Canice (Cell Cainnigh) gives Kilkenny its name. Tradition would have it that it was founded by St Canice himself in the late sixth century.[3] His principal church was at Aghaboe and he is said to have died in 599 or 600.[4] There is no mention of a monastery (or church) at Kilkenny until its burning is recorded in 1085.[5] Even the seventh-century life of St Canice omits any mention. There are, however, late seventh-century references to 'Domnach Mór Roigne', which is associated with the site of St Patrick's churchyard to the south of the castle. It was not

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[1] Empey, 'The evolution of the demesne in the lordship of Leinster', p. 61.

[2] Clare Downham, *Medieval Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), p. 283.

[3] Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*, p. 58.

[4] *AU*, 599.

[5] Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*, p. 84; *AFM*, 1085.

until 1111 that the Synod of Rath Bresaill made Kilkenny the episcopal see of Ossory, eclipsing Aghaboe. Bradley suggested that it was in this year (1111) that the round tower of St Canice's was built in order to celebrate the church's new status as a cathedral.[6] By 1169 there was a major ecclesiastical centre at Kilkenny, with St Canice's at its core and outlying churches dedicated to Ss Brigid, Rioch, Mella (Canice's mother), Ciarán and Patrick (previously Domnach Mór Roigne).

There are many reasons that Strongbow chose Kilkenny as the site for one of his major castles in 1171 or 1172. It was an established ecclesiastical centre and Episcopal see (as was the case at Kildare and Ferns) that would have already had the beginnings of an urban settlement around it. Located on the River Nore with two fording points, it would have been important for both riverine and land-based trade as well as being on an important road transecting Osraige and linking Munster with Leinster. Having launched successful campaigns against Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic, it provided a suitable base from which Strongbow might further subdue and dominate southern Osraige. The site of the castle is on a height overlooking the lower of the two crossing points but close enough to the second to control both.[7] The first mention of the castle that survives is a record of its abandonment in 1173 when a large force from Connacht led by Máenmaigi Ua Conchobair and Domnall Mór Ua Briain advanced towards Kilkenny. The garrison, judging their position hopeless, abandoned the castle and withdrew to Waterford.[8] This would have been the earthwork fortress, which pre-dated the stone castle.[9] This fortress, while defendable in most cases (albeit for a limited time), presumably would have been easily taken by the combined forces of the high-king and his Munster ally.

There is no record of the castle for a further nineteen years until 1192.[10] In 1189, however, Domnall Mór Ua Briain yet again launched a series of attacks on the Anglo-Norman settlements in Munster and Osraige. This was a serious onslaught in which several castles including Lismore in Co. Waterford and Tibberaghny in Co. Kilkenny

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[6] Bradley, 'Canice and Kilkenny', pp 18–21.

[7] David Sweetman, *Medieval castles of Ireland* (Cork, 2005), p. 34.

[8] Martin, 'Allies and an overlord', p. 103; Helen Perros, 'Crossing the Shannon frontier: Connacht and Anglo-Normans, 1170-1224' in Terry Barry, Robin Frame and Katharine Simms (eds), *Colony and frontier in medieval Ireland* (London, 1995), p. 123.

[9] Murtagh, 'The Kilkenny Castle Archaeological Project', p. 49.

[10] Ibid.

were razed.[11] According to the *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann* Kilkenny Castle along with the castles of Kilfeakle and Knockgraffon, were either built or refortified in 1192.[12] It is not known either whether this marked the beginning of work on the stone castle there or if it refers to repairs to or the rebuilding of the earthwork fortification.[13] Excavations at Kilkenny Castle begun in 1990 by the Office of Public Works under the direction of Ben Murtagh demonstrated that the stone castle was built over the earthen ramparts of an unusually large fortification, possibly a ringwork. It is still unclear whether these ramparts represent the castle abandoned in 1173 or one begun in 1192 when William Marshal gained control of the lordship of Leinster.[14] It is worth noting that both Kilfeakle and Knockgraffon, built the same year (1192), were of a motte-and-bailey type.[15] Interestingly, Orpen states that there may have been a motte surviving within the precincts of the castle until at least 1307.[16] This though could be the result of mistaking moat for 'mote' in an extent from that year of the lands of Joan, countess of Gloucester and Hertford.[17]

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[11] *AI*, 1189: it was his confederates, Cuilén Ua Cuiléin and Ua Faeláin, who razed Lismore; Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland', pp 128–9; the trio of castles – Lismore, Tibberaghny and Ardfinnan – had been erected by King John in 1185 to protect the royal enclave centred on Waterford. The loss of two of these highlights the precarious position of the Anglo-Normans in Munster.

[12] Murtagh, 'The Kilkenny Castle Archaeological Project', p. 49; *AFM*, 1192 (O'Donovan, p. 95); G.H. Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles in Ossory', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, xxxix (1909), p. 316; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 225. A manuscript version of the Annals of Inisfallen (Ann. Inisfallen, Dublin manuscript) rather than Rawlinson B. 503, the better-known version translated by Seán Mac Airt in 1944, is the main source for this date but Orpen also refers to James Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland* (Dublin, 1705), p. 33.

[13] Murtagh, 'The Kilkenny Castle Archaeological Project', p. 49.

[14] Ibid., pp 49, 54–5.

[15] Ella S. Armitage, *The early Norman castles of the British Isles* (London, 1912), pp 340–1.

[16] Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles in Ossory', p. 317; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 225.

[17] *CDI, 1302–1307*, p. 186. The description here referred to by Orpen in 1909 reads 'a castle in which there were a hall, four towers, a chapel, a moat and divers other houses necessary to the castle', however in 1911 he refers to an un-translated version of the same document (Inquis. P.M., 35 Edw. I, no. 47, m. 34), which describes the castle as having *una aula, quatuorbturres, una capella, una mota, et alie domus diverse ad idem castrum necessarie*; this rather conveniently allows for a translation of *mota* as motte. *Mota* is a Latinised form of the old French *motte* and a moat would or should be a *fosse*. It appears that Sweetman erred in 1885; Orpen, in erring in 1909, accidently corrected Sweetman's error, then in 1911, on recognising said errors, went back to the original source. It would be somewhat ironic if, and not entirely implausible that, the scribe of 1307 had mistranslated moat as *mota*.

It might be that the rebuilding of the castle at Kilkenny was part of a broader plan to establish Anglo-Norman settlements in central Osraige. Orpen suggests that the subinfeudation of this territory most likely commenced at around the same time.[18] If this was the case, Domnall Ua Briain posed a great danger to such a scheme. It is possible that Strongbow's castle at Kilkenny was unfinished, which might in part explain its abandonment in 1173. Perhaps the major campaign against Ua Briain in 1192 was a precaution against the same happening again. Even if he was not completely defeated militarily it could have been enough to provide a pause in fighting long enough to complete the castle, at least to a level where it would be defendable, before Ua Briain was in a position to retaliate.

The stone castle at Kilkenny was built by William Marshal at the end of the twelfth or very early in the thirteenth century, probably on the same site as Strongbow's earlier fortress, or on that of an earlier earth-and-timber castle he had built himself.[19] It was here that Marshal had chosen to build his principal castle in Leinster and here he would later lavishly entertain King John and his entourage for two days in 1210 at the start of the king's campaign against the De Lacys.[20] It was a large trapezoidal stone castle, in a prominent position on the southern bank of the Nore, originally with four large round corner towers and a gatehouse connected by curtain walls. It was also surrounded by a wide moat and possibly by an outer wall beyond the moat.[21] Many of what were the latest developments in castle design – plunging arrow loops, a substantial base batter, a stone-lined moat and a twin-towered gatehouse – were incorporated into its construction.[22] The outline of the early castle is followed by the extant buildings forming an irregular four-sided wedge-shape with a tower surviving on three corners. The remaining towers, although now having multiple later windows inserted, are

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[18] Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 225.

[19] Conleth Manning, 'The Record Tower, Dublin Castle' in John R. Kenyon and Kieran O'Conor (eds), *The medieval castle in Ireland and Wales* (Dublin, 2003), p. 92. Manning suggests it was begun at around the same time as Dublin Castle which would be *c.*1204.

[20] Ben Murtagh, 'William Marshal's great tower at Pembroke, Wales' in Bradley et al., *William Marshal and Ireland* (Dublin, 2017), p. 173.

[21] Murtagh, 'The Kilkenny Castle Archaeological Project', pp 47–8; Terry Barry, 'The study of medieval Irish castles: a bibliographic survey', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, cviii C (2008), p. 123.

[22] Murtagh, 'William Marshal's great tower at Pembroke, Wales', p. 173.

original, as is much of the north wall.[23] In an extent from 1307 we are told of 'a castle in which are a hall, four towers, a chapel, a mote and divers other houses'.[24] It was designed as 'a nobleman's residence from the beginning' and it later became the principal seat of the Butler family under whom it was substantially altered, undergoing transformations in 1660 and in the early nineteenth century.[25] It was this last series of alterations undertaken by the sixth marquis of Ormonde that was responsible for the castle's current appearance.[26]

Kilkenny Castle and its near contemporaries Dublin Castle and King John's Castle in Limerick (both early royal castles) all have a sub-rectangular enclosure with a tower at each angle; they also had D-shaped twin gate-towers.[27] This plan, with its absence of a great tower or donjon, was developed in France in the early thirteenth century. Notably this design also appeared early in Wales at Montgomery and Usk (Striguil), Usk also being a Marshal castle.[28] This arrangement meant that the castle's strength lay in its walls and moats due to the absence of a central strong point.[29] It is possible that one corner tower (perhaps slightly larger than the others) would have served the same function as a donjon or keep. This 'great tower' as specified in King John's 1204 mandate for Dublin Castle was probably the Bermingham Tower. At Kilkenny Castle, only three of the four original round corner towers survive. Of these, the south tower is much wider than the others, with massive walls just over 4m thick and an interior diameter of 8.4m, four storeys high with a substantial base batter. These are similar dimensions to the great tower at Pembroke. This tower might have served a similar function to the Bermingham Tower.[30] However, if plans of the castle dating

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[23] Harold Leask, *Irish castles and castellated houses* (2nd ed. Dundalk, 1951), p. 57; Ben Murtagh, 'The Kilkenny Castle Archaeological Project', p. 47.

[24] *CDI, 1302–1307*, p. 186.

[25] Leask, *Irish castles*, p. 57.

[26] Murtagh, 'The Kilkenny Castle Archaeological Project', p. 48.

[27] Ken Wiggins, *A place of great consequence: archaeological excavations at King John's Castle, Limerick, 1990–8* (Dublin, 2016), p. 310: Wiggins suggests that the missing south-east corner tower – long assumed to have been situated beneath the remains of an early seventeenth-century bastion – may never have been built.

[28] Sweetman, *Medieval castles of Ireland*, p. 50; Manning, 'The Record Tower, Dublin Castle', pp 74–5.

[29] Sweetman, *Medieval castles of Ireland*, p. 52.

[30] Murtagh, 'William Marshal's great tower at Pembroke, Wales', p. 174; Murtagh, 'The Kilkenny Castle Archaeological Project', p. 46; Manning, 'The Record Tower, Dublin Castle', p. 92; Wiggins, *A place of*

from 1767 are accurate, the now-missing east tower appears to have been at least as large as the south tower, which would make it a candidate. As the castle was located in the south-east corner of the medieval town, these two towers would have been on the most exposed side of the castle, which also contained the original gatehouse, and was not protected by the town's defences.[31] It is therefore probable that this approach to the castle was further protected by a series of outworks and barbicans, as at Dunamase.

Dunamase Castle

Dunamase Castle, atop its eponymous rock, is still an imposing structure and dominates the surrounding countryside.[32] The rock itself is an outcrop in the Dysert Hills in the east of Co. Laois. This outcrop, the Rock of Dunamase, formed something of a natural fortress with rock cliffs on three sides and a steeply sloping south-eastern approach. It was on this approach that the castle's principal defences were constructed.[33] It is a complex castle dating mostly from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. There are also the remains of pre-Anglo-Norman defensive works, which are probably the Dun Masc referred to in the Irish annals when in 843 it was plundered by foreigners.[34] Excavations at the site found the remains of an early medieval *dún*, which would tally with this account. It took the form of a dry-stone wall, cut into the slope, running along the same line as the later masonry curtain wall of the lower ward. Into this wall was later inserted a gatehouse, presumably in the same location as the original entranceway. There was no evidence of any earlier or prehistoric occupation.[35]

Dunamase Castle consists of four divisions: upper and lower wards, both protected by walls as well as an inner barbican which is also enclosed by a wall that is itself further protected by a much larger outer barbican with earthwork ramparts. The

great consequence, p. 312: Wiggins suggests that the north-east tower at King John's Castle, like the Bermingham Tower at Dublin Castle, could have functioned as a great tower or keep.

[31] Murtagh, 'The Kilkenny Castle Archaeological Project' p. 46; Manning, 'The Record Tower, Dublin Castle', p. 92.

[32] Barry, 'The study of medieval Irish castles', pp 125–6.

[33] Kieran O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', *Journal of Irish Archaeology*, vii(1996), p. 97.

[34] Edward O'Leary, 'The Rock of Dunamase', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, vii (1909–11), p. 162.

[35] Tom McNeill, *Castles in Ireland: feudal power in a Gaelic world* (London, 1997), pp 12–13; Brian Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase, Co. Laois' in John R. Kenyon and Kieran O'Conor (eds), *The medieval castle in Ireland and Wales* (Dublin, 2003), p. 32.

earliest phase of the Anglo-Norman castle dates from the late twelfth century and the keep at the top of the hill and the original gatehouse (later blocked and incorporated in the lower ward wall) are the surviving elements from this period. In this first phase of construction there seems to have been no division between the lower and upper wards.[36] There is also what appears to be the remains of a cistern within this upper ward.[37] This would have been vital in the event of a siege due to the impossibility of a well, so this feature surely dates from the initial Anglo-Norman phase of construction.

Brian Hodkinson suggests that the building consisted of a free-standing ground-floor hall (perhaps above a low or demi-basement) with an attached two-storey solar block at the northern end. This would be rare in such an early castle in an Irish context and such a hall would have been of limited defensive value and could not have functioned as a keep in the traditional sense.[38] If this was indeed the arrangement, there appears to have been no other significant accommodation in the castle, so the lower storey of the solar block was probably the great chamber and the upper storey the solar. Perhaps because of the fact that Dunamase's principal strengths were the rock's cliffs on three sides and its series of walls and barbicans, O'Keeffe is of the opinion that Dunamase is the only building in which the hall and chamber are contained side-to-end in a building deserving to be described as a donjon or keep.[39] A slightly different interpretation is put forward by O'Conor, who suggests that the keep was a more traditional large rectangular two-storeyed hall keep, a relatively simple design and one that was already becoming outdated in the 1200s (although it continued to be built in Ireland into the 1250s).[40]

The keep was a massive rectangular block (*c.*35.5m x 20m) with walls 2.8m thick sited on the summit of the rock.[41] This appears originally to have been within one enclosure before being subdivided into an upper and a lower ward with the keep straddling this division. From what remains of this dividing wall, it appears to have been relatively weakly defended.[42] There is an entrance on the north-western side and at

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[36] Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', pp 32, 35–6.

[37] O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 97.

[38] Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', p. 36.

[39] Tadhg O'Keeffe, *Medieval Irish buildings: 1100–1600* (Dublin, 2015), p. 234.

[40] O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 107.

[41] McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 33.

[42] O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 97.

a later stage a small fore-building was built in front of it; there is also evidence for an entrance and fore-building on the opposite side of the keep.[43] There is evidence for two now-blocked window embrasures at first-floor level, and these are possibly the only surviving original features.[44] Both the hall and the early gatehouse have a pronounced base batter, but this does not seem to have been part of the original construction and appears to have been added later.[45]

Excavations and finds from the site suggest that it was abandoned at some point in the mid-fourteenth century, at which point it began to fall into a state of ruin.[46] During the Confederate Wars, what remained of the castle was occupied by various factions and changed hands several times, before Cromwell's generals, Hewson and Reynolds, perhaps recognising something of its military potential, chose to dismantle its defences lest it fall back into the enemy's hands, apparently by blowing up several parts of the castle in 1650.[47] There are a number of late medieval and indeed early modern stone features incorporated into the keep, but these are insertions brought from elsewhere at the end of the eighteenth century by Sir John Parnell as part of a scheme to restore the keep to be used as a banqueting hall, a project that was possibly never finished.[48]

While the first historical record of a castle at Dunamase is in the pipe roll of 1211–12 – when William Marshal is recorded as paying £6 in fees for the lands of the castle while Geoffrey Lutterel (who was then the castle's custodian) had to pay £53 6s. 8d. – the construction of the castle had begun at least a decade earlier. The castle's early history is somewhat confused and just who was responsible for the building of each stage is a puzzle. Strongbow was campaigning in Laois in the 1170s when the defensive potential of the rock is unlikely to have been overlooked. It is possible that Strongbow, intending to keep Dunamase as a seigniorial manor of the lordship of Leinster, began construction of the earliest phase of the castle at some point between 1171 and 1176. Another possibility, favoured by Hodkinson, is that the builder was Geoffrey de Costentin, who is recorded as holding Laois in 1177, and it is not until 1200 that he

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[43] Ibid., p. 105; Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', p. 41.

[44] O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 105.

[45] Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', pp 38–9.

[46] Ibid., pp 43–4.

[47] O'Leary, 'The Rock of Dunamase', pp 167–8.

[48] Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', p. 44.

gave up his claims to the territory in favour of Meiler fitz Henry in exchange for territory in Connacht. Fitz Henry himself would seem to be a more likely possibility, either at some point between 1181 and 1208 or indeed between 1200 and 1208, depending on when it came into his possession.[49]

Fitz Henry had been granted substantial lands in Laois in the early 1180s and had his caput at Timahoe (or rather at a motte-and-bailey castle just over a kilometre from the current village of the same name). This castle was built for him in 1181 or 1182 by the then justiciar Hugh de Lacy, probably as part of a policy to secure the area from attack by the Irish. This would indicate that there was no castle at Dunamase (which was less than three kilometres away) prior to this date.[50] It therefore seems probable that Meiler fitz Henry, whose lands adjoined those of Dunamase, had at some stage during the absence of a lord of Leinster annexed these to his own, therefore prior to 1189. Hodkinson is of the view that Fitz Henry had been granted custody of Dunamase by Prince John (then styled Lord of Ireland) as early as 1181.[51] If this was the case, he may well have moved his caput to Dunamase and built the first phase of Anglo-Norman fortifications here. Marshal's later dispute with Fitz Henry may in part have stemmed from the latter's possession of Dunamase.[52] The *History* recounts Meiler fitz Henry handing over the castle to Marshal in 1208 after the collapse of his campaign against Marshal in Leinster. The earliest parts of the castle therefore pre-date the 1208 handover.[53]

While Marshal did not begin the castle, he would seem a likely candidate for the second phase of construction when the castle's defences were substantially strengthened. We know he was in possession of the castle from 1208.[54] The failed revolt by Fitz Henry showed how precarious his hold on Leinster could be, particularly when King John's tendency to turn on those of his lords he felt threatened by (or envied) is considered. It is against this background that Marshal seems to have begun a concerted

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[49] Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', pp 46–8.

[50] O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 111.

[51] Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', pp 47–8; O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 101: O'Conor suggests that Meiler fitz Henry had been in possession of Dunamase well before 1202.

[52] Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', pp 47–8.

[53] *History*, 14127–9.

[54] Ibid.; Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', pp 46, 48.

building campaign not just at Dunamase but throughout Leinster. At Dunamase, however, this period of construction might have been interrupted. Due to Marshal's involvement with William de Braose's disastrous falling out with King John and the subsequent revolt by the De Lacys, the castle was seized by the king in 1210. It seems likely to have remained in the king's possession until at least 1215.[55] This would give two windows during which work could have been overseen by Marshal; 1208–10 and 1215–19. There is, however, no reason that work could not have continued in the intervening period.[56] It is possible that King John, on seizing possession of the castle from Marshal in 1210, intended for it to remain permanently in royal hands. John was willing to put considerable resources into his Irish castles such as those he had confiscated from the rebel De Lacys at around the same time. These expenses were well documented, yet there are no records for any such work carried out at Dunamase. This could indicate that the castle was considered adequately fortified at the time, i.e. before 1210.[57]

In the early thirteenth century, the castle as it then stood was substantially re-modelled and its defences added to. The first alteration made would seem to be the addition of a base batter to the keep and the original gatehouse.[58] At some point after these minor alterations had been made, major additions to the castle's defences were begun. The entire summit of the hill was encircled by a curtain wall and it appears that the area was divided into an upper and a lower ward. While the standing remains of the keep suggest that the original entrance to the castle (with a later fore-building) was on the north-east side, investigations carried out by Hodkinson indicate that there was also an entrance (with a later fore-building) on the south-west side of the keep and he suggests that both fore-buildings were added at the same time as the curtain wall was built.[59] It might be that the chronology here was more complicated. It seems unlikely that the keep would have had two entrances originally. Perhaps when the upper and lower wards were created a new entrance was opened on the side of the castle that would now be within the upper ward; this would have made the south-west entrance, opening directly into the lower ward, somewhat redundant.

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[55] O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 101.

[56] Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', p. 48.

[57] O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 105.

[58] Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', pp 38–9.

[59] Ibid., p. 41.

The curtain wall of the lower wall follows the edge of the rock. On its northern and southern sides, it is between 1m and 1.5m thick, with little in the way of surviving features except for a sally-port to the south-west. On these sides the wall overlooked the near vertical face of the rock, which provided adequate defence. Running along the same line as the earlier dry-stone wall on the sloping approach from the east and south-east, the curtain wall was far more substantial. It was over 2m thick and in places survives to a height of 7m on its exterior face. The early gate-tower was blocked up and incorporated into the wall, while a new larger projecting gatehouse was added.[60] The stretch of wall adjoining the gatehouse has what appear to be joist-holes for supporting wooden hourding. This new main gatehouse into the lower ward is in a very ruinous state and was probably a simple two-storeyed tower with a passage running through it; alternatively, it could have been a small twin-towered gatehouse, although this would seem unlikely. It had several arrow loops, as did the curtain wall. These were plunging loops similar to those used by Marshal at Kilkenny and in Wales.[61] On the southern corner of the lower ward curtain wall, there was a small open-backed rectangular mural tower.[62] While some of these defences might seem less advanced than at Marshal's other castles, the natural defences of the rock itself may have more than compensated.[63] It is also worth noting that in the early thirteenth century open-backed rectangular mural towers were built at Trim Castle, while at Carlingford Castle a rectangular gatehouse was added. It does seem likely that this gatehouse and the lower ward's curtain wall date from the early thirteenth century, probably when Marshal was in control of the castle.[64]

Protecting the main gatehouse and much of the lower ward's south-western curtain wall is the inner barbican with a D-shaped gate-tower at the apex of the roughly triangular enclosure. The walls of the inner barbican are much thinner than those of the lower ward, being about 1.6m thick.[65] Despite this relative thinness, the barbican's curtain wall is still an important defensive feature with two tiers of arrow loops. One is

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[60] O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 107; Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', p. 39.

[61] O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', pp 107–8.

[62] Ibid., p. 97.

[63] Ibid., p. 108.

[64] McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 34; O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 107.

[65] Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', p. 41.

at ground level while the second is at battlement level where some of the surviving merlons are pierced by loops. Despite large blocks of masonry having tumbled down the slope below the wall (probably due to the work of Cromwell's generals), evidence for sixteen loops survives.[66] The gatehouse of the inner barbican is a D-shaped tower, of a somewhat obsolete design that would make it unlikely to be any later than the early thirteenth century.[67] It is similar to the Dublin Gate at Trim Castle, which could date from the 1190s although it might be as late as 1222.[68] There are three loops in the first floor of the lower gatehouse, and it also housed a counter-weight drawbridge.[69] The architectural evidence indicates that the inner barbican at Dunamase was built in the early thirteenth century, in the period when Marshal either held or had a claim to the castle.[70]

Separated from the inner barbican by a substantial ditch, cut into the bedrock, are extensive earthworks that form a roughly triangular enclosure that represents a large outer barbican. Its southern side was protected by a massive ditch and an embankment, while the remaining side to the north-west is protected by a natural slope and escarpment.[71] The ground in both barbicans is relatively steeply sloping and both contain rocky outcrops, which would suggest that neither was suitable for accommodating substantial domestic buildings.[72] There is a suggestion that further earthworks, now truncated by a modern road, extended to the south of the lower barbican's entranceway. This might indicate the presence of an oddly detached bailey in the area now occupied by the adjacent Trinity Church and its grounds. O'Conor believes the substantial earthworks of the outer barbican were built in conjunction with other work carried out (in the inner barbican and the lower ward) in the early thirteenth century and were part of an integrated defensive system. He points out that when these earth-and-timber defences are taken into consideration with those of masonry

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[66] O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 99.

[67] McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 34.

[68] Alan R. Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations 1995–8* (Dublin, 2011), pp 189–90.

[69] Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', p. 41.

[70] O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 99.

[71] Hodkinson, 'A summary of recent work at the Rock of Dunamase', p. 43; O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 97: O'Conor points out that standing remains of barbicans are rare in the British Isles, therefore having two surviving at Dunamase is very unusual.

[72] O'Conor, 'Dunamase Castle', p. 97.

construction, the resulting scale of the fortification could only be maintained by the more powerful lords such as Marshal.[73]

Towered keeps

Apart from Marshal's great fortress of Kilkenny Castle and the imposing Rock of Dunamase, when looking at castles in Leinster connected with William Marshal one distinct group is worth consideration: Leask's 'Towered keeps'. These can be considered, stylistically at least, as a distinct group of thirteenth-century castles. They consist of a large rectangular block with cylindrical towers on each corner. There are four, perhaps five, surviving buildings of this type: Carlow, Lea, Ferns, Terryglass and (possibly) Geashill.[74] Three further long-since-destroyed examples existed at Wexford, Kildare and and Gowran, Co Kilkenny. Leask felt that this design represented something unique to Ireland, as castles of a similar design elsewhere in the British Isles tend to be of a much later date. Toy, writing in the 1930s, was also inclined to view these as a distinct Irish group, although he names only three; Carlow, Ferns and Lea.[75] There are, however, castles of a similar design in France dating from the twelfth century.[76]

   Leask seems not to have been aware of these keeps of a comparable plan built towards the end of the twelfth century in France, or he felt that the physical distance involved ruled them out as a source of inspiration. O'Keeffe suggests that these 'towered keeps' do not form a homogenous or coherent group at all, pointing out that, although Carlow and Lea share a very similar plan, Ferns is larger with an irregular central block and the Butler castle at Terryglass can be distinguished by the irregular sizing of its corner towers.[77] These differences seem minor when their similarity of plan, age and relative uniqueness are considered. They therefore can be seen as a Leinster type, all of which were within the lordship of Leinster, except for Terryglass as a Munster outlier. They can also be seen as something of a Marshal type, with four being held directly by the Marshals, while Lea, was held by one of their chief barons, a

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[73] Ibid., p. 108; McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 34: McNeill's view is that the barbicans added some time after changes to the upper and lower wards' defences were made.

[74] Leask, *Irish castles*, pp 47–51; Billy Colfer, *Wexford castles* (Cork, 2013), p. 62.

[75] Sidney Toy, *Castles: their construction and history* (London, 1939; repr. New York, 1985), p. 126.

[76] Leask, *Irish castles*, pp 47–51; O'Keeffe, *Medieval Irish buildings*, pp 231–2.

[77] O'Keeffe, *Medieval Irish buildings*, pp 231–2.

Fitz Gerald (and possibly Geashill). Terryglass was probably roughly contemporary, if a little later, and built by the Butlers who were feofees of William Marshal for lands they held in Leinster, so it is not unconnected. The now destroyed castle at Gowran was also built by the Butlers.[78]

Marshal, having begun his great round keep at Pembroke and being aware of building developments in France, was adding round mural towers and twin round gate-towers at Chepstow. It is therefore easy to see this same influence in the design of castles in his Leinster lordship.[79] The improved functionality of round mural towers, and the great round corner towers of the keep-less castles of Kilkenny, Dublin and Limerick, was clearly understood by Marshal. It was against this background that this Marshal 'type' castle emerged in Leinster. This was something of a hybrid design, combining a traditional rectangular keep with round corner towers for added strength and defensive value. While this design had been tried in France, Marshal appears to be the first to build such castles in Ireland and Britain.

Carlow Castle

Carlow Castle is located on small rise where the River Burren joins the River Barrow. This was an important strategic location that enabled the castle to control riverine trade, which was crucial to Marshal's town of New Ross further downstream becoming one of the major Anglo-Norman ports in Ireland.[80] Interestingly, Carlow is not mentioned in the Irish annals prior to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans.[81] This confluence of the two rivers also made for a naturally defendable site with water on three sides and approach possible from the north-east only. Due to a bend in the Barrow just above the castle, there was only a very small neck of marshy land (reclaimed in the eighteenth century) connecting it with the town. It is likely that there was a moat here that could have been

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[78] Adrian Empey, *Gowran, Co Kilkenny, 1190–1610: custom and conflict in a baronial town* (Maynooth, 2015), pp 19–20.

[79] Colfer, *Wexford castles*, p. 62.

[80] Barry, 'The study of medieval Irish castles', p. 123.

[81] Walter FitzGerald, 'The castle and manor of Carlow', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, vi (1909–11), p. 313.

flooded if necessary. For much of the medieval period the castle was therefore more-or-less on an island.[82]

Carlow Castle has long been regarded as the earliest of the 'towered keeps' and it may have served as something of a model for this category of castle as defined by Leask in the 1940s.[83] The castle stands atop what seems to have been a low knoll, but much quarried away after the castle's partial collapse. The keep was three storeys, rectangular with a round tower at each corner with an entrance at first-floor level. What is left standing is effectively the western half, the eastern half having collapsed in 1814 after being undermined by its then tenant, a Dr Middleton (see below).[84] The inner face of the surviving western wall was demolished at the same time.[85] This stone keep had replaced an earlier earth-and-timber castle. Excavations found part of a half-moon-shaped ditch and palisade running across the low rise on which the stone keep was built.[86] It seems probable that Carlow, as part of the territory of *Obargi*, was granted to John de Clahull by Strongbow in the 1170s. It is likely that De Clahull was responsible for building this first earth-and-timber castle at this time. Alternatively, it may be that this earth-and-timber castle was the one recorded as being built for De Clahull in 1181 by Hugh de Lacy.[87]

During excavations carried out by O'Conor, the location of a palisade, identifiable by series of truncated post-holes, was discovered behind a curving fosse, directly beneath the stone walls of the later keep and running across and dividing the low rise on which the stone keep was built.[88] Evidence of silting in this ditch suggests that it was in use for a considerable time. The castle was also built over a corn-drying

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[82] William Miller, 'Carlow Castle', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, xi (1931), p. 8; Linda Doran, 'Medieval settlement hierarchy in Carlow and the 'Carlow Corridor', 1200–1550' in Thomas McGrath (ed.), *Carlow: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 2008), p. 179.

[83] Barry, 'The study of medieval Irish castles', p. 123: Barry points out that, seeing as there is no documentary evidence for a date for construction, it is not clear how this assumption was reached.

[84] Kieran O'Conor, 'The origins of Carlow Castle', *Archaeology Ireland*, xi (3) (autumn 1997), p. 13.

[85] McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 119.

[86] Doran, 'Medieval settlement hierarchy in Carlow', p. 178.

[87] O'Conor, 'The origins of Carlow Castle', p. 15; Doran, 'Medieval settlement hierarchy in Carlow', p. 178.

[88] Barry, 'The study of medieval Irish castles', p. 123; Doran, 'Medieval settlement hierarchy in Carlow', p. 178.

kiln that was part of the earth-and-timber castle complex, but outside these (presumably) inner fortifications. Later quarrying of the knoll has removed evidence of outer defences. These features might suggest that the first castle was a partial ringwork, with an attached bailey to the north (where the kiln was found) or it could have been a low motte, incorporating the knoll, with its broad summit divided by a ditch and palisade.[89]

The stone keep at Carlow, as with all of Marshal's Leinster castles, suffers from a paucity of documentary evidence relating to the early stages of its construction. There is no definite date for when work began.[90] It seems that at some point Marshal had gained possession of Carlow from De Clahull, probably after *c.*1200 (it was then that it would have become a seigniorial manor of the lord of Leinster).[91] It may be that De Clahull had been a supporter of Fitz Henry in his campaign against Marshal, and if that was the case Marshal perhaps confiscated the existing castle from him in 1208.[92] A later charter from 1223 suggests that Marshal had established a town at Carlow at some point before 1210.[93] O'Conor suggests that building of the stone castle began between 1210 and 1215, however it may be the that the castle pre-dated the establishment of the town by a number of years.[94]

During Lionel Duke of Clarence's tenure as governor of Ireland from 1361 to 1367, Carlow became an important administrative centre and would remain so until 1394.[95] In 1495, during the failed attempt to support the pretender Perkin Warbeck, the castle was seized by James Fitz Gerald, brother of Gerard Mór, earl of Kildare, who was subsequently besieged by Thomas Butler, earl of Ormond, who successfully retook

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[89] O'Conor, 'The origins of Carlow Castle', pp 14–15: O'Conor points out that these interpretations seek to impose modern classifications on fragmentary and ambiguous evidence; Doran, 'Medieval settlement hierarchy in Carlow', pp 178–9.

[90] Barry, 'The study of medieval Irish castles', p. 123.

[91] O'Conor, 'The origins of Carlow Castle', p. 15.

[92] Turtle Bunbury, *800 years of an Irish castle* (Carlow, 2013), p. 1.

[93] Doran, 'Medieval settlement hierarchy in Carlow', p. 178; O'Conor, 'The origins of Carlow Castle', p. 15.

[94] O'Conor, 'The origins of Carlow Castle', p. 15; FitzGerald, 'The castle and manor of Carlow', p. 320: FitzGerald describes a charter from 1209 that mentions a castle at Carlow but it seems likely that this is the 1223 charter issued by William Marshal the younger referred to above; Barry, 'The study of medieval Irish castles', p. 123: Barry suggests it was built between 1207 and 1225.

[95] Bunbury, *800 years of an Irish castle*, pp 4–6.

the castle. The Fitz Geralds, temporarily back in royal favour, occupied the castle until 1535 when the failed Silken Thomas rebellion collapsed. The castle was then occupied by a series of constables, one of whom, Brian O'Brian (later sixth earl of Thomond) made major alterations in the early seventeenth century, making the castle more comfortable and perhaps inserting the second floor.[96] During the Confederate Wars, the castle changed hands and was besieged several times. It was damaged after the last of these sieges in 1650 when Henry Ireton's soldiers set about destroying much of the castle's defences and knocking out windows in the keep. This and perhaps earlier cannon fire caused so much damage that it was abandoned, the roof was removed, and the castle fell into a state of decay. By the time of the war between James II and William of Orange (1688 to 1691), Carlow Castle had become militarily irrelevant. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the castle was leased by Dr Philip Parry Price Middleton, an Englishman of a dubious background who then ran an asylum in Carlow town. It seems that Middleton was in the process of restoring the castle to use as a grand private residence when his plans came undone. In an ill-advised scheme to create new openings in the castle's east wall using explosives, he catastrophically undermined it to such a degree that more-or-less half the castle including two corner towers collapsed, leaving it much as it is today.[97]

As stated earlier, the stone keep at Carlow was built directly over the site of an earlier earth-and-timber castle. Before building of the keep began, the summit of the knoll was levelled (destroying the earlier earth-and-timber castle) and its defensive ditch was filled in. Where the walls of the keep were to cross this ditch, the fill was stone. On this level platform the keep was built directly, without foundations, as was found to be the case at Ferns.[98] It seems likely that building began in the first decade of the thirteenth century but it may be that it was not completed until the early 1220s, which is suggested by the presence of cross-form loops in the south tower, although these may be later alterations.[99] The keep was rectangular with a round tower at each corner. The basement of the north-western tower had no windows and was accessed from above, presumably by means of a ladder. Like at Kilkenny, it showed Marshal's

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[96] Ibid., pp 7–8.

[97] Miller, 'Carlow Castle', p. 8; Bunbury, *800 years of an Irish castle*, pp 9–11.

[98] Barry, 'The study of medieval Irish castles', p. 123; O'Conor, 'The origins of Carlow', p. 16.

[99] Barry, 'The study of medieval Irish castles', p. 123; O'Conor, 'The origins of Carlow Castle', p. 15. It could also be a particularly early example of cross-form loops being used in Ireland.

awareness of innovations in castle building stemming from northern France.[100] It was originally two storeys with a third inserted at a later stage but without increasing the keep's overall height. This is most likely to have occurred in the fourteenth or fifteenth century; it may have been as late as the seventeenth century when the castle was greatly modernised.[101] It was entered through a first-floor door in one of its shorter walls close to the angle where the wall joins one of the round corner towers, as was the case at nearby Lea, another 'towered keep' of a similar size and plan.[102]

Lea Castle

Lea Castle is situated on the south bank of the River Barrow just east of Portarlington. It is now located in low-lying farmland but it was for several centuries the centre of an important manorial settlement that was still known as 'Newtown' at the end of the thirteenth century.[103] The standing remains of the castle consist of a towered keep, of a very similar plan to Carlow, of which the north-west and part of the north-east walls survive to a height of three storeys, and the northern corner tower that rises further to a fourth storey.[104] The keep occupies much of a small oval inner ward that was surrounded by a wall, separating it from a larger outer ward.[105] The curtain wall of the inner ward contains the remains of what might have been a large rectangular gatehouse. There are also the remains of an unusual flattened D-shaped mural tower.[106] The walled outer ward has a three-storey twin-towered gatehouse that remains largely complete, although it has been altered considerably. There is also what appears to be an additional enclosure on the north east-side of the outer ward, defined by a ditch or fosse.[107]

The first Anglo-Normans fortification erected at Lea was built by either Robert de Bermingham or his son-in-law Gerald (fitz Maurice) fitz Gerald. Lea was part of the

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[100] McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 122; Doran, 'Medieval settlement hierarchy in Carlow', p. 178.

[101] O'Conor, 'The origins of Carlow Castle', p. 13.

[102] McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 122.

[103] Linzi Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland: some case studies' in Peter Crooks and Seán Duffy (eds), *The Geraldines and medieval Ireland: the making of a myth* (Dublin, 2016), p. 127.

[104] O'Keeffe, *Medieval Irish buildings*, pp 233–4; Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', p. 131.

[105] McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 120.

[106] Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', pp 128–9.

[107] Kieran O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman castles in Co. Laois' in Pádraig G. Lane and William Nolan (eds), *Laois: history & society* (Dublin, 1999), p. 186.

grant of Offaly given to De Bermingham by Strongbow, made sometime before 1176.[108] If it was not built by De Bermingham (which seems more likely) before his death in 1197, then it was built before 1201, which was when Gerald fitz Gerald, who held Lea of the lord of Leinster, died.[109]

This early castle was possibly a ringwork or perhaps a low motte, later flattened to provide a stable base for the stone keep. The inner ward probably follows the same course as the earliest fortifications on the site. It is oval and its curtain wall was probably built over an earlier bank and palisade. This is attached to a much larger outer ward or bailey to the north, which fronts onto the Barrow. A fosse, roughly 10m wide, defended those sides of the complex not protected by the river.[110]As no excavations have been carried out at Lea, it is not clear if the outer ward and fosse were part of the first phase of construction, but this would seem likely.

Gerald, through his marriage *c.*1193 to Eva de Bermingham, heiress of Robert de Bermingham, had acquired further lands in Uí Failge (Offaly) to the west of his Offelan lands including Maynooth and Rathmore, which he had been granted by his elder brother William. When William died *c.*1199, Gerald acquired his lands, including the barony of Naas (William being the first baron Naas) as well lands in Munster. The deaths of his younger brother Alexander and his uncle Robert fitz Stephen without heirs added to his Munster holdings.[111] His substantial territories in Leinster stretched from the hinterlands of Dublin deep into Offaly, making Gerald one of the principal barons of the lordship of Leinster.[112] Gerald died probably in January 1204, leaving his substantial holdings to his 9-year-old heir Maurice. William Marshal as lord of Leinster successfully petitioned King John for wardship of Maurice, his vassal. The king ordered his justiciar (fitz Henry) to hand over custody of Lea and Geashill to Marshal when he was granted custody of Maurice.[113] This, in theory at least, meant that all the Fitz Gerald

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[108] Ibid., p. 189; Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', p. 127.

[109] O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman castles in Co. Laois', p. 189.

[110] Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', pp 128–9; O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman castles in Co. Laois', pp 196–7.

[111] Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', p. 96.

[112] Ibid., pp 95–6.

[113] Ibid., p. 117.

lands in both Offaly and Offelan were held by Marshal between 1204 and 1216 when Maurice was granted seisin of his father's lands.[114]

There is an accepted design connection between Lea and Marshal's castle at Carlow. As argued above, Carlow was probably built by Marshal between 1207 and 1213. At roughly the same time, Lea was held by Marshal during the minority of Maurice fitz Gerald (between 1204 and 1216). It is possible therefore that Marshal built Lea, using the same plan as at Carlow, perhaps with Maurice fitz Gerald completing it when he gained seisin of his inheritance in 1217.[115] O'Conor believes that it is unlikely that Marshal was willing to waste resources on a castle that was not going to remain long in his keeping, particularly when those resources might have been required for his own castles in Leinster. He suggests that Maurice fitz Gerald was responsible for Lea, building a copy of Marshal's castle at Carlow.[116] For Marshal though, when one considers the scale of his castle building and improving both in Ireland and Wales, resources did not seem to be a problem. It could be that the building of a new castle for Maurice fitz Gerald, his ward, was an investment to encourage further loyalty. Earlier Hugh de Lacy had erected multiple castles in Meath for his vassals and, of more relevance here perhaps, he erected several castles in Leinster, which were not destined for his own vassals but rather for those of a potential rival. These castles were built for the benefit of the defence of the colony as a whole.

Although in a very ruined state, the general plan of the keep at Lea is identifiable from its extant remains. These consist of the north-west wall and part of the north-east wall to a height of three storeys and the almost-complete northern corner tower. Part of a second tower also survives, as do the foundations of a third.[117] The ground floor of the keep was divided into two vaulted chambers by a central spine wall (this does not seem to be a later insertion as at Maynooth) and the vaulting over one chamber survives.[118] The keeps of both Carlow and Lea were of a similar size (Lea was slightly larger and a storey taller) and both were entered through a first-floor door in one of their shorter walls close to the angle where the wall joins one of the round corner

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[114] Ibid., p. 96.

[115] Ibid., p. 133.

[116] O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman castles in Co. Laois', p. 189.

[117] McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 120; Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', p. 131.

[118] Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', p. 131.

towers.[119] At Lea a squinch arch between the northern tower and the north-east wall supported a parapet wall-walk that also would seem to have functioned as a machicolation over the doorway below. There are also the remains of what McNeill interprets as a fore-work protecting the entrance (which would render the machicolation redundant), but this would seem more likely the remains of a gatehouse in the inner curtain wall.[120] The small size of the inner ward in relation to the rather large keep meant that space between the inner face of the gatehouse and the keep's entrance was very restricted.

Bearing in mind that most of the building is missing, the internal arrangements of the keep are impossible to work out with any certainty (as was the case at Carlow and Ferns), however, access between floors was through a small lobby in the north tower adjacent to the first-floor entrance and was by means of straight mural stairs (as was also the case at Carlow but not at Ferns). Interestingly, the stairway, beginning on the first floor, bypasses the second floor and exits onto the third (which might have been at wall-walk level originally).[121] On ground-floor level, the surviving tower had no arrow loops or windows and was entered from above and, O'Conor suggests, was probably used as a prison but it may be that all the corner-tower basements were similar and simply used as stores.[122]

Leask was inclined to assign Lea a date in the mid-thirteenth century, largely due to the double trefoil-pointed windows surviving on the third-floor level.[123] While this dating for the pair of windows concerned is probably correct – the trefoil-headed windows would suggest a date sometime after *c*.1225 – their internal embrasures have segmented arches over them, unlike those on the floors below, which have round arches. The section of mural stairs that opens onto the keep's upper floor is roofed with flat-stone lintels, whereas below this upper section the stairs is roofed by a round arch.

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[119] Leask, *Irish castles and castellated houses*, p. 50; McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 122; Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', p. 131; O'Keeffe, *Medieval Irish buildings*, pp 233-34: O'Keeffe suggests that Lea would have had a better-illuminated interior than Carlow but considering how much of both keeps is missing this view is difficult to support.

[120] Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', p. 131; McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 120: McNeill suggests that this machicolation is a later addition.

[121] O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman castles in Co. Laois', p. 188; McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 120.

[122] O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman castles in Co. Laois', p. 188.

[123] Leask, *Irish castles*, p. 50.

There also appears to be a change in the external masonry of the tower at a corresponding level. These changes in style suggest that the third floor was an addition to an existing keep. It seems likely that the keep was built in two or more stages in a similar manner to Maynooth and Trim.[124] It is probable that this third floor was added between 1225 and 1230, which would require a much earlier beginning for the initial phase of construction than Leask suggested.[125]

Although there has been no archaeological excavation carried out at Lea, the oval outline of the inner ward would suggest that this was a low motte, flattened to provide a stable base for the stone keep or a ringwork castle. This would be in keeping with other Anglo-Norman stone castles.[126] The keep at Lea occupies much of the small inner ward, which was surrounded by a curving curtain wall in places pierced by plunging arrow loops. Opposite the entrance into the keep are the very ruinous remains of a large rectangular gatehouse. There are also the remains of an unusual flattened D-shaped mural tower.[127]

The inner ward probably follows the same course as the earliest fortifications on the site and is attached to a much larger outer ward or bailey to the north, which fronts on to the River Barrow. A fosse, roughly 10m wide, defended those sides of the

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[124] O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman castles in Co. Laois', pp 187–8; Michael Potterton, *Medieval Trim: history and archaeology* (Dublin, 2005), p. 237: the great de Lacy keep at Trim was built over an earlier ringwork castle in three main phases of construction, the first sometime between 1173 and 1176, the second in the 1190s and the final phase at the beginning of the thirteenth century, completed by 1207.

[125] Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', pp 133–4: Simpson points out that it may be that some earth-and-timber castles were being replaced by stone castles earlier than has previously been considered. This could push the origins of the stone keep at Lea back to the 1190s and the time of Gerald fitz Gerald. The 'towered keep' at Lea might therefore have been built on the remains of an earlier stone keep or somehow incorporated into an earlier building. Interestingly, the dimensions of Lea without its towers are similar to those of the near square keep at Maynooth (25.9 by 21.8m and 22.6 by 19.4m respectively). She speculates that the round corner towers were an addition by Marshal when it came into his possession. The addition of a round corner tower to an existing keep, while unusual, was not unheard of; the original square south-east corner turret (rather than tower) of the great keep at Rochester was replaced by a round one after the latter collapsed having been undermined during a protracted siege in 1215.

[126] Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', p. 129.

[127] McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 120; Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', pp 128–9; Kieran O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman castles in Co. Laois', p. 186: O'Conor suggests that this gate house (described as a fore-building by McNeill) was a later domestic building.

complex not protected by the river. It is possible that the outer ward was a later addition, which is often thought to coincide with a 1297 reference to building works at the castle.[128] This outer ward was accessed through a substantial twin-towered three-storey gatehouse that was subject to serious alterations when it was blocked and converted into a residence in the early modern period and a new gateway was made in the curtain wall alongside it. The course of the outer ward is defended by the remains of a curtain wall that follows a somewhat irregular course and for the most part is quite thin. It also contains several odd angles that might relate to now-absent buildings. There are no mural towers, not even on exposed corners.[129] The fact that the surviving curtain wall deviates from the fosse, is quite insubstantial in places and follows a slightly erratic course suggests that it relates to a later stage in the site's development. There is also what appears to be a subsidiary enclosure on the north-east side of the outer ward, which was apparently never enclosed by a stone wall.[130] This would seem to follow the course of the slightly larger original outer ward, protected by a fosse, that was for some reason later truncated. The surviving outer defences at Lea are the most complete of any of the 'towered keeps' and suggest the extent to which they might have existed at the others. At Ferns Castle, in contrast, despite the size of the keep and historical references to its outer defences, no visible remains of them survive.

Ferns Castle

The most impressive and by far the largest of this type of castle is at Ferns, Co. Wexford. In order to understand the development and chronology of Ferns Castle and how these are reflected in its extant remains, it is useful to consider something of its less-than-peaceful history. It also might go some way towards explaining why there is such confusion over the dating of various features and how the castle was arranged internally.

The earliest potential castle at Ferns was Diarmaid Mac Murchada's 'stone house'. Both it and his 'long fort' are recorded in the Annals of Inisfallen as being

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[128] Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', pp 128–9; O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman castles in Co. Laois', p. 186: O'Conor suggests that the historical grounds by which the twin-towered gate house at Lea has been assigned to the late thirteenth century are 'rather flimsy', although he does not elaborate.

[129] McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 120; Simpson, 'The early Geraldine castles of Ireland', pp 128–9.

[130] O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman castles in Co. Laois', p. 186.

destroyed in 1166.[131] Here, though, we can easily fall into a semantic debate over what exactly defines a castle.[132] Ferns was the historic capital of the Uí Chennselaig dynasty and would have been an appropriate place for Diarmaid to build his 'stone house' either for its defensive value (if it was indeed a castle-type building) or as a display of wealth and sophistication or both. Diarmaid was familiar with Wales where he had many connections that he would later famously exploit. It is probable that he would have been in Wales on more than one occasion, when he could hardly have missed the stone castles of the Anglo-Norman marcher lords and indeed those beginning to be built by the Welsh princes. He might well have travelled further afield, to England and France as he would later do after his expulsion from Ireland. His stone house could well have been inspired by these marcher castles or perhaps by native Welsh imitations. Whatever form it took, it was considered to be of enough importance that its destruction warranted mention in the Irish annals. This was usually reserved for churches or forts (dúns and ráths) or, on a few occasions, towns. Due to the importance of Ferns as a dynastic capital, it is probable that a dún or ráth was already in existence before Diarmaid built his 'stone house'. This might be the *longfort* described as being destroyed at the same time. Excavations carried out by Sweetman at Ferns in the 1970s found a deep layer of boulder clay under the southern end of the castle.[133] If there is no natural reason for this deposit of boulder clay it might have been a raised area or platform or levelled earthen embankments relating to an earlier Uí Chennselaig fortress or the remains of a subsequent Anglo-Norman motte or ringwork castle. A small section of rock-cut ditch, both narrow and shallow, found during excavations could indicate an earlier phase in the site's development as it is not connected with the much larger fosse that surrounds the stone castle or it could be that this ditch had a later utilitarian function in whatever complex of buildings (now gone) was associated with the castle. The stone from the larger fosse was used as building material for the existing castle.

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[131] *AI*, 1166.

[132] Tadhg O'Keeffe and Margaret Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*, Co. Wexford' in John R. Kenyon and Kieran O'Conor (eds), *The medieval castle in Ireland and Wales* (Dublin, 2003), p. 135.

[133] O'Keeffe and Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*', p. 135.

This would indicate that the fosse and the earliest phases of the existing castle's construction were part of the same building process.[134]

In 1177 William fitz Audelin was granted the manor and fortress at Ferns by Henry II. In November of the same year, Fitz Audelin, then acting as procurator or justiciar, seized the castle of Wicklow from the sons of Maurice fitz Gerald; William, Gerald and Alexander.[135] In recompense, he granted them possession of Ferns. They soon began building a castle there but this was quickly destroyed (possibly before its completion) by Walter 'the German', the then-governor of Wexford and a nephew of Fitz Audelin.[136] That this first Anglo-Norman castle at Ferns could be built and subsequently 'razed to the ground' so quickly suggests that it was an earth-and-timber castle, probably a motte and bailey or ringwork, although the 'stone house' of Diarmaid mac Murchada or what remained of it might well have provided a ready source of material for masonry.[137]

By 1192 Marshal was in possession of Ferns, the then-capital of the lordship of Leinster. Marshal's later dispute with the bishop of Ferns had much to do with the sitting of his castle and the development of the associated manor at the expense of church land. For political reasons it was important that neither the Uí Chennselaig or for that matter his own vassals could exert control over the bishop which made it necessary for his own castle to dominate the Episcopal see. The question of when the building of the stone castle that currently stands commenced is problematic. Grattan Flood believed that the present surviving structure was built or begun by William Marshal in 1199 and finished by his son William the younger in 1225, although dates as late as the mid-thirteenth century for the origins of the existing buildings have been suggested.[138] There was a castle there by 1226, however, and that was complete enough to be given

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[134] David Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Ferns Castle', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, lxxix (1979), p. 224.

[135] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 171.

[136] William H. Grattan Flood, *History of Enniscorthy* (Enniscorthy, 1898), p. 225; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 171.

[137] Colfer, *Wexford castles*, p. 60; O'Keeffe and Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*', p. 135; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 171: Giraldus does not tell what year this occurred but, in the context of the account, it would suggest a date in the late 1170s or early 1180s.

[138] William H. Grattan Flood, *History of the diocese of Ferns* (Waterford, 1916), p. 33, O'Keeffe, *Medieval Irish buildings*, p. 234: O'Keeffe suggests that Ferns was built just after the mid-century point by William de Valance, the half-brother of Henry III.

to the bishop of Ferns, John St John, by William Marshal the younger to use as a residence. This seems to have been an arrangement that lasted until 1366, with Ferns Castle fulfilling the function of an episcopal palace.[139] As there were also constables (at times the resident bishop doubled as constable), sometimes of the De Valences and sometimes of the crown, present during the same period, there might have been a substantial range of buildings in a larger castle complex in order to cater for the episcopal, manorial and to some extent military administration simultaneously operating there.[140]

After the partition of Leinster following the death of the last of William Marshal's sons, Ferns, between 1250 and 1330, was held by the absentee De Valances through their constables. A resurgent threat from the Irish of Leinster led to a drastic decline in the productivity and population of the Ferns manor and the colony as a whole. The castle was then continually fought over with a resurgent Irish of Leinster who burned it in 1331. Towards the end the 1350s, they are reported to have destroyed its walls and bridge. This could refer to the castle's drawbridge but, because the castle was soon in use again, it seems more likely to refer to some of the outer defences of the castle rather than the keep itself.[141] The Mac Murchadas took the castle in 1370 and this time they managed to retain possession of it until 1536 when Lord Deputy Grey arrived with his forces equipped with (for the first time at Ferns, it seems) cannon and the garrison quickly surrendered. Grey described Ferns Castle in 1536 as being 'one of the ancientest and strongest castles within this land' and three years later his successor, while seeking a much-strengthened garrison, described the castle as being in 'sore decay'.[142] It remained in crown hands until in 1642 when Sir Charles Coote decided that the castle was not capable of holding out against confederate forces. He destroyed the castle's outworks and blew up a portion of the keep rather than have it fall intact into enemy hands. The castle (or what remained of it) was still occupied in 1649 by a Confederate garrison, however, which surrendered on 28 September of that year to Cromwell's forces under the command of Col. Reynolds.[143] The castle was granted in

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[139] Grattan Flood, *History of Enniscorthy*, p. 226.

[140] Grattan Flood, *History of the diocese of Ferns*, p. 33.

[141] Colfer, *Wexford castles*, p. 66: Bishop Charnell was subsequently appointed constable of the castle.

[142] Grattan Flood, *History of Enniscorthy*, p. 229.

[143] Ibid.; this must be one of the very few castles blown up prior to Cromwell's arrival in Ireland, if popular history is to be believed.

1669 to an Arthur Parsons, presumably to be used as a residence, and in 1773 it came into the possession of the Donovan family, who would own it until it became a national monument in the 1970s. Richard Donovan converted the chapel into an Orange lodge in 1790.[144] The castle was considered to be in a fine state of preservation until the 1860s when it began to deteriorate (perhaps it had become vacant). In 1865 a large portion of it collapsed and, according to Grattan Flood, writing in the 1890s, what remained was nearly destroyed by vandalism or, as he rather elegantly put it, 'at length vandalism and the gnawing tooth of Time has accomplished the practical destruction of this splendid castle.'[145]

Ferns Castle was a large, irregular but roughly rectangular building with four round corner towers with an internal area of almost 20m by 18m.[146] It was surrounded by a deep rock-cut fosse, which has been excavated on two sides. There would also have been an outer series of defences, now known only from historical references (see above) and it seems to be the case that some of these at least were joined to the castle as indicated by the scarring where an external wall was joined to the south-east tower, where it meets the eastern wall of the castle. What remains today are two of the original four corner towers, one of which is largely intact. It had two storeys over its basement. There are also three side walls of which two are in relatively good condition and still three storeys high. The south-east tower is in a well-preserved state and contains a very fine chapel.[147] The partially preserved south-west tower is intact up to its crenellations for about one third of its circumference, the rest of the tower having collapsed leaving this dramatic shard. Those crenellations that survive are in very good condition (and were so prior to conservation works) and are of a late medieval date, having replaced

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[144] Ibid., p. 229; Grattan Flood, *History of the diocese of Ferns*, p. 33.

[145] Grattan Flood, *History of Enniscorthy*, p. 229; *History of the diocese of Ferns*, p. 33; Ferns may have come into the possession of the Donovans as early as 1694.

[146] Sweetman, *Medieval castles of Ireland*, p. 78; O'Keeffe and Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*', p. 137: O'Keeffe and Coughlan suggest that it was trapezoidal. This depends on where the completely destroyed north-west tower was located. The distinction between trapezoidal and irregular is probably of little relevance, as either would have been adaptations to the site rather than a pre-conceived plan. For many, a trapezoidal plan would be considered irregular and the east wall is in itself irregular with a slight step back where there is a minor change in direction. They also point out that the south end of the castle had a ground level close to two metres higher than on the slightly narrower northern side.

[147] O'Keeffe and Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*', p. 136.

earlier ones. Curiously, the cellar of this tower, apart from the roof, was cut out of the bedrock.[148]

The size of Ferns has often confused classification. It is larger than the other 'towered keeps' –Carlow, Lea and Terryglass – yet its design is unlikely to be unconnected. The size of the internal area and its irregular shape raise the possibility that it was not a single roofed-over space but had rooms arranged around a central light well.[149] This light well or very small courtyard would have served the same purpose as a cross-wall for supporting floors as well as reducing the area needed to be roofed over. One of the problems with this light well idea is that although Ferns is large for a single keep, the insertion of a light well, with walls substantial enough to support floors on four sides, would have seriously reduced the sizes of the rooms within the castle, so much so that they could not have served the same purposes as those in other contemporary keeps. O'Keeffe and Coughlan suggest that 'the building is simply not big enough to possess both a central well and comfortable rooms on four sides of it'.[150] They go on to suggest that above a ground-floor stone cross-wall there may have been an arcuated continuation of it dividing the building or perhaps a combination of stone piers (or a central pier) and timber walls, which would have supported the floors and roof. One problem with this and an east–west cross-wall is the location of a fireplace in the east wall where, or close to where, such a division would be most likely to join the east wall (at a point where it would divide the keep into two roughly equal halves). Such a longitudinal east–west wall, however, need not necessarily be central. O'Keeffe and Coughlan point out that a north–south partition, or perhaps two, might also have been possible.[151]

The difficulty with these suggestions stems from the fact that the entire interior of the castle, including the cross-wall or any evidence for it, was destroyed before archaeological excavations took place. The size of the keep required some internal supports for floors and the roof which otherwise would not have been capable of spanning the internal space. This division or divisions was likely to have been of stone, although the use of timber alone for this purpose might have been possible, if

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[148] Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Ferns Castle', p. 220; O'Keeffe and Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*, Co. Wexford', p. 136.

[149] O'Keeffe, *Medieval Irish buildings*, p. 234.

[150] O'Keeffe and Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*', p. 137.

[151] Ibid., pp 137–8.

unlikely.[152] Sweetman, however, suggests that the repeated references to Ferns having been burnt indicates that the castle's internal structure was timber.[153] Changes in window levels in the east wall show that the differing floor level between the north and east sides within the keep continued up through the floors of the keep.[154] This could suggest that there was a cross-wall running from east to west with different floor levels on either side. The changes in window levels in the east wall would suggest that this cross-wall, in some form, would have continued up to roof level. This would have been required to support both floors and roof. The importance of the difference in floor levels might be somewhat exaggerated and if rooms were aligned north–south might only have required a raised platform at the southern end.

The chapel at Ferns is perhaps the best preserved in Ireland and is of remarkably fine workmanship. It is on the first floor of the south-east tower, where it was accessed directly from the keep. Through a smaller doorway it also had direct access to a spiral staircase that rose from the ground floor to parapet level, linking all three storeys of the tower. The ground floor of the tower is dome-vaulted, the first-floor room (the chapel) is rib-vaulted, while the top storey is groin-vaulted. It is probable that the vaulting is original. The chapel has an altar in an enlarged east-window niche. There is an east–west alignment within the chapel, with a west-facing window directly opposite the altar and a south-facing window at a right angle to this central axis. The vault's ribs are aligned the same way. There is a sedilia in the wall between the altar niche and the south-facing window.[155]

As mentioned above, dating the castle at Ferns is fraught with difficulties. The account of Mac Murchada's 'stone house' at Ferns in 1166 (when it was destroyed rather than built) might well be the earliest record of a castle in Ireland. The fact that it was stone is significant for the later incarnations of the castle at Ferns, as the majority of the early Anglo-Norman castles in Ireland were originally of earth and timber (either mottes or ringworks).[156] Many of the most significant early Anglo-Norman stone castles replaced earlier earth-and-timber castles, which they were invariably built over,

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[152] Ibid., p. 137.

[153] Sweetman, *Medieval castles of Ireland*, p. 78.

[154] Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Ferns Castle', p. 220.

[155] O'Keeffe and Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*', pp 138–40.

[156] Kieran O'Conor, 'Castle studies in Ireland: the way forward', *Château Gaillard: études de castellogie medieval*, xxiii (2008), p. 335.

Kilkenny, Maynooth and Trim being some examples.[157] In Giraldus Cambrensis's account, where he informs us that the sons of Maurice fitz Gerald quickly built a castle at Ferns, it could be, as suggested above, that this was a very early stone castle.

With regard to the surviving remains of Ferns Castle, working out the chronology of and dating various stages in its construction have been hindered by a paucity of written evidence relating to the castle's early decades and to who built or rather rebuilt it. Instead, comparative analysis of its architectural details has had to be relied upon. Leask was careful not to assign a specific date to the building, noting the above-mentioned lack of written evidence. He points out there was an established castle and manor there when it was part of the dowry of the widow of William Marshal the younger, Johanna, in 1232. He also points out that the windows of the keep and the architecture of the chapel are more likely to date from the mid-thirteenth century.[158] O'Keeffe and Coughlan suggest that early references to a castle at Ferns *c.*1224 and 1232 do refer to a stone castle although not necessarily the same one that stands today.[159] Sweetman suggested a date for Ferns in the early thirteenth century based on the similarity in design with Carlow and Lea and the fact that the castle was considered important in the 1220s. He also believed those features – the trefoil-arched windows and cross-loops –attributed to the mid-thirteenth century by Leask and others could be the result of later alterations to the fabric of the castle, something few medieval buildings escaped, or that they may in fact be slightly earlier than generally assumed, being similar to those in the gatehouse and curtain walls built by Marshal at Chepstow.[160] Here, the problem has been complicated by restoration work carried out around windows and fireplaces in particular. It is also worth noting that a small window low down in the south-west tower (opening high up into the ground floor) is very similar to those providing light into the ground floor at Maynooth Castle, which could date from the very end of the twelfth century. Adding to the difficulty of establishing a

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[157] Terry Barry, 'The study of medieval Irish castles: a bibliographic survey', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, cviii C (2008), p. 121.

[158] Leask, *Irish castles*, p. 48.

[159] O'Keeffe and Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*', p. 136.

[160] Sweetman, *Medieval castles of Ireland*, p. 78; Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Ferns Castle', p. 240; O'Keeffe and Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*', p. 145: O'Keeffe and Coughlan suggest that the location of the windows makes them likely to be original. This, given conventional dating, would suggest a mid-thirteenth-century date.

date for building commencing is the fact that there seems to have been several phases in construction judging from changes in masonry styles. This appears in stratified layers clearly visible on the external walls, although it is difficult to identify internally.[161]

The chapel, too, is important in determining a date for Ferns Castle. Some of its features are more commonly found in buildings of the mid- to late thirteenth century (and into the fourteenth century and beyond in an Irish context), but can also be found in much earlier settings. The trefoil arch over the sedilia (which is actually closer to a triangle) had a long usage in the thirteenth century and early examples can be found in New Ross from early in that century.[162] The capital on the arch over the altar niche is the same type as used on an early thirteenth-century De Burgo tomb as Athassel, Co. Limerick.[163] This type of capital continued to be used for at least the next century, as at St Francis' Abbey, Kilkenny. Some of the decorative terminal mouldings were in use at New Ross in the early thirteenth century (prior to 1220), but were still being used in the fourteenth century in St Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny.[164] The vaulting in the chapel could be consistent with a late thirteenth-century date when it was common, but there are examples at Dunbrody Abbey, Co. Wexford, that are similar and which date from the mid-thirteenth century, while there are others at Duiske Abbey, Graiguenamanagh, Co. Kilkenny, which might be earlier.[165] There are also parallels with those at Waterford Cathedral and Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, that are also early thirteenth century.[166] It seems likely that Ferns Castle was finished in stages, perhaps over decades, and periodically altered to suit the changing needs and tastes of Marshal's successors.

Wexford Castle

Despite being completely destroyed in the early eighteenth century to be replaced by a military barracks, Wexford Castle warrants inclusion here because it also seems to have been a 'towered keep' built by William Marshal. The first incarnation of Wexford

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[161] O'Keeffe and Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*', p. 145; Sweetman, *Medieval castles of Ireland*, p. 81.

[162] O'Keeffe and Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*', p. 146.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid.

[165] John Bradley, Conleth Manning, D. Newman Johnson, 'Excavations at Duiske Abbey, Graiguenamanagh, Co. Kilkenny', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, lxxxi C (1981), pp 397–8.

[166] O'Keeffe and Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*', p. 146.

Castle was probably an earth-and-timber fortification likely to have been built by Strongbow in 1172 on Henry II's orders.[167] It was located at the south-east end of the Hiberno-Norse town, just outside its walls on a low natural mound on the water's edge (land reclamation work in the nineteenth century moved the water further from the site).[168] At some point in the 1200s, William Marshal probably began to build a stone keep, replacing the original earth-and-timber castle.[169] Based on historical descriptions and one illustration, Wexford Castle would seem to have been a 'towered keep'. In a description from 1324, the castle, then in need of repair, was a 'stone castle in which there are four towers'.[170] An illustration on a mid-seventeenth-century map, although tiny and lacking in detail, appears to show the castle, adjacent to the town walls, with four towers with conical roofs.[171]

Kildare Castle

One of Marshal's seigniorial castles was Kildare which also served as an important administrative centre. As at Kilkenny and Ferns this was also an Episcopal seat. It was probably for this rather than simply strategic reasons that Strongbow initially chose to build a castle here. There was likely to initially have been an earth and timber castle here, built by Strongbow, which was then replaced by one of stone in Marshal's time. We can be fairly confident that this took the form of a 'towered keep'. An inquisition held in 1331 on the death of Richard fitz Thomas fitz Gerald, earl of Kildare describes a castle with four towers or turrets.[172]This castle was completely destroyed in the 1580s by Queen Elizabeth's officials. A much altered tower-house now stands on the site of the original castle or perhaps in close proximity to it. The tower's date of construction is not known and could possibly post-date the destruction of the 'towered keep'.[173]

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[167] Orpen, *Normans*, i, 373.

[168] Colfer, *Wexford castles*, p. 51

[169] Ibid.

[170] Philip Herbert Hore, *History of the town and county of Wexford* (6 vols, London, 1911), v, 104; Colfer, *Wexford castles*, p. 52.

[171] Colfer, *Wexford castles*, p. 53.

[172] Gearóid Mac Niocaill (ed.), *The Red Book of the earls of Kildare* (Dublin, 1964), p. 101.

[173] Mike Salter, *The castles of Leinster* (Malvern, 2004), p. 49.

Religious houses

*Tintern Abbey (*Tintern de Voto*), Co. Wexford*

The first religious house to be founded by Marshal in Leinster was Tintern Abbey in Co. Wexford. The story attached to its founding begins before he ever set foot in Ireland. On what was Marshal's first crossing to Ireland from Wales, possibly accompanied by his wife Isabella, his ship was caught up in a dangerous storm and, with shipwreck seeming imminent, he vowed that should they survive the voyage he would establish a monastery wherever the ship reached a safe harbour. The ship in due course arrived safely at Bannow Bay on the Wexford coast (where the Anglo-Normans had arrived in 1169). A group of Cistercian monks were soon after brought over from Tintern in Monmouthshire and it was probably they who selected the specific site for the monastery. This was on the western shore of the bay at a short distance upstream from where a fast-flowing river enters the tidal estuary. Although the abbey was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, it was always known as Tintern Minor or *Tintern de Voto* (Tintern of the Vow).[174] A John Torrell was Tintern's first abbot.[175]

As a result of the curious way in which the general location was chosen by Marshal, Tintern Abbey was only 8km from the already established Dunbrody Abbey, then the most important Cistercian foundation in Wexford. This was in breach of a long-standing Cistercian statute that stated that no monastery should be built within ten Burgundian leagues (*c*.60km) of another Cistercian monastery. Despite their proximity the estates of the two abbeys were separated from each other by a narrow strip of territory.[176] This buffer was probably intended to avoid conflict between the two communities of Cistercians. Due to the complex religious politics involved, it is likely that first bishop, Felix Ua Duib Shláine (O'Dullany), and then Bishop Hugh le Rous of Ossory (1202–18), who had a close relationship with Marshal, played a prominent role

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[174] Aubrey Gwynn and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses: Ireland* (Dublin, 1970 repr. 1988), p. 142; Billy Colfer, 'Tintern Abbey' in Kevin Whelan (ed.), *Tintern Abbey, County Wexford: Cistercians and Colcloughs: eight centuries of occupation* (Saltmills, 1990), p. 5; Ann Lynch, *Tintern Abbey, Co. Wexford: Cistercians and Colcloughs: excavations, 1982–2007* (Dublin, 2010), pp 1, 3.

[175] Colfer, 'Tintern Abbey', p. 5.

[176] Lynch, *Tintern Abbey*, p. 176; Colfer, 'Tintern Abbey', p. 6.

in Tintern's development.[177] Marshal initially endowed Tintern with thirty carucates of land (*c*.3,600 hectares).[178] This grant was contained in a will of Marshal's that was confirmed by King John in 1200, but his actual charter probably dates from 1207–13.[179] This discrepancy in dates seems to be related to the fact that much of the land involved had belonged to Hervey de Montmorency who died without issue in 1205.[180] Long before this, in 1179 De Montmorency had joined a Benedictine community at Canterbury, abandoning all his possessions.[181] It seems that Marshal had come into possession of De Montmorency's estates before 1205 but had to wait for his death to issue a charter.[182]

It seems likely that, as at many Cistercian foundations, temporary wooden structures preceded the stone buildings at Tintern.[183] This would have allowed the monks to live according to the rules of their order while work on the permanent buildings was ongoing. Excavations at Tintern have found no evidence for any of these early structures but they were probably located close to what would have been the construction site of the permanent stone monastery.[184]

The surviving elements of the 49m-long abbey church consist of the nave, crossing tower, chancel and part of the south transept.[185] These were generally thought

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[177] Miriam Clyne, 'Kells and its priory' in Bradley et al., *William Marshal and Ireland* (Dublin, 2017), p. 86.

[178] Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*, p. 142 (Colfer and Lynch both convert 30 carucates to 9,000 acres).

[179] Lynch, *Tintern Abbey*, pp 186–7; Billy Colfer, 'Monastery and manor: William Marshal's settlement strategy in Co. Wexford' in Bradley et al., *William Marshal and Ireland* (Dublin, 2017), p. 249; Eric St John Brooks, *Knights' fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny: 13th – 15th century* (Dublin, 1950), p. 11.

[180] Colfer, 'Tintern Abbey', p. 6.

[181] Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 189; F.X. Martin, 'Historical notes' in *Giraldus Cambrensis, Expugnatio Hibernica: the conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, ed. A.B. Scott and F.X. Martin (Dublin, 1978), pp 293, 338.

[182] Billy Colfer, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford, 1169–1400* (Wexford, 2002), p. 185.

[183] Colfer, 'Tintern Abbey', p. 9.

[184] Lynch, *Tintern Abbey*, p. 177.

[185] Ann Lynch, 'Summary of archaeological excavations, 1982–1994' in Kevin Whelan (ed.), *Tintern Abbey, County Wexford: Cistercians and Colcloughs: eight centuries of occupation* (Saltmills, 1990), p. 16; Colfer, 'Tintern Abbey', p. 9.

to date from *c*.1300 when the original church was replaced.[186] Excavations carried out by Lynch in the 1980s found earlier foundations underlying the south transept that could belong to the early thirteenth-century church. The area where the north transept and north aisle would have been located was also investigated, but no trace of these or earlier foundations were found. It seems that these were removed when major alterations were made to the abbey in the 1440s. Any foundations that remained were destroyed when further reorganisation of the abbey by the Colcloughs resulted in the ground level being lowered along the northern side of the church.[187] Further restoration work uncovered the church's west doorway, whose decorations included a filleted roll. This, along with descriptions of a decorated capital (now missing), suggest an early thirteenth-century date for the church's nave. There was also a fragment of dog-tooth decorated Dundry Stone found near this doorway, and this would support an early date. The archway leading into the south transept as well as the rib-vaulting of the chapels within it are also suggestive of a thirteenth-century date.[188] This would indicate that the original church was not destroyed completely but rather modified and incorporated into later buildings.

Cistercian monasteries were built to prescribed conventions. Their churches almost always had an aisled nave and presbytery with north and south transepts. The south transept was originally divided into three chapels by screens, as would have been the case in the missing north transept. Cistercian churches were also usually quite austere and lacking in ornamentation. This was the case at Tintern where the nave has three bays with un-moulded arches on rectangular piers with chamfered corners. The bay at the west end on the northern side was blocked up at an early stage. The nave's aisles and clerestory are missing. Some of the chancel's lancet windows survive, while others were blocked and had mullioned Tudor windows inserted.[189]

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[186] Roger Stalley, *The Cistercian monasteries of Ireland* (London & New Haven, 1987), pp 45, 249; Lynch, 'Summary of archaeological excavations', p. 16; Colfer, 'Tintern Abbey', p. 9.

[187] Lynch, 'Summary of archaeological excavations', p. 16.

[188] Lynch, *Tintern Abbey*, p. 178: Dundry Stone is a yellow sandstone that was brought to Ireland from quarries near Bristol. It was used for detailed work. Both Tintern and Duiske used large quantities in their construction.

[189] Lynch, *Tintern Abbey*, p. 178. Colfer, 'Tintern Abbey', p. 9.

Cistercian rules forbade crossing towers but this was largely ignored in Ireland, where they became popular.[190] It is likely that the crossing tower at Tintern was planned from the start and it may have formed part of the original thirteenth-century church. In 1447, when renovation works were being carried out by the abbot, a parapet with 'crow-stepped' battlements was added. This was a defensive feature added at a time when the abbey was becoming increasingly exposed to attacks from the MacMurrough Kavanaghs. It had been assumed that the tower was substantially heightened at this time, but an examination of the masonry gives no indication that this was the case. In the sixteenth century the tower became a residential tower house and five storeys were inserted into its fabric and a turret containing a spiral stair was built on to its north-west corner.[191]

Following the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539, Tintern and its lands were first leased to Sir Thomas Wood (sometime before 1551), who in 1562 sold his lease to Anthony Colclough. In 1566 the lease was extended, with instructions to provide a small garrison and fortify the abbey. In 1576 the abbey and its lands were granted to Anthony Colclough and in 1579 he and his family were recorded as living there, although it may have begun to be used as a private residence several years earlier. The Colclough family remained in residence until 1951. It was during this long period of continuous inhabitation (perhaps over four centuries) that the abbey's conventual buildings were gradually removed.[192] The stone from this is said to have been used for building the nearby bridge.[193]

Cistercian monasteries were arranged around a cloister garth with the church usually situated on the northern side. The other three sides were taken up by the remaining conventual building: the infirmary, kitchen, guest house, dormitories, chapter house and scriptorium.[194] At Tintern, the only standing remains of these domestic buildings is an arched gateway, which would have been the main entrance into the cloister. This was later incorporated into a group of outbuildings. In the course of excavations, the original layout of the cloister walkways was revealed. These date from the thirteenth century although they were slightly altered in the fourteenth century.

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[190] Colfer, 'Tintern Abbey', p. 9.

[191] Lynch, *Tintern Abbey, excavations*, p. 179; Colfer, 'Tintern Abbey', p. 12.

[192] Colfer, 'Tintern Abbey', p. 9.

[193] Stalley, *The Cistercian monasteries of Ireland*, p. 249.

[194] Colfer, 'Tintern Abbey', p. 9.

Remains of a collation bay on the northern side of the cloister and the abbot's seat in the church wall facing it were also found. Several fragments of dressed and cut stone were found, which allowed for a conjectural reconstruction of the cloister arcade. This comprised round-headed arches that were borne on double columns with bases and capitals. Based on these features, the arcade is likely to have been built in around 1250–60.[195] Located about 300m to the south-east of the abbey near a crenellated bridge are the ruins of a small church that was probably the Cistercian *capella ante portas*. This was later converted into a mausoleum by the Colclough family, many of whose tombs it still contains.[196]

The nearby lighthouse at Hook Head has long been associated with William Marshal, perhaps because of the story associated with the founding of *Tintern de Voto*. However, investigations carried out at the Hook Tower by Ben Murtagh since the 1990s would suggest a date of construction in the mid-thirteenth century, perhaps at the instigation of Walter Marshal and probably replacing an earlier beacon.[197]

Duiske Abbey, Graiguenamanagh, Co. Kilkenny

It would seem likely that shortly after Marshal brought over monks from Tintern in Monmouthshire to establish *Tintern de Voto*, a second group of Cistercians under his patronage, this time from Stanley in Wiltshire, also arrived in Leinster. They are first recorded as being at Loughmerans (two kilometres north of Kilkenny) in 1202 before they moved to Annamult (ten kilometres south of Kilkenny), where they were in 1204. Both locations were on the River Nore. That same year (1204), it seems that they made their final move to Duiske.[198] It is not clear why the first two locations were deemed unsuitable, but perhaps in the case of Annamult it was its proximity to the already-established Jerpoint Abbey (*c*.1166–70), which was a little under five kilometres away. This would have gone against a Cistercian statute that monasteries should not be founded within ten Burgundian leagues of one another.[199] That being said, Duiske Abbey was still remarkably close (within ten kilometres) of the Cistercian house of Killenny (established *c*.1165 by Diarmuid Ua Riain, king of Idrone, but becoming a

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[195] Lynch, 'Summary of archaeological excavations', p. 18.

[196] Stalley, *The Cistercian monasteries of Ireland*, p. 249; Lynch, *Tintern Abbey*, pp 1–2.

[197] Murtagh, 'William Marshal's great tower at Pembroke, Wales', pp 150–3.

[198] Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*, pp 127, 139.

[199] Stalley, *The Cistercian monasteries of Ireland*, p. 34.

daughter house of Jerpoint in 1185), and still only fourteen kilometres from Jerpoint itself.[200]

The first reference to the abbey at Duiske is from 1204 when its cemetery was consecrated in the presence of Bishop Hugh le Rous of Ossory, who was an intimate of William Marshal. It seems likely that the bishop's support was important to Marshal in order to help smooth the progress of the monastery's establishment.[201] The dedication of the cemetery is clear evidence that the wandering Stanley monks had finally settled on a location and it was probably at this time that work on the first buildings at Duiske began. It would take at least another thirty years before the abbey was complete.[202]

William Marshal's foundation charter for Duiske (witnessed by Bishop le Rous and the bishop of Ferns) can date from no earlier than 1207.[203] It seems likely therefore that this was a confirmation of earlier grants made (perhaps informally) before 1204 or as early as 1200.[204] Marshal's 1207 charter, made with the agreement of his wife Isabella, granted the monks considerable lands (approximately 6,000 hectares) in Co. Kilkenny; at Annamult, Tulachany (near Cuffesgrange) and Duiske itself. They were also granted one burgage plot in Kilkenny, one in Wexford and one on the Isle (probably Inis Teimle now Greatisland, Co. Wexford). He also conceded to allow any future grants made by 'his sworn men' to the monks of Duiske. He granted them 'a variety of exemptions from his jurisdiction', but the only one specified was that they and their servants be exempt from his forest law 'reserving only the right of capital

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[200] Bradley et al., 'Excavations at Duiske Abbey', p. 398; Cóilín Ó Drisceoil, '*PonsNovus, villa Williemi Marescalli*: New Ross, a town of William Marshal' in Bradley et al., *William Marshal and Ireland* (Dublin, 2017), p. 279.

[201] Clyne, 'Kells and its priory', p. 86; John Bradley and Ben Murtagh, 'Willian Marshal's charter to Kilkenny, 1207: background, dating and witnesses' in Bradley et al., *William Marshal and Ireland* (Dublin, 2017), p. 226; Bradley et al., 'Excavations at Duiske Abbey', p. 398.

[202] Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*, p. 133; John Joyce, *Graiguenamanagh: a town and its people* (2nd ed. Graiguenamanagh, 2001), p. 9; Stalley, *The Cistercian monasteries of Ireland*, p. 100: Stalley states that the style of the capitals in the presbytery and the church suggest it was completed *c.*1235–40.

[203] Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*, p. 133.

[204] Bradley and Murtagh, 'William Marshal's charter to Kilkenny, 1207', p. 221.

justice'. The final stipulation of the charter was that he would impose a fine of ten marks on any of his men who 'trouble the abbey in its lands'.[205]

The remains of Duiske Abbey are situated in the centre of the modern town of Graiguenamanagh in the Barrow Valley. It was built on a slightly elevated site overlooking a bend on Barrow where it is joined by the River Duiske, a fast-flowing tributary. There may have been a village nearby in the medieval period but the current town probably dates from the sixteenth century and the dissolution of the monastery. The surviving elements of the abbey consist of its church and the fragmentary remains of its claustral buildings, which are spread through several back gardens and in some cases these are incorporated into modern buildings.[206] Among these is a very fine triple archway that served as the entrance into the vestibule of the chapter house as well as the remains of the refectory pulpit.[207] Duiske is one of the few Cistercian abbeys in Ireland where a complete plan can be worked out.[208] The monastery was built to a standardised Cistercian pattern with its principal buildings surrounding an enclosed rectangular courtyard or cloister garth.[209] The large extent of this cloister garth (*c.*37m square) was matched only by that of Dunbrody.[210] The church was built on the north side of this central courtyard. The sacristy, the treasury and the chapter-house/scriptorium occupied the east side.[211] The south side consisted of the kitchens and the refectory. The west side was taken up with stores and workshops, which would have had a dormitory for lay brothers above them. Beside the Barrow and detached from the other buildings were the infirmary and the abbot's quarters, which were close to a water gate. A wall would have surrounded the whole monastery precinct. The main entrance was through a gatehouse

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[205] Bradley et al., 'Excavations at Duiske Abbey', p. 398; David Crouch (ed.), *The acts and letters of the Marshal family: marshals of England and earls of Pembroke, 1145–1248* (London, 2015), pp 89, 235–6, 238–9, 457: the original grant to the Cistercian monks at Duiske was confirmed in 1222 or 1223 by William Marshal the younger. He again refers to his father's founding of Duiske in a letter confirming the union of Killenny with Duiske in 1228. In 1246 or 1248, Marshal's daughter Matilda (by then Countess Bigod), also in a letter confirming the union of Killenny and Duiske, refers to her father's founding of Duiske.

[206] Bradley et al., 'Excavations at Duiske Abbey', p. 397.

[207] Stalley, *The Cistercian monasteries of Ireland*, p. 245.

[208] Ibid., p. 53.

[209] Joyce, *Graiguenamanagh*, p. 7.

[210] Stalley, *The Cistercian monasteries of Ireland*, p. 245.

[211] Joyce, *Graiguenamanagh*, p. 7.

on the western side of the monastic enclosure, which might also have been used as guest quarters.[212]

The church in its original form consisted of an aisled seven-bay nave with a choir, transepts with three side chapels in each arm, and a presbytery with slender rib-vaulting although only the elegant springers remain. The nave's eastern half and much of the crossing were destroyed when its octagonal crossing tower collapsed in 1774. What survived of the church was intact enough that it could be restored for use in the 1970s and early 1980s and its thirteenth-century design is still easily identifiable. The church is an impressive 64.6m in length with a breadth across its transept of 36.5m, which makes it the largest Cistercian church built in Ireland and allows it to be considered comparable to contemporary gothic cathedrals. It is noted for its very fine surviving details (often using Dundry sandstone as at Tintern) and is regarded by many as the finest example of 'Early English' architecture in Ireland.[213]

The Augustinian priory of St John the Evangelist, Kilkenny
It is likely that the first Augustinian house in Kilkenny was founded at some point between *c*.1192 and 1202 by William Marshal. This can be assumed because it was in this period that Bishop Felix Ua Duib Shláine (O'Dullany) granted to Osbert the prior of the hospital of St John all the tithes of the castle of Kilkenny. The reference to the castle in the grant implies a date after reconstruction of Strongbow's earthwork castle had begun *c*.1192, while Bishop Felix died in 1202. How the bishop had acquired this right is a mystery, as it should have been held by Marshal. It may be the case that the bishop was actually confirming a grant previously made by Marshal.[214] It is possible that the Augustinians were in Kilkenny prior to 1189, but the fact that the rights of presentation to the priorship were retained by Marshal and his heirs is strong evidence that he was its founder.[215]

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[212] Ibid., p. 9.

[213] Tadhg O'Keeffe, *Medieval Ireland, an archaeology* (Stroud, 2001), p. 146; Bradley et al., 'Excavations at Duiske Abbey', pp 397–8; Stalley, *The Cistercian monasteries of Ireland*, pp 34, 245.

[214] John Bradley, 'The priors of St John's Kilkenny', *Old Kilkenny Review*, lvii (2005), p. 64; Bradley and Murtagh, 'Willian Marshal's charter to Kilkenny', p. 219.

[215] John Hogan, *Kilkenny: the ancient city of Ossory, the seat of its kings, the see of its bishops and the site of its cathedral* (Kilkenny, 1884), pp 177–8; John Bradley, 'The precinct of St John's Priory,

The Hospital of St John was initially located near Green's Bridge, on a hill opposite St Canice's Cathedral on the east bank of the River Nore, probably in the vicinity of St Maul's Church. It has been suggested that the location was identical to that of St Maul's, but this is unlikely because St Maul's is a pre-Anglo-Norman church site.[216] This first Augustinian site would have been right at the northern limits of the town. Marshal's residency in Kilkenny from 1207 coincided with a reorganisation and expansion of the town. The town expanded to the north and a new suburb was developed across the Nore on its east bank. The greater part of this new suburb was granted to the Augustinians and it was here to which they relocated.[217] It may have been that Marshal was anxious to have the Augustinians located in a less remote site closer to the castle.[218] This created the new parish of St John's with the priory church also functioning as the parish church. The precinct of the priory comprised nearly two hectares running alongside the burgage plots from Michael Street down to the Nore.[219] When the move took place is not known, but the Augustinians were granted the new site in 1210 or earlier.[220] There were Augustinian canons recorded in the new parish in 1211 and the first mass was said at the high altar of the church in 1212.[221] This date could signify completion of the church or part of it (the church was generally built first), with the rest of the priory buildings and the hospital being built later, some of them perhaps under William Marshal the younger *c*.1220.[222]

The original priory church consisted of an undifferentiated nave and chancel along with a bell tower. It also had two side chapels dedicated to St Nicholas and St

Kilkenny, at the close of the Middle Ages', *Peritia*, xxii–xxiii (2011–12), p. 318; Bradley, 'The priors of St John's Kilkenny', p. 62.

[216] Bradley, 'The precinct of St John's Priory, Kilkenny', p. 318; John Bradley, *Kilkenny: Irish Historic Town Atlas, 10* (Dublin, 2010), p. 10; John Bradley, 'Anglo-Norman Kilkenny' in John Bradley and Michael O'Dwyer (eds) *Kilkenny through the ages: chapters in the history of an Irish city* (Kilkenny, 2009), p. 34; Bradley, 'The priors of St John's Kilkenny', p. 65; Hogan, *Kilkenny*, p. 178: Hogan felt the original site was at St Maul's.

[217] Bradley, 'The precinct of St John's Priory, Kilkenny', p. 318.

[218] Hogan, *Kilkenny*, p. 204.

[219] Bradley, *Kilkenny, Irish Historic Town Atlas No. 10*, p 10; Bradley, 'Anglo-Norman Kilkenny', p. 34.

[220] Crouch (ed.), *The acts and letters of the Marshal family*, p. 127: it can be dated to between 1199 and 1210 and it grants the Hospital of St John Evangelist 'a site at the end of the small bridge'.

[221] Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*, p. 182.

[222] Bradley, 'The precinct of St John's Priory, Kilkenny', p. 318.

Catherine, which may or may not have been part of the original church. The surviving thirteenth-century remains consist of the chancel with a lady chapel built *c*.1280, which was known as 'the lantern of Ireland' due to the continuous run of its elegant windows. The lady chapel is still in use as a parish church. The bell tower collapsed between 28 December 1329 and 4 January 1330, but it was rebuilt in the fifteenth century. There are some small fragmentary remains of claustral buildings to the north-west of the church.[223] Unusually, the cloister was to the north of the church while the churchyard was on the south side, which it still is, although it would have been considerably smaller.[224]

While very little of St John's priory's domestic buildings survive, a study by Bradley of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century rental records allowed for a conjectural reconstruction of the priory's layout and buildings. After the priory's dissolution its various buildings (or parts of them) were leased to different tenants.[225] These leases retained the names of the monastic buildings or their earlier functions. Of the claustral buildings, the chapter house adjoined the north-east side of the church, which had a passage between it and the adjacent building, which may have been the entrance to the cloister. There was a refectory and a kitchen, the refectory sometimes being referred to as 'the vault' while the kitchen was known as 'the great kitchen'. There was a hospital or infirmary (which continued in use until the 1650s), which was located to the south of the claustral buildings close to the river. The west range of the priory's first floor contained the dormitory called variously the Dorter house, Doctor House and Doghter House. There was a vicar of St John's chamber, which was a suite of rooms under the dormitory. The north of the cloister was referred to as Bake House Close. This may have formed a second courtyard. The principal entrance to the Bake House Close was St Michael's gate, sometimes called St Michael's castle, or St Michael's tower. It was described as 'a castle over a gate'. This may have been the primary defended entrance into the priory's enclosed precincts. There was a second enclosure adjoining Bake House Close called Lime-kiln Close. This had an entrance known as the Cart Gate, which also had a castle over it. There was also a porter's lodge here. Beside the cloister there was the prior's stable as well as a Great Barn and a Vicar's Barn. There was also a

[223] Bradley, 'Anglo-Norman Kilkenny', p. 34; Bradley, 'The precinct of St John's Priory, Kilkenny', pp 319, 331.

[224] Bradley, 'The precinct of St John's Priory, Kilkenny', p. 322.

[225] Ibid., p. 317.

Brew House. There were three gardens within the priory precinct, while the Infirmary garden (variously Fermorye, Fermory, Fermery or Firmory) was outside the town wall and some distance from the hospital. There were two orchards associated with the priory.[226]

The hospital of St John the Baptist, Kilkenny

As well as the Augustinian priory of St John the Evangelist, Marshal founded the hospital of John the Baptist in the town for the knights and brothers of St Thomas of Acon, a branch of the Hospitallers, although its location is unknown. All we know of it stems from two confirmation charters, one which dates from between 1234 and 1241 and was issued by Gilbert Marshal, and a second that dates from between 1241 and 1245 and was issued by Walter Marshal. The second is almost identical to the first. These charters are conditional on the Hospitallers housing the poor in Kilkenny as was provided for and planned by William Marshal and his wife Isabella. This would suggest that the hospital was founded *c.*1207 when both Marshal and Isabella were in Leinster. The lack of any later references suggests that it was abandoned after the thirteenth century or it may have become the Hospital of St Mary Magdalene, which is first recorded in 1327.[227]

There were several other religious houses associated with William Marshal that also do not survive. The earliest was a priory of *Frates Cruciferi* or Crutched Friars in New Ross, Co. Wexford, which may have been founded as early as *c.*1195. The priory was destroyed during a dispute with the town's inhabitants in the mid-thirteenth century, and the site was possibly later acquired by the Franciscans.[228] In Wexford town there was a preceptory of the Hospitallers, the priory of SS John and Brigid, which was thought to have been founded by Marshal but is more likely to have been founded by Strongbow, perhaps pre-dating Kilmainham (*c.*1174) by two years. Sometime around 1210, Marshal granted the Hospitallers possession of the town churches of St Michael, St Patrick, St Brigid, St Mary Magdalene and the extramural church of St John.[229] This may explain why he was assumed to be the priory's founder. Marshal was later arbiter

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[226] Ibid., pp 333–41.

[227] Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*, p. 343; Crouch (ed.), *The acts and letters of the Marshal family*, pp 383–4, 438; Bradley, 'Anglo-Norman Kilkenny', p. 37.

[228] Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*, pp 215, 257; Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 209.

[229] Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*, p. 339; Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 170.

in a dispute between the Hospitallers and the bishop of Ferns over these same churches (excluding St Michael's) and favoured the Hospitallers.[230] This could be another factor in the poor relationship between Marshal and the bishop. Marshal is also thought to have founded an Augustinian house at Kilrush in Co. Kildare around 1201–2. This was a cell of Cartmel Priory in Lancashire and was probably a grange or farm rather than a conventual priory.[231]

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[230] Crouch (ed.), *The acts and letters of the Marshal family*, p. 120.

[231] Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*, p. 184; Crouch (ed.), *The acts and letters of the Marshal family*, p. 79.

Summary and conclusions

In order to understand the twelfth- and thirteenth-century lordship of Leinster of William Marshal it is first necessary to understand how it emerged from its predecessor, the provincial kingdom of Leinster. As has been shown in chapter two, from the early eleventh century Leinster's fortunes had become inextricably linked with those of the Uí Chennselaig, the dynasty from which Marshal's wife was descended. Consolidation of the kingdom of Leinster, in the form that would eventually become the lordship of Leinster, began in earnest under Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó of the Uí Chennselaig in the 1030s. In 1042 Diarmaid had become powerful enough to seize the kingship of Leinster from Donnchad Mac Gilla Pátraic of Osraige. Diarmaid had earlier in 1037 usurped control of Waterford from the Munster kings and the town of Wexford had come under control of the Uí Chennselaig even earlier. In 1052 he seized control of Dublin. By the time of his death in 1072 he controlled the north and south Leinster, Osraige as well as the Ostmen towns of Dublin, Wexford and Waterford; in effect this was what would later become the lordship of Leinster.

Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó's death led to a rapid decline in the fortunes of the Uí Chennselaig to the point that they lost the kingship. This decline was halted by Énna Mac Murchada who by 1119 was being recognised as king of Leinster (but not of Dublin or Osraige). His younger brother Diarmaid Mac Murchada succeeded him in 1126 but was deposed within a year by Toirrdalbach Ua Conchobair of Connacht who installed his own son Conchobair as king of Leinster. Diarmaid spent the next ten years doggedly trying to restore Uí Chennselaig prominence in Leinster. Within a few years Diarmaid was king of Leinster again and in the 1130s he successfully subjugated Osraige and recaptured Waterford with the assistance of his allies the, Dublin Ostmen. By the 1140s Diarmaid was firmly in control of Leinster. In the 1150s and 1160s there were a series of wars between Toirrdalbach Ua Conchobair, then his son Ruaidrí against Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn of Cenél nEógain effectively for the high-kingship of Ireland. Diarmaid was not in a position to compete himself and therefore had little choice but to pick a side. Diarmaid initially supported Toirrdalbach but on his death in 1156 he switched his allegiance to Muirchertach. When Muirchertach was killed in 1166 Diarmaid found he was dangerously isolated. Despite sending hostages and submitting to Ruaidrí, the now high-king's allies invaded Leinster forcing Diarmaid into exile.

As we have seen in chapter two, while in exile Diarmaid spent several months seeking support, first from Henry II then among the Anglo-Normans based in south Wales. Diarmaid returned to Leinster in 1167 with a small force of mercenaries and quickly regained the Uí Chennselaig kingdom. A second group of Anglo-Normans, led by Robert fitz Stephen, landed in Wexford in 1169 and Diarmaid's campaign to regain the kingship of Leinster began in earnest with the capture of Wexford. After a few weeks, Diarmaid and his Anglo-Norman mercenaries launched two successive attacks on Osraige but were not able to force Donnchad Mac Gilla Pátraic to submit. These attacks caused Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair to intervene but, rather than expelling Diarmaid again, the high-king gave him free rein in Leinster, effectively recognising him as king of Leinster. Diarmaid then attacked the Uí Fáeláin of north Leinster before turning his attention back to Osraige.

In 1170 another force of Anglo-Normans arrived, led by Maurice fitz Gerald. Diarmaid and his forces marched on Dublin, where its inhabitants submitted to Diarmaid, bringing the town under the control of Uí Chennselaig for the first time since Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó's death. Later that year, two more groups of Anglo-Normans landed, the first led by Raymond le Gros and the second by Strongbow. This was a far more substantial force than any of the earlier arrivals. These forces combined to attack and capture Waterford. Diarmaid soon arrived at Waterford where Eva his daughter married Strongbow. The forces of Diarmaid and Strongbow soon turned their attention to Dublin, which had recently rejected Diarmaid as overlord. Despite an attempt by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair to intercept them Dublin, was captured with ease and the re-conquest of Leinster was complete. Diarmaid would not have long to enjoy his success and was dead within a year.

The unusual arrangement whereby Strongbow became heir to Diarmaid mac Murchada and Domnall Caomhánach would rule the Uí Chennselaig within Leinster is looked at in detail in chapter two. Strongbow's position in Leinster following Diarmaid's death was precarious. He immediately faced a rebellion by some of the Uí Chennselaig and Ascall, who had previously ruled Dublin, had returned with allies from Man and the Orkneys. Ascall's forces were defeated by Miles de Cogan who had been left in charge of the town. Strongbow returned to Dublin but soon found himself besieged by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair. Despite ongoing attempts to negotiate a peace, Strongbow's forces launched a surprise attack on their besiegers which turned into a rout. Soon after, those Uí Cheinnselaig who had been in revolt were also defeated. With

the immediate threat gone, Strongbow based himself in Waterford from where he launched an attack on Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic of Osraige with the aid of Domnall Mór Ua Briain. Strongbow's rule over the entirety of the old kingdom of Leinster was short-lived, for that same year (1171) he surrendered the towns of Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow and Arklow to Henry II as well as renewing his act of fealty for the rest of Leinster, as its lord and not its king. Henry II had arrived in Ireland in 1171 and left in 1172 having received oaths of fealty from most of the Irish kings. After the king left, Strongbow, who had moved his base to Kildare, was involved in more fighting within Leinster, where some of the Irish still refused to recognise him as overlord. In 1173 Strongbow was fighting for Henry II in Normandy and on his return the king returned to him the town of Wexford and the castle of Wicklow as well as giving him custody of Dublin and Waterford. This was the extent of the lordship of Leinster when it was acquired by Marshal.

Once secure in Leinster, Strongbow could turn his attention further afield and quickly began incursions into Munster. He also became increasingly involved in the various power struggles of the Irish kings. This was not without its risks and in 1173 a combined force under Máenmaigi Ua Conchobair andDomnall Mór Ua Briain devastated Osraige and destroyed Strongbow's castle at Kilkenny. In 1174 the Ostmen of Waterford revolted but it was soon put down. That same year Strongbow had to intervene in Meath to put down a revolt against Hugh de Lacy (who was fighting in France) and then had to return soon after to drive out the forces of Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair but not before they had destroyed De Lacy's castle at Trim. In 1175 the forces of Leinster, led by Raymond le Gros, captured Limerick and he was there the following year when word reached him that Strongbow was dead. Le Gros was forced to effectively abandon Limerick as he rushed back to Leinster. Strongbow's death left Leinster dangerously unstable, so much so that his death was kept secret until Le Gros returned. As Isabella de Clare was a minor and now a ward of the crown, William fitz Audelin was appointed governor before Leinster was split in 1177 into three custodies that were held by Fitz Audelin, Robert le Poer and Hugh de Lacy. De Lacy also became justiciar that year, which had a stabilising effect on the colony as a whole. The threat to the integrity of the lordship of Leinster now ceased to be external, instead it came from administrators, justiciars and, after 1185, John lord of Ireland in the form of misappropriation of lands.

The history of the kingdom of Leinster and the first decades of the lordship of Leinster is dominated and shaped by warfare. It was through a series of successful campaigns over many years that Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó was able to first defeat his rivals within Leinster before annexing the towns of the Ostmen and the sometimes independent kingdom of Osraige. When Diarmaid Mac Murchada became king of Leinster in 1126 it would again be war that shaped and dominated his career and was an almost constant feature in Leinster. After losing the kingship almost as soon as he had inherited it, Diarmaid fought constantly to regain it. After losing it a second time, in his old age, he brought in foreign allies to win it back and spent the last years of his life constantly at war. Strongbow, on inheriting the kingdom, was immediately fighting to retain it. Despite the perennial warfare Strongbow and many of his vassals were not only able to begin the construction of castles but they also founded monasteries and even new towns. The development of the manorial system of land division (on which parochial boundaries were based) was also well under way before Strongbow's death.[1] This irreversible process of transforming the former provincial kingdom of Leinster was continued and accelerated with Marshal at the helm particularly during the long periods of relative peace within the lordship.

As we have seen in chapters four and five, William Marshal had a long, varied and remarkably successful political career. His first official act of service for Richard I was in 1189 when he carried the orders for Queen Eleanor's release from house arrest from Fontevrault to Winchester.[2] In 1190 Marshal was appointed one of four co-justiciars who were chosen to assist William de Longchamp, Richard I's chancellor, in the running of government while the king went on crusade.[3] While Richard was absent, Prince John returned to England and began scheming to bring down the chancellor who would eventually be replaced by the archbishop of Rouen. Crouch speculates that De Longchamp viewed Marshal as a flattering courtier and it was for this reason relations between the two were so strained.[4] It would seem to be more likely that De Longchamp, an experienced politician, viewed Marshal's good relationship with John with suspicion. Despite the fact that Marshal and the other co-justiciars were likely complicit in De Longchamp's downfall, he did not support John's plot to usurp Richard. When

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[1] Paul MacCotter, *Medieval Ireland: territorial, political and economic divisions* (Dublin, 2008), p. 29.

[2] Adams, *The history of England*, p. 361.

[3] Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp 76–7.

[4] Ibid., p. 76.

news reached England that Richard had been taken prisoner and John tried to seize the kingdom, Marshal and the archbishop of Rouen were soon besieging Windsor for the king. Marshal was a prudent political player and had an instinct for sensing which way the political winds were blowing. This would be seen again on 7 April 1196 when word reached Marshal that Richard had died the previous day. Marshal decided to support John's claim to be Richard's successor over those of Arthur of Brittany. Arthur may have had a more legitimate claim, but the older and more experienced John had more realistic prospects in the conflict that was bound to follow.

Marshal managed to stay on reasonable terms with John through two wars before they had a major falling out in 1205. John planned to retake land he had lost to the French but Marshal refused to join him. One of the results of this breach was that Marshal was relegated to the political wilderness until 1208. With the exception of one interruption caused by the failed rebellion of William de Braose, Marshal retained John's favour until the king's death in 1216. When the Barons' Revolt began in 1214, Marshal's political career was resurrected. Not only was he leading troops in the field but he was also involved in negotiations with the rebels, which ultimately led to the first Magna Carta. It was Marshal who went to London to inform the rebel leaders that the king had agreed to its terms. Early in 1215, Marshal's eldest son joined the rebels. His motivations for this are unclear but Crouch suggests that it was a ploy by Marshal to keep on good terms with the rebels.[5] Marshal's actions throughout the rest of the war show that there was unlikely to have been any disloyalty involved on his part.

When John died on 18 October 1216 and the 9-year-old Henry III succeeded him, Marshal was forced to undertake his last and most important role, that of regent. The resurection of the Magna Carta by Marshal and Gaula soon after in many ways was a crucial juncture in English history. Without this version and the subsequent versions that were to follow the Magna Carta might well have been forgotten and England's long transition to a constitutional monarchy might never have begun.[6] After defeating the rebels and their French allies at Lincoln, followed by a defeat of the French fleet off Sandwich, the position of the loyalist forces was greatly improved. Peace negotiations soon started and, rather than risk prolonging the war, Marshal agreed to pay an indemnity to the French of six thousand marks and an amnesty was given to the rebel

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[5] Ibid., p. 121.

[6] Asbridge, *The greatest knight*, p. 349.

barons. Marshal's priority was to stabilise the kingdom and get all the various parts of government working again.

The views of antiquarian writers on Marshal's political career and abilities vary greatly but are generally positive. Hanmer was willing to admit that Marshal was a favourite of Richard's who had appointed him 'third governour of the Realme' or co-justiciar and that he was in great favour with Henry III.[7] He chooses to omit Marshal's relationship with John. Cox attests to Marshal's role as a diplomat when he was involved in convincing an exiled Walter de Lacy to return to Meath and a failed attempt to convince Hugh de Lacy to return.[8] He is also aware of Marshal's rise to the position of regent.[9] Ledwich's description of Marshal as 'This excellent nobleman, equally accomplished in the arts of peace and war' suggests his political ability as does his 'absolute regal jurisdiction and prerogative'.[10] Leland is full of praise for Marshal's vigour in running the government for Henry III and his administrative abilities. He also tells us that because of Marshal's vast holdings in Ireland the 'English in Ireland' were sure he would look after their interests, but because of his station and character he would not condone any irregularities.[11] Leland later adds that Marshal's death 'deprived Ireland of a useful and powerful patron: from this period at least, her disorders seem to have revived'.[12] He also tells us that it was Marshal who sent a copy of Magna Carta to Ireland for the benefit of its faithful subjects.[13]

Marshal was already an established military figure long before his connection with Leinster began. It was probably in the midst of Henry II's final war with his disloyal sons that Marshal was promised Isabella de Clare as a wife. Marshal would later play a prominent role in Richard's war against John – when he tried to seize the kingdom in the king's absence – as well as Richard's perennial wars with Philip, king of France. After Richard died in 1196, Marshal supported John's succession and was soon heavily involved in the war against his rival claimant, Arthur of Brittany (who was

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[7] Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*, p. 344.

[8] Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 56; Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland*, p. 77; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 86.

[9] Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 55.

[10] Ledwich, 'The history and antiquities of Irishtown and Kilkenny', pp 360, 362.

[11] Leland, *The history of Ireland from the invasion of Henry II*, p. 241.

[12] Ibid., p. 243.

[13] Ibid., p. 236.

supported by Philip). In 1203 Philip launched a successful campaign to seize Normandy and again Marshal was to the forefront of the duchy's defence. It is probably for the military campaigns during the Barons' Revolt that Marshal is best remembered, particularly his victory at Lincoln, which proved so pivotal in ending the war.

Few antiquarian writers comment on this aspect of Marshal's career. Hanmer describes Marshal as 'War-like and stout' and suggests that while he was in Ireland 'he gave himself to slaughter and burning' and that, in light of this, the name Marshal could be considered a contraction of '*Mars* his Seneschal'.[14] Cox, writing eighty-five years later, felt that 'Some Irish Antiquary was so silly, to think, he was call'd Marshal, quass Mars his Seneschal'. He must have thought that Hanmer was serious in suggesting that this was how Marshal acquired his name. He does admit, however, that Marshal 'was indeed a very warlike Man'.[15]

In 1205 Marshal had a falling out with John, ostensibly over Marshal's refusal to join the king on campaign in Poitou. Their dispute led to Marshal becoming increasingly isolated at court and increasingly likely to incur John's displeasure. This coincided with a period of instability in Ireland caused to a large extent by the seizing of land by the king's justiciar Meiler fitz Henry. For Marshal, Leinster provided an opportunity to escape the intrigues and suspicions of John but it was probably also becoming increasingly urgent to visit the lordship to support his own vassals against the depredations of the justiciar. Marshal was initially refused permission to leave but this was eventually granted. He and his family arrived in Leinster in 1207 (except the two eldest of his sons, who were kept by John as hostages).

As discussed in chapter four, there was no single cause behind the conflict that erupted in Leinster between Marshal and the justiciar, Meiler fitz Henry, in 1208. Certainly, Fitz Henry was avaricious and ambitious in his own right and had seized lands that should have been Marshal's by right, but he would have been unlikely to have challenged Marshal directly were he not confident of the king's support, and may have simply been carrying out instructions received from him. Marshal was recalled to England along with many of his prominent followers. Some went with Marshal to England while many chose to remain and defend Leinster despite the threat of forfeiture of lands they held in England and Wales. Crouch is inclined to believe that all those

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[14] Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*, pp 349–50.

[15] Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 57.

who went with Marshal were openly siding with Fitz Henry and that the reason there is little criticism of them in the *History* is because they were still alive at the time of its writing.[16] It would seem more likely that they simply were not viewed as disloyal and that the narrative structure of the *History* would of course focus on where the action took place and on those who had taken the greater risk. In the winter of 1207–8, two weeks after Marshal had returned to England, Fitz Henry's forces launched an attack on Marshal's new town of New Ross in Co. Wexford. Marshal's lieutenants, who had remained behind, appealed for help to Hugh and Walter de Lacy, the earls of Ulster and Meath, and they duly committed their forces. Geoffrey de Marisco, a powerful Munster baron, also sided with Marshal. This was an intervention that neither Fitz Henry nor John had been expecting, and by the end of February 1208 the justiciar had been decisively defeated. His castles had been seized and he himself had been captured. John then abruptly decided to jettison Fitz Henry, who was now politically a spent force, and make amends with Marshal.

This conflict was considered important and received quite a bit of attention from antiquarian writers, but their accounts are often confused. This is understandable given that it was the king's justiciar who was rebelling against Marshal, while Marshal himself was not in revolt against the king. The earliest antiquarian reference to this conflict is by Hanmer, who tells simply that a castle of Fitz Henry's was destroyed by Hugh de Lacy in 1208.[17] The account given in the Annals of the Four Masters tells of a major conflict that had broken out among the English of Leinster between Marshal, Fitz Henry and De Marisco. Fitz Henry was technically Marshal's vassal for the land he held in Leinster, so this was correct. It goes on to add that another war broke out between Hugh de Lacy and Fitz Henry, as a result of which, 'all Meyler's people were ruined'.[18] This does seem to be all the same conflict. Keating, in his account, also describes a conflict between Fitz Henry, De Marisco and Marshal in which many of their men were killed in Leinster and Munster.[19]

By the time Cox wrote his account in 1689 Marshal was left out entirely and the conflict was now between Mac Moris (presumably De Marisco) and Fitz Henry.[20] Mac

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[16] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 106.

[17] Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*, p. 370.

[18] O'Donovan (ed.), *Annals of the kingdom of Ireland*, iii, 155.

[19] Keating, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, p. 365.

[20] Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland*, p. 41.

Geoghegan had a clearer understanding of who was involved and he states that Leinster and Munster were devastated by the war between Marshal and Fitz Henry.[21] Leland does not mention any conflict but instead informs us that Fitz Henry was sent back to Ireland in 1208 to 'resume his government'.[22]

Another element of Marshal's career that we have seen is that of administrator. There are two aspects to this; the first is how he ran and invested in the lordship of Leinster; and the second relates to his role as regent, when, after the Barons' Revolt, he was able to concentrate on getting the government back up and running. Naturally, it is his actions in Leinster that Irish antiquarians were most interested in. As shown in chapter six, Marshal invested huge resources into developing Leinster. He built several new castles as well as improving others and established several religious houses. He founded the town and port of New Ross and expanded Kilkenny considerably. He was a prolific issuer of charters for towns within his lordship, helping to establish the civic and economic infrastructure required to make Leinster profitable, or at least economically self-sufficient. In many ways, he was a reformer and a moderniser. The *History* is curiously quiet about Marshal's first visit to Ireland in 1200 and Crouch suggests that this was because Marshal was poorly received by his vassals.[23]

Curiously for Ware, Marshal's administrative duties in Ireland began as early as 1191 when he claims that Marshal was joint-justiciar along with William le Petit.[24] Ware also claimed that Kilkenny Castle was built in 1192, presumably by Marshal.[25] Stanihurst connects Marshal with Leinster even earlier, when he suggests that Henry II planned to send him to Ireland in 1172 along with Raymond le Gros, Miles de Cogan and Hugh de Lacy.[26] In what capacity he envisioned is not clear. Cox, too, believed that Marshal came to Ireland in 1191 as justiciar. Cox does not seem to be simply copying from Ware because he adds an explanation as to why he was chosen. According to Cox, Marshal, who was then one of four co-justiciars with large land holdings in Ireland as well as being 'a Valiant Man', was thought most suitable for the position, which he held

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[21] Mac Geoghegan, *The history of Ireland*, pp 300–1.

[22] Leland, *The history of Ireland from the invasion of Henry II*, pp 218–19.

[23] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 89.

[24] Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland*, p. 154: John de Courcy was justiciar from December 1185 until 1192 when he was replaced by William le Petit and Peter Pipard.

[25] Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland*, p. 33.

[26] Stanihurst, *De Rebus*, p. 241.

for six years, a period when Ireland remained particularly peaceful.[27] Leland also believed that Marshal had been justiciar after William le Petit, which would suggest a date after 1194.[28] However, Leland had the chronology for all the early governors of Ireland quite confused so it is not clear exactly when he thought Marshal was justiciar. Like Cox, Leland (who is general highly critical of the governors of Ireland) describes the imagined administration of Marshal in glowing terms. Leland also echoes Cox's reasons for Marshal being chosen for such a role stating that

> a nobleman so connected with the country was likely to be received with favour; and dignity of his rank and character promised weight and consequence to his administration.[29]

It is not clear whether these claims of successful governorship by Cox and Leland are entirely fanciful or if they have confused them with Marshal's actions in Leinster in assisting the justiciar De Gray or his actions as regent. Leland does point out that during the Barons' Revolt Marshal, who was by then a member of the king's council, did not push for concessions for 'the king's subjects in Ireland when John was in a particularly precarious position'.[30] There are two other brief references to Marshal's running of his lordship. Both Hanmer and Cox state that Marshal arrived in Ireland in 1207 (Cox must have meant 'returned to' Ireland) and he then built Kilkenny Castle as well as giving the town its charter, or, as Cox puts it, 'incorporated that Town by the Name of Sovereign'.[31] It is hard to judge how antiquarian writers viewed Marshal's running of Leinster, but, if one takes in their views of his broader administrative abilities, it is positive. What this view is based on is problematic.

In stark contrast to these positive views are those of James Mac Geoghegan. He was aware that Marshal was regarded by the English as a hero but instead of the picture of a competent politician and administrator painted by other antiquarian writers, Mac Geoghegan insists that Marshal 'in reality was an extortioner and a tyrant'.[32] The reason

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[27] Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 45.

[28] Leland, *The history of Ireland from the invasion of Henry II*, p. 188.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Leland, *The history of Ireland from the invasion of Henry II*, p. 232.

[31] Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*, p. 345; Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 54.

[32] Mac Geoghegan, *The history of Ireland*, p. 278.

for this pronounced dislike of Marshal was his perceived rapacious actions in Ireland, where he amassed great riches only to leave it all to ungrateful heirs. This, more than his excommunication, was perhaps what put his salvation at risk.[33]

Marshal's relationship with the church was in no way straight forward, in or outside Ireland. Looking first outside of Ireland, we can see just how complicated it could be. Marshal had spent two years on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land between 1184 and 1186. During Richard I's reign, when he was co-justiciar, he worked successfully with powerful prelates, and schemed against equally powerful prelates, and for his troubles was excommunicated by Pope Celestine III. Towards the end of his career and during his regency, he again worked well with powerful church figures and Gaula the papal legate in particular. On his deathbed, Marshal donned the white cloak of a Templar (he had kept this from his time in the Holy Land). Marshal was clearly religious and not averse to displays of piety, but his view of the clergy was not universally reverential. This was also the case in Ireland, and it was his relations with the church in Ireland that Irish antiquarian writers were interested in. As discussed in chapter six, Marshal was a great patron of the church, founding several religious houses; one, Tintern, as the result of a pious vow. The initial grants of land that went to these new foundations were substantial and many received subsequent smaller grants as did many already established religious houses. In Leinster, Marshal worked well with Bishop Felix O'Dullany of Ossory until his death in 1202, and formed a close relationship with his successor Hugh le Rous (the first English or Anglo-Norman bishop). It was his relationship with Ailbe Ua Maíl Mhuaidh, however, better known as Albinus, bishop of Ferns, that antiquarian writers were most interested in. As was not uncommon, Marshal and the bishop were in dispute over two parcels of land. As a result of this ongoing feud, the bishop of Tuam placed these lands under interdict. This would later morph into a curse resulting in the extinction of the Marshal line.

Neither Campion nor Stanihurst have anything to say regarding Marshal and the bishop of Ferns, although Campion does note that all Marshal's sons died without issue.[34] The first antiquarian writer to introduce the Marshal's dispute with the bishop is Hanmer. He goes into great detail regarding first a prophecy (that all five of Marshal's sons would be earl but none would have issue). He goes on to explain how Marshal had

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[33] Ibid., pp 278–9.

[34] Campion, *Histories of Ireland*, p. 103.

taken two manors of the bishops, who in turn excommunicated Marshal. The bishop later tells Marshal's eldest son that Marshal (who has since died) will remain in hell until the lands are returned.[35] Although Keating credits Hanmer with the bishop's curse story, his interpretation of it is different in that it also related to the Anglo-Norman barons of Strongbow's generation, many of whom also had no sons. It is a curse inherited by Isabella de Clare rather than the result of Marshal's actions.[36] Cox, too, includes Hanmer's version of the curse but does not link it directly with Marshal's sons' failure to have heirs. He does add, however, that the bishop's curse 'brought no small Veneration to the Clergy' and superstitious people linked it to the fact that none of Marshal's sons had issue.[37] Mac Geoghegan has a similar version of the same tale. By his reasoning, it was divine vengeance for Marshal's wickedness as well as dying while excommunicated that resulted in none of his sons leaving any heirs.[38]

Antiquarian writers were not oblivious of the more positive relations Marshal had with the church. Hanmer credits Marshal with founding a Dominican house in Kilkenny, as does Cox.[39] Ware goes into some detail regarding religious houses founded by Marshal. He includes Kilrush in Co. Kildare, which he explains was made a cell of Cartmel Priory in Lancashire.[40] He then lists the priory of SS John and Brigid in Wexford (founded for the Hospitallers) and the abbey of Tintern. He gives the date for Tintern's founding as 1200 and explains that it was the result of a vow made by Marshal during a tempest, and that Cistercian monks were brought over from Tintern in Monmouthshire.[41] Ware also informs us that in 1204 or 1207 Marshal founded the abbey of Duiske and supplied it with Cistercian monks from Stanley in Wiltshire and that in 1211 he founded the Augustinian hospital of St John the Evangelist on the east side of the town.[42] Ledwich was able to identify the site for the new hospital in more

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[35] Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*, p. 352.

[36] Keating, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, p. 361.

[37] Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 58.

[38] Mac Geoghegan, *The history of Ireland*, p. 301.

[39] Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*, p. 354; Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 54.

[40] Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland*, p. 79.

[41] Ibid., pp 80–2.

[42] Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland*, p. 82.

detail.[43] Writing in 1758, Mac Geoghegan names the same religious houses being founded by Marshal as named by Ware.[44] Some evidence of Marshal's good relations with bishop Hugh le Rous of Ossory is given by Ledwich when he informs us that the bishop granted Marshal a large part of the town, while 'reserving to himself and his successors a chiefry of an ounce of gold'.[45]

One area that antiquarian writers provide only very limited information on is that of Marshal's buildings. Their descriptions tend to be confined to when and where they were built and, in the case of religious houses, which orders they were for. This is unfortunate because they may have seen or heard described features or whole buildings that are no longer standing. Stanihurst, in one notable exception, informs us that Ferns Castle was built on top of a large motte.[46] There are no visible remains of this early motte at the site of the current castle ruin. The castles built by Marshal are still an imposing reminder of the power and resources he had at his disposal, even in their much-altered (in the case of Kilkenny) or ruined state (all the rest). Marshal's castles represent an architectural continuity that stretched across the Angevin world. When built by Marshal in the early thirteenth century, they incorporated the most modern features of defensive architecture, making them some of the most advanced castles in Ireland and indeed Britain. Marshal's willingness to grant vast tracts of land for religious houses also shows his commitment to Leinster. This was done not just for the benefit of his immortal soul but also as part of a plan to modernise the lordship. The two biggest grants he gave went to the Cistercians. These were no mendicant friars but rather keen agriculturalists and creators of wealth, indications of which can still be seen clearly in their ruined abbeys. It is in these castle and abbey ruins that something of Marshal's ambitions can still be appreciated.

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[43] Ledwich, 'The history and antiquities of Irishtown and Kilkenny', p. 528: 'a piece of ground at the head of the small bridge of Kilkenny, between the small steam of water and the road that leads Loughmedoran.'

[44] Geoghegan, *The history of Ireland, ancient and modern*, p. 294.

[45] Ledwich, 'The history and antiquities of Irishtown and Kilkenny', p. 360.

[46] Stanihurst, *De Rebus*, p. 29.

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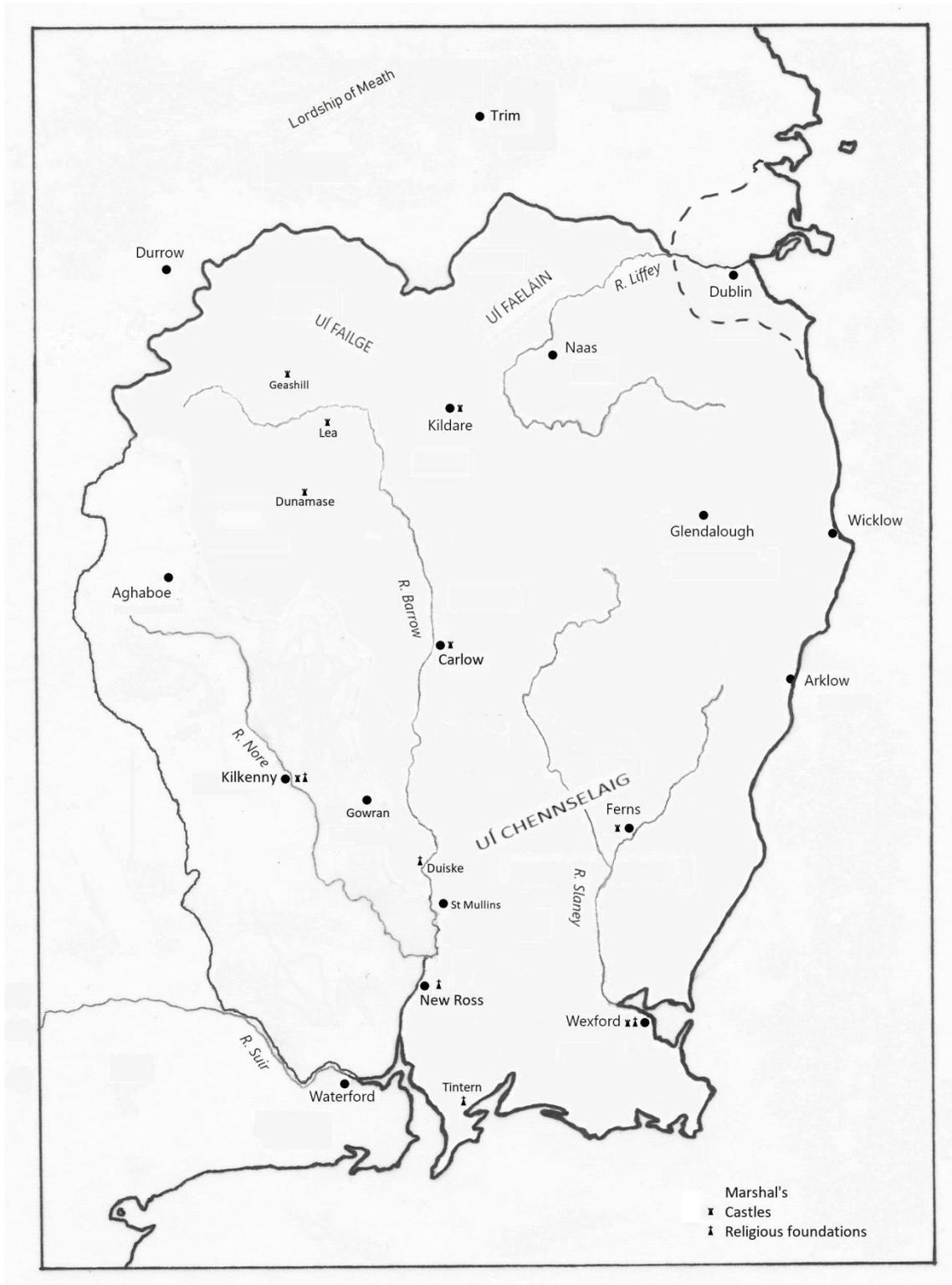––––– 'Dunamase Castle' in *The Journal of Irish Archaeology*, vii (1996), pp 97–115.

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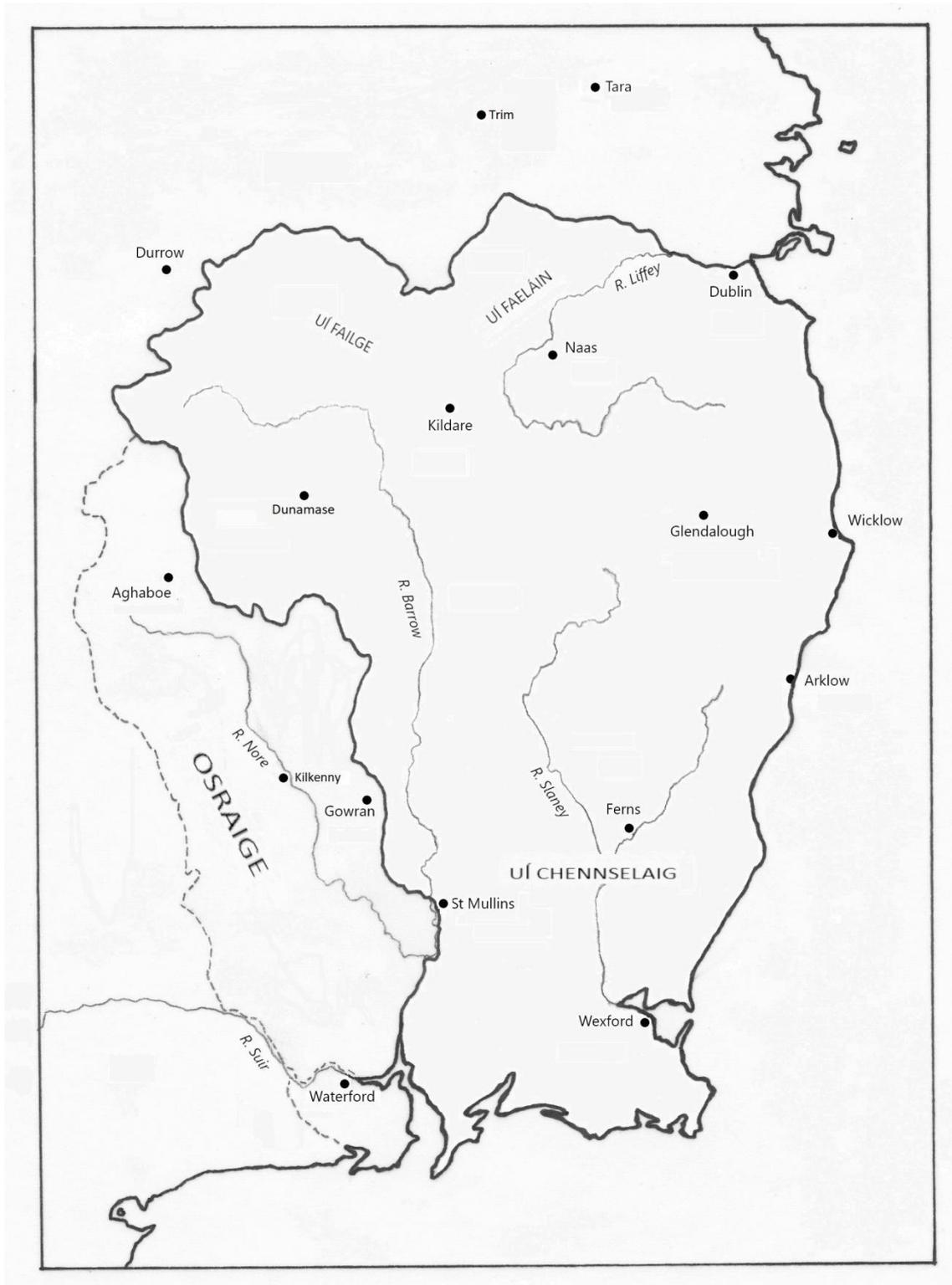
The kingdom of Leinster *c*. 1160

The lordship of Leinster *c*. 1219