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THE ENGLISH IN URIEL

1170-1330

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**THE ENGLISH IN URIEL  
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WORK AND HAS NOT BEEN SUBMITTED AS AN EXERCISE FOR A  
COURSE AT ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY.

*Brendan Smith*  
**BRENDAN SMITH**

**SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF Ph.D.**

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN**

**FEBRUARY 1990**



THE ENGLISH IN IRELAND  
1170-1250

BRENDAN SMITH



THESIS  
1907

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF PH.D.

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN

FEBRUARY 1990

## SUMMARY

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*Brendan Smith.*



## SUMMARY

The area which the medieval English called 'Uriel', which corresponds roughly with the modern Co. Louth, was annexed to the Irish kingdom of Airghialla by its O Carrol kings early in the twelfth century. The O Carrols were to the fore in the political and religious developments of pre-invasion Ireland and their initiatives, particularly in the sphere of church reform, set the agenda for their English successors in the early thirteenth century.

Uriel was not conquered by the English but was rather bequeathed to them by an arrangement reached between Lord John and the last of the native O Carrol kings. The territory was heavily colonised subsequently, with tenants being drawn for the most part from the west midlands of England where the estates of the two greatest grantees in the area, the Pipards and de Verduns lay. The limits of English expansion in the region were set in the first quarter of the thirteenth century and from that point on the settlers were more concerned with maintaining peace on their borders.

Uriel was never dominated by a single magnate family and from the late thirteenth century the heads of the de Verdun and Pipard families rarely visited Ireland. This left political power in Uriel in the hands of the local gentry, who were, for the most part, the descendants of the original sub-tenants within the county. The Uriel gentry were, in many ways, more similar to their counter-parts in England than were other such groups in Ireland. They avoided, for instance, most manifestations of what contemporaries called 'degeneracy', such as the keeping of kerne, patronage of the Irish learned classes and the adoption of the extended family or lineage as the basic social unit.

Too close an analogy with the gentry of medieval England, however, should not be drawn. The presence of marches on the fringes of the county gave to the gentry of Uriel an outlook and set of priorities which can

be adequately understood only in the context of thirteenth and fourteenth century Ireland. The serious disturbances of 1312 and 1329 showed that this community wished to limit, as far as possible, outside interference in the affairs of the county, whether that interference came from central government or from an individual magnate such as John de Bermingham, earl of Louth. However, the fundamental loyalty of the gentry community of Uriel to the English crown was shown by its stout resistance to the Scots during the Bruce invasion.

By the early fourteenth century the gentry of Uriel controlled local politics and also played an increasing role in the administration of the lordship through the retention of important posts in the Dublin government. It is to the thirteenth century, therefore, that the origins of 'the gentry of the Pale' must be assigned.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks are due in the first instance to my supervisor Professor J.F. Lydon whose enthusiasm for this project has helped see it through some dark days. I am deeply grateful for the speed with which he has read my work and for the vigour with which he has both encouraged and criticised it. I have had the privilege of teaching this year at Trinity College and would like to thank the Department of Medieval History for the help which I have received. In particular Dr Terry Barry and Professor C.E. Meek have shown great forbearance and kindness. Among my postgraduate colleagues my special thanks are due to Mrs Bernadette Williams and Mr Sean Duffy, M. Litt.

I have benefitted greatly from discussions with Dr Phil Connolly of the P.R.O. and Mr Ken Nicholls and my attention has also been drawn to archival material I would otherwise have missed by Mr Harold O Sullivan M. Litt. Dr Robin Frame and Professor R R Davies have also been kind enough to discuss with me the subject matter of this thesis. I am grateful to the Trinity Trust for financing my attendance at the Medieval Frontier Society conference in Edinburgh in September 1987. Mr Victor Buckley of the Archaeological Survey has generously put his unrivalled knowledge of the landscape of County Louth at my disposal. I have made many friends in "the wee county" while writing this thesis and I would like to thank especially those concerned with the Cu Chulainn Country Summer School.

I am grateful to the staffs of the various libraries in which I have worked and particularly the long suffering staff of the Berkeley Library. My typist Mary Trotter has shown both courage and cunning in completing this thesis. I am eternally grateful to her.

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Maps

- Mottes in Uriel
- English place names on the marches of Uriel
- The de Verdun rebellion
- Townlands of medieval Uriel



## Abbreviations and conventions

- A.F.M. Annala 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; reprint, New York, 1966.)
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- A.U. Annala Uladh, Annals of Ulster; otherwise Annala Senait, Annals of Senait: a chronicle of Irish affairs, 431-1131, 1155-1541, ed. W.M. Hennessy and B. MacCarthy (4 vols. Dublin 1887-1901.)
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- Cal. close rolls, 1272-9 [etc.] Calendar of the close rolls, 1272-9 [etc] (London, 1900-)

- Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251 [etc.]      Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1171-1251, [etc.] (5 vols, London, 1875-86)
- Cal. doc. Scot.      Calendar of documents relating to Scotland, (ed. J. Bain, 4 vols, Edinburgh, 1881-8).
- Cal. fine rolls 1271-1509 [etc.]      Calendar of fine rolls, 1272-1509 [etc] (22 vols, London 1911-62).
- Cal. inq. P.M.      Calendar of inquisitions post mortem and other analogous documents ... Henry III - [15 Richard II] (16 vols, London 1904-74).
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- Cal. papal letters, 1198-1304 [etc]      Calendar of entries in the papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: papal letters, 1198-1304 [etc.] (London, 1893-).
- Cal. pat. rolls, 1232-47 [etc.]      Calendar of the patent rolls, 1232-47, [etc.] (London, 1906-).
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- I.M.C. Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin.
- Ir. chartul. Llanthony The Irish chartularies of Llanthony Prima & Secunda, ed. Eric St John Brooks (Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin, 1953).
- Ir. Jurist The Irish Jurist, new series (Dublin, 1966-).
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P.R.O.	Public Record Office of England.
P.R.O.I.	Public Record Office of Ireland.
P.R.O.N.I.	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.
<u>Parl. writs</u>	<u>Parliamentary writs and writs of military summons</u> ed. F. Palgrave, 2 vols in 4 (Record commission 1827-34).
<u>Past &amp; Present</u>	<u>Past and present: a journal of historical studies</u> (London, 1952-).
<u>Pat. rolls, 1216-25 [etc.]</u>	<u>Patent rolls of the reign of Henry III, 1216-25 [etc]</u> (2 vols, London, 1901-3).
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'Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12'	'The Irish pipe roll of 14 John 1211-12', ed. Oliver Davies and David B. Quinn, in <u>Ulster Journal of Archaeology</u> , 3rd series, iv, supp. (July, 1941).
<u>Pipe roll Soc.</u> , vol i, 5 Henry II [etc.]	<u>Pipe roll society</u> , vol i, 5 Henry II [etc] 38 vols (1884-1925) new series 41 vols, (1925-67).
R.I.A.	Royal Irish Academy
<u>R.I.A. Proc.</u>	<u>Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy.</u> (Dublin, 1836-)
<u>R.S.A.I. Jn.</u>	<u>Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland</u> (Dublin, 1892-)
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T.C.D.

Trinity College, Dublin

T.R.H.S.

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U.C.D.

University College, Dublin

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Welsh hist. rev.

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Note: Terminology:

I use the term 'Anglo-Norman' to describe the new arrivals in Ireland until the middle of thirteenth century when I adopt 'English' and I use 'Irish' throughout to denote the native population.(1) I use the modern English form of Irish surnames (e.g. O Carrol, not O Cearbhaill) and the most common contemporary form of English surnames (e.g. Douedale, not Dowdall). I attempt to give both contemporary and present versions of place-names and identify the barony in which they lie (e.g. Mandevileston = Mansfieldstown, bar. Louth). References to Irish annals are by year. (e.g. A.L.C. 1189, not A.L.C., Vol. I p181).

(1). N.H.L., ii, pp li-lii



## INTRODUCTION

'One of the difficulties of writing in any detail the history of Ireland in the thirteenth century is that there was little or no history common to the whole country. Each province and sometimes even smaller districts must be treated more or less separately.'

(Orpen, Normans iv, p130)

The seventy years since Orpen wrote the above have witnessed a dramatic flourishing of interest in local Irish history, both medieval and modern. Little has been published, however, on the history of individual English communities in medieval Ireland.<sup>(1)</sup> In this regard Uriel, the territory discussed in this thesis, has fared better than most, thanks to the efforts of the history societies of Counties Louth, Monaghan and Armagh. Their journals have hosted outstanding pieces on the medieval history of the locality by scholars such as Canon Lawlor, Fr. Gwynn, Fr McIvor and Fr. Colmcille. Not surprisingly, however, the work of these men has concentrated, for the most part, on the ecclesiastical rather than the political history of Uriel and there is much scope for further investigation.<sup>(2)</sup>

This task is made easier by the relative abundance of primary material available from the later middle ages relating to the locality. In addition to the administrative records of the Dublin and London governments there survives the diocesan registers of Armagh, the cartularies of several religious houses which held land in the area and the deeds and papers of a number of local families such as the Pipards, Prestons, Dowdalls and Bellews. Together these constitute a pool of primary historical material of sufficient range and volume to allow for a detailed study of the locality from the late twelfth to the early fourteenth century.

Such a study may require less justification now than it did in Orpen's time, but it remains incumbent on the

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1. A notable exception is the work of C.A. Empey; 'The Butler lordship', *Butler Soc. Jn.*, i (1968-71), pp174-87. 'The Anglo-Norman community in Tipperary and Kilkenny in the middle ages', in G. Mac Niocaill and P. Wallace (eds.) *Keimelia* (Galway, 1988) pp449-67. (for a bibliography of local studies of medieval Ireland see *N.H.L.*, ii, pp916-27.

2. For individual citations see bibliography.



historian to question and explain the merits of his own line of investigation. The importance of regional diversity in Europe has become one of the key themes of medieval historiography and increasingly 'national' histories are seen as imposing artificial concepts of unity and centrality on highly autonomous and individualistic areas within medieval kingdoms.<sup>(3)</sup> Local studies enable the generalisations which inevitably accompany historical discourse to be examined and tested in a smaller and more manageable environment, while at the same time suggesting new theories and models for consideration in a wider perspective. It is this two-way process which justifies local history.<sup>(4)</sup>

The locality in question in this thesis is the medieval shire which contemporaries called Louth, or more commonly, Uriel. This area included not only the modern County Louth, but also adjacent parts of Counties Armagh and Monaghan. It was, and remains, a unit with little geographical cohesion. In topographical terms the south of the county is akin to adjoining portions of County Meath, while north of Dundalk the wide drumlin belt and the forbidding heights of the Cooley peninsula betoken the terrain of south Ulster. The medieval shire had definite southern and eastern boundaries, provided respectively by the river Boyne and the Irish Sea, but to the north and west there were no fixed termini; here the shire shaded into the marches.

The marches of Uriel represented not only an imprecise geographical borderland, but also a frontier between two societies with different political, social, economic, linguistic and cultural priorities.<sup>(5)</sup> By utilizing the evidence of place names and studying the size of medieval parishes it is possible to identify with some accuracy the furthest extent of English settlement in Uriel. As might be expected, this tallies closely with the pattern of motte distribution in the area.<sup>(6)</sup> The marches of Uriel were above all a military frontier, and

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3. J. Le Patourel, 'Is Northern History a subject?'. *Northern History*, xii (1976), pp1-5.
  4. H.P.R. Finberg, 'Local History', in H.P.R. Finberg. (ed.) *Approaches to history* (London, 1962), pp111-27.
  5. B. Smith, 'The concept of the march in medieval Ireland; the case of Uriel', *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxxxviii C (1988), pp.257-69.
  6. P.J. Duffy, 'Geographical perspectives on the borderlands' in Gillespie & O Sullivan, *Borderlands*, pp8-13. See maps 1, 3



while not all of Uriel was in the marches, local society might well be described as marcher in outlook and behaviour. The presence of marches adds a new and exciting dimension to the traditional 'centre-locality' nexus which is the basis of all local studies. As Professor Davies has remarked in the context of Wales, 'The March is ..... an ideal area for an analysis of the range and character of lordship in medieval society and the more ideal in that the lordship was that of a foreign elite exercised over a native society.'<sup>(7)</sup> The role of the marches in the history of medieval Uriel was fundamental and cannot be overstressed.

The territory discussed in this thesis, however, is not the marches of Uriel but the county of Uriel. It is unclear when the county was created, but it is highly likely that it occurred in the early 1220s.<sup>(8)</sup> By this time significant English conquests in the area had ceased and thus the limits of the county were set by considerations which were military and political, rather than economic or geographical. The county, however, represented not only the region of permanent English settlement, but also the most recent additions to their kingdom of Aighialla made by the O Carrols before they were replaced by the English. In other words, the English county of Uriel was no more artificial a creation than the kingdom of Airghialla had been prior to 1189. The degree to which the English inherited and adapted to the legacy left to them by their Irish predecessors was shown by their response to the territorial dispute between the dioceses of Armagh and Clogher, which predated their arrival. The county of Uriel constituted the disputed territory and became, in effect, the portion of the diocese of Armagh which remained in the land of peace.<sup>(9)</sup>

This is the study of an English county in medieval Ireland, not an English lordship. My concern is to show how the county came to be the focus of loyalty for the political community of Uriel, or in other words, to analyse the development there of the gentry from the late twelfth to the early fourteenth century. In order to do this it is necessary first to understand how the county came into being and how it subsequently became more than simply an administrative unit.

The county of Uriel did not immediately replace the kingdom of Airghialla. The division of the territory

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7. R. R. Davies, Lordship and society in the March of Wales 1282-1400, (Oxford, 1978) p9.

8. See below pp22 -3

9. See Chapter 2.



among the English drawn up in 1185 and implemented in 1189 was based closely on the sub-kingdoms of the region which had only recently been conquered by the O Carrols, although the grant to the Pipards, had it been realised, would have incorporated not only the present barony of Ardee but also the territory of the Airghialla confederation as far west as Fermanagh.<sup>(10)</sup> Such optimistic expectations, however, were never to be fulfilled and by the third decade of the thirteenth century the de Verduns and Pipards had conquered and colonised as much land as they ever would. The creation of a county at this juncture was a natural extension of the process whereby bounds were being set between the lands of individual grantees in the region. It was not intended that the county should undermine the importance of individual lordships nor, initially, did it do so. The county was at first seen as an adjunct to such lordships, as is suggested by the fact that the earliest recorded sheriff of Uriel, Ralph de Picheford, was also the steward of the Pipards.

The political developments of the thirteenth century, however, tended to reduce the strength of territorial lordship within the county of Uriel. The marriage, in or before 1244, of John de Verdun to one of the two de Lacy heiresses brought with it half of Meath, and it was increasingly this part of their Irish lands, rather than the baronies of Dundalk and Ferrard in Uriel, which held the attention of the de Verduns. To this was added the increasing infrequency in the late thirteenth century of visits to Ireland by the heads of the de Verdun and Pipard families, a tendency which culminated in 1301 with the transfer by Ralph Pipard of all his Irish possessions to the crown.<sup>(11)</sup>

The continued importance of territorial lordship, in its judicial, financial and military aspects, should not be underestimated in late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Uriel. However, two factors were working to enhance the political potential of the county at the same moment as the significance of personal lordship in the area was in decline. The first was the growth in the number of attacks on the settlement by the Irish. This increased pressure on the marches meant that local communities were forced to fend increasingly for themselves in the absence of their de Verdun and Pipard lords. The second factor, closely related to the first, was the increasing responsibility placed on the county by the Dublin government in the spheres of defence and finance. The 1297 parliament had given official sanction and encouragement to local peace-keeping

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10. See below pp 13-4, 21-2

11. See below. pp39-41



efforts and at the same time the crown looked more and more often to individual communities for the men and money it needed to fight its French and Scottish wars. In other words, the government enhanced the political importance of the county. In 1297 the community of the county was ordered to elect representatives to attend parliament. In 1312 juries were ordered to be assembled in the counties of Uriel, Dublin and Meath to decide a case between the king and the earl of Ulster. In 1303-4 the community of the county of Uriel paid a subsidy to the crown of £120 in aid of the Scottish war.(12)

The increasing identity of the community with the county was therefore the result of a number of trends in the history of thirteenth century Uriel, not all of which originated within the county boundaries. The community of the county of Uriel is the subject matter of this thesis and it would be inappropriate to anticipate what follows by discussing the composition and outlook of that community at this point. It is an appropriate moment, however, to ask how the picture of the role of the county outlined above tallies with similar studies conducted in the context of English history. The greatest potential for 'British history' as a historiographical frame-work within which to discuss the medieval history of the islands of Britain and Ireland may well lie at the level of local studies, where similar phenomena, such as the role of the county community, can be discussed in the context of different historical developments.(13)

The role of the county is seen as central to medieval English history, although debate continues as to the stage at which the county community became a real political force. Holt and more recently Maddicott have traced this development to the twelfth century and have stressed the crucial importance of Magna Carta as both a manifestation of and catalyst for such communal self-awareness.(14) Others such as Nigel Saul see the

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12. Otway-Ruthven, Med Ire., p.170. Cal. close rolls 1307-13, p546. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 38, p72.

13. R.R. Davies, 'In praise of British history' in R.R. Davies, (ed) The British Isles, 1100-1500 comparisons contrasts and connections. (Edinburgh, 1988) pp17-9; J.A. Tuck, 'Northumbrian society in the fourteenth century', Northern History (1971) vi, pp22- 39. M.J. Bennett, Community, class and careerism. Cheshire and Lancashire Society in the age of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, (Oxford, 1984) pp21-52. P. Morgan, War and society in medieval Cheshire, 1277-1403, (Manchester, 1987)

14. J.C. Holt, Magna Carta, (Cambridge, 1965), p.27. J.R. Maddicott, 'Magna Carta and the local community 1215-1259', Past and present no.102, (1984), pp25, 65.

development occurring rather later in the thirteenth century while Given-Wilson has sounded a cautionary note by stressing that different rates of change occurred in different areas according to the political configurations which prevailed.<sup>(15)</sup>

Clearly Uriel fits into this pattern uneasily, if at all. Magna Carta, for instance, had been granted before the county even existed. Again, Maddicott argues that the two grievances which dominated local thinking during the reigns of John and Henry III were the malpractices of the sheriff and the extent of the royal forest.<sup>(16)</sup>

While the first of these considerations may have become important in Uriel by the early fourteenth century - one thinks of the murder of the sheriff, Richard Gernon in 1310 - the second was entirely lacking.<sup>(17)</sup>

However, Saul's emphasis on the increased demands of the crown in the late thirteenth century as crucial to the growing identification of the community with the county does ring true also in the context of Uriel.<sup>(18)</sup>

Nevertheless, there existed one fundamental difference in the relationship between the county and the community in England and in Uriel. In England the county pre-dated the gentry, in Uriel the gentry were already in place, in embryonic form at least, before the county was created. What follows is an analysis of the historical development, composition and character of this county gentry community in Uriel.

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15. N. Saul, Knights and esquires: the Gloucestershire gentry in the fourteenth century, (Oxford, 1981), p168; C. Given-Wilson, The English nobility in the late middle ages. (London, 1987), pp75-83.

16. Maddicott, 'Magna Carta', pp26-7.

17. See below pp. 136-7. The royal forest in Ireland awaits its historian.

18. Saul, Knights and esquires, p168.



Uriel c.1170-c.1300. From Irish kingdom to English county.

The territory which the earliest Anglo-Norman invaders called "Uriel" was essentially the creation of one man, Donnchadh O Carrol. His family had by the early twelfth century assumed the leadership of the Fern-Mhagh who in turn had achieved pre-eminence among the confederation of peoples who formed the Airghialla. Donnchadh O Carrol's success rested on his personal ability and on his policy of forming alliances with stronger kings to further his ambitions. In 1125 Donnchadh was installed as king of Airghialla by Toirdelbach O Connor. He succeeded his father, Cu-Chaisil O Carrol, who in the first decade of the twelfth century had annexed to Fern-Mhagh the neighbouring territories or Fir Rois (bar. Ardee), Conailli Muirtheimhne (bar. Upper Dundalk), and Lughmhadh (bar. Louth). By 1133 when Donnchadh raided Fingal he must also have controlled Fir Arda (bar. Ferrard) and thus have stretched the southern boundary of his kingdom to the Boyne.(1)

Despite his initial support from Connacht, Donnchadh O Carrol's natural allegiance was with Ulster and its kings, the MacLoughlins. Donnchadh's half-brother was Tigernan O Rourke and marriage alliances bound him to the O Flynns of Ui Thuire and the MacDunlevys of Ulaidh.(2) By 1145 O Carrol was raiding Ulaidh in the company of Muircheartach MacLoughlin and in 1149 MacLoughlin took the submission of O Rourke at Louth before journeying with O Carrol to Dublin to accept the submission of Diarmad MacMurrough.(3)

In 1152 Donnchadh's career received the first of several setbacks when he was temporarily expelled from the kingship of Airghialla by MacLoughlin for having wounded the archbishop of Armagh in a dispute

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1. L.P. Murray 'The ancient territories of Oirghialla, Uladh and Conailli Muirthemhne' Louth Arch. Soc. Jn. iii, no.1 (1912), pp 52-65.  
Enda (N. Lawless) 'Muirthemhne' ibid., iii no.2 (1913), pp156-67.  
D. Mac Iomhair 'The history of Fir Rois' ibid., xv no.4, (1964), pp321-48.  
Misc. Ir. Annals 1125.  
A.F.M. 1133. T. O'Fiach 'The kingdom of Airghialla and its sub-kingdoms' (M.A. thesis, U.C.D. (1950).)
  2. K. Simms The Gaelic lordships of Ulster in the later Middle Ages (Ph.D. Thesis T.C.D. (1976)) p309 A.U. 1171,1176.
  3. Misc Ir. Annals, 1145-7      A.F.M. 1149.

concerning the extent of the bishopric of Airghialla.<sup>(4)</sup> In the following year, however, O Carrol was back in favour with MacLoughlin and was given one-third of the recently conquered kingdom of Meath.<sup>(5)</sup> O Carrol also benefitted territorially from MacLoughlin's dismemberment of the kingdom of Ulaidh, receiving in 1165 Bairche (the Mourne) in south Down. <sup>(6)</sup> O Carrol's subservient position with regard to the king of the Cenel Eoghain was clearly demonstrated in 1157 at the consecration of the Cistercian Abbey of Mellifont when MacLoughlin granted the monks a townland at Drogheda in the heart of O Carrol's lands.<sup>(7)</sup>

In 1166 this alliance came to a sudden end with far reaching consequences for Ireland as a whole. In that year Muircheartach MacLoughlin blinded the king of Ulaidh, Eochaidh MacDunlevy, who was also the foster-son of Donnchadh O Carrol. This was the signal for a widespread revolt of his vassals against MacLoughlin. Ruaidhri O Connor marched on Dublin and then took O Carrol's submission at Drogheda (Mellifont). O Carrol marched north and defeated and slew his former overlord near Tullahogue. Immediately Leinster was invaded by Tigernan O'Rourke and its king Diarmad MacMurrough, an ally of MacLoughlin's, was driven from Ireland, leaving the country in search of foreign support in August 1166.<sup>(8)</sup>

Donnchadh O Carrol did not live to see the consequences of the expulsion of MacMurrough, which his slaying of MacLoughlin had precipitated. In 1168 he was assassinated by a servant and received glowing tributes in the Irish annals.<sup>(9)</sup> These were well-earned. In comparison with other contemporary kings of the second rank in Ireland, such as O Rourke, O Melaglin, Mac Dunlevy and Mac Murrough, O Carrol's achievements appear most impressive. By the time of his death he had extended his kingdom to include at least part of County Armagh, south County Down, all of County Louth and part of County Meath. He

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4. See below p 44.

5. A.F.M. 1153.

6. A.U. 1165.

7. Ibid. 1157

8. Misc. Ir. Annals, 1165. A.U. 1165. D. O Corrain Ireland before the Normans (Dublin, 1971). pp.164-6.

9. A.U. 1168. Misc. Ir. Annals, 1167.



was also in the forefront of the innovations taking place with regard to the nature of kingship in twelfth century Ireland. His son Murchadh, for instance witnessed a charter of Mac Loughlin's in 1156-7 in his capacity as king of Ui Meith (Rex Ometh) while Donnchadh also witnessed as king of Airghialla.(10) This mirrors attempts by more important kings to establish members of their families over conquered territories. Donnchadh also colonised Bairche in south Down, which he acquired in 1165, with people from his ancestral kingdom of Mugdorna (bar. Cremorne) who in time gave their name to the area we know today as the Mourne.(11) O'Carrol also sponsored the religious reform movement and the first Irish houses of both the Arrouaisian and Cistercian orders were founded in his territory. His long and successful reign left an indelible mark on the kingdom which his Anglo-Norman successors attempted to govern.(12)

Donnchadh's immediate successor was his son Murchadh. As mentioned above, Murchadh had been king of Ui Meith since at least 1157 and his apparently uncontested accession to the kingship of Airghialla bears further testimony to the stable foundations laid by his father. Murchadh was faced with the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland and it speaks highly of his abilities that on his death in Mellifont Abbey in 1189 he was still the undisputed ruler of most of the territory bequeathed to him by his father.

Murchadh at first continued his father's alliance with Ruaidhri O'Connor. In 1171 he was part of O Connor's army which was defeated at Dublin by Miles de Cogan, but later in the same year he submitted with Tigernan O'Rourke to Henry II.(13) In 1174 O'Carrol was again in the company of O'Connor when Hugh de Lacy's castle of Trim was destroyed.(14)

O'Connor, however, was unable to halt the building of castles in Meath which threatened Airghialla. In 1176 castles were built at Kells, Skreen, Navan, Nobber and Slane, all within easy striking distance of O'Carrol's territory. The Anglo-Normans of Dublin and Meath raided from the Boyne to south Armagh,

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10. Simms 'The O Hanlons, the O Neills and the Anglo-Normans', pp72-3

11. P O Mordha, 'The Medieval kingdom of Mugdorna', Clogher Rec., vii, no.3 (1971-2), pp432-46. O Corrain Ireland before the Normans pp 168-73.

12. See below p 43.

13. Misc Ir. Annals, 1171, 1172. A.U., 1171. Otway Ruthven Med. Ire. pp.47-50. M.T.Flanagan, Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship, (Oxford, 1989) p227.

14. Song of Dermot, p239. Otway Ruthven, Med. Ire. pp55-6.

causing particular damage around the abbey, at Louth. The base for these attacks was Richard Flemming's castle of Slane and later in the same year O Carrol destroyed the castle in alliance with Maol Sheachlainn MacLoughlin, king of Cenel-Eoghain, who could offer him speedier assistance than O'Connor.<sup>(15)</sup> In the first month of the following year, 1177, John de Courcy made his expedition to Ulster from Dublin and met no resistance as he passed through Uriel. The reason for this may have been the attack which Miles de Cogan made on Louth and Machaire Conaill (bar. Upper Dundalk) which possibly diverted O Carrol's attention.<sup>(16)</sup> De Courcy's interference in east Ulster certainly added to the dangers of O Carrol's situation but militarily he posed little threat and was worsted by the Airghialla in 1168 and 1170.<sup>(17)</sup>

Since Donnchadh O Carrol slew Muirheartach MacLoughlin in 1166 no unopposed successor had emerged to take his place and civil war raged among the Cenel Eoghain between the families of O'Neill and MacLoughlin. This deprived Murchadh O Carrol of a strong Irish ally on whom he could call to resist Anglo-Norman attacks. Ruaidhri O'Connor was too far away and, after 1177, increasingly ineffective. O'Carrol was instead forced to bargain with the Anglo-Normans for his position. The references to 'treacherous' attacks on Uriel by the invaders in 1177 and 1178 may suggest that some arrangement, however poorly observed, had been agreed between the parties.<sup>(18)</sup> More concrete evidence of diplomatic contact with the Anglo-Normans comes in 1181/2 when Maol Isu O'Carrol, bishop of Airghialla and a kinsman of Murchadh's, was recorded as having sailed to Ireland from Chester, whose sheriff, Gilbert

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15. A.U., 1176, Misc Ir Annals, 1176. A.F.M. 1176.

16. Misc Ir. Annals, 1178.

17. A.F.M. 1178, A.U. 1178. Misc Ir. Annals, 1179. J.F. Lydon, 'John de Courcy (c.1150-1219) and the medieval frontier' in C. Brady (ed.) Worsted in the game (Dublin 1989) pp.37-48.

18. Misc Ir. Annals, 1178, 1179.



Pipard, was later to play a leading role in Uriel.(19)

Murchadh O Carrol followed the practice which had brought his family such gains in the previous half-century and allied himself with the most powerful local ruler, in this case Hugh de Lacy. De Lacy had been absent from Ireland from 1174 to 1177 and again from 1181 to 1182. In 1184 de Lacy and Murchadh O Carrol together raided Armagh, possibly in support of bishop Maol Isu O Carrol's attempts to wrest the archbishopric of Armagh from Tomaltach O Connor, nephew of Ruaidhri O'Connor.(20) On his death in 1186 the Irish annals calls Hugh de Lacy 'King of Meath and Breffny and Uriel' and O Carrol may have viewed him as a protector in the same mould as a MacLoughlin or O'Connor.(21) O Carrol, however, also seems to have come to some arrangement with John, lord of Ireland, during his visit of 1185. John later stated that Murchadh held his land of him and while there is little doubt that John at this time granted O Carrol's kingdom to Gilbert Pipard and Bertram de Verdun, he seems to have also guaranteed the undisturbed tenure of Murchadh until his death. (22)

Unlike his contemporaries, Manus O Melaglin and Tigernan O Rourke, Murchadh O Carrol died a peaceful death, in the Abbey of Mellifont which his father had founded. Like his father, Murchadh had enhanced his position by diplomatic alliances and military skill. Few other Irish rulers adapted to the challenges of Anglo-Norman Ireland so skillfully and so successfully.(23)

The visit of John to Ireland in 1185 marks the beginning of a new phase in the history of Uriel. Since the

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19. Pipe roll. Soc. vol. xxxi, 28 Henry II, p.148.

20. Orpen Normans ii, pp 52-6, 65-8. Misc. Ir. Annals, 1184. A.U. 1184. See below pp. 44-5.

21. A.L.C. 1186.

22. Fr. Colmille 'Seven documents from the old Abbey of Mellifont', Louth Arch. Soc. Jn. xiii, no.1 (1953). p37.

23. D. Mac Iomhair 'The Boundaries of Fir Rois' Louth Arch Soc. Jn. xv, no.2 (1962), pp.168-9.

arrival of the Anglo-Normans the area had been regularly raided, but no attempts at settlement appear to have been made. Grants of land had been issued but these were to the Abbey of Mellifont, and not to Anglo-Norman grantees. In 1177-8 King Henry II granted the monks their abbey and granges and in the years prior to 1185, further grants to Mellifont in Uriel were made by Hugh de Lacy and Robert Flandrensis.(24)

The division of Uriel between Bertram de Verdun, Gilbert Pipard and John seems to have been ratified by the future king in Dublin, late in 1185, although no formal written grants survive earlier than 1188/9. This division was part of John's larger plans for his lordship. Cambrensis, who disapproved of John's conduct in Ireland, presented his actions in a negative light, saying that 'contrary to our promises, we took away the lands of our own Irishmen ... and gave them to our new comers'. (25) This ignores the fact that in Uriel, at least, the Irish king was allowed to remain in possession of his territory until his death. John's schemes were more sophisticated than he was given credit for by Cambrensis. He sought to enhance royal power in Ireland by granting to his trustworthy followers areas such as Uriel and Ormond which had previously been independent and which lay between the lands of potentially over-powerful Anglo-Norman lords. Uriel for instance lay between Hugh de Lacy's Meath and John de Courcy's Ulster, and both these men had incurred the distrust of the young Dominus Hiberniae. (26)

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24. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.50, 175. Fr. Colmcille, 'Seven documents from Mellifont', pp37, 47. A. Gwynn, 'A forgotten abbey of St Mary's Drogheda' Louth Arch Soc. Jn. xiii, no.2 (1954), pp190-9. Several land grants in Uriel have been tentatively dated before 1189, but these must be viewed with some suspicion. Curtis dates a grant by Richard Tirel to Adam de Hereford of land in Uriel to c1176. (Ormond deeds, 1172-1350, no.3) Richard claims to hold this land of his brother Roger, who witnesses the deed. Both brothers witnessed John's grant to Peter Pipard in 1189-91 (ibid no.863 i. O'Way-Ruthven 'The partition of the de Verdun lands'. p.40) and both served as John's bailiff in Louth after this date (Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251 no.196, Close rolls, 1227-31, p.75). until at least 1204. The grant to Hereford most probably dates from between John's accession to the throne in 1199 and Richard Tirel's removal from Louth in 1204.

25. Orpen, Normans ii, p.97.

26. W.L. Warren 'King John and Ireland' in Lydon Eng. and Ire., pp27-8



The men to whom John made his grants in Uriel in 1185, Bertram de Verdun and Gilbert Pipard, were experienced officials in the administration of King Henry II. De Verdun was sheriff of Warwickshire and Leicestershire from 1168-83 and sent supplies from there to sustain Henry II's expedition to Ireland in 1171-2. He was also an itinerant justice from 1175-9.<sup>(27)</sup> Gilbert Pipard served as sheriff of Gloucester from 1168 to 1171 and sheriff of Hereford from 1171 to 1173. His first contacts with Ireland date from this period. Between 1181-5 he farmed Chester after the death of its earl and had dealings with Maol Isu O Carrol, bishop of Airghialla. <sup>(28)</sup> These men along with Theobald Walter and Philip de Worcester formed the core of John's supporters in Ireland and Bertram de Verdun served as his seneschal in the country. <sup>(29)</sup> Their loyalty was to the crown, as they were not among the major landholders in England and both de Verdun and Pipard accompanied King Richard on crusade and died in the east in 1192. <sup>(30)</sup>

No record survives of the division of Uriel made by John in 1185. The earliest surviving records detail grants made by him between 1189-91. Bertram de Verdun was granted 'four cantreds of land in Uriel and one half cantred of the land of Luva, that namely which is towards the sea', while Peter Pipard was granted the conquest of his brother Gilbert consisting of two and a half cantreds de Ferrors (bar. Ardee) with the castle of Ardee, four burgages in Carlingford, the half cantred of Muderne (bar. Farney) one cantred of Ethir (bar. Upper Few's) a half cantred of Clochkerin (bar. Cremorne) and the cantred of Clonoys (bar. Dartree). The western half of the barony of Louth was retained in John's hands. Bertram's grant consisted of land in south Armagh, the modern baronies of Upper and Lower Dundalk and possibly the barony of Ferrard. <sup>(31)</sup>

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27. Cal. Doc. Ire. 1171-1251, nos.10, 32. Song of Dermot, p.191 states that Bertram accompanied Henry to Ireland, but this is unlikely and uncorroborated from other sources. D.N.B. xx, p.217.

28. G.E.C. Peerage, x, p.427. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251. nos8, 17.

29. R. Frame, Colonial Ireland, 1169-1369, (Dublin 1981), pp.19-21.

30. H.J. Lawlor 'A charter of Christian, bishop of Louth', R.I.A. Proc. C xxxii, (1913-16), p.32. Cal. doc. Ire. 1171-1251, no.81.

31. Otway-Ruthven, 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', pp402-6.

These grants together accounted for the O Carrol kingdom of Airghialla and in 1193 Peter Pipard's share was enlarged to include 'the land of Uhegeni' (Co. Fermanagh) thus incorporating the Irish kingdom at its largest. (32)

John probably issued these formal charters on the death of Murchadh O Carrol. The Anglo-Normans had begun their settlement of Uriel since 1185, however. John's charter to Peter Pipard in 1189 implies that Gilbert Pipard had built a castle at Ardee and that burgage plots had been allotted already in Carlingford. Gilbert seems to have transferred his interests in Uriel to his brother Peter early in 1188 when the latter received the presentation of the churches of Clonkeen and Drumcar from the bishop of Louth (Airghialla).(33).

John's major achievement in 1185 had been to introduce his closest supporters into Ireland and so enhance his authority there. The division of Uriel between John and the de Verduns and Pipards was not intended simply to win more land from the Irish for the Anglo-Normans, but also to place a check on the ambitions of Hugh de Lacy and John de Courcy. De Lacy's murder in 1186 removed for a time one perceived danger, but de Courcy was still regarded with suspicion. The objective of royal policy in this portion of Ireland at this time was control of the politically and ecclesiastically important centre of Armagh. Civil war among the Cenel Eoghain left the area without a strong Irish defender and presented a vacuum which several interests attempted to fill. In 1184 Hugh de Lacy had camped in the town for three nights with Murchadh O Carrol and attempted to replace the archbishop, Tomaltach O Connor, with Murchadh's kinsman Maol Isu O Carrol, bishop of Louth (Airghialla). (34) In the following year the new justiciar, Philip de Worcester, one of John's followers, raided Armagh, causing great destruction and in 1189 the town was again attacked, on this occasion by John de Courcy. (35)

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32. Ormond deeds, 1172-1351, no.863 (1), (4).

33. Lawlor, 'A charter of Christian' pp.28-40. A Gwynn, 'Ardee in the middle ages' Louth Arch. Soc. Jn. xi, no.2 (1946), pp.78-82.

34. See above p. 11

35. Giraldus Topographia, pp89-90. Simms 'The O Hanlons, the O Neills and the Anglo Normans', p.74.



Tensions between John's supporters and enemies in Ireland erupted in 1194, following his unsuccessful rebellion against his brother, King Richard. Walter de Lacy, son and heir of Hugh de Lacy had come of age in 1190 but had been prevented by John from recovering his inheritance in Ireland. In April 1194, within days of John's surrender to Richard at Nottingham, Walter received possession of Meath from the king. He immediately travelled to Ireland, captured John's justiciar, Peter Pipard, and issued a charter to the men of Drogheda, ignoring the fact that John had acquired the town since Hugh de Lacy's death. (36) In 1195 Walter de Lacy joined with John de Courcy and travelled to Athlone to meet Cathal Crobderg O Connor and in the following year de Courcy and Niall MacMahon burnt John's town of Louth. (37)

By this time John had been re-instated and the struggle for Armagh resumed. A new dimension had been added by the re-emergence of a united Cenel Eoghain under the resourceful leadership of Aedh O Neill. In 1196 O Neill and his allies defeated a force led by Ruaidhri MacDunlevy, king of Ulaid and supported by de Courcy which attacked Armagh. (38) By 1200 alliances had shifted again. De Courcy and O Neill were now collaborating and MacDunlevy had secured the support of 'the Galls of Ardee', that is the Pipards and their tenants, supporters of the newly installed King John, for his unsuccessful attack on Armagh. In the following year Mac Dunlevy was slain. (39)

John now concentrated his efforts in Ireland on the removal of de Courcy. He achieved this by using the services of de Courcy's erstwhile ally, Hugh de Lacy II, the younger brother of Walter de Lacy. Late in 1204 de Courcy's lands were declared forfeit and in 1205 Hugh de Lacy was created earl of Ulster. De Courcy continued his resistance with the support of O Neill and in response de Lacy ravaged Armagh in 1206 and 1207. (40)

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36. Book of Howth, p.124. Mac Niocaill, Na Buirgeisi, i, pp172-8. Otway-Ruthven, Med. Ire. p.73. Warren 'King John and Ireland', pp.31-2.

37. A.U. 1195. Misc Ir. Annals, 1196. Cal. doc. Ire. 1171-1251, no.90 Orpen Normans ii, p.137 note 1.

38. A.L.C. 1196. Simms, 'The O Hanlons, the O Neills and the Anglo-Normans' pp.74-5.

39. Misc Ir. Annals, 1200. A.L.C. 1201.

40. Orpen, Normans ii, pp.134-44.



By 1210 Hugh de Lacy had incurred the displeasure which John had previously felt for de Courcy. John's successful campaign in Ireland against de Lacy in that year was a complete vindication of the arrangements he had made for Uriel in 1185. On 7 July 1210 John reached the royal town of Louth, having received the submissions of the sub-tenants of Walter de Lacy in Meath. On the following day the king arrived at Dundalk pursuing the retreating Hugh de Lacy (mistakenly described as earl of Ulster and Oriel by the Irish annals) who burnt the castles of north Louth as he fell back to Ulster. Nicholas de Verdun was now in the king's army. He was the son of Bertram de Verdun and also the brother-in-law of Hugh de Lacy and his decision to back the crown in this struggle showed the wisdom of John's grants in 1185. (41) Another brother-in-law of de Lacy's was Roger Pipard who also accompanied John and was appointed by him as steward of Ulster. Roger, the brother of Gilbert and Peter, had apparently taken control of the Pipard share of Uriel following the capture of Peter by Walter de Lacy in 1194. In 1207 he received a grant of Duffrian in Ulster from Hugh de Lacy, possibly on the occasion of his marriage to Hugh's sister, Alice. As with Nicholas de Verdun, however, loyalty to - or fear of - the king outweighed family ties. On 9 July John reached Carlingford from where he travelled by boat to Ulster. By 28 July de Lacy had abandoned Ulster and John returned south via Carlingford. (42)

Hugh de Lacy spent the following thirteen years out of Ireland attempting to negotiate the recovery of his earldom. In 1223 he returned in rebellion and joined his half brother William in harrying Meath. In 1224 he moved to Ulster and in alliance with Aedh O'Neill attacked the lands of King John's Scottish grantee s along the north coast. He then moved to south Armagh and laid waste Nicholas de Verdun's lands in north Uriel. A royal army which included O Connor, O Brien and MacCarthy was assembled by the Marshall at Dundalk and de Lacy surrendered without further fighting. Resisting de Lacy had proved expensive for de Verdun. It also strained the resources of Mellifont Abbey. To provision his army in 1224 William Marshall took from the monks 600 cows and forty marks. The monastery still awaited repayment of this contribution in 1237. The earldom of Ulster was restored for life to Hugh de Lacy in 1227. (43)

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41. Misc. Ir. Annals, A.D. 1210. Orpen Normans ii pp 246-65. Gormanston reg. p.144.

42. Ormond deeds 1172-1350, nos. 98, 852, 863 (2). H.J. Lawlor 'A charter of Donatus prior of Louth' R.I.A. Proc. xxxii, (1913-16) pp313-23.

43. Cal. doc. Ire. 1171-1251, nos. 1140, 1210, 1245, 1498, 2398. A.L.C. 1224. Otway-Ruthven Med. Ire., pp.90-2.



De Lacy's attacks on Nicholas de Verdun in 1224 may have been inspired by personal quarrels. In c.1195 Hugh de Lacy married Lescelina de Verdun, daughter of Bertram de Verdun and sister of Thomas and Nicholas de Verdun. The marriage was consistent with John's policy of bringing pressure to bear on John de Courcy in Ulster and part of the agreement stated that the consent of Earl John would be sought 'by giving money or any other way'. The terms of the agreement between Thomas de Verdun and Hugh de Lacy were that the former would give the latter, with Lescelina his sister, half of his land in Uriel. Thomas retained for himself the castle of Dundalk and five knights' fees adjoining it. Any future conquests in the land of war in Uriel were to be equally divided between the two. (44)

Nicholas de Verdun, who succeeded his brother Thomas in c.1203, seems to have disapproved of this arrangement. Hugh de Lacy made grants to his subtenants and others in the area which de Verdun resented. Before becoming earl of Ulster in 1205 de Lacy had granted to Henry de Sai land in the barony of Upper Dundalk which O Carrol had granted to the canons of Louth.(45) Also before becoming earl de Lacy made a massive grant of Ballymascanlon to the monks of Mellifont.(46) Between 1205 and 1210 he granted to the Abbey of St Thomas the church of Dundalk and the 'obventions of the castelry of Dundalk' in so far as they pertained to him.(47)

This last grant would seem to have been a clear breach of the agreement of c.1195. De Verdun set about strengthening his position, in 1205 acquiring custody of the lands of the archbishopric of Armagh which had not been filled since the disputed election of 1201. (48) Between 1203 and 1205 Nicholas also granted

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44. Gormanston reg. pp144, 192-3.

45. Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands' p.404.

46. Fr. Colmcille 'Three unpublished Cistercian documents' Louth Arch.Soc. Jn. xiii, no.3 (1955) pp.254-5. D. Mac Iomhair 'The lordship of Ballymascanlan'. ibid., xvii, no.2 (1970), pp.79-83.

47. Reg. St. Thomas no.3. For dating See appendix I. p185.

48. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.251. See below p. 140

twenty knights' fees in south Armagh to Theobald Walter.<sup>(49)</sup> This may have been an attempt to challenge de Lacy's plans for his new earldom. In 1206 de Lacy spent ten days plundering Armagh in an attempt to assert his authority.<sup>(50)</sup>

De Verdun's chance to limit de Lacy's power in Uriel came in 1210 when he joined king John in chasing the earl from Ulster. Nicholas set about recovering de Lacy's Uriel lands, even if this entailed damage to his own sister Lescelina. A writ of 1269 stated that 'Nicholas de Verdun .... unjustly and without judgement disseised Lechelina de Lassy [of certain lands in Uriel] ... after the last return of King John from Ireland into England'.<sup>(51)</sup> Nicholas de Verdun was himself dispossessed in 1215 for rebelling against the king but he was regranted his lands in 1217. <sup>(52)</sup> Between the time of Hugh de Lacy's disgrace and his own, 1210-1215, Nicholas took some steps to undo de Lacy's grants. He seems to have cancelled the grant of the church of Dundalk to St Thomas' and promised it instead the benefices of two knights fees in prima castellaria quod firmabo in terra mea de Uriell extra cantredam de Machwercunvilla.<sup>(53)</sup>

In 1226 Hugh de Lacy's lands, including those of the fee of Nicholas de Verdun, were committed to Walter de Lacy. In the following year these lands, with the earldom of Ulster, were restored to Hugh.<sup>(54)</sup> Ill feeling lingered between de Lacy and Nicholas, who died in 1231, and his daughter and heiress Roesia de Verdun.<sup>(55)</sup> This rift was finally healed in 1235 when, in return for £200, Hugh relinquished all claims after his death to half the de Verdun lands in Uriel, on condition that those men he had enfeoffed there already remained undisturbed, holding of de Verdun.<sup>(56)</sup>

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49. Ormond deeds 1172-1350, no.863(5) Walter died in 1205. The de Verdun-Butler connection was cemented in 1225 when Roesia, daughter and heiress of Nicholas de Verdun, married Walter's son Theobald Butler (Rot. litt. claus., 1204-1224 p.60)

50. Simms, 'The O Hanlons, The O Neills and the Anglo-Normans', p.75.

51. Gormanston reg. pp144-5.

52. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.448. Rot. litt. pat., p.150. Pat. rolls, 1216-25, p.74.

53. Reg. St. Thomas no.44. For dating see Appendix I. p185.

54. Pat. rolls, 1225-32, pp.31-2. See above p. 53-4

55. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.1923.

56. Gormanston reg. pp161-2.



In this agreement de Lacy mentions 'those of whom the lands were seized into the hand of Sir Nicholas de Verdun ... for failure of service'. The de Lacy-de Verdun quarrel gave rise to a great deal of confusion regarding tenure in Uriel, as testified to by the number of calls to warranty made in these years. In 1221 Nicholas de Verdun was pleading against one of his leading sub-tenants, Adam de Napton, concerning half of a knight's fee in Barmeath.<sup>(57)</sup> In June 1226 he was given custody of the lands of Stephen de Sai. The mandate states that Stephen held of Nicholas by knight service, but Henry de Sai had been enfeoffed by Hugh de Lacy in 1202, suggesting that Nicholas had subsequently taken the service of either Henry or his successor Stephen.<sup>(58)</sup> From 1226 to 1229 Nicholas was the defendant in a case brought by his tenant Ralph Bagot concerning a knight's fee in Rath and in the same years Philip de Nugent attempted to have de Verdun warrant him land near Drogheda.<sup>(59)</sup> Meanwhile, Hugh de Lacy continued to grant land in Uriel. In May 1227 he granted Dunleer to Henry de Audeley, who also had connections with the de Verduns. On the same day as de Lacy's grant, Nicholas de Verdun also gave him land in Uriel.<sup>(60)</sup> It is indicative of the poor nature of relations between the two lords that they never appear to have witnessed a charter together. Given the limited number of first ranking Anglo-Norman noblemen in Ireland, and the fact that they were both neighbours and brothers-in-law, this can hardly have been accidental.

Roesia de Verdun continued to be faced with the difficulties over title which had troubled her father. In 1233 alone she was called to warranty by five tenants in Uriel.<sup>(61)</sup> It was probably this continuous

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57. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.996.

58. Ibid., no. 1398.

59. Ibid nos, 1467, 1542, 1623, 1676. Close rolls, 1227-1231, pp16, 587.

60. Cal. chart. rolls, 1226-57, p.36. De Lacy also granted Henry Keen north of Dundalk, worth one knight's fee. Between 1213 and 1225, however Nicholas de Verdun had granted Henry de Wotton 'unum feodum militis ubi forcelletum meum ... de ultra boschum meum de Keen, in loco competenti.' (Chartul. St Mary's Dublin, i no.42). This implies a conflict over control of Keen which was strategically situated near the Moiry pass. See Appendix I. for dating. p183.

61. Close rolls 1231-1234, pp. 289, 304-5.

litigation which encouraged the agreement of 1235 between Roesia and Hugh de Lacy. Pleas of warranty in Uriel disappear from our records in that year.

By the agreement of 1235, Hugh de Lacy lost his tenants in Uriel. However, he did not relinquish the lands he himself held in the county and these passed to his descendants.<sup>(62)</sup> In 1227 he was granted a fair at the manor of Carlingford, the centre of his interests in Uriel, and before 1237 he had granted the church of Carlingford to St Andrew's in Scotland.<sup>(63)</sup> De Lacy passed on his interests in Carlingford and the Cooley peninsula to his daughter Matilda when she married David, baron of Naas.<sup>(64)</sup> Before 1245 David granted half of the land of Carlingford to John Butler in marriage to his daughter, Matilda, retaining for himself the town and castle, while c.1280 David's widow, Matilda, daughter of Hugh de Lacy and Leselina de Verdun, passed the castle and town of Carlingford to her daughter Matilda Butler.<sup>(65)</sup> In 1304 Matilda Butler granted Carlingford with all its land in the Cooley peninsula to her grandson William de London and in the following year he exchanged it with Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, for land in Molymartel.<sup>(66)</sup> By means of these transfers Carlingford and most of the Cooley peninsula returned to the earldom of Ulster of which they had been part under Hugh de Lacy.

When John devised the division of Uriel in 1185 his purpose was two-fold. He wished to limit the ambitions of the Anglo-Norman lords in the north of Ireland and he also hoped to see previously unsettled land removed from the control of the Irish and planted by Anglo-Norman colonists. These two priorities were not always complementary. By means of his supporters in Uriel, John certainly frustrated the

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62. Otway-Ruthven 'partition of the de Verdun lands' p.405.

63. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.1544. Cal chart. rolls, 1226-57, p232. In 1212 King John had granted one knight's fee near the town to Reginald, King of Man. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.428.

64. Gormanston reg., pp195-6.

65. Ibid, pp147-8. Maurice fitz Gerald who witnessed as justiciar vacated that post in 1245 (Richardson and Sayles Admin Ire., p77.)

66. Gormanston reg., pp148-50.



expansionism of de Courcy and the de Lacys, but this policy in turn contributed to mutual antagonism between the latter and the de Verduns and this impeded John's other priority in Uriel; conquest.

Regardless of the fact that Uriel had come into the crown's hands by agreement with its last Irish king, the area was regarded by the Anglo-Normans as a land of conquest.<sup>(67)</sup> In 1189 John granted to Peter Pipard his brother Gilbert's 'conquest in Uriel'.<sup>(68)</sup> Over a century later, in 1299, a Meath jury stated that the abbot of Navan had been disseised of his church 'by Roger Pyppard, a conqueror at the first conquest of Ireland, who found it vacant at the time of his conquest.'<sup>(69)</sup> Another jury in 1312 stated that 'the ancestors of Theobald de Verdun, knight, soon after the conquest of Ireland ... had divers lands in Urgalia.'<sup>(70)</sup>

After 1189 the Anglo-Normans regarded Uriel as theirs to win and many early references give the impression of the desire of these men for conquest. Before 1191 Osbert de Coleshulla made a grant to St Thomas' which included unum aliam carucatam terre de meo conquisitu in Uriel, et si ibi non habuissem quod alibi de conquisitu meo ei habere faceram.<sup>(71)</sup> In c.1195 the agreement between Hugh de Lacy and Thomas de Verdun stated that 'whatever grantor and grantee can conquer in the land of war, in their parts of the land of Ergall, they will equally divide all between them, as they have divided the land of peace'.<sup>(72)</sup>

Early grants in Uriel were based on the lands previously held by leading Irishmen. De Coleshulla's grant to St Thomas' involved omnes decimas et decimaciones terre Heath Mac Uballether et unam carrucatam terre

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67. In 1203 King John stated that O Carrol had held of him. Fr. Colmcille 'Seven documents from Mellifont', p 37.

68. Ormond deeds, 1172-1350, no.863 (1). Otway-Ruthven 'partition of the de Verdun lands', p.402.

69. Cal. justic rolls. Ire., 1295-1303, pp281-2.

70. P.R.O.I. KB 2/4. pp103-4.

71. Reg. St Thomas, no.55. For dating see Appendix I. p185

72. See above p. 17

de terra Macunekuleth.(73) In 1193 John granted Peter Pipard 'three cantreds of the land of Uhegeni', representing the modern Co. Fermanagh.(74) In 1207 Roger Pipard gave to the church of St John Ardee, 'the whole land which Machudi held'.(75) Nicholas de Verdun was aware that his barony of upper Dundalk represented the ancient Irish kingdom of Machaire conaill. Before 1215 he granted benefices to St Thomas' in terra mea de Uriell extra cantredam de Machwercunvilla.(76) At approximately the same time Geoffrey de Normanville gave the church of Llanthony decimis de feodo meo, videlicet de terra que fuit Machlan in Uriell. The heading to this deed suggests that the land of Machlan corresponds to Dunany.(77)

The conquest of Uriel was not unopposed by the Irish. For three centuries the dominant northern grouping, the Cenel Eoghain, had been extending their power southward and eastwards. The arrival of the Anglo-Normans reversed this trend. The settlers in Uriel attempted to expand their holdings to the north and west. Acquisitions in the area after 1189 were based on military strength. This was reflected in the vocabulary of conquest in Uriel. Hugh de Lacy mentioned the 'castelry' of Dundalk before 1210 and before 1215 Nicholas de Verdun promised St Thomas the benefices de feodo duorum militum in prima castellaria quod firmabo beyond the barony of upper Dundalk.(78) Between 1213 and 1225 de Verdun also granted Henry de Wooton unum feodum militis ubi forcelletum meum [est] north of Dundalk.(79) Castellaria and forcelletum were terms suitable for a land in the process of being subdued. The unit of land was not the manor, but the less clearly defined and more flexible cantred. The confusion over the division of parts of

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73. Reg. St Thomas, nos 55, 314.

74. Ormond deeds, 1172-1350, no 863 (4). A.U. 1201.

75. Cal. pat. rolls, 1338-1340, pp 444-5. M. Archdall, Monasticon Hibernicum (Dublin 1786), pp445-6.

76. Reg. St Thomas, no.44. See note 71.

77. Ir. chartul. Llanthony, no.84. The deed is probably later than the editor suggests. Philip de Nugent, one of the witnesses, was active in the first three decades of the 13th century Rot. Claus. 1204-1224, p246. Close rolls 1227-1231, p587.

78. Reg. St Thomas, nos 3, 44.

79. Chartul St Mary's Dublin, i,no 42. See note 60.



Uriel between Hugh de Lacy and the De Verduns resulted from the instability and impermanence of borders drawn in a land in the process of being won. The fluidity of the situation is attested to by the fact that as late as 1221, over thirty years after the initial division, the Irish government was still engaged in 'the making of bounds between the kings land of Louedhe and the land of Nicholas de Verdun in Dundalk'.<sup>(80)</sup>

The demarcation of permanent boundaries was of little value while new land was still being conquered. By 1196 there were Anglo-Norman castles in Uriel at Ardee, Carlingford, Dundalk, Donaghmoyne, and Louth.<sup>(81)</sup> This had not been achieved without difficulty. In 1193, during the construction of the motte at Donaghmoyne, the bishop of Louth, Gilla Crist O Maccarain lay down in the trench and had to be dragged from it by Peter Pipard. The bishop died shortly after, but not before placing his curse on Peter who, incidentally, disappears from our records in the following year having been captured by Walter de Lacy.<sup>(82)</sup> Also in 1193 'O Carrol, lord of Oriel, was taken by the English who first put out his eyes and afterwards hanged him'.<sup>(83)</sup> This O Carrol had apparently refused to accept Murchadh's transfer of his property to the Anglo-Normans. He may well have been captured while attempting to disrupt the building of Donaghmoyne.

This did not end attacks on mottes in Uriel. In 1196 'Louth was plundered and burned, together with its castle, by Niall MacMathghamha and John de Courcy'.<sup>(84)</sup> Again in 1210 Hugh de Lacy 'burned the

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80. Reg. St Thomas no.44. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8 pp217. Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', p.40. Warren, 'King John and Ireland', pp36-7. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.1013.

81. Ormond deeds 1172-1350, no. 863 (1). G.H. Orpen 'Motes and Norman castles in County Louth' in R.S.A.I. Jn. xxxviii (1908) pp241-69. Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', p.407. A.L.C. 1193, Misc Ir. Annals, 1196. I do not include Drogheda in this list because the castle at Millmount is south of the Boyne in Meath and was constructed by Hugh de Lacy before the division of Uriel in 1185. (Orpen, Normans ii, pp79-80.)

82. A.L.C. 1193 K. Nicholls 'The register of Clogher', Clogher Rec., vii, no.3 (1971-2) p389. The register places the incident six years after Donaghmoyne was actually built. For Peter Pipard see above p.15-6.

83. A.F.M. 1193.

84. Misc Ir. Annals, 1196.

castles of Machaire Conaill (bar. upper Dundalk) and Cuailghne (bar. lower Dundalk) ... Dundalk was burned'.<sup>(85)</sup> John's response to the threat from the north was to attempt to hem in Aedh O'Neill by building castles at Derry, Cael Uisce (Co. Fermanagh) and Clones. In 1212 the justiciar, John de Grey, constructed a castle at Clones at great expense. Despite initial successes against MacMahon and O'Neill the castle was over-run in the same year by the two chiefs.<sup>(86)</sup>

The failure of the Clones expedition had far reaching consequences for the Anglo-Normans in Uriel. In its immediate aftermath in 1213, 'Hugh O'Neill defeated and dreadfully slaughtered the English, and on the same day burned Carlongphort, both people and cattle'.<sup>(87)</sup> Aedh O'Neill would have proved a formidable obstacle to Anglo-Norman advances in Uriel even without the debilitating struggles taking place within the ranks of the invaders. In 1217, in conjunction with MacMahon, he defeated yet another attempt to take Armagh, killing in the process the constable [consdapla] of Dundalk.<sup>(88)</sup> In 1227 the government acquired the site for a castle at Armagh from the archbishop, Luke de Netterville, but no further action was taken at that time.<sup>(89)</sup> Aedh O'Neill died in 1230 and a succession dispute broke out among the Cenel Eoghain which lasted for most of the decade. This allowed the Anglo-Normans to construct a castle at Armagh in 1236 but this was abandoned by them shortly after.<sup>(90)</sup>

For the Anglo-Norman settlement in Uriel the temporary success in Armagh proved to be a case of too little too late. The 1220s witnessed the start of a new period in the history of the area. The emphasis shifted from expansion to fortification, from conquest to consolidation. The failure to secure permanent military centres at Clones and Armagh meant that the Irish of south Ulster could not be overwhelmed and

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85. Ibid., 1210.

86. Ibid., 1212, A.U. 1212. 'Pipe roll. Ire. 1211-12', pp 36-7, 66. Otway-Ruthven Med. Ire., pp.82-3.

87. A.F.M. 1213.

88. A.L.C. 1217.

89. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no. 1482.

90. Simms, 'The O Hanlons, the O Neills and the Anglo-Normans', pp77-8.



their lands settled. They would continue to pose a threat to the colony. 'Conquest' disappeared from the vocabulary of Anglo-Norman Uriel at the same time as the king ordered that bounds be made in Uriel between his lands and those of Nicholas de Verdun.<sup>(91)</sup> In 1226 William Pipard complained to the king that whereas his predecessors had granted land in the marches to their tenants on condition that they fortify them dicti homines terras ipsas tenent set eas non firmant.<sup>(92)</sup> The necessity of fortification in newly won areas in Ireland had been recognised by John as early as 1200 and his grants in Uriel in 1210 contained the proviso that the lands be colonised and built on at the grantees own cost.<sup>(93)</sup> It was from the 1220s, however, that calls to fortify the marches became more urgent. In 1227 William Pipard died and his lands and the custody of his heiress, Alice, were entrusted to Ralph fitz Nicholas, a bailiff of the king.<sup>(94)</sup> He set about strengthening the defences of his lands in Uriel, concentrating his efforts on making Donaghmoyne secure. Donaghmoyne had been built by Peter Pipard in 1193. It was the most westerly settlement of the Anglo-Normans in Uriel.<sup>(95)</sup> In November 1228 fitz Nicholas was granted the services of Meath and Uriel for forty days in auxilio castri sui de Dunelamein firmandi.<sup>(96)</sup> Less than two years later this grant was repeated, quia castrum de Dunelamein ... combustum fuit ab Hiberniensibus, et idem Radulfus habet in proposito firmandi ibidem castrum lapiedum.<sup>(97)</sup> This plan finally came to fruition in 1244, when the annals state that 'the castle of Domnach-Mhaighean was covered with stone'<sup>(98)</sup>. In or before 1242 Ralph fitz Nicholas entrusted care of his Irish lands to his son Ralph whom he had married to Alice, daughter of William Pipard, who was in his custody. Ralph II continued his father's policy of seeking to fortify his

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91. See above p. 23

92. Rot.litt. claus., 1224-1227, p.138.

93. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, nos 125, 1677.

94. Pat rolls, 1225-1232, p.172 Close rolls 1227-1231, p.28. Cal. chart. rolls 1226-1257, p92. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.1541.

95. See above p. 23

96. Close rolls, 1227-1231, p125.

97. Pat. rolls 1225-1232, p339.

98. Close rolls 1231-1234, p.376. ibid 1237-1241, p510. A.U. 1244.



lands and as late as 1252 he was granted an aid to fortify a castle in Uriel ubi necesse fuisset.<sup>(99)</sup>

Roesia de Verdun had also been engaged in fortifying her inheritance. The death of Aedh O'Neill in 1230 presented an opportunity to the Anglo-Normans and the ending of the de Verdun - de Lacy quarrel in 1235 allowed some progress to be made. Roesia received her father's Irish lands in April 1233. By July 1236 the King had been informed quod delecta nobis Roesia de Verdun firmavit quoddam castrum bonum et forte in terra sua propria super Hibernienses, quod nullus predecessorum suorum potuit facere, et adhuc aliud castrum firmare proponit ad magnam securitatem terre nostre.

He granted her the service of Meath and Uriel for forty days to help build the new castle.<sup>(100)</sup> The castle she had succeeded in building was Roche, five miles west of Dundalk, which in conjunction with Donaghmoyne provided a line of defence for the settlements in Uriel. Roesia's reward was the custody of the king's manor of Louth, granted to her in 1241. By the time of her death in 1247, some sixty years after the original transfer of Uriel to Anglo-Norman control, the area had acquired the frontiers which it was to retain with few changes for three centuries.<sup>(101)</sup>

The Anglo-Normans did not merely conquer parts of Uriel, they also colonised those parts which they controlled. As late as 1242 Roesia de Verdun was still expected to settle her waste lands in Ireland.<sup>(102)</sup>

In 1210 King John gave Robert de Mandeville land in the barony of Louth which was 'waste and uninhabited'. In 1229 the justiciar was sent to enquire whether Robert had 'colonised and built on it'.<sup>(103)</sup>

The responsibility for bringing settlers to Uriel rested with the de Verdun and Pipard grantees enfeoffed by John in 1189. For these two families grants in Ireland represented a major addition to their status within

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99. Close rolls 1237-1241, p510. Close rolls 1247-1251, pp.447, Close rolls 1251-1253, pp104-5. For the genealogy of the Pipards see below p37R. Frame, 'England and Ireland, 1171-1399', in M. Jones & M. Vale (eds.) England and her neighbours 1066-1453, (London, 1989), p143.

100. Close rolls 1234-1237, p364.

101. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.2544. Close rolls 1242-1247, p.500.

102. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, nos 2567, 2588. Cat. Pat. rolls 1232-1247, p331.

103. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, n 1677.



the Anglo-Norman nobility. Neither were among the first rank of landholders in England and they owed their position instead to their service as royal familiars. In Ireland, on the other hand, their power rested not merely on service to the crown, but on their position as major tenants. The prospective grants made to them by John, had they been fully realised, would have endowed them with massive estates. Before 1200 the de Verduns were entitled to claim ownership of land from the Fews of Armagh in the north to the Boyne in the south, with the exception of the western part of the barony of Louth and the lands of the Pipards. The potential lordship of the Pipards was even greater. After 1193 they could be said to hold, in theory at least, continuously from the Irish Sea to within a few miles of the the Atlantic; from Anagassan in the barony of Ardee in the south east to the western extremity of Fermanagh to the north-west.(104)

These grants were never fully exploited. The Irish remained in practical control of Fermanagh and the majority of the modern counties of Monaghan and Armagh. Rent could be collected from Irish chiefs who were technically tenants on land granted to Anglo-Norman lords, but economically this was of far less value than the introduction of manorialism and socially it was unsatisfactory because attacks on settlers could be launched from unsubdued Irish areas.

From where did the Anglo-Normans draw their settlers to Ireland? The de Verduns and Pipards certainly looked to their own families in the first instance. Besides Bertram, Thomas, Nicholas and Roesia de Verdun, for example, there are references in Ireland to master V. de Verdun in c.1195, Milo de Verdun before 1215 and Robert de Verdun in the 1230s.(105) Likewise with the Pipards, as well as Gilbert, Peter, Roger and William Pipard there is also mention in a deed of 1207 of John Pypard and Gilbert Pypard, parson of St Mary's, Ardee.(106)

Beyond their immediate families, the de Verduns and Pipards looked for settlers for Ireland among their

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104. Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', pp401-9.

105. Gormanston reg. p.144. Reg St Thomas no.44. Close rolls 1231-1234, p305, Gormanston reg p162. Close rolls 1231-1234, p305. Gormanston reg. p162. Close rolls 1227-1231, p587. Close rolls 1231-1234, p289.

106. Cal. pat rolls, 1338-1340, pp444-5.

retainers. A number of those mentioned in charters concerning Uriel before 1240 can be shown to have had connections with these families in England. Among the supporters of the Pipards for instance, was the family of Esturmin who gave their name to the present Stormanstown in the barony of Ardee, known in the fourteenth century as Gilbertstown Sturmyrn after a man who witnessed a deed in the area as early as 1207.<sup>(107)</sup> Another member of the family, Geoffrey Esturmin, witnessed several charters in Uriel before 1227.<sup>(108)</sup> In 1226 Geoffrey, who is called the bailiff of the forest of Savignac, was given his father's lands in Wiltshire.<sup>(109)</sup> In 1215 Geoffrey's own son, Thomas, had been held in England as a hostage for the good behaviour of Roger Pipard.<sup>(110)</sup> The hostage Roger gave in Ireland in 1215 was John son of Simon. This may have been John de Clinton. Many members of this family witnessed Pipard charters in Uriel before 1230, including Simon, Hugh and Roger de Clinton. Jordan de Clinton, who witnessed a grant in Uriel before 1231 was given land in Somerset by the king in 1217. Another member of the family, Henry de Clinton, was a socius of Gilbert Pipard in Warwickshire and Leicestershire in 1182-3.<sup>(111)</sup>

Another of Gilbert's socii in 1182-3 was Robert Grafton. Robert, Geoffrey and John Grafton all subsequently appear in early Uriel charters. However in Uriel they seem to have held not of the Pipards but

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107. P.R.I. rep D.K. 47, p30. Cal. pat.rolls 1338-1340, pp444-5.

108. Lawlor, 'A charter of Christian, bishop of Louth' p28. Chartul. St. Mary's, Dublin, i, no32. C O Conbhui (Fr Colmcille) 'The lands of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin' R.I.A. Proc. lxii (1961-3), c. no.3 (1962) p73.

109. Rot. litt. claus., 1224-1227, p.162.

110. Rot litt. pat., p151.

111. Ibid pp150-1. Lawlor 'A charter of Donatus, prior of Louth', pp313-23. Chartul St Mary's Dublin i, nos 17, 34, 35. C O Conbhui 'The lands of St Marys' pp 70-4, Nos 34, 35 must date from before 1227 when one witness, William Pipard, died. See Appendix I. Rot. litt. claus. 1204-1224, p305. Pipe roll. soc. vol xxxii, 29 Henry II p.36.



of the de Verduns. This suggests that the closeness of the relationship between the two families in England was transferred across the Irish sea after 1185.(112)

The de Verduns also brought their English retainers to settle in Ireland. Henry de Wotton for instance gave his son William as a hostage for Nicholas de Verdun in Ireland in 1215.(113) Before 1192 there was already an area near Dundalk called Wottonrath, mentioned in a deed of Bertram de Verdun.(114) Between 1213 and 1225 Nicholas de Verdun granted Henry de Wotton five knights' fees north of Dundalk.(115) Henry seems to have maintained some links with England, however, as is suggested by the sheriff of Warwick accounting for him in 1217.(116) Henry apparently did not give his heir as hostage for Nicholas de Verdun in 1215, as he calls Hugh de Wotton his son and heir at roughly the same time.(117) Apart from Henry, William and Hugh de Wotton, there were other members of the family in Uriel at the time, such as Richard and Robert de Wotton.(118)

Several other associates of de Verdun in England can be traced to Ireland. Adam de Napton owed a sum of money in 1174-5 in Warwickshire and Leices<sup>er</sup>shire where Bertram de Verdun was sheriff. He subsequently witnessed several deeds in Uriel and held of Nicholas de Verdun in Barmeath in 1221.(119) Roger Bagot witnessed a grant by Bertram de Verdun to Croxdon Abbey between 1176 and 1185. Several members of

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112. *ibid* p36. Chartul St Mary's Dublin, i nos 23, 27, 29, 30. Dowdall deeds, no 14. The mention of Roesia de Verdun allows this deed to be dated between 1231 and 1247. See Appendix I. p180

113. Rot. litt. pat. p 150

114. C. MacNeill 'The de Verduns and the Draycotts' Louth Arch Soc. Jn. v no 3, (1924) pp166-7.

115. Chartul St Mary's Dublin, i no.42, see Appendix I. p183

116. Rot. litt. claus., 1204-1224, p311.

117. Chartul St Mary's Dublin, i, no 43.

118. Gormanston reg. p162. Chartul St Marys Dublin, i, no 42.

119. Pipe roll soc. vol xxii, 21 Henry II; Chartul St Mary's Dublin i, nos 25, 29. Ir chartul Llanthony, nos 112, 113, Cal. doc. Ire. 1171-1251., no.996

this family appear in Uriel before 1233, including Roger. Their lands centred around Baggottstown in the de Verdun barony of Ferrard.(120)

Another witness to the Croxdon grant was Adam de Audeley, who also accounted for Bertram de Verdun in Chester in 1186-7 when the latter was in Ireland.(121) Adam and his brother Henry, however, held in Uriel not of the de Verduns but of the de Lacys, and another member of the family, Luke de Audeley, was one of those captured by King John in Carrickfergus castle in 1210 after the flight of Hugh de Lacy.(122) This reflects the fact that the de Verduns and de Lacys were neighbours in the portion of the earldom of Chester covering the west midlands. Just as the retinues of the Pipards and de Verduns seem at times to have intermingled, so too do those of the de Verduns and de Lacys. Another example of the same phenomenon is Geoffrey de Costentin. He was associated with Bertram de Verdun in his county of Staffordshire in 1180-1, but he was granted Kilbixi in Co. Westmeath by Hugh de Lacy I before 1186 and was subsequently enfeoffed near Athlone by King John.(123) Before 1225 Geoffrey witnessed a grant in Uriel by a de Verdun tenant, Henry de Wotton, but on his death in 1253 it was stated that the only land he held in Uriel was at Dromiskin and that he held of the archbishop of Armagh.(124) This land had previously been granted by the archbishop to William le Petit, another tenant of the de Lacys, between 1206 and 1212.(125)

There was nothing unusual about men such as the de Audeleys and de Costentin holding land of two lords. The marriage alliance between the de Verduns and de Lacys in c.1195 must have reduced the anomalies still further. However, the rift between Hugh de Lacy and Nicholas de Verdun after 1210 upset this arrangement and as discussed earlier caused confusion concerning tenure in Uriel among the grantees of both

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120. N.L.I. ms History of the de Verduns Ms 8509 p33 Close rolls 1231-1234, pp304-5. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.1467. Ir chartul Llanthony nos 112, 113.

121. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.82

122. Ibid, no.1505. Orpen, Normans ii, p255, note 1.

123. Pipe roll soc. 27 Henry II, p117. Song of Dermot p229. Orpen, Normans ii pp189-90.

124. Chartul St Marys Dublin, i, no 43. See Appendix I. p 184. Cal. Inq. P.M. Vol I, no 277.

125. Reg Swayne p.2. See Appendix I. p186



families.(126)

The men discussed above were, for the most part, members of the familia of either Pipard or de Verdun and they attempted to maintain their links with their England lands while concentrating most of their attentions on Ireland. The majority of the de Verdun and Pipard tenants in Uriel, however, do not appear in English records. They may have been tenants of these lords in England, without being part of their familiae. Their experience mirrors that of these lords. For them, as for de Verdun and Pipard, Ireland represented an opportunity to acquire both new land and new status. In Ireland they formed the familiae of their lords whereas in England they had not done so.(127)

Uriel charters of before c.1240 demonstrate that the major sub-tenants of the Pipards and de Verduns were also those most likely to be called upon to witness deeds concerning these lords. Whether a Pipard or de Verdun was making a grant, receiving a grant or simply witnessing one, if it concerned Uriel he ensured that his sub-tenants were also present. In Uriel, unlike England, major land owners seem automatically to have formed the lords' familia.

The familia of the Pipards in Uriel included leaders of the families of de Repenty, de Maupas, de Heddesore, Pochewell, Fulsaw, More, Caylach, de Ani (Delany), Talon, Mol, de Seil, de Auters, and de Vernon as well as the de Clintons and Esturmins already mentioned.(128) A smaller volume of de Verdun related deeds survive, and the close ties with de Lacys makes identification of the de Verdun familia in Ireland more difficult, but together with the de Wottons, Graftons and Bagots already discussed the families of de Nugent, de Ewerden and de la Feld may be consigned with some confidence to that circle.(129)

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126. See above pp.19-20

127. Simpson 'The familia of Roger de Quincy', pp105, 116.

128. Cal. pat. rolls 1338-1340, pp 444-5. Lawlor 'A charter of Christian, bishop of Louth', p28. Chartul St Marys, Dublin, i nos 12, 18, 20, 2, 31, 35, 36.

129. See above pp 29-30. Chartul St Mary's, Dublin, i, nos 42, 43. Reg St Thomas no.45. Close rolls 1227-1231, p.16

Some observations may be made concerning the sub-tenants of the de Verduns and Pipards in Uriel. A noticeable feature of their behaviour is how it mirrored on a smaller scale that of their lords. Like them, they came to Ireland not on an individual basis but with other members of their families. It has already been observed that several representatives of the Esturmins, de Clintons, de Graftons, de Wottons, and Bagots were to be found in Uriel before 1240. More examples could be given. Adam de Napton, mentioned above, witnessed a deed concerning Barmeath near Dunleer with Simon de Napton, parson of Dunleer. Likewise, Philip de Nugent witnessed a deed with his brother Thomas, who seems to have joined him in Ireland in 1203.(130)

Charter evidence also demonstrates that the co-operation of the de Verdun and Pipard lords in Ireland was reflected in the activities of their sub-tenants. At the beginning of their involvements in Ireland Bertram de Verdun and Gilbert Pipard had together witnessed grants by their lord, John.(131) Their descendants continued to witness deeds together in Uriel. Between 1225 and 1227 Nicholas de Verdun and William Pipard witnessed a grant by Peter de Repenteny to St Mary's and in the latter year they also witnessed the ratification of all grants to the same house by the general chapter of Armagh.(132)

This interaction was also to be found among the major sub-tenants. Philip and Thomas de Nugent, and Henry de Wotton who held of the de Verduns, witnessed grants by Peter de Repenteny, a Pipard tenant.(133) In similar fashion, Geoffrey de Heddesore and Peter de Repenteny, Pipard grantees, witnessed a deed by Henry de Wotton, a man of the de Verduns.(134)

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130 See above p 19 Chartul St Marys', Dublin i, no 29. *ibid* no.19. This must date from before 1225 when the witness Roger Pipard died. Rot. litt pat. p33.

131. Mac Niocaill, Na Burgeisi i, p77.

132. Chartul St Mary's Dublin i, nos 18, 131.

133. *Ibid* nos 17, 19.

134. *Ibid* no.43.



Finally, these major sub-tenants imitated their lords by dividing their own lands among smaller tenants. Walter Buy, alias Walter son of Robert Walensis, for instance, held land in Barmeath of the Graftons and De Ruvilles who in turn held of the de Verduns.<sup>(135)</sup> Roger de la Corre held his land in Corre in the tenement of Drumcar of Peter de Repenteny whom he calls his lord. Peter held of William Pipard in whose court Roger appears.<sup>(136)</sup>

An important group of tenants in Uriel not yet discussed were those enfeoffed by King John, who had retained for himself the western portion of the barony of Louth in 1185. John was responsible for the introduction into Uriel of one of the most important families in the area in the two centuries covered by this thesis; the Gernons.

The Gernons originally held in the honor of Slane of the Flemings who had been granted the area by Hugh de Lacy I.<sup>(137)</sup> William Gernon witnessed a grant by the prior of Louth to Roger Pipard in c.1197.<sup>(138)</sup>

In 1210 Ralph Gernon accompanied King John to Carrickfergus against Hugh de Lacy.<sup>(139)</sup> He seems to have been rewarded with a grant in Uriel which passed to Richard son of William Gernon. Richard did homage for his lands in 1229 and these were later said to constitute lands held in Meath of Archibald le Fleming and in Uriel of the king.<sup>(140)</sup> In 1312 a later Richard Gernon was stated to have held Killincoule in the barony of Louth of the king in capite and Gernonstoun in Meath of the lord of Slane.<sup>(141)</sup> It

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135. *ibid* nos. 28, 29, 30. Fr. Colmcille in his article on 'the lands of St Marys abbey' p72 suggests that this is an early example of an Irish name being adapted by the settlers. I would suggest that 'Walensis' is the nickname in this case and that Buy is a corruption of de Bois. A later Walter Boy in Uriel was apparently the same as a Walter de Bois who appears in the same period. P.R.O. E 101/231/6. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/10 p49.

136. Chartul St Mary's, Dublin, i, no.20.

137. Pipe roll Ire., 1211-12, p.31. Song of Dermot, p231.

138. Lawlor 'Charter of Donatus, prior of Louth' p.314.

139. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no 406.

140. Close rolls 1227-1231, p206. Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-1284, no.740.

141. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p42.

seems safe to suggest that the Gernons came into possession of Killincoule in Uriel soon after 1210.

Another important Uriel family introduced by King John were the de Mandevilles. Martin de Mandeville who witnessed a grant by the bishop of Louth to Peter Pipard as early as 1187, held in the honor of Louth of John's bailiff, Roger Tyrel.<sup>(142)</sup> Martin's lands apparently centred on the king's manor of Ash. His daughter, Joan married Hugh de Feypo but by 1225 he was dead. In 1235 the King granted Ash to Robert Cambiator and again in 1252 granted it to Richard Cocus, including Joan's dower.<sup>(143)</sup> Martin supported King John in Ireland in 1210, as did his kinsman, Robert de Mandeville. Between 1200 and 1205 Robert witnessed a grant by Hugh de Lacy to Mellifont and in 1206 he himself was given the honor of Merswood in Dorset.<sup>(144)</sup> While John was in Ireland in 1210 he granted Robert land in the honor of Louth, although he did not give him a charter. Before 1229 the land was taken back into the king's hand but may have been returned to Robert shortly after that date. It seem to have consisted of the manor of Mansfieldstown (Mandevillestown).<sup>(145)</sup> Robert also held of Nicholas de Verdun near Dundalk and witnessed several grants by de Verdun tenants in Uriel.<sup>(146)</sup> Two other grantees who held of John in his barony of Louth were Thomas de Moylnes who was given Iniskeen in Co. Monaghan and William de Baskerville who was hanged in 1229. The de Baskervilles in England were associated with the de Verduns.<sup>(147)</sup>

It is impossible to estimate the number of English settlers who arrived in Uriel in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. What is beyond doubt is their impact upon the area. It can be argued that in

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142. Lawlor 'A charter of Christian, bishop of Louth', p28. Close rolls 1227-1231, p75.

143. Rot. litt claus II, p38. Cal pat rolls 1232-1247, p101. Close rolls 1251-1253 pp93-4. Cal.doc. Ire., 1252-1284, no.197.

144. Gormanston reg. pp179-80. D. McLomhair. The lordship of Ballymascanlon Louth Arch. Soc. Jn. xvii no.2 (1970) pp 79-80. Rot. litt. pat., p.61.

145. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no1677.

146. Reg St Thomas, no.282. Chartul St Marys, Dublin, i nos 18,37.

147. Cal. Inq. P M., vol III, no.129. Close rolls 1227-1231, p198. Pipe roll society vol xxxii, 29 Henry II p.36.



comparison with other regions of Ireland, Uriel was densely settled. Place name evidence, for instance, bears testimony to the fundamental changes in land owning brought about in Uriel in the years after 1190. A study of Anglo-Norman place names in Ireland would probably show a higher incidence in Uriel than elsewhere. This is partly to be attributed to the small geographical area of Uriel which was actually settled. Despite the enormous grants made to Pipard and de Verdun in the 1180s and 1190s, the remotest Anglo-Norman settlements in Uriel were little over ten miles from the Irish sea. Pipard and de Verdun did not have the human resources in England to colonise the Irish kingdom of Uriel, but they were able to plant their tenants closely together in the eastern portion of that kingdom and thus create an embryonic community which showed remarkable resilience in years to come.<sup>(148)</sup>

Sub-infeudation in Uriel was geared towards the defence of castles.<sup>(149)</sup> It was the responsibility of those who were granted lands to secure them from attack. Many of the families mentioned thus far also gave their names to townlands in Uriel. These place-names include Baggotstown and Carrickbaggot, Baskervillesrath, Clintonsrath and Clintonstown, Gernonstown, Graftonstown, Mandevillestown (now Mansfieldstown), Maupastown, Molesforde, Moylnestown (now Mullanstown), Morefurlong, Pipardstown, Stormanstown, Verdonstown and Wottonsrath.<sup>(150)</sup> In one instance it is possible to see the process of place-name change. In 1216 the justiciar was ordered to deliver to Philip de Nugent the land of Chilbrid which was held by the burgesses of Drogheda.<sup>(151)</sup> No more is heard of Chilbrid or Kilbride, but there are many references thereafter to Philipstown Nugent just north of Drogheda.<sup>(152)</sup>

The construction of mottes was the responsibility of the tenant. The de Verduns and Pipards had shown the

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148. See below pp 132-3. N.H.I. ii, pp311-2.

149. Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', p408.

150. See indices in Dowdall deeds, Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands' and V. Buckley (ed) Archaeological inventory of County Louth (Dublin, 1988).

151. Rot. litt. claus. 1204-1224, p.246.

152. Reg. Archbishop Alen, p204. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/4, pp.29, 46, R.C. 7/10 p459.

way by building Dundalk, Roche, Ardee and Donaghmoynne, and John had also had a motte built at Louth before 1196.<sup>(153)</sup> A study of motte distribution in Uriel reveals the importance which the settlers placed on guarding river crossings. A majority of mottes are also to be found on the fringes of the settlement, forming an arc from Crowmartin in the south to Faughart in the north. These formed a defensive line to protect Ardee, Louth and Dundalk and also guarded routes of communication to the north and west.<sup>(154)</sup>

Hugh de Lacy I constructed mottes for his sub-tenants in Meath and this also seems to have been the pattern followed in Uriel. Nicholas de Verdun granted Henry de Wotton a knight's fee near Keen where he had a forcelletum. This probably corresponds to the motte and bailey at Rathskeagh which the de Wottons certainly held at a later date.<sup>(155)</sup> The mottes at Killany (Colifan) and Aclint were controlled by the de Repentenys while Crowmartin also came into their hands from the Talon family. Ash was a de Mandeville motte, Dromin belonged to William le Petit and Dunleer was held by the de Audeleys.<sup>(156)</sup> A motte distribution map of Ireland as a whole reveals that Uriel was among the most heavily encastellated areas of medieval Ireland. This suggests both a high population density and the requirements for defensive features.<sup>(157)</sup>

The male lines of both the Pipards and de Verduns ended in the first third of thirteenth century. In 1227 William Pipard died and custody of his Irish lands and of his daughter and heiress, Alice, a minor, were granted to the king's bailiff, Ralph fitz Nicholas. Ralph married his ward to his own son, Ralph fitz

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153. See above p23

154. Eight of ten motte and baileys are on river. See map. I

155. Chartul St Mary's, Dublin, no.42. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/11 p530. Dowdall deeds, no.43.

156. Chartul St. Mary's, Dublin I no.13. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/3 p438. *ibid* R.C. 8/5, pp.134-6. Ormond deeds 1172-1350, no.116. See above pp18-20 Killany (Cullifan) built before 1213. D. McIvor 'Notes on medieval Killany', Clogher rec. V no.1 (1963), p.50.

157. See map nos I, 2



Nicholas jnr and the match produced a son who retained his mother's surname and entered into his Irish possession<sup>s</sup> in the 1260s as Ralph Pipard.<sup>(158)</sup> The case of the de Verduns was somewhat similar. When Nicholas de Verdun died in 1231 he was succeeded by his daughter Roesia who in 1225 had married Theobald Butler.<sup>(159)</sup> Their son, who succeeded on his mother's death in 1247, took her surname and was thus known as John de Verdun. He followed the example of his mother and devoted much attention to his Irish lands. In 1244 he married Margaret, granddaughter and co-heiress of Walter de Lacy and thus acquired half of the latter's lordship of Meath, the remainder going to Geoffrey de Geneville husband of the other co-heiress.<sup>(160)</sup> However, whereas de Geneville's purparty was given liberty status, that of de Verdun was not.<sup>(161)</sup>

John de Verdun was apparently a vigorous knight whose services were sought both by King Henry III and his son the lord Edward. He was with the King in Gascony in 1253 and in Wales in 1257.<sup>(162)</sup> Despite his commitments elsewhere he spent an increasing amount of time in Ireland. In 1251 he came for two years and from 1260 onwards rarely departed, receiving the king's licence in 1263 to remain in Ireland for its defence.<sup>(163)</sup> In Uriel John attempted unsuccessfully to alter the agreement made between his mother and Hugh de Lacy II in 1235 concerning division of services in the county and he also seems to have introduced to the area the family of de Clifford who received land in Uriel in return for giving John land in England.<sup>(164)</sup>

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158. Ormond deeds 1172-1350, no.116. Close-rolls 1251-1253, pp104-5. Patent rolls 1225-32, p.172. A genealogy in the Register of St Thomas (no.118) of Adam de Hereford's descendants, compiled before 1302, states that Ralph Pipard's mother was Alice daughter of "Werrisio de Peche" and an unnamed mother who was herself the granddaughter of Alan de Hereford. "Werriso de Peche" seems to be a corruption of William Pipard. William married Auda de Hereford, a daughter of Adam de Hereford and thus acquired in dower from her brother, Stephen, Leixlip and the manor of Cloncurry which eventually passed to Ralph Pipard. (Ormond deeds, 1172-1350, no.82). Cal. close rolls 1272-9, p.55.

159. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.1923. Rot. litt. claus 1224-1227, p.60.

160. Close rolls 1242-7, p186. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.2874.

161. Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-1284, no.1666. Otway-Ruthven 'the partition of the de Verdun lands in Ireland', pp409-11.

162. Cal. pat. rolls 1247-58, pp232, 598.

163. Ibid., p.97. Cal. pat. rolls 1258-66, pp23, 86, 167, 218. Close rolls, 1261-4, pp280-1.

164. Gormanston reg., pp 144, 151. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, pp224-5.



John's main interests in Ireland, however, lay not in Uriel but in the half of Meath which he received by his marriage to Margaret de Lacy. For the most part these lands lay in the modern Co. Westmeath and required constant defending. In 1261 John marked out the site of a castle at Maydow and in 1273 negotiated a treaty with Art O Melaghlin of Meath on behalf of the crown.<sup>(165)</sup> Already in 1271 John had lost two of his sons, Nicholas and John, who were slain by the O'Farrels of Longford.<sup>(166)</sup>

John's eldest remaining son Theobald was apparently in Ireland at the time of his father's death in 1274 and continued his father's active policy here.<sup>(167)</sup> The early years of his tenure were marked by disputes with the crown concerning the liberty status of his Meath lands and with Basilia de Cogan, widow of his brother Nicholas, who had been killed in 1271, concerning her dower in Uriel.<sup>(168)</sup> Theobald's status and power in Ireland were considerable. The sheriff of Dublin, for instance, was said to wear his livery.<sup>(169)</sup>

De Verdun was also permitted to receive his Irishmen into the king's peace.<sup>(170)</sup>

Theobald followed the example of his father by bringing his sons with him to Ireland. The two younger sons, Nicholas and Milo probably first arrived in the 1280s and made Uriel their permanent base while the eldest son and heir, Theobald II, also spent time in the country with his father.<sup>(171)</sup> De Verdun seems to have been ill from 1297 until his death in 1309 and did not apparently visit Ireland after his period as

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165. Otway-Ruthven, 'The partition of the de Verdun lands in Ireland', pp409-15. Ann Conn. 1261. Cal.doc. Ire. 1171-1251, no.1840.

166. A.L.C. 1271. Chartul. St Mary's Dublin, ii, p317.

167. Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-1284, no.1061.

168. Cal. close rolls 1272-9, p288., Cal.doc. Ire., 1252-84, nos 1443, 1635, 1645, 1702. Cal. fine rolls, 1272-1307, p129.

169. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp386-9.

170. Cal. pat. rolls 1281-92, p132. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-07, pp175-7.

171. Cal. pat. rolls 1281-92, p168. Cal justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303 pp228-9. Cal close rolls 1296-1302, pp42-3.



constable.<sup>(172)</sup> In all he spent perhaps twelve years in the county, which in the context of his other interests represented a strong commitment to Ireland.<sup>(173)</sup> His son and successor, Theobald II however, visited only once, briefly, as justiciar in 1314 and was content to allow his brothers Nicholas and Milo take care of his Irish possessions.<sup>(174)</sup>

In comparison with John de Verdun, Theobald II neglected his Irish possessions. The commitment of the Pipards also waned. From the 1220s to the 1250s Ralph fitz Nicholas and his son pursued a vigorous policy of fortification in Uriel.<sup>(175)</sup> Ralph Pipard succeeded to his estate in the mid-1260s and between then and 1280 spent several years in Ireland.<sup>(176)</sup> He fought with the king in Wales and Scotland but seems never to have visited Ireland again, despite making plans to do so.<sup>(177)</sup> Between 1290 and 1294 Ralph gradually transferred most of his Irish possessions, including his manors in Uriel, to his son John.<sup>(178)</sup> John was married to the daughter of Theobald Butler and came under the influence of her family to such an extent that at one point he promised Edmund Butler that he would sell his lands in Ireland or England to no one but him, on pain of forfeiture of £1000. John made several other reckless grants which eventually provoked Ralph to revoke the grant to his son.<sup>(179)</sup>

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172. Ibid., pp42-3. Cal. close rolls 1296-1302, p491. Chartul St Mary's, Dublin ii., p339.

173. B. Smith 'The concept of the march', p266.

174. Cal. pat. rolls 1307-13, pp576. Cal close rolls 1313-8, p193.

175. See above p25-6 Close rolls 1237-42, p510. Close rolls 1247-51, p447. Close rolls 1251-53, pp104-5. Ormond deeds, 1172-1350, no.120.

176. Cal. pat. rolls 1258-66, pp415. N.L.I. Ms 761 p2. Cal. close rolls, 1272-9, p130. Cal. pat rolls 1272-81, pp153, 232. Cal. doc. Ire. 1252-84, no.1428. Book of Howth, p171.

177. Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84, no. 1818, 1837, 2038. Cal pat. rolls 1281-92, p371. B. Smith 'The concept of the march', pp266-7.

178. Ormond deeds 1172-1351, nos 296, 297, 316.

179. Ibid., nos 283, 333, 335, 343, 857. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8. p21.

Following the failure of this experiment, Ralph entered into negotiations with the king for an exchange of lands which would make the crown responsible for Pipard's Irish holdings while giving Ralph lands of equal value in England. By the end of 1302 the transfer was complete, although the king shortly after complained that the Irish lands were of less value than those granted to Ralph in England.(180)

Thus ended the Pipard lordship in Uriel, although the name survived in the area through minor branches. It presents an opportune moment to discuss the importance of 'absenteeism' in this period of Uriel's history. 'Absenteeism' may in the first place be a misleading term. Ireland was the major landed interest for neither de Verdun nor Pipard and so it would be unrealistic to expect them to neglect their other lands for their Irish possessions. In 1278 the justiciar, Robert d'Ufford, complained to the king about the absence from the country of Theobald de Verdun. Such a charge is hard to justify and possibly arose from personal animus on the part of the justiciar.(182) It was fair comment, however, concerning the behaviour of Pipard. The de Verduns also ensured that while the head of the family was an increasingly rare sight in Ireland the family itself was represented by the lords' sons or brothers, who settled permanently here. Pipard's attempts to do likewise proved unsuccessful.

The impact of these trends on Uriel society was to make it more defensive and more self reliant. It has been argued that Pipard's transfer of 1302 'was very much to the advantage of the townsfolk of Ardee' and indeed memories of Ralph must have become quite hazy by this time among his tenants in Uriel.(183) But

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180. Cal. doc. Ire., 1293-1301, no.383. Cal. pat. rolls, 1302-7, p78. Cal. close rolls, 1296-1302, pp 569-70. Rot. Pat. Hib, p.2. nos 21-5. P.R.O.E. 101./619/52. I am grateful to Professor Lydon for this reference.

181. Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84, no.1510.

182. D.N.B. vol xx, p 218.

183. A. Gwynn 'Ardee in the middle ages' Louth Arch. Soc. Jn, xi, no.2 (1946), pp84-5.



Ralph's position was not taken by a resident lord but by another 'absentee', the king. While the king's representatives could and did provide more defence for the community than Pipard had done, they could not provide the leadership which accompanied resident lordship. And leadership in Uriel had never been as necessary as it was in the early fourteenth century as the community faced unprecedented pressure from the Irish. The men of Ardee may well have been happy to transfer their fealty from the negligent Pipard directly to the king, but their increasingly aggressive and independent behaviour in the following years suggests that they felt themselves to have been in a sense abandoned and realised that their future lay in their own hands.

In the early fourteenth century, the development of a new lordship in Uriel was a direct result of the king's policy of 'reconquest'.

The word of 'reconquest' is used in the early fourteenth century to describe the king's policy of re-asserting his authority in the north of Ireland.

The process of the re-assertion of royal authority in the north of Ireland was a direct result of the king's policy of 'reconquest'.

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1. C. Conway (ed.), *The Lord of Moylurg Castle*, 1960, pp. 1-14. Conway also discusses the history of Moylurg Castle in *The Lord of Moylurg Castle*, 1960, pp. 1-14. Conway also discusses the history of Moylurg Castle in *The Lord of Moylurg Castle*, 1960, pp. 1-14.

2. J.A. Watt, *The English and the Irish in the Fourteenth Century*, 1960, pp. 1-14.

3. A. Gwynn, *The Middle Ages in Ireland*, 1960, pp. 1-14.

4. *IBL*, 4, pp. 1-14.

No study of medieval Irish society would be complete without reference to the role played by the church. In Uriel the elements of continuity and change in the ecclesiastical sphere which accompanied the arrival of the English are particularly interesting because of the strong commitment to church reform which already existed there before their advent. Much has been written concerning the 'Mellifont conspiracy' as an example of racial tension in the post-invasion Irish church, but little effort has been made to examine the affair in the context of the localities where trouble occurred.<sup>(1)</sup> The 'Mellifont conspiracy' reveals a great deal concerning Uriel in the early thirteenth century, but an analysis of early thirteenth century Uriel itself casts some interesting new light on the problems of Cistercianism in medieval Ireland.<sup>(2)</sup>

The synod of Rathbreasail, held in 1111, imposed on the Irish church a diocesan system which mirrored as closely as possible the political divisions of the country as the time.<sup>(3)</sup> Such an arrangement, however, took no account of the instability of contemporary Irish kingdoms. By 1130, for instance, the kingdom of Airghialla, which in 1111 had been co-terminous with the diocese of Clogher, had expanded south-eastwards to incorporate the present Co. Louth, which pertained to the diocese of Armagh.<sup>(4)</sup> The king of Airghialla, Donnchadh O Carrol, wished to see his new conquest included in the diocese of Clogher, which was also known as the diocese of Airghialla. To this end he supported the reformer Malachy O Morgar in his attempts

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1. C. Conway (Fr Colmcille), The story of Mellifont (Dublin, 1958), pp 1, 54-74, Comhceilg na Mainistreach Moire (Dublin 1968). G. Mac Niocaill, Na Manaigh liath in Eirinn, 1142-c.1600 (Dublin, 1959), pp 85-98. B. O Dwyer, 'The problem of reform in the Irish Cistercian monasteries and the attempted solution of Stephen Lexington in 1228' in Jn. Ecc. Hist., xv (1964), pp 186-91, The conspiracy of Mellifont, 1216-1231 (Dublin, 1970). R. Stalley, The Cistercian monasteries of Ireland (London & New Haven, 1987), 17-20.
  2. J. A. Watt, The church and the two nations in medieval Ireland (Cambridge, 1970), pp 85-107.
  3. A. Gwynn, The twelfth-century reform (Dublin & Sydney, 1968), pp 28-39.
  4. N.H.L., ii pp 15-6.



to obtain the bishopric of Armagh and in return Malachy's brother, Gille Crist, became bishop of Airghialla in 1135. On his death in 1138 Malachy appointed as the new bishop another reformer, Aedh O Caellaidhe, a native of Leinster and confidant of Diarmad Mac Murrough.<sup>(5)</sup>

Malachy's reform programme for the Irish church involved the introduction into the country of new religious orders and endowments for these in Airghialla were provided by Donnchadh O Carrol. One of the first Arrouaisian houses in Ireland was founded at Louth, possibly in 1142, and Bishop Aedh O Caellaidhe became its first prior.<sup>(6)</sup> This signalled the consummation of O Carrol's plans as the diocesan see of Airghialla was transferred from Clogher to Louth, with the canons of St Mary's, Louth, now forming the cathedral chapter. The title 'Bishop of Clogher' disappeared temporarily and was replaced by either 'bishop of Louth' or 'bishop of Airghialla'.<sup>(7)</sup>

1142 witnessed the foundation of the first Cistercian house in Ireland at Mellifont. The lands granted to it by O Carrol were of marginal economic value and had only recently been conquered by him. By this grant he ensured that the southern frontier of his kingdom was unlikely to fall into enemy hands.<sup>(8)</sup> His grant also pushed the southern boundary of the diocese of Airghialla to the river Boyne. The synod of Rathbreasail had placed the terminus of the province of Armagh at the Sliabh Beagh hills, some five miles north of the river but, subsequent to O Carrol's grant, 'the mid-water of the Boyne' was accepted as the southern extreme of the territory being contested between the dioceses of Armagh and Airghialla.<sup>(9)</sup>

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5. K. Simms, 'The origins of the diocese of Clogher' in Clogher Rec., x (1980), p 190. M.T. Flanagan, 'St Mary's abbey, Louth and the introduction of the Arrouaisian observance into Ireland' in Clogher Rec. x (1980), pp 223-34. Gwynn, Twelfth-century reform, pp39-53.
  6. P. J. Dunning, 'The Arroasian Order in medieval Ireland' in I.H.S., iv (1944-5), pp 297-315. Flanagan, 'St Mary's abbey, Louth', p.229.
  7. A.F.M. 1164. Lawlor, 'A charter of Christian, bishop of Louth', p.30.
  8. Conway, Story of Mellifont, pp 7-15. N.H.I., ii, pp 15-6 The grant is reminiscent of Muirheartach O'Brien's gift of Cashel to the church in 1101 which deprived his Eoganacht rivals of their traditional seat of power. Gwynn, Twelfth-century reform, p 12.
  9. Sheehy, Pontificia Hib., ii, pp68-72. A. Gwynn, 'Armagh and Louth in the 12th and 13th centuries' in Seanchas Ardmacha, i, no.1 (1954), p2, no2, (1955), p.32.



The annexation by the diocese of Airghialla of the present Co. Louth was contested by Malachy's successor as archbishop of Armagh, Gille Mac Liag. At the synod of Kells - which was possibly held at Mellifont - in 1152, the archbishop came to blows with Donnchadh O Carrol, almost certainly in connection with this dispute, with the result that O Carrol was, for a time, expelled from his kingship.<sup>(10)</sup> The leading ecclesiastical role at the consecration of Mellifont Abbey in 1157 was played by Gille Mac Liag, with no specific mention being made of Aedh O Caellaidhe, bishop of Airghialla. Moreover it was the high-king, Muircheartach Mac Loughlin, rather than the by now reinstated Donnchadh O Carrol who took the lead in bestowing land on the abbey at the consecration ceremony. The bonds thus formed between Mellifont, the diocese of Armagh and the kingdom of Cenel Eoghain were to prove enduring and significant in the years to come.<sup>(11)</sup>

Aedh O Caellaidhe resigned as bishop of Airghialla in 1178 and on his death in 1182 was buried at St Mary's Louth. He was succeeded as bishop by Mael Isu O Carrol, a kinsman of Murchadh O Carroll who had succeeded his father Donnchadh to the kingship of Airghialla in 1168.<sup>(12)</sup> Since John de Courcy's arrival in Ulster in 1176 Airghialla, or Uriel as it was known to the English, had suffered increased interference from the invaders. The elevation, in 1180, of a relative of Ruaidhri O Connor's to the archbishopric of Armagh lent greater significance to the tension between the archdiocese and the diocese of Airghialla.<sup>(13)</sup> Mael Isu O Carrol's visit to England in 1181-2 may have been undertaken to impress the crown with his own claims to the primacy and he did succeed in ousting Archbishop Tomaltach O Connor in 1184 with the assistance of Murchadh O Carrol and Hugh de Lacy. By 1185, however, he had retreated permanently to Louth.<sup>(14)</sup>

*The year*

1185 also saw the division of Uriel between John, Lord of Ireland, Bertram de Verdun and Gilbert Pipard.

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10. *ibid.* p.7. A.F.M. 1152
11. *ibid.*, 1157. Malachy had resigned from Armagh in 1137. Gwynn, Twelfth-century reform, p.46. The consecration of Mellifont should be compared with that of Knock, near Louth, in 1148 when O Carroll and O Caellaidhe played the leading role. A.F.M. 1148.
12. Nicholls, 'The register of Clogher', p.389. Gwynn, 'Armagh and Louth', p.8. Misc. Ir. Annals, 1167.
13. N.H.I., ii, p.16 A. Gwynn, 'Tomaltach O Connor, coarb of Patrick' in Seanchas Ardmhacha, vii, no.2, (1977), pp231-74.
14. Gwynn, 'Ardee in the middle ages' p.78. Misc Ir Annals 1184. A.U. A.D. 1184, Giraldus, Topographia, pp89-90.



John retained for himself the western portion of the barony of Louth, including the lands of St Mary's priory, and by 1196 a royal castle had been built in the vicinity.<sup>(15)</sup> Mael Isu O Carrol's episcopate had demonstrated the potential of his diocese to influence events at Armagh and by intruding himself at Louth John would be in a position to manipulate the on-going ecclesiastical dispute in the area to his own advantage.

Mael Isu died in 1187 while returning from Rome and was succeeded as bishop of Louth by Gille Crist O Mucarain.<sup>(16)</sup> His episcopate saw the arrival in Uriel of English settlers and the extinction of the O Carrol kingdom. The numerous benefices he granted in the area to the newcomers demonstrated his belief that the present Co. Louth remained within his diocese, but a synod held in Dublin in 1192 returned control of the area to the archdiocese of Armagh. The synod was attended by Archbishop Tomaltach O Connor and presided over by a former monk of Mellifont, Muirges O hEnna, archbishop of Cashel.<sup>(17)</sup> Muirges, who became papal legate in the same year, was a zealous supporter of royal policy towards the Irish church and it is unlikely that the return of Co. Louth to Armagh would have been effected without royal approval.<sup>(18)</sup>

The diocese of Airghialla (Uriel) again fell vacant with the death of Gille Crist O Murcarain in 1193. The canons of St Mary's Louth, who still constituted the cathedral chapter of the diocese, elected as his successor in 1194 Maol Isu O Maol Chiarain, abbot of Mellifont.<sup>(19)</sup> The transfer of Co. Louth back to Armagh was ratified by John's justiciar in Ireland, Hamo de Valognes, in 1196-8 and O Maol Chiarain signalled his acquiescence with this decision by returning the cathedral chapter from Louth to Clogher.<sup>(20)</sup>

Maol Isu O Maol Chiarain was the first Cistercian bishop of Airghialla (Uriel). As a Cistercian he could

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15. Otway-Ruthven, 'The partition of the de Verdun lands in Ireland' pp402-9. Misc. Ir. Annals 1196.
16. A.U. 1187 Nicholls, 'Register of Clogher', p.387. N.H.I., ix, pp 273-4.
17. Lawlor, 'A charter of Christian, bishop of Louth', pp 28-40. Ir. cartul. Llanthony, no.9. Reg. St Thomas, no.314. Gwynn, 'Armagh and Louth', p.23.
18. O Dwyer, Conspiracy of Mellifont, p.11.
19. N.H.I. ix, p.274.
20. Simms, 'Origins of the diocese of Clogher', p.192 Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.335.

not claim, as Aedh O Caellaidhe had, that the post of bishop carried with it the leadership of the Arrouaisian order in Ireland. This position was vested, instead, in the prior of St Mary's Louth. The archbishop of Dublin, John Cumin, took advantage of this situation to argue that land in Dublin which had been granted to Aedh O Caellaidhe by Diarmuid Mac Murrough in 1162 pertained not to O Maol Chiarain but to the prior of Louth. A compromise was reached which left O Maol Chiarain in possession of the land until his death at which time it would revert to the priory of Louth. Since this was now within the archdiocese of Armagh the truncated diocese of Airghialla (Uriel) stood to lose yet more of its landed endowment.(21)

O Maol Chiarain had been abbot of Mellifont since 1177. His monastery was patronised by the English and received substantial land grants during his seventeen-year tenure.(22) The abbey also retained its prestige among the Irish. In 1186 Derbhogill O Rourke, with whom Diarmad Mac Murrough had eloped thirty-four years before, entered the monastery and died there seven years later. It was also at Mellifont that Murchadh O Carrol chose to end his days in 1189.(23) O Maol Chiarain's tenure as abbot also saw the beginnings of tension between Mellifont and the General Chapter of the Cistercian order. In 1191 he refused to receive a visitor sent from Clairvaux to inspect discipline in the abbey and in the following year he was suspended from the abbacy as a result. He was still under suspension in 1194 when he was elected bishop of Airghialla (Uriel) and he was ordered to attend the general Chapter at Clairvaux in the following year or face expulsion from the order. He did not apparently attend but no further action was taken against him and on his death in 1197 he was buried at Mellifont. His career presaged later dissensions which again involved Mellifont in the diocesan complexities of the region.(24)

On O Maol Chiarain's death in 1197 the electors of the diocese of Airghialla (Uriel) chose as his successor the prior of St Mary's, Louth, Gille Tigernaig Mac Gille Ronain. He was the first bishop since the 1130s not to

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21. Flanagan, 'St Mary's abbey, Louth', pp 224-6.

22. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, nos.50, 175. Conway 'Seven documents from the old abbey of Mellifont', p.47.

23. A.U. 1186, 1193, 1189.

24. Conway, Story of Mellifont, pp 44-6. A.L.C., 1197.



be styled 'bishop of Louth', being referred to instead either as 'bishop of Airghialla' or 'bishop of Clogher'.

This change in title reflected the fact that the cathedral chapter had abandoned Louth for Clogher.<sup>(25)</sup>

In 1202 Mac Giolle Ronain came into conflict with King John concerning the disputed election to the archdiocese of Armagh and was singled out for particularly bitter criticism in a letter from the king to the papal legate.<sup>(26)</sup> Archbishop Tomaltach O Connor, who died in 1201, had successfully pursued Armagh's claims to Co. Louth and made grants of land and benefices there in order to assert his authority.<sup>(27)</sup> The city of Armagh, however, continued to suffer attack from both English and Irish, being plundered in 1184, 1185, 1189, 1194, 1196 and 1200, and in 1196 the archbishop abandoned the city for the relative safety of Mellifont abbey. His burial there five years later revealed the continued significance of the links between the abbey and the archdiocese.<sup>(28)</sup>

On the death of O Connor a majority of the chapter of Armagh, including Mac Gille Ronain, elected as his successor Echdonn Mac Gille Uidhir (Eugenius), prior of the Augustinian house of Bangor. This election was made without the consent of King John who had ordered the chapter to meet at Drogheda. Only two of its members obeyed his mandate, Simon de Rocheford, bishop of Meath and Gregory mac Gille na nAingal, abbot of Mellifont. They proceeded to elect as archbishop John's favoured candidate, Humphrey de Tickhill. John refused to recognise Echdonn as archbishop until 1206.<sup>(29)</sup> He may have regarded Echdonn's promotion as a victory for his enemy, John de Courcy, since Bangor was in the heart of de Courcy's territory in Ulster. It was probably more than a coincidence that John's recognition of Echdonn followed swiftly on the defeat of

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25. H J Lawlor, 'The genesis of the diocese of Clogher' in Louth Arch. Soc. Jn., iv, no.2 (1917), p.139.

26. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no. 168.

27. Simms, 'Origins of the diocese of Clogher', p.192. Ir. cartul. Llanthony, nos 10, 50.

28. Simms, 'The O Hanlons, the O Neills and the Anglo-Normans', p.74 Gwynn, 'Tomaltach O Connor', pp 272-3.

29. Gwynn, 'Armagh and Louth', p.28. Conway, Story of Mellifont, pp xlii-xliii. Cal.doc.Ire., 1171-1251, no.251.

de Courcy by Hugh de Lacy II in 1205.(30)

Gregory Mac Gille na nAigneal, who had supported John's candidate for the archbishopric, had apparently become abbot of Mellifont following the election of Maol Isu O Maol Chiarain as bishop of Airghialla in 1194. His loyalty to the crown was rewarded by a massive grant of land to Mellifont at Ballymascanlon by Hugh de Lacy II who became earl of Ulster following his victory over de Courcy. Gregory cooperated with Archbishop Echdonn once the latter's position had been accepted by John and in 1207 Echdonn employed two monks from Mellifont to bring to the king the money owed since 1196 for the return of Co. Louth to Armagh. This suggests that despite the difficulties of 1202 the alliance between Mellifont and Armagh remained intact.(31)

Shortly after 1207, however, Abbot Gregory was forced to leave Mellifont. An entry in the annals for 1216 states that 'Gregory son of Gille-na-naingel, abbot of the monks of Erinn, in pace quievit, in the eastern world, after having been expelled by the monks of Droichead-Atha [Mellifont] through envy and jealousy.'(32)

The monks of Mellifont may have resented Gregory's support for Humphrey de Tickhill in 1202 and waited for Echdonn to be accepted as archbishop by King John before revenging themselves on their abbot. If Echdonn had been favoured by Tomaltach O Connor to succeed him as archbishop then he may have influenced the monks among whom he spent the last five years of his life.

Gille Tigernaig Mac Gille Ronain, bishop of Clogher, who had supported Echdonn in 1202, cooperated closely with the archbishop following his reconciliation with King John in 1206 and did not dispute

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30. N.H.L., ii, pp 135-6. T.E. Mc Neill, Anglo-Norman Ulster (Edinburgh, 1980), pp 3-21.

31. Conway, Story of Mellifont, pp 266-7, 'Three unpublished Cistercian documents' in Louth Arch. Soc. Jn., xiii, no.3 (1955), pp 252-6. Conway and Stalley (Cistercian monasteries p.20) misdate this grant to the 1230s. One of the witnesses, Roger Pipard, died in 1225. Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin ii, p.314. For arguments in favour of a date before 1205 see D. Mac Iomhair ( Mac Ivor) 'The lordship of Ballymascanlan' in Louth Arch. Soc. Jn., xvii, no.2 (1970), p.79. Reg. Swayne, p.2. Cal.doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.335.

32. A.L.C., 1216.



Armagh's claims to Co. Louth. In 1215 Echdonn emphasised these claims by convening a provincial synod at Drogheda, which had once been part of the diocese of Airghialla.<sup>(33)</sup> Following this synod the archbishop travelled to Rome to attend the Lateran council and died there in the following year, 1216. He was succeeded, without opposition, by his archdeacon, Luke de Netterville, the first Englishman to become archbishop of Armagh. His eventual succession had apparently been demanded by John in return for acknowledging Echdonn as archbishop in 1206.<sup>(34)</sup>

In 1218 Gille Tigernaig died and was buried in St Mary's, Louth. He was succeeded as bishop of Clogher by the man who had earlier succeeded him as prior of St Mary's, Donatus O Fidabra.<sup>(35)</sup> The priory was no longer part of the bishopric of Airghialla but it retained its prestige among the diocesan chapter. Unlike Mellifont, St Mary's, Louth, received no endowments from the English and as recently as 1204 attempts had been made by one of the settlers in the area to have the grants made to it by O Carrol before the invasion declared invalid.<sup>(36)</sup> Donatus may have believed that the continued control of Co. Louth by Armagh would lead to a further diminution in the status and wealth of St Mary's. As bishop of Clogher/Airghialla he was not prepared to follow his predecessor's policy of cooperation with the archbishop of Armagh and re-opened the diocesan dispute by claiming for his bishopric 'the priory of Louth and the other churches that lie between the water of Carlingford and the mid-water of the Boyne'.<sup>(37)</sup> That he had the support of the canons of St Mary's in this campaign is suggested by the fact that in 1226 the archbishop of Armagh excommunicated a number of them 'for contumacy and excesses'.<sup>(38)</sup>

The archbishop, Luke de Netterville, resided in the town of Drogheda among the Augustinian canons of St

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33. Ir. cartul. Llanthony, nos, 11, 41, 53. Reg. Swayne, p.2. The editor misdates this deed to c.1218-20. See Appendix I for dating

34. Gwynn, 'Armagh and Louth', pp 29-30.

35. Nicholls, 'Register of Clogher', p 389. N.H.I., ix, p.274. Lawlor, 'A charter of Donatus, prior of Louth', pp 313-23.

36. Cal. papal letters, 1198-1304, p.22.

37. Sheehy, Pontificia Hib., ii, pp 68-72. Gwynn, 'Armagh and Louth', pp 31-2.

38. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.1481.

Peter's. At one stage of his episcopate, possibly during the revolt of Hugh de Lacy II in 1223-4, Luke and the community of St Peter's were forced to flee from the town and were given shelter in the house of Llanthony secunda in Hereford.<sup>(39)</sup> Luke showed his determination to retain control of Co. Louth for the archdiocese by making grants of land in the area and when he died in 1227 he was interred, like his predecessor Tomaltach O Connor, at Mellifont abbey.<sup>(40)</sup>

On Luke's death the archbishop of Dublin, Henry de London, urged the crown to secure the archbishopric of Armagh for the bishop of Limerick, Hugh de Burgh. The initiative was taken, however, by the cathedral chapter of Armagh which speedily elected a successor to de Netterville. Their choice was none other than Donatus O Fidabra, the bishop of Clogher, whose election was not contested by Henry III and who received the temporalities of the archdiocese in September 1227.<sup>(41)</sup>

Donatus, who as bishop of Clogher had sought to detach Co. Louth from the archdiocese of Armagh, completely reversed his policy on becoming archbishop. Not only did he now seek to retain the disputed area for Armagh, he further proposed that the dioceses of Clogher and Armagh be united under the archbishop. On 10 October 1227 King Henry III agreed to this request and sought the approval of the pope.<sup>(42)</sup> Donatus's volte face caused an immediate split in the cathedral chapter of the diocese of Clogher between those who agreed with unification with Armagh and those who did not. The latter party proceeded to elect a new bishop of Clogher, Nehemias O Bracain, prior of Mellifont. Donatus refused to consecrate Nehemias but the ceremony was performed instead by the archbishop of Tuam, Felix O Ruadhan. Nehemias sought not only to retain the independence of his diocese but also to regain control of Co. Louth, a policy he inherited from his predecessor as bishop of Clogher, Donatus O Fidabra.<sup>(43)</sup>

Archbishop Donatus later complained to the pope that the election of Nehemias as bishop of Clogher had

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39. Gwynn, 'Armagh and Louth', pp. 31, 36. Ir cartul. Llanthony, no.16.

40. ibid., no.13. Gwynn, 'Armagh and Louth', p.31.

41. ibid., p.32.

42. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251., no.1559.

43. Gwynn, 'Armagh and Louth', pp 33-4.



been 'procured by some married clerks of that church and one canon regular in secular garb, in contempt of the dean, precentor and chancellor of the same church'.<sup>(44)</sup> The mention of the canon regular in this petition suggests that the Arrouaisian house of St Mary's, Louth, retained some say in the election of the bishop of Clogher, despite the transfer of the cathedral chapter from Louth to Clogher in the 1190s. The fact that the first two bishops of Clogher elected subsequent to this transfer, Gille Tigernaig Mac Gille Ronain and Donatus O Fidabra, had both also been priors of St Mary's adds weight to this conjecture.

In choosing a successor to Donatus as bishop of Clogher the disaffected members of the diocesan chapter displayed a great deal of shrewdness. By electing Nehemias O Bracain, prior of Mellifont, they ensured that the Armagh-Clogher dispute would have repercussions within the premier religious establishment in the region. Mellifont abbey not only had a long tradition of cooperation with Armagh, it also lay within the territory claimed by the diocese of Clogher. Thus in 1227-8 the monks of Mellifont were faced with a serious dilemma. Should they continue the traditional support of their house for the archbishop of Armagh, who was also favoured by the king, or should they ally themselves with their prior, Nehemias, bishop of Clogher? It was at this delicate juncture in the ecclesiastical politics of Uriel that the 'Mellifont conspiracy' erupted.

There had been disciplinary problems at Mellifont in the 1190s and again during the abbacy of Gregory Mac Gille na nAingeal.<sup>(45)</sup> In 1216 the Cistercian General Chapter at Clairvaux heard of 'enormities' at Mellifont and appointed visitors to reform the house. These were met with opposition by Thomas, who had succeeded Gregory as abbot. The General Chapter reacted sharply as an entry in the annals for 1217 demonstrates.

All the abbots of Erinn went across eastwards to the general chapter in this year; and their attendants were dispersed and the choice of them was slain, by Saxons; and the abbot of Droichet-atha [Mellifont] was deprived of his abbacy in this chapter.<sup>(46)</sup>

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44. Cal. papal letters, 1198-1304, pp 163-4.

45. See above pp. 47-8

46. A.L.C., 1217. Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin, i, no.129 O Dwyer, Conspiracy of Mellifont, p 54. Conway, Story of Mellifont, p.56.

Further complaints concerning Mellifont and its daughter houses were heard at the General Chapter in 1218, 1219, 1220 and 1221.<sup>(47)</sup> In 1227 the Cistercian visitors to Ireland informed the Chapter that a conspiracy existed among the houses of the Mellifont filiation to subvert the authority of the order. Five Irish abbots were deposed and a number of houses were withdrawn from the control of Mellifont. A new visitor, Stephen of Lexington, abbot of Stanley, was appointed to continue this policy of correction. He arrived in Ireland in March 1228.<sup>(48)</sup>

In May Stephen wrote from Duiske in Co. Kilkenny, asking the abbot of Mellifont to meet him <sup>in</sup> Dublin on 25 June. On receipt of this letter the French abbot, who had been appointed during the visitation of the ~~the~~ previous year, immediately wrote to the abbot of Clairvaux seeking his permission to resign. The request was granted and Stephen reluctantly accepted the resignation of 'brother R.' before entering Mellifont. He had at first been unwilling to do so because of the abbot's zeal and because of 'the regard which the English have for him over others of the aforesaid house of Mellifont'. However, Stephen had himself heard death-threats being made against the abbot and so agreed to his resignation, being 'very concerned not to bring about his death through a lack of judgement'.<sup>(49)</sup>

'Brother R.', like Gregory Mac Gille na nAingeal some twenty years before him, had fallen foul of the monastic community over which he presided. The disaffection of the monks in both cases may have had the same origin. Gregory had supported the royal candidate for the archbishopric of Armagh in 1202 while in 1228 'Brother R.' was said to enjoy the regard of the English. He may have earned this regard by adhering to the royal policy concerning the Armagh-Clogher dispute, which was to favour the claims of Donatus O Fidabra over those of Nehemias O Bracain. The sympathies of the monks of Mellifont, however, seem to have lain with their prior and not their abbot. On Stephen's arrival at the abbey, late in July 1228, he found

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47. Ibid., p56

48. O Dwyer, Conspiracy of Mellifont, pp 20-1.

49. Stephen of Lexington, Letters from Ireland, 1228-9, trans. B. O Dwyer (Kalimazoo, 1982), p.65.



that sixty-eight of the house's 110 monks had already departed, seeking the protection of Aedh O'Neill, king of Cenel Eoghain, while those who remained were suspicious and hostile. Before these could summon their kinsmen from the locality, Stephen rushed through the election of a new abbot, Jocelyn, prior of Beaubec.<sup>(50)</sup>

Aedh O'Neill later wrote to Stephen asking him to receive back the monks who had fled to him. Stephen allowed some to return to Mellifont and distributed the remainder among 'well-ordered' Cistercian houses in Ireland and abroad. He also urged Aedh to defend and protect Mellifont and threatened to transfer the monastery to Leinster or to England should signs of rebellion re-appear.<sup>(51)</sup> Stephen elsewhere described Mellifont as being situated in pessima namque marchia et periculosa inter Anglicos et Hibernicos and it is clear that the Irish retained a stronger influence there than might have been expected, more especially since the abbey lay only five miles from Drogheda, within the heart of the English settlement in Ireland.<sup>(52)</sup> Mellifont appears to have been staffed entirely by Irish monks who regarded the king of Cenel Eoghain as their natural protector. They may have had in mind the role played in the consecration of the abbey some seventy years earlier by the king of Cenel Eoghain of that time, Muircheatach Mac Loughlin.<sup>(53)</sup>

Until his death in 1230, Aedh O'Neill was the dominant figure in Ulster politics. Since assuming the kingship of Cenel Eoghain in c1200 he had managed to retain a large measure of independence by manipulating the insecurity and ambitions first of John de Courcy and then of Hugh de Lacy II.<sup>(54)</sup> In 1227, however, two potential threats to his position in Ulster had emerged. In January, Archbishop Luke de Netterville assigned to the king a site at Armagh suitable for the construction of a new castle and later in the

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50. 'Registrum Epistolarum Stephani de Lexington', ed. P.B. Greisser in Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis, ii (1948), pp 45-8.

51. Ibid., pp 62-3.

52. Ibid., p42.

53. See above, p 8

54. Simms, 'The O Hanlons, the O Neills and the Anglo-Normans', pp 74-7.

same year the rehabilitated Hugh de Lacy II was finally restored to his earldom of Ulster. (55) Taken together, these developments appeared to suggest a renewal of attempts to curb O'Neill's power.

In such a situation Aedh was unlikely to favour the attempts of Donatus O'Fidabra - which had the support of the crown- to unite the dioceses of Armagh and Clogher. Were the English to succeed in building a castle at Armagh they would be in a position to annex south Ulster, including the territory covered by the diocese of Clogher. In this region O'Neill relied on the support of the Mac Mahons, who had replaced the O'Carrolls as the leading family in what remained of the kingdom of Airghialla. The Mac Mahons would have strongly opposed the absorption of 'their' diocese of Clogher into Armagh and would have expected O'Neill to assist them in their resistance. (56)

Stephen of Lexington realised that to ensure stability and religious renewal at Mellifont he would have to address the Armagh-Clogher controversy. He initially supported the crown and Donatus O'Fidabra in their efforts to unite the dioceses. Nehemias O'Bracain had been elected bishop of Clogher before Stephen's arrival in Ireland, but it was as 'prior of Mellifont' that the visitor addressed him in a letter dated before his arrival at the house. Nehemias did not obstruct Stephen's visitation and the latter remarked of him that he 'deserves commendation on account of his pleasing manners and moderate literacy.' (57) Stephen sought to reward Nehemias' cooperation while denying him the bishopric of Clogher and suggested that he be considered for the abbacy of Boyle, which was vacant at the time. Nehemias, however, was not elected. (58)

By the time he left Ireland in 1228, however, Stephen had reversed his opinions concerning the Armagh-Clogher dispute. He wrote to the bishop of Salisbury to appeal 'on behalf of the prior of Mellifont, elected to the bishopric of Clogher ... that you will promote his cause and this matter according to God. For

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55. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, nos. 1482, 1498.

56. Misc. Ir. Annals, 1207, 1211, 1212, A.L.C. 1217.

57. Stephen of Lexington, letters from Ireland, pp 90, 113.

58. Ibid., p 110.



the aforesaid bishopric is situated for the most part among mere Irish'.<sup>(59)</sup> This change of attitude probably reflected Cistercian displeasure with the behaviour of the archbishop of Armagh, Donatus O Fidabra. He had left Ireland for Rome shortly after acquiring the agreement of the crown for the unification of the dioceses in October 1227 and he received from the pope a commission to investigate abuses among the Cistercians in Ireland. The Cistercian General chapter objected strongly and the commission was revoked in September 1228.<sup>(60)</sup>

Donatus had secured this commission not only for himself but also for the bishops of Cloyne and Dromore. These were both Cistercians and the bishop of Dromore had previously been cellarer at Mellifont. Donatus, therefore, was attempting to divide the monks of Mellifont and discourage them from supporting their prior, Nehemias.<sup>(61)</sup> The General Chapter objected to a development which 'committed the concerns of the Order to any person outside the Order' and they resented in particular the appointment of Gerald, bishop of Dromore. The visitors of 1227 had identified Gerald as the leader of a conspiracy at Mellifont and had excommunicated him. It was while under this excommunication that he was consecrated as bishop of Dromore.<sup>(62)</sup>

By the time of Stephen of Lexington's departure from Ireland in November 1228 Donatus O Fidabra had lost the support of the Cistercian house of Mellifont for his plan to unite Clogher with Armagh. This, combined with the opposition of at least some of the canons of St Marys, Louth and that of Aedh O Neill was enough to end talk of merger, for the time being at least. The pope came to no decision on the question and Nehemias was accepted by the crown as bishop of Clogher. In 1229 he witnessed a confirmation by Donatus of all previous grants in Uriel made to St. Mary's, Dublin, demonstrating that by then the archbishop had

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59. Ibid., p.113.

60. Ibid., pp 180-2.

61. O Dwyer, Conspiracy of Mellifont, pp 27-8.

62. Conway, Story of Mellifont, p.58. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no. 1500.

recognised him as bishop of Clogher.(63)

Nehemias, however, was committed to more than simply the survival of Clogher as an independent diocese. On his election as bishop he had adopted the policy of his predecessor, Donatus O Fidabra, and sought the return of the modern county Louth to Clogher. His attestation of Donatus' confirmation of grants in the county in 1229 suggests that at that juncture he had abandoned such claims. Some four years later, however, he revived the dispute by confirming, as bishop of Clogher, all grants made to St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, in Uriel, thus arrogating to himself a function of the archbishop of Armagh.(64) Donatus responded by excommunicating Nehemias and travelling to Rome to have the election of the latter as bishop declared void and to renew his appeal for a union of Clogher and Armagh. In 1237 Pope Gregory IX appointed the bishops of Killaloe and Ardagh to reach a decision on the affair but before they could begin their task Donatus died while returning to Ireland from Rome.(65)

Nehemias took advantage of the demise of his adversary to claim tenements in the present county Louth which the justiciar had taken into the king's hand on the death of Donatus. These consisted of Termonfeckin, Clogherhead (Kilclochair), Dromin (Drunnyng), Dromiskin (Drummeselin) and Smarmore (Smirm). In May 1238 the justiciar was ordered to enquire whether these pertained to the bishopric of Clogher.(66) Two months later the mandate was repeated, but on this occasion its purpose was to determine whether Donatus had been seised of Termonfeckin when he last left Ireland.(67)

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63. Chartul. St. Mary's Dublin, i no.132

64. Ibid., no.138

65. Gwynn 'Armagh and Louth in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', pp 33-4.

66. Close rolls 1237-1242, p.49.

67. Ibid., p 262.



The confusion thus caused by the attempts of Nehemias to dispute the ownership of ecclesiastical lands in the present county <sup>of</sup> Louth signalled in effect the final act in the efforts by the bishopric of Clogher to regain the territory which had comprised the diocese of Louth. Nehemias died in 1240 and in the same year a new archbishop of Armagh was consecrated, the German Albert Suerbeer.<sup>(68)</sup> Albert immediately petitioned the pope for a union of the sees of Armagh and Clogher claiming that he had found his diocese 'more stripped of its goods by the prelates and barons of those parts than could be believed and among them by his own suffragans, of whom the late bishop of Clogher was the worst of his persecutors'.<sup>(69)</sup> The pope agreed to the request and in February 1241 the king ordered 'that the bishopric of Clogher be united to the archbishopric of Armagh on account of the poverty of each see'.<sup>(70)</sup>

Albert re-inforced the victory of Armagh over Clogher in 1242 by presiding over a general chapter of the Augustinians in Ireland held at Louth, possibly to commemorate the centennial of the foundation of the Arrouaisian house of St. Mary's.<sup>(71)</sup> Two years later in 1244 the reduced importance of the house of Louth was further confirmed by an agreement made with St Mary's Abbey, Dublin. This concerned the provisions of the grant made by Gille Tigernaig Mac Gilla Ronain, prior of St Mary's Louth, to Peter Pipard in 1187-8 of the presentation to the churches of Clonkeen and Drumcar.<sup>(72)</sup> In this charter the community of the house of Louth reserved for itself one-third of the tithes of these churches as the cathedral chapter of the diocese. These churches were subsequently granted to St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin. Louth, however, had lost its position as cathedral chapter before the grants to St Mary's and so the Dublin house felt no obligation to continue the payments of the third to St Mary's, Louth. In 1244 a compromise was reached. Clonkeen was returned to Louth which in turn yielded all rights in Drumcar and agreed to forego any future claims to the third part.<sup>(73)</sup>

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68. N.H.I., ix, pp 269, 274.

69. Cal. papal letters, 1198-1304, pp 192-3.

70. Cal. doc. Ire, 1171-1251, no.2505.

71. Flanagan, "St Marys Abbey, Louth", p 229.

72. Lawlor, 'Charter of Christin, bishop of Louth', pp 28-9. See above pp. 44-6

73. Chartul St Mary's Dublin, nos.14, 132, 281.

The desire of the archbishops of Armagh for a union with the diocese of Clogher may well have been inspired by a wish to ensure that the present county Louth would never be lost from their control. By 1244 this possibility had been permanently removed. Armagh was able to relax somewhat and in 1245 a new bishop of Clogher was elected. He was David O Bracain, a brother of Nehemias and like him a monk of Mellifont.<sup>(74)</sup> Armagh raised no objections to the re-emergence of the diocese of Clogher and in 1250 a final settlement was achieved with the formal annexation to Armagh of the deaneries of Drogheda, Ardee, Louth and Dundalk.<sup>(75)</sup> Clogher can have added little to the financial resources of Armagh. In 1228 Stephen of Lexington had justified its continued existence by explaining that it was 'situated for the most part among mere Irish'.<sup>(76)</sup> The term 'bishop of Airghialla' was seldom used after 1218, yet the territory covered by the bishopric of Clogher by the middle of the thirteenth century corresponded closely to the Mac Mahon lordship of Airghialla. After some 125 years, the bishopric of Clogher/Airghialla had returned to the limits set for it at the synod of Rathbreasail.<sup>(77)</sup>

One of the many controversial issues raised during the Armagh-Clogher dispute was the question of the archiepiscopal manors in Uriel. By the end of the middle ages the archbishops of Armagh held the manors of Termonfeckin and Dromiskin where for the most part they resided when they were in Ireland.<sup>(78)</sup> It is probable that these lands pertained to the see of Patrick long before the arrival of the English, but formal grants seem to have been first made to Archbishop Tomaltach O Connor, possibly after the synod of Dublin of 1192 had transferred control of Co. Louth from the see of Clogher to that of Armagh.<sup>(79)</sup> As late as the early fourteenth century the priory of Louth disputed the right of the archbishop to present to the parsonage of Dromiskin and claimed for itself the vicarage of Termonfeckin. Louth's claims probably date back to the time of Aedh O Caellaidhe who may have acquired these advowsons while he was prior of Louth and bishop

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74. N.H.L., ix, p.274.

75. J. Dalton, A history of Drogheda, ii (Dublin, 1844) p.50.

76. See above p.p 54-5

77. Lawlor, 'The genesis of the diocese of Clogher', p142.

78. Watt, Ch. in med. Ire., p 176. Gwynn, Med. province Armagh, pp86-7.

79. D. Mac Iomhair, 'Primate Mac Maol Iosa and County Louth', Seanchas Ardmhacha, vi, no.1, (1971), pp.71-2, 81.



of Louth/Airghialla from Donnchadh O Carrol, king of Airghialla.(80)

The priory of Louth, unlike Mellifont abbey, did not receive large grants of land from the newly arrived English and the long drawn-out dispute between the diocese of Armagh and Clogher certainly cost the priory land and ecclesiastical privileges in Uriel.(81) However, the numerous disputes of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries between the prior and various local English families bear witness to the fact that by that stage some grants of land were being made to the priory.(82) These, however, do not compare in size with the gifts of land which came to be made to the archdiocese of Armagh in the same period and which involved the archbishop of the time, Nicholas Mac Maol Iosa, in endless litigation.

Archbishop Mac Maol Iosa's innumerable disputes with the crown concerning land granted to the church in contravention of the statute of Mortmain and with the de Verduns and other English families concerning land and benefices in Uriel have been discussed by Fr. Mac Iomhair.(83) Mac Maol Iosa apparently came from the diocese of Ardagh. In 1284 he was accused of having harboured the murders of two of John de Verdun's sons who in 1272 had been slain by the O Farrels in the Ardagh area.(84) There can be little doubt, however, concerning Archbishop Nicholas' enthusiasm for the English regime in Ireland. His attitude to the Irish clans of his archdiocese was admonitory. He described his manor of Iniskeen, which lay in the land of the Mac Mahons, as being situated in medio perverse gentis and his propounding of the bull clericis laicos to the same family in 1297, accompanied by the bishop of Clogher, served as an excuse for him to list the 'crimes'

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80. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/11, pp 677-8. See above p. 43-4

81. See above p.57 Gormanston reg., p.155.

82. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/3. p.413. P.R.O.I.R.C. 7/4, pp41-2, 225-6, P.R.O.I.R.C. 7/10, p.382. G. Hand, 'Two hitherto unpublished membranes of Irish petitions presented at the midsummer parliament of 1302 and the Lent parliament of 1305', R.I.A. Proc. lxxi, C. (1971), p.6.

83. Mac Iomhair 'Primate Mac Maol Iosa', pp 70-93.

84. A. Gwynn, 'Nicholas mac Maol Iosa, archbisop of Armagh, 1272-1303', in J. Ryan (ed.), Feil-Sgribhinn Eoin Mhic Neill, (Dublin, 1940), pp.394-405.

which the Irish had committed against the church.(85)

Nicholas was also an unashamed nepotist who boosted the fortunes of his family by introducing them into English society in Uriel. In 1285 Christopher Mac Maol Iosa was granted English law and in the same year English law was also granted to Rose Mac Maol Iosa, who had married Peter de Repenty.(86) Nicholas later became involved in a dispute concerning land in Monasterboice with John de Repenty which may have been connected with this marriage.(87)

It is clear that Nicholas Mac Maol Iosa believed that the best interests of the church of Armagh lay in fostering close ties with the English settlers in the archdiocese and especially in Uriel. In this he adhered to the example set by Archbishop Tomaltach O Connor and followed, however erratically, by Donatus O Fidabra. Nicholas' immediate predecessor as archbishop, Maol Padraig O Scannal had possibly been prior of the Dominican house at Drogheda before his accession to the primacy.(88) The last Irish archbishop of Armagh in the middle ages, David O Herighty issued ordinances against Irish jugglers and beggars in the archdiocese. As a reward for his loyalty to the crown he was granted in 1338 the lands which had been confiscated from Nicholas Mac Maol Iosa because of infringements of the statute of Mortmain.(89) Indeed David's successor as archbishop, the Dundalk born Richard fitz Ralph, was far more 'Christian' in his attitude to the Irish of his diocese than his Irish predecessors had been. He was particularly critical of the behaviour of the townsmen of Dundalk and Drogheda towards the Irish with whom they had dealings. The exclusion of Irishmen from the post of archbishop of Armagh from the mid-fourteenth century could not have been justified by doubts about the loyalty of previous Irish primates.(90)

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85. Gwynn, 'Documents relating to Armagh', p 11, Nicholls, 'Register of Clogher', pp.413-21.

86. See below pp. 109-10

87. P.R.O.I.R.C. 7/7, p436.

88. H. O Sullivan, 'The Franciscans in Dundalk', Seanchas Ardmhacha, iv, no.1 (1960-1), p.33.

89. Reg. Swayne, p.11 Cal. pat. rolls 1338-1340, p.85.

90. Walsh, Richard Fitz Ralph, pp 266, 285-7, 318-48.



A study of the fortunes of the Church in Uriel between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries reveals a large measure of continuity despite the arrival of the English. The Armagh-Clogher dispute dominated the ecclesiastical politics of the area both before and after their advent. Uriel under the O Carrols had been exceptionally receptive to the plans of the church reformers. The Augustinians and Cistercians had established themselves there a generation before the English settled the area. In general the newcomers preferred to found new houses in Uriel or grant land there to houses under English control elsewhere in Ireland, rather than endow the monasteries which had thrived in the area before their coming. New orders were introduced such as the Cruciferi at Ardee in 1207 and Dundalk in 1189.<sup>(91)</sup> The Franciscans and Dominicans were established at Drogheda and Dundalk before 1260 and shortly after the Templars received the manors of Kilsarin and Cooley.<sup>(92)</sup> As late as the 1280s Ralph Pipard founded a Carmelite house at Ardee while in 1306 Richard de Burgh, on acquiring Carlingford, founded there a new Dominican abbey.<sup>(93)</sup>

Dublin houses also received large grants of land in Uriel. Fr Colmcille has analysed the extensive grants made there to the Cistercian house of St Mary's.<sup>(94)</sup> The Victorine house of St Thomas' also received land, as did the Knights Hospitaller of St John at Kilmainham.<sup>(95)</sup> When a subsidy was proclaimed on behalf of the king in 1303 Uriel proffered £120. Of this one-third, £40, came from the tenants of the archbishop of Armagh and the abbot of Mellifont in the county, who each paid £20.<sup>(96)</sup> Church lands apart from those pertaining to Armagh and Mellifont were included in the £80 offered by the rest of Uriel. This suggests that well over one-third of the land in Uriel was in the hands of the church. Although it is impossible to be certain of such figures it seems likely that this was an unusually high percentage of land held in any one county in the lordship by the church. It was a fact which may have helped Uriel remain one of the "loyal shires" of English Ireland.

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91. Gwynn and Hadcock, Med. relig. houses, pp.210, 212-3.

92. *Ibid.*, pp 224, 247-8, 338.

93. *Ibid.*, pp 286, 222-3.

94. Conway (O Conbhui) 'The lands of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin', pp 70-4.

95. Reg. St. Thomas, nos., 3, 42, 44, 45, 55, 282, 314. Reg. St. John, Dublin, nos., 240-5.

96. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 38, p 72. N.H.I., ii, pp.451-3.

The early fourteenth century was a time of increased lawlessness throughout Ireland. The parliaments of 1297 and 1310 revealed the deterioration in the position of the English in Ireland which had by then occurred. Two major problems were identified; the increasing ease with which the Irish were able to attack the marches and lands of peace and the growing oppression of the people by their lords who kept companies of kerne on their lands at the expense of the local population. The enactments of the parliaments made it clear that peace keeping must become more and more the concern of local communities themselves.<sup>(1)</sup> The Kilkenny parliament of 1310 was held in the aftermath of a rebellion in Carlow and Wexford instigated by the English family of de Caunteton in conjunction with the O Byrnes, while three of the Uriel representatives at the parliament, Richard d'Exeter, Baldwin le Fleming and Walter de Cusak, later acted as pledges for a number of the de Verdun rebels of 1312.<sup>(2)</sup> The English rebellions in early fourteenth century Ireland, although fundamentally different from each other in many ways, were part of the general malaise of the lordship at that time.

The rebellion in Uriel in 1312 may have been inspired in part by the ordinances of the 1310 parliament, the last of which had condemned the shortcomings of sheriffs in Ireland who were accused of being unlearned and unsuitable for office.<sup>(3)</sup> This was part of a campaign to reduce corruption in local government. On 28 February 1310 two chamberlains of the exchequer were given a commission to investigate the distribution of confiscated Templar property in Dublin, Meath and Uriel and also to enquire into the returns sent to the Dublin exchequer by sheriffs in Ireland. The sheriffs, it was stated falsas et fictas responsiones diversimode fingentes proponunt by suggesting that outstanding debts could not be collected because the debtors had no property in their counties. In response, Edward huiusmodi vicecomitum nostrorum maliciis quatenus juste

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1. Stat. Ire., John -Hen.V, pp 199-213, 259-77. Lydon, Lordship, pp138-40.
  2. Otway-Ruthven, Med. Ire., pp 219-20. Stat. Ire., John - Hen. V, pp259-63, Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp210, 276, P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp. 2, 110, 125-6.
  3. Stat. Ire., John-Hen V, p.277.



poterimus obviare assigned the chamberlains Ad inquirendum in comitatu nostro Uriel per sacramentum, etc. per quos etc., que videlicet debita nostra clara sunt et que non de omnibus et singulis debitis nostris que nobis debentur in eodem comitatu ad que vicecomites nostri eiusdem comitatus respondent in redditione comp<sup>o</sup>rum suorum ad scaccarium nostrum predictu. quod huiusmodi debitor<sup>es</sup> nostri nichil habent in ballivis suis nec habuerunt tempore quo onerati fuerunt de eidem debitis et quod non sunt inventi etc.(4)

This initiative was followed on 6 March by the appointment of Hugh de Clinton as the king's receiver in Uriel. No money was to be received by the sheriff except in the presence of the receiver and the money was to be kept in a chest for which the sheriff had one key and the receiver the other.(5)

Uriel had been singled out for special attention. This need not necessarily imply that its sheriffs were exceptionally corrupt. Its relatively small size and proximity to Dublin may have encouraged the Dublin government to view it as a suitable location for reform programmes. Uriel may have been chosen as a model for future initiatives elsewhere. The government demonstrated its seriousness by imprisoning two former sheriffs of Uriel, Walter Dovedale and Benedict le Hauberge, in November 1311 for non-payment of debts owed from their periods of office.(6)

Closer scrutiny of local government in Uriel was certain to appear as a threat to the power elite in the county. The Pipard transfer of 1301 and the increasingly infrequent visits of Theobald I (d.1309) and Theobald II de Verdun meant that political influence in Uriel came to lie more in the hands of Nicholas and Milo de Verdun, younger brothers of Theobald II.(7) On succeeding to his father's inheritance in 1309, Theobald II de Verdun immediately made Milo guardian of his Irish lands.(8) The power wielded by the de Verduns in Uriel was

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4. P.R.O.I. EX 2/3, pp 614-5. P.R.O.I. Ex1/1, m.24d, Craig, Memoranda roll, 3 Ed.II, p.223.

5. Ibid., pp.224-5. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/3, pp616-7. See below pp. 151-2

6. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, pp231-2, 234. See below pp. 149-50

7. See above, pp 38-9

8. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, pp.198-9.

considerable. In 1311 it was stated that 'notables of the county for their money in past times were often accustomed to take from the tenants victuals for their hospitality and this taking has not hitherto been forbidden to the notables'.<sup>(9)</sup> Nicholas and Milo were also employed on occasion to deal with the Irish clans in their area.<sup>(10)</sup>

The community of Uriel regarded the de Verdun brothers as their natural leaders. In April 1312 the representatives of the community pleaded successfully with the justiciar to allow Nicholas and Milo to have custody of the county in order to deal with the rebels.<sup>(11)</sup> Milo never became directly involved in the rebellion and Nicholas did so only at a late stage, but their sympathy with the activities of their brother Robert, the leader of the rebellion, was clear.<sup>(12)</sup> Indeed it is difficult to imagine the uprising occurring without their acquiescence. Two former sheriffs of Uriel, Thomas de Stanley and the recently imprisoned Walter Dovedale, participated in the rising. Both men had close ties with the de Verduns.<sup>(13)</sup> Thus by attacking local government in Uriel the crown had challenged the power base of the de Verduns in the county. It seems probable that the de Verdun rebellion was a response to this challenge.

The immediate cause of the de Verdun rebellion is not revealed in our records. Curtis suggested that it occurred in response to the partition of long-established lordships through the succession of heiresses, but Otway-Ruthven effectively dealt with this argument by pointing out that in 1312 Theobald II de Verdun was still a young man quite capable of producing male off-spring.<sup>(14)</sup> Another possible explanation which can be

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9. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, p211. The county referred to is Meath where, of course, the de Verduns also held land. Milo de Verdun secured a pardon for Richard de Tuyt, who had taken livestock in lieu of rent from the manor of Grelly (Girley).

10. See below. pp169-70.

11. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp 237-8. R. Frame, 'The judicial powers of the medieval Irish keepers of the peace', Ir. Jurist, new ser., ii, (1967), pp308-26.

12. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp237-9. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp 1, 2, 5, 109, 110, 124.

13. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, pp21-2. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4 pp5. 124. 125. See below pp149-50

14. Curtis, Med. Ire., p179. Otway-Ruthven Med Ire., pp271-2.



discounted is that the rebellion represented a response to the increasing threat from the Irish of the marches of Uriel. There is no doubt that tension between the English and Irish of the region was at a high point at this time. The murder of O Hanlon and Mac Mahon at Dundalk in 1297 had been followed by serious disturbances in 1306 and 1310 which occurred it was stated 'because of divers dissensions between the English and Irish of their marches now arisen anew by which it was feared great damage might easily come if such dissensions should not somehow be allayed'.<sup>(15)</sup> In 1311 the murder of a man of Mac Mahon by a number of Ardee men was said to have led to a situation 'by which the whole peace of those marches is disturbed, to the common ill of the Englishmen of those parts'.<sup>(16)</sup>

One of the Ardee men involved in this incident, John Lemman, also rebelled in 1312, but it is clear from the evidence that the Irish were not the target of the rebels' anger.<sup>(17)</sup> The areas attacked by the insurgents excluded the territory of the Mac Mahons and O Hanlons. Mention of these families is indeed conspicuously absent from accounts of the rebellion. That they did not take the opportunity presented by the disturbed state of the country in spring 1312 to conduct raids on Uriel suggests that the Irish at that time were under the sway of the de Verduns. Nor were they involved in the rebellion itself, in marked contrast to the Caunteton uprising in the south-east in 1308, when that English family was joined by the O Byrnes who were in turn attacked by the Mac Murroughs.<sup>(18)</sup>

The non-participation of the Irish in the events of 1312 was not coincidental. It reflected the wishes of the de Verduns and thereby adds greater credence to the suggestion that the rebellion of that year was essentially a demonstration by that family of their power in Uriel in the face of increased government involvement in the area. The de Verdun rebellion was essentially a confrontation between central authority and a local elite. The

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15. A.U. 1297. Cal. justic rolls Ire. 1305-7, pp 175-7, 486-7, 502-3. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, p161.

16. Ibid. pp 170-1.

17. See below p187 For a possibly contemporary account of the rebellion apparently written by an Irish monk of St. Mary's Louth see Appendix II B, pp192-3

18. P.R.I. rep D.K. 39, p31. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp 159-61.

essentials of the conflict were perhaps most neatly summarised when the community of Uriel met the justiciar John Wogan who was advancing with a royal army and 'asserted that by coming of so great an army the faithful men of those parts would suffer greater evils than before'.<sup>(19)</sup> This suggests the low esteem in which the government was held by the local community.

According to the indictment brought against the offenders after the end of the disturbances the rebels 'put themselves at war against the king ... appropriating to themselves as if by conquest the demesne lands of the king, administering the oath of fealty as well to free tenants and betaghs of the king as to other inhabitants of the said county, and taking homage'. The rebels apparently expected to control the county for several months as is suggested by their allowing those who were unwilling to take oaths of fealty to them immediately to pay fines instead and to promise fealty on the following 24 June, four months later.<sup>(20)</sup>

Certain members of the community of Uriel, the government later charged,

"as it were sponsors of the said felons ... permitted the felons to commit the said evils freely, received them wittingly, gave them food and drink and gave counsel and favour to them in their misdeeds".<sup>(21)</sup>

Further evidence of the self-confidence of the rebels is to be found in the remarks of contemporary English annalists in Ireland. They report that the royal army sent to defeat the insurgents miserabiliter confectus est and that the rebels, having surrendered, then travelled to Dublin gratiam expectando.<sup>(22)</sup> There was certainly no hint of repentance in Nicholas de Verdun's robust defence, delivered before the council in Dublin. <sup>(23)</sup>

The de Verdun rebellion of 1312 involved fewer people and caused less physical damage than that of the de Cauntetons in 1308 but its constitutional implications were far more serious. By taking homage and fealty from the king's men the rebels stated their repudiation of the authority of the crown in the most unequivocal

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19. Ibid., p237.

20. Ibid pp237-9.

21. Ibid., p278.

22. Chartul St. Mary's, Dublin ii, pp340-1.

23. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, p238.



fashion. Frustratingly, no record survives of what plans, if any, they had for alternative political arrangements. Their subsequent actions, however, suggest that they had no serious intention of creating an independent political entity in Uriel. They surrendered to Roger Mortimer undefeated, suggesting that once they had demonstrated their power they were prepared to return to the king's allegiance.

The rebels had gambled successfully on being able to withstand, for a time at least, the military resources of the Irish lordship. Disturbances commenced in Uriel during Lent, possibly on 21 February.<sup>(24)</sup> The barony of Louth, which was held by an absentee, Drew de Merlowe, was attacked, as was the king's barony of Ardee. The rebels also preyed on the lands of Mellifont Abbey in the barony of Ferrard and in adjacent parts of Co. Meath. They attacked St-abannon near Ardee on 27 March but had retired to the town of Louth by the time government forces reached Uriel in mid April.<sup>(25)</sup>

The justiciar, John Wogan, was apparently in the south-east of Ireland when the rebellion began. On 10 January, he was hearing pleas at Ross concerned with the continuing de Caunteton disturbances and he is next recorded as being in Dublin on 9 April.<sup>(26)</sup> The royal force he brought into Uriel included a strong south-eastern representation. Nicholas Avenal, who was slain by the rebels at Ardee and Walter de Nyvel who was captured by them both held lands in the Carlow - Kilkenny - Wexford area as did Richard de Valle who in July 1312 received a pardon from Wogan for all previous offences because of his good service in fighting against the Uriel rebels. Another of those killed at Ardee, Patrick Roche, had also seen service against the de Caunteton rebels, thus providing another element of contact between the two uprisings.<sup>(27)</sup>

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24. Ibid., p278. Chartul. St. Mary's, Dublin ii, p340.

25. Otway-Ruthven Med Ire., pp 271-2. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp187-8. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, p238. J.R.S. Phillips 'The Anglo-Norman nobility' in Lydon (ed) English in medieval Ireland, pp.94-5.

26. P. Connolly 'Pleas heard before the chief governors of Ireland 1308-76'. Ir. Jurist, new ser xviii (1983), p.104.

27. Knight's fees, pp 66-8, 153, 164, 254. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, p247. Clyn Annals, p.11.

The government had made some attempt to end the rebellion prior to Wogan's return to Dublin. Two officials, Hugh Canon and Richard de Wodehouse, the latter of whom had landed interests in Uriel, were sent to parley with Robert de Verdun in an unsuccessful attempt to bring him and his followers to peace.(28) However, by mid-April the military option appeared the only one still available to the justiciar.

Wogan, nevertheless, appears to have been unwilling to commit all of his limited resources to crushing the disturbances. While still in Dublin he met representatives of the community of Uriel who persuaded him to leave most of the force he had gathered in the capital before he travelled to Drogheda. Wogan had shown himself to be both relentless and successful in his dealings with the de Caunteton rebels and his reluctance to take similar measures against the insurgents in Uriel suggests that he still believed a show of force would restore order. His first duty, however, was to protect the king's interests and so he immediately sent a small force to guard the king's town of Ardee.(29)

Wogan arrived in Drogheda on or before Sunday 16 April. He summoned the sheriff of Uriel, Benedict le Hauberge, to meet him and replaced him with Richard Taaf, which suggests that he blamed local officials for allowing the situation to have got out of hand.(30) He also held a second meeting with the representatives of the community of the county, who pleaded,

'that the said community, to avoid the injury which might come to the country by the coming of the army, might guard the country against the said felons at their own charges, and that the said Nicholas and Milo de Verduno his brother might have the custody of it'.(31)

Wogan chose to overlook the fact that for almost two months the community of Uriel and the two elder

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28. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p51. P.R.O.I.R.C. 8/9, pp321-2. Richardson & Sayles. Admin. Ire., pp 101, 115, 126, 145, 153, 167. See below pp. 161

29. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, p.237.

30. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/6, pp.209, 251.

31. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, p237.



brothers of the leader of the rebellion had done nothing to end the affair and agreed to the request. On 16 April Wogan issued letters patent in the King's name to Nicholas and Milo de Verdun and Richard de Tuyt making them guardians of the peace in Uriel. They were to enquire of upright men the names of those who had rebelled and they were then to arrest and guard the felons until the justiciar decided on their punishments.(32)

Having made these commissions, Wogan ordered his army to disperse.

On receiving his commission as keeper of the peace Nicholas de Verdun collected the posse of the lands of Dundalk and went to parley with the rebels near Louth. Meanwhile the force which Wogan had sent to guard Ardee, unaware of the justiciar's decision to disband his army, heard that the rebels were in the town of Louth and went to attack them with the king's standard displayed. A skirmish took place during which, Nicholas as keeper of the peace, gave Robert de Verdun and the rebels with whom he had been parleying nearby a truce and together they attacked and defeated the royal army. A number of the army were slain, some of whom, it was said, could have been taken alive. Others fled to Ardee and were killed there. Still others were imprisoned and deprived of their horses and arms. This battle occurred sometime between 17 April and 25 April.(33)

Wogan heard this account at Drogheda in early May when Nicholas de Verdun appeared before him. Wishing to have the matter addressed by the council, Wogan ordered Nicholas to appear at Dublin on 26 May and took mainprises for his appearance. He also permitted Robert de Verdun and the rebels to surrender to the court if they wished and be taken to Dublin Castle by Roger Mortimer who was also at Drogheda. The rebels accepted the offer.(34)

On 26 May Nicholas de Verdun appeared before the earl of Ulster, Roger Mortimer and the council. He

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32. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, p.31.

33. Clyn, (p11) dates the battle 17 April. Walter Dowdall's pardon of 1313 says it occurred around 25 April. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, p276. The Dublin annalist is clearly mistaken in dating it to the middle of June. Chartul StMary's, Dublin, ii, p341.

34. Cal. justic rolls. Ire., 1308-14, pp238-9. Mortimer's presence in court precludes a date for this hearing earlier than 30 April when he was still in Wales. Cal. close rolls 1307-13, pp 419, 459. Wogan was in Carlow on 13 May. Connolly 'Pleas heard before the chief governor', p104.



vigorously defended his actions in attacking the royal army, saying that

'such felons ought not to have been spared because they carried as a banner the standard of the king in as much as it is not to be presumed that it is a true standard of the king with the carrying of which were done arson and robbery upon the loyal people of the king and those who were at peace'.(35)

On December 5 1312, Nicholas de Verdun and Robert de Verdun and the rebels who had been imprisoned in Dublin appeared at Drogheda before the keeper, Edmund Butler, who had succeeded John Wogan. Butler took mainprises for the rebels to be in Dublin castle the following Easter. On 17 April 1313 he was ordered to take further mainprises until Easter 1314 for forty rebels who had appeared at Dublin, on condition that they joined the king in Scotland 'with forty hobelers and fitting arms'. The king made this order at the request of Roger Mortimer and Theobald de Verdun.(36)

Ten days later on 27 April 1313, the entire community of Uriel was admitted to make fine with the king for supporting the rebels by 500m. The inhabitants of Drogheda towards Uriel were exempted from the fine. Men were elected by the community to ensure that everyone in the county, both free and unfree, paid according to the extent of his guilt and his wealth. A last opportunity was given to those rebels who had not yet surrendered to come in, otherwise they were to be regarded as the king's enemies. It was also made clear that this pardon did not cover offences committed before February 1312. Pardon was also reserved against Nicholas de Verdun and those of his company who rose against the king's standard at Louth.(37) Thus, pardon was granted only to those who had not resisted the rebellion and not to those who had rebelled in February or who had fought alongside the rebels in April.

On 28 January 1314 Edward informed Butler that he would not be in Scotland until midsummer of that year. The keeper was to extend the rebels' mainprise until then and was to 'deliver to them their horses, equipment

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35. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, p239. Nicholas de Verdun and Richard de Burgh had quarrelled in 1306. This may explain why the latter did not act as pledge for any rebel after 1312. *Ibid*, p.276. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp.186-7.

36. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4 pp1-5, 108-127. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/8, pp1-9. P.R.O.I. K.B. 1/1 m1-m2d. Cal. close rolls 1307-13, pp525-6. See Appendix II pp187-92

37. Cal. justic. rolls Ire 1308-14, pp278. One rebel, Hugh le Hauberge was still at large in 1315. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, p23.



and other goods arrested on account of this trespass.'<sup>(38)</sup> On 23 April Butler took further mainprises at Dublin for thirty-one rebels to be in Scotland by the end of June, failing which they were to be placed in Dublin castle.<sup>(39)</sup>

The response of the government to the de Verdun rebellion, as detailed above, demonstrates that the rebels had been correct in their belief that they would be leniently dealt with. The rising not only effectively ended the career of the long-serving John Wogan, it also revealed the limited extent of royal authority in Ireland.<sup>(40)</sup> In financial terms the government did not recoup its losses from the rebels. Their deprecations on the king's lands and on those of Mellifont Abbey had caused more than £100 worth of damage, not including the cost of the raid on the town of Collon which lost '200 cows, oxen and afers, 300 sheep and other goods to the value of 20 marks'. The royal force defeated at Louth was also plundered of horses and arms to the value of £100.<sup>(41)</sup> The cost to the government of assembling the army led by Wogan was over £300.<sup>(42)</sup> Thus the de Verdun rebellion cost the crown at the very least £500.

The government did not come close to recouping this sum once the rebellion had ended. On 5 December 1312 at Drogheda, when pledges were taken for the rebels to be in Dublin Castle the following Easter, mainpernors for a number of the rebels paid sums ranging from 5 marks to 20s. to be granted grace. Some of those accused of sheltering rebels in Meath were also allowed make fine at a late date. Together, these payments brought the government slightly more than £25.<sup>(43)</sup> On 27 April 1313 a penalty of 500m. was imposed on

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38. Cal close rolls 1313-15, p.36. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/13, p212.

39. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/6, pp1-6.

40. Curtis, Med. Ire., p182

41. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, p265. Adam le Blound alone lost £40 when his haggard at Stabannon was burnt on 27 March. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp 187-8. Cal justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp238, 275.

42. J. F. Lydon 'The enrolled account of Alexander Bicknor treasurer of Ireland, 1308-14'. Anal Hib. no.30 (1982) p31.

43. A total of £18 6s was collected on 5 December (P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp1-5). On 27 April 1313 Nicholas and Philip Teeling paid 40s for receiving the rebels while the community of Siddan in Meath paid 100s.

the community of Uriel and on 21 August 1314 they were charged another £100 for not having produced the bodies of some of the rebels before Edmund Butler.<sup>(44)</sup> Efforts were made to collect this amercement. As late as 1332 the community paid £5, reducing the amount owed to £158.<sup>(45)</sup> A number of individual payments can be identified, which may help to suggest whom the government considered most culpable. In 1315, for instance, William de Clinton paid 5m or 1% of the penalty of the community, a relatively high amount.<sup>(46)</sup> Among those for whom he stood as pledge after the rebellion was Reginald de Clinton, presumably a relative, which may have led to his high amercement.<sup>(47)</sup>

In contrast, Richard Potighel of Molaghurg paid only 3s for his offence in 1326. Some communities paid together as for instance Baronstown which gave 20s in 1326,<sup>(48)</sup> Crowmartin paid 40s through John de Cusak in 1332, its high amercement possibly resulting from the fact that some of the cattle stolen from Collon in 1312 had been driven there.<sup>(49)</sup>

In comparison with the treatment meted out to the de Caunteton rebels who were being hunted and executed long after 1308, the de Verdun rebels were treated leniently.<sup>(50)</sup> The name of only one rebel who died in the fighting appears, probably reflecting accurately the small losses of the rebels.<sup>(51)</sup> Another rebel died in

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44. See above p 70-1 P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/9, pp567-8.

45. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 43, p52. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, pp 52, 68, P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p.63. P.R.O. E. 101/237/7. Receipt roll, Trinity a.r.r. 11 Ed. II.

46. P.R.O. E. 101/236/14. Receipt roll, Hilary a.r.r. 8. Ed II. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/9 p175.

47. Cal. justic rolls Ire. 1308-14, pp416-8. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp2, 101-1. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/6, pp3-6.

48. P.R.O. E. 101/238/27. Receipt counter-roll, Easter a.r.r. 19 Ed.II

49. P.R.O. E. 101/239/27. receipt roll Mich. a.r.r. 6 Ed. III.

50. Cal. justic rolls 1308-14, pp199-200. Cal. Fine rolls 1307-19, p185.

51. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp560-1.



Dublin Castle in 1313.<sup>(52)</sup> Two rebels were hanged, but they were both also convicted of being common thieves.<sup>(53)</sup> One man who was not captured until 1314 was still in Dublin Castle in 1316 but was then allowed make fine for £40 for his offence.<sup>(54)</sup>

Such cases, however, were exceptional. Those rebels whom the government considered particularly culpable were required to serve in Scotland. This did not include Nicholas de Verdun and it may be that military service in Scotland was reserved for those who had rebelled with Robert de Verdun in February 1312 and did not include those who had joined the rebels with Nicholas in April of that year. In April 1313 the king ordered forty of the rebels to join him in Scotland. In January 1314 the keeper took mainprises for thirty-one of them to be there by the end of June. The records reveal the names of twenty-nine of those who served.<sup>(55)</sup> They may have had the good fortune to join the king's army after the battle of Bannockburn (24 June). They were still with the king in March 1316 but by October they had returned to Uriel where a number of them played an important role in the defeat of Edward Bruce.<sup>(56)</sup>

For many years after 1312 the de Verdun rebels attempted to retrieve their lands in Uriel which had been confiscated by the crown. In 1316 a number of those serving with the king in Scotland managed to have their lands committed to their wives.<sup>(57)</sup> In 1325 the lands of nine Uriel rebels were still being accounted for by their neighbours in the county.<sup>(58)</sup> Two years later several of these asked for restoration of their lands,

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52. Ibid. pp454-5. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p64.

53. Cal justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp265-6. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, pp24-5.

54. P.R.O. E. 372/166. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/8, pp21-2.

55. See above pp70-1

56. See below pp 82-3. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp509-10. Cal. close rolls 1313-8, p368.

57. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp.509-10.

58. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p64.

arguing that they had joined the rebellion unwillingly.(59) It is clear, however, that some rebels died without recovering their lands. In 1337 the heirs of a number of these men proved that they had never been convicted of the rebellious crime of which they were accused.(60)

The treatment of the rebels following their surrender demonstrated that the crown placed a higher priority on obtaining fighting men for Scotland than it did on solving the problem which had led to the rebellion in the first place. This problem was the refusal of the local elite in Uriel to tolerate increased government intrusion in its sphere of influence. The rebellion was essentially a political statement. This explains why the community of Drogheda towards Uriel remained aloof from the disturbances. It had gained economically from the Scottish wars and had even attracted entrepreneurial settlers from England such as the Preston family.(61)

So long as the community was not burdened with passing royal armies, as it had been in 1301 with the visit of Peter de Bermingham, it was happy to co-operate with the crown's war effort. In the spring of 1312 Drogheda towards Uriel had far more to fear from the de Verduns than from the justiciar.

The Dublin government was unable to end the rebellion. Significantly, when the rebels surrendered they did so to Roger Mortimer, not to the justiciar, John Wogan. Mortimer's role in this affair is important but obscure. He had come to Ireland in 1308 and received the moiety of Meath from his <sup>grand-father</sup> wife's Geoffrey de Geneville. He was also the brother-in-law of the lord of the other half of Meath, Theobald de Verdun, elder brother of Robert, Nicholas and Milo de Verdun. Mortimer may later have used his connections in Uriel to procure the downfall of John de Bermingham, earl of Louth, but it would be unwise to suggest that he lay behind the de Verdun rebellion of 1312. He had not by then assumed the pre-eminent role he was later to play in English politics and in 1312 his loyalties still lay with Edward II.(62)

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59. P.R.O. S.C. 8/57/2828, S.C. 8/147/7321. 7322. P. Connolly, 'Irish materials in the class of ancient petitions (SC8). Anal Hib. no.34, (1987), pp.19,49.

60. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 53, p26.

61. Gormanston reg. ppi-vi. See below pp.156-7

62. D.N.B. vol.13, pp1034-5. Vol 20, p.219. J.R.S. Phillips, Aymer de Valence, earl of Pembroke, 1307-1324, (Oxford, 1972) p283. See below pp.97-9



Some attempt was made to offer a counter-balance to the local elite in Uriel by the crown. In May 1313 the king's manor of Ardee was committed to Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster. (63) Many of the rebels came from the Ardee area and it had suffered the worst of the rebel depredations in 1312. The barony had come into the king's hands from Ralph Pipard in 1301. At first local notables such as Walter de Cusak and Richard de Tuyt had been awarded its custody, but the events of 1312 seem to have convinced the government that a powerful outside influence was required to pacify the area. De Burgh had been increasing his interests in Uriel and had a history of bad relations with Nicholas de Verdun. (64)

The appointment of Theobald de Verdun as justiciar of Ireland in April 1313 may also have represented an attempt by the crown to place a curb on the <sup>power</sup> of the de Verdun brothers in Uriel. (65) Theobald, along with Mortimer, stood as mainpriser for forty rebels going to Scotland in April 1313, but other than this intervention Theobald had little influence on the rebellion or its aftermath. He did not arrive in Ireland until the summer of 1314 and left for England early the following year. He left Dublin only twice, on both occasions hearing pleas at Drogheda but the evidence suggests that he was unwilling or unable to disturb the influence of his brothers. (66)

The clearest sign of the government's failure to deal with the situation in Uriel was the continued violence of those who had supported the rebellion of 1312 until the Bruce invasion of 1315. In April 1315 Edmund Butler heard pleas at Drogheda which revealed the county to have been in an even more disturbed state than it had been prior to the rebellion. The grooms of Richard de Tuyt, one of those appointed justice of the peace in Uriel in 1312, had forced the vicar of Mansfieldstown to entertain them against his will and broke up his stacks. (67) Adam de Stanley, who had rebelled with Robert de Verdun robbed a horse of Adam Cornewaleys

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63. Cal. fine rolls 1307-1319, p172.

64. P.R.I. rep.D.K. 39, pp37, 56. See above pp.69-70

65. Cal. pat. rolls 1307-13, p568.

66. P. Connolly, 'Pleas heard before the chief governors' p.106. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, pp1-18.

67. Ibid., pp25-7.

after 'beating, wounding and maltreating him and drinking his beer against his will.'<sup>(68)</sup>

More serious was the continued lawlessness of Nicholas de Verdun. On 27 April 1313 he had been specifically excluded from the pardon granted to the community of Uriel by the crown. This, however, neither curtailed his activities nor reduced his status in Uriel society. On 4 May 1313 John Petyt promised to return to Nicholas and Milo de Verdun cattle he had taken from Molsathlyn O Reilly a hibernicus of Theobald de Verdun.<sup>(69)</sup> In the following year Nicholas murdered John Parys at Drogheda but was pardoned in January 1315 'for the good service [he] has done and will do in the future to the king'.<sup>(70)</sup> In April 1315 it was stated that Nicholas had been engaged in

'seizing everywhere, as well in the demesne of Lord Theobald de Verdun as elsewhere horses and afers to do divers caitings and likewise oxen, cows, pigs, hoggets, geese, hens and other vicutals commonly against the will of those to who those cattle belonged, for which ... he paid too little'

He also extorted money from Robert and Peter Moriel 'through fear of death', who 'understood for certain that ... Nicholas would have killed them' had they refused to pay. In court it was accepted that Nicholas had committed these deeds at the instigation of Thomas de Stanley, a former sheriff of Uriel and de Verdun rebel. Thomas was allowed make fine by £40 while Nicholas was not even charged. Instead he stood as one of de Stanley's pledges.<sup>(71)</sup> Far from being cowed by the government's response to his role in the rebellion, Nicholas was encouraged to even greater acts of defiance, even to the point of attacking the lands of his lord and brother.

The career of Nicholas de Verdun after 1312 shows the de Verdun rebellion to have been a success. Many leading rebels later enjoyed successful careers. Walter de la Pulle, for instance, became escheator for Ireland in

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68. Ibid., pp21-2.

69. P.R.O.I. K.B., 2/4, p598.

70. Grace, Annals, p63. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, p18.

71. Ibid., pp21-2.



1323.<sup>(72)</sup> The rebellion was a well organised and calculated affair. Only specific areas were attacked and the rebels had sufficient military discipline to defeat a small royal force. The rebels themselves were drawn from the most important families of Uriel, 'the Anglo-Irish of the petite-noblesse' as Curtis described them.<sup>(73)</sup> They were prepared to defy the authority of the crown in order to safeguard their own local interests. They correctly judged that the crown would tolerate such defiance. Thus the de Verdun rebellion proved not only the strong sense of community and self-reliance which existed in Uriel by 1312, but also the weakness of the Dublin government when faced with armed resistance. In 1315 Uriel again faced these two realities when the Scots arrived under Edward Bruce.

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72. Richardson & Sayles Admin Ire., p.126

73. Curtis Med. Ire., p182.

No part of Ireland endured such intense military activity during the years of the Bruce invasion as did Uriel. On 29 June 1315 the Scots burned Dundalk before attacking and burning Ardee. Late in July a royal army led by the justiciar, Edmund Butler, and a force led by Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, gathered south of Ardee, while Bruce's forces were at Iniskeen. The English force moved to Louth but following a small skirmish the Scots escaped into Ulster and made their way to Coleraine, travelling west of Lough Neagh. The English went to Dundalk where a decision was taken to allow de Burgh to follow Bruce with his own force. Butler brought his force to Carlingford and there disbanded the royal army.(1)

Less than four months later, in mid November 1315, the Scots again appeared at Dundalk before travelling through north Uriel to Nobber in Meath. They defeated Roger Mortimer at Kells and then attacked English settlements in Westmeath and Longford before spending Christmas at the de Verdun manor of Lough Sewdy. In January 1316 Bruce defeated the English at Skerries in Co. Kildare and in the following month led his exhausted army back to Ulster through Westmeath, Cavan and Monaghan. 1316 also witnessed two encounters between the inhabitants of Dundalk and the O Hanlons.(2)

Late in 1316 Robert Bruce joined his brother in Ulster and in February of the following year they were at Slane having presumably travelled south through Uriel. From there they made their unsuccessful sortie as far south as Limerick before retiring to Ulster via Trim at the beginning of May. In July 1317 Roger Mortimer arrived at Drogheda and with the help of Nicholas de Verdun drove the de Lacys from Meath. This was apparently the last military engagement in the Uriel area until the battle of Faughart on 14 October 1318 when the Scots were finally defeated and Edward Bruce slain by an English force led by John de Bermingham

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1. Ann. Conn. 1315. Chartul. St. Mary's Dublin ii, p345. Orpen, Normans IV, pp163-4. R. Frame, 'The Bruces in Ireland', I.H.S. xix, (1974), p27. Phillips, 'Documents'. p258
  2. Orpen, Normans IV, pp173-8, Chartul St. Mary's, Dublin ii, pp297, 350.



and Milo de Verdun.(3)

It is impossible to quantify the physical damage caused to Uriel in the years 1315-18 -years also of severe famine - but it seems safe to suggest that such damage was extensive and long-lasting. The areas worst affected were from Ardee north to Dundalk. In 1325 Walter de la Pulle was granted the manor of Ardee which was said to have been destruyt per les enemys de Scotorum et les Ireys de les marches.(4) An inquisition held at Mansfieldtown in February 1316 concerning the lands of Benedict Pipard who had died in the previous August revealed some of the destruction wreaked by Bruce in the area in the summer and winter of 1315. Pipard's chief holding at Pippardeston (Pepperstown) could not be extended because it had been 'totally burned by the Irish'. No tenants could be found to take 60 acres of bog 'because the whole country is destroyed by the Scots'.(5)

North of Ardee the barony of Louth was said to be worth nothing in 1316 'because the whole country is laid waste by the Scots and Irish'.(6) The de Verdun barony of Upper Dundalk was especially affected by the repeated Scottish and Irish incursions. Late in 1315 Nicholas de Verdun wrote to the king that he had lost ma terre e mes rentes e mes chivaux e mes armures auxicome ma lygessce in fighting the Scots.(7) In 1316 John de Kent and Walter Dowdall, attorneys of the community of Dundalk, were granted £46 16s. 4d. in subsidium communitatis, eiusdem ville nuper per Scotos depredate et combusto relevande et reperande ut

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3. Ibid., pp354, 359-60. Clynn, Annals, pp13-4, Orpen, Normans iv, pp184-206. S. Duffy 'The Gaelic Account of the Bruce Invasion, Cath Fhochairte Brighite: Medieval romance or modern forgery?' Seanchas Ardmhacha vol 13 no.1 (1988), pp59-121.
  4. P.R.O. C 47/10/18 (42). Hogan Anal. Hib i (1930), p191 (1) MacIvor 'Ardee manor in A.D. 1336,' Louth Arch. Soc Jn., xiv, no 3, (1959), pp160-4.
  5. D. MacIvor 'Estate of Benedict Pippard of Pippardeston, A.D. 1316', Louth Arch. Soc. Jn., xiv, no.3 (1959) pp165-9.
  6. Cal. Inq. P.M. vi, p72.
  7. Phillips, 'Documents' p.262.

maliciam dictorum Scotorum et aliorum inimicorum parcium illorum virilius reprimere valerent et sedare.(8)

The caput of the de Verdun lands in Uriel, Castle Roche, lay directly in the path of the Scots and was attacked by them. In 1315-6 the guardians of Roche were permitted to take victuals without payment for the garrison of the castle, but it was thought wiser to move the Irish hostages being held there south to Dublin.(9) In 1320 the de Verdun manors of Roche and Lough Sewdy were said to be 'so burned and destroyed by the Scotch and Irish that no profit could be received from them' and as late as 1332 Roche was described as a place in quo nulla sunt edificia quia castrum cumbustum per Hibernicos.(10)

It is necessary, however, to treat these examples of destruction with some caution. It was tempting in the confused situation caused by the invasion to exaggerate the damage wreaked by the Scots in order to reduce levels of payment to the exchequer. The inquisition taken into Benedict Pipard's holdings in February 1316, for instance, valued most of his land at 4d per acre. However, it was stated soon after that the sub-escheator in Uriel Simon Fitz Richard, should have given a valuation instead of 12d. per acre.(11) The townsmen of Drogheda may also have been taking advantage of the Scottish intervention when they insisted in November 1318 that they could not account for murage grants awarded during the reigns of Edward I and Edward II because the older collectors were dead and had left no rolls, and because more recently they had been too busy fighting the Scots to keep records.(12) They also asked to be exempted from paying their fee farm because of the expense of enclosing their town and because some of the townsmen had died at Faughart.(13) It should be pointed out, however, that unlike Dundalk and Dublin, Drogheda did not suffer any physical damage during the years of the Bruce invasion from the Scots.

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8. P.R.O. E 372/166. Pipe roll a.r.r. 9 Ed. II

9. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp555-6. P.R.O.I. EX 1/2 m3

10. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p24. Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', p421.

11. MacIvor 'Estate of Benedict Pipard' p166. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp789-91.

12. Hist & Mun. doc Ire., pp417-20.

13. P.R.O. S C 8/106/5277. Chartul St. Mary's, Dublin ii p360.



Nevertheless, it can hardly be doubted that the years 1315-18 witnessed unprecedented devastation in Uriel. In addition to famine, Uriel endured repeated Scottish intrusions, and it was this repetition which probably proved most damaging. In May 1319, for instance, John de Cusak claimed that 'his father, Sir Walter, and himself and their friends have been thrice burned and plundered by the Scots and the Lascys' (14) The sense of insecurity created by these events was revealed in a land grant in the Dundalk area in 1321 which contained the clause that 'should war (which God forbid) of the Scots or Irish occur to prevent tilling, the time during which the two acres lie untilled is not to be reckoned'.(15) In Uriel the Bruce invasion engendered a feeling of apprehension concerning the future which lasted after much of the physical destruction caused by the Scots had been repaired.

In analysing the impact of the Bruce invasion on Uriel it is appropriate first to assess the reaction of the Irish clans of the area to the arrival of the Scots. It is clear that to varying degrees these clans co-operated with the invaders against the English of Uriel. In March 1314 the king summoned Neil O Hanlon, Brian Mac Mahon and the men of Dundalk to come to his assistance against the Scots, but following Bruce's victory at Bannockburn the crown seems to have realised that the loyalty of the Irish could not be taken for granted.(16) By the beginning of 1315 the Dublin government was aware that Scottish envoys were in Ireland and it was possibly with this in mind that Echy MacMahon was required to give his wife and two of his children as hostages in January 1315 in return for the king's peace.(17)

The English of Uriel were certainly of the opinion that the Irish were in league with the Scots. Late in 1315 Milo de Verdun wrote to the king that the Scots intended to conquer the country par eide des Irreis Dirlaunde(18) In August 1316 the son of Murrough MacMahon 'and 100 of his people along with him' died

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14. Cal. doc. Scot II, no 640.

15. Dowdall deeds, p29.

16. Parl. writs., vol II, pp423-4, nos. 12, 15, 17. N.L.I. Ms.1 Harris collectanea, f421. Brian MacMahon died in 1311. A.L.C. 1311.

17. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, p17. J.R.S. Phillips, 'The mission of John de Hothum to Ireland, 1315-1316', in J.F. Lydon (ed), Eng & Ire., pp66-7.

18. Phillips, 'Documents', p263.

fighting against William de Burgh at Athenry.<sup>(19)</sup> The Mac Mahons, however, seem not to have attacked Uriel during the invasion. Not only were members of Echy's family held captive, but by 1317 he also was in custody and was transferred under guard from Castle Roche to Dublin.<sup>(20)</sup>

More dangerous to the English than the Mac Mahons were the O Hanlons. Neil O Hanlon's hostility to the English during the invasion may be explained by an entry in the Book of Howth for 1316 which states that 'in the midst of Lent the said Bruce ... took Lord Hanlon's son prisoner and led him into Scotland'. Some confirmation of this statement may be found in the report in the Annals of Connacht for 1315 that Bruce 'took the hostages and lordship of the whole province [of Ulster]'.<sup>(21)</sup> In 1316 at least one, and more probably two, engagements took place between the O Hanlons and the men of Dundalk. As a result Robert de Verdun, the leader of the rebellion of 1312, was slain, and Maire, the wife of O Hanlon was taken prisoner and kept in Drogheda.<sup>(22)</sup> It was possibly this loss which prevented O Hanlon from troubling the English of Uriel further. The receiver of the profits of the late Theobald de Verdun in Dundalk, Richard the prior of St Leonard's, was employed by the government to parley with O Hanlon, but the prior lost two horses as a result. O Hanlon, however, gave no further trouble. He was never mentioned acting with the Scots which may suggest that his was a private quarrel with the de Verduns and the men of Dundalk. By the end of 1316 his son may have been a hostage of the Scots while his wife was a hostage of the English. By ceasing his attacks on the English while at the same time allowing the Scots to pass through his territory north of Dundalk, O Hanlon made the best of a difficult situation.<sup>(23)</sup>

Turning from the Irish to the English of Uriel it is important to remember that the Scots arrived in Ireland only three years after the de Verdun rebellion. The first point to be made is that the participants in the

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19. A.L.C., 1316, Orpen, Normans iv, p182. A.F.M., 1316, For Murrough MacMahon see A.F.M., 1331.

20. P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2 m3.

21. Book of Howth, p135, Ann Conn., 1315.

22. Chartul. St. Mary's, Dublin ii, pp297, 350. Cal. close rolls, 1313-8, p368.

23. P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2 m3. Hist. & Mun. doc. Ire., p385.



disturbances of 1312 were unwavering in their loyalty to the crown during the Bruce invasion and were instrumental in ensuring the defeat of the Scots. The death in 1316 of Robert de Verdun, described by the annals as armiger bellicosus, at the hands of the O Hanlons typified the response of the leaders of the 1312 rebellion to the Scottish threat.<sup>(24)</sup> As late as March 1316 the de Verdun rebels who had joined the king in the summer of 1314 were still in his service in England, but by the beginning of October they were back in Uriel.<sup>(25)</sup> Their leader abroad was Walter de la Pulle who, along with Robert de Verdun, had led the initial revolt of February 1312. De la Pulle restored his fortunes in the campaign against the Bruces. In November 1316 he was granted land worth £20 from the inheritance of the late Theobald de Verdun in Ireland and in May 1318 he was made sheriff of Uriel.<sup>(26)</sup> As sheriff he accounted for the collection of part of the fine paid by the community of Uriel for supporting the rebellion which he had led in 1312.<sup>(27)</sup> De la Pulle was also prominent at the defeat of Edward Bruce at Faughart in November 1318 and was subsequently rewarded by a grant of Ardee and also served as Irish escheator from 1323 to 1325.<sup>(28)</sup>

In a similar fashion to Walter de la Pulle, Nicholas de Verdun took advantage of the arrival of the Scots to demonstrate his loyalty to the crown and put behind him his defeat of a royal army at Louth in April 1312 and his more recent escapades in Uriel.<sup>(29)</sup> In July 1315 he was one of those to whom the king addressed letters requesting information concerning the movements of the Scots and his reply shows him to have been active against the enemy.<sup>(30)</sup> He was vigorous in his defence of Dundalk and was rewarded, with Milo his brother, for expelling the Scots and Irish from the marches of Uriel in 1316 by a grant of the money raised in Theobald de Verdun's lands for the last royal service proclaimed at Oldcastle.<sup>(31)</sup> It was also his men who

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24. See above p. 82 Curtis, Med. Ire., p.184

25. See above p 73

26. Cal. pat. rolls 1313-7, p565. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p64.

27. P.R.O.E. 101/237/7. Receipt roll, Trinity a.r.r. ii, Ed. II

28. Chartul St Mary's Dublin ii. p360. Richardson & Sayles, Admin Ire. p 126

29. See above pp.69-70 Connolly, 'Ancient petitions', p.93

30. Phillips, 'Documents' p262.

31. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, p.22. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp.524-5. Connolly 'Ancient petitions' p48.

captured Maire O Hanlon in 1316.<sup>(32)</sup> In July 1316 he was granted 200m from Mansfieldstown and in the same year petitioned for a grant of the same vill which was worth £30 p.a.. In November 1318 his request was granted. <sup>(33)</sup>

It was also in July 1316 that Theobald de Verdun died in England. Nicholas was in England by October of that year, presumably to press his case for custody of his brothers' lands. <sup>(34)</sup> On 7 October the king granted Nicholas and Milo de Verdun this custody but delivery of it was delayed until March 1317 to allow individual grants to be made to Richard de Tuyt and Walter de la Pulle and to enable Theobald's widow to recover her dower. <sup>(35)</sup> Nicholas was back in Ireland by the summer of 1317 when he assisted Roger Mortimer in expelling the de Lacys from Meath.<sup>(36)</sup> Nicholas is not mentioned among those who participated at Faughart so it is perhaps fitting that his last recorded action in the course of the Bruce invasion was this encounter in Meath. In April 1312 he had joined rebels in defeating a royal army, now he joined a royal army in expelling rebels. The Bruce invasion thus proved de Verdun's loyalty and significantly improved his fortunes.

The government, therefore, had no need to fear that those in Uriel who had defied its authority in 1312 would do so again in 1315. However, it is also clear that treachery was suspected of a number of Uriel inhabitants during the invasion. In October 1315 an unknown correspondent reported to the king that the Scots had been helped par les Ires qe sont en la marche Dulvestere et de Uriel et par ascuns Engles.<sup>(37)</sup> Fears of collaboration with the Scots, indeed, predated the invasion itself. On 16 May 1315 Henry de Welbe and John le Masoun of

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32. See above p32

33. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, p.802. Cal. pat. rolls 1313-7, p463. Connolly 'Ancient petitions p.49, Rot pat. Hib. p21 no.4

34. Phillips, 'John de Hothum', p71. Cal. pat. rolls 1313-7, p552.

35. Cal. close. rolls 1313-8, pp397, 500. See above p.83

36. Chartul St. Mary's Dublin ii, pp354-5, Clyn, Annals, p.13

37. Phillips, 'Documents', p257.



Carlingford were released on mainprise from Dublin Castle at the request of the earl of Ulster having been arrested earlier on the Isle of Man on suspicion of being in league with the Scots who had only recently been expelled from the island.<sup>(38)</sup> In May 1317 two men were found not guilty of joining Edward Bruce by a jury summoned by Mortimer at Drogheda and in March of the following year Mortimer also presided over a court which acquitted sixteen men of conspiring to steal a boat from William Preston at Drogheda and cross over to Scotland to help Robert Bruce.<sup>(39)</sup> Mortimer's campaign against the de Lacys may have inspired some resentment in Meath and this possibly explains the detention by the lieutenant of Alexander de Repenteny and several members of the Delany family in Dublin castle in 1318.<sup>(40)</sup>

The government's fear of treachery among the English presented opportunities for the settling of more private scores in Uriel. In 1323 unknown petitioners requested that the chief justice of the common bench, Richard d'Exeter, be removed from office because he had married a daughter of Walter de Lacy et par autres plusours malveises alliances entre le dit Richard et autres enemys.<sup>(41)</sup> The charge was disingenuous, not least because Richard was also allied by marriage to Milo de Verdun one of the heroes of Faughart.<sup>(42)</sup> Personal animus seems also to have lain behind the charge brought against the abbot of Mellifont by Nicholas de Netterville that he had offered Edward Bruce £100 in return for Nicholas' manor of Dowth once the Scots had proved victorious. The fact that Nicholas refused to accept the not guilty verdict handed down by the jury at Drogheda in May 1317 suggests a strained relationship between de Netterville and the neighbouring abbot.<sup>(43)</sup> In 1322 the archbishop of Armagh was accused of sympathising with Robert Bruce, a charge difficult to take seriously since the same archbishop had blessed the army at Dundalk which slew Edward Bruce in 1318.<sup>(44)</sup> Again personal quarrels lay behind the accusation. It seems probable that it was brought against the archbishop by the prior of Louth and resulted from the dispute between the two clerics concerning

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38. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, pp31-2. Cal.close rolls, 1313-8, p153.

39. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/8, pp68-9. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/12, pp85-6.

40. Ibid., pp90, 91. Rot. pat. Hib., p27, no.52.

41. Sayles, Affairs pp101-1.

42. Chartul St. Mary's Dublin ii, pp 343, 359.

43. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/8 pp66-7.

44. Cal. papal letters 1305-42, p219.



the appointment of Robert de Cotgrave to the church of Termonfeckin.<sup>(45)</sup>

In fact, despite the numerous accusations of treachery in Uriel during the Bruce invasion, only one individual was actually convicted of collaboration with the Scots. This was Brother Robert, prior of St. Mary's, Louth. In February 1316 he was accused of sheltering and feeding Bruce's force the previous summer and of warning them of the arrival of the royal force assembled to destroy them. The prior denied the charge but he was placed in the custody of the sheriff of Uriel, John de Cusak and forced to pay a fine of £40.<sup>(46)</sup> The lands of the priory were taken into the king's hands but were returned to the prior in August.<sup>(47)</sup> Robert may have been motivated either by enthusiasm for the Scottish cause or by a desire to protect his Arrouaisian house from the fate which had befallen the Franciscans at Dundalk and Carmelites at Ardee at the hands of the Scots.<sup>(48)</sup> Whatever his reasons may have been, Robert's treachery was apparently unique. At great personal cost, the community of Uriel remained loyal to the king throughout the Bruce invasion.

Uriel alone, however, could not have withstood or defeated the Scots. The military resources of the lordship as a whole were required to oppose Bruce's army and in 1315 and again in 1318 the arena of military operations centred on Uriel. In July 1315 the justiciar, Edmund Butler brought a royal force to the area to oppose the Scots. This included notables such as John Fitz Thomas, Arnold and John le Poer, Richard le Waleys and David and Alexander le Roche.<sup>(49)</sup> Present at Faughart were lords from parts other than Uriel, such as John de Bermingham, Hugh de Turpilton and Herbert de Sutton.<sup>(50)</sup> This concentration of military forces in the area produced resentment among the inhabitants of Uriel. Their dislike of royal armies had been demonstrated during the de Verdun rebellion and was apparently not without foundation, bearing in mind the

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45. P.R.O.I. R. C. 8/10, pp324-5. Rot. pat. Hib. p23 no 98. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p15. Connolly, 'Ancient petitions', p99. See above pp160-1

46. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, pp58-9. Ann. Conn. 1316. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p67.

47. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p18, P.R.O. E. 101/237/7. Receipt roll Mich. a.r.r. 11 Ed II.

48. Clynn, Annals, p12. Chartul. St. Mary's Dublin, ii, p345.

49. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp 449-50, 453, 455. Rot. pat. Hib. p23, no.77. Phillips 'Documents', p 258.

50. Rot. pat. Hib. p 30 no 2. Chartul St Mary's, Dublin, ii pp359-60. Orpen, Normans iv, pp198-9.



remark of the annalist that 'excepting homicides ... deeds no less evil were done by an army drawn from different parts of Ireland to do battle with them [i.e. the Scots] in the districts through which the units passed'.<sup>(51)</sup> The townsmen of Drogheda were seemingly most directly affected by the presence of the army and ill-feeling towards their supposed defenders continued throughout the invasion. In February 1316, for instance, Michael de Trym of Drogheda was accused of receiving cattle stolen from the army and of selling to them commodities such as salt at exorbitant prices.<sup>(52)</sup> In the following year the lieutenant, Roger Mortimer, was ordered 'not to permit any men to be housed in the town of Drogheda against the will of the community of that town or to take any victuals against the will of the said men'.<sup>(53)</sup> 1317 also witnessed fighting between the Drogheda men and the Ulster contingent of the government's forces.<sup>(54)</sup>

There also appears to have been some dissension between the justiciar, Edmund Butler, and Nicholas de Verdun. In October 1316 Nicholas was in England and he seems to have been behind a number of complaints levelled against Butler's behaviour in Uriel. On 3 October Edmund was ordered to stop harassing the de Verdun rebels who had returned from the king's service with Walter de la Pulle to fight the Scots.<sup>(55)</sup> On 8 October he was commanded to assemble the council in order to decide whether Mora O Hanlon should be placed in the custody of Nicholas de Verdun who claimed in a petition that the justiciar 'eloigns her from his custody, not permitting him to make his profit of her'.<sup>(56)</sup> It was also in October 1316 that the king ordered the justiciar to deliver the residue of Theobald de Verdun's lands in Ireland to Nicholas and Milo his brothers, but Butler had still to comply with this directive by March of the following year.<sup>(57)</sup> Tensions between Edmund and Nicholas may have originated in the aftermath of the de Verdun rebellion, which Butler, as

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51. Ann. Inisf. 1315. See above pp 68-9

52. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, p58

53. Cal. close rolls 1313-8, pp 405, 476.

54. Clyn, Annals, p.13, Chartul. St. Mary's Dublin, ii, p356.

55. See above p.83

56. See above p.82

57. See above p.84

keeper, was required to deal with following the removal of John Wogan.<sup>(58)</sup> Whatever their causes, such quarrels were a distraction in the fight against Bruce.

The limited financial resources of the lordship were also employed in the defence of Uriel during the years of the invasion. Dundalk, for instance received almost £50 in 1316 to help repair the damage inflicted by the Scots, and the purveyors at Dublin in the same year sent corn and other foodstuffs to the beleaguered town.<sup>(59)</sup> Drogheda received several grants of 300m. during and after the invasion to help repair its walls which were in 'a ruinous state'.<sup>(60)</sup>

However, the government placed greater emphasis on harnessing the resources of Uriel itself to help in its own defence. The purveyors at Drogheda for instance contributed over £7 worth of provisions to Butler's force in 1315.<sup>(61)</sup> In turn the purveyors were allowed £7 6s. 8d. from the goods of Benedict Pipard who died in August 1315 and who owed that sum to the king. They were to spend the money on constructing a stone house for storing provisions in Drogheda.<sup>(62)</sup> In 1316 the guardians of Castle Roche were permitted to take food in Uriel without immediate payment although this was intended to be regarded as an exceptional case.<sup>(63)</sup> The process by which provisions were taken for the king's use during the invasion can be seen in the case of Robert Napton who complained in 1325 that he had not yet been fully paid for wheat and oats taken from him in 1316. The sheriff of Uriel and the clerk of provisions had come to Robert's manor of Dissard (Dysart. bar. Ferrard) and taken the foodstuffs under the supervision of Robert's bailiff and fourteen men of the locality. A testimony was later sealed at Drogheda as to the amount taken by the sheriff the clerk and the bailiff.<sup>(64)</sup>

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58. See above p.70

59. See pp 74-80 P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2, m33.

60. Cal. pat. rolls 1313-7, p509. Cal. pat. rolls 1317-21, pp54, 346. Hist. & Mun. doc. Ire., p394.

61. P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2 m 40d.

62. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10. pp628, 621.

63. *Ibid.*, pp555-6.

64. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/14. pp174-5. R.I.A. 12/D/13, p165. P.R.O. E. 372/171



Governmental and local reactions to the Bruce invasion were perhaps best co-ordinated in the campaign of Thomas de Mandeville in 1316. De Mandeville was Richard de Burgh's seneschal. His family held lands at Mansfieldstown (Mandevilleston) which was attached to the manor of Ardee which the king had granted to the earl of Ulster in 1313.<sup>(65)</sup> Early in 1316 all debts in Uriel were granted to Thomas to the value of £30 and in March of that year he was permitted to negotiate with the rebel English and Irish of Ulster and was given corn from a hagar in Uriel to help sustain his expedition.<sup>(66)</sup> On 18 March he was given a commission for custody of Donaghmoyne which was part of the manor of Ardee for an annual rent of 20s. and the sheriff of Uriel was ordered to repair the pass there and make another one at Louth.<sup>(67)</sup> On April 8 Thomas relieved the besieged town of Carrickfergus from the sea with a company of men from Drogheda but was apparently killed during the operation and was buried at Drogheda.<sup>(68)</sup> De Mandeville's campaign had harnessed local resources of men and money in Uriel with a minimal commitment from the government and helped sustain an important English outpost in Ulster.

No attempt to assess the impact of the Bruce invasion on Uriel society would be complete without reference to the evidence which suggests that in many ways life continued much as it had always done during the years 1315-8. The Scots burned Dundalk in July 1315 but as early as 19 August a land grant in the town is recorded.<sup>(70)</sup> In November the Scots again passed by Dundalk but a grant sealed and dated at the town on 12 January 1316 makes no reference to the event and is indistinguishable in form from those drawn up in more peaceful times.<sup>(71)</sup>

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65. See Phillips 'John de Hothum' pp72-3, Orpen Normans iv, p.140, n2. Cal. justic. rolls Ire1295-1303, p359. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p15. Wm de Mandeville was a cousin of Thomas, P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/14, p755.

66. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp452-3. 492, 552, 555, 647-8.

67. *Ibid.*, pp174, 653-4.

68. Chartul. St. Mary's Dublin ii, p350. Cal. papal letters 1305-42, p171.

69. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp627, 710.

70. Dowdall deeds no.46. The witness list suggests that the grant was made in Drogheda.

71. *Ibid.*, no.47.

Nor was the sheriff exempted from performing his official duties. He was still expected to hear cases and monitor the behaviour of his assistants in the county.<sup>(72)</sup> He was also required to account at the exchequer in Dublin and did so in 1316 and 1318. On both occasions sums collected in connection with the de Verdun rebellion were accounted for, indicating that the invasion had not led to a suspension of the government's demands in this regard.<sup>(73)</sup>

There was no breakdown of government authority in Uriel during the Bruce invasion. In February 1316 the Scots were in Kildare having defeated a royal force at Ardsclull. They had passed south through Uriel the previous November. Yet on 15 February the escheator, John de Ufford, was at Manfieldstown presiding at an inquisition into the lands of the late Benedict Pipard, conducted by twelve men of the locality.<sup>(74)</sup> In the following month the sheriff of Uriel was ordered to return the lands of four de Verdun rebels who were with the king to their wives.<sup>(75)</sup> Nor did the invasion prevent the distribution of the de Verdun inheritance in Uriel or attempts by the de Verduns' bailiff to collect rents owed to his lord.<sup>(76)</sup>

The grants of de Verdun lands in Uriel and Meath to Walter de la Pulle, Richard de Tuit, and Milo and Nicholas de Verdun in 1317 were not only examples of rewards being given to those who opposed the Scots before their final defeat at Faughart.<sup>(77)</sup> Donaghmoyne was granted to Thomas de Mandeville in March 1316 and the de Lacy manors of Martry and Arthurstown were given respectively to Hugh de Turpilton in February 1318 and to William de Preston of Drogheda in 1317-8.<sup>(78)</sup> Such grants should be viewed not as attempts to

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72. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp300-1, 324-5, 163, 647.

73. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, pp67-8. P.R.O. E 101/237/7. Receipt roll Trinity a.r.r. 11, Ed.II.

74. Orpen, Normans iv, pp172-8. McIvor 'Estate of Benedict Pipard' p.166.

75. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp508-9.

76. Otway-Ruthven, 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', p.401. P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2 m3.

77. See above p 84

78. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, p174, Rot. pat. Hib. p21, no.5, p26, no.202.



shore up potentially wavering support but as deliberate gestures of continued government control in the area and confidence in the future. The Scots had ceased to threaten English influence in Uriel long before the battle of Faughart.

It would be difficult, however, to underplay the significance of Faughart in the history of medieval Uriel. Its consequences were dramatic and had a long lasting effect on the politics of the area. In the immediate aftermath of the defeat of the Scots an opportunity was presented to the government to reward those who had been present at the battle or whose contribution to the English victory had been significant. In March 1319, for instance, the brothers John and Roger Gernon were recommended for reward for their efforts against Bruce and in the following year John Gernon appealed for a grant of the fishery of Gernonstown because he had been maimed at the battle of Faughart.<sup>(79)</sup> In 1323 Walter de la Pulle requested that the serjeantry of Meath be given to his valet Robert de Tuyt because of his good service at Faughart, a request which was granted that June.<sup>(80)</sup> De la Pulle had been sheriff of Uriel at the time of the defeat of Bruce and had led a contingent from Drogheda to Faughart. Also present was John de Cusak who had been sheriff in 1315-6 and who was the son of Walter de Cusak, seneschal of Trim and chief justice in eyre.<sup>(81)</sup> In May 1319 John petitioned the king for the first escheat of 100m worth of land which came to his hand because 'at Dundalk, where Sir Edward le Brus was killed, he had sixty men-at-arms, the best of his own surname and lineage and his father, Sir Walter and himself and their friends have been thrice burned and plundered by the Scots and the Lascys.'<sup>(82)</sup> In June 1319 John was granted land worth 50m. a year from escheated tenements.<sup>(83)</sup> His son Adam, who

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79. Ibid., p28, no.91. Connolly, 'Ancient petitions', p29.

80. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/13, pp 202-5.

81. Chartul St. Mary's, Dublin ii. p359-60. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p67. Frame, 'English lordship, p167. Cal pat. rolls 1307-13, p78. Phillips 'John de Hothum' p71.

82. Cal. doc. Scot. II p121. Connolly, 'Ancient petitions', p34.

83. Cal. pat. rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp237-9, P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp 5, 126. Connolly, 'Ancient petitions', p87.

had rebelled with Robert de Verdun in 1312, also sought reward for his role at Faughart, petitioning in 1319 for the constableness of Drogheda castle.<sup>(84)</sup>

The de Verdun brothers were also rewarded after the defeat of the Scots, in addition to the custody earlier granted to them of the residue of the lands of their brother Theobald. In November 1318 the manor of Manfieldstown was granted to Nicholas de Verdun, while in 1320 he was granted £10 per annum towards the cost of defending Theobald's lands.<sup>(85)</sup> Milo de Verdun who with John de Bermingham had commanded the English forces at Faughart, petitioned for and received £100 worth of rebel land at Rathfaygh in Co. Meath and the issues of the coket in Drogheda.<sup>(86)</sup>

The most important grant resulting from the battle of Faughart, however, was to John de Bermingham who in May 1319 was created earl of Louth. For his maintenance the royal county became a liberty, which was to be held in return for 1/4 of a knight's fee. De Bermingham was initially granted £20 per annum of the issues of the county, but this was later expanded to encompass all such issues. He was also granted the office of sheriff of the county and all pleas therein except those of rape, forestalling, treasure-trove and arson. Drogheda was excluded from the grant as were church lands within the county.<sup>(87)</sup> In the following June de Bermingham was further granted power to receive his Irish tenants into English law and was also given cognisance of all undecided pleas in the county, saving the four pleas.<sup>(88)</sup> As he held no land in the county he was also granted the manor of Ardee.<sup>(89)</sup>

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84. Cal. pat. rolls 1317-21, p.343. John and his companions were also owed wages from their service in Scotland. Connolly, 'Ancient petitions', p87.

85. Cal. justic. rolls Ire 1308-14, p21, no.4. Connolly, 'Ancient petitions' p7, Cal. close rolls 1318-23, p277.

86. Connolly 'Ancient petitions', pp27, 57. Cal. pat. rolls, 1317-21, p343. Clyn, Annals p14.

87. Cal. pat. rolls 1317-21, pp334-5. Frame, English lordship, p162. Rymer, Foedera, 2, pt1, p393.

88. Cal. pat. rolls 1317-21, pp342, 344. Connolly, 'Ancient petitions', pp27-8.

89. Chartul. St. Mary's Dublin ii, p360. Frame, English lordship, p14, n.2.



Before turning to the reasons why John de Bermingham was made earl of Louth let us examine the consitutional implications of the transition of Uriel from royal county to liberty. In the first place this change meant that tenants-in-chief in the county were now answerable to de Bermingham. (90) It also entailed the installation of a new administrative layer in Uriel.(91) As lord of a liberty de Bermingham was entitled to his own exchequer and chancery in Uriel and there is a record of him issuing letters patent at Ardee in 1320 to his seneschal, Jordan de Kyngesford.(92). The seneschal was the chief officer of the lord in the liberty. He performed the functions of the sheriff in a royal county. He took an oath, however, not only to his own lord but also to the king and was required to execute the king's writs, in the liberty.(93) Thus in the liberty of Louth we see the seneschal being ordered by the king to distrain debtors, have the king's ministers account, levy fines for trespass from Irishmen and take lands into the king's hands.(94). The seneschal also accounted at the Dublin exchequer.(95) De Bermingham, however, was entitled to the amercements of his men, even if these were imposed in the king's court. After they were paid into the exchequer he could petition for them to be paid to him.(96)

Thus the seneschal of the liberty of Louth performed the functions previously carried out by the sheriff of Uriel. The office of sheriff, however, did not become defunct. The reservation to the crown of the four pleas

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90. Otway-Ruthven, 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', p418.

91. For liberties in Ireland, see, Frame, English lordship, pp21, 24-7. Hand, English law in Ireland, pp113-7. For the situation in England see H. Cain, Liberties and communities in medieval England, (London, 1961), pp190-2. F. Pollock and F. W. Maitland History of English law 2nd ed Cambridge, 1968), pp583-4. H.M. Jewell, English local administration in the middle ages. (London, 1972), pp66-7, 136.

92. P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2 m48. W.F. Nugent 'Carlow in the middle-ages', in R.S.A.I. jn. lxxxv (1955), pp67-74.

93. P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2, m48. Frame English lordship, p21, Hand, English law in Ireland, p166.

94. P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2, mm 12, 14, 17, 51. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/13, pp 408, 413, 508. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/14, pp103, 347-9.

95. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, pp63-4, P.R.I. rep. D.K., 43, p40.

96. Pollock and Maitland, History of English law, p583.

and of cross lands necessitated the continued existence of the county court where the sheriff heard cases beyond the jurisdiction of the liberty.(97) Writs for the liberty might be sent to the sheriff who passed them on to the seneschal but if the conduct of the latter was unsatisfactory a litigant might obtain a writ of non omittas propter libertatem which empowered the sheriff to enter the liberty and prosecute the original writ.(98) The sheriff of Uriel not only continued to account at the Dublin exchequer, he was also mandated to levy debts, distrain litigants and even to cut timber for the king's use in the woods of his bailwick.(99) The king's presence also continued to be felt through the existence of his receivers in the liberty and through the activities of the escheator's officials there.(100)

Thus the creation of the liberty of Louth did not imply that Uriel became more isolated within the lordship of Ireland as a whole. However, the change to liberty status was of major significance. It deprived the Dublin government of much needed revenue, although it also provided it with unpaid peace officers. Louth was one of a number of liberties erected in the decade following the battle of Faughart and these came to be seen increasingly by English officials as detrimental to the good government of the lordship.(101) The earldom of Louth differed from the earldoms of Kildare Ormond and Desmond, which were created in the same period, in that it was given to a man who held no land in the area of his grant.(102)

The choice of John de Bermingham as earl was also unusual. He was of a lower rank in English society in Ireland than were the other earls. They had long-standing connections with their earldoms, he did not. Their elevation reflected broader power struggles in England, his resulted from one solitary fact; he had commanded

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97. Hand, English law in Ireland, p.116

98. Jewell, English local administration, p67. Cam, Liberties and communities, pp191-2.

99. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p64. *ibid* 43, pp40-1. P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2 mm 17, 29. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/12. p.793. P.R.O.I. R.C 8/14, p121.

100. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/12, p.408. P.R.O. E.101/238/10, P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/13, p508. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, pp14-26.

101. Jewell, English local administration, p.136. Frame, English lordship, pp119-20, 234, 240.

102. *Ibid*, p14., n.2



the English forces at Faughart in Uriel which had defeated the Scots in October 1318.<sup>(103)</sup> This is not to suggest, however, that his elevation was decided on the spur of the moment. It reflected two considerations, first a desire to reward de Bermingham and second a wish to alter the political situation in Uriel. These two policies were, of course, inter-related: it would have been possible for instance, to reward de Bermingham elsewhere and if it had been thought desirable simply to create an earl of Louth at this juncture then there were more obvious candidates available in the shape of Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, who was a substantial landowner in Uriel, or even Milo de Verdun who had led the English at Faughart with de Bermingham and who was the most powerful English lord in the area.

De Bermingham was created earl of Louth not merely as a reward for past services but also in anticipation of his implementation of the government's will in Uriel. His promotion had been secured by two of the most knowledgeable of English ministers in Ireland, John de Hothum and Roger Mortimer.<sup>(104)</sup> Both were familiar with the political situation in Uriel. Mortimer had helped end the rebellion there in 1312 and had been related by marriage to Theobald de Verdun jr.<sup>(105)</sup> He had also had the assistance of de Bermingham in 1317 when he expelled the de Lacy's from Meath.<sup>(106)</sup> The government had not forgotten the affront to its authority which Uriel had offered in 1312. Dublin administrators such as Richard de Wodehouse who had been in office at the time of the rebellion were still in positions of power in 1319 when de Bermingham was made earl.<sup>(107)</sup> That rebellion represented a response to increased government intervention in Uriel, yet the reasons why such intervention had increased were if anything even more pressing in 1319 than they had been before 1312. The Scottish threat to England was more evident than ever and so Ireland could expect to be called upon to provide even greater supplies of men and provisions. The government intended to ensure that such demands were never again greeted in Uriel with

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103. Ibid., pp15-6.

104. Phillips 'John de Hothum', p77.

105. See above, pp 74

106. Clyn's Annals, p13.

107. See above p68 P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2, mm3, 10.



open rebellion. Following the de Verdun rising, Richard de Burgh had been given custody of Ardee in order to subdue local opposition, but following the Bruce invasion his reputation was tarnished and he was preoccupied with rebuilding his authority in Ulster. In such circumstances John de Bermingham appeared the most promising instrument of the government's will. Since the purpose of the exercise was to subdue the local power elite, Milo and Nicholas de Verdun could not be considered. What was needed was a strong hand, wielded by an outsider on the government's behalf. De Bermingham came closest to fulfilling these requirements. He was familiar with the environment of the march, he was likely to remain a resident lord, within Ireland at least, and his promotion to the justiciarship of Ireland would add real power to his prestige. However, the government must also have been aware of the hostility of the men of Uriel to outsiders, the possibility of resentment on the part of the de Verduns and of the limited nature of de Bermingham's resources and experience in the area. Given all this, the creation of John de Bermingham as earl of Louth in 1319 represented a gamble. It was a gamble which failed disastrously.(108)

Had de Bermingham been able to concentrate solely on imposing his authority on his new earldom he might have proved a highly successful lord. As it was, however, the ambitious nature which had brought him to the first rank of the English nobility in Ireland drove him on further into the political struggles which occurred in England in the 1320's. He quickly aligned himself with the Despenser faction in opposition to Roger Mortimer and his supporters. At their behest he was appointed justiciar of Ireland in 1321, with the primary mission of eliminating support in the country for the now disgraced Mortimer. He took to the task with relish and redoubled his efforts following Roger's escape from the Tower of London in the summer of 1323. De Bermingham was replaced as justiciar by John Darcy in the following year but remained active in Irish politics. Following the triumphant return to England of Mortimer late in 1326, the earl of Louth found himself out of favour with the new regime and may have conspired with Maurice Fitz Thomas and others against potential supporters of Mortimer in Ireland. De Bermingham's position remained insecure until on 10 June 1329 he was murdered, along with scores of his relatives and friends, at Braganstown by a posse of men from Uriel.(109)

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108. Lydon, 'Braganstown massacre', p7

109. Frame, English lordship, pp162-90. Cal. close rolls 1318-23, p408. Cal. pat. rolls 1321-4, p40. Cal. close rolls 1323-7, p134, Cal. close rolls 1327-30, p397.



Was de Bermingham assassinated at the instigation of Roger Mortimer? Certain circumstantial evidence seems to suggest that he was. As noted above, Mortimer's connections with Uriel stretched back to the de Verdun rebellion of 1312 and as we shall see the links between the rebels of 1312 and the posse of 1329 were numerous. (110) The leader of the posse which murdered de Bermingham was Roger Gernon jr who, together with his brother John, had been rewarded following the defeat of Edward Bruce through Mortimer's influence. (111) Another prominent member of the mob, the sheriff, John de Cusak, was the son of Walter de Cusak, Mortimer's erstwhile seneschal of Trim who had been accused of readying horses for his master's return in 1323. (112) Most suspicious of all, however, was the gentle treatment the murderers received from the government in the aftermath of the massacre. Although fines were made with a number of those involved, these were soon superseded and all the participants were pardoned, despite the damning evidence collected at two inquisitions held at Drogheda within weeks of the affair. (113)

However, the evidence which might acquit Mortimer of involvement is at least equally as strong. The 1320s had demonstrated that in Uriel, as elsewhere in Ireland, he could not take the support of leading individuals and former allies for granted. Walter de la Pulle, for instance, had been among the leaders of the 1312 rebellion as well as serving against Bruce at Faughart and had subsequently been rewarded in Ireland during Mortimer's justiciarship. (114) On becoming escheator, however, de la Pulle presided over the inquisitions into Mortimer's Irish lands in 1324 while the latter was in exile and was rewarded with a grant of Ardee, which belonged to de Bermingham. (115) Mortimer was determined on revenge and in May 1328, following Walter's death, attempted unsuccessfully to disinherit his son, John de la Pulle. (116) John was a juror on the second inquisition, held at Drogheda in Meath, into the circumstances of de Bermingham's death, a task he performed

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110. See below pp 104-5

111. Cal. pat. rolls 1317-21, p318. Chartul St Mary's Dublin, ii p370.

112. See above p. 96 Parl writs II, ii appendix p245 no.89.

113. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 43, p.53. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/16, pp.449-50. Lydon, 'Braganstown massacre', pp11-14. Cal. pat. rolls 1327-30, pp531-2.

114. Cal. pat. rolls 1317-21, p322, P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p17.

115. P.R.O. C 47/10/18.

116. Cal. pat. rolls 1327-30, p263.



alongside Walter de Cusak, Mortimer's ally, and Jordan Dardiz, one of those who had served on his father's inquisition into Mortimer's lands in 1324.<sup>(117)</sup> This was in itself revealing, suggesting as it does that Mortimer was still treating his former enemies in Ireland gingerly in June 1329, and therefore making his direct involvement in de Bermingham's murder seem even less likely.

The insecure nature of Mortimer's position in Ireland is well illustrated by an examination of his relations with the de Verdun brothers, Nicholas and Milo. Their brother Theobald had been married to Mortimer's sister; Nicholas had helped Roger expel the de Lacys from Meath in 1317 and as late as November 1320 he was receiving money grants at Mortimer's behest.<sup>(118)</sup> If Mortimer had a steady body of support in Ireland we would surely find it here. While the de Verduns took no part in the Braganstown massacre there is some slight evidence that they were dissatisfied with de Bermingham's rule in Uriel. His attempts to have their nieces, the daughters of Theobald de Verdun, do him homage c.1320 may have rankled with the brothers, who were guardians of Theobald's lands.<sup>(119)</sup> In October 1326 Nicholas de Verdun and Richard de Tuyt were reported to have risen with armed men in terrorem fidelis populi regis.<sup>(120)</sup> It is unclear whether this rising was undertaken against de Bermingham, but the fact that in June 1330 Mortimer made Nicholas his seneschal of Trim at first suggests some earlier collusion between the two men. <sup>(121)</sup>

More typical of Nicholas' behaviour, however, was the grant he received in December of the same year of the manors of Rathfay and Rathwire which had belonged to Mortimer and which were now in the king's hand following Roger's disgrace and execution.<sup>(122)</sup> The de Verdun brothers had, in reality, aligned themselves throughout the 1320's with whatever cause seemed most likely to advance their position. In 1322, for instance, Milo de Verdun was granted lands in Louth and Meath belonging to the disgraced Hugh de

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117. Lydon 'Braganstown Massacre', p12.

118. See above pp 74 Cal. close. rolls 1318-23, p277

119. Otway-Ruthven, 'Partition of the de Verdun lands'. pp 418,440.

120. Rot. pat. Hib. p.34 no.26. Frame English lordship, p177, no.92. There is evidence that de Tuyt was attempting to mend his bridges with Mortimer in 1326 having benefitted earlier from his discomf<sup>d</sup>ture (ibid, pp165-8). In March 1326 he granted Hugh de Turplynton, a loyal Mortimer retainer, substantial lands in Meath. (ibid, p183, Cal. close rolls 1323-7, p547).

121. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/15, p607. Nicholas was in England in October 1327. Cal.pat.rolls 1327-30, p175

122. Cal. pat. rolls 1330-4, p31, 264.



Turplynton and to Mortimer himself.<sup>(123)</sup> Nicholas de Verdun was even more acquisitive. In November 1322 he was granted custody of the land and heir of Simon de Pheypo, thus repeating a similar grant made to his father in 1283.<sup>(124)</sup> In return the government expected Nicholas' assistance against Mortimer and he was one of those who participated in the inquisition taken into Roger's lands in October 1324.<sup>(125)</sup>

In short, there is no evidence of a body of unswerving support for Mortimer in Uriel upon which he could have called in June 1329 to have John de Bermingham killed. It is unlikely that he conspired in his murder. There is little doubt, however, that he was pleased it had occurred<sup>r</sup> as the pardons granted to those involved indicate and as is also demonstrated by his own acquisition of Louth as a liberty in June 1330.<sup>(126)</sup> De Bermingham's killers were clearly aware that they would not be dealt with harshly and so they accused the earl of having attacked them first, a blatant lie as the inquisitions reveal. However, as the Book of Howth succinctly puts it "those that these tales was told to was contented to give ear to hear this same".<sup>(127)</sup> This is probably an accurate description of Mortimer's role in the murder of John de Bermingham.

John de Bermingham's ambitious nature not only brought him into conflict with the most powerful magnate in England, it also prevented him from devoting more of his energy to stamping his authority on his new earldom. Some idea of the earl's conduct with regard to Uriel may be gleaned from the records of the time. In the ecclesiastical sphere he continued to pay the alms to the Carmelite friary of Ardee which Ralph Pipard had founded.<sup>(128)</sup> His only grant to the church as earl, however, was to the convent of Ballybogan, near the de Bermingham caput of Carbury in Co. Offaly.<sup>(129)</sup> In Uriel itself, John secured the parsonage of the church

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123. Cal. pat. rolls 1321-4, p277. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p59.

124. Cal. pat. rolls 1321-4, p211. Cal. doc. Ire. 1254-85, no.2156, See below p.135

125. Cal. close rolls 1323-7, p134. P.R.O. C 47/10/18.

126. Cal. Charter rolls, 1327-1341, p.176.

127. Cal. pat. rolls 1327-30, p438. Lydon 'Braganstown massacre', pp11-14. Book of Howth, p153.

128. Cal close rolls 1330-3, p238-9.

129. Cal. pat. rolls 1317-21, p598. M. Morris, 3rd baron Killanin & M V Duigan, Shell guide to Ireland, (London, 1962), p.270.

of Stabannon for his kinsman Master Reymond de Bermingham.(130)

The only other male relative of the earl's to benefit in Uriel was Edmund de Bermingham who had fought at Faughart and who served as seneschal of the liberty of Louth on a number of occasions during John's tenure.(131) Two more of de Bermingham's seneschals may be identified. Of Godfrey son of Roger, who accounted at the exchequer in 1327, nothing is known, but more may be said concerning the other appointee, Jordan de Kingsford.(132) He was given a commission as seneschal by de Bermingham on at least two occasions, in 1320 and 1322.(133) He was from Uriel and held land near Termonfeckin, which on his death passed to his son Richard who was married into the family of Top, tenants-in-chief of the crown in Ardee prior to de Bermingham's appointment as earl.(134) De Bermingham could not, therefore, be accused of bestowing patronage in Uriel on his family at the expense of local men. It is perhaps indicative of local attitudes however, that another of the Kingfords, Simon, was one of the instigators of the Braganstown massacre.(135)

De Bermingham was also required to call upon local resources in 1322 when as justiciar he was ordered to bring a large force to fight in Scotland.(136) The company which travelled with the earl included John, Peter, Nicholas and Adam de Cusak and Philip de Repenteny.(137) Of these men only Nicholas and Adam de Cusak did not participate in the murder of de Bermingham at Braganstown in 1329. John de Cusak, who had fought alongside de Bermingham at Faughart in 1318, was sheriff of Uriel in 1329 and led the posse comitatus which massacred the earl and his companions.

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130. Cal. pat. rolls 1330-4, p110.

131. Chartul St. Mary's, Dublin ii, p360. P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2 m1. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/13, pp459-1. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 43, p40.

132. P.R.O. E. 101/239/1. Receipt roll Easter a.r.r. 20 Ed II

133. P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2 m48. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/12, pp792-3.

134. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 47, pp23, 32. Reg. St. John, Dublin, p168. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/2, p252.

135. Lydon, 'Braganstown massacre', p12.

136. Cal. close rolls 1318-23, pp529-30. Frame, English Lordship, pp135-7.

137. P.R.O. E. 101/16/16. Account of John de Bermingham a.r.r. 16 Ed II.



Our understanding of de Bermingham's relations with his earldom is enhanced by the information contained in the inquisitions taken after his death. These reveal that after ten years as earl of Louth he was still regarded as an outsider by the men of Uriel and still behaved as such. His primary loyalty seems still to have lain with his ancestral manor of Carbury rather than with his new possessions. Those kerne who escaped from Ardee fled to Carbury, while John de Clinton and Roger Gernon jr plotted to spread the tale that Roger Gernon sr and jr had been taken to Carbury after being captured by the earl.<sup>(138)</sup> De Bermingham's residence at Balibragan itself requires explanation. He had originally been granted the manor of Ardee and sealed letters patent there in 1320 and 1322.<sup>(139)</sup> In 1324, however, the manor of Ardee was granted to Walter de la Pulle in recognition of his service as escheator against Roger Mortimer and his supporters in Ireland.<sup>(140)</sup> This may have been what encouraged the earl to move to Braganstown (Balibragan), four miles to the north-east in the barony of Ardee. Braganstown was held by the de Clinton family. Sometime after 1301 John de Clinton granted land 'to his freemen residing in the town called Balibragan' in return for rent and for providing him with archers.<sup>(141)</sup> De Clinton was one of those most deeply involved in de Bermingham's murder, raising hue and cry when the kerne who fled from Ardee reached the earl at Braganstown.<sup>(142)</sup> Another of those who helped slay the earl was William Constable of Balibragan who as recently as December 1328 had quit claimed his inheritance in Braganstown to Richard Kenefeg. William's family had been constables for the de Clintons at Braganstown.<sup>(143)</sup> It is possible, therefore, that sometime after 1324 de Bermingham had evicted John de Clinton from his ancestral manor of Braganstown and that Constable's grant was made in anticipation of an attack on the earl. There is no evidence to prove this but the speed with which matters unfolded at Ardee and Braganstown on the Friday night and Saturday morning of 9-10 June 1329 suggests some forward planning

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138. Lydon, 'Braganstown massacre', pp12-3. C. Given-Wilson The English nobility in the late middle ages (London, 1987), p162.

139. See above p 100 . P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2 m48, P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/12, pp772-3.

140. See above p.97

141. P.R.O.I. 1121/1/1 Bellew Mss p2, no.3. The deed may be dated by the reference to the death of John's father Simon, who died in 1301. P.R.O.I., R.C. 7/8, pp215-6.

142. Lydon, 'Braganstown massacre', p13.

143. P.R.O.I. 1121/1/1, Bellew mss p5 no.10, p.1, no.2

on the part of the Uriel men.

Returning to the evidence of the inquisitions, they reveal that the earl kept about him a large retinue which included many members of his own family. More than 160 people died at Braganstown, ten of them de Berminghams.<sup>(144)</sup> This may have been an untypically large gathering, reflecting the disturbed state of the country at the time. In June 1328 de Bermingham had been ordered to desist from assembling men-at-arms which he had employed to attack other lords in Ireland.<sup>(145)</sup> De Bermingham also made use of Irish kerne who were apparently from Offaly and not Uriel. In 1319 the earl had been permitted to receive his Irishmen into English law but the jurors on the second inquisition following his murder professed to be ignorant as to whether the kerne were free or not.<sup>(146)</sup> Finally, the inquisitions reveal the general distrust with which the earl was viewed by the men of Uriel. They were apparently prepared to believe that de Bermingham would kidnap Roger Gernon and imprison him in Offaly. The earl himself acknowledged the ill feeling towards him when he expressed disbelief that his own men would attack him 'however much they might be of a mind to do it'.<sup>(147)</sup> The Book of Howth summed up the situation with delightful understatement when it said 'the truth is, the earl was not beloved of those of Uriell'.<sup>(148)</sup>

What inspired this hatred of de Bermingham? In part it stemmed from certain innovations which he introduced into Uriel and which the local inhabitants rejected. Kerne, for instance, were apparently not maintained by the local English lords, although the neighbouring Mac Mahons did employ them.<sup>(149)</sup> The murder of de Bermingham's kerne at Ardee resembled an attack on Mac Mahon's men in the same town in

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144. Lydon, 'Braganstown massacre', p.12. The accuracy of Clyn's numbers in his account suggests that he had been speaking to someone who witnessed the first inquisition on 28 June 1329. (Clyn, p.20).

145. Cal. close rolls 1327-30, p397

146. Cal. pat. rolls 1317-21, p.342. Lydon, 'Braganstown massacre', p12.

147. *Ibid.*, p13.

148. Book of Howth, p153.

149. Nicholls, 'Register of Clogher', p415. See below, pp.130-1



1310, which resulted in widespread disorder in the area.<sup>(150)</sup> De Bermingham's patronage of the Irish learned classes, as illustrated by the presence at Braganstown of a famous harper at the time of the massacre, may also have given rise to displeasure among an English community in Uriel which seems not to have employed Irish poets or musicians.<sup>(151)</sup> Finally, the extended family was a phenomenon not witnessed in Uriel at this time. Ten de Berminghams died at Braganstown but no more than three members of any one family were among their attackers. The Uriel men later claimed that they had been provoked by the lawless behaviour of Raymond de Bermingham, one of those slain by them alongside John de Bermingham. The government was perhaps all the more inclined to believe such an excuse as a result of its own difficulties with English lineages or surnames.<sup>(152)</sup>

It may not be necessary, however, to seek an explanation for the Braganstown massacre in the conduct of John de Bermingham. The evidence suggests that his yoke as earl was not excessively burdensome. He employed local men in an official capacity, brought them with him to war and a number were even present at his final, fatal, repast.<sup>(153)</sup> His downfall may have been caused not by an overly aggressive exercise of lordship but, in contrast, by failure on his part to have his authority in Uriel recognised and respected. It is quite clear that the change in status from royal county to liberty had done nothing to temper the strong sense of community and self reliance felt by the men of Uriel. In 1321, for instance, 'Niall O Hanlon, lord of Orior, was treacherously slain by the English of Dundalk' in one of a series of attacks and assassinations, stretching back as far as 1297, which characterised relations between the English and Irish of the area and which it was quite beyond the power of any third party such as de Bermingham to control.<sup>(154)</sup>

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150. Cal. justic. rolls Ire 1308-14, pp 170-1. Lydon, 'Braganstown massacre', pp7-10.

151. See below, p126 A.F.M., 1328

152. See below, pp128-30 Cal. pat. rolls 1327-30, pp531-2

153. See above. Lydon 'Braganstown massacre', p14. William Hamond was a Dundalk man. (Dowdall Deeds, pp46, 49, 54).

154. A.F.M. 1321. See above. p82.

By 1329 John de Bermingham's political prospects were more likely to have provoked joy than jealousy among his resentful tenants in Uriel. Clyn's annal is the only contemporary narrative source to discuss the motivation of the massacre, and given the accuracy of its account in other respects, its brief summary of the cause of de Bermingham's murder, deserves careful consideration. The men of Uriel conspired against their earl, it says, 'not wishing him to reign over them'.(155)

They did not wish him to reign over them because his reign posed a threat to a tradition of independent action and communal power which they treasured. De Bermingham's behaviour as earl of Louth was, in a sense, irrelevant. What rankled was that there existed an earl of Louth in the first place, and one more over, who held Uriel as a liberty, thus imposing a layer of control on the county far more visible and potent than anything which the Dublin government could have implemented. By the summer of 1329 the leaders of the local community realised that they could rid themselves of this irksome imposition with impunity, and if the politically unpopular and potentially dangerous de Bermingham lineage were to be wiped out in the process then all the better from several points of view, Mortimer's included.

The Braganstown massacre, therefore, should be seen as part of process by which a section of the English community of Uriel asserted its power and desire to control its own destiny under the crown with a minimum of outside interference. Three of those who murdered the de Berminghams had also rebelled in 1312, Simon Bod, John Pypard and Roger Wodeford.(156) Nine more had acted as mainpersons for their relatives or friends in the aftermath of the rebellion.(157) Those who had rebelled with Robert de Verdun and Walter de la Pulle in 1312 included many of the most respectable inhabitants of Uriel, and the same was true of those who participated in the events of June 1329.(158) John de Cusak and Richard Taaf, for instance, had served as sheriffs of Uriel prior to 1329.(159) Reginald de Haddesore had been a serjeant of the county while William

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155. Clyn, Annals, p20.

156. Cal. justic rolls Ire. 1308-14, pp237-14, Cal. pat. rolls 1327-30, pp531-2.

157. Ibid, pp501-2

158. See above pp.63-4

159. See above p. 68,91 P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/6, p209.



de Houth and John Hervy had acted there as receivers on the king's behalf.<sup>(160)</sup> John Tancard had not only stood as mainpernor for Theobald de Verdun jr to receive his Irish lands in 1309, he had also been a collector of the king's subsidy in Co. Meath.<sup>(161)</sup> Peter de Haddesore had been similarly made use of by the king and had been given custody of archiepiscopal lands in Uriel during a vacancy at Armagh.<sup>(162)</sup> Roger Gernon jr and Henry Stanley of Molavery had benefitted from the confiscation of Templar property in Uriel while Robert Lowys and William White were wealthy wool merchants of Dundalk.<sup>(163)</sup>

If the pasts of those who slew the earl of Louth in 1329 were respectable, their subsequent careers were spectacular. The Braganstown massacre is a suitable point to end a narrative account of the history of medieval Uriel because it represents a watershed in the political history of the area. The self reliance which the community of Uriel displayed in rebellion in 1312 was sufficiently strong to outlast the influence of the de Verdun brothers, an influence which waned in the 1320's, despite Nicholas de Verdun's uprising in 1326.<sup>(164)</sup> Peter de Haddesore, John de Clinton and Richard Taaf of Balibragan subsequently served as sheriffs of Uriel.<sup>(165)</sup> John Taaf was appointed attorney in Ireland by Nicholas de Verdun in 1338 while Richard Taaf of Castleomnaght along with Peter de Cusak, John de Clinton and Gerald de Clinton were addressed as armigeri and were requested by the king to fight with him in Scotland in 1335.<sup>(166)</sup> John de Clinton was also granted Donaghmoyne in 1332, fought in Leinster with Anthony de Lucy and was sufficiently powerful by 1343 to bring a force of men at arms and hobelars to the

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160. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, pp68-9. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/13, p408. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/6, p280.

161. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/3, pp516-7. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, p605.

162. Cal. pat. rolls 1317-21, p503. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, p666. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/14, p795.

163. P.R. O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp68-9, McIvor 'Knight's Templar', p83. Cal. close rolls 1339-41, p334.

164. See above p.98

165. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/15, p300. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 45 pp 28-9

166. Cal. pat.rolls 1338-40, p153. N.L.I. Ms 1, Harris collectanea, f 62.d

defence of Trim.<sup>(167)</sup> More significant, however, was the fact that by 1337 Roger Gernon jr, Peter de Haddesore and Wiiliam White of Dundalk were concluding peace treaties on behalf of the community of Uriel with Donal O Hanlon.<sup>(168)</sup> In a marcher society this is what power meant, and by the mid 1330s this power lay with those who had slain John de Bermingham and helped end the earldom of Louth.

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167. Cal. Fine rolls 1327-37, p329. P.R.O. E. 372/179, Rot. pat. Hib, p45, no.78.

168. Ibid p 42, no.6



## CHAPTER 5: English and Irish in medieval Uriel

When Richard Fitz Ralph, archbishop of Armagh, preached before the Pope at Avignon in August 1349 concerning the traditional hatred which existed between the English and Irish of Ireland he spoke as one who had experienced the phenomenon at first hand.<sup>(1)</sup> As a native of Dundalk he had been reared in a region of persistent racial strife and on several occasions during his primacy he lectured his flock in Uriel regarding their un-Christian attitude to their neighbours.<sup>(2)</sup> In addressing the racial tension in the area he was pursuing a theme which had attracted attention and condemnation from churchmen for well over a century. In 1242 for instance, the then archbishop of Armagh, Albert Subeer, described the Augustinian church of St Peter's, Drogheda as being situated in medio duorum nacionum se quasi insatiabili odio adinuicem perseuencium et ob hoc bella concitancium, unde destructis omnibus cir<sup>qua</sup> .cumque nisi aliunde vobis contingerit subueniri non possetis in eodem loco Deo congrue militare.<sup>(3)</sup> Earlier still, in 1228, Stephen of Lexington referred to Mellifont's position in pessima namque marchia et periculosa inter Anglicos et Hibernicos. Quod propter esti quando sit ibi pax horaria, nulla tamen constans, nulla segura.<sup>(4)</sup> The history of medieval Uriel was shaped by this conflict between English and Irish. It produced marches on the margins of English settlement and the result was a marcher society in Uriel which developed social characteristics peculiar to itself.<sup>(5)</sup>

The mutual tolerance which characterised relations in Uriel between the native Irish and the newly arrived English had by as early as 1193 disappeared with the murder of the last of the O Carrol chiefs by the

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1. Walsh, Richard Fitz Ralph, pp288-90.
2. Ibid, pp1-5. 341-5.
3. Ir. chartul Llanthony, p25.
4. Smith, 'The march in medieval Ireland', p259.
5. Ibid., pp257-69. R. Bartlett. Gerald of Wales 1146-1223, (Oxford, 1982), pp158-77. Empey, 'The Anglo-Norman community in Tipperary and Kilkenny in the middle ages'.

invaders.(6) It is difficult to judge whether the English conquest of Uriel involved any sizeable migration westward of the native population - as a provision in the treaty of Windsor of 1175 suggested had been the case elsewhere - but it is clear that the O Carrols at least became subordinate to their Mac Mahon cousins in the east of the present County Monaghan.(7) The earliest English tenants in Uriel were frequently granted lands which had previously constituted the holdings of individual Irish families.(8) It is likely that these expropriated families preferred migration to a diminution of their status under English rule, but it is also apparent that not all Irish families of significance chose to leave following the conquest. The O Bragans for instance, with whom Braganstown was associated, continued to hold land in Uriel in the fourteenth century, apparently as free tenants of English lords.(9) In the later thirteenth century the family of MacGone were said to hold their lands, which possibly consisted of Ballymacone in south Armagh, of Ralph Pipard.(10)

In the church, in particular, the influence of the Irish in Uriel proved difficult to eradicate. At the time of Stephen of Lexington's visitation to Mellifont in 1228, for instance, the monastery had come to be staffed entirely by Irish monks whose families resided in the vicinity of the house.(11) Little had changed by the end of the century when the abbot, Hugh O Hessian, gave his brother Maurice, a betagh, a charter of freedom and granted him monastic land in Grangegeth.(12) That some local ecclesiastical families of importance survived the transition from Irish to English rule is suggested by the appearance of Brother Gilbert O Gorman of Mellifont in 1317. Malcolm O Gorman, who died in 1164, had been master of St Mary's abbey, Louth and a former abbot of the Arrouaisian house of Termonfeckin.(13) In general, the newly arrived English preferred to

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6. See above p 23

7. Ibid. Nicholls 'Register of Clogher', p.413. Curtis & McDowell, Ir. hist. docs. p23.

8. See above p.21-2

9. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp486-7

10. Cal. Ormond deeds, 1171-1350, pp81, 196-7. Simms, 'The O Hanlons, the O Neills and the Anglo-Normans', p87.

11. See above p.53

12. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp321-3.

13. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/8, pp66-7. Reg. All Hallows, pp66-7. A.F.M., 1164.



found and endow new houses staffed by Englishmen rather than attempt to supersede Irish influence in houses which existed before their coming.(14) The same mode of thought persuaded Stephen of Lexington to support the continued existence of the diocese of Clogher on the grounds that it was situated 'among mere Irish'.(15) In the course of the Bruce invasion the English of Uriel expressed a distrust of Irish monks in the county which was not entirely unjustified.(16)

In many ways, however, the church cut across the racial divide. That the archbishops of Armagh chose to live in Uriel rather than in their cathedral city from the thirteenth century onwards, for instance, appears at first sight to be symptomatic of the division of the church inter Anglicos and inter Hibernicos. The first archbishop to leave Armagh for the comparative safety of Mellifont abbey, however, was Tomaltach O Connor and his decision, taken in 1196, was prompted as much by attacks by the English as by the Irish.(17) Irish archbishops of Armagh such as Nicholas Mac Maol Iosa and David O Hiraghty were also far more vituperative in their condemnations of the Irish of the marches of Uriel - Mac Maol Iosa referred to them as 'a perverse people' - than was Richard Fitz Ralph, an English native of Dundalk. There is no evidence of antipathy towards the English on the part of Irish archbishops and this cannot have been used as an excuse to exclude Irish clerics from the primacy from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards.(18)

In Uriel, as elsewhere in the lordship, the Irish were, in general, excluded from the use of the common law. Irish women were however able to acquire common law by marrying Englishmen. This was the case with Mariota Mac Irechti who married Ralph le Burgeys, a coroner in Uriel, and with Ismaya and Matilda O Reilly, the former of whom married first Bertram de Repenteny and later Bartholemew de Tuit.(19) Archbishop

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14. See above p 61

15. See above pp.54-5

16. See above p.86

17. See above p.47

18. Walsh, Richard Fitz Ralph, pp341-5; Gwynn 'Documents relating to Armagh', p.11. Nicholls, 'Register of Clogher', pp413-21. Reg. Swayne, p.11

19. Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92, nos 94, 685; Gwynn, 'Documents relating to Armagh', p.16. Cal. justic.rolls Ire., 1305-7, p489.

Nicholas Mac Maol Iosa may have played a part in arranging these matches. He certainly had land dealings with Ralph Burgeys and he also petitioned the king for English law on behalf of Ismaya O Reilly on the grounds that 'it is the custom of Ireland that Irishwomen may not take dower after the death of their husbands'.<sup>(20)</sup> Mac Maol Iosa was certainly concerned to ensure that his own relatives acquired common law. A female relation, Rose Mac Molis married Peter de Repenty while Christopher Mac Molissi received a grant of common law in 1285.<sup>(21)</sup>

Common law could also be acquired by those Irishmen in Drogheda who became burgesses. In 1307 Thomas son of Gerald son of John complained that on his father's death the justiciar, John Wogan, had taken his lands and goods into the king's hands because he was hibernicus

'whereas by the custom used hitherto ... in said burgh ... hibernici made burgesses are made free in the same way as Englishmen, especially in the disposition of their goods and tenements which they had in said burghs and cities and likewise as Gerald was free by charter of the king'<sup>(22)</sup>

William Broun of Drogheda was granted English law in 1309 while Richard de Dromisken who may have lived in the same town received it in 1290.<sup>(23)</sup>

Many of the Irish in Drogheda who enjoyed the common law were members of local families which had held land in the area before the arrival of the English. In 1287, for example, the dominicum of William O Kelly junior included a half carucate of land in Duleek held in chief of Theobald de Verdun. When the prior of Duleek subsequently succeeded in having the O Kellys reduced to the status of Hibernici, William moved to Drogheda where he became an influential merchant and burgess.<sup>(24)</sup>

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20. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, pp10-11; Gwynn, 'Documents relating to Armagh', p.16

21. Rot. pat. Hib., p.2, no.12. Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92, no.94.

22. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, p.52 Gerald son of John had been a royal purveyor at Drogheda, P.R.O.I. Ex 2/1, p101.

23. Cal. pat. rolls 1307-13, p.183, Cal. pat. rolls, 1281-92, p.368.

24. Ir. cartul. Llanthony, pp230-1; K.W. Nicholls, 'Anglo-French and after', in Peritia, i (1982), p.378; Cal. pat. rolls, 1317-21, p314; Rot. pat. Hib., p.12, no.26.



The family of O Moledy presents a similar picture. In 1297 Master Gilbert O Moledy possessed the tenement of Rathmolan near Drogheda, while Murtagh O Moledy received an illegal grant of 80 acres in Monasterboice from Archbishop Nicholas Mac Meol Iosa.(25) John O Moledy was outlawed in 1311 for helping the powerful Drogheda family of Sewell murder one of its enemies in the town. (26) The Mac Kenevan family likewise combined interests in Drogheda with lands elsewhere in Uriel. Robert Mackanefy was prepositus of Drogheda c.1260 while in 1268-9 William Macaveny accounted at the exchequer for the farm of Drogheda towards Meath.(27) John Mc Canefy held land of the vicar of Donarfy in 1295 while in 1306 Nicholas McKenevan was charged in Drogheda with having supplied wine to MacMahon and made fine by 20s.(28) In general it seems likely that there were many free tenants of Irish origin in Meath and Louth. In 1317, for instance, Gilbert Large, burgess of Drogheda, granted land to his son in Duleek and stipulated that the grant included 'all lordship of the free tenants both English and Irish therein'.(29) The 'Gillberide' who acted as one of the pledges for Killincoule following the murder there of Sheriff Richard Gernon in 1311, was also presumably a free tenant of the area.(30)

Most of the Irish in Uriel, however, did not hold their land by free tenure and were under the direct jurisdiction of English lords.(31) In most cases those referred to as hibernici enjoyed the lowly legal status of betaghs. By the early fourteenth century betagh communities had clearly developed in Uriel, possibly as the result of the sub-division of larger holdings which had earlier been held by individual betaghs. (32) The lord of many of the betaghs in Uriel, particularly after the Pipard transfer of 1301, was the king. One of the most remarkable

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25. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp.106-7; N.L.I. Ms 761, pp173, 287; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p43.
26. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, p223-4.
27. Reg. St. John, Dublin, p.168; P.R.I. rep., D.K. 35, p.50.
28. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/3, p248; Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, p.490; P.R.O.E. 101/234/16, receipt roll Mich. a.r.r 34-5 Ed . P.R.O.E. 101/232/24, receipt roll, Easter a.r.r. 25 EdI.
29. Gormanston reg., p43.
30. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp225-6.
31. Hand, English law in Ireland, pp93-115; A.J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The native Irish and English law in medieval Ireland', in L.H.S., vii (1950-1), pp1-16.
32. Nicholls, 'Anglo-French Ireland and after' pp374, 379-80.

features of Robert de Verdun's rebellion of 1312 was the fact that he administered oaths of fealty not only to free tenants of the crown but also to the king's betaghs. This suggests that the latter were of sufficient numerical importance to merit an unusual effort by the rebels to ensure their obedience.(33)

The king's betaghs were in the privileged position of being able to plead for themselves in the king's court rather than having to be represented by an intermediary lord. In 1306 the betaghs of Stackillen in the barony of Ardee, whose lord had been Ralph Pipard but who were now tenants of the king, succeeded in having the rent due from 4 acres deducted from what they owed to the king. The jury in this case, however, also decided that the rent on the remainder of their land should be raised from 16d to 18d. per acre 'because Emma, widow of John de Kent takes 18d. for each acre of her land of Molyneston [Mullanstown, bar. Ardee] which is of equal goodness with the lands which the betaghs hold.'(34)

That betagh status was not a permanent obstacle to the attainment of common law by individual Irishmen is suggested by the numerous references to men with the surname 'Betagh' acting as jurors in Uriel courts in the early fourteenth century, a function which could be performed only by free men.(35) Most betaghs, however, remained unfree and were forced to look for legal protection to their lords. Edmund Butler, for instance prosecuted three men who stole fish from his hibernici at Kilclogher (Clogherhead) in 1315.(36) In 1306 Luke de Netterville accused Stephen d'Exeter of having 'assaulted and wounded his hibernici to his damage of £100' and also accused Doneghuth O Reilly of having stolen 'many of his cattle and those of his betaghs'.(37) Before studying the implications of this incident more closely a word should be said concerning

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33. Cal. justic. rolls Ire. 1308-14, p278

34. Cal. justic. rolls 1305-7, 180-1

35. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/3, pp 19-23, 56, 144, 145. N.L.I. ms 761, p165.

36. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, p29.

37. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, p175



the relationship between the betaghs of Uriel and their English neighbours.

Because of the nature of the surviving evidence this relationship is best documented in cases of criminal activity. In February 1312, Robert de Verdun was said to have gathered a large force tam Anglicorum quam Hibernicorum, de comitatu de Loeth et partibus adiacentibus when beginning his rebellion.<sup>(38)</sup> Proof of the charge is to be found in the conviction in 1315 of Adam and Donagh O Bronan and Ralph Further on a charge of being in Robert's company. In this instance the jury granted leniency to the Irishmen but insisted on the Englishmen being hanged.<sup>(39)</sup> Two other members of the O Bronan family had been involved in cattle rustling in 1306 and one of them had been beheaded while attempting to escape from the sanctuary of the church of Aclint.<sup>(40)</sup> Examples of co-operation in criminal activity between betaghs and Englishmen of Uriel are numerous. Following the murder of Sheriff Richard Gernon at Allardstown (bar. Louth) in September 1311, one of his assailants, William Brisbon, who was wounded in the affray, was attended to and sheltered by William O Braydir and John Hereward of Dunbin.<sup>(41)</sup> In 1315 Robert McKydin and John Bodenham were hanged for having robbed and murdered Gilbert McCurryn while in 1301 Geoffrey le Bret accused Adam de Sancto Bosco and Nicholas Mac Scoly of having disseised him of his land in Kylcloghir (Clogherhead).<sup>(42)</sup>

It was not these hibernici, however, who were regarded by the English of Uriel as their enemies. In May 1311 a man convicted of receiving stolen cattle was allowed make fine with the king because he "is a strong man and often fights well against Irish felons, although he is poor".<sup>(43)</sup> The Irish referred to in this instance were

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38. Cal. justic. rolls Ire. 1308-14. p237. J. F. Lydon 'The enrolled account of Alexander Bicknor'. p31

39. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, pp24-5

40. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7. pp486-7, 489.

41. Cal. justic rolls Ire. 1308-14. pp225-6.

42. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, p.16. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, p212.

43. Cal justic rolls Ire., 1308-14. p213.

those from beyond the terra pacis. The free tenants of the de Verduns were obliged to perform military service at CastleRoche cum Hibernicis ad guerram. (44) These Hibernici were clearly not the betaghs who lived among the English of Uriel.

The territories of the O Hanlons and Mac Mahons had been included in the earliest grants made to the Pipards and de Verduns and it is clear that attempts to collect rent from these families were still being made in the early fourteenth century.(45) In 1306, for instance, Brian Mac Mahon agreed that the de Verduns might retain 'the goods which they took from the Irish for rent due to them, or that the Irish may pay their rent (and have) restitution'. (46) This in itself demonstrates the problems which were likely to arise in areas where there was English lordship but no English settlement. In short, it shows the problems of the march.

The impression given in contemporary records is that warfare on the marches of Uriel was the fault of the Irish who constantly attacked the English settlement. In 1320 Nicholas de Verdun was allowed £10 p.a. for the defence of the lands of his late brother Theobald 'because the said lands cannot be defended without great cost against the Irish of those parts, who frequently rise against the king's peace'.(47) However, a closer examination of individual incidents of violence demonstrates that much of the friction in Uriel resulted from the attempts of the de Verduns and others to make effective their notional lordship over the neighbouring clans. In other words the English themselves were partly to blame for the wars of the Irish.

A case of 1306 involving Nicholas de Verdun helps illustrate the point.(48) Nicholas and a body of men took cattle from Doneghuth O Coghegan who had them on the laúd of John del Auncy. Nicholas claimed that

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44. See above, pp.81-2 Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', p422.

45. Ibid, p406.

46. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/1, pp89-90, 96. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp502-3. Smith, 'The medieval border', pp45-6.

47. Cal. close rolls 1318-23, p277.

48. Cal. justic. rolls Ire. 1305-7, pp186-7.



Doneghuth belonged to the company of Gillys O Reilly who was a felon of the king.<sup>(49)</sup> Following this raid John del Auney defamed Nicholas saying he had robbed his hibernici. John was also the bailiff of the earl of Ulster and told de Burgh that de Verdun 'had robbed faithful hibernici of the earl, in contempt of the earl, by which the earl was moved beyond measure against Nicholas and had ill will against him, to his <sup>a</sup>damge of £200.' The jury found that Doneghuth was a felon and was a tenant of del Auney but not of the earl. Nicholas was awarded damages.<sup>(50)</sup>

Another example of the same phenomenon in Uriel is also recorded in 1306 and concerned one of the jurors in the case discussed above, Stephen d'Exeter.<sup>(51)</sup> The incident began with the theft of sixty cattle from the manor of Nicholas de Netterville at Dowth in Co. Meath. The thieves brought the cows to Doneghuth O Reilly who resided on the lands of Stephen d'Exeter. Nicholas learnt that Doneghuth 'was under the avowry of Gilpatrick Mac Mahon', a man of Theobald de Verdun and so brought him to court and had him outlawed. Because, however, the justiciar was informed 'that Doneghuth was wont to repress the felons of his parts for the good of the peace' he postponed the outlawry and assigned two government officials with interests in Uriel to forge an agreement between O Reilly and de Netterville.<sup>(52)</sup> Under the terms of this agreement Doneghuth and Gilpatrick undertook to compensate Nicholas for his loss. When Doneghuth failed to honour this promise Nicholas sent his son Luke and others to take Doneghuth's cattle. These men, however, were in turn pursued by Stephen d'Exeter, John le Petyt and others and a fracas ensued near Dowth in the course of which Luke de Netterville received a serious wound in the arm. Stephen and John succeeded in recovering most of the cattle taken from Doneghuth. The jury found in favour of the de Nettervilles.

This case reveals many of the complexities of life on the marches of Uriel. Both the protagonists, Nicholas de Netterville and Stephen d'Exeter, were free tenants of Theobald de Verdun. Doneghuth O Reilly, who

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49. Giolla Iosa O Reilly had helped Brian Mac Mahon kill Aedh Buidhe O'Neill in 1283. Ann. Conn., 1283.

50. K. Simms, 'Nomadry in medieval Ireland: the origins of the creaght or caoraigheacht,' Pertia v (1986), p386.

51. Cal. justic rolls Ire. 1305-7. pp175-7.

52. Roger Roth, Sheriff of Uriel, had stood as pledge for Doneghuth following an incident in 1301. P.R.O.I. E 101/233/16, receipt roll Mich. a.r.r. 29 Ed I.



provoked the argument by receiving stolen cattle was 'a faithful man of Theobald de Verdun' and clearly enjoyed free legal status since he was capable of being outlawed. He resided under the avowry of Mac Mahon who was also 'a man of Theobald de Verdun' and pastured his cattle on the land of an Englishman close to Drogheda. Theobald de Verdun's desire to facilitate O Reilly in this manner, possibly in return for some form of military service, clearly led to dissensions among the English of Uriel.(53)

Nor was this the only example of such friction. In the case discussed above John le Petyt fought against de Netterville on behalf of O Reilly. Seven years later, however, in 1313, John found himself in a situation similar to that of Nicholas de Netterville in 1306. Because of trespasses committed against him by Molsathlyn O Reilly he raided the Irishman's cattle but was eventually forced to promise to 'restore to Nicholas and Milo de Verdun, knights, those 232 cows which John took from Molsathlyn O Raylly a hibernicus of Theobald de Verdun'.(54) In this instance, Nicholas de Verdun is seen defending an Irishman whose behaviour has promoted disturbance in Uriel. This must be borne in mind, alongside his complaints concerning 'the Irish of those parts, who frequently rise against the kings peace'(55)

The importance of pasturing and cattle in general in the life of the marches of Uriel has been demonstrated by the incidents described above. It is also clearly illustrated in an agreement reached between Ralph Pipard and Aonghus Mac Mahon sometime between 1284 and 1294.(56) Mac Mahon was granted the regalitas of the barony of Cremone (Co. Monaghan) rent free on condition that he protected Pipard's men and prevented Gilleho Mac Mahon from pasturing his cattle there. By 1297, however, 'Mahon son of Gille Chua' was recognised as lord of Cremorne, suggesting that Aonghus had been unable to prevent Gilleho from pasturing his cattle and that such pasturing had entitled his son to the lordship of the area thus exploited.(57) Marches were produced and then typified by the clashes between different concepts and practices in a wide range of areas, be they social, economic or political. Perhaps one of the most fundamental of these clashes was that between pastoral and arable farming. It differentiated the Irish who lived among the English of Uriel from those such as the O Reillys and Mac Mahons who did not. It seems fair to say that Ireland beyond the

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53. Simms, 'Nomadry in medieval Ireland', pp385-6.

54. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, p598.

55. See above p.114

56. Ormond deeds, 1172-1350, pp106-7. For dating see Appendix I

57. Simms 'Nomadry in medieval Ireland', p385. Nicholls 'Register of Clogher'. p416.



terra pacis became increasingly pastoral. This in turn required extra mobility from Irish chiefs and their supporters. Much of the violence on the marches of Uriel sprang from attempts by the English to resist the spread of pastoralism.(58)

Of necessity, the attitude of the de Verduns and Pipards to their Irish neighbours could not be one of unrelenting hostility. Nicholas and Milo de Verdun, as discussed above, pursued the interests of 'Molsathlyn O Rayly', a hibernicus of Theobald de Verdun, against those of John le Petyt and Nicholas also acted as pledge in 1306 for the son of Conluth O Hanlon who owed 40s for the king's peace.(59) Ralph Pipard attempted to have Aenghus Mac Mahon recognise the overlordship of Eachmharach O Hanlon when he granted to the former the kingship of certain lands in Co Monaghan and the appearance in the early fourteenth century of a 'Ralph Mac Mahon' suggests that ties of fosterage may have existed between that family and the Pipards.(60)

The example set by the de Verduns and Pipards was followed by their sub-tenants in Uriel. Bertram de Repenteny, as mentioned earlier, married an O Reilly and that family in turn seems also to have been related to the Babes of Uriel.(61) The Cruises, who were hereditary serjeants of the county and tenants of the de Verduns, may also have been related to the O Reillys and the existence of a 'Mahon de Cruys' in the early fourteenth century again suggests ties of fosterage with the MacMahons.(62) Henry de Cruys was one of a number of Englishmen who acted as pledges for the payment by Gilpatrick Mac Mahon in 1304 of rent owed to the king since the Pipard transfer and in 1306 he again acted as pledge for Gilpatrick who had promised to

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58. N.H.I. ii, pp413-6.

59. See above p. 116 Cal justic rolls Ire 1305-7, p503.

60. Simms, 'The O Hanlons, the O Neills and the Anglo-Normans', p87; The Gaelic lordships of Ulster, p324.

61. See above p. 109-10 Simms, The Gaelic lordships of Ulster, p404

62. *Ibid*, pp332, 404. Cal justic rolls Ire. 1295-1303, p81. Craig. Memoranda roll, 3 Ed II, p310

return goods stolen from the men of Ardee. On this occasion Gilpatrick defaulted and the money equivalent was levied in part from Henry's land in Meath.<sup>(63)</sup> The goods had been stolen by Mahon O Reilly who was supposed to have been under the supervision of Gilpatrick at the time. In October 1310 O Reilly agreed to pay 10m for the king's peace and a pardon was issued to him and to Mahon Mac Mahon.<sup>(64)</sup> Shortly after, however, Henry son of Otuel de Cruys - presumably not the Henry who had acted as pledge for Gilpatrick Mac Mahon in 1306 - who was in Dublin, wrote to Hugh Alger and other Uriel men encouraging them to conduct a raid on O Reilly. This they did, taking 107 cows from the Irishman. In retaliation O Reilly 'robbed Robertstown of four score cows and Henry son of Otuel de Cruy of four score pigs so that the whole peace of those marches is destroyed'. A jury acquitted the Englishmen of robbery on the grounds that O Reilly's pardon had not yet been proclaimed when they made their raid. The case is of interest in that it shows two members of the same English family of Cruise adopting different attitudes to the same Irishman, Mahon O Reilly.<sup>(65)</sup>

Henry de Cruys was not the only Englishman to act as pledge for Gilpatrick Mac Mahon in both 1304 and 1306. Baldewyn le Flemyng and Adam le Chamberleyn offered their services in a like manner.<sup>(66)</sup> They may have been motivated in this by a desire to ensure that they were not the victims of any future Irish attacks. If this was the case, le Chamberleyn at least was to be disappointed. In 1310 his stable and the seventeen oxen and twenty-five cows within were burned during an attack by an associate of 'Conlygh

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63. P.R.O.I. EX 2/1 pp89-90, 96. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp280-1.

64. Cal. justic rolls 1308-14, p161. Rot. Pat. Hib., p18 no.113.

65. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp209-10. Robertstown had earlier been attacked by another O Reilly (P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/3, p145) Henry son of Otuel de Cruys was not averse to fighting with his own kin. In October 1311 he was charged with robbing Richard de Crues and the king's lands of Inisken 'with caparisoned horses and standards displayed'. (Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, p224).

66. See above p 115



McNeel' who was in league with the Mac Mahons.<sup>(67)</sup> Another of those who acted as pledge for Gilpatrick in 1304 was Adam d'Exeter who two years later was involved in the clash with the de Nettervilles which followed the attempt by the latter to reclaim the cattle which Doneghuth O Reilly was grazing on the land of Adam's kinsman, Stephen d'Exeter.<sup>(68)</sup> Stephen had earlier witnessed the grant by Ralph Pipard to Aonghus MacMahon of the kingship of 'Crichnegarum' as had another relative, Richard d'Exeter.<sup>(69)</sup>

Richard d'Exeter's career incorporates many of the important facets of English-Irish relations on the marches of Uriel. His qualifications as a major land-owner in Uriel and an important government official prompted the Dublin administration to call upon his services to help end the disturbances on the marches there in the early fourteenth century.<sup>(70)</sup> Twice in 1306 he sought to negotiate peace in the area, on the first occasion attempting unsuccessfully to disentangle his kinsman Stephen d'Exeter and de Nettervilles from a feud over O Reilly's cattle and on the second standing as pledge for Brian Mac Mahon who promised a payment of sixty cows, in return for the king's peace.<sup>(71)</sup> Brian defaulted, however, and the 100s. he owed was later levied from Richard's property.<sup>(72)</sup> In 1310 he was commanded to parley with Mahon MacMahon and Mahon O Reilly and succeeded temporarily in bringing them to the king's peace.<sup>(73)</sup>

It is abundantly clear, therefore, that contact with the Irish on a variety of social and political levels was maintained in Uriel not only by the leading families of de Verdun and Pipard but also by a large and important section of their tenantry. Some of these English families may have entered into such contacts

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67. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14. pp167-8, 170-1.

68. See above p.115

69. Ormond deeds 1172-1350, pp106-7

70. Richardson and Sayles, Admin Ire., p102. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/10, pp592-3. See below p.164-8

71. Cal justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp175-7, 502-3.

72. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p32.

73. Cal justic rolls Ire, 1308-14, 161.

more enthusiastically than others, but it would be a distortion of the reality of marcher life to seek to distinguish between tenants who sought compromise with the Irish and those who sought confrontation. The de Nettervilles are a case in point. In 1306, as we have seen, they risked a full scale battle with their neighbours, the d'Exeters, in order to retrieve cattle stolen from them by an O Reilly who was supposed to have been kept in check by a Mac Mahon. Any idea, however, that the de Netterville might therefore be perceived as being implacably opposed to the Irish is negated by the command issued in 1314 'to attach Luke de Netterville, Ralph de Netterville, Thomas de Netterville ... Nicholas de Netterville and Mahon Mac Mahon to appear before the justiciar ... to stand to the charge for certain felonies for which they were indicted before the justiciar'.(74)

Warfare on the marches of Uriel rarely if ever involved a clear cut division between English and Irish. Despite the volume and variety of interaction between the two races illustrated above, however, warfare remained a fact of life in the area. This resulted in part at least from the splintered character of lordship among the Mac Mahons.(75) It usually proved impossible for the English to reach an agreement with one chief which would be considered binding on all. Another result of this internal competition was that individual Mac Mahon chiefs found it difficult to fulfill the promises they made to the English when agreements were reached. Thus Aonghus Mac Mahon failed to prevent Gilleho Mac Mahon from pasturing the lands granted to him by Ralph Pipard, as the latter had insisted.(76) An even more conspicuous failure in this regard was Gilpatrick Mac Mahon. He was unable in 1306 to prevent Doneghuth O Reilly ' who resided under his avowry', from stealing the cattle of the de Nettervilles and in the same year he acknowledged his responsibility for a raid conducted on Ardee by Mahon O Reilly which occurred 'for default of keeping of Gilpatrick'.(77) The original

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74. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, pp7-8. It is not clear whether this mandate was directed to the sheriff of Louth or Meath. R. Frame, 'War and peace in the medieval lordship of Ireland' in Lydon (ed.), English in medieval Ireland, p125.

75. Smith, 'The Medieval border', pp47-52.

76. See above p.116

77. Cal. justic. rolls Ire. 1305-7, pp175-7, 280-1.



lords of Airghialla, the O Carrols, now sub-chiefs of their Mac Mahon cousins, also appear to have acted independently on occasion as when in 1278 Walter O Carrol cum sequela sua murdered Robert Gernon.(78) Walter's successors, Magnus and Nicholas O Carroll, also perpetrated small-scale robberies in Uriel but more frequently acted as pledges for their wayward Mac Mahon lords and even paid the rent they owed to the crown in 1309.(79)

Even less amenable to English control as exerted through various Mac Mahon chiefs than the groups discussed above were the travelling bands of Irish felons who came to ply their trade in the marches of Uriel in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Of these the most notorious was the band of 'Conlygh Mac Neel' a thief who, sometimes in conjunction with one of the Mac Mahons, but more frequently on his own, terrorised the Ardee area around 1310.(80) In 1315, as part of an agreement made with Achy Beg Mac Mahon, the justiciar mainprised him 'to take Philip O Schethel, accused of divers robberies, felonies and other trespasses committed by him and to produce him alive to the justiciar or at least to kill him if the cannot be taken alive'.(81) There was in fact little which could be done to stop attacks such as the one reported in 1278 when Aulef Mac Finan cum sequela sua robbed the town of Ays.(82) These criminal bands added an extra measure of instability to life on the marches of Uriel. It is possible that they caused as many problems for the local Irish chiefs as they did for the English. They emerged as a result of the increased pastoralism of Irish society and were thus very much a march phenomenon.

Those English families in Uriel who dealt with the Irish on the level of fosterage, pledging or military engagement - the de Verduns, Pipards and their leading tenants, - were in a more advantageous position than

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78. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/1, pp16/ 18. In 1297 Walter was still described as 'Lord of Clann Cearbhaill', Nicholls, 'Register of Clogher', p.415.

79. Cal. justic rolls Ire. 1308-14, pp161, 212. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p36, P.R.O.E. 101/235/18. receipt roll Hilary a.r.r. 2 Ed II.

80. Cal. justic rolls Ire. 1308-14, pp167-8, 169-70,

81. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, p17.

82. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/1, pp15, 18. Might his Norse sounding name suggest a Gallowglass connection? Mac Mahon employed these by 1296 (Nicholas Reg. Clogher, p415).

the ordinary English settlers when it came to surviving on the marches. Agreements with the Irish usually contained clauses intended to guarantee the safety of these settlers. Thus, in the agreement between Ralph Pipard and Aonghus Mac Mahon of 1284-94 the latter undertook 'to defend and maintain all Ralph's men on their lands', while between 1303 and 1305 Gilpatrick Mac Mahon gave repeated assurances that he would permit the men of Ardee to 'go securely to the woods in those parts and cut timbers and other necessaries in the woods and carry them away without impediment'.<sup>(83)</sup> Given the persistent violence which characterised the marches of Uriel in the early fourteenth century the English inhabitants of the area must have viewed such guarantees with some scepticism. They must also have appreciated the irony of a situation in which Doneghuth O Reilly, a cattle thief, could have his outlawry suspended at the behest of his powerful English friends on the grounds that he 'was wont to repress the felons of his parts for the good of peace'.<sup>(84)</sup> Even more dubious was the payment in 1301 of 40s to Brian Mac Mahon to defend Castlefrank (bar. Louth) 'against the hostile Irish'. In 1306 Brian agreed to pay a fine of 60 cows in return for the king's peace for himself et sequela sua.<sup>(85)</sup>

The parliament of 1297 had criticised those English who encouraged warfare on the marches by attacking Irishmen who were at peace and this was indeed one of the characteristics of relations between the two races in Uriel at this time.<sup>(86)</sup> It represented, in part, the frustration felt by men of limited economic resources who perhaps believed themselves to have been abandoned by their natural protectors. Again it must be stressed that attitudes to the Irish cannot be neatly demarcated along social or 'class' lines within the English community. It was not only Englishmen of substance who consorted with the Irish. In 1311, for instance,

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83. Ormond deeds 1172-1350, p268. R.I.A. 12/D/11, p.5. P.R.O.I. EX 2/1, p96. Cal justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, p16.

84. *Ibid*, p.176

85. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 38, p53. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp502-3.

86. Stat. Ire., John -Hen V., pp205, 207.



Walter Gigg, an Englishman who held no free land was hanged because 'he leads Coulygh Mac Neel and other Irish felons coming from the woods and mountains of Hatherde [Ardee] to steal animals and other goods of faithful Englishmen'(87) Nevertheless it is entirely plausible that resentment against the Irish was most keenly felt by those English who bore the brunt of their raids and were least able to withstand the financial losses they entailed. It should be remembered that it was a strong recommendation in favour of Stephen Germeyn that he 'is a strong man and often fights well against Irish felons although he is poor'.(88) The connection between poverty and prowess against the Irish stressed here is probably a reflection of one facet of race relations on the marches of Uriel.

It is clear that the English were at least partly to blame for the disturbances which the Dublin government sought to contain through the mediation of Richard d'Exeter. In 1306 he persuaded Brian Mac Mahon and 'the English of those marches' to restore to each other the goods they had stolen in the previous year, thereby clearly implying that robberies had been committed by both sides.(89) In 1310 it was Mahon Mac Mahon whom d'Exeter brought to the king's peace. He agreed on behalf of his sept that

'they would also satisfy all who wished to complain of them by consideration and ordinance of the natives of their marches, as well English as Irish, to be chosen for the purpose on a certain day and at a certain time to be assigned by them, provided that the Englishmen satisfied them in turn'.(90)

Again the partial responsibility of the English for the disturbance is acknowledged, and the aftermath of this agreement reveals such realism to have been fully justified. Before the end of the year a follower of Mac Mahon was slain in Ardee with the result that 'the whole peace of those marches is disturbed to the common ill of the Englishmen of those parts'. As in the case of the attack on Mahon O Reilly by Hugh Alger in 1310, the jury in this instance acquitted the Englishmen on the grounds that the king's pardon to the Irishman did not protect him as he was a common robber.(91)

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87. Cal. justic rolls Ire. 1308-14, p. 167.

88. See above p.113-4

89. Cal. justic rolls Ire. 1308-14, p161. Smith, 'Concept of the march', p264.

90. Cal. justic rolls Ire. 1308-14, pp170-1. See above p.119

91. Cal. justic rolls Ire. 1308-14, pp170-1. See above p.118

Suspicion of the Irish, indeed, seems to have been particularly strong among the townsmen of Ardee. The murder of the follower of Mac Mahon in 1310 in the town foreshadowed the slaughter of twenty-one kerne there in the prelude to the Braganstown massacre of 1329.<sup>(92)</sup> The townsmen, however, were not averse, on occasion, to allying themselves with one element of the Irish in order to strengthen their position against another. In 1331, for instance, 'Murrough Mac Mahon was slain by John Mac Mahon and the English of Machaire Oirghiall'<sup>(93)</sup>. This support for John Mac Mahon began a period of unusual harmony between that family and the English. In 1332, the sheriff of Uriel, John Gernon of Killincoule, stood as pledge for the payment by Mac Mahon of an amercement of £1 to the king and incidents of violence on the marches of the area apparently declined.<sup>(94)</sup>

The men of Dundalk gave vent to their frustrations concerning the alliance of English lords with those Irish whom they regarded as their enemies in 1297 when

'Cu-Uladh O Hanlon, lord of Orier, and Aengus Mac Mahon, and many others of the chiefs of his people, were slain by the English of Dundalk, on their return home from the earl [of Ulster]'.<sup>(95)</sup>

This attack may very well have upset Richard de Burgh's relations with the Irish chiefs of Ulster but just as in the attacks by the Ardee men on the Irish who were at peace, long term considerations seem not to have influenced the behaviour of this section of the English of Uriel.

The incident initiated a period of particularly bad relations between the O Hanlons and Dundalk which lasted until 1321 when 'Niall O Hanlon, lord of Orior, was treacherously slain by the English of Dundalk.'<sup>(96)</sup>

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92. See above. pp102-3

93. A.F.M. 1331.

94. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 43. p53.

95. A.F.M., 1297.

96. Ibid., 1321



Niall, was succeeded by the more conciliatory Donal Ruadh and a rapprochement developed between the O Hanlons and the English of Uriel in the 1330s which resembled that which occurred simultaneously with the Mac Mahons.<sup>(97)</sup> On 1 May 1335 Donal granted land north of Dundalk to Walter Douedale and Geoffrey son of Elias. The grant was significant in many ways. It demonstrated for instance that O Hanlon exercised some form of lordship within two miles of Dundalk.<sup>(98)</sup> Other evidence also makes it clear that the Irish controlled land in the Cooley peninsula, north-east of the town by the middle of the 1330s.<sup>(99)</sup>

However, the grant by one Englishman to another of the manor of Faughart, north of Dundalk, in 1326 suggests that O Hanlon's control of the area was not entirely secure.<sup>(100)</sup> Douedale and Elias may, in fact, have already recovered the land which O Hanlon granted them. This would support the suggestion that Irish pressure on Dundalk had eased following the murder of Niall O Hanlon in 1321. That the grant was made in Dundalk suggests that Donal was more welcome there than Cu-Uladh O Hanlon had been in 1297.<sup>(101)</sup>

Of even greater significance, however, was the form of the grant itself. Donal styled himself rex Erthir and attached his seal to the bottom of the deed. The grant is strictly feudal in form, even including a warranty clause and a witness list. If, as seems likely, O Hanlon did not have the use of the common law, then this warranty clause was useless. In theory, moreover, the lands which he granted to Douedale and Elias were occupied by him illegally since they notionally belonged to the descendants of the original grantee, Bertram de Verdun. These legal niceties were perhaps deliberately ignored by all those concerned. If Douedale and Elias already had physical possession of these lands, then O Hanlon's grant was primarily of symbolic importance. It demonstrated his familiarity with the land-holding customs of the English and his acceptance of these

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97. See above, p 124

98. Dowdall deeds, no.121. See Appendix III for text. p194

99. P.R.O. C 135 Ed. 3, 36.

100. Dowdall deeds, no. 94

101. See above p.124

customs when necessary. It established ties of mutual dependence which helped create the atmosphere for the formal peace treaty concluded between Donal and the English of Uriel at Kilsarin in 1337.(102)

The 1330's, therefore, demonstrated that a modus vivendi could be reached between the English and Irish of Uriel by peaceful means. This, however, did not mean that the basic mistrust which existed between the two races could be overcome. It can be said that the English of Uriel were, in general, cautious and conservative in their dealings with the Irish. There is little evidence of intermarriage although some possible examples of fosterage can be found. In the cultural sphere the English seem not to have patronised the Irish learned classes. The only mention of the Uriel settlers in Irish poetry comes from the 1240's and praises Gilpatrick O Hanlon because 'east and west the settlements of the foreigners of Ulster and Oriel were plundered by him.' (103) It was a motif hardly likely to commend itself to the beleaguered foreigners. Finally we can accept as realistic, if exaggerated, Archbishop Fitz Ralph's remark in 1349 about the traditional hatred which existed between the two nations in Ireland, at least in so far as Uriel was concerned. We may also sympathise with his characterisation of the march as 'diabolic'.(104)

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102. See above p.106

103. N.J. Williams, The poems of Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe, (Irish Texts Soc., 1980), pp119-27.

104. Fitz Ralph spoke of 'lege marchia, sive diaboli', Walsh, Fitz Ralph, p.345



The existence of the march fundamentally influenced the way of life of the English of Uriel. In 1313 an inquisition was ordered to be held at Ardee to discover whether John Fernon, who had been slain while in rebellion with Robert de Verdun in the previous year had held land near the town 'by the law of England or in another manner.' It was found that John had held by the law of England but the terms of the enquiry implicitly recognise the existence of an alternative method of land-holding in the area, presumably one of Irish origin. (1) No records survive of Englishmen holding their lands by non-feudal tenure in Uriel, but the march did impinge on conventional land grants in the county. In 1310 Richard Wutton's (de Wotton) grant to John the Merchant of a messuage and 40 acres at Raskeagh, one of the most northerly English settlements in Uriel, contained the clause that 'when through general war the land is untilled, no rent is to be paid while the war lasts, except for one year, after which no rent shall be paid, nor shall the time of war be reckoned in the term.' (2) In 1321 the grant by John Aboueye-mille (above the mill) to William of Sydan of 2 acres in Castletown near Dundalk, stated that 'should war, (which God forbid) of the Scots or Irish occur to prevent tilling, the time during which the 2 acres he untilled is not to be reckoned.' (3)

The march also affected the nature of law-and-order in Uriel. The dealings of the English with the Irish described in the previous chapter typified the lex marchiae of which the government at a later date so strongly disapproved. Indeed it was a government official, Richard d'Exeter, who in 1310 arranged for the MacMahons and the men of Ardee to meet on a regular basis to settle the disputes between them, a system similar to the 'March days' of medieval Wales. (4) The march seems also to have encouraged some English lords of the area to believe that they could deal with their tenants in a more high-handed fashion than would have been acceptable in the terra pacis. Liberty status was refused to John de Verdun for his half of Meath in the 1260s, for instance, because it would prove too expensive to the crown 'even if all the tenants of the tenement were

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1. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp 560-1.

2. Dowdall deeds, no.43.

3. Ibid, no.64.

4. See above p. 23 Frame 'Power and society,' pp 22-6 Davis, 'Kings, lords and liberties,' p 46.



decently and well treated, which they could not hope would be done if those liberties were granted to Sir John.' (5) In 1311 it was stated that 'the notables of the county for their money in past times were often accustomed to take from the tenants victuals for their hospitality and this taking has not hitherto been forbidden to the notables' (6) Nicholas de Verdun's concept of 'hospitality' could scarcely have been more Irish. In 1315 Thomas de Stanley, a former sheriff of Uriel, was convicted of having encouraged him 'to send his horses with their grooms to the house of Master Ralph le Blound with malicious intent to remain at Paynestoun at the costs of master Ralph against his will.' (7)

The gentry of Uriel, however, eschewed one significant manifestation of 'gaelicisation' or 'degeneracy'; the extended family or lineage. (8) In 1319 John de Cusak claimed to have brought to the battle of Faughart 'the best of his own surname and lineage' while in 1306 the records speak of an agreement being reached between Brian MacMahon and 'the Verdoyns'. (9) Both statements deserve comment. There is no other evidence of the de Cusaks acting together as an extended family. When Adam de Cusak rebelled in 1312, for instance, his mainpernors consisted solely of his father, John, and his grand-father, Walter. (10) Other members of the family do appear in contemporary accounts, but never in sufficient numbers to justify John's talk of his 'surname and lineage.' His choice of words may have been intended to impress the crown with the loyalty of his family in comparison with the rebel de Lacys, by whom, he stated, he and his father 'and their friends have been twice burned and plundered.' (11)

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5. Cal. doc. Ire. 1252-84, no 1666.

6. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, p 211.

7. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, pp 21-2; K. Simms 'Guesting and feasting in Gaelic Ireland.' In R.S.A.I. jn, cviii (1978), pp 67-100.

8. Frame English lordship in Ireland, pp 27-41; idem, 'Power and society' pp 19-22, 25-6.

9. Cal. doc. Scot, ii, no 640; Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp 502-3.

10. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, p 126; Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp 237-9.

11. Nicholas de Cusak was appointed king's receiver in Co Meath in 1310 (P.R.O.I. Ex 2/3, p 617) He served on several Uriel juries. (Cal. justic rolls. 1308-14, p 275. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, pp 23, 25-7) Piers de Cusak fought alongside John de Cusak in Scotland and his presence there was also requested in 1335. (Connolly 'Ancient petitions,' p 87; N.L.I. Ms 2, Harris Collectanea, f. 62d.) He also participated in the Braganstown massacre, (Lydon 'Braganstown massacre', p 11).



Similarly, with regard to 'the Verdoyns' one of the most notable aspects of the 'de Verdun rebellion' is the absence of de Verdun participants. (12) This is in sharp contrast with the Caunteton uprising of 1309 where lineages were much in evidence. In Uriel no more than three members of any one family joined Robert de Verdun's rising in 1312. (13) Three was also the maximum number from any single family to participate in the Braganstown massacre of 1329; in contrast, the de Berminghams lost ten of their number in the same incident. (14) Had lineages been to the fore in Uriel in the early fourteenth century these two disturbances would surely have illustrated the phenomenon.

This is not to suggest that in Uriel English families did not, on occasion, operate as fighting units, it is merely to demonstrate that such families were nuclear and not agnatic, unitary rather than segmentary. (15) In 1306 four of the sons of Nicholas de Netterville came into conflict with two d'Exeters when they attempted to retrieve the cattle stolen from their father. In the course of the affray Luke de Netterville was struck on the head by the kinsman of one of the opposing footmen whom he had attempted to run through with his spear, but such 'kin-solidarity' is hardly to be wondered at. (16) In 1311 three of Walter Brisbon's sons murdered the sheriff, Richard Gernon, before escaping with horses and arms supplied by their father. (17) The family of de Cruys had members in Uriel, Meath and Dublin and had intermarried with the O'Reillys. In 1311 three of the family attacked another de Cruys 'with standards displayed' in Meath, while in 1316 four different members were ordered to be distrained by the sheriff of Dublin. (18) The Cruyses most closely resembled the extended families of other areas of the lordship but they hardly compared in number for instance with the Roches of

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12. See above pp. 69-70

13. Frame 'Power and society,' p.20 n.80, p.24, n.97. Three Gernons, three Hunts and three Tanners participated. Six men with the surname Albus, Blund or White are also recorded but it is unsafe to assume they were related. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp 237-9, 275 P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp 108;27. Seventy-four rebels are named, not including those who sheltered them. See appendix II

14. See above p 102.

15. Frame, 'Power and society,' pp 19-20.

16. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp 175-7. 4 de Nettervilles were also accused of felonies with MacMahon in 1314 P.R.O.I. K.B 2/7, pp 7-8.

17. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp 225-6.

18. Ibid p 224. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp 567-8.



Cork who at a similar period could produce over fifty family members for military action. (19)

Intermarriage with the Irish did not lead inevitably to the development of lineages in Uriel. In the 1280s two de Repentenys married Irish women but this did not lead to greater cohesion in the family, as the numerous disputes between its different members suggests. In 1306, for instance Simon de Repenteny brought a writ of novel disseisin against William, Richard, John and Alice de Repenteny. (20) Such disputes should be seen as evidence of the fact that large and important families in Uriel did not see the extended family as the natural social or economic unit. In 1299 another case concerning novel disseisin revealed that Roger Gernon was unaware that there were three other Roger Gernons living in Uriel at the time, while in 1319 Roger Gernon sr. was found to have disseised his own, son, John, of the manor of Mileston (Milestown, bar. Ardee). (21)

The absence of lineages in Uriel had obvious implications for the composition of the military retinues of local lords. The ociosus was apparently not indigenous to the area, although Robert de Verdun, who led the rebellion of 1312 and who died fighting the Irish in 1316, seems, unlike his brothers Nicholas and Milo, not to have held land in Uriel. (22) Evidence of kernes being employed in the area is also slight. Theobald de Verdun certainly allowed unruly Irish chiefs to reside on the lands of his sub-tenants and the rebel force of 1312 was said to have consisted tam Anglicorum quam Hibernicorum, de comitatu de Loueth et partibus adiacentibus. (23) In 1307 the monks of Mellifont were said to have employed 'very may<sup>n</sup> hired men-at-arms' in disputes concerning the abbatial succession, and it is possible that these were indeed kernes. (24) Nicholas de Verdun who, as described above, attempted to billet his horses and grooms on his tenants was also said to

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19. N.H.I. ii, pp 279-80; Frame 'Power and society,' p 20 n.80.

20. See above pp. 109-10 Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, p 168; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/6, p 67; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, p 134-6.

21. Cal. justic. rolls. Ire., 1295-1303, pp 221-2; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/12, p 222.

22. Frame English lordship, pp 37-8. See above, p. 83

23. See above pp 64-5 Lydon 'Enrolled account of Alexander Bicknor', p 31.

24. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp 350-1. Before 1298 the monks made £300 fine "for harbouring thieves" Cal. close rolls 1296-1302, p 15.



have used 'a force of men-at-arms and footmen to prosecute felons.'<sup>(25)</sup> Again it is unclear whether 'men-at-arms' here meant kerne. The term itself was not employed with regard to the English in Uriel until 1329 when John de Bermingham was said to have used 'satellites ... who are called kernes.'<sup>(26)</sup> Most of the English lords of Uriel seem not to have been sufficiently wealthy to maintain permanent military retinues but when they did, such retinues were not comprised of junior branches of their family.

The obligation of military service remained an important aspect of the tenurial relationship between lord and man in early fourteenth century Uriel. In the time of Theobald de Verdun jr. (d. 1316), for instance, the free tenants of the barony of Ferard were required to perform military service at Castle Roche when the Irish were at war.<sup>(27)</sup> In 1312, on being appointed keeper of the peace to deal with his rebel brother, Nicholas de Verdun took with him 'the posse of the lands of his lord, of Dundalk and adjacent places' before meeting the insurgents.<sup>(28)</sup> At roughly the same time John de Clinton granted land to his freemen in Braganstown on condition that they in turn provide him with archers.<sup>(29)</sup> John was accompanied by a force of archers in 1343 when he went to the justiciar's aid at Trim, which suggests that his tenants fulfilled their obligation<sup>(30)</sup>

Thus the English of Uriel in the early fourteenth century formed a marcher society which was conservative in outlook and behaviour. The explanation for this is to be found firstly in the depth of English settlement in the area and secondly in the volume and variety of the contacts which were maintained between the county and the centres of royal power in Dublin and in England.

The absence of extended families in Uriel may partly be explained by the fact that most of the original settlers seem to have come from the west-midlands of England, rather than from south-Wales, where a tradition of

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25. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp 186-7. Stat. Ire., John-Hen, pp 195-213, N.H.I. ii pp 271-2.

26. Lydon 'Braganstown massacre,' p 11.

27. Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands,' p 422. 'Knight service in Ireland,' R.S.A.I. jn. lxxxix (1959) p 1-15. Empey 'Anglo-Norman community in Tipperary and Kilkenny,' p 453.

28. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, ;p 238.

29. P.R.O.I. Bellew Mss 1121/1/1. p 2 no.3. John was a minor in 1301. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, pp 215-6.

30. Rot. Pat. Hib. p 45 no 78.



strong kinship ties already existed. (31) More important, however, was the extensive nature of the settlement which allowed marriage to take place within the English community without recourse to concubinage or wholesale alliances with the Irish. Extended kin-groups must have relied heavily on bastardy for their development and this in turn suggests a scarcity of suitable marriage partners. (32) The presence in their midst of the archbishop of Armagh may have strengthened the moral fibre of the English of Uriel but probably of greater significance was the availability of potential spouses. Significantly, a lax attitude to the marriage bond was one of the few sins of which the English were not accused by that most censorious of prelates Richard Fitz Ralph, archbishop of Armagh 1346-60, and himself a native of Dundalk. (33) The single example of concubinage which I have come across in Uriel at this time involved a woman who was apparently English, not Irish and, significantly, the illegitimate son appears to have lost his mother's inheritance which was awarded by the jury instead to his legitimate half-brother. (34)

Marriage among the English settlers of Uriel was begun at the highest level within a generation of their arrival. Before 1210 Lescelina, daughter of Bertram de Verdun, had been married to Hugh de Lacy II, who in turn married his own sister Alice to Roger Pipard. (35) This pattern was followed at a lower level by two leading sub-tenants, Geoffrey de Auters and Cecelie de Vernun who were married before 1227. (36) By the early fourteenth century it is clear that marriage within the English community was the normal practice. Such alliances were designed either to unite families of equal importance or to provide a means of social advancement. (37) It was probably the former consideration which prompted Richard d'Exeter to marry one of his daughters to a son of Richard de Tuit and another to Milo de Verdun, while Richard himself was also

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31. See above pp 26-34. Frame 'Power and society,' p 20.

32. Empey 'The Anglo-Norman community in Tipperary and Kilkenny' pp 449-67, esp. pp 459-60.

33. Walsh Richard Fitz Ralph pp 232-8. A. Cosgrove 'Marriage in medieval Ireland' in A. Cosgrove (ed) Marriage in Ireland (Dublin 1985), pp 25-8, 37-47.

34. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, p 181.

35. See above, pp. 16-7.

36. Chartul. St. Mary's Dublin i, pp 55-6. William Pipard, a witness to this deed died in 1227. Complete peerage, vol 10. p 530.

37. K. Simms 'Women in Norman Ireland,' in M MacCurtain & D. O Corrain (eds) Women in Irish society (Dublin, 1978) pp 14-25.



related by marriage to the de Lacy s. (38) John Plunkett, on the other hand, gained materially by his marriage before 1327 to Alice, daughter and heiress of John de Trim, whose family were of importance in Drogheda (39)

The importance attached by the English of Uriel to marriage alliances with families of note in the county is well attested to by the case of Henry Top and his relatives. Henry had served as attorney for the abbots of Cnock and Clones and was also coroner of Uriel in 1306.(40) On his death, in or before 1309, he was recorded as having held in capite of the king in the barony of Ardee and of Richard d'Exeter in the barony of Ferrard.(41) His daughter, Alice was married to Robert de Cassell, a Dundalk man who had rebelled with Robert de Verdun in 1312.(42) Henry's son and heir was apparently much sought after and Maurice Pounteis resorted to deceit in order to secure his marriage in 1310. He persuaded the young man, against his better judgement, that he should get married and promised to secure for him one of the daughters of Richard le Blund as his wife. When the secret ceremony was performed, however, Top discovered that he had in fact married a daughter of Maurice Pounteis'.(43) It is unclear whether or not this marriage was subsequently annulled. William son of Henry Top, presumably the man duped in 1310, was dead by 1317 when his widow Joanna married, without licence, John Sturmyn, a former sub-escheator of Uriel.(44) Legal niceties were often set aside in the race to secure 'a good match' in fourteenth century Uriel.

Inextricably linked with marriage was the question of wardship, the disposition of the lands and heirs of

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38. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/10, p 181-2. Chartal St. Marys, Dublin ii, pp 343, 372. Richard d'Exeter took as his second (?) wife in 1305 Elizabeth the widow of John Mour, P.R.O.I. Ex 2/1, p 129. Sayles Affairs. pp 110-1.

39. Cal. pat. rolls 1327-30, p 132. See below, pp.153-4

40. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, pp 208-9. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp 488-9.

41. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/2, p 252, Rot. Pat. Hib, p 9 no. 112, P.R.I. rep D.K. 39, p 30.

42. P.R.I. rep D.K. 42; p 15. Cal. justic rolls. Ire. p 239; P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp 11, 593. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/6, p 4. Dowdall deeds, pp 228-30.

44. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p 23; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, p 785.



tenants who died leaving as their successors minors who could not yet inherit. (45) In Uriel there appears to have been little deviation in the early fourteenth century from the practices regarding wardship which prevailed in England. Minors and their lands were in the wardship of the lord who might retain these lands and the marriage of the heir for himself or might alternatively grant them to a man of his choice.(46) The original settlement of Uriel involved the enfeoffment of a large number of tenants-in-chief and in the case of these men wardship belonged to the king. (47) The crown was thus in a position to reward its favourites in Uriel. On the death of William Pipard in 1227, for instance, a royal servant, Ralph Fitz Nicholas was given custody of his lands and of his daughter and heiress who was a minor. Fitz Nicholas married his son, also called Ralph to this heiress and their son in turn was called Ralph Pipard, the last Pipard lord of Ardee. (48)

Although not many guardians were as bold as Fitz Nicholas in marrying their ward to members of their family, custody of minors with Uriel interests was apparently considered a good investment, especially when tenants-in-chief were concerned. On occasion, custody of such interests was divided by the crown between several guardians. In 1310, for instance, custody of the lands of the late Stephen Talon belonged to Boniface Talon while the guardian of Stephen's son and heir, John, was Adam Chamberlain. In 1314 Richard and Robert de Rath were given a commission for part of the Talon lands while John remained a minor.(49) Similarly, custody of the lands and heir of William de Mandeville, who held in capite at Mandevilleston (Manfieldstown) in the barony of Louth was sold to John Beg of Drogheda in 1316 but in 1318 it was delivered to Thomas Ace.(50)

Custody of the heirs and lands of freemen who were not tenants-in-chief belonged to the lords of those

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45. M. Bloch Feudal society vol i (London, 1965), pp 201-3; C. Stephenson Medieval feudalism (London, 1952), pp 26-7; S. Painter Medieval Society (Cornell, 1960), pp 24-5; S.F.C. Milsom The feudal framework of English law, (Cambridge, 1976), pp 154-86.

46. Otway-Ruthven, Med. Ire., pp 105-6.

47. See above pp 33-4 Otway-Ruthven, 'Partition of the de Verdun lands,' p 407, n.32; Frame, English lordship, p 78.

48. Cal. doc. Ire. 1171-1251, no.1541. Close rolls 1251-3, pp 104-5.

49. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, p 89. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/9, p 94.

50. Cal. Fine rolls 1307-19, p 272; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p 15; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/14, p 755.



involved. Thus in 1310 Theobald de Verdun II had the custody of the lands of Jordan Dardys and Robert de Cruys, both of whom had held of his family in Meath before their deaths. (51) In 1283 Theobald de Verdun I claimed the custody of the lands and heir of Richard de Feypo while in 1322 one of the guardians of the de Verdun lands in Ireland, Nicholas de Verdun, was awarded the custody of the lands of Richard's successor, Simon de Feypo. (52) Wardship of tenants could also be granted by one lord to another. In 1278-9 John de Pycheford granted the wardship and marriage of the heir of Simon Fleming to Ralph Pipard on condition that the services of the heir on his coming of age would return to John. (53) In 1335 when Richard Tanner of Dundalk, who had been the collector of the small subsidy at Drogheda, made his will he insisted that the wardship of his sons should go to William Douedale. (54) It is unclear by what right Tanner chose his own guardian for his heirs, since this right belonged to this lord, one of the de Verdun parceners. (55)

Tanner may have been attempting to ensure that his son's inheritance was not despoiled by an unscrupulous guardian, as was likely to occur in cases of wardship. In 1302, for instance Simon de Feypo complained that his inheritance at Santry had been damaged to the extent of £2,000 by Theobald de Verdun I, who had been appointed his guardian in 1283. The damage included the felling of 30,000 great ash trees and 1,000 alders. (56) Even relatives were not necessarily to be trusted in this respect. In 1299 Roesia, daughter of Bertram de Repenteny, accused her guardian Richard de Repenteny of having wasted her inheritance at Drumcar. (57)

The value of wardships in Uriel is suggested by the frequency with which disputes arose concerning the disposal of custody. Richard de Repenteny was involved in several disputes of this kind. In 1290 a jury was

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51. Craig Memoranda roll, 3 Ed II, p 310. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p 30; Ir. cartul Llanthony, p 127; Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands,' pp 432, 434.

52. Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84, no. 2156; Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303; pp 386-9; Cal. pat. rolls 1321-4, p 211; Cal. close rolls 1313-8, p 397.

53. Ormond deeds 1171-1350, pp 90-1, 79-80; Reg. St. Thomas Dublin, p 165. John Picheford inherited his father's lands shortly after 1253. These were later said to have included the manor of Dowth. John was sheriff of Uriel in 1270-2. Cal Inq. P.M., i no. 286, p 74; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, pp 106-14. P.R.O.I. 101/230/2. Receipt roll a.r 56 Henry III.

54. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 44, p 52 Dowdall deeds, no. 122.

55. Otway-Ruthven, Med. Ire., pp 105-6. Tanner may have been a burgess of Drogheda.

56. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp 386-9.

57. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/6, p 67; Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, p 87.



summoned to decide between Richard and Gerald de Predegast concerning the custody of John and Bertinus, sons of William de Alneto (d'Alton). (58) Nine years later another jury was asked to decide whether Richard or John de May should enjoy custody of the heirs of Peter de Alneto. (59) In 1298 Theobald de Verdun claimed that the heir of William de Northburg should be in his custody rather than that of Andrew de Dromiskin, while in 1302 John Sturmyn demanded that John de Haddesore return to him the custody of the land and heir of Richard de Kerdyf. (60)

The seriousness with which such custodies were regarded was revealed in spectacular fashion in 1311 when the sheriff of Uriel, Richard Gernon, was murdered as a result of a dispute concerning wardship. (61) In May 1297 Robert Athelard was murdered by John son of Richard Gernon and another man who were then sheltered by Richard. (62) On Robert's death the sub-escheator in Uriel, Thomas de Stanley, took the lands of the dead man into the king's hand. These consisted of properties in the town of Louth and also in Athelardestoun (Allardstown, bar Louth) Corbally (bar. Lower Dundalk?) and Walteristoun Hamelyn (Walterstown, bar. Louth). (63) On 29 June 1297, however, Stanley held two inquisitions at Allardstown at the request of Richard d'Exeter and Richard Gernon in order to determine to whom Robert Athelard's service had belonged. These inquisitions decided that nothing pertained to the king. Robert, they stated, had held of d'Exeter by knight service in Corbally and Walterstown and of Richard Gernon in like manner in Allardstown. They also asserted that the marriage of the dead man's heir belonged to Gernon. (64)

Robert Athelard's relatives and friends, however, were not prepared to allow Richard Gernon to benefit from the death of a man murdered by his son. Before Easter 1298 Henry Athelard and Walter Brisbon had entered an

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58. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/2, p 154.

59. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/6, p 54.

60. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/5, p 261; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/2, pp 154-5.

61. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp 225-6.

62. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303, p 166; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 38, p 41; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, pp 36, 42; Cal. doc. Ire., 1293-1301, no. 480.

63. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 38, p 41; Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, p 248.

64. Ibid, pp 248, 276-7.



appeal against Gernon who responded in January of the following year by bringing his accusers to court on a charge of abetting a false appeal against him. At first the case had to be postponed, owing to a lack of jurors - a sure sign of either sympathy with or intimidation by the accused - but in May 1299 Henry and Walter were convicted and made fine with the king. (65)

Their activities, however, produced the desired result. By Easter 1299 sufficient doubt had been cast on the verdicts of the inquisitions of 1297 to prompt the government to have Athelard's lands taken back from d'Exeter and Gernon. By this time, however, Thomas de Stanley had been replaced as sub-escheator by Richard Gernon and the return of the tenements to the crown was entrusted instead to the sheriff of Uriel, Roger Gernon, whose relationship with Richard is unclear. In July 1299 a jury at Drogheda found that the earlier inquisitions had 'knowingly suppressed the truth in fraud of the king.' (66)

The man who lost most through this re-examination of the inquisitions of 1297 was Richard Gernon. In 1301 the marriage of Robert Athelard's heir, which had earlier been awarded to Gernon, was in the king's hands, while the dead man's lands, including Allardstown, which Gernon also claimed, were in the custody of Richard d'Exeter, Walter Brisbon, Michael de Wotton, Roger de Bordysdale and Roger Hoa. (67) There was a certain irony, therefore, in the fact that it was at Allardstown that Richard Gernon was murdered in September 1311 by three sons of Walter Brisbon. (68)

Under the common law tenants had little say concerning the custody of their lands and heirs subsequent to their deaths. They could, however, choose whom they pleased to act as executors of their property. This, like marriage, was a means of forming alliances and an avenue of social advance. Walter de Cusak combined the two neatly when he married the widow of Nigel le Brun of whose will he was also executor. (69)

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65. Ibid pp 217, 238, P.R.O. E 101/233/16. Mich. a.r. 29 Ed I receipt roll. For non-attendance by jurors see J.G. Bellamy Bastard Feudalism and the law (London, 1989) pp 28-9.

66. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp 276-7. The perjured jurors of 1297 each paid an amercement of 1m. in 1300. P.R.O.E 101/233/11. Receipt roll Hilary a.r. 28 Ed I.

67. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8 pp 34-5.

68. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp 225-6.

69. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, pp 544d. Rot. pat. Hib, p 24 no. 140.



Executors were entitled to any grants made to them in wills so long as they did not also witness the document, and the position of executor was often a profitable one, although it might require considerable effort to retrieve money owed to the deceased and reimburse his creditors.<sup>(70)</sup> Relatives were the most popular choice as executors. Geoffrey Kenefeg performed this function for Ralph Kenefeg while the executors of Hugh de Repenty were his son William and Richard Serle. <sup>(71)</sup> Both Gilbert de Repenty and his son Bertram chose as their executors William son of John de Repenty and Richard, prior of St. Leonard's, Dundalk.<sup>(72)</sup> Heads of local religious establishments were often called upon to act as executors. Both Nicholas de Dromcath, a former purveyor at Dundalk and Walter Douedale, a former sheriff of Uriel, appointed as their executors Richard, prior of the house of St. John of Ardee and Roger Kenefeg.<sup>(73)</sup> Richard le Tanner's will provided for William Douedale and John de Sydar to act as his executors and Douedale, as discussed above, was also made guardian of Tanner's heirs. The Tanners and the Douedales were two of the leading families in Dundalk and such an arrangement might have helped seal an alliance between the two. <sup>(74)</sup>

Marriage, wardship and executorship were bonds which helped the English of Uriel maintain their identity in the early fourteenth century. Another such bond was the appointment by one man of another to be his attorney, that is, to perform on his behalf acts which he himself had power to perform, including the conveyancing of land. <sup>(75)</sup> In 1297, for instance, William Bagot appointed Walter Wyte by letters patent to be his attorney and to put Roger Roch in seisin of lands in Carrickbaggot in the barony of Ferrard, while in 1326 Laurence Blund appointed William Alger to be his attorney in order to put his daughter Alice in seisin of 5 acres in Dundalk. <sup>(76)</sup>

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70. Bellamy. Bastard Feudalism and the law, p 95.

71. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, p 48; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/5, p 274.

72. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/3, p 287; P.R.O.I. DR.C. 7/5, pp 55-6; Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, p 87.

73. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp 122-4; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, p 250; P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2 m.5.

74. Dowdall deeds, no. 122. See above. p135

75. J.C.W. Wylie Irish land law (London, 1975) pp 544, 554.

76. Dowdall deeds, nos. 26, 91, 106.



Uriel men who were travelling to, or staying in, England would appoint local men as their attorneys. Thus Master Reginald Taf, the official of the archdeacon of Armagh in Uriel, appointed Ralph de Hadesore as his attorney in Ireland for two years in 1288. (77) In 1333 John Rauf of Dundalk, who was staying in England for a year, appointed as his attorneys Matthew Coupland and the ubiquitous William Douedale. (78) Three years before, in 1330, John Rauf had himself been appointed as his attorney in Ireland by Thomas de Furnival, husband of one of the de Verdun heiresses. (79)

The appointment of attorneys, therefore, was also an instrument of patronage and a means by which absentee lords might make their presence felt in regions they seldom if ever visited. Thus in 1289 Ralph Pipard nominated Richard de Atrio Dei (Ardee) and John Stummyn as his attorneys in Ireland while in 1304 Geoffrey de Lezinaco similarly appointed William de Paris. (80) In 1333 Matilda, widow of William de Burgh nominated as one of her attorneys in Ireland the former sheriff of Uriel, John Gernon. (81) In 1338 Nicholas de Verdun, who was spending more of his time in England, appointed John Taf of Gibbeston (bar. Upper Dundalk, Gibstown) as his attorney. (82)

Before turning to the question of office-holding in early fourteenth century Uriel a word must be said concerning the socio-political role of the church in the region. Between the holdings of the Cistercian houses

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77. Cal. pat. rolls 1281-92, p 297. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/5, p 5. Ralph had connections with Ardee, Cal. justic. rolls 1295-1303, p 290.
78. Cal. pat. rolls 1330-4, p 432. Matthew Coupland had participated in the murder of John de Bermingham, Lydon 'Braganstown massacre,' p 11. John Rauf witnessed the grant by Walter Douedale to William his brother of all his lands in Dundalk in 1331. Dowdall deeds, no.111.
79. Cal. pat. rolls 1281-30, p 549; Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands,' p 422; Walsh Richard Fitz Ralph, pp 13-4.
80. Cal. pat. rolls 1281-92, p 249. Richard of Ardee may have been Br. Richard, prior of the hospital of St. John of Ardee, which was a Pipard foundation. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp 281-2; Cal. pat. rolls. 1301-7, p 305; For Paris see Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, p 172.
81. Cal. pat. rolls 1330-4, p 486; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 43, pp 52, 53; Frame English lordship in Ireland, p 247; idem 'English policies and Anglo-Irish attitudes in the crisis of 1341-2' in Lydon (ed) England and Ireland in the later middle ages, p 91.
82. Cal. pat. rolls 1338-40, p 153.



of St. Mary's, Dublin and Mellifont, the lands of other religious orders and the archiepiscopal manors of Armagh, the church may have held a greater proportion of land in Uriel than it did in any other part of the lordship. (83) The residence of the archbishop in their midst also increased the importance of church patronage for the English of Uriel. On his visits to England for instance, the archbishop was likely to appoint Uriel men as his attorneys in Ireland. In 1312, Roland Jorz nominated Simon son of Richard Dumeskyn (Dromiskin, bar Louth) to perform this function for him, (84) while in 1320 the same archbishop chose as his attorneys Peter de Hadesore and John de Falshawre. (85)

Vacancies in the archbishopric of Armagh also offered the crown an opportunity to bestow patronage in Uriel, since it controlled the temporalities of the archdiocese on such occasions. (86) As early as 1205, at a time when King John was refusing to recognise Echdonn Mac Gille Uidhir as primate, Nicholas de Verdun was awarded custody of the lands of the archdiocese during pleasure by the crown. (87) In the early fourteenth century the archbishopric fell vacant on a number of occasions and the crown's choice of guardian varied between the prior of St Leonard's of Dundalk in 1306 and Mahon de Cruys and Simon Fitz Richard in 1322-3. (88)

The crown was also in a position to bestow patronage when other church lands in Uriel were forfeited to it. In 1307, for instance, Roger Taff and others were entrusted with the custody of the lands of Mellifont abbey which had been confiscated by the crown because of the dispute then raging concerning the abbatial

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83. See above. p161

84. Cal. pat. rolls 1307-13, p 498. Simon may have been the son of the Richard de Drumeskyn who was granted English law in 1290. Cal. pat. rolls, 1281-92, p 368.

85. Cal. pat. rolls 1307-21, p 503. Peter de Hadesore participated in the Braganstown massacre and later became sheriff of Uriel, Lydon 'Braganstown massacre,' p 11, P.R.I. rep. D.K. 47, p 21.

86. Otway-Ruthven Med. Ire., pp 132-3.

87. Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.251.

88. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, p 178, P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p 35. Craig memoranda roll 3 Ed. II, pp 66, 76. The prior of St. Leonard's and FitzRichard had both previously been sub-escheators in Uriel. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp 86, 728, 789. For Mahan Cruys see above p. 117



succession. (89) The largest forfeiture of ecclesiastical land in early fourteenth century Uriel, however, was of course, the seizure of the property of the Templars in February 1308. (90) The Templars possessed two manors in Uriel at Cooley (bar. Lower Dundalk), and Kilsarin, (bar. Ardee), which had been granted to them between the years 1267 and 1280. (91) When the valuation of these manors was made it was revealed that the fruits and tithes of eleven churches in the barony of Ardee pertained to Kilsarin and that the Templars had rented these out to local men. The crown at first granted custody of the manors to a number of its servants, but in 1310 Kilsarin was granted to Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster while custody of the eleven churches was given first to Walter Douedale and then to a Dublin official, Philip d'Erdeley. (92) From 1312, however, it was decided to rent the eleven churches simultaneously to a larger number of men and with <sup>the</sup> exception of the <sub>A</sub> government official William de Hothum, these were all from Uriel. (93)

It is possible, therefore, to say something about who in early fourteenth century Uriel might wish to invest in ecclesiastical property, paying a fixed rent in return for the tithes and fruits of the churches concerned. Of the ten men who held the churches of the Templars in 1308, prior to their dissolution, some, such as John Huddard, William Leynagh, Adam, chaplain of Kylpatrick and Maghnus the clerk have left little or no record of their activities in other fields. (94) The careers of the others, however are better documented. John de Hadesore, for instance, who with Nicholas de Dromcath held the church of Kepoke (Cappoge) has already been mentioned in connection with a dispute concerning wardship. (95) He witnessed a grant by Ralph Pipard in 1294, but sometime before 1310 he murdered William Grafton, and only received his lands in

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89. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/2, p 316; Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp 350-1.

90. G. MacNiocaill 'Documents relating to the suppression of the Templars in Ireland' in Anal Hib. xxiv (1967), pp 183-226; MacIvor, 'Knights Templar,' pp 72-91.

91. *Ibid.*, pp 74, 91. Otway-Ruthven, 'Partition of the de Verdun lands,' p 405. See appendix. IV, pp 195-6

92. MacIvor 'Knights Templar,' pp 80-3; Cal. Fine. rolls. 1307-19, p 76.

93. MacIvor 'Knights Templar,' p 83; Philips 'Mission of John de Hothum to Ireland,' pp 64-5.

94. MacIvor 'Knights Templar,' p 83. For Leynagh see Cal. justic. rolls Ire. 1295-1303, p 214. Brother Thomas Leynagh, possibly a relative, was a monk of Mellifont in 1317. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/8, pp 66-7.

95. MacIvor 'Knights Templar,' p 83; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/7, p 135.

Cappoge back after serving with the King in Scotland. (96)

William Waleys sr., who held one-third of the church of Molavery was a sub-serjeant of the county from at least 1310-11.(97) He was not the only holder of prominent office involved. Hugh de Clinton had been sheriff of Uriel as recently as 1307 and answered for the church of Portlyverun while Roger Gernon who held the church of Gernonstown had been sheriff in 1304-5.(98) The largest farmer of the Templar churches prior to their dissolution, however, was Nicholas de Dromcath who held Kilsarin, Kilmedymoke, Tallonstown and half of Cappoge. He has already been mentioned in connection with his choice of executors before his death in 1318. (99) In 1307 he had been granted the "toll and sensaria" of the town of Louth where he also held land. (100)

When the crown rented out the tithes and fruits of these churches in 1312-3 only Nicholas de Drumcath continued to rent as before. Together with Master William de Hothum and a prominent Dundalk man, John de Kent, he had a stake in eight of Kilsarin's eleven churches.(101) Milo de Verdun rented Cappoge, Benedict le Hauberge took Kylpatrik while Molavery was divided between le Hauberge, Milo le Waleys and Henry de Stanley. Le Hauberge had been sheriff of Uriel in 1307-8 and had confiscated the property of the Templars in the county on the King's orders on 3 Feb 1308.(102) Henry de Stanley later participated in the murder of John de Bermingham at Braganstown in 1329. (103)

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96. Ormond Deeds., 1172-1350, pp 129-30; Cal. justic. rolls Ire. 1308-14, pp 208-9.

97. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, p 610; Craig Memoranda roll 3 Ed. II., pp 334, 359; Dowdall deeds, no. 113.

98. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/3, p 255; P.R.O.I. Ex 2/1, pp 68, 131.

99. MacIvor 'Knights Templar,' p 83. See above p. 138

100. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/1, p 210.

101. MacIvor 'Knights Templar,' p 83.

102. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/2, p 255.

103. Lydon 'Braganstown massacre,' p 11.



Ten Uriel men had held Templar churches in 1308 while in 1312 the number was reduced to six. This reduction may have been caused by an increase in the rent. In 1308 the sum of the value of the eleven churches was £52, but in 1312 the crown had increased this to approximately £73. The rent of only one church, Molavery, remained the same. The value of Kilsarin, on the other hand, rose by 25% from 16m to 20m while that of Talonstown doubled from 6m to 12m. The churches of Crowmartin and Moymok, in the western marches of Uriel, had together been valued at 1m in 1308 but in 1312 the rent went up to 6m. Nicholas de Dromcath retained the largest interest but his share had declined. In 1308 he accounted for £28 of the total value of £52 but in 1312 he answered for only £18 of the new valuation of £73. (104)

At first sight these figures may seem to suggest that land values were increasing in Uriel in the early fourteenth century and that resources for investment in property were coming to be held in the hands of a smaller number of people. The land valuations, however, must be treated cautiously. The confiscations of 1308 revealed that the payment of rent for the churches attached to Kilsarin was massively in arrears. Over £68 was, in fact, owed at that time. 20m alone, for instance was owed for the church of Kilsarin, while the total indebtedness of Nicholas de Dromcath ran to roughly £38. (105) It is clear that attempts were made to collect these debts subsequent to their discovery and the increased valuation of 1312 may have reflected these efforts. The new valuation of £73 was similar to the amount of debt owed in 1308. (106) It is also important to bear in mind that the farming out of the churches in 1312-3 took place shortly after the de Verdun rebellion of February - April 1312 which affected most severely the barony of Ardee wherein lay most of the property concerned. Given this, the rents seem artificially high and it would probably be incorrect to imagine an improvement in the economy occurring in the early fourteenth century. (107)

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104. MacIvor 'Knights Templar', p 83; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/7, p 448. Moymoke was not valued, being inter Hibernicos 'Knights Templar,' p 83. See appendix. IV, pp195-6

105. MacIvor, 'Knights Templar,' p 83.

106. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/6, pp 296-7; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/7, p 135, p 135; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp 122-4. MacIvor, 'Knights Templar,' p 88.

107. See above pp. 71-2        Nicholas de Drumcath, John de Kent, Benedict le Hauberge and Milo de Verdun all acted as pledges for men who had been involved in the rebellion. Le Hauberge had been sheriff of Uriel when it erupted, while de Verdun had been appointed keeper of the peace to help bring it to an end. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2.6, pp 3,5, P.R.O.I. K.B. 2.4, pp 108, 125. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8.6, p 251. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp 237-9.



Templar property, however, was obviously worth obtaining, as Stephen Gernon demonstrated. On 3 November 1309 the sheriff of Uriel Walter Douedale was ordered to deliver to him certain Templar lands, including the manor of Kilsarin. On 17 November, however, these same lands were awarded to Master Philip d'Erdeley, a justice itinerant and archdeacon of Armagh.<sup>(108)</sup> Stephen, however, 'maintaining himself in said houses by arms and force' refused to allow Philip access.<sup>(109)</sup> Both men subsequently accounted for Kilsarin and its associated churches but the grants of 1312-3 appear to have settled the quarrel by depriving both of their property. As with the murder of sheriff Richard Gernon in 1311, the speed with which Stephen Gernon took up arms to defend his position in 1309-10 revealed the seriousness with which possession of land was regarded in the marcher society.<sup>(110)</sup>

The most obvious sign of status and prestige in this society was the holding of office. Because Uriel was a royal county, excepting the ten years it enjoyed as a liberty under John de Bermingham, public office was of greater importance than service under any individual lord. Many tenants-in-chief and lords of manors in Uriel retained household officers to administer their estates. Thus Richard d'Exeter employed as bailiffs of his manor of Darver in the barony of Louth Alex<sup>ander</sup> Savage in 1304 and John O Mighan in 1307 and had the former outlawed for his failure to render account in 1305.<sup>(111)</sup> Robert de Napton's bailiff of his manor of Dysart in the barony of Ferrard, Robert Crek, was on hand on 20 December 1316 to view and measure the corn being purveyed at his master's manor by the sheriff, Roger Gernon and his clerk.<sup>(112)</sup> Sometime before 1301 Simon de Clinton granted land in his manor of Braganstown to Robert his constable.<sup>(113)</sup> Some families

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108. Craig, memoranda roll 3 Ed II pp 77, 92, 160; MacIvor 'Knights Templar,' pp 86-7.

109. Craig, memoranda roll 3 Ed II pp 138, 231; P.R.O.I. Ex 2/3, pp 621-2.

110. Craig, memoranda roll 3 Ed II pp 320; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/7, p 119; See above. p133

111. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/10, p 169; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/13, p 17; Cal. justic. rolls. Ire., 1305-7, p 167. Alex disseised one of his relatives of land in 1309. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, pp 68-9.

112. R.I.A. 12/D/13, pp 165-7. Robert Crek may be Robert Criketot, coroner of Uriel from 1283 to 1301 who had dealings with other members of the de Napton family at this time, or possibly his son. Cal. doc. Ire 1252-84, no 2108; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, p 20; Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, p 278. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/10, p 459.

113. P.R.O.I. Bellew mss 1121/1/1/, p1, no 2.



retained hereditary office under lords in Uriel. Thus in 1231 Ralph de Picheford was the seneschal of Ralph FitzNicholas while in c.1280 Ralph de Picheford was seneschal for Ralph Pipard, the grandson of FitzNicholas.<sup>(114)</sup> Ralph Pipard employed members of important Uriel families, some of which had come to Ireland with his ancestors in 1180s, as his officers in the county. Thus Gilbert de Repenty was his seneschal in 1266 and later, while between 1278-84 the same position was held by Philip de Bakepuz. In c.1284-94 Ralph's constable of Ardee castle was Walter le Hauberge.<sup>(115)</sup> Even men of such high rank as Walter de Cusak and Nicholas de Verdun, on the other hand, were prepared to act as seneschals of Trim on behalf of Roger Mortimer. <sup>(116)</sup>

In 1302 when Simon de Feypo complained about the damage done to his inheritance in Santry, Co. Dublin during the time he had been a minor in the custody of Theobald de Verdun he concluded by alleging that 'the sheriff (of Dublin) is a servant of Theobald, having his livery and fee, and inquired of the waste unfavourably'.<sup>(117)</sup> To what extent was such a manifestation of 'bastard feudalism' to be found in Uriel at the time?<sup>(118)</sup> In 1284 an exemption was granted, at the instance of Theobald de Verdun, for Nicholas de Netterville 'Knight of his household' from being put on assise or being made sheriff 'while in the service of the said Theobald, who has great need to him in the present war in Ireland'.<sup>(119)</sup> Nicholas had, however, been sheriff of Uriel from 1281 to 1284.<sup>(120)</sup> He was also, by 1285, a justice assigned in Uriel and he was one of those who in the following two years heard a case between Theobald de Verdun and the prior of St. Leonards, Dundalk concerning the advowson of the churches of Keen, Dundalk and Castletown. His loyalties were

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114. Close rolls 1227-31, p 502; Reg. St. John, Dublin, pp 169-70. See above p. 134

115. Ormond deeds pp 64, 90, 106-7; Cal. pat. rolls 1338-40, p 445. For Pipard's council in Ireland, Ormond deeds, 1172-1350, p 81.

116. Parl. Writs II, ii Appendix p 245, no. 89; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/15, p 607; Frame English lordship, p 19.

117. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1297-1303, pp 386-9.

118. K. B. Mc Farlane 'Bastard feudalism' I.H.R. Bull XX (1943-5), pp 161-80; Bellamy Bastard feudalism and the law, pp 10-12. W.F. Nugent Carlow in the middle ages in R.S.A.I. jn, lxxxv (1955) p 67-74.

119. Cal. pat. rolls, 1281-92, p 132.

120. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 36, p 70; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 37, p 75.



shown by his standing as pledge for Theobald to procure a better writ against the prior.<sup>(121)</sup> Nicholas' career, therefore, is a classic example of the lord's retainer progressing from local office-holding to the ranks of the judiciary.<sup>(122)</sup> It should be pointed out, however, that these bonds between lord and man did not prevent de Netterville bringing a plea of novel disseisin against de Verdun in 1297.<sup>(123)</sup>

De Netterville was not the only retainer of a local lord to become sheriff of Uriel. In 1234 Ralph de Picheford, who had been the seneschal of Ralph Fitz Nicholas as recently as 1231, became the first sheriff of Uriel to leave his name in surviving records. <sup>(124)</sup> In 1274 John de Baskeville, sheriff of Uriel was said to be coming to Ireland with Ralph Pipard.<sup>(125)</sup> In 1300 Richard Taf, who had been sheriff in 1293-5, stood as pledge for a fine made by Pipard with the king for the receipt of the manor of Manfieldtown from Nicholas Dunheved. <sup>(126)</sup>

Sheriffs of Uriel also witnessed grants made by Pipard or de Verdun. The grant by the former to his son John of all his lands in Ireland in 1294 was witnessed not only <sup>by</sup> Richard Taf, but also by Thomas de Stanley, sheriff in 1291. <sup>(127)</sup> A grant by Arnold le Fleming of land to Ralph Pipard in Donaghmayne c.1275 was witnessed by the sheriff Richard de Crumba and a former sheriff William Talon. <sup>(128)</sup> A grant by Theobald de Verdun to the archbishop of Armagh in 1296-7 was witnessed by the sheriff, William de

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121. Ibid, p 28; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/4, p 301; Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, p 113.

122. J.R. Maddicatt Law and lordship : royal justices as retainers in thirteenth and fourteenth - century England, (Past & Present supp. 4., 1978).

123. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303, p 86. In 1332 Thomas de Netterville, Nicholas' son, was found to hold the disputed land at Baskervillesrath (bar. Louth) of the de Verduns. Otway - Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands, p 428. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp 175-7.

124. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 35, p 35. See above. p145

125. N.L.I. MS 761, P 13; Cal. pat. rolls 1272-81, p 58.

126. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 37, p 53; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/3, p 223; Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, p 359.

127. Ormond deeds, 1172-1350, pp 129-30; P.R.O. E 101/231/6 Receipt roll, Easter a.r. 19 Ed I P.R.I. rep. D.K. 37, p 53.

128. Ormond deeds 1172-1350, pp 79-80; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 35, p 42; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 36, p 42.



Hatch (129). There was clearly a connection, therefore, between the favour of Pipard and de Verdun and the holding of office in Uriel. The extent of this connection, however, should probably not be over-estimated. The frequent absences of these lords in the late thirteenth century and the withdrawal of the former from Uriel in 1302 meant that control of the office of sheriff never lay exclusively in the grasp of these men. Of those from Uriel, for instance, who acted as pledges for Theobald<sup>d</sup> de Verdun I and II to receive their Irish lands in 1275 and 1309 respectively none went on to hold public office in the county. (130)

Some observations may be made concerning the nature of office-holding in Uriel in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. It was not unusual for successive generations of a family to hold the same office, although only the serjeantry of the county, held by the de Cruyses, was in fact an hereditary post.(131) Ralph de Picheford was sheriff in 1234 while his son John was sheriff in 1270-2. (132) Richard Gernon was sheriff in 1310-1 and John his son held the same office in 1331-2. (133) It is possible to hazard a guess concerning the ages of John de Picheford and John Gernon when they became sheriffs. De Picheford was sixteen when his father died in 1253 which would make him thirty-three in 1270. John Gernon was outlawed for murder in 1298 which suggests that he was at least in his late teens at the time. He was probably in his fifties, therefore when he became sheriff.(134) De Picheford was probably unusually young to become sheriff. John de Clinton, who first served as sheriff in 1336-8, was an infant in 1301 which suggests he was in his forties on achieving office.(135) John de Cusack was of sufficient age by 1282 to plead the manor of Dromiskin against Nicholas Taf and thus on becoming sheriff of Uriel for the first time in 1315-6, was

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129. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/4, pp 178-9.

130. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 36, p 38; Craig, memoranda roll 3 Ed. II, pp 86-7.

131. Otway-Ruthven, 'Anglo-Irish shire government in the thirteenth century' in I.H.S., V (1946-7), pp 21-2; Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303, p 81. The Cruyses were also sergeants of Dublin. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/7, p 45; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 47, p 22.

132. See above p 146 Cal. inq. P. M. i, no 286; E 101/230/2 receipt roll, Mich ar 56 Ed I.

133. See above pp.136-7 P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p 42; P.R.I., rep. D.K. 45, p 29.

134. Cal. inq. P. M. i, no 286. See above p136

135. Bellamy, Bastard feudalism and the law, p 11; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, pp 215-6; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 45, p 29.



probably already in his fifties. He must, therefore, have been approaching seventy when as sheriff, he led the posse comitatus to murder John de Bermingham at Braganstown in 1329.<sup>(136)</sup> Such longevity need not surprise us. Nicholas and Milo de Verdun, who had both come of age before 1300 were still active in Uriel in the 1340s. <sup>(137)</sup>

Sheriffs of Uriel might also hold the same position in other counties. Thus Richard Taf was sheriff of Uriel in 1294-5 and sheriff of Dublin in 1297, while Geoffrey de Brandwade was sheriff of Dublin in 1324 and sheriff of Uriel in 1329-30. <sup>(138)</sup> There seems also to have been a tradition in Uriel of holding several local offices in the course of a career. Thus both Richard Gernon and his son John had acted as sub-escheators in the county prior to becoming sheriff while Thomas de Stanley held the same offices in the reverse order. <sup>(139)</sup> Ralph Burgess had been a coroner of Uriel in 1306 and went on to act as one of the King's receivers and serjeant of the manor of Ardee.<sup>(140)</sup> William de Grafton was a coroner in 1308 and in 1315-6 was one of the collectors of the subsidy in the county. <sup>(141)</sup> Hugh de Clinton was sheriff on a number of occasions between 1298 and 1307. In 1310 he became the receiver of the King's money in the county, a post he held until 1319, and in 1311 he was appointed chief serjeant in Uriel. <sup>(142)</sup>

De Clinton was appointed receiver in 1310 as part of an anti-corruption campaign, but it is not necessary to

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136. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/1, p 160. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, pp 52, 67. Lydon 'Braganstown massacre,' p 11; Cal. pat. rolls 1327-30, p 532.

137. They were born after 1278. Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands,' p 445. Nicholas acted as pledge for his father to repay his debts to the king in Ireland in 1295. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/1, p 59, Nicholas was enfeoffed of land by his father in 1299. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp 228-9. For Milo in the 1340s, Rot. Pat. Hib., p 45, no 78. For Nicholas, Frame 'Crisis of 1341,' p 97.

138. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/3, p 223; Stat. Ire., John-Hen.v, p 197; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/13, pp 479-80; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/15, p 377.

139. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp 248-76. Craig, memoranda roll 3 Ed. II p 334. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/13, p 508; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 37, p 53.

140. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, p 489; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/7, pp 112-3.

141. Rot. pat. Hib., p 7, no. 23; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, p 492.

142. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 38, p 52; Cal. doc. Ire., 1302-7, no 58; P.R.O.I. Ex 2/1, p 131; P.R.O.I. Ex 2/2, p 255; P.R.O.I. Ex 2/3, pp 616-7; P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2, m 14; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp 139, Hugh was addressed as chief serjeant in 1318. *Ibid.*, pp 122-4. However in 1313 the same title was given to Nicholas de Cruys P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, p 568.



conclude from this that local government in Uriel was exceptionally poor. A receiver was similarly appointed in Meath. (143) Uriel was relatively small in size and close to Dublin and must therefore have seemed suitable as a testing ground for reform. There is a good deal of evidence, however, of both corruption and inefficiency among office holders in the county at the time. Richard Gernon's murder in September 1311, for instance, resulted from his dishonest behaviour as sub-escheator in 1297 when he bribed jurors to find in his favour concerning the land and heir of Robert Athelard. (144)

Examples of dishonesty and laxness are to be found in all the local offices. In 1306, for instance, the coroner, Henry Top, was found to have <sup>in</sup>quired insufficiently into the circumstances surrounding a murder near Drogheda, while in 1308 and 1309 two other coroners, Ralph Burgess and William de Grafton were removed from office because they were found to be unsuitable. (145) In 1295 the chief serjeant of the county, Nicholas de Cruys, was in mercy for not having levied the King's money as directed, while two years later Nicholas' brother Richard, who was then chief serjeant, lost his post because he had failed to summon an assize of Novel Disseisin as directed by the sheriff. (146) In 1315-6 the sub-escheator in the county, Simon FitzRichard, was found to have deliberately under-valued the lands of the late Benedict Pipard in Ardee. (147)

Among the sheriffs of Uriel of the time the same mixture of corruption and inefficiency prevailed. In 1294, for instance, Thomas de Stanley was imprisoned for distraining Benedict le Hauberge for an exchequer tally of 100s which he had already received from Benedict's father, Walter. (148) In Feb 1304 Roger Roth was

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143. Craig, Memoranda roll, Ed. II, p 245; J.F. Lydon 'Edward II and the revenues of Ireland in 1311-2,' I.H.S., xiv (1964-5), pp 39-57.

144. See above pp. 136-7

145. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp 489; Rot. pat. Hib., p 7. no 27, p 8. no. 54.

146. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/1, p 56; Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1307, p 81.

147. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp 789-91.

148. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/1, p3.

likewise imprisoned for having received tallies to the value of 60s but only charging himself 33s. 4d. (149) A similar fate befell Roger Gernon in 1304 because he had failed to levy the money due for the royal service proclaimed for Kilkenny on 7 Jan and because he had failed to have timber cut for the king at Ardee as ordered. (150)

Less serious offences committed by Uriel sheriffs included the assembling of unsuitable jurors by William de Hatch in 1297, the loss by the same man of a writ of novel disseisin in the same year, Roger Roth's failure to return writs in 1302 and Richard Taaf's failure in 1294 to return an inventory of the goods of Geoffrey de Lusignan in his bailiwick. (151) There were also regular escapes from Drogheda castle, the custody of which occasionally belonged to the sheriff. (152) Ralph de Picheford was both sheriff and constable in 1234-5 as were Nicholas de Netterville, Thomas de Stanley and William de Hatch later. However constables such as Richard de Bailibin and Adam de Cusak were not also sheriffs. (153)

A mixture of corruption and dishonesty probably lay behind the debts which many sheriffs owed to the exchequer by the time they left office. Some sheriffs such as Roger Roth, Roger Gernon and Hugh de Clinton farmed the office for an annual fee of £10 while others apparently did not. (154) The amount sheriffs owed varied from individual to individual and depended on different circumstances. Richard Gernon, for instance, who had been in office for one year and ten weeks when he was murdered, owed only £8 to the exchequer at his death. (155) In 1310-1, however, Walter Douedale was imprisoned for non-payment of debts totalling £45.6s 6d. This may reflect the new rigour being applied to the collection of shrieval debts in the aftermath of the 1310 commissions to de Whatton and Dene. Douedale had paid off the debt by

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149. Ibid, p 64.

150. Ibid, p 107. A.J. Otway-Ruthven 'Royal service in Ireland,' in R.S.A.I. jn xcviij (1968), p 43.

151. P.R.O.I. 7/5, p 128. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp 82, 373; P.R.O.I. Ex 2/1, p 19.

152. Cal. pat. rolls 1301-7, p 162; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, p 19.

153. Close rolls 1231-4, p 529; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 36, p 70; P.R.O.I. C 47/10/17; Connolly 'Ancient petitions' pp 27, 33.

154. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 38, pp 71, 2; P.R.O.I. EX 2/1, pp 68; 150. Otway-Ruthven Medieval Ireland., pp 176-9.

155. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/7, p 188.



1317. (156) William de Hatch owed £52. 11s 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d which he accounted for in 1301 while John de Cusak agreed in Dec 1316 that he owed £100 from his time as sheriff. (157) The largest debtor to the crown from among the sheriffs, however, was Benedict le Hauberge, sheriff in 1307-8 and <sup>again</sup> from 1311-14. (158) In 1309 he was adjudged to owe £118 5s 1d and this was ordered to be levied from his property by 14 Jan 1310. He was subsequently imprisoned on being found to still owe £107. 12s 9d. (159) He succeeded the murdered Richard Gernon as sheriff in September 1311 and was in office when the de Verdun rebellion broke out in February of the next year. Wogan's dissatisfaction with his behaviour during this crisis is suggested by his replacement as sheriff on Wogan's initiative by Richard Taaf on 13 April 1312. Le Hauberge, however, did regain the office which he held until Nov. 1314. (160) His property, however, was subsequently ordered to be taken into the king's hand by the coroner and in 1319 he was a prisoner in Dublin castle from where he petitioned the king for relief of his family. He owed £260 and his lands, which were in the king's hands, had suffered dampna irrecupabilia at the hands of the Scots and Irish. Benedict was ordered to pay off his debts at the rate of 5m per annum and was released on finding pledges. (161) At this rate it would have taken 78 years to pay off the debt. The government realised it would never recover the money but wished Benedict to make some restitution. On his death in 1329 he owed £449 5s. 8d., a sum considerably larger than the 500m. penalty imposed on Uriel after the de Verdun rebellion. (162)

Le Hauberge's profligacy was certainly unusual and it is unclear whether its cause was corruption, inefficiency, or a combination of both. Not all officials were suspect. Hugh de Clinton, for instance, had

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156. Craig, Memoranda roll 3 Ed II, pp 350, 443, 511; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, pp 231-2 P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p68; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, p 160.

157. P.R.I. rep. D.K.D. 38, p 52. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp 135, 477.

158. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/2., p 255; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/6, p 1; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, pp 36, 52.

159. Craig, Memoranda roll 3 Ed II, pp 137; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, p 234.

160. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, pp 36, 52; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/6, p 209.

161. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/9, p 611; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/13, pp 74-7; P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2 m.17.

162. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/15, p 223; See above. pp71-2



served as sheriff on several occasions before being appointed receiver in 1310, which suggests that this term of office was above suspicion. (163) Corruption was accepted as normal in local government and Uriel was probably no worse than other royal counties in this respect. Its proximity to Dublin, however, meant that it came under close scrutiny from central government. (164)

Hugh de Clinton's name has appeared on many occasions in the preceding pages. In the first two decades of the fourteenth century he served as sheriff of the county, chief serjeant and receiver of the King's money in Uriel. (165) The extent of his landed interests is unclear. He had an interest in land at Bolies (bar. Ardee) which is adjacent to Braganstown where other members of the de Clinton family held a manor and he also held land at Port (bar Ferard,) by free-hold of John de Clifford. (166) He also held the tithes and fruits of the church of Port, which pertained to the Templar manor of Kilsarin, prior to the dissolution of that order and had some share in the church of Cappoge as well. He did not maintain these investments, however, after 1310, possibly because his appointment as King's receiver might lead to a conflict of interests on his part. (167) He did not become involved in the de Verdun rebellion of 1312 but he subsequently acted as pledge for one of those who did, the former sheriff, Thomas de Stanley. (168) During the Bruce invasion he also acted as pledge for the prior of Louth abbey, who had been convicted of collaboration with the Scots. Another of the pledges was John de Cusak who in 1325-6 was one of two men who acted as security for Hugh to have custody of the heir of William de Mandeville. (169)

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163. See above. p148

164. N.H.I. ii, pp 192-5.

165. See above. p148

166. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, pp 231-2; P.R.O.I. Bellew mss 1121/1/1, p 2 no 3; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/13, p 2. Roll 92. Gerald de Clinton owed 5m royal service for 5 carucates in Port in 1332. Otway-Ruthven 'partition of the de Verdun lands,' p 429. He also held in Smarmore and Dromiskin (bar. Ardee & Louth) P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/12, p 212.

167. McIvor 'Knights Templar,' p 83; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/6, pp 296-7, See above. p142

168. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, p 124. He also acted on pledge for Walter Douedale to pay his debts from his time as sheriff. Craig, Memoranda roll 3 Ed II, p 511.

169. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, pp 58-9; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/14, p 755.



Another of the pledges for the prior of Louth in 1316 was John Plunket. By 1310 he was already narrator of the king in Uriel, a post he still held in 1316. (170) In 1312 he recovered some of his late father's land from Richard de Overton but most of his own land seems to have come from his marriage, before 1317, to Alice, daughter of John de Trim. John's father Henry, who had at one time been mayor of Drogheda in Uriel, was granted the manors of Redmore, Beaulieu and Stachliban in the barony of Ferrard by Theobald de Verdun.(171) These came to Plunket after John's death in or before 1305. (172) Beaulieu was attached to the parish of Termonfeckin, but because the area was subject to flooding it was often impossible for those living in Beaulieu to attend services in Termonfeckin. The people of Beaulieu asked the archbishop for permission to build a parish church in the vicinity and he in turn referred the matter to the prior of Louth, whose house held the church at Termonfeckin. The prior initially objected but changed his mind, possibly as a result of Plunket standing as one of his pledges following his treachery during the Bruce invasion. The church was finally built and presentation of the parson rested with Plunket. (173)

Sometime before 1317 John had also been given the manor of 'Kerwyleston' (bar. Ferrard) by another relative, Michael de Trym, a burg.ess of Drogheda, a grant which was witnessed by Hugh de Clinton. (174) The archbishop of Armagh and others, including Roger Gernon and master Reginald Taaf, subsequently attempted unsuccessfully to disseise Plunket of this property. (175) In 1329 William de London granted him land in the county including land in Dromin (bar. Ardee) and by 1332 he also held near Dromiskin in the barony of Louth. (176) In 1330 he was one of those accounting for land confiscated from the archbishopric of Armagh

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170. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, p 720; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, p 745. For narratores see Maddicott Law and lordship, pp 11-2, 20-2.

171. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, p 51. Chartul. St. Mary's. Dublin ii, p 7; Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, p 275; Cal. pat. rolls 1327-30., pp 132, 134.

172. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/10, p 606.

173. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/11, pp 290-5; Cal. pat. rolls. 1327-30, p 134.

174. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/12, pp 209-13.

175. *Ibid.*, pp 209-10.

176. Gormanston reg., p. 155, Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of de Verdun lands,' p 425, 432.

and in c 1335 he and Nicholas Douedale were granted all her rights in land near Termonfeckin by Martina Rosel. (177)

The careers of Hugh de Clinton and John Plunket reveal something of the social dynamics of early fourteenth century Uriel. De Clinton came from a well established family while Plunkett apparently founded the fortunes of a family which was within two centuries to be pre-eminent within the county. Both held public office and both held advowsons to churches. De Clinton sought the custody of an influential tenant-in-chief while Plunket made an advantageous marriage alliance. The gentry community of early fourteenth century Uriel was dynamic and "open". Within its own confines it provided opportunities for social advancement on the part of families who had originally been of little importance politically. However, it was not an isolated community. It was increasingly self-aware and self-confident and it played - and wished to play - a crucial part in the life of the lordship of Ireland as a whole.

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177. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 43, p 40 Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp 267-8. Dowdall deeds, no 23.



An analysis of the English community of Uriel would be incomplete without reference to the part played by the town of Drogheda in Uriel. As a royal borough the town was constitutionally distinct and separate from the county. The political priorities of the townsmen, moreover, did not necessarily coincide with those of the county gentry.<sup>(1)</sup> This division was best illustrated by the exclusion of Drogheda in Uriel from the amercement placed on the community of Uriel following the de Verdun rebellion, despite the fact that the representatives of the community had met the justiciar in the town in order to plead that they be allowed <sup>to</sup> end the disturbance themselves. Only one Drogheda man, Hugh Burgeys, stood as pledge for any of the rebels subsequent to their surrender, suggesting that the level of Drogheda participation in the uprising was minimal.<sup>(2)</sup> When the town did join with the county in common action, as at the battle of Faughart in 1318, the Drogheda contingent still acted as a distinct unit, although led by the county sheriff.<sup>(3)</sup>

Within the first generation of English settlement in the area, the inhabitants of Drogheda held land outside their borough in Uriel.<sup>(4)</sup> In the early fourteenth century a number of burgesses and others of the town can be identified as holding land within the county. Richard Denn, who held in chief of the king in the barony of Ardee in 1318, was unusual in holding land so far from Drogheda.<sup>(5)</sup> Most, such as Thomas Page, Walter de la More and the prior of the House of St John in Drogheda in Meath held in the barony of Ferrard, adjacent to the town.<sup>(6)</sup> The landed interests there of the family of de Trim, which came into the hands of John Plunket

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1. G. Mac Niocaill Na Buirgeisi ii, (Dublin 1969), pp327, 334.
  2. See above. p74 Cal. justic rolls Ire. 1308-14, p265.
  3. Chartul St. Mary's Dublin ii, pp350, 359-60.
  4. Rot. litt. claus. 1204-24, p246.
  5. Rot. pat. Hib. p23 no.118.
  6. Dowdall deeds, no.13, P.R.I. rep. DK 39, p29; Cal. justic rolls Ire, 1305-7, p242; Otway-Ruthven, 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', p425.

in the early fourteenth century, have been detailed above, while Roger Roch, who uniquely combined the positions of sheriff of Uriel and seneschal of Drogheda in Meath in the course of his career, also held land at Carrickbaggot in the barony of Ferrard.<sup>(7)</sup>

Drogheda men were also given custody of lands in Uriel which were in the hands of the king. The lands of Geoffrey de Luzignan in the barony of Louth, for instance, were committed to an inhabitant of Drogheda, John de Somerset, between 1296 and 1300 while in 1337 the same lands, which were vacant owing to the death of Ralph de Eu, were granted for three years to Henry Russel, burgess of Drogheda.<sup>(8)</sup> Drogheda also attracted the interest of leading men in Uriel. Milo de Verdun, for instance, requested the coket of the town in 1320. He was also in debt to the amount of £40 to Henry Russel in 1325.<sup>(9)</sup> Adam de Cusak asked for the custody of Drogheda castle as a reward for his service against the Scots in c.1319.<sup>(10)</sup>

In general, however, Drogheda's role in Uriel was confined to the economic sphere where it served as the centre for local trade. The Scottish wars of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries apparently boosted economic activity in the town. Entrepreneurs such as the Preston family from Lancashire were attracted to Drogheda. They were a dynamic family whose ambitions lay beyond their adopted town. William de Preston married into the important burgess family of Cosyn before 1307 and he and his brother Richard began to acquire substantial grants of land, some of it belonging to adherents of the Scots, in the year after the Bruce invasion.<sup>(11)</sup> Another of the family, Roger, became a justice of the common bench in 1327 and by

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7. See above p153 Dowdall deeds, no.24.

8. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 38, p53; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, p34; Ir. cartul Llanthony, p107; Cal. justic rolls Ire. 1308-14, pp223-4; Cal. close rolls 1337-9, p206.

9. Connolly, 'Ancient petitions', p57; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/14, pp306-7.

10. Connolly, 'Ancient petitions', pp33-4.

11. N.H.I. ii, pp239, 273-4; Gormanston reg., pp25, 51, 52, 64. For Moymurthy see Otway-Ruthven 'Two obsolete place names in Co. Meath' in Dinnseanchas, iv no.1, (1970) p7; Rot. pat. Hib., p26, no.202.



the 1340's he and his son Robert also held part of the manor of Ardee.<sup>(12)</sup> The de Prestons were an unusually active and successful immigrant family in early fourteenth century Ireland. Their rise to power demonstrates that Meath and Uriel at least, continued to offer opportunities for those prepared to take them.

The community of Uriel was of course part of a larger community. This was symbolised in parliament where the English community of the lordship of Ireland as a whole met, but it also had a military aspect. In May 1311 Ralph Kytterbern of Uriel was robbed of "a pair of military boots worth 6d".<sup>(13)</sup> Given the military activity of Uriel men both within the lordship and beyond there must have been many such items of footwear in the county at the time. In 1295 Paul Lagheles (Lawless) brought his sheep from the troubled Dublin mountains to Castleknock in 'the land of peace ..... in hope of finding refuge there as a man of peace'. A contingent of men from Uriel, however, led by Peter le Petit and Geoffrey del Aunee, who were on their way to fight the Irish of Leinster 'not taking the direct way to the mountains, but deviating far from it as spoilers and against the king's peace, came and robbed Paul of all his cattle at Loterelston viz 220 sheep, value 24 1/2 marks'<sup>(14)</sup> In 1324 Walter de la Pulle, the escheator and leader of the de Verdun rebellion of 1312, was fighting with John Darcy in Leinster while in the 1330s and 1340s the martial prowess of John de Clinton was much in demand by Irish justiciars in Wicklow and elsewhere.<sup>(15)</sup>

Men from Uriel were also to be found fighting for the king outside of Ireland, many in reparation for criminal activity. Thus in 1298 John Gernon, who had killed Robert Athelard in the previous year, was pardoned his

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12. N.H.I. ii, pp361-2; Richardson & Sayles, Admin. Ire., pp157, 162, 169, 178; Connolly 'Ancient petitions' pp22-3. Frame, English lordship, pp59-60.

13. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14. p213.

14. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp29-30. The accused were found not guilty of the charge but were convicted of receiving sheep stolen from Peter.

15. P.R.O. E 352/119, Treasurer's account, a.r.r. 14 Ed II. Rot pat. Hib., p45, no.78; P.R.O. E 372/179. Treasurer's account; a.r.r. 6 Ed III.



offence for serving with the king in Flanders, while in 1300 Walter de Samaylle was able to produce a pardon for all his trespasses before the sheriff of Uriel, dated 4 November 1298, because of his service, also in Flanders.<sup>(16)</sup> The demands of the king's Scottish wars brought forth even more pardons. In November 1310 John and Robert de Haddesore were pardoned for the murder of William de Grafton because of their service in Scotland while in May 1327 pardon was issued to Richard de Dromgole for the death of Richard de Houethe on condition that he join the king against the Scots.<sup>(17)</sup> The de Verdun rebellion provided the crown with numerous Uriel fighters in 1314.<sup>(18)</sup> Less serious offences might also be forgiven for service abroad. Both William de Hatch and Richard de Balybin were pardoned for the escapes which occurred while Drogheda castle was in their custody because of their service in Scotland.<sup>(19)</sup>

Pardons for criminal offences, of course, merely supplemented the forces which were at the king's disposal for any of his wars. The de Verduns and Pipards served in person with the king throughout the period of their involvement with Uriel, from the late twelfth to the early fourteenth century.<sup>(20)</sup> Other English lords in the area also brought contingents to the Scottish wars. For the abortive Scottish campaign of 1322 John de Bermingham brought from Ireland a force which included Walter Gernon and Nicholas de Dromiskin. Also under his command was John de Cusak who brought with him Peter, Nicholas and Adam de Cusak and Philip de Repenteny.<sup>(21)</sup> The summonses for the expedition of 1335 reveal an even larger number of Uriel names. Not only did the knights Richard de Tuyt and Nicholas and Milo de Verdun receive individual summonses, but also the squires Mahon de Cruys, Luke de Netterville, John de

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16. See above, p. 136 P.R. O.I. R.C. 7/8, pp32-3. J.R. Maddicott The English peasantry and the demands of the crown, 1294-1341, (Past and Present, supplement 1, 1975), pp29-34; N.H.I., ii, p203.

17. Cal.pat. rolls 1307-13, p297; Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp208-9. Cal. pat. rolls 1327-30, p112.

18. See above p.73

19. Cal. pat. rolls 1301-7, pp162; Cal. pat. rolls 1292-1301, p456; P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, pp60-1; P.R.O. C.47/10/17,18.

20. D.N.B., vol 20, p217. Complete peerage vol 10, p527; Cal. pat. rolls 1247-58, pp232, 598; Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84, no 2038.

21. P.R.O.E. 101/16/16; Account of John de Bermingham; a.r.r. 16, Ed II; Frame; English lordship, pp135-7; Connolly, 'Ancient petitions', p87



Clynton, Roger Gernon, Richard Taaf de Liscarton, Richard Taaf de Castleomnacht, John de Haddesores, John Gernon de Killincoule, Gerald de Clynton and Peter de Cusak.<sup>(22)</sup> For important local men such as Walter de Cusak and Richard d'Exeter summonses to serve in Scotland were issued regularly. Between 1297 and 1324 each was summoned on at least five occasions.<sup>(23)</sup>

Men from Uriel spent time abroad for reasons other than warfare. The journeys of Robert de Napton in 1317 and Adam de Napton in 1322 may have been undertaken for commercial reasons or in order to petition the king directly in England.<sup>(24)</sup> Nicholas and Milo de Verdun certainly travelled to England in order to petition for grants of land and other favours.<sup>(25)</sup> Uriel men also travelled abroad to study. Richard Fitz Ralph is an obvious example. He seems to have arrived in Oxford in the early 1320s.<sup>(26)</sup> An assise of novel disseisin held in May 1313 revealed that Robert Muryel had sometime earlier gone overseas moratur ibi in studio and that his father, thinking that his son was dead, had given his lands to Robert's brother, John.<sup>(27)</sup>

The degree to which the English inhabitants of thirteenth and early fourteenth century Ireland migrated within the lordship has possibly been underestimated. In 1297 Richard Talon testified at Drogheda that he had been born in the liberty of Trim, grown up in the liberty of Carlow and now lived in Uriel.<sup>(28)</sup> By 1260 at the latest the family of de Houth, who presumably had settled initially in north Co. Dublin, had moved into Uriel and later held land in the barony of Ardee as well as in Sydan, Co. Meath.<sup>(29)</sup> Uriel men were expected to travel far afield on the king's business and not merely on military expeditions. In 1305 the justiciar John

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22. N.L.I. Ms2, Harris collectanea, vol ii, pp61-62. R. Nicholson, Scotland in the later middle ages, (Edinburgh, 1974), pp131-3.

23. Parl writs, i, p281, no.3, p365 no16, p368, no.5. Parl writs, ii, pt2, p393, no65, pp423-4, nos 12,15, 17, p562, no.120, p570, no.155, p613, no 61, pp680-1, no.161. Rot. pat. Hib., p13, no.45.

24. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/11, p169, Cal. pat. rolls 1321-4, p112.

25. See above p.84 Frame, English lordship in Ireland p114.

26. Walsh, Richard FitzRalph, pp3-4.

27. P.R.O.I. K.B. 1/1, m 100d.

28. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/4, pp216-7.

29. R.I.A. 12/D/9, p.9. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp181-2. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp454-5. N.L.I. ms 760, pipe rolls. p310. Howthstown is in the barony of lower Slane, Co. Meath.



Wogan held an inquisition at Castledermot into the claims of Richard de Burgh concerning the lands of the O Connors in Connacht. The jurors who attended included John son of Ryrith, William de Grafton and John de Alue [Alneton], knights of Co. Louth, and William and Ralph Serle, Peter Muriel and John le Keu of the same county. Not surprisingly a large number of the jurors from Meath and Louth did not attend the inquisition. These included Nicholas de Netterville, Benedict le Hauberge and William Hamelyn of Meath and John de la Felde and Ralph le Tanner of Louth. They were held to be in mercy for not attending.(30)

As late as the end of the thirteenth century Uriel was attracting settlers from England. Before 1275 John de Verdun was able to grant land in the manor of Rodebank (Redmore, bar Ferrard) to John de Clifford in exchange for land which the latter held of him in England.(31) In 1287 Ralph Pipard, who was in England, enfeoffed John de Kent and his wife Emma, who were with him, of land in the barony of Ardee and the family settled in Uriel while maintaining links with England.(32) In the ecclesiastical sphere advowsons to churches in Uriel were regularly granted to Englishmen or to men from elsewhere within the lordship. When Walter, parson of Manchester, was given the church of Carlingford in c.1267 he was in Devon and he does not seem to have resided at any stage in Ireland.(33) The church of Carlingford had previously been granted to the church of St Andrew's in Scotland by Hugh de Lacy in 1237.(34) In 1327 the same church was granted to Roger Outlaw, prior of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem and chancellor of Ireland.(35)

The church of Stabannon in the barony of Ardee was similarly granted to rectors from England such as the chancery clerk John de Merton who did not visit Ireland.(36) In 1315 the vicarage of Termonfeckin, which

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30. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp133-5.

31. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, pp224-5. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/10, p125.

32. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp243-4, Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92 no.721, P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, pp258-9.

33. Cal. inq. P.M., ii, no 734.

34. Cal. chart. rolls 1226-57, p232.

35. Cal. pat. rolls 1327-30, p171. As mentioned in the previous chapter Philip d'Erdeley who had been prevented from entering the Templar house of Kilsarin by Stephen Gernon was also rector of Carlingford. He collected his rents through the vicar, Elyas. (R.I.A. 12/D/8, pp349-53.)

36. Cal. pat. rolls 1313-7, p265. G. O. Sayles 'Ecclesiastical process and the parsonage of Stabannon in 1351' in R.I.A. Proc. lv, (1952-3), pp7-8.



the king had recovered from the house of St. Mary's, Louth, was given to Robert de Cotegrave, a chamberlain of the Dublin exchequer. In 1318 he was also granted 34 acres in Termonfeckin which the former archbishop, Nicholas Mac Maol Iosa had granted without licence to Geoffrey Kenefeg.<sup>(37)</sup> Robert apparently had some difficulty in making good this grant. Sometime between 1318 and 1322 he claimed that he had been deprived of the vicarage by the prior of Louth and the archbishop, but in the latter year the prior in turn was said to have been deprived of the church of Termonfeckin by the archbishop, who had given it to de Cotegrave.<sup>(38)</sup>

Because of Uriel's status as a royal county and because the crown held a large proportion of the land there in demesne, especially after the Pipard transfer of 1302, the king was in a position to reward his favourites and servants with grants of office and lands within the county. Between 1285 and 1291 the sheriff of Uriel was William de Spineto, an Italian merchant, and another Italian, Byndo de Guydolet was constable of Carlingford castle in the 1330s.<sup>(39)</sup> Many officials of the Dublin government whose main landed interests lay elsewhere also had connections with Uriel. Thomas Eustace, Roger Kenefeg and the abbot of Mellifont, for instance, all held land of Richard de Wodehouse, who between 1316 and 1323 acted as deputy treasurer, escheator and chancellor of the exchequer.<sup>(40)</sup> Thomas Ace, who became a justice of the justiciar's bench in 1320, successfully petitioned in 1318 for custody of the lands and heir of William de Mandeville, who held in Manfieldstown in the barony of Louth.<sup>(41)</sup> Following the murder of John de Bermingham in June 1329 the justiciar, John D'Arcy, was granted the custody 'of the town of Atherde (Ardee) and the hamlet of Donaghman (Donaghmagne)' until de Bermingham's heir<sup>s</sup> came of age.<sup>(42)</sup> This grant was superseded in June 1330 when Roger Mortimer secured Uriel for himself as a liberty and after his death in the following year the escheator

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37. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp324-5; Rot. pat. Hib. p.23, no.98; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p15; Reg. Swayne, p.4; Richardson & Sayles Admin. Ire., pp120-1.

38. Sayles Affairs of Ire., pp108-9; Cal. papal letters 1305-42, p.219.

39. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 37, p28, 38, 44; P.R.O.E. 101/231/6. receipt roll Mich. a.r.r. 16-17 Ed I. M.D.O'Sullivan, Italian merchant bankers in Ireland in the thirteenth century. pp60-1; Rot. pat. Hib., p.40 no.133; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 44, p39; Dowdall deeds, no.119.

40. Craig, Memoranda roll 3 Ed. II, p.419, P.R.O.I. Ex 1/2, m10; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, p541; Richardson & Sayles Admin Ire., pp101, 115, 116, 126.

41. Ibid, p168; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p15.

42. Cal. fine rolls, 1327-37, p143.



John Morice, who had earlier had custody of Ardee, had this grant renewed until September 1336.(43)

Finally, Simon Fitz Richard, kings pleader and justice of the common bench, was given custody of the lands of Ralph de Eu in Ireland, including half of the barony of Louth, in October 1337.(44)

The proximity of Uriel to Dublin meant that visits by the justiciar could be undertaken with relative ease.

Between 1295 and 1345 the various chief governors held sessions in the area on roughly sixty-five occasions.

With the exception of 1303 and 1306 when sessions were held at Ardee, the justiciar heard local cases at

Drogheda. His visits, however, were irregular. There were none, for instance, between Jan, 1306 and January

1311, but during the Bruce invasion both Mortimer and Butler held sessions regularly at Drogheda.(45)

Visits by itinerant justices appear to have been made less frequently with none occurring between 1242 and

1301.(46) Military interventions in the area were also infrequent in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth

century. Between 1250 and 1350 the justiciar led armies in the county in 1252, 1273-6, 1291, 1299, 1312,

1315-8 and 1345.(47) Taken together these instances of government involvement in Uriel suggest that the

area was considered to be one of the less troublesome regions of the lordship. While it is correct to associate

the term 'march' with instability and warfare it is also important to remember that such instability was more

frequently potential than it was actual. In other words a march area such as Uriel was more often at peace

than it was at war.

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43. Cal. chart. rolls, 1327-41, pp175-6; P.R.I. rep. D.K., 44 pp44-5.

44. Cal. pat. rolls 1334-8, p540. Frame, English lordship pp104-5. Might this also be the Simon Fitzrichard who was sub-escheator in Uriel in 1315-6 and who, together with Mahon de Cruys, was given custody of the temporalities of the archbishopric of Armagh in 1321? P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, p.728, P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, pp35, 38.

45. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp80, 274, 456. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, p.180. Connolly 'Pleas held before the chief governors', pp103-22. Frame, English lordship in Ire., p.81, table 6.

46. Richardson & Sayles, Admin Ire., pp.134-5, 142-3. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 38, p53. P.R.O. E 372/150, Issue roll. a.r.r. 29 Ed I. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 37, p.28, Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp112-4, P.R.I. rep. D.K. 36, p66. Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84, no2108.

47. Ann. Conn. A.D. 1252. Cal. doc Ire., 1252-84, n no.1219. Chartul St. Mary's Dublin ii, p.320. Otway-Ruthven 'Royal Service in Ireland', p.43. Simms, 'The O'Hanlons, the O Neills and the Anglo Normans', p.84.



The sheriff of Uriel accounted annually at the Dublin exchequer, thereby helping to maintain a regular level of contact between the county and the government.<sup>(48)</sup> Only in unusual circumstances were sheriffs exempted from performing this duty. In 1301, for instance, Hugh de Clinton did not have to travel to Dublin because an eyre was being held in Uriel.<sup>(49)</sup> During the de Verdun rebellion of 1312 the sheriff, Benedict le Hauberge, was given another day to account because his presence was required by the justiciar at Drogheda.<sup>(50)</sup>

Uriel also contributed personnel to the administration of the lordship. With the exception of Walter de la Pulle, who acted as Irish escheator between 1323-6, and Richard d'Exeter sr. who was deputy justiciar between 1268 and 1276, men from Uriel were generally employed in the judicial branch of the government.<sup>(51)</sup> Peter de Repenteny, for instance, had been the king's seneschal in Ulster and was made an itinerant justice in 1252.<sup>(52)</sup> Nicholas Taaf, who held in Uriel at Braganstown and possibly Dromin, was a justice of the common bench between 1278 and 1287 and an itinerant justice in 1281.<sup>(53)</sup> Thomas de Snyterby, justice of the common bench between 1295 and 1308, held the motte castle at Collifan (Killaney, Co. Monaghan) in the western marches of Uriel.<sup>(54)</sup> The career of John Gernon has been discussed in the previous chapter. He was outlawed for murder in 1297, his father, Richard, the sheriff was murdered in 1311, he himself became sheriff in 1330-1 and between 1334 and 1355 he served for lengthy periods as king's pleader and justice of the common bench.<sup>(55)</sup> Walter de Cusak, justice itinerant in 1310, and justice of the justiciar's bench in 1317

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48. Otway-Ruthven, Med. Ire., pp176-7.

49. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 38, p52.

50. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/6, p251.

51. Richardson & Sayles Admin Ire., pp80, 81, 126. I am not including here Theobald de Verdun II who was chief governor during this period. ibid, pp.83 Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp228-9.

52. Richardson & Sayles, Admin Ire. p4, no.3, p134. Ormond deeds. 1172-1350, p43.

53. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/1, pp111, 160; Richardson & Sayles, Admin Ire., pp140, 149.

54. Ibid., pp.150,152, 153, Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp486-7; P.r.O.I. R.C. 8/5, pp134-5; D. Mac Ivor (Mac Iomhair) 'Notes on medieval Killanny', in Clogher rec. v., no.1 (1963) p46-52.

55. See above.pp 136, 147. Richardson & Sayles Admin Ire., pp40-2, 160-3, 177.



was one of a family which had held property in Uriel since the earliest days of the conquest.<sup>(56)</sup> Some of his activities have already been mentioned, such as his frequent summonses to serve in Scotland, his marriage to the widow of Nigel le Brun, for whose will he acted as executor, and his role as Roger Mortimer's seneschal of the liberty of Trim.<sup>(57)</sup> In 1308 he was appointed chief justice in eyre and in the same year was given custody of the manors of Ardee and Mandevillestown (Mansfieldstown) which had been in the king's hand since the Pipard transfer of 1302. He held the farm of the manors until 1310.<sup>(58)</sup>

Any discussion of the role of Uriel in the administration of the lordship would be incomplete without mention of Richard d'Exeter sr and jr who combined better than any of their contemporaries the two roles of local lord and government official. The family seems to have come to prominence in Uriel through its connections with the Cistercian abbey of St. Mary's, Dublin, which came to hold large estates in the county. The Dublin annals compiled at St. Mary's contain references to the d'Exeters which their status in Ireland did not merit. Thus, in 1269 the appointment of Richard d'Exeter sr. as a justice itinerant is recorded, while in 1313 reference is made to the marriage of a daughter of Richard d'Exeter jr to Milo de Verdun.<sup>(59)</sup> A strange document included among the charters of the abbey also suggests a close link with the d'Exeters. The document lists six events; the foundation of Mellifont in 1142; the visit of Henry II to Ireland in 1171; the death of Gille MacLiag archbishop of Armagh in 1180; the death of Tomaltach O Connor, archbishop of Armagh in 1201; the death of archbishop Echdonn Mac Gille Uidhir in 1216 and the death of Richard d'Exeter in 1286. Exalted company indeed!<sup>(60)</sup> It may well be that Richard d'Exeter sr. had acted as the steward of St Mary's property in Uriel before becoming a justice itinerant a pattern of career advancement which was certainly common in contemporary England.<sup>(61)</sup> Some weight is added to this conjecture by the fact that

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56. Ibid, pp144, 167. Master Geoffrey de Cusak, official of the bishop of Meath, witnessed several grants in Drogheda and also granted land himself to the priory of Llanthony in Meath before 1214. Ir. cartul Llanthony, pp20, 64, 94, 101. In 1235 Adam de Kusake witnessed the agreement made at Drogheda between Hugh de Lacy and Roesia de Verdun which ended hostilities between those two families. Gormanston reg., p162.

57. See above pp97, 137, 159.

58. Cal. pat. rolls 1307-13, p78; Cal. fine rolls 1307-19, p23; Craig, Memoranda roll 3 Ed II, p465.

59. Chartul St. Mary's, Dublin, ii, p316, 343.

60. Chartul St. Mary's, Dublin, i, p279.

61. Maddicott Law and lordship, pp29-32.



Richard held land of the abbey in Drummermoy, which is near Killanny motte. Richard's son also held the motte at Kane where St Mary's had also received grants.(62)

The centre of d'Exeter interests in Uriel, however, was the manor of Darver in the barony of Louth, which was held of the king in capite. Shortly after inheriting this manor from his father in 1286, Richard d'Exeter jr and two other justices assigned heard a case there between Theobald de Verdun, and the prior of St Leonards, Dundalk, concerning the advowson of churches in north Uriel.(63) In 1305 d'Exeter was permitted to enfeoff Nicholas d'Exeter, clerk, of all the lands he held in capite on condition that Nicholas re-enfeoffed him at a later date. In Uriel these lands consisted of the manors of Barounyston (Baronstown, bar. Ferrard), Phelipyston Nugent (Philipstown, bar. Ferrard), Dervyr and Corbally (Darver, bar Louth), Bellaghylysconan (Balisconan - Killanny, Co. Monaghan?) and Lynne (Linne, bar. Ardee) and other small parcels of lands. In Meath they consisted of the manors of Staghcallyan (Stackallen, bar. Upper Slane) and Bryaneston (Brownstown, bar. Lower Slane or bar. Duleek,?) (64)

The manors of Baronstown and Philipstown had been granted to d'Exeter by Richard de Costentyn, but his daughter and her husband, William Savage, continued to hold one third of the property of Richard.(65) D'Exeter's tenants in Philipstown included Henry Top, who died in 1309. When his son was tricked into marriage by Maurice Pounteis in 1311, however, it was revealed that the marriage of Henry's heir was in the king's hand and not in Richard's.(66) When Philipstown came into d'Exeter's hands is unclear.

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62. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, pp76-7; Chartul St. Mary's, Dublin, i, pp197-8; Rot. pat. Hib. p18 no.146. Drummermoy is in the tenement of Balisconan which Fr Colmcille has identified as being in the proximity of Collifan or Killanny Chartul St. Mary's Dublin, ii, pp64-5; O Conbhui (Conway) lands of St. Marys', pp73-4; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/10, pp314-5.

63. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 37, p35; Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp112-4.

64. Cal justic rolls Ire., 1305-7; p69; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/10, pp 592-3.

65. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/5, pp46, 122.

66. Rot. pat. Hib., p9, no.112. See above p.<sup>133</sup> Otway-Ruthven, 'Partition of the de Verdun lands in Ireland', p422. Craig, memoranda roll 3 Ed II, pp.228-30.

Shortly-before 1258 Philip de Nugent, the original lord of the manor or his son, gave the local church with a wood and two carucates of land to the Priory of Holy Trinity in Dublin, but by 1343 this grant had been suppressed because of the distances involved. (67)

In Corbally and Walteristown Hamelyn (Walters town, bar. Louth) Richard d'Exeter's tenants included Robert Athelard, who was murdered by John Gernon in 1297.(68) The manor of Linns possibly came to d'Exeter from Ralph de Picheford, seneschal of Ralph FitzNicholas, who held it of Stephen de Buterleye at his death in 1253.(69) It was situated at the confluence of the rivers Dee and Glyde and was ideally situated for the fishing of salmon. In 1306 d'Exeter requested permission to build a fishery there, saying that he had already constructed a pool and sluices further up the river Glyde at great expense.(70) Inland fishing was apparently important in the economy of the area. In 1301, John Pipard enfeoffed John de Kent of the fishery of Gernonstown, while some years earlier Richard Fulsahé quit-claimed to Sir Gilbert de Repenteny the waters which separated their lands, from Cappoge to the sea, a stretch of about 5 miles on the White river. De Repenteny subsequently granted part of this river to John Duff for an annual rent of 10s. and one salmon from the stream each week in Lent.(71)

It is probable that Richard d'Exeter jr held more manors in Uriel than any of his contemporaries, including Nicholas and Milo de Verdun. As already mentioned one of his daughters married Milo de Verdun while another married John son of Richard de Tuyt.(72) Richard himself married at least twice, one of his wives

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67. Alen's reg. p204. Philip de Nugent held this land from at least the early 1200s. Ir. cartul. Llanthony, p51; Rot. litt. claus. i, p246; Close rolls 1227-31, p.16.

68. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303, p248; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, pp34-5.

69. Cal. inq.P.M., i p74.

70. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, p214; P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/11, p565.

71. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, p21; P.R.O.I. Bellew Mss 1121/1/1, p35, nos 100, 101.

72. See above.132-3



being a daughter of Walter de Lacy who joined the Bruces in 1315-8.<sup>(73)</sup> Richard, however, did not hold only in Uriel. During the justiciarship of Robert d'Ufford (1268-70, 1276-81), Richard d'Exeter sr received a grant of thirty librates of land in Connacht for half of a knight's fee. These lands were centred on Tirmany (Ui Maine) in east Galway.<sup>(74)</sup> He was also given custody of the king's castles of Roscommon and Rindown and his son, who was sheriff of Roscommon between 1306 and 1310, was also constable of Roscommon castle.<sup>(75)</sup>

The only post held by Richard d'Exeter jr during his long administrative career which concerned Uriel exclusively was as collector there between 1293 and c 1310 of the money owed from the "fifteenths" granted to the king.<sup>(76)</sup> He was a justice assigned in Uriel as early as 1286 and served as chief justice of the common bench from 1302 until c 1324. He was probably in his late sixties, therefore, at his death in 1331.<sup>(77)</sup> In his role as chief justice, however, d'Exeter did have important dealings with Uriel and these illustrate the nature of the relationship which existed between the Dublin government and the county, or, more precisely, the role which the government saw itself playing there.

Twice in 1306 and again in 1310 Richard d'Exeter was required by the government to help end racial disturbances in the marches in Uriel. The first incident involved two of his relatives, Adam and Stephen d'Exeter who had allowed Doneghuth O Reilly to pasture cattle on their land which had been stolen from Nicholas de Netterville's manor of Dowth. Richard and his colleague, Thomas de Snyterby, persuaded O Reilly to agree to pay de Netterville for the stolen cattle but the Irishman defaulted and serious disturbances followed.<sup>(78)</sup> Later in the same year d'Exeter was given a commission to treat with Brian Mac Mahon to

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73. Sayles, Affairs of Ire., pp110-1. In 1305 Richard married Elizabeth, widow of John Mour, who was alive in 1331. P.R.O.I. EX 2/1, p129. Otway-Ruthven 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', p422. Richard's widow is incorrectly named Joanna in P.R.I. rep. D.K. 44, p32. Richard's daughter married John de Tuyt in 1304, proving that Elizabeth was not his first wife. P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/10, pp181-2.

74. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, p179; P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, p309; H. Walton, The English in Connacht, 1171-1333, (Ph.D., 1980, T.C.D.), pp496, 502, 512-3.

75. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/7, pp10-1; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p28; Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7, p355.

76. P.R.O. E 101/232/10, receipt roll Trinity a.r.r. 21 Ed I; Craig, Memoranda roll, 3 EdII, p476.

77. See above p 165 Cal. pat. rolls 1301-7, p70. Richardson & Sayles Admin Ire., pp 150, 152, 154. P.R.I. rep. D.K. 44, p32; P.R.O. E 101/238/17, issue roll, Mich. a.r.r. 18 EdII.

78. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp175-7. See above pp 115-6



bring him to the king's peace. He succeeded and the Irishman made fine by sixty cows and also agreed to exchange with the local English goods which they had stolen from each other in the recent past. Richard stood as pledge for Brian on this occasion and in 1308-10 was held accountable for 100s for the sixty cows which Mac Mahon had apparently failed to deliver.<sup>(79)</sup> In 1310 Richard was again commissioned to treat with the Irish, on this occasion Mahon MacMahon and Mahon O'Reilly, because they were at war 'on account of the divers dissensions between the Irish and English of their marches now arisen anew, by which it was feared great damage might easily come if such dissensions should not somehow be allayed.' D'Exeter succeeded in bringing the Irish to peace and in instituting discussions about disputes on the marches between the Irish and the English but this initiative was soon negated by more warfare between the Mac Mahons and the townsmen of Ardee.<sup>(80)</sup>

Richard d'Exeter was uniquely qualified to represent the Dublin government in its dealings with the Irish of Uriel. His status as a leading local lord was enhanced by his authority as a top government official. In general the administration preferred to avoid such direct intervention in the affairs of the area and d'Exeter's local prestige must have been viewed as crucial to his chances of success in 1306 and 1310. The government was more inclined to work through the offices of local lords in Uriel than to expend its own limited resources there in times of disturbance. The power wielded by the earl of Ulster over the potentially troublesome clans of O Hanlon, Mac Mahon and O Reilly was often sufficient to ensure order without recourse to Dublin. The enormous influence of Richard de Burgh in Ulster may explain why the justiciar felt it unnecessary to visit Uriel even once during the five years between Jan 1306 and Jan 1311.<sup>(81)</sup> The reliance placed by the government on de Burgh for the maintenance of order in Uriel is demonstrated by the fact that subsequent to the de Verdun rebellion of 1312, the royal manor of Ardee, where most of the trouble had occurred, was placed in his custody.<sup>(82)</sup>

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79. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7. pp502-3; P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39. p32.

80. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14. p161. See above. p123

81. See above p162

82. See above. p75



The earl of Ulster, however, was not always on hand to pacify the local Irish and in such cases the government preferred negotiation to confrontation. In 1281, for instance, Richard de Burgh had only recently come into his inheritance, and had not yet arrived in Ireland. In that year a payment of £6. 7s.10d was made "to O Hanlon, for his expenses in coming from Uriel to Dublin, to the chief justiciary of Ireland with men-at arms to expedite affairs of the king, and for a robe of the king's gift to him".<sup>(83)</sup> Again in 1333, shortly after the murder of William de Burgh, Donal O Hanlon came to Dublin for negotiations with the justiciar and council which proved successful in reinforcing O Hanlon's conciliatory outlook.<sup>(84)</sup>

On occasion the government could also work through local men in Uriel to influence the neighbouring Irish. Thus in 1308 Milo de Verdun was given permission to treat and parley with the Irish of Meath and Uriel.<sup>(85)</sup> In general, however, because the de Verduns lacked the financial and military resources of the earl of Ulster and because they were often in direct competition with the O Hanlons and Mac Mahons, they were not considered suitable as impartial representatives of the government's will. In 1301 payment of 40s was made by the crown to Brian Mac Mahon for defending the king's lands in the barony of Louth 'against the Irish'.<sup>(86)</sup> This is a rare example of the government paying an Irish chief in Uriel to keep the peace. It was more common for the administration to seek obedience by the taking of hostages. In 1304 Gilpatrick Mac Mahon was taken to Drogheda castle and forced to surrender his son as surety that he would pay rent owed to the crown since 1302 and that he would guard the king's workmen of Ardee. This hostage was presumably the Neylin son of Gilpatrick Mac mahon who was entrusted to the custody of Richard de Burgh in 1305. In 1306 the same Gilpatrick agreed to give pledges for the behaviour of Doneghuth O Reilly on condition "that

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83. Cal. doc. Ire. 1285-42, no.169. Simms 'The O Hanlons, the O Neills and the Anglo-Normans', p86. P.R.O. E 101/231/6, receipt roll Mich. a.r.r. 13-14 EdI.

84. Simms, 'The O Hanlons, the O Neills and the Anglo-Normans', p.91.

85. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, p51.

86. See above p. 122

the body of Gilpatrick be not taken".(87) In Jan. 1315 Achy Mac Mahon left his wife and three of his sons as hostages in Dublin castle to ensure his payment of thirty cows to the king and also as an incentive to capture 'or at least kill' the local bandit Philip O Scethel. Two years later it was Achy himself who as obsidem nostrum was led by an armed posse from Castle Roche to Dublin.(88)

There was, therefore, no weakening of the links between Uriel and the Dublin administration in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. This must be borne in mind when discussing the political turmoil in the county between c 1310 and 1330. If the de Verdun rebellion was motivated by fears of increased government intervention in the county, then the hostility to John de Bermingham, which culminated in the Braganstown massacre, was at least partly due to resentment at the barriers which liberty status placed between the locality and the centre. It was a paradox faced in different forms and at different times by many of the English of medieval Ireland.

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87. P.R.O.I. EX 2/1, pp89-90; Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp16, 175-7.

88. P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, p17; Hist. & mun. doc Ire., p385.



## CONCLUSION

A recent study of a local English community began with the observation that 'the attitude of the medievalist to those whom we know as the gentry is founded on a combination of good intentions and missed opportunities'.<sup>(1)</sup> In Ireland, it might be said, this combination has been avoided because there exists no attitude to the medieval gentry except, perhaps one of neglect. Even the recent shift from studying Ireland as a lordship towards viewing it as 'a patchwork of lordships' has failed to pay much attention to the role played by those below the rank of magnate. This is all the more surprising given the recognition that in Ireland, even more than in England, the prime concern of the magnate lay with the maintenance of control within his own lordship and that his interest in the centre was usually merely an extension of this.<sup>(2)</sup> Irish historians can certainly not be accused of slavishly following the fashions established by their English counterparts. The recent assertion that 'the enhanced political role of the gentry is one of the key-themes of fourteenth century English history' finds no echo in the historiography of medieval Ireland.<sup>(3)</sup>

It would be impossible, however, to understand the history of Uriel from the late twelfth to the early fourteenth century without placing the gentry at the centre of the story. It has been recognised that during this period gentry societies did exist in the region which was later known as the Pale and which included Uriel, but little has been said concerning the contributions of these societies to the history of the lordship.

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1. Saul, Knights and esquires, p.v.
  2. Frame, 'Power and society', pp3-7; R.R. Coss, 'Bastard feudalism revised', Past and Present no 125 (1989), p29.
  3. Given-Wilson, English nobility in the late middle ages, p83.

They have tended to be regarded almost as exceptions in a country where magnate power was the rule.<sup>(4)</sup> Magnate politics were certainly in evidence in Uriel in the early thirteenth century when the de Verdun - de Lacy feud affected all levels of the local English political community, but by the end of the century Uriel politics was gentry politics. The gentry, of course, continued to fulfil the tenurial obligations due to their Pipard and de Verdun lords, but in a county where the magnates were mostly absent and their estates few, the gentry were correspondingly wealthier and more politically influential.<sup>(5)</sup>

By the turn of the fourteenth century the gentry of Uriel comprised those descendants of the original sub-tenants in the county who had retained or acquired the status of knight or esquire. It also included the younger relatives of the absent de Verdun magnates. Nicholas de Verdun showed where his loyalties lay in 1315 by raiding the demesne lands of his absent brother and lord, Theobald. Nor was this an entirely closed elite. Newcomers from England who arrived in the late thirteenth century, such as the de Kents, de Cliffords and Prestons could penetrate its ranks, as could local families such as the Douedales and Plunkets whose status in the earliest years of the settlement was not as high as that, for instance, of the de Clintons or de Repentenys. As late as the early fifteenth century a family such as the Bellews of Meath could extend their lands and enhance their social standing by transferring their interests to Uriel.<sup>(6)</sup>

The gentry of Uriel were distinguishable from their neighbours in the county on a number of grounds. First there was the nature and extent of their land-holding. They held more land by free tenure than their contemporaries and their landed interests were likely to be scattered throughout the county, rather than centred on one manor.<sup>(7)</sup> The nature of the surviving documentation gives the impression that the land market in Uriel was more active than in most parts of the lordship and this may well be <sup>an</sup> accurate reflection of the state <sub>^</sub>

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4. Frame, 'War and peace', p126, idem; 'England and Ireland, 1171-1399', p153.
5. Otway-Ruthven, 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', pp408-9, Given-Wilson, English nobility in the later middle ages, p82.
6. H. O'Sullivan, 'The march of south-east Ulster in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: a period of change', in Gillespie & O Sullivan, Borderlands, pp58-60,
7. See for instance Richard d'Exeter, pp 165-6.



of affairs, within the terra pacis at least.

The gentry were also the office holders in Uriel. In England it has proved possible to distinguish between 'parish' gentry who held minor offices such as king's receiver and coroner, and 'county' gentry who monopolised the offices of sheriff, sub-escheator and keeper of the peace.<sup>(8)</sup> The same is largely true in Uriel where coroners, for instance, never became sheriffs, but it would be stretching the surviving evidence too thinly to attempt to identify different strata within what was, after all, a small gentry community.

Closely related to their landholding and office holding characteristics were the close ties of the gentry with the church. The dispossession of the Templars in 1307 revealed the extent to which they leased ecclesiastical property, while the Armagh registers from the middle of the fourteenth century on show how crucial the patronage of the archbishops of Armagh was for the social advancement of some local families such as the Taafs. It may be the case that the church had a greater impact on the fortunes of the gentry in Uriel than it did in any other part of the lordship.<sup>(9)</sup>

The gentry of Uriel, or at least the most important of them, were also increasingly likely to receive individual summonses to fight with the king in Scotland. They were also likely to bring small retinues with them to campaign in different parts of the lordship at the behest of the justiciar.<sup>(10)</sup> Attention has recently been drawn to 'the vitality of the tradition of personal service' in Ireland in comparison with England, and knights and esquires in Ireland were very likely to partake in military action in the course of their careers. This was certainly true of the gentry of Uriel and must have led to a strong sense of common identity among the gentry of the lordship as a whole.<sup>(11)</sup>

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8. Given-Wilson, English nobility in the late middle ages, pp73-4.

9. See pp 139-44

10. See pp 158-9

11. R. Frame, 'Military service in the lordship of Ireland 1290-1360: institutions and society on the Anglo-Gaelic frontier', in Bartlett & Mackay. Medieval frontier societies, p107.

Related to their military function was the nature of the relationship between the gentry of Uriel and the Irish. Although this was founded on deep mutual distrust it was multi-dimensional in character and involved not only warfare but also inter-marriage, fosterage, pledging, land deals and the making of treaties.<sup>(12)</sup> It was these contacts which made the gentry of Uriel a marcher community and it is this factor, more than any other, which prevents too close an analogy been drawn between Uriel and the shires of medieval England.

The gentry formed the political community of Uriel. It is clear from contemporary records that a distinction was drawn between the community of the county and the inhabitants of the county. In the aftermath of the de Verdun rebellion, for instance, a financial penalty was imposed on 'the whole community of free tenants and others of the whole county of Louth', and men were 'elected and approved by the whole community ... to assess the said fine on the county so that everyone in the county, as well free-tenant as villate' should pay according to his wealth and guilt.<sup>(13)</sup> In other words, at its very broadest, the community of the county was taken to mean only the free tenants of the county. A county community in this broad sense found its most frequent expression in the county court which met roughly every forty days and which, J.R. Maddicott has suggested, provided a medium through which shire communities could make their feelings known.<sup>(14)</sup> It was probably at the county court that the community of Uriel elected its parliamentary representatives and it was probably there also that those 'representatives of the community' were appointed who pleaded successfully with John Wogan not to lead a royal army into the county in 1312.

For the most part, however, the effective political community of Uriel consisted not of all the free tenants of the county but of those knights and esquires who comprised the gentry. As stated earlier, this was not a closed elite, but there is ample evidence to show that the gentry saw themselves as distinct from the free tenants as a whole. They married among themselves, conducted their legal transactions with each other, used their equals as witnesses and mainperners and appointed each other to be the executors of their wills and

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12. See above pp. 117-21. R.R. Davies, 'Frontier arrangements *in* fragmented societies: Ireland and Wales', in Bartlett & MacKay, Medieval frontier societies, p79.

13. Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, p278.

14. J.R. Maddicott, 'The county community and the making of public opinion in fourteenth century England', TRHS 5th ser. xxviii (1978), p30.



guardians of their children.<sup>(15)</sup> The notion of community certainly existed at a level lower than that of the county. In 1303, for instance, the community of Ardee requested and was given permission to grant an acre of land in the town to the local Carmelite friary, while in 1307 Walter Maynard was elected receiver of the same town by seven local men who included a former sheriff of the county, Roger Gernon.<sup>(16)</sup> It would be incorrect, however, to think of the community of the county of Uriel as being composed of the sum of these smaller manorial communities. The gentry did not derive their authority from election.

Nor it is necessary to picture the gentry of Uriel as having been always united among themselves. The feud between Richard Gernon and the families of Athelard and Brisbon, which resulted in the murder of the former while he was sheriff in 1310, reveals the fissures which could emerge within the community. Gernon's attackers were able to make good their escape because the four nearest towns failed to respond when hue and cry was raised by the sheriff's companions, an offence for which they were subsequently penalised. One of the towns, Killincoule, was the centre of Gernon's lands in the county, which suggests that he had lost the good will even of his own tenants and neighbours.<sup>(17)</sup> The de Verdun rebellion also saw the property of some of the Uriel gentry being attacked by others, while the complicated nature of relations with the Irish could result in serious disturbances between the de Nettervilles and de Exeter's.<sup>(18)</sup>

However, the essential community of interests which made the gentry of Uriel a political force was unequivocally demonstrated by the Braganstown massacre of 1329. Even more than the de Verdun rebellion this showed how the community of Uriel identified with the county of Uriel. It was the posse comitatus which assembled at the de Bermingham's residence and the demands made by the community of the earl were phrased in such a way as to give the impression that Uriel was still a royal county and not a liberty. To the end de Bermingham insisted on his right as lord of a liberty to try those accused by the community in his own court, but the county sheriff insisted 'in the king's name' that they be handed over to his jurisdiction. De

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15. See pp.32-9

16. Cal. doc. Ire., 1302-7, pp43-4, Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303, pp456-7. P.R.O.I. Ex 2/2, p251, P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/7, pp112-3.

17. See pp136-7

18. See pp.115-6



Bermingham was unpopular not only because he was an outsider, imposed on the community from above, but also because while he was earl Uriel ceased to be a royal county and became instead a liberty. He did not have time to build up a local following in Uriel and he lacked a strong territorial interest in the county which would have enhanced his seigneurial authority. It was this as much as any possible exploitation in the region on his part which cost John de Bermingham first his authority and then his life. His murder marked not the beginning of the political ascendancy of the gentry in Uriel, but rather the affirmation of the scope and potential which that ascendancy had by then achieved. (19)

The Braganstown massacre also reveals how well educated the community of Uriel was politically. Its leaders were aware of de Bermingham's difficulties with the Mortimer faction and they were quick to present their version of the events leading up to the massacre to the administration in Dublin. The gentry of Uriel certainly did not lack self-confidence when it came to defending actions which were politically subversive. In 1312, for instance, Nicholas de Verdun stoutly defended his behaviour in attacking a royal army at Louth, saying 'that it is not to be presumed to be a true standard of the king with the carrying of which were done arson and robbery upon the loyal people of the king and those who where at peace'.(20)

This easy familiarity with legal conventions and with wider political considerations on the part of the gentry of Uriel was the result of the high level of their involvement in the running of the lordship. Not only did they form part of its military resources, they also attended its parliaments and staffed its administrative posts. As the geographical extent of English authority in Ireland declined, so the importance of the Uriel gentry in the administration of the lordship correspondingly increased: The virtual monopolisation of office in Dublin by the Pale gentry, evident by the end of the fifteenth century, had its roots in the political developments which had occurred in that region before 1300.(21) In other words, the gentry of Uriel formed an important part of that political community of Ireland which manifested its concerns most frequently in the Irish

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19. Frame, English lordship, pp190-1. Given-Wilson, English nobility in the late middle ages, p162, R.R. Davies, 'Lordship or colony?', in Lydon, English in medieval Ireland, p.147.

20. Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, p239.

21. N. Canny, 'The formation of the Old English elite in Ireland', (Dublin, 1975) pp2-10.



parliament.(22) Uriel was part of that region of the medieval lordship of Ireland which in its political, social and economic organisation most closely resembled contemporary England. (23) It is pertinent to ask, therefore, whether Uriel shared in the historical developments which have been attributed to medieval local English societies. The existence of a gentry community in the county, and the fact that by the beginning of the fourteenth century this community enjoyed political pre-eminence within the shire, at first sight suggests that it did. However, medieval Irish history is at its most deceptive at the points where it most clearly approximates to the history of medieval England. The origins of the relationship between the gentry and the county in Uriel, for instance, were unlike anything which had occurred in England, and the theme of 'the rise of the gentry', so beloved of medieval English historians, is a distortion when applied to Uriel. Here the gentry did not rise to power; power descended to the gentry.(24)

What then of that other historical phenomenon, inextricably linked with the rise of the gentry in medieval England; bastard feudalism? This is a term noticeably absent from the vocabulary of medieval Irish historiography, although some of the features associated with it, such as the retaining of local government officials, the wearing of the lord's livery and the development of affinities were clearly present also in the Irish lordship. However a survey of the origins and nature of bastard feudalism in England suggests that it is again an inappropriate concept to apply to a community such as Uriel.. The most recent discussion of the topic has identified bastard feudalism as occurring when a highly feudalised society experiences a growth in publicly exercised authority which in turn leads to attempts to control that authority by magnate interests. In other words bastard feudalism was an aristocratic reaction to the more direct relationship which was developing between the gentry and the crown in the thirteenth century.(25)

It is impossible to discern a magnate reaction in thirteenth century Uriel because there were no permanently

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22. Frame, 'England and Ireland, 1171-1399', p154.

23. For a discussion of the Pale as a frontier of English authority in the early Tudor period see S. Ellis 'The Pale and the far north, government and society in two early Tudor borderlands.' (Galway, 1988).

24. See pp.4-6

25. Coss, 'Bastard feudalism revised', pp41-2, 49-54.

resident magnates within the county and because the Pipards and the de Verduns were not, in any case, opposed to the development of a strong county community identity. Some knights and esquires in Uriel, such as Nicholas de Netterville and Walter de Cusak, were certainly retained by magnates such as Theobald de Verdun and Roger Mortimer, but the failure of the latter to build a steady body of support in the county during the 1320s reveals the limited importance of such individual relationships.<sup>(26)</sup> It has been recognised in England that in some localities 'a considerable proportion of the gentry lived outside the embrace of bastard feudalism' and that the practice of retaining posed a threat to the growing identity of the gentry with the shire.<sup>(27)</sup> It might not be too bold to suggest that this identity was stronger in Uriel than in most English counties and that this precluded the development there of anything but the mildest strain of bastard feudalism in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

The explanation for this is to be found in the presence of the marches. Uriel retained a traditional form of feudalism because this fulfilled most adequately its military needs as a marcher community. To develop this point to its logical conclusion, in a land of marches, such as Ireland, bastard feudalism was unlikely to replace older and more functional varieties.<sup>(28)</sup>

To conclude, this study of a local community, which in the context of the lordship of Ireland from the late twelfth to the early fourteenth century was more 'English' than most, has shown that it is first and foremost within the context of Ireland that historical explanations must be sought. The scope for comparative studies of local marcher communities within Ireland and Britain is immense and may lead to a radical reappraisal of the whole nature of the relationship between the centre and the frontier in the medieval world.

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26. See pp. 97-9.

27. Saul, Knights and esquires, pp258, 261.

28. Frame, 'Military service in the lordship of Ireland', p113; R.R. Davies, 'The law of the March', Welsh Hist rev., v. (1970) p.15.



APPENDIX I

THE DATING OF URIEL CHARTERS

The evidence of witness lists has allowed a number of charters relating to Uriel to be dated more accurately than has previously been the case. Only the texts of those charters not already published are given in full. The approximate date given by the editors of the charters is given at the top, beside the number of the document. N.D. means no date supplied. The charters are found either in family or ecclesiastical collections.

A. Family charters

1). Bellew deeds. Calendared in the Public Record Office Dublin at P.R.O.I. Ms 1121/1-4.

1121/1/1 p.1 no.2

'N.D. [Fourteenth Century]

Grant by Symon de Clynton to Robert his constable of a plot of land and half a ploughland of land and wood in his town of Balibragan together with the piece of water belonging to the said land for 20s. silver, yearly rent, payable at the feasts of S.S. Philip and James and All Saints, and suit of court every fortnight. Mentioned, a field called Barrymede, Phillepsford, "the dyke of my great park",

Witnesses: Ralf Pippard, Richard Hadford, Roger Herson, Philip de Repenty.

[The charter must date from before 1301 when Simon de Clinton died - (P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, pp215-6)]

1121/1/1 p2 no3

'N.D. [thirteenth century]

Grant by John de Clinton to his free-men residing in the town called Baliobragan for their homages and services, of one ploughland and 10 acres in his land called Maymathe, as they held it on the day the death of his father Symon de Clinton, for yearly rent of three marks of silver and 5s., payable at 'belta' and the feast of All Saints, and for the ploughland they shall provide archers and shall cut through the wood and when the army is called out they shall answer for the said 10 acres of land.

Also grant of a half acre of land in (sic) a messuage in the said town for yearly rent of 8d. payable at the said terms. And if they be amerced they shall pay 12d. and no more.

Witnesses: Robert de Mandevill, Peter de Repenteneye, Robert de Fulchawe, Hugh de Clinton, Robert de Clinton, Henry Crompt, Robert Constable, ... Laheles, John Miller.

[The charter must date from after 1301 when John was described as an infant on the death of his father, Simon. (P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, pp215-6). In 1343 John brought a force of archers to fight on the justiciars behalf at Trim. (Rot. pat. Hib., p.45, no.78)].

1121/1/1 p35, no.100

'[Fourteenth century]'

Quitclaim by Richard Fulshahe to Sir Gilbert de Repenty of the waters which separate their lands, namely from the boundaries of Keppok to the sea.

Witnesses: Sir Henry de Audeley, Sir Richard de Hadsors, Sir Simon Little, Sir Simon de Clinton, Adam de Stanley, Robert Gernoun.

[The charter must date from before 1296 when Gilbert de Repenty died (P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/3, p287)].



Grant by Sir Gilbert de Repenteny to John Duff of the water of Drumcar, from the boundaries of Cassan to the ford of Achtaffta; to hold in fee farm, at a yearly rent of 10s of silver, payable at Easter and Michaelmas and one salmon in each week in Lent if caught in the said water and between Easter and Whitsuntide if not caught there. The whole land of Cassan may be distrained for said rent.

Witnesses: Sir Hugh de Repenteny, Sir Miles de Naptun, Sir Walter le Hauberge, Robert Faulsawe, Roger Gernun, Roger Eyrlok, John Rumle.

[The charter must date from before 1294 by which time Walter le Hauberge was dead, (P.R.O.I. EX 2/1, p30).]

## 2. Ormond deeds 1172-1350.

p 38, no.82, 'Grant by Stephen de Hereford to William Pipard of the land which belonged to Yago de Nas near Naas [circa 1234]'

[The charter must date from before 1227 by which time William Pipard was dead. (Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no. 1541)].

pp 106-7, no. 268 'Indenture between Ralph Pippard and Eneagus Mac Mahon regarding the grant of the regality of Crichnegarum [between 1284-1297]'

[This indenture must date from before 1294 when one of the witnesses, Walter le Hauberge, died (P.R.O.I. EX 2/1, p.3)].

## 3. Dowdall deeds

p5. no.8 'Grant by Richard de Boli to Sir Gilbert de Repenteny of a free way through his lands to the red moor of Monmathi.

(late 13th century)'

[The charter must date from before 1296 when Gilbert de Repenteny died (P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/3, p287)].

pp7-8, no.14. Grant by Robert de Everdon to Milo de Everdon his son of land in Rath.

(late 13th century).

[The charter must date from between 1231-1247 because rent is said to be due to Lady Roesia de Verdun who held the land between these dates, D.N.B., xx, p.218.]

## B. Ecclesiastical charters.

### 1. Chartul St. Mary's , Dublin, i

no.12, p37. Ralph de Repenteni grants annual rent from the vill of Tauerach.

[This grant must date from between 1200-1213. A charter of confirmation by King John to the abbey in 1200 of all its Irish lands mentions no possessions in Uriel, while one of the witnesses to this grant, William Parvus died in 1213. (ibid, no.64, Conway 'lands of St Mary's abbey', p.70)]



no.13, p38. Ralph de Repenteni grants the church of St Ultan of Coillifan and tithes of mills and fisheries.

[This grant may be dated to between 1200-1213 for the same reasons as in no.12 above].

no.14, p39. Ralph de Repenteni grants the church of St Finnen of Drumkare, tithes of mills and fisheries and land.

[This grant may be dated to between 1200-1213 for the same reasons as no.12 above.]

no.15, p.40. Letter to Eugene Mac Gillivider, Archbishop of Armagh A.D. 1206-1216 from Ralph de Repenteni, with request for confirmation of grant of the church of St Finnen at Drumkare.

[The letter must date from between 1206-1216 when Eugene was archbishop (N.H.I. ix, p260)].

no.18, p43 Peter de Repenteni confirms grants of land in Coliffan, as given by William de Estruguil.

[This confirmation must date from before 1227 when one of the witnesses, William Pipard, died, (Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251, no.1541)].

no 19, p43. Peter de Repenteni confirms grant of annual rent from Tauerach.

[This confirmation dates from before 1225 when one of the witnesses, Roger Pipard, died (Chartul. St. Marys, Dublin, ii p314)].

no.20, p44, Roger de la Corre grants land in Corre held from his lord, Peter de Repenteni, and his father Ralph, in tenement of Drumkare.

[This grant can be dated to between 1225-1227 because William Pipard is described as Roger's lord, a position he held only after his father Roger's death in 1225 and before his own in 1227 (Chartul. St. Mary's, Dublin, ii, p.314)]

no. 21 p45. Walter de la Corre confirms the grant of land in Corre as given by his father, Roger.

[This confirmation may be dated to between 1225-1227, because one of the witnesses is William Pipard. See above, no.20].

no.22, p46. Thomas Mol grants land in Corre which he held from Peter de Repenteni in the tenement of Drumkare.

[This must date from before 1227 when one of the witnesses, William Pipard died, see above no.20]

no.28, p51. Robert de Ruvill grants to Master William de Dublin land held by Walter Bui.

[This grant must date from before 1227. See no.31 below].

no.29, p.52. Grant of land in Bernemethe from John de Grafton to Master William of Dublin.

[This grant must date from before 1227. See no.31 below.]

no.31, p54. Grant of land in Drumkare and Bernemethe from William Seil.

[This grant dates from before 1227 when one of the witnesses, William Pipard died. (See above no.20) William Seil is William of Dublin. The lands here granted by him were granted to him before this date by Robert de Ruvill and John de Grafton. See above nos. 28,29]

no.33, p55. Grant of land, mill and rights of pasture in Balisconan, from Galfred des Auters, with the consent of his wife Cecilia de Venum.

[This grant may be dated to before 1227, when one of the witnesses, William Pipard, died. See above no.20.]



no.34. p56. Grant by Galfrid des Auters of church and ecclesiastical benefices of Balisconan, with land in Uriel.

[This grant must date from between 1225-1227, since William Pipard is styled 'Dominus'. See above no.20]

no.35, p58. Grant of land and mill in Balisconan from Galfrid des Auters and his wife Ceceli de Vernun.

[This may be dated to between 1225-1227 for the same reasons as no. 34.]

no.36. p59. Cecelia de Vernun, relict of Galfrid des Auters, ratifies grant of land and mill in Balisconan in consideration of which the monks have given her fourteen marks and a palfrey.

[This must be later than no.35, when Galfrid was alive, but before 1227 when William Pipard, a witness died. See no.20]

no.37, p60. Grant of land in Balisconan from Galfrid des Auters to Hugh de Clinton.

[This must date from before 1227, by which time Galfrid was dead. See above no.36].

no.40, p63. Grant of land of Drumermoy in Balisconan from Richard Taillefer to Matheus Lupus.

[This grant must date from before 1227, by which time one of the witnesses, Galfrid des Auters, was dead, See above no.36].

no.42, p65. Grant of four knights' fees in Cnockterterling from Nicholas de Verdun to Henry de Wotton.

[This grant must date from before 1225. See no 43.]

no.43, p66. Grant of land in Cnockterterling by Henry de Wotton, with the assent of his son, Hugh.

[This must date from between 1213-25. One of the witnesses, Henry, Archbishop of Dublin, became Archbishop in the former year, (N.H.I., ix, p309) while another, Roger Pipard, died in the latter. (See above no.20) The land granted by Henry was granted to him by Nicholas de Verdun. This, therefore, must also have been done before 1225. See above no.42.]

no.127, p149. Eugenius Archbishop of Armagh, ratifies Ralph de Repenteny's grant of church of Coillifan.

[This must date from 1206-1216, when Eugenius was the undisputed claimant to Armagh. N.H.I. ix, p269.]

no.128 p149. Precept from Eugenius, Archbishop of Armagh, for induction of Abbot and monks of St Mary's to benefices in Colifan and Balisconan.

[This must date from 1206-16 for the same reasons as in no.127.]

no.129. p150. Eugenius, Archbishop of Armagh, ratifies Ralph de Repentini's grant of church of St Finnen of Drumkar.

[This dates at most from 1206-16. See no.127. One witness 'T, abbot of Mellifont' was not abbot before 1207. See above p.48

no.130 p151. Luke Netterville Archbishop of Armagh [A.D. 1216-1227], ratifies grant of church of St Finnen of Drumkare.

[This dates from between 1216-1227, when Luke was Archbishop (N.H.I., ix, p269)].

no.131, p.151. The chapter of Armagh ratifies grants of churches of St Finnen of Drumkare and St Ultan of Kulifan and land of Balibakel.

[This may be dated to 1225-1227 since one of the grants confirmed is Henry de Wotton's which occurred in those years. (see above no.43). One of those who attended the chapter was William Pipard who died in 1227. (See above no.20)]



no.132, p152. Donatus, Archbishop of Armagh [A.D. 1227-1237] and chapter ratify proceedings in connection with Balibachel, Drumkare, Kulifan, Cnocherterling and Balisconan etc.

[This dates from <sup>m</sup>1227-35. In the former year Donatus became archbishop, in the latter one of the witnesses, Felix, archbishop of Tuam, retired (N.H.I., ix, pp269, 319) A marginal note in the text bears the date 1229.]

## 2). Reg. St. Thomas, Dublin

no.3. p9. Grant by Hugh de Lacy to St Thomas of the church of Dundalk.

[This must date from between 1205-1210. Hugh styles himself, 'earl of Ulster', a title he received in the former year. He was dispossessed in 1210. One of the witnesses to the grant, William Parvus, died in 1213, which precludes the charter having been made after Hugh was restored to the earldom in 1227. See above p 16.]

no.44. pp42-3. Grant by Nicholas de Verdun to St. Thomas of land beyond Machervunvilla.

[This dates from before 1216 when one of the witnesses, Luke, archdeacon of Armagh became archbishop of Armagh. It may well date from after 1210. Nicholas appears to be attempting to compensate St Thomas for land he has taken from them which was granted to them by Hugh de Lacy in Dundalk before that date. Nicholas was himself dispossessed in 1215 and so the dates 1210-1215 are most likely for this grant. (See above pp v , 17-8 ).]

no.45, pp43-4. Grant by Nicholas de Verdun to St Thomas of land in Balibaldric.

[This may be dated to 1199-1224, the dates of the episcopate of one of the witnesses, Simon, bishop of Meath, (N.H.I, ix, p285).]

no.55, pp49-50. Grant by Osbert de Coleshulla to St Thomas of the tithes of Heath Mac Uballether and other lands.

[This must date to before 1191. See no 314, below.]

no.314, pp267-8. Confirmation by C. bishop of Louth of Osbert de Coleshulla's grant to St Thomas.

[This dates from 1187-91. Gilla Crist O Mucarain, known in Latin as Christain, was bishop of Louth from 1187-1193. (N.H.I. ix, p274) One of the witnesses to the confirmation, Eugenius, bishop of Clonard died in 1191 (ibid, p.285) The original grant must therefore also have been made before 1191.]

3. Reg. Swayne.

p.2. (About 1218-20) Grant by Eugenius, archbishop of Armagh to William Parvus, of Drumming.

[Should be dated 1206-12. In the former year Eugenius was recognised as archbishop of Armagh while in the latter one of the witnesses to the grant, William Piro bishop of Glendalough, died (N.H.I. ix, p313)].

*[Faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Richard de...						x
Robert de...			x			
Philip de...	x		x			
William de...		x	x			
Richard de...						
James de...						
John de...						
John de...						
Richard de...			x			
Thomas de...						
Thomas de...						
Thomas de...						x



## APPENDIX II

### The de Verdun rebellion

A. The following is a list of those accused of participation in the de Verdun rebellion of Feb-Apr 1312.

- Column 1: gives the names of those accused.
- Column 2: An X beside a name means the accused was found not guilty of being a rebel.
- Column 3: An X beside a name means the accused was guilty only of receiving the rebels.
- Column 4: The figures indicate the sums paid for the good conduct of the accused by their mainpernors in Dec. 1312.
- Column 5: The figures indicate the penalties to be imposed on the mainpernors should the accused fail to appear in Dublin at Easter 1313. These were fixed in Dec. 1312.
- Column 6: An X beside a name means the accused was ordered in April 1314 to join the king in Scotland in the summer of that year.
- Note: I have listed all versions of the surname 'White', such as 'Albus', 'Blound' or 'White' under, 'Blound'.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Richard Beche				£20	X
David Beg of Sidan		X			
Philip Beg	X	X			
William Beg	X	X			
Richard Bet					
James le White					
John le Blound				100m	
John le White					
John le Blount jr					X
Richard Albus of Sidan		X			
Thomas le Blound			20s	£40	
Thomas Albus of Sidan		X			
Thomas White					X
Simon Bod					X

1	2	3	4	5	6
Nicholas Bole of Sidan		X			
Thomas Boyt			20s	£20	
Roger Burgeys of Sidan		X			
Philip Burnel	X				
Robert Cassell			20s		X
Philip Chaumbre					X
Reginald de Clinton				£1,000	X
Simon Cockeley					X
Benedict Crompe					X
John de Cruys			40s		X
Adam de Cusak			40s	£100	X
Peter Daniel			20s	£20	X
William Douenachmayn			20s	£20	
Walter Douedale					
John Drocath					X
Henry Ewek of Sidan		X			
John Ewek of Sidan		X			
John Fernoun <sup>1</sup>					
Simon Fernoun <sup>2</sup>					
John le Flemyng of Meath			20s	£20	
John le Flemyng of Uriel					
Nicholas Fotyng of Sidan		X			
Stephan Fotyng of Sidan		X			
William Frend	X				
Ralph Further <sup>3</sup>					



1	2	3	4	5	6
Robert Garzoun					X
John Gary of Sidan		X			
Peter Gatyn			20s	£40	
John Gernon					X
Roger Gernon de Coly					
Roger son of Adam Gernon			40s	£40	X
Richard Godman			20s	£20	X
Roger Godman			20s	£20	X
David Gregory	X				
Jordan son of David Gregory					
Hugh le Hauberge <sup>4</sup>					
Richard de Houth <sup>5</sup>					
David Hugh of Sidan		X			
Bertram Hunt					
Ralph Hunt					
Richard Hunt					
John Jocelyn			20s	£20	X
Adam Jordan					X
Adam Jordan of Crewmartyn					
Benedict Kenefeg					
Robert Kenefeg		X			
John Lemman			40s	£20	X

1	2	3	4	5	6
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Adam Lewys				£40	X
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Richard Lone					X
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Philip Mac Shaun

William Messan of Sidan		X			
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John the Miller of Cayran			40s		
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John Maol of Drumconragh	X				
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Adam Not

Adam O Bronan

Donagh O Bronan

Patrick O Carrenan

Mody O Coryn

Gilleneve O Crathe

Robert Olyver

Benedict Pipard

John Pipard					X
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Walter de la Pulle				£1,000	X
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Gromyn le Rede	X				
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Henry le Rede	X				
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Henry Serl



Simon Serl			20s	£1,000	
------------	--	--	-----	--------	--

Adam de Serleston					
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Reginald son of Osan de Fyngal <sup>6</sup>					
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Adam son of Simon					
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William Stanard					
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Adam de Stanley					
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Thomas de Stanley					
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Nicholas Stede of Sidan		X			
-------------------------	--	---	--	--	--

Nicholas le Tanner					X
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Walter le Tanner					
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William le Tanner					X
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Henry Telyng					
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Nicholas Telyng		X	40s		
-----------------	--	---	-----	--	--

Philip Telyng		X			
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Stephen Telyng		X			
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William Telyng					
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Nicholas de Verdun					
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Robert de Verdun				£1,000	X
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Roger Wedeford			5m	£1,000	X
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Owne Worth of Sidan		X			
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John Wyot					
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David le Wyse		X			
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## Notes

1. John Fernoun was apparently slain during the rebellion (P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp560-1).
2. Simon Fernoun was captured by 1315 and was still in Dublin castle in Aug. 1316. (P.R.O.E. 372/166, P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/8, pp21-2.)
3. Ralph Further was hanged in April 1315 (P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, pp24-5).
4. Hugh le Hauberge was still at large in April 1315, (P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/7, p23.)
5. Richard de Houth was dead by May 1313 (P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/9, pp382-3, P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp454-5.)
6. Reginald son of Osan was hanged in Dec. 1312, (Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp255-6).

## Sources

The names of those accused of involvement in the de Verdun rebellion are to be found in the following records;

Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1308-14, pp237-9, 256-6, 275-80; P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, pp1-5, 108-27. Those ordered to be in Scotland are named in Cal. close rolls 1307-13, pp525-6, P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/6, pp1-6. Cal. close rolls 1313-8, p36.

### B. An Irish account of the de Verdun rebellion.

Among the entries in the register of Octavian, Archbishop of Armagh (1479-1513) is one taken from an otherwise unknown chronicle, dealing with the disturbance in Uriel in 1312. It reads as follows:

[Marginal note]

Cronica. De insurrectione hominum de Dundalke et Machryconyll.

[Text]

Anno Domini M. CCC xii. Luguad do Loscud uli exceptis monasteriis per justiciarium Hybernie et Anglicos de Langenia propter quod homines de Dundlake et de Machiari chonailli in eos insurrexerunt et innumerabiles homines tam [~~'quam'~~] milites quam armigeros occiderunt ad viaditam desolacionis et incendii que fecerunt predicti justiciarius et Anglici de Langenia [~~'quis'~~] quibus visum est unum clericum in pontificalibus indutum baculum in manu habentem cum quo quem libet occisum vulnerabat scilicet. Sanctus Mochteus

[P.R.O.N.I., DI04; f. 241, b.]

It seems clear that this account was written by an Irish scribe. The opening words, 'Luguad do Loscud uli' are in Irish and mean 'Louth was entirely burnt'. This is the town of Louth, rather than the shire, which in Irish would be written Airghialla.

St. Mochtu was the patron of a pre-Norman monastery in the town of Louth and it seems probable that the chronicle was kept either at that house or at the Arrouaisian house of St Mary's in the same town. It is



unclear when this account was written. The writer is correct in identifying the English force as coming from Leinster. He does not distinguish between English and Irish among the rebels simply calling them instead 'the men of Dundalk and Machaire Chonaill [bar. Upper Dundalk]'.  
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I am grateful to Mr Harold O Sullivan, M. Litt., for bringing this document to my attention and to Dr Phil Connolly for checking my transcription.

MS.A.1.2.15.260

### APPENDIX III

A charter of Donal O Hanlon granting land near Dundalk to two local Englishmen. [ 1 May, 1335.]

Sciant presentes et futuri quod nos Donaldus O hanlon Rex de Erthir dedimus, concessimus et hac presenti carta [nostra] confirmavimus Waltero Douedale seniori et Galfrido filio Elye omnia terras et tenementa de Drumgaha et Douelerg cum omnibus suis pertinentiis in Erthir habenda et tenenda predicta terras et tenementa cum omnibus suis pertinentiis predictis Waltero et heredibus suis seu assignatis imperpetuum de nobis et heredibus nostris pro omnium servicio consuetudine exactione et demanda. Nos vero Donaldus predictus et heredes nostri predictis Waltero et Galfrido et heredibus suis seu assignatis predicta terras et tenementa cum omnibus suis pertinenciis ut predictum est contra omnes homines et feminas imperpetuum warrantizabimus, acquietabimus et defendemus. Et ut hec nostra donacio, concessio carte nostre confirmacio et warrantia perpetue robur optineant firmitatis presentem cartam impressione sigilli nostri roboravimus. Hiis testibus: Roberto Lowys, Willelmo Blundo, Johanne filio Henri, Ricardo Baldewyn, Johanane Lucas clerico et aliis. Datum apud Dundalk die Lune proxima ante festum Sancti Johannis ante portam Latinam anno Regni Regis Edwardi tertii post conquestum nono.

(N.L.I. Ms D 15, 565)



## APPENDIX IV

### The Templar manor of Kilsarin

Eleven churches were attached to the Templar manor of Kilsarin. The value of these churches at the time when the property of the Order was confiscated, in Feb. 1308, was as follows:

<u>Church</u>	<u>Value</u>
Kylsaran	16m
Molaury	14m
Portclyueran	100s
Keppoc	10m
Gernonston	5m
Kylmedymok	£10
Taloneston	6m
Kyltanelagh	20s
Crefmartyn	1m
Kylpatrik	2m
Moymoke <sup>1</sup>	0
Total	£52

((1) Church not valued because inter Hibernicos.)

The names of those who farmed these churches in 1308, and the amount of rent owed by them were as follows.

<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>FARMER</u>	<u>RENT OWED</u>
Kylsaran	Nicholas de Drumcath	20 m
Molaury	William le Waleys sr., William le Waleys jr., John Huddard	£12
Portlyueran	Hugh de Clinton	10m
Keppoke	John de Haddesore, Nicholas de Drumcath	12m

Gernonston	Roger Gernon	5m
Kylmedymoke	Nicholas de Drumcath	20m
Taloneston	Nicholas de Drumcath	10m
Kyltanelagh	William Leynagh	4m
Kilpatrik	Adam, chaplain of Kilpatrick	2 1/2 m
Moymok	Maghnus the clerk	10s
	Total	£68 3s 4d.

In 1312 the churches were farmed out by the government to new farmers at new rates. A list of these follows:

<u>Church</u>	<u>Farmer</u>	<u>Rent</u>
Kylsaran		20m
Gernounestoun		8m
Kilmedymok		18m
Tallounestoun	William de Hothum, John de Kent, Nicholas de Drumcath	12m
Portelyveran		12m
Crefmartyn <sup>1</sup>		} 6m <sup>1</sup>
Moymok		
Kyltanelagh		5m
Keppok	Milo de Verdun	12m
Kylpatrik	Benedict le Hauberge	2 1/2m
Molauery	Benedict le Hauberge, Milo le Waleys, Henry Stanley	14m
	Total	£73

(( 1) The churches of Crefmartyn and Moymoke were valued together)

Sources: Mc Ivor, 'Knights Templar', pp82-4, MacNiocaill, 'Documents relating to the suppression of the Templars in Ireland', pp193-9. P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/7, p448.



APPENDIX V

OFFICE HOLDING IN URIEL

1). Sheriff

<u>Year</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Source</u>
1234-5	Ralph de Picheford	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K.35</u> , p35.
1260-1	William Talon	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 35.</u> , p39
1261-2	William Talon	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 35</u> , p42.
1265-6	William de Bakepuz	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 35</u> , p46.
1266-7	John de Fyshyde	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 35</u> , p46.
1270-2	John de Picheford	P.R.O. E 101/230/2
1272-3	William Talon	N.L.I. Ms 761, pp12-3
1273-5	William Talon	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 36</u> , pp24,26
1275-7	Thomas de Mymmes	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 36</u> , p38
1278-9	Thomas de Mymmes	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 36</u> , p49
1279-80 <sup>1</sup>	Roger de Crumba	<u>Ormond deeds, 1172-1350</u> , no.188
1281-2	Nicholas de Netterville	P.R.O. E 101/230/16
1282-3	Thomas de Mymmes	Lydon 'Uriel account, 1281-3', <u>Louth Arch Soc. Jn.</u> , xix, no.3 (1979), p200.
1283-4	Nicholas de Netterville	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 36</u> , p70
1284-5	Nicholas de Netterville	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 37</u> , p75
1285-7	William de Spineto	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 37</u> , p28
1287-91	William de Spineto	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 37</u> , pp38, 44.
1291-2	Thomas de Stanley	P.R.O. E 101/231/6
1292-4	Thomas de Stanley	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 37</u> , p53.
1294-5	Richard Taaf	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 37</u> , p53, P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/3, p223.

(1) This grant is dated to c.1275 in the Ormond deeds. As the sheriff for that year is known it must date from 1277-8 or 1279-80.

1296-9	William de Hatch	<u>P.R. O.E. 101/232/24</u> <u>Cal.doc.Ire., 1293-1301,</u> no.587.
1299-1300	Roger Gernon	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 38, p52,</u> <u>Cal. doc. Ire., 1293-1301,</u> no.705.
1300-1	Hugh de Clinton	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 38, p52.</u>
1301-5	Roger Roth	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 38, pp52, 71,</u> <u>Cal. doc. Ire., 1302-7, no.4</u> <u>Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7 pp31-2</u>
1305-7	Hugh de Clinton	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K.39, p25.</u> P.R.O.I. Ex 2/2, p255.
1307-9	Benedict le Hauberge	P.R.O.I. EX 2/2, p255 <u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p32.</u>
1309-10	Walter Douedale	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p32</u> P.R.O.I. EX 1/1, m 49d.
1310-1	Richard Gernon <sup>2</sup>	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, p36</u> <u>Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14,</u> pp169-70
1311-5	Benedict le Hauberge <sup>3</sup>	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K.39, pp36, 48, 52</u>
1315-8	John de Cusak	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 39, pp52, 67</u> P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, p160
1318-20	Walter de la Pulle	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42, p64</u> P.R.O.E 101/237/7
1328-9	John de Cusak	Lydon, 'Braganstown massacre', p11, <u>Cal. pat. rolls 1327-30, p532.</u>
1329-31	Geoffrey de Brandewode	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 43, p40</u> P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/15, p377.
1331-2	John Gernon	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K 43, p52.</u>
1336-7	Peter de Haddesore	P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/15, p300
1337-8	Reginald Taaf	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 45, p29.</u>
1338-42 <sup>4</sup>	John de Clinton	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 45, p29</u> <u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 47, p21</u> <u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 53, pp24, 26.</u>

2. Gernon was murdered in October 1310. See pp 136-7

3. Le Hauberge was replaced temporarily as sheriff during the de Verdun rebellion in April 1312 by Richard Taaf, (P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/6, p209). See pp 151

4. Reginald Taaf may have been sheriff in one of these years, P.R.I. rep. D.K., 53, p24.



2. Seneschals of the liberty of Louth

1319-20	Edmund de Bermingham	P.R.O.I. EX 1/2, m1
1320-3	Jordan de Kyngesford	P.R.O.I. EX 1/2, m48 P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/13, p383
1323-5	Jordan de Kyngesford	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 42</u> , p63
1327	Godfrey son of Roger	P.R.O.I. 101.239/1
1327-9	Edmund de Bermingham	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 43</u> , p40

3. Chief serjeants of Uriel

<u>Year</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Source</u>
1297	Richard de Cruys	<u>Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303</u> , p81.
1297	Nicholas de Cruys	<u>Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303</u> , p81
1302, 1307, 1310	John Bacon	N.L.I. ms761, pp254, 278, 287
1311	Hugh de Clinton	P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, p139
1313	Nicholas de Cruys	P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/4, p568
1318	Hugh de Clinton	P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, pp122-3
1337-9	Robert de Cruys	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 47</u> , p22

4. Sub-serjeants of Uriel

1293-4	Alan Kernulf	<u>P.R.I. rep. D.K. 37</u> , p53
1297	Richard le Waleys	<u>Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303</u> , p81.
1309-10	John Adyn, William le Waleys, Peter Fot, Adam Hanne Reginald de Haddesore	Craig, <u>Memoranda roll 3 EdII</u> , pp144, 334, 503, P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/5, pp68-9.
1311	John Brun	P.R.O.I. K.B. 2/3, p145
1312-3	Ralph le Waleys, Richard de Wiltshire, Ralph Burgess	P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/7, pp112-3

5. Coroners in Uriel

<u>Year</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Source</u>
1283	Robert de Criketot, John de Kew	<u>Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84, no.2108</u>
1301	Robert de Criketot Boniface Talon Robert de Drumgol	P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, pp15, 20 N.L.I. Ms 761, p173 P.R.O.I. R.C. 7/8, p22
1306	Ralph Burgess <sup>5</sup> Henry Top	<u>Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1305-7, pp488-9</u>
1308	Ralph Burgess, William de Grafton	<u>Rot. pat. Hib., p.7 no 23, p8 no.54</u>
1311	Robert de Drumgol	<u>Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1307-14, p277</u>

6. Sub-escheators in Uriel

1299	Thomas de Stanley	<u>Cal. justic. rolls Ire. 1295-1303, p 248.</u>
1299-1310	Richard Gernon	<u>Cal. justic rolls Ire., 1295-1303, p276; Craig, <u>Memoranda roll 3 Ed II, p334.</u></u>
1310-5? <sup>6</sup>	Richard, prior of Dundalk	P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, p68.
1315-6	Simon, son of Richard	P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/10, p728, 789
1324	John Gernon, Adam Jordan	P.R.O.I. R.C. 8/13, p508.

5. Removed from Office

6. In 1315 Richard was ordered to account for his time as sub-escheator



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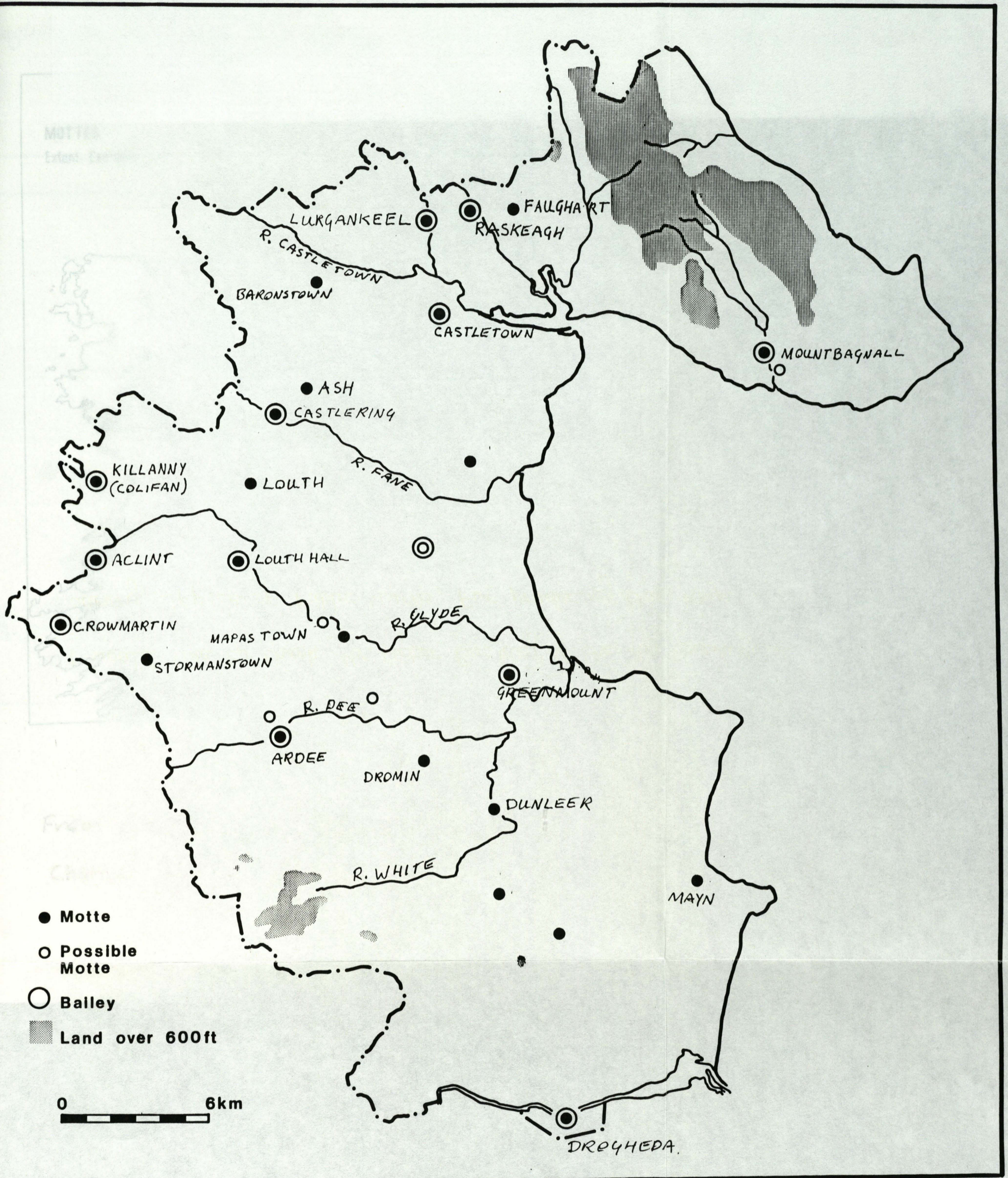
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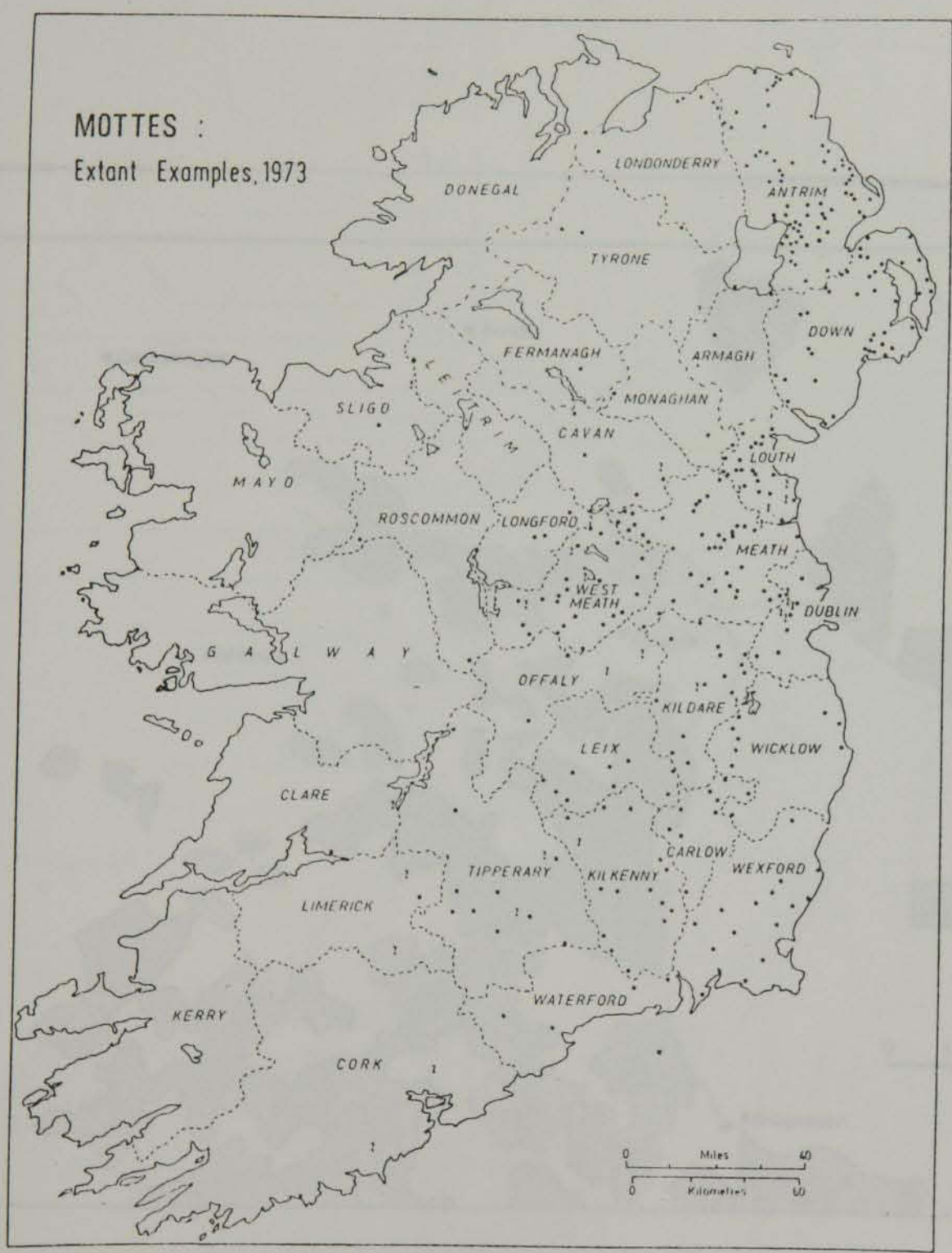
MOTTES IN URIEL



I would like to thank Mr. Victor Buckley of the Archaeological Survey, Office of Public Works, for producing this map.

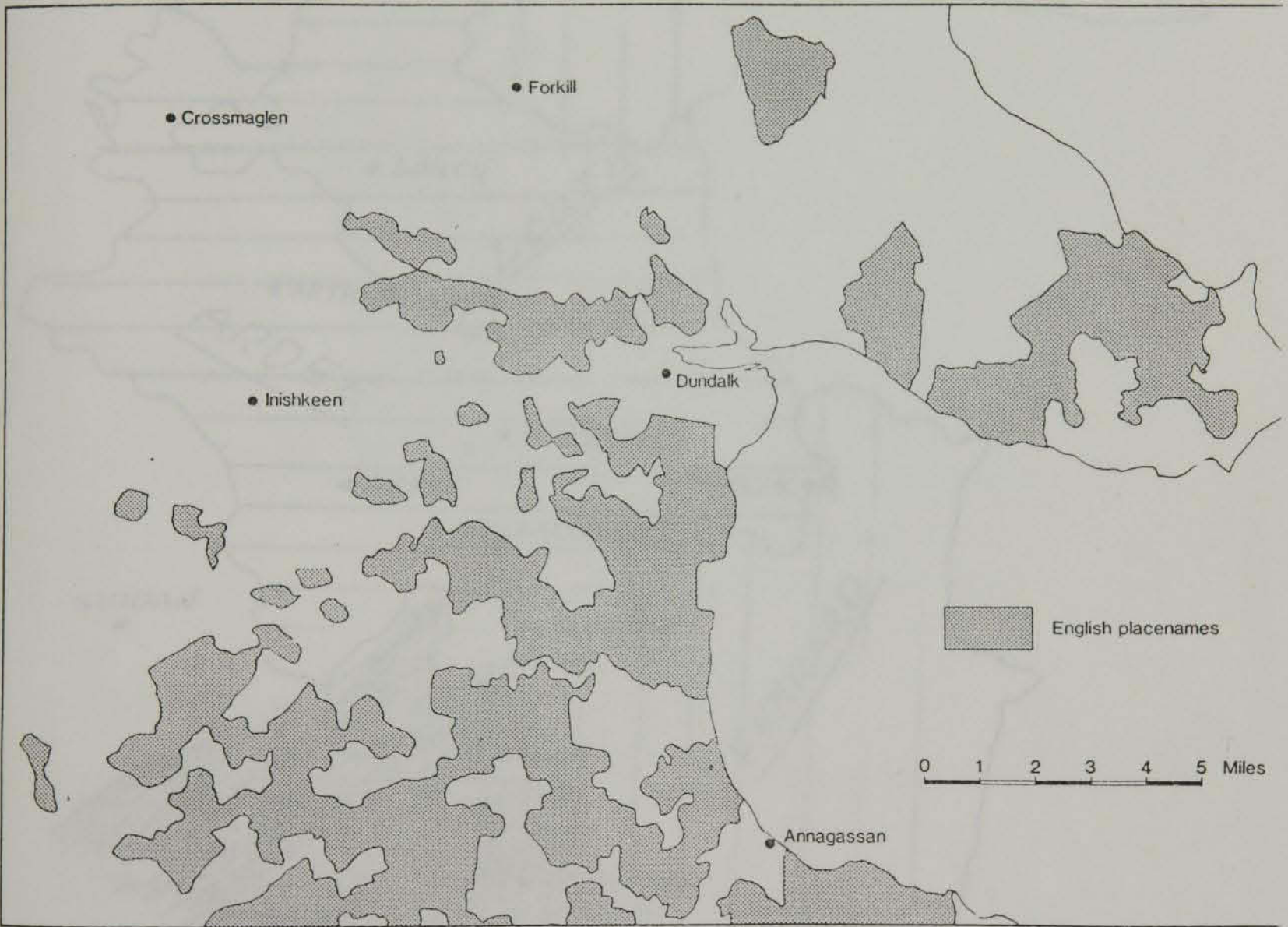


# MOTTES IN IRELAND



From R.E. Glasscock, Mottes in Ireland  
Chateau-Gaillard VII (Caen, 1975)

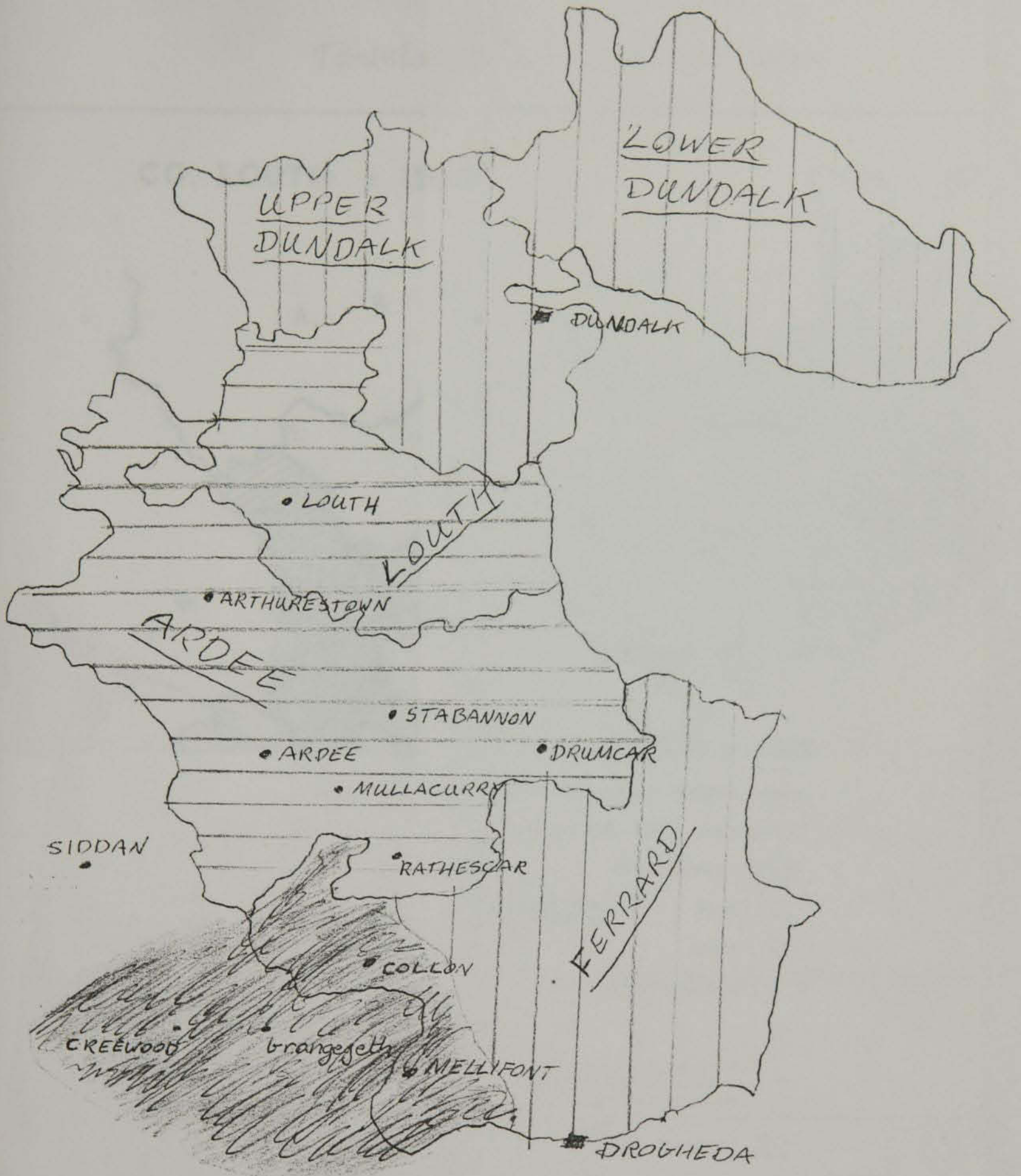
English placenames on the marches of Ulster



From P. S. Duffy, 'Geographical perspectives on the borderlands', in Gillespie & O'Sullivan, The Borderlands



THE DE VERDUN REBELLION



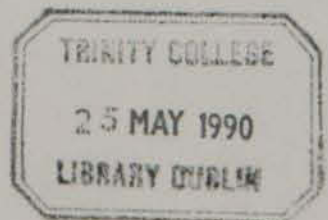
• LOUTH: PLACES NAMED IN COURSE OF REBELLION

LOUTH: BARONIES

||| : DE VERDUN LANDS

≡ : CROWN LANDS

▨ : LANDS OF MELLIFONT ABBEY











THE CONCEPT OF THE MARCH IN MEDIEVAL IRELAND:  
THE CASE OF URIEL

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to explain the use of the term 'march' in medieval Irish history. It was a word used throughout Europe, and the English invaders who brought it with them to Ireland in the late twelfth century saw parallels here with their experiences elsewhere, particularly in Wales. The century after 1170, however, saw the emergence of a distinctive Irish march, different from the marches of Wales or Scotland. I have tried to trace this development and then discuss its impact on local society in one small part of Ireland, Uriel. I end with a definition of an Irish march which I hope will at least provoke some thought among those using the word.

'March' was a term used widely throughout medieval Europe. The fact that contemporaries felt no need to define it strictly does not relieve us of the duty of trying to delimit its meaning. A simple working definition might be that a march was a tract of debatable land separating one country or people from another. It is a concept as old as territorial consciousness itself, deriving as it does from the notion of two areas of land marching with each other for a certain distance. The word is Germanic in origin and can be found in Old English as early as the seventh century.<sup>1</sup>

Attempts to define the word more precisely, however, resemble lifting mercury with a fork. To illustrate the difficulties involved, let me briefly compare the statements of Professor Davies regarding the Welsh march with those of Professor Barrow regarding the Scottish march. Of Wales, Davies says that 'instead of a boundary there was a march'.<sup>2</sup> Of Scotland, Barrow states that 'it is as a march, a boundary in the fullest sense, that I see the Border in the period before 1237'.<sup>3</sup> Again, Davies argues that 'A measure of geographical imprecision is a characteristic of all marches. . . Such frontier zones are unlikely to have clearly defined boundaries. . . We are dealing in the phraseology of imprecision'.<sup>4</sup> In Barrow's opinion, however, 'The notion that there was ever a sizeable tract of territory where the English and Scottish kingdoms, as it were, shaded off into each other is based . . . upon an entirely false belief that precise boundaries are a modern invention. . . We must not ascribe to our forbears a vagueness which is really our own failure to extract precision from the evidence'.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *O.E.D.*, vi. I would like to thank Mrs Bernadette Williams for her useful comments on this matter. The abbreviations used in this paper are those suggested by T. W. Moody in 'Rules for contributors to Irish Historical Studies', reprinted from *Irish Historical Studies*, supplement I (January 1968). I have opted for 'English' and 'Irish' to describe the different inhabitants of post-invasion Ireland. See F. X. Martin's comments in *N.H.L.*, II (1987), pp li-liii.

<sup>2</sup> R. R. Davies, *Lordship and society in the march of Wales, 1282-1400* (Oxford, 1978), p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> G. W. S. Barrow, 'The Anglo-Scottish border', *Northern History* I (1966), p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Davies, *Lordship and society*, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Barrow, 'Anglo-Scottish border', p. 23.

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The fascinating and exasperating feature of the term 'march' is that it is wide enough to incorporate two such contradictory interpretations. Geographically the Welsh border was fluid and ill-defined, while that of Scotland was quite precisely delimited. Yet both were known to contemporaries as 'marches'. The historical development and character of these two marches differed significantly from each other, and neither very closely approximated to the situation in Ireland.

The century or so between Hastings and the invasion of Ireland saw Norman influence penetrate into the furthest corners of Britain. In Wales an already existing military frontier was reinforced and adapted by Norman adventurers. In Scotland, Norman expansion involved infiltration rather than invasion. With the connivance of successive Scottish kings, a group of Norman barons emerged holding land in both kingdoms. To these Anglo-Scottish lords, known collectively in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries as 'Northerners', the border was 'a political and administrative frontier, but little more'.<sup>6</sup>

In Wales, racial confrontation was the keynote in the creation of the march. In this, of course, it resembled the situation in post-invasion Ireland. It is misleading, however, to draw too close an analogy between the two. The one hundred years between the emergence of the march in Wales and that in Ireland witnessed changes in society which determined a differing development for each. More precisely, what had changed was the royal attitude to baronial independence. The Norman kings after 1066 in general encouraged, or at least did little to hinder, the conquering activities of the barons in Wales. More importantly, they were prepared to allow these barons to acquire exceptionally wide constitutional and legal powers in their lordships, a process which quickly led to a sense of group identity among those lords who were called and who called themselves 'Marchers'.<sup>7</sup>

The Angevin kings took a different view of developments in Ireland. Suspicion of magnate aggrandisement from royal rights was one of the constant themes in the early history of post-invasion Ireland, up until at least the destruction of the Marshalls in the 1240s. A close eye was kept on the activities of the English barons. Marches quickly developed in Ireland as they had in Wales, but apart from the obvious shared feature of cultural diversity and confrontation they had little in common. To put it simply, in Wales local lords tried and often succeeded in increasing the amount of land in the march; in Ireland they sought to limit it. The difference was that in Wales a lord's power and independence increased with the size of his march, while in Ireland it decreased. Lords of the march in Ireland lacked those means of garnering profit, especially in the field of justice, which compensated their counterparts in Wales for the economic losses associated with the unstable conditions of the march. March law, while it did emerge in Ireland, never achieved the status it enjoyed in Wales.<sup>8</sup> Finally, there was an obvious difference in the historical fortunes of Wales and Ireland from the late twelfth century on. Following the Edwardian conquest of the 1280s, the military significance of the march in Wales receded and the fourteenth century witnessed unprecedented peace and prosperity in the area. In Ireland at the same time an increase in war

<sup>6</sup> J. A. Tuck, 'Northumbrian society in the fourteenth century', *Northern History* 6 (1971), p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> R. R. Davies, 'Kings, lords and liberties in the march of Wales, 1066-1272', *R. Hist. Soc. Trans.*, 5th ser., 29 (1979), pp 41-62.

<sup>8</sup> R. R. Davies, 'The law of the march', *Welsh Hist. Rev.* 5 (1970-1), p. 27; P. Brand, 'Ireland and the literature of the early common law', *Ir. Jurist*, new ser., 16 (1981), pp 95-113; Hand, *Eng. law in Ire.*, pp 214-18.



and a loosening of the bonds of authority were the features of the march. For Davies, the Welsh march excludes all lands 'subject to the authority of the sheriff',<sup>9</sup> yet in Ireland many marches were nominally within the jurisdiction of royal sheriffs, as was the case, for instance, with Uriel.

Turning to Ireland, the first point to be grasped is that marches appeared in the country as soon as the English themselves. The first to use the term was Giraldus Cambrensis, when describing the treatment of Meiler Fitz Henry by King Henry's representatives in 1181. Meiler was forced to exchange Kildare for Laois and thus, says Giraldus, 'remotam ex industria viro marchioni et Martis alumno marchiam assignantes'.<sup>10</sup> The earliest official use of the term was in 1200 when King John ordered all holding land 'in marchiis Hybernie' to fortify their land under pain of forfeiture.<sup>11</sup> Another early example comes from the pipe roll of 14 John when two clerks were paid 10*d.* 'brevigeris in marchia'.<sup>12</sup>

From the very outset, then, conditions in certain parts of Ireland resembled what contemporaries elsewhere called marches. By what criteria were these areas so judged? Negatively, marches were those places which were neither within the land of peace nor the land of war. These phrases were also used by the English soon after their arrival. An early example comes from about the year 1195 and is contained in an agreement made between Thomas de Verdun and Hugh de Lacy on the occasion of Thomas giving his sister Lesclina in marriage to Hugh. It includes a clause stating that 'Whatever grantor and grantee can conquer in the land of war, in their parts of the land of Ergall (Uriel), they will equally divide all between them as they have divided the land of peace'.<sup>13</sup>

It was the balance between war and peace which defined the march. When Stephen of Lexington explained why he thought the lands of Mellifont should be transferred from Uriel he said:

For half the land in a safe place and in a land of peace would be better than the whole complement where it now is. For it is in a very unfavourable and dangerous march between the English and the Irish. Because of this, though there may be peace by the hour there, there is however no constant peace, no secure peace.<sup>14</sup>

The march in Ireland was a military frontier. Bearing this in mind, it would be incorrect to imagine marches in Ireland slowly emerging as the colony was pushed back. Marches were initially a feature of expansion, not contraction. A march was, after all, a piece of debatable land between two peoples. Marches could be identified on the fringes of any part of Ireland where the English established themselves. Let us turn to one such area, Uriel (Fig. 1).

<sup>9</sup> Davies, *Lordship and society*, p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 194. For discussion of the Irish frontier see J. F. Lydon, 'The problem of the frontier in medieval Ireland', *Topic: A Journal of the Liberal Arts* (1967), pp 5-22; R. Frame, 'Power and society in the lordship of Ireland 1272-1377', *Past and Present* 76 (1977), pp 3-33; P. J. Duffy, 'The nature of the medieval frontier', *Studia Hibernica* 22 and 23 (1982-3), pp 21-38.

<sup>11</sup> *Rot. Chart.*, pp 98-9; *Cal. Doc. Ire. 1171-1251*, no. 125.

<sup>12</sup> *Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, p. 25.

<sup>13</sup> *Gormanston Reg.*, p. 144.

<sup>14</sup> 'Preualeret namque in tuto loco et terra pacis sola terra medietas, quam in loco, ubi nunc est, totalis integritas. In pessima namque marchia et periculosa inter Anglicos et Hibernicos. Quapropter etsi quando sit ibi pax horaria, nulla tamen constans, nulla secunda' (*Registrum epistolarum Stephane de Lexington, abbatis de Stanlegia et de Savignaco*, ed. Bruno B. Greisser). In *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis* 2 (1946), p. 42; B. O'Dwyer (ed.), *Stephen of Lexington. Letters from Ireland, 1228-29* (Kalamazoo, 1982), p. 57.



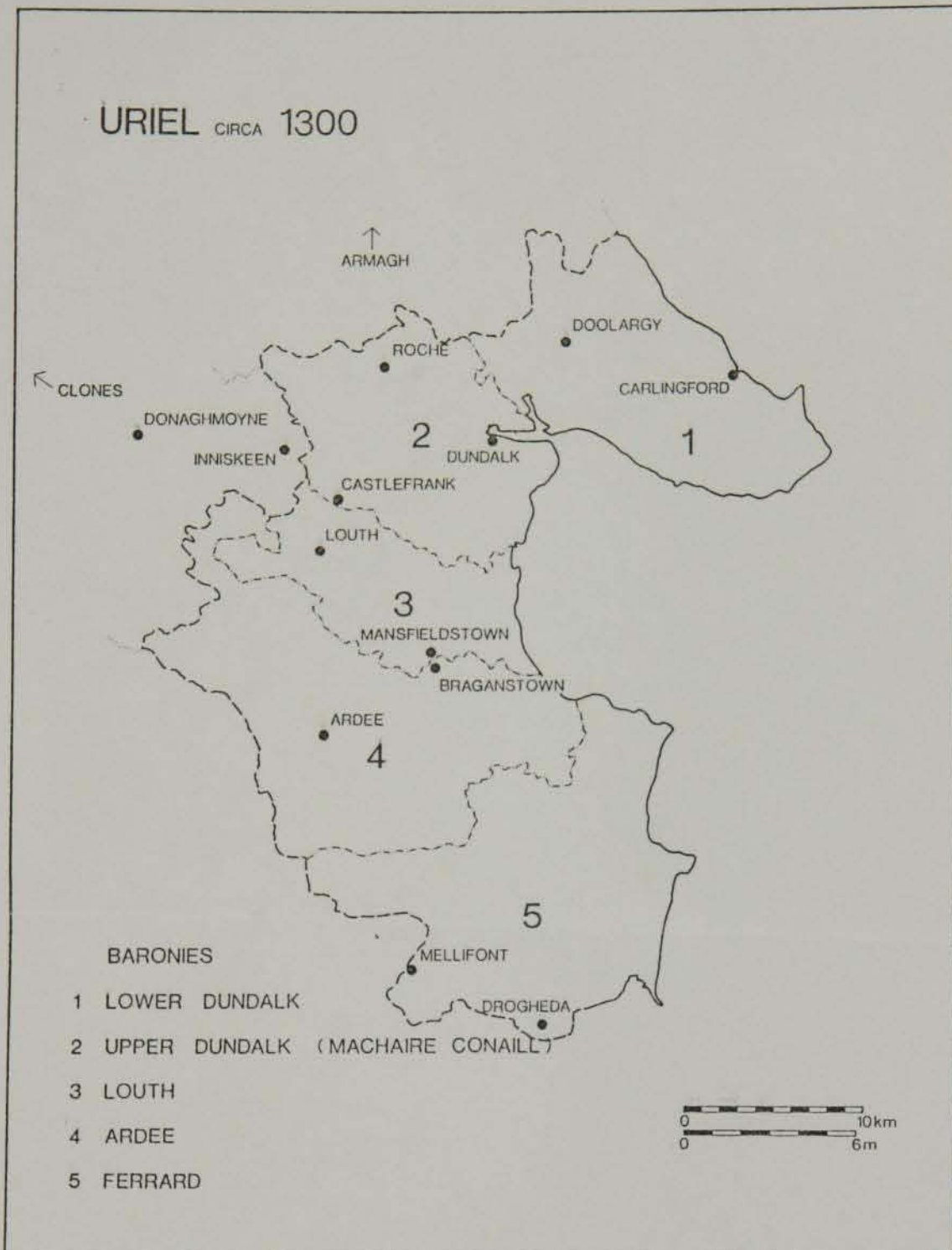


FIG. 1—Map of Uriel *c.* 1300, drawn by Ms Frances Fay of the Archaeological Survey.

Despite O Carroll's submission to Henry II, and despite the fact that no royal grants were made in Uriel until 1189,<sup>15</sup> the area was immediately affected by the arrival of the English. Given its proximity to Dublin this is hardly surprising. On his death in 1186 the Irish annals call Hugh de Lacy 'king of Midhe, and Breifne, and Airghiall',<sup>16</sup> and there is no reason to doubt that there were English settlers in Uriel before 1189. King Henry himself intervened at an early stage to confirm to Mellifont land granted it by O Carroll and also to grant it new land in Uriel.<sup>17</sup> In 1205 the canons of St Mary's, Louth, claimed that Henry de Sai was occupying lands granted to them by O Carroll. De Sai replied that 'there is a law, brought in by the English, to the effect that a donation made by an Irishman to a religious house is of no effect when the king has granted the same to an Englishman'.<sup>18</sup> In short, despite the legal niceties, Uriel was a land of conquest and was regarded as such by the English. An assize of 1299 found that the abbot of Navan, one hundred years or so before, had been disseised of land near Ardee 'by Roger Pippard, a conquerer at the first conquest of Ireland, who found it vacant at his conquest'.<sup>19</sup>

The earliest documents relating to Uriel often speak of 'conquest'. In or about 1190, Lord John confirmed to Peter Pipard 'his conquest in Uriel'.<sup>20</sup> In 1195, as we have seen, Thomas de Verdun and Hugh de Lacy agreed to divide whatever they could conquer in the land of war in their parts of the land of Uriel.<sup>21</sup> At roughly the same time, Osbert de Coleshulla granted St Thomas's in Dublin a carucate of land 'de meo conquiritu in Uriel'.<sup>22</sup>

Conquests, of course, had to be fought for. Coleshulla's grant contained the proviso that if his grant in Uriel could not be made good, then he would compensate St Thomas's elsewhere. Sometime before 1191, Geoffrey de Normanville granted the church of Llanthony the tithes of his fee in Uriel and twenty acres as a gift to the church 'quam in eadem terra, Deo propicio, construemus'. He also granted the tithes 'de uno feodo quem voluero ubi in propinquiori duos feodos habeo'.<sup>23</sup> Before 1216, Nicholas de Verdun granted St Thomas's the tithes and benefices of two knights' fees 'in prima castellaria quod firmabo in terra mea de Uriell extra cantredum de Machwercunvilla'.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, the early settlers in Uriel were eager to expand the land under their control. This did not degenerate into a free-for-all, however. The final clause in the agreement between Thomas de Verdun and Hugh de Lacy stated that 'Thomas has pledged himself that he will endeavour with Earl John, by giving money or any other way he can, that the said Earl will concede the said agreement'.<sup>25</sup> In other words, any major territorial expansion in Uriel had first to be cleared with John, lord of Ireland. His interest in the area was shown both by his retention of the barony of Louth during the division of Uriel between Pipard

<sup>15</sup> Orpen, *Normans*, ii, p. 118; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The partition of the de Verdun lands in Ireland in 1332', *Proc. R. Ir. Acad.* 66C (1967-8), p. 402.

<sup>16</sup> *Ann. Loch Cé*, p. 173.

<sup>17</sup> *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 50; Conway, *Mellifont*, pp 38-9.

<sup>18</sup> *Cal. papal letters, 1198-1304*, p. 22.

<sup>19</sup> *Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303*, pp 281-2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ormond deeds, 1172-1350*, no. 863, pp 364-5.

<sup>21</sup> See above, p. 259.

<sup>22</sup> *Reg. St Thomas, Dublin*, pp 49-50.

<sup>23</sup> *Ir. Cartul. Llantony*, p. 92.

<sup>24</sup> *Reg. St Thomas, Dublin*, p. 43.

<sup>25</sup> *Gormanston Reg.*, p. 144.



and de Verdun, and also by the nature of the grants which he made in the barony during his visit in 1210. These contained the proviso that the grantees should colonise and build on their lands at their own expense.<sup>26</sup>

From the outset, war was a common feature of life in Uriel. In 1196 'Louth was plundered and burned, together with its castle, by Niall Mac Mahon and John de Courcy'.<sup>27</sup> In 1200 Rory Mac Donlevy and 'the Galls of Ardee'<sup>28</sup> made a foray against Armagh. Ten years later, the rebel Hugh de Lacy burnt the castles of northern Uriel, including Dundalk, in the face of the approaching king.<sup>29</sup>

John's response to this situation was to attempt to establish a permanent military outpost at Clones. This royal operation would serve the dual function of directing the expansionist ambitions of local lords in a disciplined and constructive manner and of weakening the power of the most dangerous of the local Irish clans, the O Neills. As the pipe roll of 14 John shows, massive effort and expenditure were involved in garrisoning Clones.<sup>30</sup> For Uriel the failure of this enterprise was to have far-reaching consequences. In the following year, 1213, 'Hugh O Neill defeated and dreadfully slaughtered the English and on the same day burned Carlingford, both people and cattle'.<sup>31</sup> Again, in 1217, the O Neills and Mac Mahons successfully defeated an English raid into Armagh and in the process 'killed fourteen foreigners who were clad in coats of mail, including the constable of Dealgan (Dundalk)'.<sup>32</sup>

The failure to maintain a permanent garrison at Clones effectively ended the era of English military conquest in Uriel. The frontier between Irish and English in this area would now be much closer to the settled areas near the east coast than would otherwise have been the case. Two factors contributed to this situation. One was the recurring trouble within the ranks of the local English baronage; the other was the continuing strength of the O Neills.

We have seen that in the late twelfth century, Hugh de Lacy and Thomas de Verdun were cooperating to conquer territory in the land of war. Yet in 1224 Thomas's son, Nicholas de Verdun, complained that his lands in Ireland 'are laid waste by Hugh de Lacy's war against the king'.<sup>33</sup> Trouble seems to have started between the two men shortly after King John's departure from Ireland in 1210, when Nicholas disseised Leselina de Lacy, Hugh's wife and his own aunt, of the marriage portion in Cooley given to her by Thomas de Verdun in 1195. The quarrel between the two families was not finally healed until 1235 when Nicholas's daughter, Roesia de Verdun, came to terms with Hugh de Lacy.<sup>34</sup>

The O Neills, under Hugh, had taken full advantage of these squabbles and had given Hugh de Lacy support in his rebellion of 1224. In 1230, however, on Hugh O Neill's death, a decade of civil war began among the Cenel Eoghain.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1677; W. L. Warren, 'King John and Ireland', in J. F. Lydon (ed.), *England and Ireland in the later middle ages* (Dublin, 1981), pp. 27, 32; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, p. 119; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, pp. 71-2.

<sup>27</sup> *Misc. Ir. Annals*, p. 77.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 89.

<sup>30</sup> *Pipe roll Ire., 1211-12*, pp. 13, 15, 25, 27, 45.

<sup>31</sup> *A.F.M.*, III, p. 179.

<sup>32</sup> *A.L.C.*, I, p. 257.

<sup>33</sup> *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1210.

<sup>34</sup> Otway-Ruthven, 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', pp. 403-5.

<sup>35</sup> K. Simms, 'The O Haulons, the O Neills and the Anglo-Normans in thirteenth century Armagh', *Seanchas Ardnhacha* 9 (1978), pp. 77-8.



The eclipse of the O Neills and the healing of the rift between de Lacy and the de Verduns placed opportunities in the way of the colony in Uriel which it had not seen for two decades. The concrete result of this was the construction of Castle Roche by Roesia de Verdun in 1236, a feat, we are told, 'which none of her predecessors were able to do'.<sup>36</sup> That this achievement should be greeted with such obvious relief in official circles is evidence of the change which had taken place in attitudes regarding the situation in Uriel. The emphasis had shifted from expansion to defence. As early as 1200, as noted above, King John was urging that Irish marches be fortified. But it was really from the mid 1220s that this became a common theme. In 1226 the king wrote to the justiciar that William Pipard had informed him that his predecessors had given land in the marches to men on condition that they fortify them and make them safer, but 'dicti homines terras ipsas tenent set eas non firmant'.<sup>37</sup> In the following year, 1227, King Henry gave those with lands in the marches two years in which to fortify them, on pain of forfeiture.<sup>38</sup> In 1229 the justiciar was ordered to respite Nicholas de Verdun regarding the fortification of his land while he was on the king's service in England.<sup>39</sup>

In Uriel this campaign of fortification was centred on two strategic positions, Roche and Donaghmoynne. After previous unsuccessful efforts, Roesia de Verdun at last succeeded in building a castle at Roche in 1236. There had been a motte at Donaghmoynne since 1193, built by the Pipards.<sup>40</sup> Following William Pipard's death in 1227, his lands were entrusted to Ralph Fitz Nicholas.<sup>41</sup> He immediately set about strengthening the motte. In 1228 he was granted the service of Meath and Uriel for forty days 'in aid of the fortification of his castle of Dunelamein'.<sup>42</sup> Two years later the same grant was repeated because the castle 'has been burnt down by the Irish and Ralph proposes to fortify a stone castle there'.<sup>43</sup> In 1244 the annals record that 'The castle of Dombnach Mhaighean was covered with stone this year'.<sup>44</sup> Finally, in 1252, Ralph, son of Ralph Fitz Nicholas, was allowed 'to have from his knights and free tenants in Leinster and Uriel, service and aid to fortify a castle in his lands, and if necessary to distrain them for that purpose'.<sup>45</sup>

This was the last of a spate of references to castle-building in Uriel. The years 1226 to 1244 had seen repeated efforts to build or strengthen castles in the marches. The result was the erection of Roche and Donaghmoynne. Their construction was the logical result of the failure to establish a permanent castle at Clones. They marked the furthest limits of English settlement in Uriel. The priority now was to guard, not extend, the land under English control.

The success of Roche and Donaghmoynne should not be underestimated. Their strategic siting beside important routes of communication made it easier than it would otherwise have been to limit the raiding activities of local Irish

<sup>36</sup> *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 2334; *Close rolls, 1234-1237*, p. 364.

<sup>37</sup> *Rot. litt. claus., II*, p. 138; *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1445.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1546.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1691.

<sup>40</sup> Orpen, *Normans*, ii, p. 123; K. W. Nicholls, 'The register of Clogher', *Clogher Rec.* 7, no. 3 (1971-2), p. 389.

<sup>41</sup> *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1541.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1632.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1806.

<sup>44</sup> *A.U.*, II, p. 303.

<sup>45</sup> *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1252-1284*, no. 43.



chiefs, and they may be said to have held off permanent settlement by the Irish in areas previously settled by the English for an improbably long time.

There can be no doubt that the late thirteenth century witnessed an increase in the power of the Mac Mahons and O Hanlons, the Irish neighbours of the English settlers in Uriel.<sup>46</sup> One sign of this was to be seen in the terminology of the march. In the early thirteenth century an area in the march could be described as 'between the Irish and the English' or 'among the Irish and the English'. But increasingly in the late thirteenth century, the word 'English' was dropped and areas were said to be 'in the marches of the Irish'.<sup>47</sup> In 1278 the archbishop of Armagh, Nicholas Mac Maol Iosa, wrote to the king concerning his manor of Iniskeen. It was situated, he said, 'in medio perverse gentis'. He urged that a castle be built 'ad resistendum malitie eiusdem gentis . . . ratione cuius emptionis pax et concordia in tota marchia illa melius observetur'.<sup>48</sup> Iniskeen, it is important to remember, is only six miles from the sea. It seems clear that there was increasing pressure on manors in the marches of Uriel from the late thirteenth century. This is surely the only interpretation that can be put on the extraordinary agreement between Ralph Pipard and Eneagus Mac Mahon in about 1284.<sup>49</sup> Pipard granted Mac Mahon the *regalitas* of part of his lordship on condition that Mac Mahon 'defend and maintain all Ralph's men on their lands'. In 1301 the pipe rolls record an allowance of 30*li.* to John de Somerset for custody of Castlefrank, near Louth, including '40*s.* paid to Obren M'Mahun to defend it against the Irish'.<sup>50</sup>

In the marches, the advantage lay with the Irish, not the English. The early fourteenth century saw the emergence in Uriel of what in Wales were called 'march days', occasions on which disputes in the march could be settled by negotiation.<sup>51</sup> In 1310 Richard d'Exeter, justice of the Bench and himself a landowner in Uriel, was sent to treat with Mac Mahon and O Reilly who had gone to war 'on account of divers dissensions between the Irish and English of their marches'. D'Exeter succeeded in bringing Mac Mahon to the king's peace, for which he had to pay 10*li.* The Mac Mahons also agreed that 'they would satisfy all who wished to complain of them by consideration and ordinance of the natives of their marches, as well English as Irish, to be chosen for the purpose on a certain day and at a certain place to be assigned by them, provided that the Englishmen satisfied them in turn'.<sup>52</sup> The phrase 'the English of their marches', that is, the marches of the Mac Mahons, is interesting. It was certainly not unknown for Englishmen in the marches to hold their land of Irishmen. An inquisition of 1313 concerning land near Ardee was established to decide whether the English occupant held the land 'by the law of England or in another manner'.<sup>53</sup> In 1335 Donal O Hanlon, 'king of Erthir', granted the tenements of Drumgaha and Doolargy, north-east of Dundalk, to Walter Dowdall and Geoffrey, son of Elias.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>46</sup> K. Simms, 'Gaelic lordships in Ulster in the later middle ages' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, T.C.D., 1976), pp 289-97, 321-34.

<sup>47</sup> O Dwyer, *Letters from Ireland*, p. 57; *Cal. inq. post. mort.* III, no. 48; G. Mac Niocaill, 'Documents relating to the suppression of the Templars in Ireland', *Anal. Hib.* 24 (1967), p. 197.

<sup>48</sup> A. Gwynn, 'Documents relating to the medieval diocese of Armagh', *Archiv. Hib.* 13 (1947), p. 11.

<sup>49</sup> *Ormond deeds, 1172-1350*, no. 268.

<sup>50</sup> *P.R.I. rep. D.K.* 38, p. 53.

<sup>51</sup> Davies, 'Kings, lords and liberties', p. 46.

<sup>52</sup> *Cal. justic. rolls, 1308-1314*, p. 161.

<sup>53</sup> *P.R.O.I. KB 2/4*, p. 561.

<sup>54</sup> *Dowdall deeds*, no. 121.



Before turning to the impact of the existence of the march on Uriel society, let us review the conclusions so far reached about the march. The march in Uriel was an area of debatable land between the English and the Irish. It appeared as soon as the invaders themselves. Its position depended upon the outcome of military encounters. After an early attempt to establish the march beyond Clones, the English were forced to settle for a line of defensive castles at Roche, Donaghmoynne and Ardee. From the late thirteenth century onwards, neighbouring Irish clans exercised pasturing rights and conducted cattle raids to the east of this line. Thus more and more areas of English settlement came to be included in the march. This in turn led to a decrease in the value of such land because of the prevalent unstable conditions.<sup>55</sup> The history of thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Uriel is the history of the eastward extension of the march.

Uriel, however, was never entirely engulfed by the march. Uriel was not a march, but parts of it were in the march. This fact determined the kind of society which developed in the area. Even those parts of the county which were not in the march felt the impact of their close proximity to it. As we have seen, Iniskeen, which was in the march, was a mere six miles from Dundalk, which was not. Thus it is fair to say that while not all of Uriel was in the march, Uriel was a marcher society.

What this implied, simply, was that Uriel society was heavily militarised. All aspects of life were governed by the constant need for defense and frequent outbreak of war. This is mirrored in the feudal terminology of the area. *Castellaria* and *forcelletum* are words which appear in the early thirteenth century.<sup>56</sup> 'Lordship' and 'fee' occur throughout our period. 'Cantred' and 'vill' are the subdivisions of land most frequently mentioned.<sup>57</sup> Conspicuously rare in the thirteenth century is the word 'manor', and it has been argued plausibly that this suggests a lack of stable conditions.<sup>58</sup>

The importance of war also manifested itself in the nature of relationships between lords and men in Uriel. In the 1250s, John Clinton granted his men of Balibragan a carucate of land nearby. Not only had they to pay an annual rent for this but they also had to supply John with archers.<sup>59</sup> In 1278 it was stated that John de Russebury was bound to Sir Ralph Pipard for 'the mustering of Ardee for the whole tenement of the town of Louth'.<sup>60</sup> Following the building of Castle Roche in 1236, all the free tenants of de Verdun in Uriel, even those living in the barony of Ferrard, which was not in the march, had to do, and did so, service at the castle 'cum Hibernicis ad guerram'.<sup>61</sup>

Not surprisingly, what might be called a war mentality existed in Uriel. War and peace impinged on aspects of everyday thought. An inquisition of 1297 was

<sup>55</sup> M. Lyons, 'Manorial administration and the manorial economy of Ireland, c. 1200–c. 1377' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, T.C.D., 1984), pp 7–8, 234–7; D. Mac Ivor, 'The estate of Benedict Pipard of Pipardston, A.D. 1316', *Louth Arch. Soc. Jn.* 14 (1959), pp 165–9; H. Jager, 'Land use in medieval Ireland', *Jr. Ec. and Soc. Hist.* 10 (1983), p. 56.

<sup>56</sup> *Castellaria*, *Reg. St Thomas, Dublin*, p. 43; *forcelletum*, *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, I, no. 42.

<sup>57</sup> 'Cantred', Otway-Ruthven, 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', pp 402, 405, 407; 'vill', *Dowdall deeds*, no. 25.

<sup>58</sup> Warren, 'King John and Ireland', pp 36–7.

<sup>59</sup> Bellew MSS, Barmeath Castle, 'Ancient Deeds', no. iii. I would like to thank Mr Kenneth Nicholls for kindly showing me a transcript of this document. I would also like to thank Mr Brian Bellew for permitting me to quote it in this paper.

<sup>60</sup> *Ormond deeds, 1172–1350*, no. 224.

<sup>61</sup> Otway-Ruthven, 'Partition of the de Verdun lands', p. 408.



asked to decide 'what patron, in time of peace, presented the last parson to the chapel of Roche'.<sup>62</sup> In 1311 a convicted thief was allowed to make fine with the king because the jurors testified that 'Stephen is a strong man and often fights well against Irish felons, although he is poor'.<sup>63</sup> A land grant of 1321 concerning land in Dundalk contained the proviso that rent would not be charged 'should war (which God forbid) of the Scots or Irish occur to prevent tillage'.<sup>64</sup>

In such a militarised society it is not surprising that the lords, the supposed protectors of the common folk, should play an exceptionally important role. Nor is it surprising that they should attempt to wield unusually wide powers over the men below them. In practical terms this might mean control of the offices of local government such as sheriff. The de Verduns were particularly adept at this. In 1302 it was stated that the sheriff of Dublin was 'a servant of Theobald (de Verdun), having his livery and fee'.<sup>65</sup> In 1284 the same Theobald asked that 'Nicholas de Netterville, his familiar knight in the present Irish war, shall not, so long as he remain on that service, be put on assizes . . . and shall not be made sheriff . . .'. De Netterville had, however, been sheriff of Uriel in the previous year, 1283.<sup>66</sup>

To improve his military position, de Verdun also received a grant from the king that he might receive his Irishmen into the king's peace. This was in 1284, over thirty years before Fitz Thomas and de Bermingham received similar licences.<sup>67</sup>

Such innovations might have proved acceptable had they led to lords such as Theobald de Verdun providing increased protection for their tenants. Unfortunately, their development coincided with an increase in absenteeism on the part of Theobald and his kind. This was a particular problem in Uriel because the original grants of 1189 had meant that responsibility for the area was shared by only two families, the de Verduns and the Pipards. In the late thirteenth century the representatives of both these families were absentees. In 1278 the justiciar, Robert d'Ufford, wrote to the king: 'If contention should arise in Ireland there are few to whom recourse can be had with confidence, the more so especially as Sir Geoffrey de Geynville, Sir Theobald de Verdun, Sir Ralph Pippard and other great men are absent'.<sup>68</sup> Of the quarter-century between 1277 and 1302, Ralph Pipard spent perhaps six years in Ireland. In roughly the same period, Theobald de Verdun spent approximately twelve.<sup>69</sup> Worse still, these men took with them from Uriel their estate managers and officials. In 1283 Ralph Pipard secured a writ of protection for himself and Sir Walter le Hauberge for as long as they were fighting in Wales. Le Hauberge was also constable of Ardee at the time.<sup>70</sup> In 1302 Pipard severed all connections with Uriel and Ireland by exchanging his

<sup>62</sup> *Cal. justic. rolls, 1295-1303*, p. 113.

<sup>63</sup> *Cal. justic. rolls, 1308-1314*, p. 213.

<sup>64</sup> *Dowdall deeds*, no. 64.

<sup>65</sup> *Cal. justic. rolls, 1295-1303*, p. 387.

<sup>66</sup> *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1252-1284*, no. 2297; *P.R.I. rep. D.K. 36*, p. 70.

<sup>67</sup> *Cal. Pat. rolls, 1281-1292*, p. 132; *Cal. Pat. rolls, 1317-1321*, p. 342.

<sup>68</sup> *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1252-1284*, no. 1510.

<sup>69</sup> Pipard, *Cal. Pat. rolls, 1281-1292*, pp 54, 59, 223, 248, 402, 510, 581; *Cal. Pat. rolls, 1301-1307*, p. 9; de Verdun, *Cal. Pat. rolls, 1281-1292*, pp 57, 60, 77, 131, 134, 157, 172, 248, 326, 355, 431, 492; *Cal. Pat. rolls, 1292-1301*, pp 21, 141, 321, 394; *Cal. Pat. rolls, 1301-1307*, pp 36, 234; *D.N.B.*, xx, pp 218-19.

<sup>70</sup> *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1252-1284*, no. 2038; S.C. 8/51/2513 (I am indebted to Dr P. Connolly for this reference); *Ormond deeds, 1172-1350*, no. 268.



lands there for others of equal value in England. He was one of the first English magnates to take such drastic action in Ireland.<sup>71</sup>

The vacuum of direct authority created by this absenteeism in late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Uriel was filled by the younger brothers of the absent Theobald de Verdun II, Nicholas and Milo. They operated a system of extortion and murder in Uriel in the years after 1310 which only the Bruce invasion halted. They claimed extraordinary privileges for themselves. In 1311 Milo de Verdun argued that in Uriel 'the notables of the county, for their money in times past, were often accustomed to take from the tenants victuals for their hospitality, and this taking has not hitherto been forbidden to the notables'.<sup>72</sup> An incident of 1315 showed how this 'hospitality' operated. Richard Tuyt, a crony of the de Verduns, was accused that he 'maliciously, with a great company, came to the town of Maldevilestown and there in the house of John, vicar of the church of the said town, for one night made him entertain him against his will and took his goods and chattels . . . and did as they liked with them'.<sup>73</sup> Refusal to comply with such demands could mean death. Robert Moriel and Peter, his father, were forced to pay Nicholas de Verdun 20 marks and Thomas de Stanley 100s. 'against their will, through fear of death, because (they) understood for certain that unless they should do so Nicholas, by the procuration of Thomas de Stanley, would have killed them'.<sup>74</sup> The most notorious example of de Verdun lawlessness was of course the rebellion they staged in Uriel in 1312. For several weeks Robert, Nicholas and Milo de Verdun held the county under their control and even defeated a royal army under the justiciar, John de Wogan. Despite this, however, the careers of Nicholas and Milo continued to flourish.<sup>75</sup>

The warlike nature of the situation in Uriel and the absenteeism of the great men led to a strong sense of community in the area. In 1312, at the outbreak of the de Verdun rebellion, the community of the county requested 'that they might guard the country against the said felons at their own charges'. Their conspicuous failure to actually do this led to a penalty of 500*li.* being imposed in turn on the community after the rebellion.<sup>76</sup> Again, in 1329, it was the *posse comitatus* which massacred the de Berminghams at Braganstown.<sup>77</sup>

It is tempting to look below this level of community awareness and action for a sense of family solidarity in Uriel. There is no reason to doubt that members of the same family often acted together. In 1306, during a brawl concerning cattle-rustling on the Uriel/Meath border, Luke de Netterville struck one of the footmen of Stephen d'Exeter with a spear. Upon this, one of the footman's companions, 'being his kinsman, went to Luke and struck him in the head on his iron head-piece'.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>71</sup> *Rot. pat. Hib.*, no. 21.

<sup>72</sup> *Cal. justic. rolls, 1308-1314*, p. 211.

<sup>73</sup> P.R.O.I. KB 2/7, pp 25-6.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>75</sup> *Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1308-14*, pp 237-9; J.R.S. Phillips, 'Documents on the early stages of the Bruce invasion of Ireland, 1315-1316', *Proc. R. Ir. Acad.* 79C (1979), pp 262-3; *Cal. Pat. rolls, 1317-1321*, p. 236; *Dowdall deeds*, no. 113.

<sup>76</sup> *Cal. justic. rolls, 1303-1314*, p. 237; *P.R.I. rep. D.K.* 39, p. 52.

<sup>77</sup> *Cal. Pat. rolls, 1327-1330*, p. 532.

<sup>78</sup> *Cal. justic. rolls, 1305-1307*, p. 176.



Beyond such obvious incidence of kin solidarity, the evidence suggests that this was not a major factor in Uriel society.<sup>79</sup> Ties of marriage did not prevent twenty years of conflict between the de Lacys and the de Verduns.<sup>80</sup> In 1315 Nicholas de Verdun was accused of stealing cattle from the demesne land of his brother Theobald.<sup>81</sup> Most significantly of all, perhaps, in discussing the level of kin awareness in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Uriel, a case of 1299 showed that Roger Gernun was unaware of the fact that there were three other Roger Gernuns living in the county at the same time.<sup>82</sup>

Thus, this marcher society was preoccupied with the need for defence. Its most important lords were absentees. Its leading residents wielded wide and arbitrary powers over their tenants. The inhabitants of the county had a well-developed sense of belonging to one community, which was stronger than the loyalty they felt to their extended family or kin.

Before defining an Irish march, one piece of crucial evidence, so far ignored, must be referred to. This is the body of acts passed by the parliament of 1297. This parliament was almost exclusively concerned with the problems of the marches and with finding remedies for these problems. The sources of weakness identified were absenteeism, the oppression of the commonalty by the lords in order to support their retinues, and an unwillingness on the part of the commons to finance their own defence.<sup>83</sup> This shows, first, that the statutes of 1297 accurately reflect the situation in the marches of Uriel and, second, that these same marches had much the same problems as marches in other parts of Ireland. It would be incorrect, however, to think of the 1297 parliament as identifying problems which had arisen only recently. Exhortations to fortify the marches go back to 1200. The century since then had merely seen existing problems become acute.

What was an Irish march? First, let it be said that geography did not necessarily determine its location or extent. In south Dublin the march coincided with the transition zone between lowland and upland, but there were no mountains in Uriel to provide a similar boundary. Contemporaries looked to the forests as marking the frontier in the area, but a forest can be removed in a way in which a mountain cannot.<sup>84</sup> The location and extent of marches in Ireland depended, instead, on military encounters. A march was not a thin line, but a broad zone.<sup>85</sup> It was a border area which had its own borders, one with the land of war and one with the land of peace. For long periods it could remain static, but in Uriel, after 1210, when it did move it was eastwards at the expense of the land of peace.

What this meant was that the arena of armed conflict moved east. A march was a war zone. It saw more war than did those areas officially designated *terra guerre*. The feudal English and the Gaelic Irish fought here. Not surprisingly, the march is often described as waste and uncultivated.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>79</sup> For a discussion of this theme in medieval England see J. C. Holt, 'Feudal society and the family in early medieval England. I. The revolution of 1066', *R. Hist. Soc. Trans.*, 5th ser., 32 (1982), pp 93-4.

<sup>80</sup> See above, p. 262.

<sup>81</sup> P.R.O.I. KB 2/7, p. 21.

<sup>82</sup> *Cal. justic. rolls, 1295-1303*, p. 221.

<sup>83</sup> *Stat. Ire. John-Henry V*, pp 195-213.

<sup>84</sup> *Hist. and Mun. Doc Ire.*, p. 378; *Cal. justic. rolls, 1308-1314*, p. 167.

<sup>85</sup> R. Frame, 'War and peace in the medieval lordship of Ireland', in J. F. Lydon (ed.), *The English in medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1984), p. 128.

<sup>86</sup> *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1302-1307*, p. 167.

But a march was not a 'no man's land'. There were 'natives of the marches',<sup>87</sup> Some lived under a feudal system, others under a Gaelic system. For long periods there was no conflict between them. 'The peace of the marches' is a common phrase in the records.<sup>88</sup> They lived beside each other and occasionally married each other. But usually they were at war with each other, and because they did not exist in a vacuum they had superiors who were bound to assist them. Thus the march again became a battleground.

The existence of such an area affected society for miles around, so that marcher society extended far beyond the march and its inhabitants. But our definition of the Irish march must be precise enough to exclude areas in the land of peace, even if they were affected by the march. Ardee, for instance, was frequently raided by the Irish, but it was not in the march.<sup>89</sup> It was in the land of peace on the borders of the march. If we turn to Iniskeen, however, we see an area undoubtedly in the march which was still granted to Englishmen and which still had a 'town and manor' in 1322.<sup>90</sup> Let us take our definition from this. In Ireland, a march was an area where racial conflict occurred. It was nominally under the jurisdiction of a royal sheriff or local lord. English settlers there continued to give allegiance to their feudal superiors, but their Irish neighbours owed their allegiance to Gaelic chiefs.

Thus the Irish march cannot be defined in geographical or even jurisdictional terms, but ultimately in military ones. This is why we imagine the march to have been a grey area. Contemporaries saw more clearly the black and white of the situation.

<sup>87</sup> *Cal. justic. rolls, 1308-1314*, p. 161.

<sup>88</sup> Gwynn, 'Documents relating to Armagh', p. 11; *Cal. justic. rolls, 1308-1314*, p. 170.

<sup>89</sup> *Ormond deeds, 1172-1350*, no. 268.

<sup>90</sup> *Cal. papal letters, 1305-1342*, p. 219.





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## 4 The Medieval Border

*Anglo-Irish and Gaelic Irish in late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Uriel*

BRENDAN SMITH

Uriel, an area broadly coterminous with the modern County Louth, had been a border-zone or 'debatable land' long before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, but it was only after their appearance that part of it became a march. Many of the earliest Anglo-Norman invaders came from Wales and they brought with them to Ireland the terminology and concepts which they had developed there. Thus the parts of Ireland which they penetrated were labelled by them as either *terra pacis*, 'land of peace', *terra guerrae*, 'land of war', or *marchia*, 'march'. The first they had already conquered, the second they had not. The third they believed they were on the point of subjugating. The use of 'peace' and 'war' in this context can be misleading. It was not necessarily the case that the 'land of peace' witnessed less violence and warfare than the 'land of war'. What those who used the terms wished to suggest was that one area enjoyed the 'benefits' of Anglo-Norman rule and the common law, while the other did not. The march, which separated these two areas, was thus a cultural frontier. It divided people who lived under different social, economic and political systems. In Uriel, therefore, the medieval border, the march, has no earlier (or indeed later) equivalents.<sup>1</sup>

The era of territorial expansion by the Anglo-Normans in Uriel was effectively ended by the failure to maintain a permanent military outpost at Clones after 1212. From the 1220's onwards the emphasis shifted to defending the marches. The march as a concept was given a physical shape at Castle Roche in 1236 and Donaghmoyno in 1244 and this defensive line held good for most of the next three centuries.<sup>2</sup> With a secure frontier thus established the problem which faced the Anglo-Irish in Uriel was how to exert sufficient control over the Gaelic-Irish clans in the neighbouring 'land of war' to prevent their own territory being attacked. In the period under review this control could be exerted by either the earls of Ulster, the Dublin government or the local gentry. Let us consider each in turn.

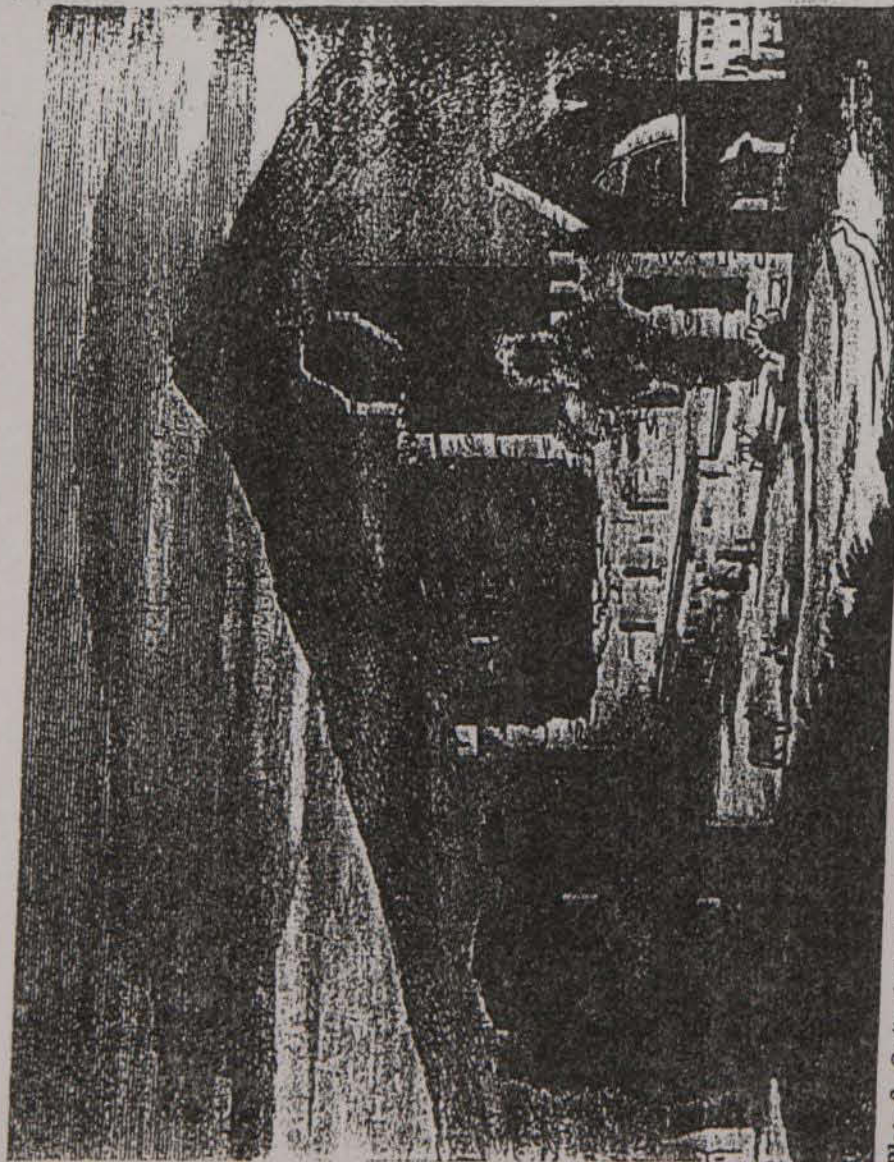


Plate 2: Carlingford Abbey from Dublin Penny Journal, 3 May 1834.



The area we now know as County Louth has ancient links with Ulster and even today, in many respects, seems more akin to that province than to Leinster. In the middle ages the Ulster connection was strong and varied. Carlingford and Dundalk, for instance, were included among 'the ports of Ulster' for accounting purposes at the Dublin exchequer.<sup>3</sup> The bond was even more obvious in the ecclesiastical sphere. The political and religious developments of the twelfth century left the southern boundary of the province of Armagh at the Boyne, permanently removing the southern part of the present County Louth from the ambit of the bishopric of Meath. Subsequent disputes for control of the area in the thirteenth century involved the archbishops of Armagh and their suffragan bishops of Clogher. There was no question of Uriel being transferred to the Leinster province of the archbishops of Dublin. The importance of Uriel to the archbishops of Armagh may be gauged from the fact that for the most part they lived at Termonfeckin, close to the Boyne.<sup>4</sup>

The intrusion of John de Courcy into Ulster in 1176 added a new dimension to its relations with Uriel. In the course of his turbulent career he came into conflict first with the native O'Carroll kings and then with their Anglo-Norman successors.<sup>5</sup> The first earl of Ulster, Hugh de Lacy II, who finally ousted de Courcy in 1204, had already received a grant of half of the Verdun lands in Uriel by a marriage agreement of about 1195. By 1235 de Lacy had returned most of these to Roesia de Verdun, but the descendants of his wife, Lescelina de Verdun, continued to hold the manor of Carlingford and other lands in the Cooley peninsula until 1305. In that year these lands were acquired by Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, who marked the event by founding a Dominican friary at Carlingford under the invocation of St Malachy.<sup>6</sup>

Richard de Burgh, the 'red' earl of Ulster, was the most powerful man in late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Ireland. His power was based on his extensive landed possessions and on his control of the Gaelic-Irish clans of Ulster. Although Uriel was not part of his earldom he was a landowner there. He was also capable of exerting considerable pressure on the Gaelic-Irish who threatened the 'land of peace' in the area, the Mac Mahons and O'Hanlons. His influence in Uriel was demonstrated in 1305 when he requested and was given custody of Neylin, son of Gilpatrick Mac Mahon who was being kept in Dublin castle as a hostage for his father's good behaviour. De Burgh undertook to ensure that Gilpatrick would keep the peace and allow the men of Ardee to cut timber without hindrance. Should Gilpatrick misbehave, Neylin was to be returned to the castle.<sup>7</sup>

De Burgh's power was also to be feared by the Anglo-Irish of Uriel. In 1306 Nicholas de Verdun accused John del Aunee of having defamed him before the earl. As a result of this defamation, Nicholas claimed, 'the earl was moved beyond measure against Nicholas and had ill-will against him to his damage of £200'.<sup>8</sup> Another incident of the same year demonstrated

that Uriel was well within the reach of the earl's vengeance. A valet of de Burgh's was robbed at Greencastle by a thief who fled south. The earl's men caught up with him near Drogheda and murdered him. De Burgh then proceeded to recover the stolen money in court.<sup>9</sup>

The early fourteenth century saw the earl of Ulster expand his landed interests in Uriel. In 1305, as mentioned above, he acquired land in the Cooley peninsula. In 1311 he was given a commission for the former Templar manor of Kilsaran and in 1315 he was made guardian of the royal manor of Ardee.<sup>10</sup> His growing influence in the area was shown in the aftermath of the de Verdun rebellion of 1312 when he obtained a partial pardon for a former sheriff of Uriel, Thomas de Stanley and his son Adam, both of whom had rebelled.<sup>11</sup>

The years immediately prior to the Bruce invasion of 1315 are generally regarded as marking the zenith of Anglo-Irish power in Ulster.<sup>12</sup> De Burgh simultaneously expanded his influence westward into the Inishowen peninsula in Donegal and southward into Uriel. Uriel, however, was not part of the earldom and had its own political and social dynamics which made it difficult for outsiders to control. De Burgh was unable to stop raids on the 'land of peace' in 1306 and 1310 and he was also powerless in 1297 when 'Cu Uliadh O hAnluain, king of the Oirthir and his brother and Aenghus Mac Mathgamna and many of the chiefs of his people were killed by the foreigners of Dun Dealgan, in returning to their houses from the earl'.<sup>13</sup>

Whatever de Burgh's ambitions in Uriel may have been, they were irrevocably dashed by the arrival of the Scots under Bruce in 1315, yet another casualty of that cataclysm which left the earl for a time 'a wanderer up and down Ireland . . . with no power or lordship'.<sup>14</sup>

De Burgh's pre-eminence in the northern part of Ireland influenced the attitude of the Dublin government towards Uriel. In 1600 the English observer John Dimmock wrote of County Louth that 'this county hath the most dangerous borderers and neighbours of any county'.<sup>15</sup> Three hundred years earlier the official perception was somewhat different. Uriel occupied a relatively low position on the government's list of military priorities, a list headed by the Leinster mountains and followed by the marches of Laois and Offaly.<sup>16</sup> The chief governor rarely visited Uriel. In the thirty-five years between 1295 and 1350 he came only fifteen times and strayed further than Drogheda on only two occasions, journeying to Ardee in 1303 and 1306. In comparison, Cashel received the chief governor nine times in the eleven years between 1308 and 1318.<sup>17</sup>

The situation in Uriel was seen as relatively secure. Most disturbances could be dealt with by the local gentry and the earl of Ulster. Generally, the government intervened only to fill the role vacated by one or other of these powers. In 1282 and again in 1334, for instance, the chief of the O'Hanlons was brought to Dublin to parley at the government's expense. On both occasions the earldom of Ulster was either vacant or the earl was absent.<sup>18</sup>



Royal armies were rarely seen in late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Uriel. There were expeditions in 1252, 1273-6, 1291, 1299, 1312 and during the Bruce invasion of 1315-8, but this hardly compares with the virtually annual campaigns of the chief governor and his forces in the Leinster mountains from the 1270s onwards.<sup>19</sup> When they did venture into Uriel, royal armies often behaved badly and were greeted with hostility by the local population. In 1252, for instance, The Galls of Ireland invaded Ulster in great force, when strife arose between the Meath and Munster contingents, and some of those of Munster were killed, at Dundalk.<sup>20</sup>

In 1301 a force on its way to Scotland, led by Peter de Bermingham, was attacked in Drogheda and several soldiers were killed.<sup>21</sup> Again in 1312 during the de Verdun rebellion, the community of the county of Uriel persuaded the Justiciar, John Wogan, not to lead a royal army into the county, arguing 'that by the coming of so great an army the faithful men of those parts would suffer greater evils than before'.<sup>22</sup> The behaviour of the government's forces in Uriel during the Bruce invasion fully justified the observation of the annalist that

excepting homicides ... deeds no less evil were done by an army drawn from different parts of Ireland to do battle with them [the Scots] in the districts through which the units passed.<sup>23</sup>

The crown was not a major landowner in Uriel. In the original grants of the 1180s it had retained for itself half of the barony of Louth but in the 1250s Lord Edward granted this to his cousin, Geoffrey de Luzignan. The French wars of the 1290s, however, led to the confiscation of this property and it remained in the king's hands for several years before being delivered to Geoffrey's nephew and heir, Drew de Merlow.<sup>24</sup> In 1302 the crown became responsible for another large portion of Uriel when Ralph Pipard transferred his Irish lands to the king in return for land of equal value in England.<sup>25</sup> In Uriel this consisted of the barony of Ardee and land in east Monaghan. Thus, the early fourteenth century saw the crown acquire control of the parts of the 'land of peace' in Uriel most liable to attack from the neighbouring march. This in turn necessitated an unprecedented degree of government involvement in the affairs of the county.

As far as possible, the government attempted to exercise its newfound responsibilities in Uriel through the local gentry. In 1308, for instance, Milo de Verdun was given a commission to parley with the Gaelic-Irish of Meath and Uriel.<sup>26</sup> The government was also fortunate in being able to call on the services of Richard d'Exeter, who was not only one of the leading men in Uriel, but also one of the highest officials in the Dublin administration. D'Exeter's father, also Richard, had twice been deputy chief governor briefly in the 1270s and was the first justice of the justiciar's court. He also acquired large grants of land in Connacht.<sup>27</sup> Richard d'Exeter junior was a lawyer by profession and after serving as a justice itinerant in the 1290s was made a chief justice of the bench in 1302.<sup>28</sup> He also served as constable of

Roscommon castle and as collector of the fifteenth in Uriel.<sup>29</sup> His lands in Uriel centred on the manor of Darver, but also included land in Philipston Nugent and Stackallen.<sup>30</sup> He was connected by marriage to the de Verduns and the de Lacys. His links with the latter family led to charges being levelled against him in the 1320s of treason during the Bruce invasion, but he survived these and finally died c.1330.<sup>31</sup>

The Dublin government made use of Richard d'Exeter's services on three occasions between 1306 and 1310. Sometime before 10 January 1306, Doneghuth O'Reilly stole cattle from Nicholas de Netterville's manor of Dowth and pastured them on the lands of Stephen d'Exeter. De Netterville sued against O'Reilly in the county court and succeeded in having him outlawed because he did not appear to answer the charges. Execution of the outlawry, however, was suspended by the justiciar 'for the good of the peace' after friends interceded on Doneghuth's behalf, testifying that he 'was a faithful man of Theobald de Verdun'. A commission to examine the case was then made for Richard d'Exeter and Thomas de Snyterby, another justice of the bench who also held land in Uriel. They devised an agreement whereby Doneghuth was to compensate Nicholas de Netterville with Gilpatrick Mac Mahon providing his pledges. Doneghuth, however, subsequently defaulted and de Netterville sent his son Luke with an armed band to recover the cattle. Their efforts were resisted by a force led by Stephen d'Exeter, possibly a relative of Richard's. A fight ensued and several footmen and Luke de Netterville were wounded. In 1308 the case was finally settled in favour of the de Nettervilles.<sup>32</sup>

Later in 1306 d'Exeter's arbitration was again required. He was given a commission 'to treat with Brian Mac Mahon for reformation of the peace'. He succeeded in having Mac Mahon pay a fine of sixty cows in return for the king's peace. The Mac Mahons, along with 'the English of those marches' also agreed to a mutual return of goods taken by either side since the previous July. D'Exeter himself stood as pledge for Brian's compliance with these terms and was later held accountable for their fulfillment.<sup>33</sup>

In 1310 the government called on d'Exeter's services for the third time.

Because Maghoun Mac Maghon, an Irishman of the said county [Uriel] and all the Irishmen of his sept and Maghoun Mc Keygh O'Reilly of County Meath and all the Irishmen of his sept openly put themselves at war against the king on account of divers dissensions between the Irish and English of their marches now arisen anew, by which it was feared great damage might easily come if such dissensions should not somehow be allayed, Richard d'Exeter, one of the justices of the bench, was commanded to treat and parley with the said Irish to see if he could find a reasonable measure to make amends as well to the king as to others of the marches of said Irish for the damage done by the said Irish.

The 'reasonable measure' found by d'Exeter was to have Mac Mahon pay a fine of £10 for the king's peace. A number of natives of the marches 'as well English as Irish' were to be chosen to decide complaints against the Mac Mahons 'provided that the Englishmen satisfied them in turn'.<sup>34</sup> This



rather sophisticated settlement has parallels in medieval Wales where border disputes were defused in 'march days' without recourse to violence.<sup>35</sup> The good will to make d'Exeter's agreement work, however, did not exist in Uriel. Soon after Mac Mahon came into the king's peace one of his men was murdered in Ardee by some of its inhabitants, 'by which the whole peace of those marches is disturbed to the common ill of the Englishmen of those parts'. The Ardee men were subsequently acquitted when it was adjudged that the dead man had been a common robber.<sup>36</sup>

These three incidents show the variety of problems which faced the Dublin government in Uriel. It often found it easier, for instance, to impose its will on the Gaelic-Irish than on the Anglo-Irish communities it was supposed to be defending. Another difficulty was caused by the fragmented nature of authority within the most important Gaelic-Irish clan of the area, the Mac Mahons. Within four years Richard d'Exeter had to deal not only with Brian Mac Mahon, king of Uriel, but also Gilpatrick and Mahon Mac Mahon. This situation arose because of what Dr Simms described as 'a well developed system of appenage whereby the ruling Mac Mahon allowed his kinsmen to hold considerable sections of such territory as vassal chiefs under his dominion'.<sup>37</sup> An agreement between the Mac Mahons and Nicholas Mac Maol Iosa, archbishop of Armagh, in 1296 shows the system in operation. Letters notifying the agreement were sent out under the name not only of Brian Mac Mahon, king of Uriel, but also under those of Ralph his brother, lord of Darry, Mahon Mac Mahon, chief of Mollhinn, Patrick (Gilpatrick) Mac Mahon, of Farnrey and several other sub-chiefs of the Mac Mahons.<sup>38</sup> Brian Mac Mahon, who ruled from 1283 to 1311, often saw his authority ignored by his family. The Angus Mac Mahon, murdered in Dundalk in 1297, for instance, had some years previously been granted the 'kingship' of the barony of Cremorne by Ralph Pipard and had acknowledged the overlordship of Eachmharcach O'Hanlon.<sup>39</sup> This multiplicity of Mac Mahon rulers made it difficult for the government to deal with one individual, but it also enabled it to exploit the internal divisions of the lordship. In 1302, for instance, Brian Mac Mahon received 40s. from the government to defend Castle Frank 'against the Irish'.<sup>40</sup>

Another method employed by the Dublin government to control the Mac Mahons was the taking of hostages. In 1304 Gilpatrick Mac Mahon was taken to Drogheda castle and forced to surrender his son as surety that he would pay rent owed to the crown since 1302 and that he would guard the king's workmen of Ardee.<sup>41</sup> Presumably this hostage was the Neylin son of Gilpatrick Mac Mahon entrusted to the care of Richard de Burgh in 1305.<sup>42</sup> In 1306 the same Gilpatrick agreed to give pledges for the behaviour of Doneghuth O'Reilly 'except that the body of Gilpatrick be not taken'.<sup>43</sup> In January 1315, Achy Mac Mahon left his wife and three of his sons as hostages in Dublin castle to ensure his payment of thirty cows to the king and also as an incentive to capture 'or at least kill' a notorious robber in his

area, Philip O Scethel.<sup>44</sup> Two years later it was Achy himself who, as *obsidum nostrum*, was led by an armed posse from Castle Roche to Dublin castle.<sup>45</sup>

Uriel represented an unsought and unwelcome additional commitment for the Dublin government in the early fourteenth century. The crown's acquisition of the Pipard lands in 1302 coincided with an upsurge in the level of conflict between Anglo-Irish and Gaelic-Irish in the Ardee area. The government responded wisely (and economically) by acting through important men with local connections such as Richard d'Exeter. The policy of hostage-taking was probably effective in limiting the raids of at least some of the Mac Mahons, although its impact may have been reduced by the fragmented political organisation of that clan. The greatest vindication of its efforts lies in the fact that the Mac Mahons took no part in the Bruce invasion.

Relations with the Gaelic-Irish of the 'land of war' in Uriel were, in general, of peripheral concern to the earldom of Ulster and the Dublin government. To the Anglo-Irish who inhabited the neighbouring 'land of peace' however they were of primary importance. Not surprisingly these relations were extremely complicated and often appear contradictory. 'It is possible, nevertheless, to find in them a general consistency if the following points are borne in mind. First, the O'Hanlons and Mac Mahons were prepared to operate within the feudal structure used by the Anglo-Irish to the extent to which this benefited themselves or to which the Anglo-Irish could force them to do so. Second, the inferior position which the Gaelic-Irish occupied in this feudal structure *viz-a-viz* the Anglo-Irish was not necessarily reflected in the balance of power in the area. In other words the ideal represented by these feudal arrangements was often at variance with reality. Finally, the tone of relations between the two cultures in Uriel was one of deep hostility which transcended the many links which joined them.

The original land grants in Uriel in the 1180's to Bertram de Verdun and Gilbert Pipard included areas deep in Monaghan and south Armagh thus in theory making the Gaelic-Irish of these parts tenants of Anglo-Irish lords. The Mac Mahons and O'Hanlons probably owed the de Verduns rent from at least the middle of the thirteenth century.<sup>46</sup> That the Mac Mahons also owed rent to the Pipards is suggested by Gilpatrick Mac Mahon's promise to the king in 1304 to pay rent owed since Pipard transferred his land to the crown in 1302.<sup>47</sup> These rents were probably paid only when sufficient force existed to collect them. Part of the agreement reached by Richard d'Exeter with Brian Mac Mahon in 1306 stated that the de Verduns might keep 'the goods which they took from the Irish for rent due to them or that the Irish may pay their rent and have restitution'.<sup>48</sup>

The Gaelic-Irish of the 'land of war' used systems of lordship and land-ownership far removed from the feudal practices of the Anglo-Irish.<sup>49</sup> This did not prevent the Gaelic-Irish, however, from entering into arrangements of a feudal nature. Sometime between 1284 and 1297, for instance,



Ralph Pipard granted Angus Mac Mahon the kingship of Cremorne free of rent and certain other lands at their usual rent. Dr Simms has discussed elsewhere the many problems raised by this interesting and difficult document but what is significant for Uriel is the divergence the agreement reveals between theory and practice in relations between the two cultures. On one level the document seems to demonstrate the full integration of Mac Mahon into feudal practice, all be it in a subservient position dictated by his race. It was Mac Mahon who received the grant from his Pipard lord. In return he was obliged to guard Ralph's men and surrender hostages as guarantee of his behaviour. Quite a different picture emerges, however, on going beyond the form of the document to its context.<sup>50</sup>

Ralph Pipard had little time for his Irish possessions. He visited the country on only six occasions between 1265 and 1302. In the latter year he finally divested himself completely of his Irish interests by transferring them to the crown in return for land of equal value in England. By the time he granted Cremorne to Mac Mahon it was no longer under his control. The indenture merely formalised this situation. Thus Mac Mahon acknowledged Pipard as his lord while undermining the basis of that lordship, the control of land.<sup>51</sup>

Form and fact appear even further divorced in a document in the Dowdall collection dated 1 May 1335 in which Donal O'Hanlon, king of Erthir, granted the tenements of Drumgaha and Doolargy to Walter Dowdall senior and Geoffrey, son of Elias.<sup>52</sup> The grant was strictly feudal in its arrangement, even down to the affixing by O'Hanlon of his seal at the bottom of the document. It is this adherence to feudal practice which makes the grant all the more extraordinary. It was as *rex Erthir* that O'Hanlon made his grant to Walter and Geoffrey, yet O'Hanlon owed rent to the Verduns and their successors who were in turn lords of the Anglo-Irish grantees. However, these superior lords are nowhere mentioned in this agreement. In typical feudal fashion O'Hanlon also promised to warrant Walter and Geoffrey against all men, but this would have been impossible if, as seems likely, O'Hanlon did not have the use of the common law.

The background to this grant was Donal O'Hanlon's desire to improve relations with the Anglo-Irish of Dundalk.<sup>53</sup> That he was in a position to grant lands so deep within the 'land of peace' demonstrates how far the position of the Anglo-Irish had been eroded. O'Hanlon made the grant in Dundalk and had it witnessed by some of the leading men of the town, suggesting that both sides wished to see its terms fulfilled. In order to achieve a settlement, both sides were willing to adhere strictly to feudal forms while ignoring the inconvenient theories these implied.

Another Anglo-Irish practice shared by the Anglo-Irish and the Gaelic-Irish was the naming of pledges to guarantee agreements. In 1310, for instance, Magnus and Nicholas O'Carrol and Gilletyrny Mac Mahon stood as pledges for the payment by Mahon Mac Mahon of £10 to the crown

in return for the king's peace.<sup>54</sup> More significantly, Anglo-Irishmen of Uriel were, on occasion, prepared to act as pledges for the Gaelic-Irish. In 1306 Richard d'Exeter stood as pledge for Brian Mac Mahon and in the same year Nicholas de Verdun performed a similar function for a son of Cu Uladh O'Hanlon.<sup>55</sup> Baldewyn le Fleming acted as surety for Gilpatrick Mac Mahon in 1304 and 1306 and had to pay a large sum when Gilpatrick defaulted on the latter occasion.<sup>56</sup> To stand as pledge for a man was a responsibility not undertaken lightly and it might be argued that its frequency in Uriel implied the existence of a degree of trust between some of the leading men of the two cultures. That the Gaelic-Irish often defaulted on their payments, leaving their Anglo-Irish pledges to pay instead, however, suggests that the latter took the practice more seriously than the former and that theory and reality were again at odds.

The Anglo-Irish also kept certain of the Gaelic-Irish under their avowry. In 1306 Doneghuth O'Reilly was described as 'a faithful man of Theobald de Verdun' as was Gilpatrick Mac Mahon.<sup>57</sup> In 1313 Molsathlyn O'Reilly was said to be 'a *hibernicus* of Theobald de Verdun'.<sup>58</sup> Normally, *hibernicus* should be translated as 'betagh', but O'Reilly enjoyed a higher status than the unfree manorial labourers who comprised the betagh class. Ironically, it was these Gaelic-Irish who were in the avowry of Anglo-Irish lords who in Uriel often caused warfare among the Anglo-Irish.<sup>59</sup>

The Anglo-Irish of Uriel sought to involve the Gaelic-Irish in feudal arrangements which *per se* emphasised the theoretical superiority of the former over the latter. The Gaelic-Irish acquiesced in this while steadily eroding the basis of Anglo-Irish power, control of land. That the Anglo-Irish realised the limitations of their strategy was shown by their increasing recourse to extra-legal methods of control and more particularly to assassination. In 1297 Cu Uladh O'Hanlon and Angus Mac Mahon were murdered by the men of Dundalk.<sup>60</sup> In 1321 'Niall O'Hanlon, lord of Orior, was treacherously slain by the English of Dundalk', shortly after blinding his predecessor Manus, probably with Anglo-Irish connivance.<sup>61</sup> In 1331 Murrough Mac Mahon was slain 'by John Mac Mahon and the English of Machaire Oirghiall'.<sup>62</sup> Such dissensions among the Gaelic-Irish made it easier for the Anglo-Irish to retain some influence in their affairs.

It would be a mistake to underestimate the success of the settlers in containing the threat from the 'land of war'. The de Verdun rebellion of 1312 and the Bruce invasion of 1315-8 presented the Gaelic-Irish with opportunities to wreak havoc in the 'land of peace' which were not taken. Neither the O'Hanlons nor the Mac Mahons created any disturbance in 1312 and during the Scottish invasion the Mac Mahons were quiescent while the O'Hanlons could make little headway against the men of Dundalk.<sup>63</sup>

Relations between the two cultures in early fourteenth century Uriel reached a virulence scarcely matched elsewhere in the lordship. No



attempts to maintain the peace could restrain the deep mutual antipathy which existed at the time. This hostility was to be found at different levels of society. The de Verduns and O'Hanlons, for instance, pursued a bitter feud in these years, possibly as a consequence of the murder of Cu Uladh O'Hanlon in Dundalk in 1297. In 1316, one year after the town had been burnt by the Scots, Manus O'Hanlon attacked Dundalk but was repulsed. He did succeed, however, in killing Robert de Verdun, brother of Theobald II, Nicholas and Milo and leader of the rebellion of 1312.<sup>64</sup> The de Verduns were in a position to exact revenge. In October 1316 the justiciar, Edmund Butler, was ordered to ascertain<sup>65</sup>

whether the release of Mora, wife of O'Hanlon, from prison in the town of Drogheda, where she was placed by Nicholas de Verdun, by whose men she was captured in war would be injurious to the king or to the disturbance of the peace and if he finds that she can be released safely to deliver her to Nicholas to make his profit of her and if not to make *gratium* (?compensation) with Nicholas for what pertains to him for her capture.

In the following year the prior of St Leonard's of Dundalk lost two horses to the O'Hanlons while collecting rents from the de Verdun lands around Dundalk. Had Mora O'Hanlon not been in custody he might have lost a great deal more.<sup>66</sup>

The feud continued after the Bruce invasion. In 1321 Manus O'Hanlon was blinded by his kinsman, Niall, with Anglo-Irish support and in the same year Niall himself was slain 'by the English of Dundalk'.<sup>67</sup> The 1330's saw an improvement in relations, apparently at the instigation of Donal O'Hanlon. In 1333 he went to Dublin for discussions with the government and two years later granted land near Dundalk to Walter Dowdall and Geoffrey, son of Elias.<sup>68</sup> This *rapprochement* with the Anglo-Irish was formalised by a peace agreement, drawn up at Kilsarin in 1337, between Donal and the leading men of Anglo-Irish Uriel. This ended the period of O'Hanlon raids on the 'land of peace'.<sup>69</sup>

Below this level of 'aristocratic' antipathy there existed the hostility of the common folk of Anglo-Irish Uriel to the Gaelic-Irish of the 'land of war'. The authorities at times found this impossible to control. The earl of Ulster lost two allies in 1297 when O'Hanlon and Mac Mahon were murdered by the men of Dundalk. The murder by the men of Ardee of a supporter of Mac Mahon in 1311 wrecked an agreement fashioned by Richard d'Exeter 'to the common ill of the Englishmen of those parts'.<sup>70</sup> In the same year Robertston, nearby in County Meath, was burnt by Mathew O'Reilly in revenge for a cattle raid instigated by Henry de Cruys.<sup>71</sup>

This hostility to the Gaelic-Irish resulted from the frequent attacks from the 'land of war' which often involved not only cattle raiding but also murder. In 1278 Walter O'Carrol, a sub-chief of the Mac Mahons, 'wretchedly killed' Robert Gernon and in the same year Nicholas Crossath and Robert Cacheool were murdered by Rory O'Hadhan while attempt-

ing to raise hue and cry after William Wyot had been robbed of sixty cows.<sup>72</sup> In 1306 Maoliosa O'Reilly came into the 'land of peace' specifically 'to slay Peter le Petit and other faithful Englishmen'.<sup>73</sup>

In many instances it was not the leading Gaelic-Irish clans who were responsible for such raids but the criminal bands who lived on their lands and over whom they had little control. The Mac Mahons might be held responsible for the activities of 'notorious felons' such as Philip O'Scethel and Conlyth Mac Neill, but in reality such men could do much as they pleased. Mac Neill seems to have acknowledged the lordship of Mac Mahon only when it suited him. His felonious activities were also facilitated by the behaviour of the Anglo-Irish. In 1311 Walter Gigg was hanged for leading him to steal in Ardee but shortly before this Mac Neill had been captured by the sheriff of Uriel. He escaped because the constable of Drogheda castle would not accept him as a prisoner and so had to be kept in Ardee. Internal dissensions were not peculiar to the Gaelic-Irish.<sup>74</sup>

When it was not used in reference to the betagh class, the term *hibernicus*, 'Irishman', was usually applied in the context of destruction. The lands of the late Benedict Pipard in Pipardstown could not be extended in 1316 'because they have been totally burned by the Irish'.<sup>75</sup> In 1317 the barony of Louth was said to be worth nothing 'because it is totally destroyed by the Scots and Irish'.<sup>76</sup> In 1332 Castle Roche was described as having no buildings within it *quia castrum combustum per Hibernicos*.<sup>77</sup> Paranoia seems to have crept into Anglo-Irish attitudes during the Bruce invasion with Milo de Verdun reporting rumours to the king that the Scots intended to conquer the country 'with the help of the Irish of Ireland'.<sup>78</sup> It was this deep distrust and hostility which the archbishop of Armagh, Richard Fitz Ralph, himself a Dundalk man, condemned so strongly in the 1340s.<sup>79</sup>

What impact did such attitudes have on Anglo-Irish society in Uriel? Ironically, warfare did a great deal to bring the two cultures closer together. March warfare, which consisted in large part of cattle-raiding, encouraged techniques which both sides employed. Raiding parties went 'well-armed and on equipped horses' to harry the lands of their victims.<sup>80</sup> Nor were these raiding parties always organised along racial lines. In 1314, for instance, Mahon Mac Mahon and several members of the de Netterville family were ordered to appear before the justiciar to answer certain charges which apparently arose from a joint raid they had conducted.<sup>81</sup> In official terminology, no distinction was drawn between the *sequela*, 'following', of the Gaelic-Irish felon and that of his Anglo-Irish, counterpart, suggesting that both in composition and in purpose they were identical. In 1278 Aulaf Mac Finan *cum sequela sua* robbed the town of Ays, while in 1295 Peter le Petit and other Uriel men 'with their following' stole sheep from Castleknock on their way to fight the Gaelic-Irish of the Leinster mountains.<sup>82</sup> Again, in 1306, Brian Mac Mahon and *sequela sua* were admitted to the king's peace while in 1312 Robert de Verdun and his *sequela*, 'both English and Irish', rebelled



against the king.<sup>83</sup> Finally, warfare also gave rise to customs such as avowry, hostage-taking and pledging, all of which acted as bonds between the two cultures.

In certain fundamental ways, however, the Anglo-Irish of Uriel were less willing than their counterparts elsewhere in the lordship to compromise with the culture which faced them. In their attitudes to the Gaelic-Irish they were extremely conservative, not to say reactionary. That variety of compromises with and adaptations to native practices which characterised the Anglo-Irish lordship from the late thirteenth century onwards and which a disapproving government labelled as 'degeneracy' was less obvious in Uriel than in any other area which contained a march.<sup>84</sup> There is little evidence, for instance, of intermarriage among the aristocracies of the two cultures. On the other hand, the names Ralph Mac Mahon and Mahon Cruys may suggest that gossipred was, on occasion, used to link certain families together.<sup>85</sup> In the sphere of family organisation, extended kin groups did not flourish. By the early fourteenth century *cognomines*, 'surnames' or *nationes* 'nations' had become common among the Anglo-Irish. These were extended families under their own 'captains', which often operated as fighting units. The Harolds and Lawlesses of south Dublin and Roches, Cauntetons and Christophers of Cork and Waterford are just some examples of this phenomenon.<sup>86</sup>

In Uriel there are virtually no examples of Anglo-Irish *cognomines*. In 1319 John de Cusak, sheriff of Uriel in 1316 and 1329, stated that he had had with him 'the best of his own surname and lineage' at Faughart when Edward Bruce was killed, but other examples of a de Cusak 'lineage' are lacking.<sup>87</sup> The low level of kin awareness in Uriel was well demonstrated by Roger Gernon in 1299 when he admitted to being unaware of the existence of three other Roger Gernons in the country at the time.<sup>88</sup> Following the de Verdun rebellion of 1312, 104 men were charged with involvement. The family most strongly represented was that of Teling of Sidan in County Meath with five members involved. No Uriel family, including the de Verduns themselves, had more than three members indicted.<sup>89</sup> If we compare this with the disturbances between the Roches and Cauntetons in Waterford in 1311, when over fifty Roches were involved, we see clearly that extended families were relatively unimportant in Anglo-Irish Uriel.<sup>90</sup> Ten members of the de Bermingham family were indeed murdered at Braganstown, but this apparent exception to the rule only serves to confirm it. The de Berminghams were from the marches of Offaly, not Uriel. Their assailants, who represented the cream of Uriel society, did not come in large family groupings to murder them in 1329.<sup>91</sup> Why Uriel should eschew extended family organisation is unclear. Illegitimacy, on which the system was based, was apparently not as common in Uriel as in some other parts of the lordship. The answer perhaps lies in the fact that Anglo-Irish Uriel was more densely colonised than other regions where *cognomines* flourished and

that this feeling of strength in numbers made adaptation of the family unit less crucial to survival.

Another manifestation of 'degeneracy' which Anglo-Irish Uriel did not display was the keeping by its leading men of kernes. These were the lightly armed mercenary troops who formed the core of both Gaelic and Anglo-Irish armed forces throughout Ireland. They were deeply unpopular with the common folk because of the system of billeting by which they were maintained. Theobald de Verdun allowed his *hibernici* such as Doneghuth O'Reilly to pasture their cows on his lands, but these *hibernici* were neither betaghs nor kernes. The earliest use of the term 'kerne' traced in Uriel was in 1329 when twenty-nine of 'the satellites of the lord, John de Bermingham, earl of Louth, who are called kernes' were murdered by the inhabitants of Ardee in the prelude to the Braganstown massacre. It is very likely that de Bermingham imported these kernes from Offaly when he was made earl of Louth in 1319.<sup>92</sup>

The leading men of Uriel also avoided 'degeneracy' by not patronising the Gaelic learned classes. Uriel as a whole, indeed, seems to have been something of a cultural backwater at this time, with only a handful of praise poems surviving in honour of the Mac Mahons and O'Hanlons and none at all addressed to the Anglo-Irish gentry of the area. The single example of Anglo-Irish patronage of Gaelic learning is again provided by John de Bermingham. He was being entertained at Braganstown by the best harpist of his day, Mulrone Mac Carrol, when his angry and murderous tenants arrived at the gates.<sup>93</sup>

The Braganstown massacre of 1329 provides a fitting conclusion to this essay, illuminating as it does some of the important themes in the nature of relations between the two cultures in this period of Uriel's history. The local resentment which in part led to de Bermingham's murder, was fuelled by what the Anglo-Irish of Uriel saw as his willingness to compromise with Gaelic-Irish practices. His use of kernes and his patronage of the Gaelic learned classes were habits acquired in the marches of Offaly. What was acceptable there was intolerable in Uriel.<sup>94</sup> What gave Uriel its special character at this time was not the fact that it contained within it a march or border, as these were to be found in many other parts of Ireland. Nor was it because its Anglo-Irish inhabitants were self-reliant and hostile to outsiders, be they Gaelic-Irish chiefs, Dublin government officials or 'blow in' Anglo-Irish magnates, although it may have exhibited these characteristics more strongly than other areas of the lordship. Finally, what made medieval Uriel so remarkable and so unusual was the fact that the march strengthened rather than lessened its resistance to compromise.



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## CHAPTER 4

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 94. Lydon, 'Braganstown massacre', pp 9-10.

## CHAPTER 5

1. The argument for sixteenth century political nationalism is given in Brendan Bradshaw, *The Irish constitutional revolution of the sixteenth century*, (Cambridge, 1979), pp 258-88.  
 2. The text of Laudabiliter is printed in Edmund Curtis, R. B. McDowell (eds), *Irish historical documents*, (London, 1943), pp 17-18.  
 3. S. G. Ellis, 'Henry VII and Ireland, 1491-1496' in J. F. Lydon (ed), *England and Ireland in the later middle ages*, (Dublin, 1981), pp 237-54.  
 4. For developments in fifteenth century England, J. R. Lander, *Government and community: England 1450-1509*, (London, 1980), pp 175-330.  
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 9. Katharine Simms, 'The O'Hanlons, the O'Neills and the Anglo-Normans in thirteenth-century Armagh' in *Seanchas Árámhacha*, ix (1978-9), pp 70-94.  
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 11. *The annals of Ulster*, ed. W. M. Hennessy, B. MacCarthy (4 vols, Dublin, 1893-1901), sub anno. 1444.  
 12. Tomás Ó'Flaich, 'The O'Neills of the Fews' in *Seanchas Árámhacha*, vii (1972-3), pp 1-15.  
 13. Aubrey Gwynn, 'Armagh and Louth in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries' in *Seanchas Árámhacha*, i (1954-5), pp 1-11.  
 14. For a collection of deeds and other documents relating to Dundalk and County Louth from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries see *Dowdall deeds*, ed. Charles McNeill and A. J. Orway-Ruthven (Dublin, 1960).  
 15. *N.H.I.*, ii, ch. 18.; H. G. Tempest, 'Pale ditch at Siddan' in *Louth Arch. Soc. Jnl.*, x (1941-4), pp 50-54; Edmund Curtis, *A history of medieval Ireland*, (London, 1978) p. 353.  
 16. S. G. Ellis, *Tudor Ireland: crown, community and the conflict of cultures, 1470-1603*, (London, 1987), pp 57-8; Brendan Smith, 'The concept of the march in medieval Ireland: the case of Uriel' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxxxviii, sect. C (1988), pp 257-69; Cecile O'Rahilly, *Táin Bó Cuailgna: Recension I*, (Dublin, 1976), p. 154 (Machaire Connailla); in County Monaghan there were several Machaire, Shirley, *County Monaghan*, chs. 10 and 17.  
 17. Ellis, *Tudor Ireland*, p. 57; S. G. Ellis, 'Parliaments and great councils, 1483-99' in *Analecta Hibernica*, xxax (1980), pp 104-5.  
 18. Father Colmille, *The story of Mellisfont*, (Dublin, 1958), pp 147-51, see also p. 131 where Collon is described as on the 'frontiers of the march'. The 'taking of coign and livery in the English shires' was one of the charges laid against Gerald earl of Kildare in 1494, Curtis, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 350.  
 19. *Dowdall deeds*, pp 250-1.  
 20. P.R.O.I., Bellew Papers 1121/1, 2; for County Louth gentry who entered into recognisances in 1523 in connection with felonies including coign and livery see *State Papers, Henry VIII, 1515-38*, ii, pt. 2, pp 108-11.



## 4 The Medieval Border

*Anglo-Irish and Gaelic Irish in late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Uriel*

BRENDAN SMITH

Uriel, an area broadly coterminous with the modern County Louth, had been a border-zone or 'debarable land' long before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, but it was only after their appearance that part of it became a march. Many of the earliest Anglo-Norman invaders came from Wales and they brought with them to Ireland the terminology and concepts which they had developed there. Thus the parts of Ireland which they penetrated were labelled by them as either *terra pacis*, 'land of peace', *terra guerra*, 'land of war', or *marchia*, 'march'. The first they had already conquered, the second they had not. The third they believed they were on the point of subjugating. The use of 'peace' and 'war' in this context can be misleading. It was not necessarily the case that the 'land of peace' witnessed less violence and warfare than the 'land of war'. What those who used the terms wished to suggest was that one area enjoyed the 'benefits' of Anglo-Norman rule and the common law, while the other did not. The march, which separated these two areas, was thus a cultural frontier. It divided people who lived under different social, economic and political systems. In Uriel, therefore, the medieval border, the march, has no earlier (or indeed later) equivalents.<sup>1</sup>

The era of territorial expansion by the Anglo-Normans in Uriel was effectively ended by the failure to maintain a permanent military outpost at Clones after 1212. From the 1220's onwards the emphasis shifted to defending the marches. The march as a concept was given a physical shape at Castle Roche in 1236 and Donaghmoynne in 1244 and this defensive line held good for most of the next three centuries.<sup>2</sup> With a secure frontier thus established the problem which faced the Anglo-Irish in Uriel was how to exert sufficient control over the Gaelic-Irish clans in the neighbouring 'land of war' to prevent their own territory being attacked. In the period under review this control could be exerted by either the earls of Ulster, the Dublin government or the local gentry. Let us consider each in turn.

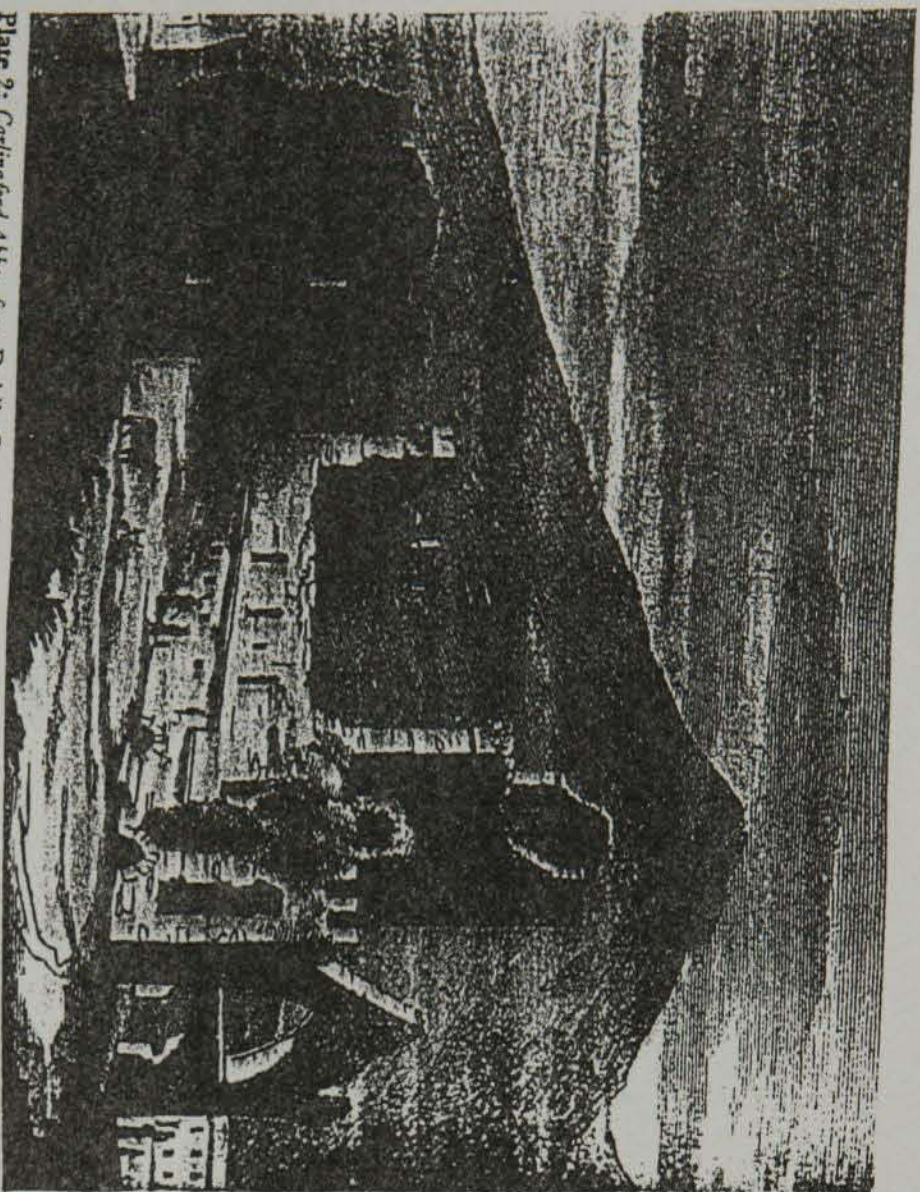


Plate 2: Carlingford Abbey from Dublin Penny Journal, 3 May 1834.



The area we now know as County Louth has ancient links with Ulster and even today, in many respects, seems more akin to that province than to Leinster. In the middle ages the Ulster connection was strong and varied. Carlingford and Dundalk, for instance, were included among 'the ports of Ulster' for accounting purposes at the Dublin exchequer.<sup>3</sup> The bond was even more obvious in the ecclesiastical sphere. The political and religious developments of the twelfth century left the southern boundary of the province of Armagh at the Boyne, permanently removing the southern part of the present County Louth from the ambit of the bishopric of Meath. Subsequent disputes for control of the area in the thirteenth century involved the archbishops of Armagh and their suffragan bishops of Clogher. There was no question of Uriel being transferred to the Leinster province of the archbishops of Dublin. The importance of Uriel to the archbishops of Armagh may be gauged from the fact that for the most part they lived at Termonfeckin, close to the Boyne.<sup>4</sup>

The intrusion of John de Courcy into Ulster in 1176 added a new dimension to its relations with Uriel. In the course of his turbulent career he came into conflict first with the native O'Carroll kings and then with their Anglo-Norman successors.<sup>5</sup> The first earl of Ulster, Hugh de Lacy II, who finally ousted de Courcy in 1204, had already received a grant of half of the de Verdun lands in Uriel by a marriage agreement of about 1195. By 1235 de Lacy had returned most of these to Roesia de Verdun, but the descendants of his wife, Lescelina de Verdun, continued to hold the manor of Carlingford and other lands in the Cooley peninsula until 1305. In that year these lands were acquired by Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, who marked the event by founding a Dominican friary at Carlingford under the invocation of St Malachy.<sup>6</sup>

Richard de Burgh, the 'red' earl of Ulster, was the most powerful man in late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Ireland. His power was based on his extensive landed possessions and on his control of the Gaelic-Irish clans of Ulster. Although Uriel was not part of his earldom he was a landowner there. He was also capable of exerting considerable pressure on the Gaelic-Irish who threatened the 'land of peace' in the area, the Mac Mahons and O'Hanlons. His influence in Uriel was demonstrated in 1305 when he requested and was given custody of Neylin, son of Gilpatrick Mac Mahon who was being kept in Dublin castle as a hostage for his father's good behaviour. De Burgh undertook to ensure that Gilpatrick would keep the peace and allow the men of Ardee to cut timber without hindrance. Should Gilpatrick misbehave, Neylin was to be returned to the castle.<sup>7</sup>

De Burgh's power was also to be feared by the Anglo-Irish of Uriel. In 1306 Nicholas de Verdun accused John del Aunee of having defamed him before the earl. As a result of this defamation, Nicholas claimed, 'the earl was moved beyond measure against Nicholas and had ill-will against him to his damage of £200'.<sup>8</sup> Another incident of the same year demonstrated

that Uriel was well within the reach of the earl's vengeance. A valet of de Burgh's was robbed at Greencastle by a thief who fled south. The earl's men caught up with him near Drogheda and murdered him. De Burgh then proceeded to recover the stolen money in court.<sup>9</sup>

The early fourteenth century saw the earl of Ulster expand his landed interests in Uriel. In 1305, as mentioned above, he acquired land in the Cooley peninsula. In 1311 he was given a commission for the former Templar manor of Kilsaran and in 1315 he was made guardian of the royal manor of Ardee.<sup>10</sup> His growing influence in the area was shown in the aftermath of the de Verdun rebellion of 1312 when he obtained a partial pardon for a former sheriff of Uriel, Thomas de Stanley and his son Adam, both of whom had rebelled.<sup>11</sup>

The years immediately prior to the Bruce invasion of 1315 are generally regarded as marking the zenith of Anglo-Irish power in Ulster.<sup>12</sup> De Burgh simultaneously expanded his influence westward into the Inishowen peninsula in Donegal and southward into Uriel. Uriel, however, was not part of the earldom and had its own political and social dynamics which made it difficult for outsiders to control. De Burgh was unable to stop raids on the 'land of peace' in 1306 and 1310 and he was also powerless in 1297 when 'Cu Uiladh O hAnluain, king of the Oirrthir and his brother and Aenghus Mac Mathgamna and many of the chiefs of his people were killed by the foreigners of Dun Dealgan, in returning to their houses from the earl'.<sup>13</sup>

Whatever de Burgh's ambitions in Uriel may have been, they were irrevocably dashed by the arrival of the Scots under Bruce in 1315, yet another casualty of that cataclysm which left the earl for a time 'a wanderer up and down Ireland... with no power or lordship'.<sup>14</sup>

De Burgh's pre-eminence in the northern part of Ireland influenced the attitude of the Dublin government towards Uriel. In 1600 the English observer John Dimmock wrote of County Louth that 'this county hath the most dangerous borderers and neighbours of any county'.<sup>15</sup> Three hundred years earlier the official perception was somewhat different. Uriel occupied a relatively low position on the government's list of military priorities, a list headed by the Leinster mountains and followed by the marches of Laois and Offaly.<sup>16</sup> The chief governor rarely visited Uriel. In the thirty-five years between 1295 and 1350 he came only fifteen times and strayed further than Drogheda on only two occasions, journeying to Ardee in 1303 and 1306. In comparison, Cashel received the chief governor nine times in the eleven years between 1308 and 1318.<sup>17</sup>

The situation in Uriel was seen as relatively secure. Most disturbances could be dealt with by the local gentry and the earl of Ulster. Generally, the government intervened only to fill the role vacated by one or other of these powers. In 1282 and again in 1334, for instance, the chief of the O'Hanlons was brought to Dublin to parley at the government's expense. On both occasions the earldom of Ulster was either vacant or the earl was absent.<sup>18</sup>



Royal armies were rarely seen in late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Uriel. There were expeditions in 1252, 1273-6, 1291, 1299, 1312 and during the Bruce invasion of 1315-8, but this hardly compares with the virtually annual campaigns of the chief governor and his forces in the Leinster mountains from the 1270s onwards.<sup>19</sup> When they did venture into Uriel, royal armies often behaved badly and were greeted with hostility by the local population. In 1252, for instance, The Galls of Ireland invaded Ulster in great force, when strife arose between the Meath and Munster contingents, and some of those of Munster were killed, at Dundalk.<sup>20</sup>

In 1301 a force on its way to Scotland, led by Peter de Bermingham, was attacked in Drogheda and several soldiers were killed.<sup>21</sup> Again in 1312 during the de Verdun rebellion, the community of the county of Uriel persuaded the Justiciar, John Wogan, not to lead a royal army into the county, arguing 'that by the coming of so great an army the faithful men of those parts would suffer greater evils than before'.<sup>22</sup> The behaviour of the government's forces in Uriel during the Bruce invasion fully justified the observation of the annalist that

excepting homicides ... deeds no less evil were done by an army drawn from different parts of Ireland to do battle with them [the Scots] in the districts through which the units passed.<sup>23</sup>

The crown was not a major landowner in Uriel. In the original grants of the 1180s it had retained for itself half of the barony of Louth but in the 1250s Lord Edward granted this to his cousin, Geoffrey de Luzignan. The French wars of the 1290s, however, led to the confiscation of his property and it remained in the king's hands for several years before being delivered to Geoffrey's nephew and heir, Drew de Merlow.<sup>24</sup> In 1302 the crown became responsible for another large portion of Uriel when Ralph Pipard transferred his Irish lands to the king in return for land of equal value in England.<sup>25</sup> In Uriel this consisted of the barony of Ardee and land in east Monaghan. Thus, the early fourteenth century saw the crown acquire control of the parts of the 'land of peace' in Uriel most liable to attack from the neighbouring march. This in turn necessitated an unprecedented degree of government involvement in the affairs of the county.

As far as possible, the government attempted to exercise its newfound responsibilities in Uriel through the local gentry. In 1308, for instance, Milo de Verdun was given a commission to parley with the Gaelic-Irish of Meath and Uriel.<sup>26</sup> The government was also fortunate in being able to call on the services of Richard d'Exeter, who was not only one of the leading men in Uriel, but also one of the highest officials in the Dublin administration. D'Exeter's father, also Richard, had twice been deputy chief governor briefly in the 1270s and was the first justice of the justiciar's court. He also acquired large grants of land in Connacht.<sup>27</sup> Richard d'Exeter junior was a lawyer by profession and after serving as a justice itinerant in the 1290s was made a chief justice of the bench in 1302.<sup>28</sup> He also served as constable of

Roscommon castle and as collector of the fifteenth in Uriel.<sup>29</sup> His lands in Uriel centred on the manor of Darver, but also included land in Philipston Nugent and Stackallen.<sup>30</sup> He was connected by marriage to the de Verduns and the de Lacys. His links with the latter family led to charges being levelled against him in the 1320s of treason during the Bruce invasion, but he survived these and finally died c.1330.<sup>31</sup>

The Dublin government made use of Richard d'Exeter's services on three occasions between 1306 and 1310. Sometime before 10 January 1306, Doneghuth O'Reilly stole cattle from Nicholas de Netterville's manor of Dowth and pastured them on the lands of Stephen d'Exeter. De Netterville sued against O'Reilly in the county court and succeeded in having him outlawed because he did not appear to answer the charges. Execution of the outlawry, however, was suspended by the justiciar 'for the good of the peace' after friends interceded on Doneghuth's behalf, testifying that he 'was a faithful man of Theobald de Verdun'. A commission to examine the case was then made for Richard d'Exeter and Thomas de Snyderby, another justice of the bench who also held land in Uriel. They devised an agreement whereby Doneghuth was to compensate Nicholas de Netterville with Gilpatrick Mac Mahon providing his pledges. Doneghuth, however, subsequently defaulted and de Netterville sent his son Luke with an armed band to recover the cattle. Their efforts were resisted by a force led by Stephen d'Exeter, possibly a relative of Richard's. A fight ensued and several footmen and Luke de Netterville were wounded. In 1308 the case was finally settled in favour of the de Nettervilles.<sup>32</sup>

Later in 1306 d'Exeter's arbitration was again required. He was given a commission 'to treat with Brian Mac Mahon for reformation of the peace'. He succeeded in having Mac Mahon pay a fine of sixty cows in return for the king's peace. The Mac Mahons, along with 'the English of those marches' also agreed to a mutual return of goods taken by either side since the previous July. D'Exeter himself stood as pledge for Brian's compliance with these terms and was later held accountable for their fulfillment.<sup>33</sup> In 1310 the government called on d'Exeter's services for the third time.

Because Maghoun Mac Maghon, an Irishman of the said county [Uriel] and all the Irishmen of his sept and Maghoun Mc Keygh O'Reilly of County Meath and all the Irishmen of his sept openly put themselves at war against the king on account of divers dissensions between the Irish and English of their marches now arisen anew, by which it was feared great damage might easily come if such dissensions should not somehow be allayed, Richard d'Exeter, one of the justices of the bench, was commanded to treat and parley with the said Irish to see if he could find a reasonable measure to make amends as well to the king as to others of the marches of said Irish for the damage done by the said Irish.

The 'reasonable measure' found by d'Exeter was to have Mac Mahon pay a fine of £10 for the king's peace. A number of natives of the marches 'as well English as Irish' were to be chosen to decide complaints against the Mac Mahons 'provided that the Englishmen satisfied them in turn'.<sup>34</sup> This



rather sophisticated settlement has parallels in medieval Wales where border disputes were defused in 'march days' without recourse to violence.<sup>35</sup> The good will to make d'Exeter's agreement work, however, did not exist in Uriel. Soon after Mac Mahon came into the king's peace one of his men was murdered in Ardee by some of its inhabitants, 'by which the whole peace of those marches is disturbed to the common ill of the Englishmen of those parts'. The Ardee men were subsequently acquitted when it was adjudged that the dead man had been a common robber.<sup>36</sup>

These three incidents show the variety of problems which faced the Dublin government in Uriel. It often found it easier, for instance, to impose its will on the Gaelic-Irish than on the Anglo-Irish communities it was supposed to be defending. Another difficulty was caused by the fragmented nature of authority within the most important Gaelic-Irish clan of the area, the Mac Mahons. Within four years Richard d'Exeter had to deal not only with Brian Mac Mahon, king of Uriel, but also Gilpatrick and Mahon Mac Mahon. This situation arose because of what Dr Simms described as 'a well developed system of appenage whereby the ruling Mac Mahon allowed his kinsmen to hold considerable sections of such territory as vassal chiefs under his dominion'.<sup>37</sup> An agreement between the Mac Mahons and Nicholas Mac Maol Iosa, archbishop of Armagh, in 1296 shows the system in operation. Letters notifying the agreement were sent out under the name not only of Brian Mac Mahon, king of Uriel, but also under those of Ralph his brother, lord of Dartry, Mahon Mac Mahon, chief of Molfhinn, Patrick (Gilpatrick) Mac Mahon, of Farney and several other sub-chiefs of the Mac Mahons.<sup>38</sup> Brian Mac Mahon, who ruled from 1283 to 1311, often saw his authority ignored by his family. The Angus Mac Mahon, murdered in Dundalk in 1297, for instance, had some years previously been granted the 'kingship' of the barony of Cremorne by Ralph Pipard and had acknowledged the overlordship of Eachmharcach O'Hanlon.<sup>39</sup> This multiplicity of Mac Mahon rulers made it difficult for the government to deal with one individual, but it also enabled it to exploit the internal divisions of the lordship. In 1302, for instance, Brian Mac Mahon received 40s. from the government to defend Castle Frank 'against the Irish'.<sup>40</sup>

Another method employed by the Dublin government to control the Mac Mahons was the taking of hostages. In 1304 Gilpatrick Mac Mahon was taken to Drogheda castle and forced to surrender his son as surety that he would pay rent owed to the crown since 1302 and that he would guard the king's workmen of Ardee.<sup>41</sup> Presumably this hostage was the Neylin son of Gilpatrick Mac Mahon entrusted to the care of Richard de Burgh in 1305.<sup>42</sup> In 1306 the same Gilpatrick agreed to give pledges for the behaviour of Doneghuth O'Reilly 'except that the body of Gilpatrick be not taken'.<sup>43</sup> In January 1315, Achy Mac Mahon left his wife and three of his sons as hostages in Dublin castle to ensure his payment of thirty cows to the king and also as an incentive to capture 'or at least kill' a notorious robber in his

area, Philip O Scethel.<sup>44</sup> Two years later it was Achy himself who, as *obsidem nostrum*, was led by an armed posse from Castle Roche to Dublin castle.<sup>45</sup>

Uriel represented an unsought and unwelcome additional commitment for the Dublin government in the early fourteenth century. The crown's acquisition of the Pipard lands in 1302 coincided with an upsurge in the level of conflict between Anglo-Irish and Gaelic-Irish in the Ardee area. The government responded wisely (and economically) by acting through important men with local connections such as Richard d'Exeter. The policy of hostage-taking was probably effective in limiting the raids of at least some of the Mac Mahons, although its impact may have been reduced by the fragmented political organisation of that clan. The greatest vindication of its efforts lies in the fact that the Mac Mahons took no part in the Bruce invasion.

Relations with the Gaelic-Irish of the 'land of war' in Uriel were, in general, of peripheral concern to the earldom of Ulster and the Dublin government. To the Anglo-Irish who inhabited the neighbouring 'land of peace' however they were of primary importance. Not surprisingly these relations were extremely complicated and often appear contradictory. It is possible, nevertheless, to find in them a general consistency if the following points are borne in mind. First, the O'Hanlons and Mac Mahons were prepared to operate within the feudal structure used by the Anglo-Irish to the extent to which this benefited themselves or to which the Anglo-Irish could force them to do so. Second, the inferior position which the Gaelic-Irish occupied in this feudal structure *viz-a-viz* the Anglo-Irish was not necessarily reflected in the balance of power in the area. In other words the ideal represented by these feudal arrangements was often at variance with reality. Finally, the tone of relations between the two cultures in Uriel was one of deep hostility which transcended the many links which joined them.

The original land grants in Uriel in the 1180's to Bertram de Verdun and Gilbert Pipard included areas deep in Monaghan and south Armagh thus in theory making the Gaelic-Irish of these parts tenants of Anglo-Irish lords. The Mac Mahons and O'Hanlons probably owed the de Verduns rent from at least the middle of the thirteenth century.<sup>46</sup> That the Mac Mahons also owed rent to the Pipards is suggested by Gilpatrick Mac Mahon's promise to the king in 1304 to pay rent owed since Pipard transferred his land to the crown in 1302.<sup>47</sup> These rents were probably paid only when sufficient force existed to collect them. Part of the agreement reached by Richard d'Exeter with Brian Mac Mahon in 1306 stated that the de Verduns might keep 'the goods which they took from the Irish for rent due to them or that the Irish may pay their rent and have restitution'.<sup>48</sup>

The Gaelic-Irish of the 'land of war' used systems of lordship and land-ownership far removed from the feudal practices of the Anglo-Irish.<sup>49</sup> This did not prevent the Gaelic-Irish, however, from entering into arrangements of a feudal nature. Sometime between 1284 and 1297, for instance,



Ralph Pipard granted Angus Mac Mahon the kingship of Cremorne free of rent and certain other lands at their usual rent. Dr Simms has discussed elsewhere the many problems raised by this interesting and difficult document but what is significant for Uriel is the divergence the agreement reveals between theory and practice in relations between the two cultures. On one level the document seems to demonstrate the full integration of Mac Mahon into feudal practice, all be it in a subservient position dictated by his race. It was Mac Mahon who received the grant from his Pipard lord. In return he was obliged to guard Ralph's men and surrender hostages as guarantee of his behaviour. Quite a different picture emerges, however, on going beyond the form of the document to its context.<sup>50</sup>

Ralph Pipard had little time for his Irish possessions. He visited the country on only six occasions between 1265 and 1302. In the latter year he finally divested himself completely of his Irish interests by transferring them to the crown in return for land of equal value in England. By the time he granted Cremorne to Mac Mahon it was no longer under his control. The indenture merely formalised this situation. Thus Mac Mahon acknowledged Pipard as his lord while undermining the basis of that lordship, the control of land.<sup>51</sup>

Form and fact appear even further divorced in a document in the Dowdall collection dated 1 May 1335 in which Donal O'Hanlon, king of Erthir, granted the tenements of Drumgaha and Doolargy to Walter Dowdall senior and Geoffrey, son of Elias.<sup>52</sup> The grant was strictly feudal in its arrangement, even down to the affixing by O'Hanlon of his seal at the bottom of the document. It is this adherence to feudal practice which makes the grant all the more extraordinary. It was as *rex Erthir* that O'Hanlon made his grant to Walter and Geoffrey, yet O'Hanlon owed rent to the de Verduns and their successors who were in turn lords of the Anglo-Irish grantees. However, these superior lords are nowhere mentioned in this agreement. In typical feudal fashion O'Hanlon also promised to warrant Walter and Geoffrey against all men, but this would have been impossible if, as seems likely, O'Hanlon did not have the use of the common law.

The background to this grant was Donal O'Hanlon's desire to improve relations with the Anglo-Irish of Dundalk.<sup>53</sup> That he was in a position to grant lands so deep within the 'land of peace' demonstrates how far the position of the Anglo-Irish had been eroded. O'Hanlon made the grant in Dundalk and had it witnessed by some of the leading men of the town, suggesting that both sides wished to see its terms fulfilled. In order to achieve a settlement, both sides were willing to adhere strictly to feudal forms while ignoring the inconvenient theories these implied.

Another Anglo-Irish practice shared by the Anglo-Irish and the Gaelic-Irish was the naming of pledges to guarantee agreements. In 1310, for instance, Magnus and Nicholas O'Carrol and Gilletyrny Mac Mahon stood as pledges for the payment by Mahon Mac Mahon of £10 to the crown

in return for the king's peace.<sup>54</sup> More significantly, Anglo-Irishmen of Uriel were, on occasion, prepared to act as pledges for the Gaelic-Irish. In 1306 Richard d'Exeter stood as pledge for Brian Mac Mahon and in the same year Nicholas de Verdun performed a similar function for a son of Cu Uladh O'Hanlon.<sup>55</sup> Baldewyn le Fleming acted as surety for Gilpatrick Mac Mahon in 1304 and 1306 and had to pay a large sum when Gilpatrick defaulted on the latter occasion.<sup>56</sup> To stand as pledge for a man was a responsibility not undertaken lightly and it might be argued that its frequency in Uriel implied the existence of a degree of trust between some of the leading men of the two cultures. That the Gaelic-Irish often defaulted on their payments, leaving their Anglo-Irish pledges to pay instead, however, suggests that the latter took the practice more seriously than the former and that theory and reality were again at odds.

The Anglo-Irish also kept certain of the Gaelic-Irish under their avowry. In 1306 Doneghuth O'Reilly was described as 'a faithful man of Theobald de Verdun' as was Gilpatrick Mac Mahon.<sup>57</sup> In 1313 Molsathlyn O'Reilly was said to be 'a *hibernicus* of Theobald de Verdun'.<sup>58</sup> Normally, *hibernicus* should be translated as 'betagh', but O'Reilly enjoyed a higher status than the unfree manorial labourers who comprised the betagh class. Ironically, it was these Gaelic-Irish who were in the avowry of Anglo-Irish lords who in Uriel often caused warfare among the Anglo-Irish.<sup>59</sup>

The Anglo-Irish of Uriel sought to involve the Gaelic-Irish in feudal arrangements which *per se* emphasised the theoretical superiority of the former over the latter. The Gaelic-Irish acquiesced in this while steadily eroding the basis of Anglo-Irish power, control of land. That the Anglo-Irish realised the limitations of their strategy was shown by their increasing recourse to extra-legal methods of control and more particularly to assassination. In 1297 Cu Uladh O'Hanlon and Angus Mac Mahon were murdered by the men of Dundalk.<sup>60</sup> In 1321 'Niall O'Hanlon, lord of Orior, was treacherously slain by the English of Dundalk', shortly after blinding his predecessor Manus, probably with Anglo-Irish connivance.<sup>61</sup> In 1331 Murrough Mac Mahon was slain 'by John Mac Mahon and the English of Machaire Oirghiall'.<sup>62</sup> Such dissensions among the Gaelic-Irish made it easier for the Anglo-Irish to retain some influence in their affairs.

It would be a mistake to underestimate the success of the settlers in containing the threat from the 'land of war'. The de Verdun rebellion of 1312 and the Bruce invasion of 1315-8 presented the Gaelic-Irish with opportunities to wreak havoc in the 'land of peace' which were not taken. Neither the O'Hanlons nor the Mac Mahons created any disturbance in 1312 and during the Scottish invasion the Mac Mahons were quiescent while the O'Hanlons could make little headway against the men of Dundalk.<sup>63</sup>

Relations between the two cultures in early fourteenth century Uriel reached a virulence scarcely matched elsewhere in the lordship. No



attempts to maintain the peace could restrain the deep mutual antipathy which existed at the time. This hostility was to be found at different levels of society. The de Verduns and O'Hanlons, for instance, pursued a bitter feud in these years, possibly as a consequence of the murder of Cu Uladh O'Hanlon in Dundalk in 1297. In 1316, one year after the town had been burnt by the Scots, Manus O'Hanlon attacked Dundalk but was repulsed. He did succeed, however, in killing Robert de Verdun, brother of Theobald II, Nicholas and Milo and leader of the rebellion of 1312.<sup>64</sup> The de Verduns were in a position to exact revenge. In October 1316 the justiciar, Edmund Butler, was ordered to ascertain<sup>65</sup>

whether the release of Mora, wife of O'Hanlon, from prison in the town of Drogheda, where she was placed by Nicholas de Verdun, by whose men she was captured in war would be injurious to the king or to the disturbance of the peace and if he finds that she can be released safely to deliver her to Nicholas to make his profit of her and if not to make *gratium* (?compensation) with Nicholas for what pertains to him for her capture.

In the following year the prior of St Leonard's of Dundalk lost two horses to the O'Hanlons while collecting rents from the de Verdun lands around Dundalk. Had Mora O'Hanlon not been in custody he might have lost a great deal more.<sup>66</sup>

The feud continued after the Bruce invasion. In 1321 Manus O'Hanlon was blinded by his kinsman, Niall, with Anglo-Irish support and in the same year Niall himself was slain 'by the English of Dundalk'.<sup>67</sup> The 1330's saw an improvement in relations, apparently at the instigation of Donal O'Hanlon. In 1333 he went to Dublin for discussions with the government and two years later granted land near Dundalk to Walter Dowdall and Geoffrey, son of Elias.<sup>68</sup> This *rapprochement* with the Anglo-Irish was formalised by a peace agreement, drawn up at Kilsarin in 1337, between Donal and the leading men of Anglo-Irish Uriel. This ended the period of O'Hanlon raids on the 'land of peace'.<sup>69</sup>

Below this level of 'aristocratic' antipathy there existed the hostility of the common folk of Anglo-Irish Uriel to the Gaelic-Irish of the 'land of war'. The authorities at times found this impossible to control. The earl of Ulster lost two allies in 1297 when O'Hanlon and Mac Mahon were murdered by the men of Dundalk. The murder by the men of Ardee of a supporter of Mac Mahon in 1311 wrecked an agreement fashioned by Richard d'Exeter 'to the common ill of the Englishmen of those parts'.<sup>70</sup> In the same year Robertston, nearby in County Meath, was burnt by Mathew O'Reilly in revenge for a cattle raid instigated by Henry de Cruys.<sup>71</sup>

This hostility to the Gaelic-Irish resulted from the frequent attacks from the 'land of war' which often involved not only cattle raiding but also murder. In 1278 Walter O'Carroll, a sub-chief of the Mac Mahons, 'wretchedly killed' Robert Gernon and in the same year Nicholas Crossath and Robert Cachepool were murdered by Rory O'Hadhlan while attempt-

ing to raise hue and cry after William Wyot had been robbed of sixty cows.<sup>72</sup> In 1306 Maoliosa O'Reilly came into the 'land of peace' specifically 'to slay Peter le Petit and other faithful Englishmen'.<sup>73</sup>

In many instances it was not the leading Gaelic-Irish clans who were responsible for such raids but the criminal bands who lived on their lands and over whom they had little control. The Mac Mahons might be held responsible for the activities of 'notorious felons' such as Philip O'Sceithel and Conlyth Mac Neill, but in reality such men could do much as they pleased. Mac Neill seems to have acknowledged the lordship of Mac Mahon only when it suited him. His felonious activities were also facilitated by the behaviour of the Anglo-Irish. In 1311 Walter Gigg was hanged for leading him to steal in Ardee but shortly before this Mac Neill had been captured by the sheriff of Uriel. He escaped because the constable of Drogheda castle would not accept him as a prisoner and so had to be kept in Ardee. Internal dissensions were not peculiar to the Gaelic-Irish.<sup>74</sup>

When it was not used in reference to the *betagh* class, the term *hibernicus*, 'Irishman', was usually applied in the context of destruction. The lands of the late Benedict Pipard in Pipardstown could not be extended in 1316 'because they have been totally burned by the Irish'.<sup>75</sup> In 1317 the barony of Louth was said to be worth nothing 'because it is totally destroyed by the Scots and Irish'.<sup>76</sup> In 1332 Castle Roche was described as having no buildings within it *quia castrum cumbustum per Hibernicos*.<sup>77</sup> Paranoia seems to have crept into Anglo-Irish attitudes during the Bruce invasion with Milo de Verdun reporting rumours to the king that the Scots intended to conquer the country 'with the help of the Irish of Ireland'.<sup>78</sup> It was this deep distrust and hostility which the archbishop of Armagh, Richard Fitz Ralph, himself a Dundalk man, condemned so strongly in the 1340s.<sup>79</sup>

What impact did such attitudes have on Anglo-Irish society in Uriel? Ironically, warfare did a great deal to bring the two cultures closer together. March warfare, which consisted in large part of cattle-raiding, encouraged techniques which both sides employed. Raiding parties went 'well-armed and on equipped horses' to harry the lands of their victims.<sup>80</sup> Nor were these raiding parties always organised along racial lines. In 1314, for instance, Mahon Mac Mahon and several members of the de Netterville family were ordered to appear before the justiciar to answer certain charges which apparently arose from a joint raid they had conducted.<sup>81</sup> In official terminology, no distinction was drawn between the *sequela*, 'following', of the Gaelic-Irish felon and that of his Anglo-Irish, counterpart, suggesting that both in composition and in purpose they were identical. In 1278 Aulief Mac Finan *cum sequela sua* robbed the town of Ays, while in 1295 Peter le Petit and other Uriel men 'with their following' stole sheep from Castleknock on their way to fight the Gaelic-Irish of the Leinster mountains.<sup>82</sup> Again, in 1306, Brian Mac Mahon and *sequela sua* were admitted to the king's peace while in 1312 Robert de Verdun and his *sequela*, 'both English and Irish', rebelled



against the king.<sup>83</sup> Finally, warfare also gave rise to customs such as avowry, hostage-taking and pledging, all of which acted as bonds between the two cultures.

In certain fundamental ways, however, the Anglo-Irish of Uriel were less willing than their counterparts elsewhere in the lordship to compromise with the culture which faced them. In their attitudes to the Gaelic-Irish they were extremely conservative, not to say reactionary. That variety of compromises with and adaptations to native practices which characterised the Anglo-Irish lordship from the late thirteenth century onwards and which a disapproving government labelled as 'degeneracy' was less obvious in Uriel than in any other area which contained a march.<sup>84</sup> There is little evidence, for instance, of intermarriage among the aristocracies of the two cultures. On the other hand, the names Ralph Mac Mahon and Mahon Cruys may suggest that gossiped was, on occasion, used to link certain families together.<sup>85</sup> In the sphere of family organisation, extended kin groups did not flourish. By the early fourteenth century *cognomines*, 'surnames' or *nations* 'nations' had become common among the Anglo-Irish. These were extended families under their own 'captains', which often operated as fighting units. The Harolds and Lawlesses of south Dublin and Roches, Caunterons and Christophers of Cork and Waterford are just some examples of this phenomenon.<sup>86</sup>

In Uriel there are virtually no examples of Anglo-Irish *cognomines*. In 1319 John de Cusak, sheriff of Uriel in 1316 and 1329, stated that he had had with him 'the best of his own surname and lineage' at Faughart when Edward Bruce was killed, but other examples of a de Cusak 'lineage' are lacking.<sup>87</sup> The low level of kin awareness in Uriel was well demonstrated by Roger Gernon in 1299 when he admitted to being unaware of the existence of three other Roger Gernons in the country at the time.<sup>88</sup> Following the de Verdun rebellion of 1312, 104 men were charged with involvement. The family most strongly represented was that of Teling of Sidan in County Meath with five members involved. No Uriel family, including the de Verduns themselves, had more than three members indicted.<sup>89</sup> If we compare this with the disturbances between the Roches and Caunterons in Waterford in 1311, when over fifty Roches were involved, we see clearly that extended families were relatively unimportant in Anglo-Irish Uriel.<sup>90</sup> Ten members of the de Bermingham family were indeed murdered at Braganstown, but this apparent exception to the rule only serves to confirm it. The de Berminghams were from the marches of Offaly, not Uriel. Their assailants, who represented the cream of Uriel society, did not come in large family groupings to murder them in 1329.<sup>91</sup> Why Uriel should eschew extended family organisation is unclear. Illegitimacy, on which the system was based, was apparently not as common in Uriel as in some other parts of the lordship. The answer perhaps lies in the fact that Anglo-Irish Uriel was more densely colonised than other regions where *cognomines* flourished and

that this feeling of strength in numbers made adaptation of the family unit less crucial to survival.

Another manifestation of 'degeneracy' which Anglo-Irish Uriel did not display was the keeping by its leading men of kernes. These were the lightly armed mercenary troops who formed the core of both Gaelic and Anglo-Irish armed forces throughout Ireland. They were deeply unpopular with the common folk because of the system of billeting by which they were maintained. Theobald de Verdun allowed his *hibernici* such as Doneghuth O'Reilly to pasture their cows on his lands, but these *hibernici* were neither betaghs nor kernes. The earliest use of the term 'kerne' traced in Uriel was in 1329 when twenty-nine of 'the satellites of the lord, John de Bermingham, earl of Louth, who are called kernes' were murdered by the inhabitants of Ardee in the prelude to the Braganstown massacre. It is very likely that de Bermingham imported these kernes from Offaly when he was made earl of Louth in 1319.<sup>92</sup>

The leading men of Uriel also avoided 'degeneracy' by not patronising the Gaelic learned classes. Uriel as a whole, indeed, seems to have been something of a cultural backwater at this time, with only a handful of praise poems surviving in honour of the Mac Mahons and O'Hanlons and none at all addressed to the Anglo-Irish gentry of the area. The single example of Anglo-Irish patronage of Gaelic learning is again provided by John de Bermingham. He was being entertained at Braganstown by the best harpist of his day, Mulroney Mac Carrol, when his angry and murderous tenants arrived at the gates.<sup>93</sup>

The Braganstown massacre of 1329 provides a fitting conclusion to this essay, illuminating as it does some of the important themes in the nature of relations between the two cultures in this period of Uriel's history. The local resentment which in part led to de Bermingham's murder, was fuelled by what the Anglo-Irish of Uriel saw as his willingness to compromise with Gaelic-Irish practices. His use of kernes and his patronage of the Gaelic learned classes were habits acquired in the marches of Offaly. What was acceptable there was intolerable in Uriel.<sup>94</sup> What gave Uriel its special character at this time was not the fact that it contained within it a march or border, as these were to be found in many other parts of Ireland. Nor was it because its Anglo-Irish inhabitants were self-reliant and hostile to outsiders, be they Gaelic-Irish chiefs, Dublin government officials or 'blow in' Anglo-Irish magnates, although it may have exhibited these characteristics more strongly than other areas of the lordship. Finally, what made medieval Uriel so remarkable and so unusual was the fact that the march strengthened rather than lessened its resistance to compromise.



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## CHAPTER 4

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## CHAPTER 5

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## 4 The Medieval Border

*Anglo-Irish and Gaelic Irish in late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Uriel*

BRENDAN SMITH

Uriel, an area broadly coterminous with the modern County Louth, had been a border-zone or 'debatable land' long before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, but it was only after their appearance that part of it became a march. Many of the earliest Anglo-Norman invaders came from Wales and they brought with them to Ireland the terminology and concepts which they had developed there. Thus the parts of Ireland which they penetrated were labelled by them as either *terra pacis*, 'land of peace', *terra guerrae*, 'land of war', or *marchia*, 'march'. The first they had already conquered, the second they had not. The third they believed they were on the point of subjugating. The use of 'peace' and 'war' in this context can be misleading. It was not necessarily the case that the 'land of peace' witnessed less violence and warfare than the 'land of war'. What those who used the terms wished to suggest was that one area enjoyed the 'benefits' of Anglo-Norman rule and the common law, while the other did not. The march, which separated these two areas, was thus a cultural frontier. It divided people who lived under different social, economic and political systems. In Uriel, therefore, the medieval border, the march, has no earlier (or indeed later) equivalents.<sup>1</sup>

The era of territorial expansion by the Anglo-Normans in Uriel was effectively ended by the failure to maintain a permanent military outpost at Clones after 1212. From the 1220's onwards the emphasis shifted to defending the marches. The march as a concept was given a physical shape at Castle Roche in 1236 and Donaghmoine in 1244 and this defensive line held good for most of the next three centuries.<sup>2</sup> With a secure frontier thus established the problem which faced the Anglo-Irish in Uriel was how to exert sufficient control over the Gaelic-Irish clans in the neighbouring 'land of war' to prevent their own territory being attacked. In the period under review this control could be exerted by either the earls of Ulster, the Dublin government or the local gentry. Let us consider each in turn.

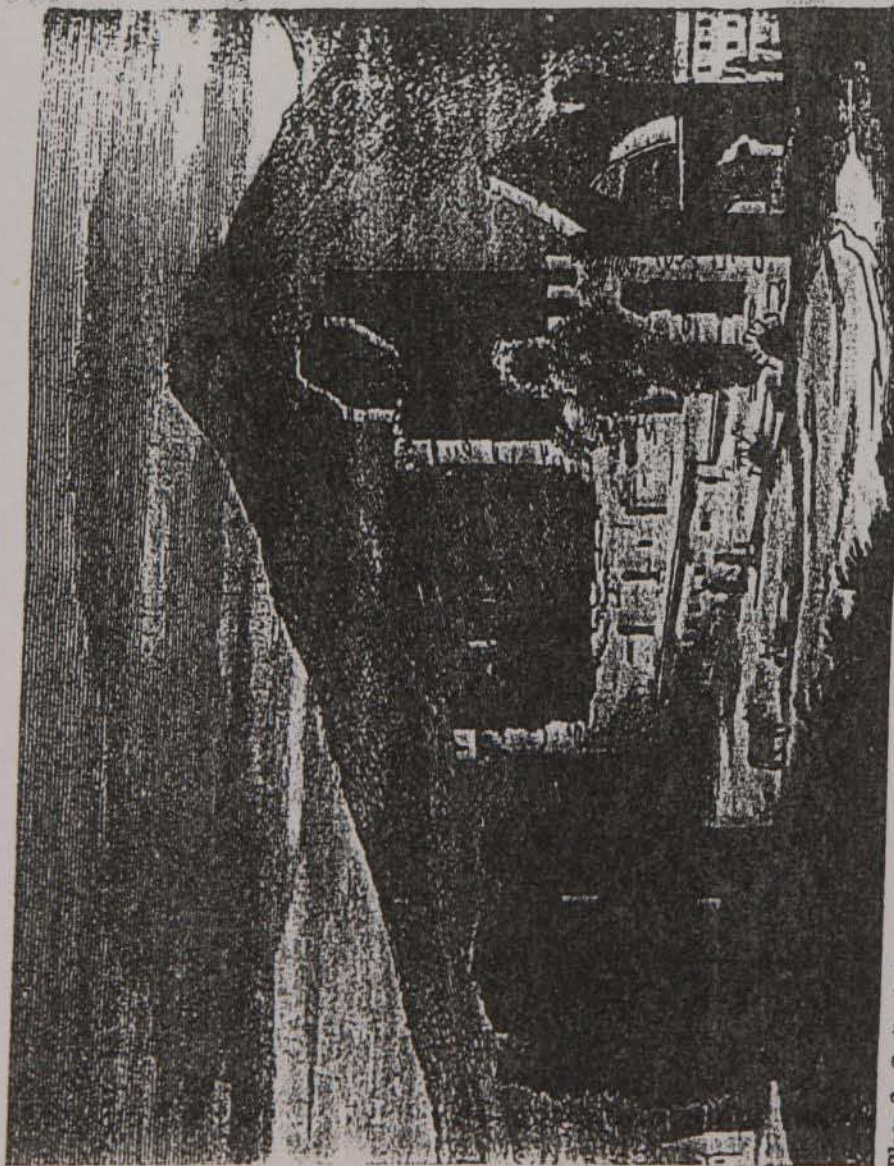


Plate 2: Carlingford Abbey from Dublin Penny Journal, 3 May 1834.





