'Divide and Rule': Factionalism as Royal Policy in the Lordship of Ireland, 1171–1265

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Abstract. Faction and consequent violence are characteristic of lordship in medieval Europe and like societies elsewhere, especially when the central power is weak or remote. The question is whether English kings and their servitors attempted to curb the violent tendencies of their subjects or rather exploited factionalism to manage their barons and prevent the rise of 'over-mighty' subjects. Here the late twelfth and first half of the thirteenth centuries are closely examined. The conclusion is that English kings did indeed use faction to manipulate their barons.

Key words: conquest, faction, baronage, barons' wars, Henry II, king John, Henry III, Strongbow, de Lacy, de Burgh, de Braose, Marshal, Butler, Uí Chonchobair, Connacht, Geraldines, de Montfort.

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The adventurers who sailed across the Irish Sea in great numbers from the late 1160s seeking land and fortune in Ireland could not, perhaps, afford to be the most genial of men. Ambition may have been the motor of conquest, but it would not have taken them far had it not been backed up by a certain flintiness of character, great tenacity, and a willingness to use violence and withstand fierce reprisals.[1] These were possibly the attributes that one of the pioneers of the invasion, Maurice fitz Gerald (†1176), sought from his men when, besieged in Dublin, he reminded them: 'Fellow soldiers, it is not a call to luxury and ease that has brought us to this land'.[2] The principal narrative sources on the invasion

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1. For a stimulating *exposé* of the mentality of the invaders in Britain and Ireland, see R. R. Davies, *Domination and conquest: the experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, 1100–1300* (Cambridge 1990) 25–46. For the wider European experience see Robert Bartlett, *The making of Europe: conquest, colonization and cultural change* (London 1993) 85–105; Alexander Murray, *Reason and society in the middle ages* (Oxford 1978) 81–109.

2. Giraldus Cambrensis, *Expugnatio hibernica: the conquest of Ireland*, New History of Ireland [hereafter NHI], Ancillary Publications 3, ed. A. B. Scott & F. X. Martin (Dublin 1978) 81. Elsewhere, Gerald is scathing about those he considers inadequate frontiersmen *(marchiones)*: ibid. 191, 239–41. Even his lighter tales of the invaders show up their hardiness. Neither a day's drinking, nor a night 'enjoying the delights of the bridal bed', deterred a crapulent Raymond 'le Gros' from rising on the morning after his wedding to Strongbow's sister in order to confront Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht (ibid. 141).

tend to coat events in a more romantic vocabulary that celebrates the daring exploits of courageous invaders against a savage enemy. No doubt these tales of valour capture much of the invaders' spirit, not least how they wished to be remembered;[3] but occasionally they also display the grittier side of the story. In an unusually frank passage, Gerald de Barri, not usually one to sympathise with the Gaelic Irish, talks of the conquest in terms of a 'bloodstained acquisition of land, secured at the cost of great bloodshed and the slaughter of a Christian people'.[4]

The catastrophic social impact of the invasion of Ireland has only recently come back onto the agenda of historians.[5] For various reasons, some embedded in the politics of modern Ireland, much of the earlier historiography is conspicuously unspattered by blood.[6] Still, the story of the foreign penetration of Ire-

3. See the many pen-portraits and 'speeches' in the narratives of the invasion: *Expugnatio hibernica* [hereafter EH], 33–39, 47–53, 57–65, 77, 81–82, 87–88, 119–21, 153–61, 169–73, 179–81, 193; Evelyn Mullally (ed), *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland (La geste des Engleis en Yrlande): a new edition of the chronicle formerly known as the Song of Dermot and the earl* (Dublin 2002) lines 445–62, 530–45, 600–09, 664–783, 1392–1409, 1600–03, 1644–55, 1674–1711, 1800–30, 1939–56, 2230–38, 2273–6, 2282–9, 2333–58, 2379–98, 2547–64, 2826–8, 3038–55. The earlier edition, G. H. Orpen (ed & tr), *The song of Dermot and the earl: an Old French poem about the coming of the Normans to Ireland* (Oxford 1892) remains invaluable for its notes and map.

4. EH 157.

5. This change of emphasis in no way devalues the scholarly achievements of many others who have laboured on the period, but see for instance: Davies, *Domination and conquest*; idem, *The first English empire: power and identities in the British Isles, 1093–1343* (Oxford 2000); Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales, 1146–1223* (Oxford 1982), especially 158–77; John Gillingham, 'The English invasion of Ireland', in Gillingham, *The English in the twelfth century: imperialism, national identity, and political values* (Woodbridge 2000) 145–60 (first published in B. Bradshaw, A. Hadfield & W. Maley (ed), *Representing Ireland: literature and the origins of conflict, 1534–1660* (Cambridge 1993) 24–42); idem, 'Conquering the barbarians: war and chivalry in twelfth-century Britain and Ireland', in *English in the twelfth century*, 41–58 (first published in *Haskins Soc J* 4 (1992) 67–84); Emmett O'Byrne, *War, politics and the Irish of Leinster* (Dublin 2003) 12–14.

6. Brendan Bradshaw discusses the effect of 'filtering out the trauma' of Irish history in a now-famous article, 'Nationalism and historical scholarship in modern Ireland', in Ciaran Brady (ed), *Interpreting Irish history: the debate on historical revisionism, 1938–1994* (Dublin 1994) 191–216: 201 (first published in *Ir Hist Stud* 26 (1988–9) 329–51). Many of his comments on the historiography of the post–1534 period should resonate with students of the earlier conquest that occurred from the 1160s. With reference to Bradshaw, John Gillingham has commented that such 'tacit evasion' reflects the 'discomfiture of historians in general—not just "revisionist Irish historians"—when faced by the violence of history': Gillingham, 'Killing and mutilating political enemies in the British Isles from the late twelfth to the early fourteenth century: a comparative study', in Brendan Smith (ed), *Britain and Ireland, 900–1300* (Cambridge 1999) 114–34: 134.

land is extremely involved. The picture is infinitely more complex than that of a Gaelic nation pitted against a unified body of rapacious invaders. One such knotty intricacy is the extent to which the settlers directed their aggression against one another in the century after the invasion. Granted, they saved their worst excesses for the 'barbarian' native population, rather than each other. They were steeped in what John Gillingham has called, 'that little known aspect of the revolution of 1066 ... chivalry'.[7] But there was still considerable friction between groups of colonists in the first century after the invasion, leading to some spectacularly unchivalrous acts, such as the attack on Richard Marshal, earl of Pembroke and lord of Leinster, in 1234, that led to his death.[8] Factionalism, therefore, is an important and relatively neglected strand of the colony's early history.

Neglected perhaps, but not totally ignored. Indeed, factionalism featured in the first great modern debate on the period in the early decades of the twentieth century. G. H. Orpen argued in his masterpiece *Ireland under the Normans* that the invasion brought a measure of peace and stability to an otherwise devastatingly violent Ireland, ushering in what he called a *Pax normannica*.[9] It was this most familiar (though perhaps somewhat rickety) of Orpen's hobby-horses that another titan, Eoin MacNeill, went to considerable trouble to dismantle. Mac-Neill emphasised the turbulence of the invaders and suggested—in a surfeit of irony—that when Orpen had described the Gaelic chiefs as 'always killing one

Still, there can be little doubt that political sensitivities added to the unease of historians and the popularity of the relatively sanitised theme of institutional history. In this context, it is striking that the account that brings us closest to the human experience of the conquest in Ireland is the series of comparative lectures delivered in Belfast by a Welshman in 1988: Davies, *Domination and conquest*. The invasion of Ireland still awaits a sensitive treatment equivalent to that which Davies provides for Wales in *The age of conquest: Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford 2000) esp. 82–107 (first published as *Conquest, coexistence and change: Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford 1987)).

7. John Gillingham, 'The introduction of chivalry into England', in Gillingham, *English in the twelfth century* 209–31: 209 (first published in George Garnett & John Hudson (ed), *Law and government in medieval England and Normandy: essays in honour of Sir James Holt* (Cambridge 1994) 31–55).

8. Gillingham, 'Killing and mutilating political enemies', 125.

9. For the phrase 'Pax normannica', see Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans* [hereafter *Normans*] (4 vols, Oxford 1911–20; repr. Dublin 2006), ii 323; iv 262; idem, 'The effects of Norman rule in Ireland, 1169–1333', *Am Hist Rev* 19 (1914) 245–56: 249; idem, 'Ireland to 1315', in J. R. Tanner, C. W. Previté-Orton & Z. N. Brooke (ed), *The Cambridge medieval history*, vii: *decline of empire and papacy* (Cambridge 1932) 527–47: 546.

another', he had possibly confused them with the ruling English dynasty, the Plantagenets.[10]

Of course, it would be easy, in reaction to Orpen, to overstate the disorderliness of the newcomers to Ireland. They were not merely freebooters, nor did personal ambition override all other concerns. For one thing, they were bound together by the allegiance they owed to the king of England, a fact impressed on them by the royal expeditions of Henry II in 1171–72 and king John in 1210. Equally, their vulnerable situation in an often-hostile country could galvanise them into unity in times of crisis.[11] Added to this were more immediate loyalties, such as kinship, tenurial dependence and military service, which must have created firm, though by no means immutable,[12] bonds within groups of settlers. The Geraldines are famously eulogised as the heroes of Gerald de Barri's *Expugnatio hibernica*, and for all the author's hyperbole, the family's delight in its mixed heritage—'deriving its valour from the Trojans and its skill in the use of arms from the French'—must have been real.[13] This pride in kin or common

10. Eoin MacNeill, *Phases of Irish history* (Dublin 1919) 312. F. J. Byrne commented equally wryly that a 'cynic would be tempted to say merely that feudal anarchy had replaced tribal': NHI ii 5. Orpen's views on the dissensions within the lordship of Ireland are expressed most succinctly in the conclusion to volume iv of his *magnum opus*, published after MacNeill's attack, where he says: 'Some quarrels and consequent disturbances arose among the Anglo-Irish lords, but they were few and trivial as compared with the devastating conflicts of former Irish chiefs, or even with the discords and risings against the crown of their English compeers. On the whole the barons of Ireland stood by each other and were conspicuous for their loyalty to the king of England (*Normans,* iv 263). For a discussion of Orpen and his critics, see Seán Duffy, 'Historical revisit: Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans, 1169–1333* (1911–20)', *Ir Hist Stud* 32 (2000) 246–59; Robin Frame, 'The "failure" of the first English conquest of Ireland', *Ireland and Britain, 1170–1450* [hereafter *Ire & Brit*] (London & Rio Grande 1998) 1–13: 2–3; Marie Therese Flanagan, 'Strategies of lordship in pre-Norman and post-Norman Leinster', in Christopher Harper-Bill (ed), *Anglo-Norman Studies* 20 [hereafter *ANS*] (Woodbridge 1998) 107–26: 107–10.

11. As, for instance, when Strongbow answered a request for military aid from Hugh de Lacy's tenant, Hugh Tyrel of Castleknock: *Deeds of the Normans*, lines 3260–3339. For Hugh Tyrel, see Eric St John Brooks, 'The grant of Castleknock to Hugh Tyrel', *J Roy Soc Antiq Ire* 63 (1933) 206–20; idem, 'The Tyrels of Castleknock', ibid. 76 (1946) 151–54.

12. For a discussion of the fragility of such bonds in a tenants' market, see Brendan Smith, 'Tenure and locality in north Leinster', in T. B. Barry, Robin Frame & Katharine Simms (ed), *Colony and frontier in medieval Ireland: essays presented to J. F. Lydon,* (London 1995) 29–40: 30–34; idem, *Colonisation and conquest: the English in Louth, 1170–1330* (Cambridge 1999) 37–42.

13. EH 49, 157–59 (quotation at 157), 169–71. For a reconsideration of the pedigree of earliest Geraldines with aspects relevant to Ireland, see Nicholas Vincent, 'Warin and Henry fitz Gerald, the king's chamberlains: the origins of the FitzGeralds revisited', in Christopher Harper-Bill (ed),

origin gave rise to the war cries used by the invaders, such as 'Cogan' and 'Saint David'.[14] Similarly, the distribution of land by the likes of Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare, alias 'Strongbow' (†1176), in Leinster,[15] and Hugh I de Lacy (†1186) in Meath[16] created ties of dependence and mutual support. When Strongbow faced Henry II's wrath at Newnham, Gloucestershire, in 1171 for his actions in Ireland, we are told that the 'noble earl, who was so valiant, came into the presence of his lord with his friends and supporters'.[17] Enfeoffment was only one way in which personal devotion to a lord could be repaid, although in Ireland, where for a time land was a commodity in abundance, it was the obvious way to supplement other rewards for service such as administrative office, money and protection. William Marshal (†1219), lord of Leinster, arrived in Ireland in 1207 supported by an affinity of knights, many of whom had no tenurial connection him until he granted them lands in Ireland.[18] Bonds such as these were given physical expression by heraldic insignia, such as the eagles painted on John de Courcy's shield as he marched north with his band of supporters to conquer

ANS 21 (Woodbridge 1999) 233–60, esp. 248–51.

14. *Deeds of the Normans*, lines 744–53, 986–87, 1678–79, 1919–24, 1935–38, 3441–53.

15. ibid. lines 3058–3125; *Normans*, i 367–98; B. Eagar, 'The Cambro-Normans and the lordship of Leinster', in John Bradley (ed), *Settlement and society in medieval Ireland: studies presented to F. X. Martin, o.s.a.* (Kilkenny 1988) 193–205; Marie Therese Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship: interactions in Ireland in the late twelfth century* [hereafter *Irish society*] (Oxford 1989) 155–61.

16. *Deeds of the Normans*, lines 3126–75, 3220–29; Robert Bartlett, 'Colonial aristocracies of the high middle ages', in R. Bartlett & A. MacKay (ed), *Medieval frontier societies* (Oxford 1989) 24–47: 35–41.

17. *Deeds of the Normans*, lines 2227–32 (where the meeting is located at Pembroke; cf. EH 89, 309 n 134; *Normans*, i 249 n 1; Flanagan, *Irish society*, 120). There are many similar examples of group solidarity. At the siege of Dublin, Strongbow relied on the advice of his councillors, many of whom are listed and afterwards described as 'close allies': *Deeds of the Normans*, lines 1796–1818. When Robert fitz Stephen had to answer before Henry II at Waterford, he 'folded his glove and handed it at once to the king .... At once, many Frenchmen, Flemings and Normans stood surety for him' (ibid. lines 2639–46). Likewise, Maurice de Prendergast gave Strongbow his glove 'to show that he would defend himself in court regarding any wrong he had done. Many of the renowned English vassals stood surety for him': ibid. lines 2147–52.

18. David Crouch, *William Marshal: knighthood, war and chivalry, 1147–1219* (2nd ed. London 2002) 113–4, 143–52, 166–76; idem, 'Debate—bastard feudalism revised: comment 1', *Past & Present* 131 (1991) 165–203: 172–73; David Crouch, 'From Stenton to McFarlane: models of societies of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', *Trans Roy Hist Soc ser6* 5 (1995) 179–200: 194–7. See also, S. L. Waugh, 'Tenure to contract: lordship and clientage in thirteenth-century England', *Engl Hist Rev* 101 (1986) 811–39; and more generally Michael Hicks, *Bastard feudalism* (London & New York 1995) 19–27.

Ulaid, or those of the Geraldines whom William fitz Audelin saw upon his arrival 'mounted on splendid horses, having donned shields bearing the same device'.[19] The evidence for group solidarity is compelling, but this very cohesion created the circumstances in which rival groups could come to blows. According to Gerald, when William fitz Audelin saw the Geraldines practising their horsemanship, 'he turned to his own followers and said and in a lowered tone of voice, "I will soon put an end to this arrogance and disperse those shields"'.[20]

Gerald's persecution complex may have been at the core of this particular antagonism, but the general fact that different groups of invaders could come into conflict should occasion little surprise. A scramble for land, power, and supporters was at the heart of the invasion, and it was almost inevitable that the 'plural attachments' of the invaders would spawn tensions and rivalries.[21] Favour bestowed may have won men's adherence, but favour denied—whether land, office, or a good marriage—could create enemies and send men seeking a new lord.[22] Nor is the fact that the settlers took matters into their own hands particularly astounding. In the Welsh March, whence many of them came, the right to wage private war was a jealously guarded liberty, and one that lords used to frontier conditions would no doubt have liked to carry in their baggage to the more remote colony across the Irish Sea.[23] The development of centralised royal institutions in Ireland and the entrenchment of that 'increasingly demanding mistress', the common law, soon blocked off self-help as a legitimate avenue for redressing grievances.[24] But this very growth in royal power, which gave the king

19. EH 169, 175. On heraldic insignia see Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven CO & London 1984) 125–42; David Crouch, *The image of aristocracy in Britain, 1000–1300* (London & New York 1992) 220–51.

20. EH 169.

21. The phrase is Keith Stringer's in 'Social and political communities in European history: some reflections on recent studies', in Claus Björn, Alexander Grant & Keith Stringer (ed), *Nations, nationalism and patriotism in the European past* (Copenhagen 1994) 9–34: 10.

22. For the politicised marriage market, see EH 139–43; *Deeds of the Normans,* lines 2739–44, 2815–58, 3008–37.

23. R. R. Davies, 'The law of the march', *Welsh Hist Rev* 5 (1970–71) 1–30: 15, 17; idem, 'Kings, lords and liberties in the March of Wales', *Trans Roy Hist Soc ser5* 29 (1979) 41–61: 41, 56; idem, *Age of conquest,* 284–87; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The constitutional position of the great lordships of south Wales', *Trans Roy Hist Soc ser5* 8 (1958) 1–20: 15–17.

24. The phrase is Robin Frame's and occurs in 'War and peace in the medieval lordship of Ireland, 1272–1377', *Ire & Brit,* 221–39: 235 (first published in James Lydon (ed), *The English in medieval Ireland* (Dublin 1984) 118–41). The theme itself has a longer history and recurs in many works on the period, for instance: A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'Knight service in Ireland', *J Roy Soc Antiq Ir* 89 (1959) 1–15: 13–15; eadem, 'The constitutional position of the great lordships of

leverage on his subjects in Ireland, was in fact central to the problem of factionalism in Ireland.

If the invaders' propensity to come to blows explains itself readily enough, the role played by the king of England, who was usually the ultimate power in Ireland, may seem rather more problematic.[25] The belief that the cure for factious politics was a king prepared to devote time and energy to cutting back Ireland's 'overgrown feudalism' has a distinctly musty air to it these days.[26] Such a strict

south Wales', 12–14; eadem, *A history of medieval Ireland* [hereafter *Ireland*] (London 1968, repr. Dublin 1980) 188; G. J. Hand, *English law in Ireland, 1290–1324* (Cambridge 1967) 1–5; R. R. Davies, 'The law of the march', 27; idem, *Domination & conquest*, 73–74; Robin Frame, *Colonial Ireland, 1169–1369* (Dublin 1981) 105–06; idem, *The political development of the British Isles, 1100–1400* (Oxford 1990) 85–86; idem, 'Aristocracies and the political configuration of the British Isles', *Ire & Brit*, 151–69: 164–65 (first published in R. R. Davies (ed), *The British Isles: comparisons, contrasts and connections* (Edinburgh 1988) 141–59); idem, '*Les Engleys nées en Irlande*: the English political identity in medieval Ireland', *Ire & Brit*, 131–50: 134–35 (first published in *Trans Roy Hist Soc ser*6 3 (1993) 83–103); idem, 'Exporting state and nation: being English in medieval Ireland', in L. E. Scales & O. Zimmer, *Power and the nation in European history* (Cambridge 2005) 143–65: 145–47. The point has been hammered home so firmly that the assumption that this development was utterly inevitable is hard to resist. Liberty jurisdictions were not, however, precisely defined until 1205 in Ulster and 1208 in Leinster and Meath, when it was accepted that cross lands were reserved to the crown, royal justices had to be admitted to hear the four pleas, and actions could be taken on appeal to the royal courts. Before this, the lords of these liberties—although they owed knight service—may have had much greater freedom of action (see H. S. Sweetman (ed), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1171–1307* [hereafter CDI] (5 vols, London 1875–86), i §§263, 381–82; *Normans*, ii 233–34; cf. Otway-Ruthven, *Ireland*, 182–87; eadem, 'Knight service in Ireland', 1–3). Moreover, while the thirteenth century witnessed greater articulation of royal power, it was also the 'age of definition' of liberties in the Welsh March, in *response* to the assertiveness of Henry III in particular (see Davies, 'Kings, lords and liberties in the March of Wales', 53–59; idem, *Age of conquest*, 287–88). Counter-factual speculation is dangerous, but without the concessions to royal power in 1205–08, the lords in Ireland might have tried to articulate and defend much greater jurisdictional immunity.

25. For most of this period, the king of England was also 'dominus Hibernie'. Even when the lordship of Ireland was granted to another—for instance to John in 1177 and to the Lord Edward in 1254—it has been argued that supreme authority remained with the head of the Plantagenet dominions. See Flanagan, *Irish society*, 273–84; Seán Duffy, 'John and Ireland: the origins of England's Irish problem', in S. D. Church (ed), *King John: new interpretations* (Woodbridge 1999) 221–45: 234, 237–8; James Lydon, 'Ireland and the English crown, 1171–1541', *Ir Hist Stud* 29 (1995) 281–94: 281–82.

26. Quotation from Edmund Curtis, *A history of mediaeval Ireland from 1110 to 1513* (1st ed. Dublin 1927) 108. See also the second edition, where Curtis talks of a 'colonial faction' opposed to royal government, as though there was no conflict of interests between colonists: Curtis, *A history of medieval Ireland from 1086 to 1513* (2nd ed. Dublin 1938) 104. Musty or not, such ideas have been surprisingly resilient. W. L. Warren in particular had a negative view of baronial power. He compared John's failure in 1185 to 'impose himself on insubordinate barons' with that of king

demarcation between royal and magnate interests masks the extent to which the king himself could constitute a faction, albeit a supremely powerful one. Far from attempting to resolve contentions within the Irish baronage, the crown frequently acted as a catalyst for violence. The crucial point is that, despite the oft-repeated truism that the invasion was to a large degree a seigneurial initiative, the king retained a vital role. He was necessary to legitimise conquests, and advancement or deprivation came at his behest.[27] If the king sometimes took his shears to baronial power, at other times throughout this period he took care to cultivate it, inevitably sparking tensions between those whose fortunes he tended and others who were less fortunate. This side-effect of patronage was not so extraordinary. The chagrin of a losing party was always the obverse of royal favour. But there was also a more insidious aspect to royal involvement in Ireland, the explanation for which should be sought in the political needs of the moment, rather than in the dutiful concern of a lord of Ireland to provide strong government and restrain the excesses of his magnates. The personalities involved in

Stephen, remarking that 'the consequence then had been anarchy and civil war': Warren, 'John in Ireland, 1185', in J. Bossy & P. Jupp (ed), *Essays presented to Michael Roberts* (Belfast 1976) 11–23: 23. He expresses similar, though developing, views elsewhere: 'The interpretation of twelfth-century Irish history', in J. C. Beckett (ed), *Historical Studies* vii (London 1969) 1–19: 17–18; 'The historian as "private eye"', in J. G. Barry (ed), *Historical Studies* ix (Belfast 1974) 1–18: 14–17; 'King John and Ireland', in James Lydon (ed), *England and Ireland in the later middle ages: essays in honour of Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven* (Dublin 1981) 26–42: 26–27, 32–33, 35–36. Even as Warren was writing, however, 'anarchic' barons, whether in England or Ireland, were ceasing to be a modish concept, and recently Warren's interpretation of John, particularly his policy towards the native Irish, has come under specific attack from Seán Duffy: Edmund King, 'King Stephen and the Anglo-Norman aristocracy', *History* 59 (1974) 180–94; idem, 'The anarchy of king Stephen's reign', *Trans Roy Hist Soc ser5* 34 (1984) 133–53; Graeme J. White, 'The myth of the anarchy', in Christopher Harper-Bill (ed), *ANS* 22 (Woodbridge 1999) 323–37; David Crouch, *The reign of king Stephen, 1135–1164* (London 2000); D. A. Carpenter, 'Foreword to Yale edition' in W. L. Warren, *King John* (new ed. New Haven CO & London 1997) xi–xii; Robin Frame, *Colonial Ireland, 1169–1369* (Dublin 1981) 58–9; Seán Duffy, 'John and Ireland', in Church (ed), *King John: new interpretations*, 221–45. On the other hand, in 1989, Marie Therese Flanagan echoed Warren's comment about king Stephen's reign when she talked of the Anglo-Norman adventurers trying to recreate in Ireland the 'old world' of aristocratic power that prevailed before Henry II's accession: *Irish society*, 304. Similarly, James Lydon can still talk of a policy of safeguarding the king's rights 'in the face of feudal autonomy', the result of which was good government and order: *The lordship of Ireland in the middle ages* (2nd ed. Dublin 2003) 66–74: 73.

27. See Robert Bartlett's comment on the situation after Henry II's expedition of 1171–72: '[T]he intervention of the English Crown transformed the situation. The new men in Ireland relied upon *Königsnähe*, nearness to the king, not nearness to Ireland, as the basis of their Irish involvement': 'Colonial aristocracies', in Bartlett & MacKay (ed), *Medieval frontier societies*, 30.

Ireland were of sufficient prestige on both sides of the Irish Sea to warrant close attention from the king. Political dramas involving not just England, but also Wales and occasionally Scotland, frequently had an Irish dimension in which the stakes for the king were high.[28] Pressing engagements elsewhere meant that personal interventions by the king in Ireland were rare in the extreme. He therefore protected his interests, in part, by promoting segmentary quarrels among his subjects for his own ends. Such was the thinking behind the territorial power-checks created by the king, and, when these proved insufficient, the use of one magnate to wage war on another.

This bald and rather cynical statement requires immediate modification. While many acts of patronage, for instance large speculative grants of land, were insensitive to the niceties of colonial politics, they can still be shown to have been dictated, at some level, by strategic imperatives and the need for security. Yet, too forgiving an assessment upsets the balance in the other direction. It is probably fairer to risk a charge of equivocation and admit that royal motives were complex and that any one deed could serve multiple ends. A single grant could satisfy both defensive requirements and, simultaneously, the desire to reward one subject and exclude another. Where to place the emphasis can simply be a matter of perspective. From the angle of king and subject at least, it seems relatively clear that recipients of royal largesse were often deemed suitable precisely because existing baronial rivalries would make them eager to act against perceived threats to the king's interests within the colony.

'Royal policy', unless it is understood quite loosely, is far too grand a term for such an extemporary method of government. Still, it provides as coherent a model of behaviour as the bewildering muddle of sudden interventions, short-term expedients, and longer periods of neglect that Irish historians have found so unflattering, and that otherwise make the term 'royal policy' seem like an oxymoron. Admittedly, factionalism as policy seems reckless for a number of reasons. Firstly, it ran directly contrary to the concept of the king as the keeper of peace and an arbiter, rather than promoter, of disputes. It could also be argued

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28. This basic lesson permeates many of the works by Robin Frame, but see in particular, 'Aristocracies and the political configuration of the British Isles', *Ire & Brit*, 151–69 (first published in R. R. Davies (ed), *The British Isles: contrasts, comparisons and connections* (Edinburgh 1988) 141–59); idem, *The political development of the British Isles, 1100–1400* (Oxford 1990) 53–63. In nearly every one of the episodes described below there is a clear 'British Isles' context. The emphasis in this essay is necessarily on curial politics and the king's motives, but this is not intended to disguise the fact that detailed elaboration of the broader context would illuminate the problem of factionalism in the Irish colony still further.

that it was counter-productive in practical terms, since the king's natural instrument of government in a remote land like Ireland was the nobility. Perhaps these are rational responses, and certainly they did not have to await modern historians to find voice.[29] But they are also unrealistic.[30] Switching sides in a game of historiographical mud-slinging, so that the king, rather than his barons, becomes the prime target, is hardly a sensible approach. It is not my purpose to portray a scheming English king as the villain lurking behind every instance of factionalism in Ireland. There were many reasons for friction without any royal stimulus. It is the interplay between royal needs and factious colonial politics, from the expedition of Henry II in 1171–72 to the end of the Barons' Wars in England in 1265, that is the theme of this essay.

Within the first few months of royal intervention in Ireland, there was already a first glimpse of what was to become a pattern of behaviour. Henry II's motives in sailing to Ireland in 1171 were complex. The expedition may, in part, have been fuelled by a desire to see Ireland added to the Angevin *imperium*. But the chronicler Gervase of Canterbury alone provides three other reasons, and of these three he devotes the most space (if not the most importance) to the pressing need Henry felt to rein in the ambitions of Strongbow who, according to another chronicler, William of Newburgh, was already exercising near regal power.[31] This Henry did with great success. Personal intervention was, however,

29. Want of justice and the undermining of long-term residents of Ireland are both grievances levelled by Gerald de Barri against Angevin rulers. See, generally, Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 22–25, 62, 65–66, and in an Irish context, EH 131, 239–41, 245. The importance of the aristocracy as agents of conquest is reflected in the opinion of a Latin annalist that with Hugh I de Lacy's death in 1186 'ibi cessavit conquestus': J. T. Gilbert (ed), 'Annales Hibernie' [hereafter AHib], *Chartulary of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, RS 80 (2 vols, London 1884–6) ii 303–98: 305; likewise see Richard Butler (ed), *Jacobi Grace Kilkenniensis Annales Hibernie* [hereafter AGrace], Irish Archaeological Society (Dublin 1842) 19: 'the subjugation of Ireland went no further'.

30. J. E. A. Jolliffe, *Angevin kingship* (London 1955); J. C. Holt, *Magna carta* (2nd ed. Cambridge 1992) 123–87; D. A. Carpenter, 'Justice and jurisdiction under king John and Henry III', *The reign of Henry III* (London & Rio Grande 1996) 17–43; D. A. Carpenter, 'Kings, magnates and society: the personal rule of Henry III', ibid. 75–106 (first published in *Speculum* 60 (1985) 39–70).

31. Gervase's other two reasons were an appeal made by Gaelic kings to Henry II about his subjects and (most importantly for a monk of Canterbury) Henry's desire to avoid the papal backlash from the death of archbishop Thomas Becket: *The historical works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. William Stubbs, RS 73 (2 vols, London 1879–80), i 234–5; Flanagan, *Irish society*, 169; William of Newburgh, 'Historia rerum anglicarum', *Chronicles of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, ed. Richard Howlett, RS 82 (4 vols, London 1884–9), i 168: 'jam paene regnantem'.

no long-term remedy. What was required was tangible insurance against renewed attempts by Strongbow to aggrandise. Henry had already seized Dublin and the other coastal towns into his hands,[32] and once in Ireland he took many of the invaders into his service, 'his purpose being to strengthen his party and weaken that of the earl [Strongbow]'.[33] But as Henry prepared to embark for England in April 1172, he carefully pondered what else he should do to ensure the security of his new acquisition.[34] The solution he hit upon was to bestow the Gaelic kingdom of Mide (Meath) on Hugh I de Lacy, a lavish grant with grave implications for Gaelic Ireland, but which primarily acted as a counterbalance to the power Strongbow enjoyed in Leinster.[35] As has been pointed out, the careers of de Lacy and Strongbow were strikingly different.[36] Strongbow, long frustrated in his desire to use the comital title of Pembroke that king Stephen (1135–54)

The view that Strongbow's success meant that an otherwise reluctant Henry II 'felt obliged to intervene personally' in Ireland has been the orthodoxy for many decades, but the argument is marshalled most forcefully in the many writings of Marie Therese Flanagan: 'Strongbow, Henry II and the Anglo-Norman intervention in Ireland', in *War and government in the middle ages: essays presented to J. O. Prestwich* (Woodbridge 1984) 62–77: 67–70, 77 (quotation at 68); *Irish society*, 119–22, 161–62; H. C. G. Matthew & Brian Harrison (ed), *Oxford dictionary of national biography in association with the British Academy: from the earliest times to the year 2000* [hereafter *Oxford DNB*] (60 vols, Oxford 2004), xi s. n. 'Clare, Richard fitz Gilbert de'. A contrary opinion, long ago expressed among others by Orpen (*Normans*, i 81–82) and recently endorsed by Seán Duffy, is reflected in some of the recent comments on the invasion: Duffy, 'Historical revisit: Goddard Henry Orpen', 255–56; idem, *Ireland in the middle ages* (Dublin 1997) 69–70; John Gillingham, *The Angevin empire* (2nd ed. London & New York 2001) 27–28; D. A. Carpenter, *The struggle for mastery: Britain, 1066–1284* (London 2003) 217–18; Peter Crooks, 'Anglo-Irish relations', in Seán Duffy (ed), *Medieval Ireland: an encyclopedia* (New York 2005) 16. Further research is bound to emphasise that the two views are, in fact, consonant with each other.

   32. EH 89; Seán Duffy 'Ireland's Hastings: the Anglo-Norman conquest of Dublin', *ANS* 20 (Woodbridge 1998) 69–85: 80; idem, 'Town and crown: the kings of England and their city of Dublin', in Michael Prestwich, Richard Britnell & Robin Frame (ed), *Thirteenth century England, x: proceedings of the Durham Conference 2003* (Woodbridge 2005) 95–117: 96.

   33. EH 103.

   34. EH 105.

   35. *Normans*, i 285–6; James Mills & M. J. McEnery (ed), *Calendar of the Gormanston register from the original in the possession of the right honourable the viscount of Gormanston* (Dublin 1916) 6, 177; *Deeds of the Normans,* lines 2723–30; EH 105; *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene,* ed. William Stubbs, RS 51 (4 vols, London 1868–71), ii 34. For comment see Bartlett, 'Colonial aristocracies', in Bartlett & MacKay (ed), *Medieval frontier societies*, 31; F. X. Martin in NHI ii 96; EH 317 n 187

   36. Bartlett, 'Colonial aristocracies', 30–31.

had granted his father in 1138,[37] was a stark contrast to de Lacy, whose family had, in that very same year, attached themselves to the Angevin cause of Henry II's mother, the empress Matilda.[38] In the event, there was little opportunity for rivalry to develop between the two men. De Lacy left Ireland in 1172 and spent most of the next years until 1177 in the king's household. By the time he returned to Ireland for any extended period, Strongbow was dead.[39] Nonetheless, Henry II's grant of Meath to de Lacy is important because it is the first statement of a significant leitmotiv of the period: that of granting lands to one vassal in order to constrain the ambitions of another.

There may have been little occasion for hostility to arise between these two men, but lower down the social ladder there is evidence that the pioneers of the colony resented the way that newcomers capitalised on their hard-won conquests. This is typified by Gerald de Barri's bilious comments about William fitz Audelin, who served as Henry II's agent in Ireland several times in the decade 1171–81.[40] Never one short of pejoratives, Gerald remarked that: 'His outward appearance was that of a generous and easy-going man, but ... he was always a snake lurking in the grass, offering men poison under the guise of honey'.[41] This hostility sprang from a series of grievances against fitz Audelin, primarily the removal of Wicklow castle from the sons of Maurice fitz Gerald at their father's death.[42] It is, of course, not incidental that Gerald himself was a close kinsman of the aggrieved party, but if anything this relationship adds weight to his opinion, since it provides an insider's view of the antagonism that a long-term colonist might feel for a newcomer.

Similar expressions of disenchantment characterise the period after the 1185 expedition of Henry's fourth son John, who had been lord of Ireland since 1177,

37. Michael Altschul, *A baronial family in England: the Clares, 1217–1314* (Baltimore ML 1965) 21–22; Flanagan, 'Strongbow, Henry II and Anglo-Norman intervention in Ireland', 63–65; eadem, *Irish society*, 113–16.

38. W. E. Wightman, *The Lacy family in England and Normandy, 1066–1194* (Oxford 1966) 186–87; Crouch, *The reign of king Stephen*, 79 n 21, 80 n 24.

39. EH 165–67. For the dating of Strongbow's death, see Flanagan, *Oxford DNB*, xi 766. Marie Therese Flanagan has shown that Hugh de Lacy cannot be described as chief governor until at least 1181: *Irish society*, 298–301; eadem, 'Household favourites: Angevin royal agents in Ireland under Henry II and John', in Alfred P. Smyth (ed), *Seanchas: studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin 2000) 357–80: 366–68.

40. On fitz Audelin, see Marie Therese Flanagan, *Oxford DNB*, lix s. n. 'William fitz Audelin'; eadem, *Irish society*, 231–32, 278–79, 288–302; eadem, 'Household favourites', 359–68.

41. EH 173.

42. EH 171–73

and was now being primed to be its king.[43] The series of speculative grants John made in 1185 reveals that he intended to reward his own men—among them, Theobald I Walter (†1205), William de Burgh (†1206) and Bertram de Verdon (†1192)—rather than those who had laid the foundations of his putative kingdom of Ireland.[44] Gerald de Barri, who accompanied John on this expedition of 1185, clearly records the tension between those 'slaves to wine and lust'—the new arrivals—and the established colonists, whom he says were treated with malice and disdain.[45] Yet factional conflict cannot be understood solely in terms of a strict, almost taxonomic, distinction between 'newcomer' and 'veteran'. These categories rapidly blurred, and unrest could arise even within the very parties John established in Ireland from 1185. For them, too, favour could be fleeting. C. A. Empey has shown, for instance, how John granted the same piece of land at Iffowyn (around Clonmel, Co Tipperary) to three different parties between 1189 and 1204, when it ended up in the hands of William de Burgh.[46] Land holding in this region was further complicated by the revival in 1201 of the 'honor of Limerick' for the ill-fated William de Braose.[47] This meant that several of those who had previously been tenants-in-chief, for instance Theobald Walter and Philip of Worcester, now held their lands of the new lord of Limerick. The grant had severe ramifications, as is shown in the *Annals of Inisfallen*, which report in 1201: 'Great warfare between Philip of Worcester and Mac Uilliam Hebreus [de Braose] and other foreigners'.[48]

In fact, conflicts such as these had become typical in the years after the 1185 expedition as the second generation of colonists began to come of age. Key players were the sons of Hugh I de Lacy, Walter (†1241) and Hugh II (†1242).

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43. On this expedition, see Duffy, 'John and Ireland', in Church (ed), *King John: new interpretations*, 229–33; W. L. Warren, 'John in Ireland, 1185', in Bossy & Jupp (ed), *Essays presented to Michael Roberts*, 11–23. On John's putative kingship, see Flanagan, *Irish society*, 276–81.

44. Marie Therese Flanagan has compiled twenty-one 'Charters issued by John, lord of Ireland, in 1185' in an appendix to 'Household favourites', 377–80. See also *Normans*, ii 94–95; Otway-Ruthven, *Ireland*, 66–70 (with map at 68); Warren, 'John in Ireland, 1185', 20–21; Duffy, 'John and Ireland', 230–31; C. A. Empey, 'The settlement of the kingdom of Limerick', in J. F. Lydon (ed), *England and Ireland in the later middle ages: essays in honour of Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven* (Dublin 1981) 1–25: 5; Brendan Smith, *Colonization and conquest in medieval Ireland: the English in Louth, 1170–1330* (Cambridge 1999) 29–31.

45. EH 241–5 (quotation at 241); Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 20–25.

46. Empey, 'The settlement of the kingdom of Limerick', in Lydon, *England and Ireland in the later middle ages*, 4–5.

47. CDI i §§146–48.

48. AI 1201.10

The source of contention was a new outlet of expansion: Connacht. Since the beginning of the conquest, Connacht had been considered something of a separate entity, both geographically and politically. The formidable natural boundary of the river Shannon was noted by Giraldus in his *Topographia* as 'separating the fourth and western part of the island from the other three',[49] and it was a foolish newcomer who under-estimated the challenge posed by this geographical hurdle.[50] Politically, Connacht's importance lay in the fact that its king, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, held the high-kingship of Ireland during the initial invasion. It was Hugh I de Lacy's proximity to the king of Connacht, notably his marriage to Ua Conchobair's daughter in 1180, that raised suspicions about him. Strongbow's succession to Diarmait Mac Murchada's kingdom of Leinster was a recent memory. Rumours that de Lacy aspired to make himself king were widespread, and whether or not Henry II put much credence in these, he did feel it necessary to recall de Lacy repeatedly between 1179 and 1184.[51] When he dispatched John to Ireland in 1185, Henry II in some respects intended his son to counterbalance Hugh, in much the same manner as Hugh had acted as a check on Strongbow from 1172. John's expedition was a notorious fiasco, in part at de Lacy's connivance, so it was reputedly a rather gratified Henry II who received the news in 1186 that de Lacy's ambitions had been brought to a rather grisly halt at the end of an axe.[52]

49. Gerald of Wales, *The history and topography of Ireland*, ed. John J. O'Meara (rev. ed. London 1982) 37. Gerald talks of the 'the more remote area [of Ireland] … which lies beyond the Shannon' in EH 249. Helen Perros, 'Crossing the Shannon frontier: Connacht and the Anglo-Normans, 1170–1224', in Barry, Frame & Simms (ed), *Colony and frontier,* 117–38: 117.

50. As an imprudent knight, Geoffrey Judas, found out to his cost near the city of Limerick. He attempted to swim the 'swiftly flowing river with its rough and rocky bed', but was 'snatched to the bottom and overwhelmed by the violent force of the torrent' (EH 151). The *Deeds of the Normans* agrees that Limerick was protected by the Shannon, such that 'none of these people could cross over without a boat or a bridge either in winter or summer except by a difficult ford …. Before they had all crossed, many were drowned that day' (*Deeds of the Normans,* lines 3416–21, 3456–7).

51. EH 191; William of Newburgh, *Chronicles of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I,* i 240; Flanagan, *Irish society,* 263–64.

52. William of Newburgh, *Chronicles,* i 239–40. For de Lacy's death, see *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene,* ii 309; EH 235; ALC i 173–5; AU ii 209; AFM iii 71–77; Aquilla Smith (ed), 'Annales de Monte Fernandi (Annals of Multifernan)' [hereafter AMF], in *Tracts relating to Ireland,* Irish Archaeological Society (2 vols, Dublin 1841–3), ii 10 (separate pagination); AHib 305; 'Annales monasterii Beate Marie Virginis, Dublin—excerpts by Sir James Ware' [hereafter ABMV–Ware], *Chart St Mary,* ii 287–92: 288; AGrace 19; Robin Flower (ed), 'Manuscripts of Irish interest in the British Museum: appendix to section II—the Kilkenny chronicle in Cotton MS

Association with Connacht was, therefore, a matter of grave concern to the crown. Yet, around 1194, John, as lord of Ireland, granted to whole region to William de Burgh (†1206).[53] This extraordinary act of munificence inevitably led to political tension within the English community in Ireland. The grant coincided with a serious succession dispute in Connacht, which made the competing Gaelic dynasts eager to solicit English military support.[54] In 1191, for instance, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair had set out to win allies from among the Gaelic Irish but, failing to do so, 'he repaired to the English of Meath, and these having also refused to go with him, he passed into Munster'.[55] It is unclear whether Ruaidrí had any success recruiting, but in 1195 it is reported that his younger brother and rival for the kingship of Connacht, Cathal Crobderg, 'came to Mumu and demolished many castles … and everyone expected that he would destroy all the foreigners on that expedition, and he arranged to come again, but he did not come'.[56] It has been suggested that this was a response to the speculative grant of Connacht to de Burgh,[57] and if so it is possible that John de Courcy, the self-made lord of Ulster, and the de Lacys supported Cathal Crobderg in his attempt to thwart de Burgh's ambitions. In 1195, the annals report a 'hosting by John de Curci and the son of Hugo de Laci, to assume power over the Foreigners of Laighin and Mumha',[58] and we also know that Cathal was supported by some of the English of Meath led by one 'Mac Goisdelb' or Gilbert d'Angulo,[59] who held land in the de Lacy lordship of Meath. Furthermore, 'the son of Hugo de Lacy' and de Courcy recognised the claims of Cathal Crobderg to Connacht at a meeting at Athlone in that same year, 1195,[60] effectively ending, at least momentarily, William de Burgh's ambitions in Connacht. The picture that emerges, then, is of the established magnates, de Courcy and the de Lacys, exploiting rivalries within the royal dynasty of Connacht with the aim of preventing William de Burgh from realising his grant of Connacht. Although

Vespasian B XI', *Analecta Hibernica* 2 (1931) 330–40: 331.

53. CDI i §653; *Normans*, ii 156; Perros, 'Crossing the Shannon frontier', 126. On William de Burgh see C. A. Empey, *Oxford DNB*, viii s. n. 'Burgh, William de'; *Normans*, ii 179–98; Martin J. Blake, 'William de Burgh: progenitor of the Burkes in Ireland', *J Galway Archaeol Hist Soc* 7 (1911–12) 83–101.

54. The best summary of the events of this dynastic war is in Perros, 117–38.

55. AFM iii 91.

56. AI 1195.2.

57. Otway-Ruthven, *Ireland*, 72–73.

58. ALC i quotation at 191; AU ii 223; AFM iii 101.

59. ALC i 190; AFM iii 101.

60. ALC i 191.

Orpen and Otway-Ruthven interpret these events differently, seeing de Lacy's involvement as stemming from de Burgh's grant to Hugh de Lacy of ten can-treds in north Connacht,[61] one could conjecture that this grant was an attempt by de Burgh to appease de Lacy, who felt bruised by the enormous show of favour de Burgh had received.

These events have been placed in the broader context of John's rebellion against his brother Richard I in 1193–94, during the king's captivity on the con-tinent on return from the crusade.[62] The evidence for this is found in a letter from king John to the justiciar in 1199, soon after his succession, instructing him to investigate whether Henry Tyrel, a tenant of de Lacy in Meath, 'sided with John de Courcy and W[alter] de Lacy, and aided them in destroying the k[ing]'s land of Ireland'.[63] It is possible that, as Otway-Ruthven puts it: 'de Courcy and de Lacy had been heads of the party in Ireland which supported the king against John, thus securing the bitter enmity of a very dangerous man'.[64] This should not be taken to mean that de Courcy and de Lacy were necessarily ardent Ricardians determined to undermine John's supporters in Ireland during his rebellion of 1193–94. The important events already cited—namely, the foray south against the foreigners of Leinster and Munster, and the peace made with Cathal Crobderg—took place in 1195. It was in March 1194 that Richard I had returned to England and, at Nottingham, faced down the last determined adhe-rents of his brother.[65] However, even after John's submission in England, the task of tackling his agents in Ireland remained. The obvious men for the job were those who had a vested interest in seeing it completed successfully. One such was to hand. Walter de Lacy was probably with Richard I when Notting-ham Castle capitulated on 28 March 1194.[66] The very next day, 29 March 1194, he did homage to the king for his Irish lands, and on 8 April the king granted him seisin of his father's lordship in Meath, which John had withheld

61. *Normans*, ii 156; Otway-Ruthven, *Ireland*, 72–73. For the grant see Mills & McEnery, *Gor-manston register*, 143–44, 191–92.

62. Otway-Ruthven, *Ireland*, 73; Duffy, 'John and Ireland', 236–37.

63. CDI i §90.

64. Otway-Ruthven, *Ireland*, 73.

65. John Gillingham, *Richard I* (New York & London 1999) 269; Warren, *King John*, 45–46.

66. Lionel Landon, *The itinerary of king Richard I with studies on certain matters of interest con-nected with his reign* (London 1935) 86; J. C. Holt, 'Ricardus rex Anglorum et dux Norman-norum', in *Magna Carta and medieval government* (London 1983) 67–83: 70–71 (first published in *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* 253 (1981) 17–33).

from him.[67] The return of the king was also an invitation to John de Courcy, de Lacy's ally in 1195, to come in from the cold. In 1194, he regained the justiciarship of Ireland.[68] The new political out-group was made up of John's favourites, one of whom was William de Burgh. Given all this, it seems as though the hosting to Munster in 1195, and the support given to Cathal Crobderg were policies designed with the approval of the king to stamp out a distant pocket of support for his brother.[69] The task of containing de Burgh was delegated to those who were keen to see his grant of Connacht go unrealised.

De Burgh's desire to gain control of Connacht was not, however, wiped out. His resolve may have been hardened by the fact that a consolidated territorial bloc would have been a great improvement on the scattered land-holdings he had been granted to date.[70] Connacht continued to suffer from dynastic strife between Cathal Crobderg and Cathal Carrach, a grandson of Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair. The annals report that, in 1200, William de Burgh supported Cathal Carrach and they defeated Cathal Crobderg and the Irish of the north of Ireland. Thwarted, Cathal Crobderg went north in search of aid eventually coming to John de Courcy.[71] Next year, after a series of other encounters, Cathal Crobderg

67. Landon, *Itinerary*, 87 §398. The charter is dated 8 April 1194 at Nottingham, but the king's itinerary suggests Northampton as the correct place. Landon's source (cited at 164 §398) is a transcript in London, British Library, Hargraves 313, f 44^b. Undated charters for Walter de Lacy from Richard I, and a re-issue in the same form by the lord John, survive in Mills & McEnery, *Gormanston register*, 6–7, 177–78. The charters in Landon's itinerary are not collated with those in J. C. Holt & Richard Mortimer (ed), *Acta of Henry II and Richard I: handlist of documents surviving in repositories in the United Kingdom*, List & Index Society, special series 21 (1986), or Nicholas Vincent (ed), *Acta of Henry II and Richard I, ii: handlist of documents surviving in repositories in the United Kingdom, France, Ireland, Belgium and the USA*, ibid. 27 (1996). Richard I's control of Ireland also resulted in William Marshal gaining seisin of Leinster, held in right of his wife, Isabella, daughter of Strongbow: A. J. Holden, S. Gregory & D. Crouch (ed), *History of William Marshal*, Anglo-Norman Text Society, Occasional Publications Series, 4 (3 vols, London 2002—), i 487–9, lines 9581–630.

68. Flanagan, 'Household favourites', 377; H. G. Richardson & G. O. Sayles, *The administration of Ireland, 1172–1377* (Dublin 1963) 74.

69. This tentative interpretation is in part substantiated by how Henry Marlborough reports the restoration of Meath to de Lacy and the arrest of John's Irish justiciar in 1194 as one event (Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 1316, f 39), and also by the description in ALC of the formal peace made by de Courcy (chief governor), de Lacy 'and the nobles of the foreigners' with Cathal Crobderg at Athlone (ALC i 191). The gathering described may be a form of common council implementing Richard I's orders. References to the *commune consilium* appear from at least 1188 (H. G. Richardson & G. O. Sayles, *The Irish parliament in the middle ages* (Philadelphia 1952) 10–11).

70. For de Burgh's holdings see Empey, 'The settlement of the kingdom of Limerick', 6–8.

got the help he wanted: 'A great hosting by John de Curci and Hugo the younger, son of Hugo de Laci, accompanied by a great number of the Foreigners of Mide, together with Cathal Crobderg, to contest the sovereignty with Cathal Carrach'.[72] The parties in the conflict were, therefore, split on the same lines as in the 1190s, with de Lacy and de Courcy attempting to thwart the ambitions of de Burgh.

By now, John, king of England (1199–1216) for two years past, seems to have begun to regret his generosity in 1194, and in 1201 he effectively limited de Burgh's power with the grant of the honor of Limerick to William de Braose.[73] In part, this grant must have been intended to constrain de Burgh by subjugating his allies and kinsmen by marriage, Uí Briain of Thomond.[74] But it was also a manipulation of baronial tensions in Ireland. Admittedly, de Burgh's lands were exempted from de Braose's jurisdiction, and the latter was in any case usually an absentee. But the divisive intention of the grant is manifest given that de Braose's seneschal was his son-in-law, de Burgh's old rival, Walter de Lacy, lord of Meath. Moreover, in 1202 it had become official policy to sponsor Cathal Crobderg as king of Connacht, to the exclusion of de Burgh.[75] When news

71. ALC i 211–3; AFM iii 127; AI 1200.6; MIA 1200.4; AC 215–6 (s. a. 1199); AHib 307; 'Annales Monasterii Beate Marie Virginis, juxta Dublin', *Chart St Mary*, ii 241–86: 278; AMF 11; Aubrey Gwynn (ed), 'Annals of Christ Church' [hereafter AChristCh], *Analecta Hibernica* 16 (1946) 324–33: 330; AGrace 21 (s. a. 1199).

72. ALC i 219; AU ii 235–37; MIA 1201.5; AC 216–7 (s. a. 1200).

73. CDI i §§146–48.

74. For de Burgh's relationship with Uí Briain, see John O'Donovan (ed), *The tribes and customs of Hy-Many* (Dublin 1843) 45; *Normans*, ii 148–52; Martin J. Blake, 'William de Burgh: progenitor of the Burkes in Ireland', 96; Katharine Simms, 'Bards and barons: the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and the native culture', in Bartlett & MacKay (ed), *Medieval fronier societies*, 177–97: 178–9; Seán Duffy, 'The problem of degeneracy', in James Lydon (ed), *Law and disorder in thirteenth-century Ireland: the Dublin parliament of 1297* (Dublin 1997) 87–106: 92.

75. A Latin annal records in 1202 that Cathal Crobderg was restored 'in regno suo', suggesting that an annalist at the colony's heart considered him to be the rightful claimant being returned to his kingdom: AHib 308; 'Annales Monasterii Beate Marie Virginis, juxta Dublin', *Chart St Mary*, ii 241–86: 278; AChristCh 330; AGrace 21. Cathal Crobderg's position within the colony was confirmed in 1204 when he agreed to surrender two-thirds of Connacht to the crown and hold the other third of the king for one hundred marks per year: CDI i §222. He remained within the English administrative system throughout John's reign and a decade later the Irish pipe roll of 14 John records receipt of '343 cows from the fine of the king of Connacht': Oliver Davies & David B. Quinn (ed), 'The Irish pipe roll of 14 John, 1211–1212', *Ulster J Archaeol ser3* 4 (1941) 37. It should be noted as a warning against assuming that any of these alliances were static that Cathal Crobderg and William de Burgh, were briefly in alliance in 1202: ALC i 223–7; MIA 1202.1; AC 217–8 (s. a. 1201); *Normans*, ii 190–93; Perros, 'Crossing the Shannon frontier', 130–31.

came that de Burgh had attacked Connacht once again in 1203,[76] the official reaction was swift. The justiciar, Meiler fitz Henry, complained to the king about his incursion and, on 7 July 1203, de Burgh was summoned to appear before the king's court.[77] The next day, 8 July 1203, de Burgh's control over the city of Limerick, the base from which he attacked Connacht, was withdrawn and granted to the lord of Limerick, William de Braose.[78] This in effect meant possession passed to Walter de Lacy, who acted for de Braose in Ireland, and immediately Walter de Lacy, and the justiciar fitz Henry, launched an expedition and expelled de Burgh from the city.[79] The real interest of this is crown policy. In order to curb de Burgh's power, the crown deliberately lent its support to a rival, in this case one with whom he had twice come to blows in the recent past. It was presumably hoped that this acrimonious relationship would ensure that de Lacy kept de Burgh out of Connacht.[80] Put at its simplest, the king was exploiting faction in Ireland as a means of keeping the lordship under his control.

John provides two further illustrations of this taste for power games during the first decade of the thirteenth century. Both involved the king vicariously attacking a celebrated personality through the medium of a less powerful man with little to lose and much to gain. The first case is that of John de Courcy, expelled from Ulster in 1204 by the brother of Walter de Lacy of Meath, Hugh II. Hugh was a younger son on the make, and by any standards the reward for his service was extraordinary.[81] King John essentially commissioned him to bring down de Courcy, granting him in return, 'all the land of Ulster … as John de Courcy held it on the day when Hugh conquered him and took him prisoner in the field'.[82] As if that was not enough, in 1205 de Lacy was raised to the dignity of earl, the first and only comital title in Ireland until the fourteenth century.[83]

76. ALC i 229; AI 1203.2; MIA 1203.2; AC 218–9 (s. a. 1202).

77. CDI i §181. The turbulent career of Meiler fitz Henry, and his troubled relations with William de Burgh, Walter de Lacy and William Marshal, deserve fuller attention, but see *Normans*, ii 176–8, 192–94, 209–16; Marie Therese Flanagan, *Oxford DNB*, xxxvii s. n. 'Meiler fitz Henry'.

78. CDI i §182.

79. ALC i 229–31; AU ii 241; AI 1203.3; AC 219 (s. a. 1202).

80. Walter de Lacy was effectively appointed chief policy maker regarding Connacht and the justiciar was ordered to act by his advice (CDI i §§205–06); William de Burgh's restoration, when it came, explicitly excluded Connacht (CDI i §213).

81. For the role of *juvenes* in the providing the impetus for conquest, see Davies, *Domination and conquest*, 33–34.

82. CDI i §263

83. Mills & McEnery, *Gormanston register*, 141–42, 189–90; *Normans*, ii 140–41. On the earldom of Ulster to 1333, see G. H. Orpen, 'The earldom of Ulster', *J Roy Soc Antiq Ire* 43

Despite recent studies of John de Courcy's career,[84] a definitive explanation of what merited such a bounty has proved elusive, but the solution probably lies in the great independence of de Courcy. The last entry in a list of sovereign rulers compiled by Roger of Howden for the year 1201 runs, 'Johanne de Curci in Ul-vestrre'.[85] Orpen interpreted this as a 'court sarcasm', but whatever Howden intended, the aside indicates that, in king John's eyes, de Courcy had pretensions above his station.[86] In the very same year as Howden's enigmatic comment, de Courcy was arrested by the de Lacys, the first in the sequence of events that led to his eventual flight from Ireland.

In the following years, the personalities in Ireland changed somewhat, but the political patterns remained. Making his début on the Irish stage in 1207 was the famous William Marshal (†1219), son-in-law of Strongbow and heir to the lordship of Leinster. King John's relationship with Marshal had been strained since 1204 when, after the loss of Normandy, the latter had made separate arrangements for his Norman estates with king Philip 'Augustus' of France.[87] With the atmosphere at court distinctly chilly, Marshal decided to make the most of his Irish estates, and he travelled to Leinster in 1207 with grudging permission from king John. John soon repented of his decision, however, and tried to block the Marshal's attempts to exploit his Irish lands. To do this he found a willing accomplice in Meiler fitz Henry, justiciar of Ireland, who held lands of Marshal in Uí Fáeláin in Leinster, and resented the arrival of his previously unobtrusive

(1913) 30–46, 133–43; 44 (1914) 51–66; 45 (1915) 123–42; 50 (1920) 166–77; 51 (1921) 68–76. From 1333 onwards see Edmund Curtis, 'The medieval earldom of Ulster, 1333–1603', *Proc & Rep Belfast Nat Hist & Philos Soc* (1930–31) 67–80; D. B. Quinn, 'Anglo-Irish Ulster in the sixteenth century', ibid. (1933–4) 56–78. For the Irish earldoms of the fourteenth century see Robin Frame, *English lordship in Ireland, 1318–61* (Oxford 1982) 13–18; G. E. Cokayne, *Complete peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain, and the United Kingdom* x, appendix C.

84. Seán Duffy, 'The first Ulster plantation: John de Courcy and the men of Cumbria', in Barry, Frame & Simms (ed), *Colony and frontier*, 1–27 (and references therein n 3), and the response by Marie Therese Flanagan, 'John de Courcy, the first Ulster plantation and Irish church men', in Smith, *Britain and Ireland, 900–1300*, 154–78.

85. *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, iv 162; cited in *Normans*, ii 137–38 n 2.

86. Seán Duffy warns against dismissing Howden's remark lightly: 'The first Ulster plantation', 1 n 2. There is no hint of irony when elsewhere Howden refers to Jordan de Courcy as 'frater Johannis de Curci principis regni de Ulvestir in Hibernia': *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, iv 25. A Dublin annalist, writing long after, suggested that de Courcy had refused to render homage to king John: AHib 309; AGrace 23. It may be that the elevation of de Courcy's lordship of Ulster to an earldom was both an acknowledgement of its independence before 1205, and an attempt to bring it more firmly within the grasp the Irish administration.

87. Crouch, *William Marshal*, 93–96; Warren, *King John*, 104.

lord.[88] John did not go so far as to licence Meiler to attack Marshal, but he was receptive to Meiler's complaints,[89] and the *History of William Marshal* relates just how vulnerable the Marshal was in 1207–08.[90] As it happened, Meiler was a poor choice. He had alienated many of the leading men of Ireland, notably Walter de Lacy of Meath,[91] and a confederation against Meiler forced John into an about turn.[92] In 1208, he appointed a new justiciar, John de Grey, bishop of Norwich, and restored the Marshal to favour.[93] The king's plan to foment dissent for political ends was, therefore, frustrated in 1208; but its appeal as a policy probably did not lose its lustre. Failure had been by the narrowest of margins and, more importantly, it incurred minimal expense.

Whatever his view in 1208, an opportunity for John to assess the benefits of a thrifty policy over the massive cost of personal intervention came sooner than expected. William Marshal retired to Leinster in 1208, but he can scarcely have had time to breathe a sigh of relief before the flight of William de Braose to Ireland prompted the crisis that culminated in the royal expedition of 1210.[94] In our context, it is important to remember that the mission of 1210 was, as Orpen noted,[95] not intended to resolve the issue of factionalism, and resolution of that problem was not one of its side-effects. John's aim in 1210 was rather to punish 'rebellious' subjects. Given John's ruthless response to disloyalty in 1210, the lordship's apparent quiescence during the strife of John's last years requires some explanation. It seems odd that despite John's harsh and arbitrary actions in

88. Marie Therese Flanagan, 'Henry II and the kingdom of Uí Fáeláin', in Bradley (ed), *Settlement and society*, 229–39.

89. CDI i §§328–29

90. The events of these years are related in detail in *Normans*, ii 208–18; Sidney Painter, *William Marshal: knight-errant, baron, and regent of England* (Baltimore ML 1933) 149–61; and recently, Crouch, *William Marshal*, 100–13.

91. For Walter de Lacy's role, see Joe Hillaby, 'Colonisation, crisis management and debt: Walter de Lacy and the lordship of Meath, 1189–1241', *Ríocht na Midhe*, 8 no 4 (1990–91) 1–50: 12–14.

92. ALC i 239; AFM iii 155; AC 221–2.

93. Richardson & Sayles, *Administration*, 75.

94. Two recent studies of the 1210 expedition are Warren, 'King John and Ireland', and the important revision by Seán Duffy, 'King John's expedition to Ireland, 1210: the evidence reconsidered', *Ir Hist Stud* 30 (1996) 1–24. For the Welsh context, crucial to understanding de Braose's support in Ireland, and which deserves greater elaboration, see *Normans*, ii 236–41; Ifor W. Rowlands, 'King John and Wales', in Church, *King John: new interpretations*, 273–87: 275–6, 280, 283–4; Davies, *Age of conquest*, 277–80; John Edward Lloyd, *A history of Wales from the earliest times to the Edwardian conquest* (2 vols, London 1911), ii 620.

95. *Normans*, ii 240.

1210, English Ireland remained steadfastly loyal to him and did not use the opportunity provided by civil war and foreign invasion in England to indulge private ambitions. In 1212, the barons of Ireland led by William Marshal declared their allegiance stating: 'We are ready to go with him [the king] in death or in life ... and, both in this cause and all others, we will to the last faithfully and inseparably adhere to him'.[96]

W. L. Warren's ruminations resulted in his convincingly putting the case that this declaration of 1212, and Ireland's adherence to the oath of loyalty thereafter, were the result of a deal with king John under which the Marshal and his fellows in Ireland were given a free rein to exploit their holdings to maximum potential. The proof that a bargain was struck is seen in the fact that the declaration of loyalty was accompanied by a change in the justiciarship from bishop John de Grey of Norwich to the archbishop of Dublin, Henry of London.[97] The evidence in favour of the argument, although not definitive, is compelling and it appears that English Ireland was indeed loyal during the baronial conflict.

Of course, there are other, equally self-serving, explanations for this royalist vigour. It has been suggested on the basis of papal letters to Ireland that the native Irish were not entirely subdued during the conflict.[98] Across the Irish Sea, the Welsh certainly exploited the situation. A native chronicle reports that, 'all the leading men of England and all the princes of Wales made a pact together against the king',[99] and they were soon to have their demands recognised in the 'Articles of the barons' (1215) and in Magna Carta itself.[100] Given that Marshal and many other lords held lands on both sides of the Irish Sea and were possibly facing a native rally on two fronts, in the marches of Ireland and Wales, it is

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96. From the Red Book of the Exchequer, printed in Richardson & Sayles, *Irish parliament*, 285–87; cited by Warren, 'Historian as "private eye"', 10; for comment, see also H. G. Richardson, 'Norman Ireland in 1212', *Ir Hist Stud* 3 (1942–3) 144–58: 150–54.

97. Warren, 'Historian as "private eye"', 10–18; Richardson & Sayles, *Administration*, 76. For his career, see Margaret Murphy, 'Balancing the concerns of church and state: the archbishops of Dublin, 1181–1228', in Barry, Frame & Simms (ed), *Colony and frontier*, 41–56: 48–56; eadem, 'Henry of London (d. 1228)', in Seán Duffy (ed), *Medieval Ireland: an encyclopedia* (New York 2005) 212–13; Eric St. John Brooks, 'Archbishop Henry of London and his Irish connections', *J Roy Soc Antiq Ire* 60 (1930) 1–22.

98. Duffy, 'John and Ireland', 244–45.

99. Thomas Jones (ed), *Brut y Tywysogyon, or the Chronicle of the princes: Red Book of Hergest version*, Board of Celtic Studies, University of Wales History & Law Series 16 (Cardiff 1955) 201.

100. J. Beverley Smith, 'Magna Carta and the charters of the Welsh princes', *Engl Hist Rev* 99 (1984) 344–61; Rowlands, 'King John and Wales', 285–7; Davies, *Age of conquest*, 241–44, 296–7; Lloyd, *Wales*, ii 646.

hardly surprising that they found themselves, almost by default, to be royal sup-
porters. What is important to note is that two principal groups who had been
responsible for much of the warfare in the colony since the 1190s, the de Lacys
and de Burghs, were not party to the declaration. Both the de Lacys were de-
prived in 1210, and the de Burgh lands were in minority since the death of Wil-
liam de Burgh in 1206. In other words, the destructive potential inherent in the
colony's politics had not evaporated in the years after 1210, even though the
English community in Ireland appeared, almost for the first time since the inva-
sion, to be acting in concert. Similarly, king John's propensity for making divi-
sive grants for short-term gains also survived the new 'conciliatory' atmosphere
after 1212. Hugh II de Lacy is a personality whose career can be used to demon-
strate these points.

Unlike his brother Walter, whom king John restored in 1215,[101] Hugh de
Lacy's lands and title were not returned, with the result that by the mid-1220s
he was at war with the government. Moreover, John exacerbated the situation
and created posthumous resentment with a series of grants of land in Ulster
from the Foyle to the Glenns of Antrim to Scottish nobles, namely earl Duncan
of Carrick, Alan fitz Roland, lord of Galloway, and his brother, earl Thomas of
Athol.[102] These grants had a significance that extended far beyond Ulster, but in
Irish terms they represented the creation of another power-check, this time on
the basis that the Galloway lords of Scotland had been long-time allies of John
de Courcy, whom de Lacy had overthrown in 1205.[103] A brief five years later,
these Scottish nobles seem to have been glad to play a hand in toppling de Lacy.
Duncan of Carrick captured the unfortunate Maud de Braose, wife of the rebel

101. CDI i §628.

102. William Reeves, *Ecclesiastical antiquities of Down, Connor, and Dromore, consisting of a
taxation compiled in the year MCCCVI* (Dublin 1847, repr. 1992) 323–5; Ronald Greeves, 'The
Galloway lands in Ulster', *Trans Dumfriesshire & Galloway Nat Hist Soc ser3* 36 (1957–58) 115–
22; CDI i §§427, 463, 468, 474, 907.

103. For this alliance and Scottish involvement in Ulster at this time, see Seán Duffy, 'The first
Ulster plantation: John de Courcy and the men of Cumbria', 24; idem, Ireland and the Irish Sea
region, 1014–1318 (unpublished PhD diss. Trinity College, Dublin 1993) 72–79. In terms of
Scottish politics, these grants have been interpreted as an attempt to stamp out support for the
MacWilliam rivals of the Scottish royal dynasty. From that perspective, see Keith J. Stringer,
'Periphery and core in thirteenth century Scotland: Alan son of Roland, lord of Galloway and
constable of Scotland', in Alexander Grant & Keith J. Stringer (ed), *Medieval Scotland: crown,
community and lordship* (Edinburgh 1993) 82–114: 85–94; R. Andrew McDonald, '"Treachery in
the remotest territories of Scotland": northern resistance to the Canmore dynasty, 1130–1230',
Can J Hist/Ann canadiennes d'histoire 33 (1999) 161–92: 169–71, 183–84.

William de Braose, after she fled Ireland in 1210, and delivered her into the hands of king John. A great stretch of coastal land in Ulster, confirmed amid the Magna Carta crisis of 1215, was his family's reward.[104] The severe ramifications of the grants became clear in the 1220s, when much of Hugh's campaign in Ulster was spent reversing the progress of these Scottish nobles.[105]

The blame for this situation does not, however, rest solely with king John. His death and the accession of the boy-king, Henry III (1216–72) brought one change of great significance for Ireland. The government of England during Henry III's minority (1216–27) fell into the hands of nobles intimately acquainted with the Irish colony, notably William Marshal and later the de Burgh family. It was, therefore, an opportunity to resolve problems in the lordship without recourse to the divisive tactics of the crown. Instead, it seems that the power that accompanied great office in England was used to undermine rivals in Ireland. Rather than reappoint Hugh de Lacy to his earldom, the lands of the Scots in Ulster were confirmed in 1219–20.[106] This confirmation is a clue to another stratum of factionalism, otherwise almost imperceptible. A close examination of the background reveals some devious decision making. It is not the case that Hugh II de Lacy was never offered reconciliation. In November 1216, a letter was sent to him in the name of Henry III promising that if he came to the king he would be restored to his rights and liberties and stating that 'if John, our father of good memory, truly wronged you in any way, we should be free of that wrong'.[107] Behind this offer lay, perhaps, the influence of William Marshal who had been *rector regis et regni* since king John's death in 1216.[108] Hugh was apparently fighting on the Albigensian crusade and so was not available to pay fealty to Henry III and receive his earldom back until 1222. By that time, the restoration on offer had been whittled down solely to lands that Hugh held in his brother Walter's lordship of Meath.[109] The crucial factor may have been the

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104. CDI i §§564–65, 567; *Normans*, ii 291 n 1.

105. ALC i 265; AU ii 271; AFM iii 201–03; AC 229–30; CDI i §§1126–27, 1200.

106. CDI i §§879, 907, 936–37, 942.

107. *Patent rolls of the reign of Henry III, 1216–1225* (London 1901) 4.

108. Marshal's influence is indicated by the report in *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. Paul Meyer (3 vols, Paris 1891–1901), lines 15170–90, that, on his deathbed, king John implored Marshal to 'take charge of my son for the lad will never be able to hold his own without the Marshal's aid'. Quoted from *Normans*, iii 16. See Crouch, *William Marshal*, 124–38; D. A. Carpenter, *The minority of Henry III* (London 1990) 13–108.

109. CDI i §1110; Carpenter, *Minority*, 306–07.

death of the earl Marshal on 14 May 1219.[110] The next month, Thomas, earl of Athol, had his Ulster lands confirmed,[111] and his fellow Galloway lords were soon similarly favoured.[112] In other words, with Marshal the conciliator dead, the government changed its mind about restoring Hugh to Ulster. Who was in a position to effect this change in policy? The obvious candidate is the justiciar of England, Hubert de Burgh (†1243), brother of the William de Burgh whose ambitions in Connacht had repeatedly been thwarted by the de Lacys.[113] In cutting off Hugh de Lacy, the English justiciar was promoting the fortunes his brother's son, the young and ambitious Richard de Burgh (†1243),[114] a policy laced with the residue of a family discord that can be traced back as far as the 1190s.

The minority government under Hubert de Burgh was, therefore, up to its neck in the factious politics of Ireland. These political manoeuvres forced Hugh de Lacy to take matters into his own hands and attempt to retake Ulster by force. The government countered de Lacy's rebellion of 1223–24, by manipulating rival parties in the colony. In June 1223, the justiciar of Ireland and archbishop of Dublin, Henry of London, was informed that Hugh was 'plotting forcibly to invade the king's land of Ireland' and ordered to fortify 'with victuals and men the k[ing]'s Irish castles'.[115] When it came to physically countering Hugh de Lacy, however, the archbishop was superseded and the office of justiciar was conferred on William II Marshal (†1231).[116] Marshal's campaign was fought in tandem with Hugh's brother, the lord of Meath, Walter de Lacy, who in March 1224 was sent ahead of Marshal to Ireland.[117] In the case of the de Lacy brothers, what we see is not two inveterate rivals being pitched against each

110. For Marshal's death, see Crouch, *William Marshal*, 140–42.

111. CDI i §879 (restoration dated 19 June 1219).

112. CDI i §§907 (restoration to Duncan of Carrick dated 19 October 1219), 936–37, 942 (restoration to Alan of Galloway dated 18 April 1220).

113. Hubert de Burgh only began attesting royal letters after the Marshal's death. See Carpenter, *Minority*, 104, 129–32

114. On Richard de Burgh, see Brendan Smith, *Oxford DNB*, viii s. n. 'Burgh, Richard de'; G. H. Orpen, 'Richard de Burgh and the conquest of Connaught', *J Galway Arch Hist Soc* 7 no 3 (1911–12) 129–47.

115. CDI i §1110.

116. W. W. Shirley (ed), *Royal and other historical letters illustrative of the reign of Henry III*, RS 27 (2 vols, London 1862–66) i 500–03; calendared in CDI i §1203; Murphy, 'Balancing the concerns of church and state', 52–53.

117. *Normans*, iii 41; Hillaby, 'Colonisation, crisis management', 20–21; Carpenter, *Minority*, 345.

other, but rather the break up of a possible alliance. Walter, already deprived of the castles of Hereford, Ludlow and Trim,[118] was evidently being forced to prove his loyalty by serving against his own brother. But if Walter was reluctant, others were eager to participate.

It can be argued that, since Hugh de Lacy was in open rebellion against the crown, there was an obligation on the barons of Ireland to rally to the king, so the question of factionalism simply does not arise. Certainly Marshal, writing to the king in August 1224 after his arrival in Ireland, stated that he was rendered both military and material service and that the 'king would do well to commend … the Irish barons in his letters'.[119] Does this mean that there was no personal element to the rally against de Lacy in 1224 and the context is entirely one of feudal obligation? That hardly squares with the evidence. In the first place, the very fact that Marshal encourages the king to commend his Irish barons is an indication that they perhaps expected recognition, if not reward, for their service. This was not mere altruism. More explicitly, Marshal also reports that Sir Geoffrey de Marisco, who had been justiciar from 1215 to 1221,[120] was especially willing to do service because he 'by no means favours Hugh de Lascy'.[121] This is a clear statement that there was a personal element to the de Lacy affair. The minority government was, in effect, giving the barons of Ireland an opportunity to express their mutual antagonisms.

William Marshal had a burning incentive to seek such an opportunity. Marshal's actions need to be interpreted in the context of the simultaneous rising in the Welsh marches that involved much the same personnel as the de Lacy affair.[122] Matthew Paris reports in 1223 that 'Llywelyn, prince of North Wales and some English, namely Hugh de Lacy and his followers … made frequent expeditions against some of the barons of the king, [including] the younger Marshal'.[123] Frame has brilliantly illuminated the principal connections between the de Lacys, Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, and the Marshal estates in Wales.[124] It is suffi-

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118. Carpenter, *Minority*, 316; *Patent rolls … Henry III, 1216–25*, 414, 483.

119. CDI i §1203; Shirley, *Letters*, i 500–01.

120. Richardson & Sayles, *Administration*, 76.

121. CDI i §1203; Shirley, *Letters*, i 500.

122. For the English context for this rising and Marshal's involvement, see R. F. Walker, 'Hubert de Burgh and Wales', *Engl Hist Rev* 87 (1972) 465–94: 473–76.

123. Matthew Paris added this remark to the account of Roger of Wendover, *Flowers of History: formerly ascribed to Matthew Paris*, tr. J. A. Giles, ii 448–49 n; Henry Richards Luard (ed), *Mattaei Parisiensis: monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica majora*, RS 57 (7 vols, London 1872–83), iii 82.

124. Robin Frame, 'Aristocracies and the political configuration of the British Isles', *Ire & Brit,*

cient here to remark that Marshal had a personal motivation to break Hugh de Lacy, and that this was a family rivalry that reached its climax a decade later in the killing of William's brother, Richard Marshal, in Kildare in 1234.

In the period after Hugh de Lacy's rebellion in Ulster, the principal source of friction between the magnates of Ireland continued to be land, and more specifically Connacht.[125] The events of 1226–28, which centred on that province, at one level display the extraordinary fragmentation of the English colony, but from another perspective they show how groups within the colony could hang together in the face of royal policy. The divisiveness of Connacht was another remnant of king John's reign. William de Burgh's ambitions were constrained there from 1201, and the fate of the province was made an issue of future aggravation when, in 1215, John, doubtless with some prompting from his new justiciar, Hubert de Burgh, granted separate charters for the region to two distinct personages: Cathal Crobderg Ua Conchobair and Richard de Burgh.[126] From 1215 on there was a possibility that the grant to Cathal Crobderg would be revoked and de Burgh's latent charter activated. Cathal comfortably held Connacht until his death in 1224, after which a succession dispute emerged between his son Áed and the descendants of Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, high-king at the time of the invasion of the 1160s. In this dispute, William Marshal consistently supported Áed son of Cathal Crobderg and is referred to in the annals as 'his personal friend'.[127] When government policy changed in 1226–27 and plans were made to confiscate Connacht and realise Richard de Burgh's grant,[128] Marshal, perhaps because of his support for Áed, was superseded in the justiciarship by Geoffrey de Marisco.[129]

158–60.

125. The most recent interpretation of these events is Brendan Smith, 'Irish politics: 1220–1245', in Michael Prestwich, Richard Britnell & Robin Frame (ed), *Thirteenth century England, viii: proceedings of the Durham conference 1999* (Woodbridge 2001) 13–21. Detailed narratives are provided in *Normans*, iii 158–89; Orpen, 'Richard de Burgh and the conquest of Connaught', *J Galway Arch Hist Soc* 7 no 3 (1911–12) 129–47; Otway-Ruthven, *Ireland*, 92–96.

126. CDI i §653 (grant to de Burgh) and §654 (grant to the 'king of Kunnoc'). Both grants are dated 13 September 1215. The grant to Richard de Burgh is witnessed by his uncle Hubert, who was appointed justiciar of England just three months before, on 15 June 1215: E. B. Fryde, D. E. Greenaway, S. Porter & I. Roy (ed), *Handbook of British chronology*, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks, 2 (3rd ed. corr. Cambridge 1996) 72.

127. ACT quotation at 1227.2; AFM iii 243; AC 231 (s. a. 1226).

128. *Calendar of charter rolls, 1226–1257* (London 1903) 42: 'Gift to Richard de Burgo ... of the land of Connok, which was taken from the king's hands for the trespass of Oethus, king of Connoc [Áed Ua Conchobair]'; CDI i §1518.

129. Richardson & Sayles, *Administration*, 77.

It is clear, however, that Marshal was determined to prevent Richard de Burgh from realising his grant, and he was not alone in his opposition. A letter from Geoffrey de Marisco, the newly appointed justiciar, to the king in August 1226 reported that he had heard that 'William Earl Marshal, by the assent of Theobald Walter,[130] is about to oppose his passage [from Waterford to Dublin] with all the force of Leinster'.[131] That Richard de Burgh was at the centre of the affair is proven by the fact that de Marisco reports in the same letter that, alone of all the colonists, de Burgh 'always assists the justiciary in the king's affairs'. Once de Marisco reached Dublin, several principal vassals of Marshal in Leinster refused to render to him their oaths of fealty (namely William, baron of Naas; Walter de Ridelsford; Matthew fitz Griffin; and John de Clahull) and Theobald Walter, 'who came to Dublin, as it were, unwillingly' refused to part with the custody of Marshal's castles without the earl's explicit consent. Walter, furthermore, in an extraordinary act of defiance that has not received due notice, 'fortified the castle of Dublin with a force against the king'.[132] The very heart of the royal administration, Dublin castle, was therefore being held against crown.

The opposition extended further still. Walter de Lacy appears to have supported the Marshal 'because of the confederacy between the Earl and Gilbert de Lascy, Walter's son'.[133] This may indicate yet another rupture between the de Burghs and de Lacys. Admittedly, sometime before 1225, Richard de Burgh had married Walter de Lacy's daughter, Egidia, possibly in an attempt to heal old wounds.[134] If so, it seems not to have had the desired effect. Indeed marriages generally should not be taken as a sure sign of alliance. In the very same letter, de Marisco explicitly assures the king in relation to Theobald Walter that the latter had

> so misconducted himself in regard to the k[ing], that although he has married the justiciary's [de Marisco's] daughter, and has by her a son, the justiciary would, if it is the k[ing]'s will, deprive him of all the land which he holds of the k[ing] in Ireland.[135]

130. Theobald II Walter (†1230).
131. CDI i §1443; Shirley, *Letters,* i 290.
132. CDI i §1443; Shirley, *Letters,* i 291.
133. CDI i §1443; Shirley, *Letters,* i 292.
134. *Normans,* iii 165–66.
135. CDI §1443; Shirley, *Letters,* i 293. For a cynical attitude towards marriage alliances, see Gerald de Barri's story that Strongbow's uncle Hervey de Montmorency married Nest, the daughter of Maurice fitz Gerald, in order to damage Raymond le Gros. 'So, seeking to harm by hidden means one whom he could not openly injure, and hoping that, under cover of a marriage

If a putative conquest of Connacht was at the root of this crisis, the crown's decision to appoint Geoffrey de Marisco as its chief governor certainly did not help matters. De Marisco was a highly unpopular figure, whose previous justiciarship (1215–21) had been controversial and had ended in royal censure and his supersession.[136] It is not surprising to see the Irish magnates refusing to pay him fealty when he was reappointed. The local nature of the problem is also shown by Marshal himself, who when censured by Henry III for going to Ireland to combat de Burgh, immediately backed down and complied with his sovereign's wishes.[137] While he certainly intended to come to Ireland in an attempt to thwart de Burgh,[138] he was unwilling to raise the level of the dispute to more than a feud between two tenants-in-chief. He did not allow faction in Ireland to escalate into rebellion against his brother-in-law, Henry III.

There was, nonetheless, an English context to the dispute, in that the favour Richard de Burgh received at court was the result of his uncle's position as justiciar of England. Their fates were intertwined. As long as Hubert de Burgh was in

alliance and a pretence of friendship he would crush him all the more effectively because he would be off his guard, he asked for and obtained as his lawful wife Raymond's cousin Nest, the daughter of Maurice fitz Gerald' (EH 143). Note also the cases illuminated by Brendan Smith, 'Tenure and locality in north Leinster', in Barry, Frame & Simms, *Colony and frontier*, 32–34.

136. De Marisco's career deserves much greater attention, but see *Normans*, iii 22–26 and Otway-Ruthven, *Ireland*, 90. The careers of Geoffrey de Marisco and his descendants are discussed by Eric St John Brooks in the third instalment of his 'The family of Marisco', *J Roy Soc Antiq Ire* 62 (1932) 50–74.

137. 'The k[ing] to William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke. Takes it unkindly that the Earl should give up his journey to St. Andrew's and proceed to Ireland. The k[ing] had no suspicion of the Earl, but greatly confided in him as one to whom he had given his sister in marriage. If the Earl intend to go to Ireland the k[ing] commands him first to come to the k[ing] to surrender his castles of Carmarthen and Cardigan' (CDI i §1431). The seizure of Carmarthen and Cardigan may have been required to maintain the security of Wales, but the grant of these castles to Hubert de Burgh for life in 1229 seems to have been a generally unpopular move, no doubt particularly aggravating to William Marshal: Carpenter, *Minority*, 390 n 10; Walker, 'Hubert de Burgh and Wales, 1218–1232', 482.

138. Marshal's desire to come in person to prevent de Burgh from acquiring Connacht must have been widely known. A Gaelic annalist in Connacht solemnly records a dramatic intervention by Marshal on behalf of Áed son of Cathal Crobderg at a court in Dublin (ACT 1227.2; AFM iii 243; AC 231, s. a. 1226). Orpen proves the story to be false, writing that the 'substratum of fact probably was that the Earl, through his cousin and vassal, William le Gras, warned Aedh of what was intended, and advised him not to appear. Thus do stories grow!': Orpen, 'Richard de Burgh', 136–37 (quotation in fourth unnumbered note); *Normans*, iii 166–70. Nonetheless, the very fact that the annalist set down this apocryphal tale, presumably in good faith, shows that his understanding of Marshal's motivation was widespread.

the ascendant, Richard was secure in Ireland.[139] Marshal's submission to Henry III in 1226 was followed in 1227 by the confirmation to de Burgh of Connacht.[140] The next year, de Burgh was granted the Irish justiciarship[141] and the conquest of Connacht could, at last, begin in earnest.

The honeymoon was brief. In 1232, Henry III, who had ruled England in person since 1227, dismissed his justiciar, Hubert de Burgh.[142] The splash caused by this great man's fall engulfed Richard de Burgh in Ireland. A new justiciar was appointed, Richard was forced to surrender the castles he held in Ireland, and when he resisted his lands were forfeited and the conquest of Connacht stalled.[143] The connection between the two events is indisputable. Two years later, the records clearly state that, 'the king caused [Richard de Burgo] to be disseised on account of ... the contention moved between the king and H[ubert] de Burgo, earl of Kent, his uncle'.[144] What is of interest in the context of this discussion is the manner of Richard de Burgh's restoration. It followed on the heels of the death of William Marshal's brother and heir, Richard (†1234). Richard Marshal had been pushed into a rebellion by opposition to Henry III's 'alien' courtiers. Having fought against the king in England and Wales in 1233, he fled to Ireland in 1234, where he came to a parley under the king's peace on the Curragh of Kildare with the barons of Ireland. Marshal was seemingly unwilling to accept terms despite being greatly outnumbered. The parley became a mêlée, in the course of which Marshal was wounded and some while later died.[145]

Outrage at the part played by Irish magnates in Marshal's death was not confined to England. The Welsh *Brut y Tywysogyon* states that the Marshal's 'knights

139. The relationship is seen as important: Orpen, 'Richard de Burgh', 140; *Normans*, iii 177–80; Otway-Ruthven, *Ireland*, 95–96; Robin Frame, *Colonial Ireland* (Dublin 1981) 60–61; idem, 'England and Ireland, 1171–1399', *Ire & Brit*, 15–30: 19–20 (first published in M. Jones & M. Vale, *England and her neighbours, 1066–1453: essays in honour of Pierre Chaplais* (London & Rio Grande 1989) 139–55); Carpenter, *Minority*, 390; Smith, 'Irish politics, 1220–1245', 15.

140. *Calendar of charter rolls, 1226–57*, 42; CDI i §1518.

141. CDI i §1571; Richardson & Sayles, *Administration*, 77.

142. D. A. Carpenter, 'The fall of Hubert de Burgh', in *The reign of Henry III* (London 1996) 46–60 (first published in *J Br Stud* 19 (1980) 1–17).

143. CDI i §§1969–72, 1975, 1977–8, 2003, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2032, 2036, 2044; Helen Walton [Perros], The English in Connacht, 1171–1333 (unpublished PhD diss, Trinity College, Dublin 1980) 70–72; Nicholas Vincent, *Peter des Roches: an alien in English politics, 1205–1238* (Cambridge 1996) 371–75.

144. *Calendar of the patent rolls, 1232–47*, 73; CDI i §2217.

145. *Normans*, iii 59–74; Otway-Ruthven, *Ireland*, 95–98; Vincent, *Peter des Roches*, 371–419, 425–45; Smith, 'Irish politics', 15–19.

had treacherously deserted him',[146] and the Gaelic annals, likewise talk of desertion and remark that '[t]his was one of the worst deeds done in that age'.[147] Writing in the next century, friar John Clyn believed that the Irish colonists had acted factiously and identifies the Geraldines, 'locum et partem regis tenentes', as those responsible for his death.[148] As a reaction to this monolithic condemnation, modern historians tend to apologise for the Irish barons. Orpen was particularly keen to clear them of treachery. He argued that 'Richard Marshal was an outlaw ... and the Irish barons must be credited with supposing that they were carrying out the king's order to take him dead or alive'.[149] Orpen's arguments are, as ever, extremely persuasive. But if the story of Marshal's last stand is exaggerated, one can go too far in the other direction. There were certainly grievances among the colonists that were expressed in the killing of Marshal in 1234. One family that may have harboured resentment towards Marshal was the de Lacys. Richard Marshal's elder brother, William II, had led the campaign against Hugh de Lacy in 1224. Perhaps this was in the king's mind when he dispatched Walter de Lacy to Ireland in December 1233.[150] The vigour of the de Lacy brothers' efforts can be seen from the Irish pipe roll of 19 Henry III (1234–35), which makes several references to horses being bought for use against Marshal.[151] Another old sparring-partner of the Marshal's was Richard de Burgh, although here the waters are muddied by the fact that it was Richard Marshal who rescued Hubert de Burgh, the former English justiciar, from his captivity in

146. Jones, *Brut y Tywysogyon*, 233.

147. ACT quotation at 1234.3; ALC i 319; AU ii 292–93; AFM iii 271–73; AC 234; MIA 1234.1; AI 1234.1.

148. Richard Butler (ed), *The annals of Ireland by Friar John Clyn of the convent of Friars Minor, Kilkenny; and Thady Dowling, chancellor of Leighlin, together with the Annals of Ross* [hereafter Clyn], Irish Archaeological Society (Dublin 1849) 7 (s. a. 1233). The anniversary of Marshal's death was noted in 1294: ibid. 10. The event is recorded in most of the major Latin annals: AMF 12; AHib 315; AGrace 31; Flower, 'The Kilkenny chronicle', 331 (s. a. 1233); AChristCh 331; BL Harley MS 4003 s. a. 1233 in Flower, 'Manuscripts of Irish interest', 314–15 n 3; 'Thadei Dowling cancellarii Leighlen Annales Hiberniae' [hereafter Dowling], in Butler (ed), *The annals of Ireland by Friar John Clyn ... and Thady Dowling*, 14.

149. *Normans*, iii 61–74: 69. Further qualifications to the dramatic English accounts are made in Smith, 'Irish Politics, 1220–45', 15–18.

150. CDI i §2079.

151. *35th report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records... Ireland* (Dublin 1903) 29–50: 35–36. It is probably no more than a curiosity that it was another de Lacy, from the Pontefract branch of the family, John, earl of Lincoln (†1240), who led the royal forces against the Marshal in England: R. F. Walker, 'The supporters of Richard Marshal, earl of Pembroke, in the rebellion of 1233–34', *Welsh Hist Rev* 17 (1994) 41–65: 64.

Devizes castle. This, however, has been described as a propaganda coup against Henry III, in that Marshal was releasing one of the chief victims of Henry III's Poitevin advisers.[152] There is little sign that their alliance was built on more than expediency. Hubert de Burgh had been in power at William II Marshal's death in 1231 and had been active in trying to prevent Richard gaining seisin of the lordship of Leinster. Moreover, at Hubert's dismissal in 1232, Richard Marshal was one of the magnates before whom he was judged and condemned.[153] Richard de Burgh, who had lost Connacht as a direct result of his uncle's fall, therefore had an urgent reason for attacking Marshal; there was more than a glimmer of hope that a show of loyalty might bring Connacht back into his hands. Then there were the Geraldine tenants of Richard Marshal, who so notoriously attacked him in 1234. Brendan Smith has indicated that, although the convenient tag 'Geraldines' is too sweeping, it was quite possible that sections of this group resented the fact that the Marshal family had long tended to favour its personal household rather than the tenants it inherited through the first William Marshal's marriage to Strongbow's daughter.[154]

While the actions of the Irish barons may have a pungent whiff of the vendetta about them, evidence that Henry III harnessed that animosity is harder to identify. English accounts certainly speak in terms of a conspiracy, but they must be treated with caution because of the charged reaction to Marshal's death. Roger of Wendover, for instance, reports that Henry informed the Irish barons that if Richard Marshal, 'should happen to come to Ireland ... [they should] bring him, dead or alive, before the king: and if you do this, all his inheritance and possessions in the kingdom of Ireland ... will be granted to you to be divided amongst you, and to be held by you by hereditary right'.[155] There is no proof that any such promise was committed to parchment.[156] Yet the crown had certainly tried to whip up support somehow, and it is instructive to note that messages sent to the king at Marshal's death have an air of breathlessly anticipat-

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152. Walker, 'Supporters of Richard Marshal', 64; Vincent, *Peter des Roches*, 415–16.

153. *Cal patent rolls, 1232–47,* 29. For discussion of Marshal's involvement in de Burgh's downfall and his importance at court afterwards, see Carpenter, 'The fall of Hubert de Burgh', 57–58.

154. Smith, 'Irish politics, 1220–1245', 16–17.

155. Roger of Wendover, *Flowers of History*, ii 582; Henry G. Hewlett (ed), *The flowers of history by Roger de Wendover*, RS 84 (3 vols, London 1886–89), iii 73.

156. Vincent, *Peter des Roches*, 430; Antonia Gransden, *Historical writing in England, c.550–1307* (London & New York 1996) 368–69.

ing the rich spoils of the Marshal inheritance.[157] Even if only the spirit of Wen-
dover's accusation is credible, there is a telling comparison to be made with the
expulsion of John de Courcy, lord of Ulster, by Hugh de Lacy in 1204–05, at
the licence of king John. The political repercussions of Marshal's death made
lavish rewards in Leinster almost impossible, however.[158] Henry III was forced to
give Richard's heir, Gilbert, immediate seisin of his brother's lands and he stated
that it was his will that 'there shall not be henceforth hatred between the earl
[Gilbert] and the king's magnates of Ireland',[159] incidentally confirming the
suspicion that the Irish barons were spurred on by a personal animosity that
went beyond the call of duty. Indeed, despite his public profession of grief for
Richard Marshal, the king took care to commend the actions of his supporters
and attend to their advice and petitions.[160] And if the possibility of territorial
reward in Leinster was restricted, the situation was very different in Connacht.
When Richard de Burgh was restored to favour after Marshal's death, the reason
given was unequivocal: 'Remission also to [Richard], in consideration of his ser-
vice in Ireland in the war of Richard Marshal, of the king's indignation con-
ceived against him on account of the king's anger against H[ubert de Burgh] earl
of Kent'.[161] In short, de Burgh's fortunes came out of eclipse because of his hand
in bringing Marshal to a bloody end. The fact that Henry III rewarded de Burgh
for breaking Marshal's rebellion indicates that he, like his predecessors, was will-
ing to play the fissiparous Irish colonists off one another for his own ends.

There were still spasms of discontent. In 1235, Henry Clement, a clerk of
Maurice fitz Gerald, the justiciar who had fought against Richard Marshal in
1234, was murdered in London by one of the Marshal's vassals. The murder was
apparently premeditated and may have stemmed from the bitterness of the de
Marisco family who, despite being punished by the king for siding with Marshal,
were contemptuously accused of betraying Marshal on the Curragh in 1234.[162]

157. G. O. Sayles (ed), *Documents on the affairs of Ireland before the king's council* (Dublin 1979)
§3.

158. But not entirely so; Maurice fitz Gerald (†1257), second baron of Offaly, received some
lands of Geoffrey de Marisco: G. H. Orpen, 'The FitzGeralds, barons of Offaly', *J Roy Soc Antiq
Ire* 44 (1914) 99–112: 104.

159. *Cal patent rolls, 1232–47,* 48; CDI i §2120.

160. *Close rolls ... Henry III, 1231–34,* 561–62; CDI i §§2112, 2114.

161. *Cal patent rolls, 1232–47,* 73; CDI i §2217.

162. This is the interpretation of F. M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the lord Edward: the com-
munity of the realm in the thirteenth century* (one vol ed. Oxford 1966) appendix B, 740–59); first
published in *History* 25 (1941) 285–310. Roger of Wendover was one chronicler who succeeded

The fact that the Marshal affair could spill over into England indicates the extent of the contention between the Irish factions. In 1236, Gilbert Marshal was still being warned not to harbour anyone involved in the murder in Leinster,[163] and it was feared that he might recommence the war of his brother.[164] An indication that hostilities were threatening to break out again is offered by a letter of August 1237 from pope Gregory IX to the archbishop of Dublin and the bishop of Meath, charging them with maintaining the peace, 'between Maurice son of Gerold, Walter de Lasci, Richard de Burgo, Walter de Riddelford, and other barons of Ireland of the one part, and Gilbert the Marshal, earl of Pembroke, and his brothers Walter and Anselm ... of the other'.[165] As far away as the papal curia it was possible to comprehend clearly delineated parties in Ireland.

The events of the year 1234, therefore, had seen the king eliminating a political threat by appealing to the worst instincts of the magnates of Ireland. The conquest of Connacht and its division amongst the Irish baronage occupied attention in the lordship of Ireland into the 1240s, momentarily dispelling internal antagonisms.[166] But, if the uninhibited conquest of Connacht acted as a safety-valve for the violence of the competitive Irish baronage, it did not mark an end to the factious nature of Irish politics. True, from 1234, there were three decades of relative quiet. By 1245, death had cut a swathe through the ranks of the Irish nobility and had left a litany of female co-heirs or minors in its wake.[167] This spate of deaths must have had the greatest contemporary significance. Latin annals with a colonial bias note them and little else between 1234 and 1248.[168] It follows that without these personalities some of the potential for rivalry was

in blackening the de Marisco name and Matthew Paris was later to follow his account. Orpen expended much effort in reinterpreting Wendover's account in accordance with the established facts and clearing de Marisco of the charge of treachery (*Normans*, iii 61–73). For the career of William de Marisco who was accused of the murder see Eric St. John Brooks, 'The family of Marisco', 60–61.

163. CDI i §2321.

164. The justiciar was promised the king's support if Gilbert Marshal rebelled and he urged his subjects 'to remain firm in their wonted fidelity' (CDI i §2284).

165. W. H. Bliss (ed), *Calendar ... papal registers ... Great Britain & Ireland, 1198–1304* (London 1893) 165–66.

166. For the conquest and settlement of Connacht in this period, see Helen Walton [Perros], The English in Connacht, 1171–1333, 73–202.

167. Otway-Ruthven concisely summarises the deaths and their effect on estates in *Ireland*, 100–01. Detailed analysis is provided in *Normans*, iii 79–110; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The partition of the de Verdon lands in Ireland in 1332', *Proc Roy Ir Acad (C)* 66 (1968) 401–55: 409–11.

168. AHib 315; AChristCh 331–32; Dowling 14. The information, though bare, is somewhat richer in: AMF 12–3; ABMV–Ware 289; AGrace 31–35; Flower, 'Kilkenny chronicle', 331–32.

removed. Furthermore, these decades saw intensified Gaelic action, what Eoin MacNeill dubbed the 'Irish rally',[169] and the colonists may have been too pre-occupied with countering this threat to become embroiled with each other. However, when factional conflict came to the fore of politics in the lordship of Ireland once more, it did so in the most dramatic of circumstances. On 6 December 1264, just over thirty years after the death of Richard Marshal, two Geraldine leaders, uncle and nephew, took captive the chief governor of Ireland and a number of others at a parliament in Castledermot, Co Kildare.[170] The protracted conflict that ensued between the Geraldines and the de Burghs was to rumble on until the closing years of the thirteenth century, but in the short-term it engulfed Ireland until April 1265.[171] This crisis coincided with the baronial revolt in England led by the earl of Leicester, Simon de Montfort, against Henry III. Given the way the crown usually went about tackling political obstacles in the lordship of Ireland, one question inevitably arises: was the Geraldine–de Burgh dispute yet another case of segmentary quarrels in Ireland being tailored to fit the political measurements of those holding power in England? Put another way, did the Geraldines act at the instigation of de Montfort's government, or was the context primarily Irish, the crisis in England merely being a fortuitous opportunity to settle old scores? [172]

169. MacNeill, *Phases of Irish history*, 323.

170. These Geraldines were descendants of the former justiciar, Maurice fitz Gerald, second baron of Offaly (†1257). They are his grandson and heir, Maurice fitz Gerald (†1268), third baron of Offaly, and his second son Maurice fitz Maurice (†1286). His first-born son, Gerald, died in Poitou in 1243 (Orpen, 'The FitzGeralds, barons of Offaly', 99–112: 105–06). The events at Castledermot are recorded in the Gaelic and Latin annals: ALC i 449; ACT 1264.10; AFM iii 395; AC 245; AI 1265.3; AMF 14; AHib 316; ABMV–Ware 290; AGrace 37; Flower, 'Kilkenny chronicle', 332; AChristCh 332; Clyn 8; Dowling 15. The date is discussed in Richardson & Sayles, *Irish parliament*, 59 n 11. The only detailed study of the events is Robin Frame, 'Ireland and the Barons' Wars', *Ire & Brit*, 59–69 (first published in P. R. Coss & S. D. Lloyd, *Thirteenth century England*, i (Woodbridge 1986) 158–67).

171. The disturbances were widespread enough to warrant the fortification of New Ross: Hugh Shields (ed), 'The walling of New Ross: a thirteenth century poem in French', *Long Room* 12–13 (1975–6) 24–33. Lines 10–13 identify the protagonists, stating that the townsmen were 'fearful of a war that was [going on] between two barons; here are their two names in writing: lord Maurice and lord Walter'. For comment, see Alan Bliss & Joseph Long, 'Literature in Norman French and English to 1534', NHI ii 710–11. Dublin's fortifications were likewise bolstered: *35th Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records ... Ireland* (Dublin 1903) 29–50: 47; James Lydon, 'The defence of Dublin in the middle ages', in Seán Duffy (ed), *Medieval Dublin iv: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin Symposium 2002* (Dublin 2003) 63–78: 69.

172. The likelihood of a connection with events in England, albeit difficult to demonstrate, has

The two scenarios are not mutually exclusive. Certainly, the Irish element of the dispute was of vital importance, crucially the revival of the earldom of Ulster, which was granted to Walter de Burgh in July 1263 after some twenty years in abeyance.[173] It would seem that the Geraldines, who were already tenants of de Burgh as lord of Connacht,[174] were resistant to his new status in the north of Ireland, where they had spent the years since 1245 trying to carve out a lordship in Tír Conaill.[175] The fact that when peace came in April 1265, the settlement involved the promise that all parties would be restored to the lands they held before the conflict broke out, also seems to indicate a domestic spark for the affair.[176] Within a few months, both Maurice fitz Gerald and his uncle, Maurice fitz Maurice (the Geraldines responsible for seizing the justiciar in December 1264) were fighting for the king in England alongside their erstwhile enemies, Theobald Walter and Walter de Burgh.[177]

Nonetheless, there are other factors that seem to urge an English context for the events that convulsed the lordship in 1264–65, not least the personalities involved. The reports of the events at the Castledermot parliament of December 1264 are unanimous about what occurred. Three men were taken prisoner by the Geraldines: the justiciar of Ireland, Richard de la Rochelle; Theobald IV

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seemed high to historians: see *Normans*, iii 280–82; Otway-Ruthven, *Ireland*, 197–99; Robin Frame, *Colonial Ireland, 1169–1369* (Dublin 1981) 64. James Lydon expressed a contrary opinion: 'One might expect their divided allegiances to be reflected in Ireland, but there is no evidence to support this … there were serious disturbances in Ireland at this time; but domestic circumstances are sufficient to explain these' (NHI ii 182).

173. Frame, *Ire & Brit*, 59–69: 65–68; for a different explanation for de Burgh's elevation to the earldom, which emphasises the threat posed by the expedition of king Hákon IV of Norway, see Seán Duffy, Ireland and the Irish Sea region, 1014–1318, 128–32.

174. *Normans*, iii 193–95.

175. The grant by de Lacy is in Gearóid Mac Niocaill (ed), *The Red Book of the earls of Kildare* (Dublin 1964) §21.

176. Sayles, *Documents on the affairs of Ireland*, §§9–10. The 1265 settlement was, however, no more than a papering over of the problem. Latin annals record 'pax inter comitem W. de Burgo et Geraldinos' only in 1268–69: AMF quotation at 15; Flower, 'Kilkenny chronicle', 332. The statement in AGrace (at 37) under 1268 that 'Maurice fitz Maurice is subdued *(subjungitur)*' is unrelated and a mistake for the report elsewhere that he was drowned *(submergitur)* crossing the Irish Sea: AMF 15; 'Kilkenny chronicle', 332; AChristCh 333; AHib 316; ABMV–Ware 290; Clyn 9; Dowling 15.

177. Henry Richards Luard (ed), *Annales Monastici*, RS 36 (5 vols, London 1864–9), ii 365–6. Noted in T. F. Tout, 'Wales and the March during the Barons' Wars', *The collected papers of Thomas Frederick Tout* (3 vols, Manchester 1934), ii 47–100: 85; and Frame, 'Ireland and the barons' wars', *Ire & Brit*, 62.

Walter (†1285), hereditary butler of Ireland; and John de Cogan (†1279).[178] It has been so obvious to historians from the earliest annalists onwards that this conflict was one of Geraldine versus de Burgh that virtually the only attempt to explain how the seizure of these three was intended to injure the newly created earl of Ulster, Walter de Burgh, is buried in G. H. Orpen's substantial scholarly apparatus.[179] It may be worth emphasising, then, that a point of interface is found in the person of the former justiciar of Ireland, John fitz Geoffrey (†1258).

John fitz Geoffrey was the son of Geoffrey fitz Peter, earl of Essex and justiciar of king John. His service in Ireland extended over ten years (1245–56), during which time he forged some significant Irish connections.[180] Both Theobald Walter, who was seized at Castledermot, and Walter de Burgh, the focus of Geraldine animus, married into fitz Geoffrey's family. De Burgh took fitz Geoffrey's daughter Aveline as wife, while Theobald Walter married another, Joan.[181] These marriages furthered a relationship already strong before either de Burgh or Theobald Walter had come of age. Fitz Geoffrey had acquired custody of the Butler estates in Ireland for some 3000 marks,[182] and had campaigned extensively in the north and west, areas that were to be at the heart of de Burgh's interests in Ireland.[183] Richard de la Rochelle, the justiciar in 1264, seems to have been John fitz Geoffrey's nephew.[184] He acted as deputy justiciar to his uncle during the latter's absences from Ireland in the 1250s,[185] and meanwhile had acquired substantial holdings in de Burgh's lordship of Connacht.[186] It seems,

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178. ALC i 449; ACT 1264.10; AFM iii 395; AC 245; AI 1265.3; AMF 14; AHib 316; ABMV–Ware 290; AGrace 37; Clyn 8; Dowling 15; Flower, 'Kilkenny chronicle', 332; AChristCh 332.

179. Orpen was extremely self-effacing, remarking that his suggestions were 'perhaps not irrelevant' (*Normans*, iii 244 n 1).

180. D. A. Carpenter, *Oxford DNB* xxx, s. n. 'John fitz Geoffrey'; Robin Frame, 'Henry III and Ireland: the shaping of a peripheral lordship', *Ire & Brit*, 31–57: 52–54; Richardson & Sayles, *Administration*, 78.

181. *Peerage*, v 437; Eric St. John Brooks, *Knights' fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny* (Dublin 1950) 80.

182. *Close rolls ... Henry III, 1259–61* (London 1934) 295; CDI ii §689; Charles McNeill (ed), *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's register* (Dublin 1950) 132.

183. Frame, 'Henry III and Ireland', 52–53.

184. Edmund Curtis (ed), *Calendar of Ormond deeds 1172–1603* (6 vols, Dublin 1932–43), i §63; *Normans*, iii 232 n 2.

185. Richardson & Sayles, *Administration*, 78.

186. CDI ii §223; *Ormond deeds*, i §123.

therefore, that while fitz Geoffrey was justiciar in Ireland, a party of support involving de Burgh had crystallised around him. Even after John fitz Geoffrey's death, John fitz John and Richard fitz John, who may be his two sons, can be traced witnessing charters with their late father's associates.[187] This relationship does little of itself to explain why de Burgh, Theobald Walter, and de la Rochelle continued to support the king amid the complex and fluid politics of 1258–65. In 1258, Henry III's denial of justice to fitz Geoffrey was the *cause célèbre* of the baronial party.[188] Moreover, while Robin Frame has singled fitz Geoffrey out as the man most likely to have identified the Ireland's potential as a solution to Henry III's problems of patronage,[189] it would be a mistake to assume that the Geraldines objected to fitz Geoffrey, and by extension to de Burgh, on this basis. The conquest of the north-west had been a joint enterprise between Maurice fitz Gerald (†1257) and fitz Geoffrey.[190] His importance lies in the fact that he facilitated contacts between young Irish magnates and court. The favour that this liaison brought to those connected with him, most spectacularly

187. *Ormond deeds*, i §§135–36; *Peerage*, v 437. John fitz John got seisin of his Irish lands on 28 December 1258: *Ormond deeds*, i §124; for custody of his English lands, see *Cal patent rolls, 1258–66*, 12. The identification is tenuous: cf. Brooks, *Knights' fees*, 49; *Ormond deeds* §74 n.

188. R. F. Treharne & I. J. Sanders, *Documents on the baronial movement of reform and rebellion* (Oxford 1973) 101, 105–07, 119; Huw Ridgeway, 'The Lord Edward and the provisions of Oxford (1258): a study in faction', P. R. Coss & S. D. Lloyd (ed), *Thirteenth century England*, i 89–99: 91, 93–4; D. A. Carpenter, 'What happened in 1258?', *War and government in the middle ages: essays presented to J. O. Prestwich* (Woodbridge 1984) 106–19: 114–17; idem, 'Justice and jurisdiction under king John and king Henry III', *The reign of Henry III* (London & Rio Grande 1996) 17–43: 35.

189. Robin Frame, 'King Henry III and Ireland', *Ire & Brit*, 52–53, and on grants to Henry III's favourites, ibid. 46–52. See also Huw Ridgeway, 'King Henry III and the "Aliens", 1236–72', in P. R. Coss & S. D. Lloyd, *Thirteenth century England*, ii (Woodbridge 1988) 81–92: 85–86; idem, 'Foreign favourites and Henry III's problems of patronage, 1247–58', *Engl Hist Rev* 104 (1989) 590–610: 601–3; Aoife Nic Ghiollamhaith, 'The Uí Briain and the king of England: 1248–1276', *Dal gCais: Journal of Clare* 7 (1984) 94–99: 97. For a detailed study of the career of one recipient of patronage, see Beth Hartland, 'Vancouleurs, Ludlow and Trim: the role of Ireland in the career of Geoffrey de Geneville (*c.*1226–1314)', *Ir Hist Stud* 32 (2001) 457–77.

190. ACT 1248.7. 1248.9, 1249.8; AC 238–9; AFM iii 329, 335–7. G. H. Orpen, 'The Normans in Tirowen and Tirconnell', *J Roy Soc Antiq Ire* 45 (1915) 275–88: 280; *Normans*, iii 231–32; Frame, 'Henry III and Ireland', 53.

the grant of the earldom of Ulster, seems to have perpetuated a royalist bias into the 1260s.[191]

John de Cogan's involvement with matters English is less apparent, although his connection with the de Burgh family is plain enough. In the 1230s, he had accompanied Walter's father, Richard de Burgh, on his conquest of Connacht,[192] and he was still consorting with Walter, earl of Ulster, in 1269.[193] There are also several explanations to hand for the Geraldines' hostility to him. Orpen, for instance, pointed to the fact that both de Cogan and Maurice fitz Maurice, the second son of the justiciar, Maurice fitz Gerald (†1257), had married daughters of Gerald de Prendergast. These two wives were half-sisters and had been in dispute over their respective shares of their father's lands.[194] It may be that the descent of the Geraldine inheritance was also in dispute, which would make it significant that John de Cogan's son, John II (†1276), was married to Juliana, sister of the Maurice fitz Gerald (†1268), third baron of Offaly, who seized de Cogan at Castledermot in 1264.[195]

Another fact may, however, serve to link de Cogan, de Burgh and the royalist camp more directly. Endeavouring to find signs of an alliance between the baro-

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191. For the group's continuing interactions see the grant by de la Rochelle to Theobald Walter, witnessed by Walter de Burgh (*Ormond deeds*, i §127), and also a quitclaim to Theobald witnessed by de la Rochelle and de Burgh, the latter now sporting his title of earl of Ulster (ibid. §134). Also ibid. §§135–36.

192. ALC i 321; ACT 1235.8; AFM ii 275. *Normans*, iii 182–3, 214–15. On this John de Cogan, see K. W. Nicholls, 'The development of lordship in county Cork, 1300–1600', in Patrick O'Flanagan & Cornelius G. Buttimer (ed), *Cork history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin 1993) 157–211: 166–67.

193. *Alen's Register*, 132.

194. *Normans*, iii 244 n 1; for the de Prendergast dispute see CDI ii §165.

195. Orpen, 'FitzGeralds, barons of Offaly', 99–112: 108. Two decades later, a dispute over the Geraldine inheritance may have lain behind the involvement of Thomas de Clare, lord of Thomond and husband of another Geraldine heiress (Juliana, daughter of Maurice fitz Maurice (†1286) of Castledermot fame) in an otherwise unlikely alliance, formalised in the Turnberry band of 20 September 1286, with Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster and a number of Scottish lords. See Seán Duffy, Ireland and the Irish Sea region, 152–53. I am grateful to Dr Duffy for bringing this to my attention. Another connection, with no obvious English link, is found in Desmond, where the Munster Geraldines and the de Cogans each sponsored rival factions within the Meic Carthaig dynasty. At the fateful battle of Callan (1261) de Cogans seem to have offered no military support to the Munster Geraldines, and John fitz Thomas and his son John fitz John were killed: Diarmait Ó Murchadha, 'The battle of Callann, A.D. 1261', *J Cork Hist Archaeol Soc* 66 (1961) 105–16: 108. It is faintly possible that the cousins of these Geraldines felt some residual hostility towards the de Cogans three years on in 1264.

nial party and the Geraldines, Robin Frame pointed to a letter from the Mont-fortian government of September 1264 which demanded that Gilbert de Clare, the 'Red' earl of Gloucester, who was a supporter of Simon de Montfort, be granted seisin 'of the castle of Kilkenny and the other lands of his father in Ireland in the keeping of the said Walter [de Burgh]'.[196] Frame suggested that the fact that the Geraldines were commanded to aid Gilbert de Clare in recovering his inheritance indicates that the Montfortian government 'believed that the Geraldine lords might be counted upon should de Burgh prove recalcitrant'.[197] Certainly, capitalising on internal factions in this way would be part of a very familiar pattern. But where does John de Cogan fit into all this? The Irish pipe roll of 46 Henry III (1261–62) identifies as seneschal of Kilkenny one John de Cogan. This de Cogan is seen acting for Earl Gilbert's father, Richard de Clare (†1262) regarding 'several charges in respect of a third part of two parts of 100 services due to the lord Edward from Leinster'.[198] It is important to be clear that while the 'Red' earl, Gilbert, was a Montfortian until he defected to the king in March 1265,[199] his father Richard's flirtation with the baronial reformers was much more fleeting. He had supported the provisions of Oxford in 1258,[200] but being more conservative than Simon de Montfort his tendency from 1260 to his death in 1262 was to back the king.[201] De Cogan, therefore, had served a royalist earl of Gloucester as seneschal in 1261–62 for the same lands that Walter de Burgh, also a royalist, may have been reluctant to surrender to Gloucester's baronial son in September 1264. If a connection to the royalist cause is needed to explain why de Cogan was targeted at Castledermot, then he seems to have had the necessary credentials.

Whatever about the personnel involved, the timing of the Castledermot affray seems, at first, to promise little in the way of a connection with English politics. If Simon de Montfort wished to capitalise on Geraldine–de Burgh antipathy to neutralise Ireland as a potential royalist enclave, why did the Geraldines act only in December, seven months after the baronial victory at Lewes of 14 May 1264? Ostensibly, this seems to negate the possibility that the Geraldines were acting

196. *Cal patent rolls, 1258–66*, 350; CDI ii §750.
197. Frame, 'Ireland and the Barons' Wars', 67.
198. *35th Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records … Ireland*, 29–50: 44.
199. Altschul, *A baronial family in England: the Clares*, 94–110; J. R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge 1994) 264, 327–28; F. M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the lord Edward*, 494–98.
200. Traharne & Sanders, *Documents*, 101, 105; Altschul, *Baronial family*, 80–82.
201. Altschul, *Baronial family*, 82–93; Tout, *Collected papers*, ii 70.

other than on their own initiative. The chronology, however, poses a problem only if it is assumed that the events at Castledermot were the 'signal for civil war'.[202] In fact, the accounts in both Gaelic and colonial sources suggest that hostilities in Ireland predated the Castledermot parliament by some time. In nearly every case, reports of a general state of war in Ireland and the seizure of Geraldine castles in Connacht by de Burgh are recorded *before* any mention is made of the capture of the chief governor and his associates at Castledermot.[203] Moreover, it is striking how well acquainted these writers are with the vicissitudes of the baronial party in England.[204] When their accounts are collated, they provide a potted history of all the most important events, including the revival of the earldom of Ulster (1263),[205] English hostility to the 'aliens',[206] the battle of Lewes[207] and the capture of the king and the lord Edward (1264),[208] and the battle of Evesham (1265).[209] More than one distinct set of annals mentions

202. This is assumed in Richardson & Sayles, *Irish parliament*, 59; Otway-Ruthven (who uses the very same phrase as Richardson and Sayles: 'the signal for the outbreak of civil war') *Ireland* 198; James Lydon in NHI ii 182–4; Lydon, *Lordship of Ireland*, 91–92; Michael Dolley, *Anglo-Norman Ireland* (Dublin 1972) 156–57.

203. One quotation each from the Irish and Latin sources may serve to make the point. 'A great war arose between Mac William Burk, i.e. the Earl of Ulster, and Fitz-Gerald, in this year, so that the major part of Erinn was destroyed between them; and the Earl seized all the castles Fitz-Gerald had in Connacht, and burned all his manors, and plundered all his people, during this war .... The Justiciary of Erinn, and John Gogan, and Tibbot Butler were taken prisoners by Fitz-Gerald in a consecrated church': ALC i 449; ACT 1264.8, 1264.10; AFM iii 395; AC 245; AI 1265.3. 'Bellum commissum est apud Lewys ubi captus erat rex cum multis .... Guerra mota est inter dominum W. de Burgo et Geraldinos. Item magnates capti sunt apud Desertum in die Sancti Nicholai': AMF 14; AChristCh 332; Clyn 8. The seizure at Castledermot, without preceding disturbances, is reported in: Flower, 'Kilkenny chronicle', 332; AHib 316; ABVM–Ware 290; AGrace 37. A brief entry in the 'Annals of Duisk' states that the war was 'apud Tristeldermot' and makes no mention of de Burgh: K. W. Nicholls (ed), 'Late medieval annals: two fragments', *Peritia* 2 (1983) 87–102: 97. Dowling, a much later authority, dates the commotion in Ireland to after the seizure: Dowling 15.

204. For a contrary view, see Seán Duffy, Ireland and the Irish Sea region, 1014–1318, 132.

205. AI 1263.3

206. AMF 14; Flower, 'Kilkenny chronicle', 332; AChristCh 332.

207. ALC i 447; ACT 1264.4; AI 1263.2, 1264.3; AC 244; AMF 14; annals from London, British Library, Harley 4003 s. a. 1264, printed in Robin Flower (ed), 'Manuscripts of Irish interest in the British Museum', *Analecta Hibernica* 2 (1931) 292–340: 314–15 n 3; Flower, 'Kilkenny chronicle', 332; AChristCh 332; Clyn 8.

208. ALC i 447; ACT 1264.4; AC 244; AI 1263.2, 1264.3; AMF 14; BL Harley MS 4003 s. a. 1264 in Flower (ed), 'Manuscripts of Irish interest', 314–5 n 3; Flower (ed), 'Kilkenny Chronicle', 332; AChristCh 332; Clyn 8.

209. AI 1265.2; AU ii 339; AMF 14; BL Harley MS 4003 s. a. 1265 in Flower, 'Manuscripts of

Simon de Montfort by name.[210] Significantly, the outbreak of disturbances in Ireland in this sequence is located after the baronial victory at Lewes. It seems to have been at this point that de Burgh seized the Geraldine castles in Connacht. Given this, the events at Castledermot in December, the next event in the series, takes on a somewhat different aspect: that of an attempted negotiation gone wrong. After the seizure, the conflict may have escalated,[211] and it was to require another parliament, that of April 1265, to reach a settlement.

If this reading of the evidence is correct—and admittedly it rests on shaky foundations—its significance lies in the way events on the periphery so closely mirror developments at the heart of the conflict. In England, just as in Ireland, there were disturbances in the aftermath of the battle of Lewes. Key strongholds were apportioned among de Montfort's supporters in an attempt to emasculate any remaining royalist support.[212] One group in particular held out: the marcher lords.[213] They were encouraged in their resistance by the failure of negotiations at Boulogne in October between the barons and the papal legate. The next month they launched an abortive attempt to liberate the lord Edward from his captivity in Wallingford Castle.[214] This caused de Montfort to launch another intensive effort to force their capitulation, including attacks from the native Welsh leader Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, until, in Tout's colourful phrase, 'it seemed as if the Marchers would soon be crushed between the anvil of Leicester [de Montfort] and the hammer of Llywelyn'.[215] In late November, the marchers were summoned to a parliament at Oxford for the purpose of reaching a settlement, but 'fearing for themselves, they did not come'.[216] The fact that the feudal host had also been summoned may indicate that their suspicions were justified. However, within three weeks, they had been compelled to seek terms and around 12 December 1264 at Worcester they were forced surrender authority in

Irish interest', 314–15 n 3; Flower, 'Kilkenny chronicle', 332; AChristCh 333; Clyn 8.

210. AU ii 338 *(Simunn Muford)*; BL Harley MS 4003 s. a. 1265 in Flower, 'Manuscripts of Irish interest', 314–15 n 3 *(Symon comes Leycestrie)*; Clyn 8 *(Symon de Monte-forti)*.

211. Or at least official documents recording that Ireland was 'disturbed by discord prevailing between its great men and magnates' begin to survive: CDI ii §§727–28 (misdated), 758, 766, 771–72, 776. For comment on the dating of these documents, see *Normans*, iii 282 n 3; Frame, 'Ireland and the barons' wars', 60 n 4.

212. Altschul, *Baronial family*, 105.

213. The term 'marcher lords' should not be interpreted too strictly. Note the caveat of R. R. Davies about depictions of the marcher lords a monolithic body (Davies, *Age of conquest*, 313).

214. Powicke, *Thirteenth century*, 196.

215. T. F. Tout, *Collected papers*, ii 74; see also Davies, *Age of conquest*, 312–14.

216. Luard, *Annales monastici*, iii 235.

the west of England to Simon de Montfort.[217] The Dunstable annals report that at Worcester the marchers were sentenced to be exiled from England 'for a year or more'.[218] Another source is more specific: 'these barons ... abjured the realm of England for a year and a day, to proceed to Ireland in exile, and there to stay the whole of the said year, their lands, tenements, and castles, remaining in the hands of the earl of Leicester in the meantime'.[219]

Although this plan ultimately foundered, it cannot have begun as an idle proposal. A series of safe conducts for the marcher lords in question survives in the administrative records.[220] Given that these leading 'rebels' were about to be sent into exile in Ireland, it seems an uncanny coincidence that it was also in December 1264 that the Geraldines imprisoned a group of royalists in Ireland, including the lord Edward's justiciar. The fact that there had been already been upheaval in Ireland for some time indicates that Walter de Burgh and his supporters, like the royalists in England, refused to accept de Montfort's authority after Lewes. In this setting, the picture that emerges is of the baronial party in England attempting to secure control of the government in Ireland before dispatching the marcher lords to their estates there. If so, their agents in this action were the Geraldines.

There is yet another stumbling block. The 'Provisions of Worcester' were agreed around 12 December 1264 and confirmed by the lord Edward a few days later.[221] The Geraldine coup took place on St Nicholas's day, 6 December 1264. Even if the issue of the delay in information crossing the Irish Sea is ignored, there remains the seemingly inescapable fact that the fracas at Castledermot took place before the marchers were forced to agree to go to Ireland. Yet, the fact is that the baronial party had been attempting to force the marchers into submission for many months. Once already, the marchers had sued for terms, but having accepted a settlement on 25 August, they soon shook it off.[222] It is not inconceivable that, as hostilities renewed with the marchers, de Montfort intended

217. Powicke, *Thirteenth century*, 196–97; idem, *Henry III and the lord Edward*, 486–87; Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, 289–90, 306–08; Traharne & Sanders, *Documents*, 50–52.

218. Luard, *Annales monastici*, iii 235.

219. Harry Rothwell (ed), *English historical documents, 1189–1327* (London 1975), 180; original in Thomas Stapleton (ed), *De antiquis legibus liber: Cronica maiorum et vicecomitum Londoniarum* (London 1846).

220. *Cal patent rolls, 1258–66*, 399, 402, 410, 415, 418–19; CDI ii §§754–55, 757, 760–61, 764, 768, 770.

221. Powicke, *Thirteenth century*, 196; idem, *Henry III and the lord Edward*, 487.

222. T. F. Tout, *Collected papers*, ii 73; Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, 289–90.

to force them off the English stage once and for all by exiling them across the Irish Sea. That autumn, covert letters bound for Ireland, presumably in support of the royalist cause, fell into the hands of de Montfort's government.[223] There is no reason to think that the baronial party was not likewise attempting to woo potential supporters across the Irish Sea. If de Montfort originally formulated the idea of forcing the barons into exile in Ireland in November, then the issue of the time delay across the Irish Sea is of less concern. Letters seeking support, or issuing instructions, could have been sent ahead to Ireland at that time and have done their work by 6 December 1264.

These arguments are far from conclusive. They do little more than show that, given the meagre nature of our sources, there is no room for complacency in interpreting the events of the Barons' Wars in Ireland. Nonetheless, an essential continuity is, perhaps, discernible between these divisions and the factious politics that had developed in Ireland from the late twelfth century onwards. On the one hand were the English nobles of Ireland, in competition for land and patronage; on the other was the crown, or those acting in its name, exploiting the fissures within the colonial community as a means of controlling Ireland and eliminating what it perceived as political threats.

The year 1265 is an artificial terminus in this narrative. The Geraldine–de Burgh dispute was to embroil a succeeding generation, the events of 1264–65 being virtually re-enacted thirty years later when, in 1294, the Geraldine leader John fitz Thomas captured and imprisoned Richard de Burgh, the 'Red' earl of Ulster (†1326).[224] With the passage of time, factions seem to become ever more entrenched, so much so that the history of the later medieval period has been described as that of rival families competing 'for control of privilege and patronage at official level … [causing them] to become enmeshed in savage contests which frequently caused death and destruction in many parts of the island'.[225] This characterisation is rather unsympathetic. Irish conditions favoured strong local lordship.[226] When seigneurial interests collided, conflict could result. How-

223. *Close rolls … Henry III, 1264–68,* 80–81; calendared in CDI ii §778; but, as Robin Frame has pointed out, misdated (Frame, 'Ireland and the barons' wars', *Ire & Brit,* 64 n 32).

224. *Normans,* iv 112–13, 116–19; Otway-Ruthven, *Ireland,* 211; Lydon in NHI ii 184–88.

225. Lydon, *Lordship of Ireland,* 86.

226. For the fourteenth century see esp. Robin Frame, *Ire & Brit,* 191–239; *English lordship in Ireland, 1318–61* (Oxford 1982) 13–51; 'Military service in the lordship of Ireland, 1290–1360: institutions and society on the Anglo-Gaelic frontier', in Bartlett & MacKay (ed), *Medieval fron-*

ever, despite the hysteria of some royal administrators, the actors in the most celebrated disputes of the late medieval period tended to find that political weapons, for instance, the Irish parliament, were just as mighty as the sword.[227] When violent, rather than political, conflict erupted, there were arrangements, official or otherwise, for tempering disputes and bringing about settlement.[228] In general, strong noble power, with all its troublesome encumbrances, was not the agency of 'decline' in the later medieval lordship in Ireland: rather it was its lifeblood.

Factionalism was very much part of the fabric of colonial life in the period historians have characterised as the zenith of English power in Ireland, the late thirteenth century. If Irish politics lacked harmony, it was in part because the king of England found disharmony could serve his interests well. This latter trend long ago fired the imagination of Dr Meredith Hanmer in a tale he conceived as a description of royal policy towards the native Irish, but which might as well apply to the crown's attitude to its English subjects in Ireland. Lying on the chronological penumbra of this essay, it both anticipates future events and encapsulates developments since the first royal expedition of 1171–72. Visiting king Edward I of England in 1278, the then Irish justiciar, Robert d'Ufford, reputedly told the king that 'in policie he thought it expedient to winke at one knave in cutting off another, and that would save the Kings Coffers, and purchase peace to the land; whereat the King smiled, and bid him returne to Ireland'.[229]