

ENGLAND AND THE IRISH-SEA ZONE IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY*

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Many historical studies have been written about Anglo-Irish relations in the years immediately after the English invasion of Ireland in 1169.¹ That the invasion should have an important place in research is understandable, given its long-term impact and its implications in recent historical and political debate.² In contrast, very few publications have focused on Anglo-Irish political interaction in the eleventh century.³ In this paper, I hope to draw more attention to this somewhat neglected field of enquiry.

The emphasis of historical scholarship on the invasion and its aftermath has perhaps influenced the interpretation of earlier events. The issues in the eleventh century which have been studied most are those which can be seen to foreshadow the later invasion. These include Canterbury's claims of ecclesiastical primacy, and the alleged ambitions of Knútr or William the Conqueror to dominate Irish rulers.⁴ Meanwhile, research on a wider range of issues has been lacking. The resulting narrative gives a rather selective view of events. This hindsight perspective has, I suggest, meant that England's domination of Irish rulers in the eleventh century has tended to be exaggerated. Furthermore Ireland's impact on England has generally been underestimated.⁵ In this paper I seek to highlight Ireland's significance in English affairs from the reign of Æthelred the Unready to that of William Rufus.

From the late ninth century Ireland's main contacts with England were through the viking towns of Dublin, Waterford and Limerick.⁶ In the late tenth century, these ports were dominated by the Hiberno-Scandinavian dynasty of Ívarr. Members of this family also ruled the Isle of Man and the Hebrides. Thus they were a significant power in Irish Sea politics. However, divisions within the dynasty enabled Irish provincial overkings to win increasing influence over the viking towns from the late tenth century.⁷ The wealth and military resources of these ports came to be regarded

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¹ For use of the term 'English', see R. H. C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth*, London 1976, 13 and 131; John Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, Woodbridge 2000, 145–60.

² E.g. Anthony Carty, *Was Ireland Conquered? International Law and the Irish Question*, London 1996.

³ More work has focused on Hiberno- and Anglo-Welsh relations. Recent surveys include: Seán Duffy, 'Ostmen, Irish and Welsh in the Eleventh Century', *Peritia* 9, 1995, 378–96; Colmán Etchingham, 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles: the Insular Viking Zone', *Peritia* 15, 2001, 145–87; K. L. Maund, *Ireland, Wales, and England in the Eleventh Century*, Woodbridge 1991.

⁴ Mark Philpott, 'Some Interactions between the English and Irish Churches', *ANS* 20, 1997 (1998), 187–204, at 188.

⁵ This in part reflects a bias in post-Conquest English sources: Gillingham, *The English*, 3–18, 145–50.

⁶ Mary A. Valante, 'Reassessing the Irish "Monastic Town"', *Irish Historical Studies* 31, 1998–9, 1–18, at 12.

⁷ Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings in Ireland', in *The Vikings in Ireland*, ed. Anne-Christine Larsen, Roskilde 2001, 17–27.

as significant to those Irish leaders who sought to rule as much of Ireland as possible. As Seán Duffy has noted, Irish kings tended to become increasingly involved in Irish Sea affairs in the eleventh century, as a consequence of their ambition to rule these ports.⁸ This Irish dimension in foreign affairs is sometimes underrated, as overkings tended to manage Irish Sea affairs through the agency of Hiberno-Scandinavian fleets which they ruled or hired.⁹

During the eleventh century, the nature of contacts between England and Ireland can be broadly divided under the headings of trade, religious and intellectual links, and political relations.¹⁰ Most of this article will be devoted to political contacts. However, a brief overview of other links across the Irish Sea provides a context in which political events can be interpreted.

A large amount of contact between England and Ireland took place through the medium of trade. The vikings' colonies and their network of external contacts stimulated the import and export of goods to and from Ireland. English ports appear to have been the main trading partners with the viking towns of Ireland in the eleventh century.¹¹ Archaeological and written evidence indicate that major exports included animal skins, grain, timber, slaves, fish, metal jewellery and antler combs. Slaves are perhaps the best-documented trade, and Dublin in particular seems to have been a hub for importing and exporting human traffic.¹² It is notable that many of these exported goods would have been brought to the coastal towns from the interior of Ireland.¹³ An insight into this inland network of economic contacts is provided by the location of silver hoards. These demonstrate that Irish kings and merchants engaged in, and derived benefit from, trade across the Irish Sea.¹⁴ Recent studies have fostered a greater awareness of wider Irish involvement in foreign commerce. This has led to revision of the statement made by Gerald of Wales that the Irish were too lazy to trade.¹⁵

Many English ports had commercial links with Ireland. However, the geographical pattern of these relations altered over time. The political association of Dublin and York in the early tenth century encouraged trade. Their economic contacts continued, albeit on a reduced scale, in the eleventh century.¹⁶ The port of Chester appears to have been the main trading partner with Ireland from the 920s to the 970s,

⁸ Seán Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in the Kingdoms of Dublin and Man, 1052–1171', *Ériu* 43, 1992, 93–133, at 100.

⁹ This can be shown during the career of Gruffudd ap Cynan. See below, notes 146–7. Duffy ('Ostmen', 382–4) has also challenged the assumption that most fleets from Ireland were viking fleets.

¹⁰ A less tangible transmission of cultural practices and ideas took place within these exchanges. An example is the transfer of oral tales suggested in literature: Ó Corráin, 'Viking Ireland – Afterthoughts', in *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age*, ed. H. B. Clarke *et al.*, Dublin 1998, 421–52, at 447.

¹¹ Patrick F. Wallace, 'The Economy and Commerce of Viking Age Dublin', in *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa, Teil IV: Der Handel der Karolinger- und Wikingerzeit*, ed. Klaus Düwel *et al.*, Göttingen 1987, 200–45, at 229.

¹² Poul Holm, 'The Slave Trade of Dublin, Ninth to Twelfth Centuries', *Peritia* 5, 1986, 317–45.

¹³ Wallace, 'The Economy', 201–5; Mary Valante, 'Dublin's Economic Relations with Hinterland and Periphery in the Later Viking Age', *Medieval Dublin* 1, 2000, 69–83.

¹⁴ Marilyn Gerriets, 'Money among the Irish: Coin Hoards in Viking-Age Ireland', *JRSAI* 115, 1985, 121–39.

¹⁵ 'Giraldus Cambrensis in Topographia Hibernie: Text of the First Recension', ed. John J. O'Meara, *PRIA* 52 C, 1948–50, 113–78, at 175; *Gerald of Wales, The History and Topography of Ireland*, trans. John J. O'Meara, Harmondsworth 1982, 122. For the influence of this statement in the debate concerning urban origins in Ireland, see John Bradley, 'The Interpretation of Scandinavian Settlement in Ireland', in *Settlement and Society in Medieval Ireland*, ed. John Bradley, Kilkenny 1988, 39; Wallace, 'The Economy', 202.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 230.

as numismatic evidence suggests.¹⁷ This town had developed largely in response to viking's trading networks. While Chester remained significant in the eleventh century, the Severn estuary seems to have become increasingly important for Irish traders. This shift may be observed in the efforts made by the dynasty of Ívarr to dominate the coasts of South Wales, and in the deposition of silver hoards in this region.¹⁸ One notable consequence of these developments was the rise of Bristol. This port emerges in the historical record in the mid-eleventh century. It became the major partner in Irish trade throughout the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹⁹

This geographical re-orientation of trade in the eleventh century is also represented by stronger contacts with other towns in southern England. Documented examples include London, Gloucester, Exeter, and Cambridge.²⁰ This change has been linked with the political decline of northern England and the increased significance of trade across the English Channel.²¹ Goods exported from England to Ireland at this time include jewellery, pottery, high quality woollens, and basic foodstuffs. More exotic goods also came from the Continent via England.²² Direct trading links between Ireland and north-west France are also well attested from the mid-eleventh century through the evidence of pottery imports.²³

One consequence of this trade was that foreign merchants settled in major ports. Patrick Wallace has discussed the evidence for a settlement of English merchants along Fishamble Street in Dublin.²⁴ In London, the dedication of a church to St Bride (Brigit) in Fleet Street might suggest the presence of an Irish community in the eleventh century.²⁵ Other merchant colonies have been posited elsewhere.²⁶ In addition, these trading links must have fostered multilingualism among Irish Sea merchants who might wish to converse in English, Norse, or Irish to effect transactions.²⁷ Traders can be seen as a culturally, economically, and therefore politically significant group, whose interests were vested in contact across the Irish Sea.

People were also prompted to cross the Irish Sea for religious reasons. This group included lay pilgrims and clerics. The main route to Rome was through England and Flanders.²⁸ In 1941, the eminent ecclesiastical scholar, Aubrey Gwynn, drew atten-

¹⁷ A. T. Thacker, 'Early Medieval Chester, 400–1230', in *VCH Cheshire*, v, part 1, ed. C. P. Lewis and A. T. Thacker, London 2003, 16–33, at 20–21.

¹⁸ Mark Blackburn and Hugh Pagan, 'A Revised Checklist of Coin Hoards from the British Isles, c.500–1100', in *Anglo-Saxon Monetary History*, ed. M. A. S. Blackburn, Leicester 1986, 291–313 (revised edn, available online at www.-cm.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/Coins/hoards/index.html), nos 172, 187c, 203; ASC MSS CDE, *s.a.* 997; *Annales Cambriae, A.D. 955–1097: Texts BC in Parallel*, ed. and trans. David N. Dumville, Cambridge (forthcoming), *s.aa.* 999, 1001.

¹⁹ ASC MS D, *s.a.* 1052; Aubrey Gwynn, 'Medieval Bristol and Dublin', *Irish Historical Studies* 5, 1946–7, 275–86; Wallace, 'The Economy', 231.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 227–32.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 239.

²² *Ibid.*, 215–20.

²³ Audrey Gahan *et al.*, 'Medieval Pottery', in *Late Viking Age and Medieval Waterford*, ed. Maurice Hurley *et al.*, Waterford 1997, 285–336; Alan G. Vince, 'Early Medieval English Pottery in Viking Dublin', in *Keimelia: Studies in Medieval Archaeology and History in Memory of Tom Delaney*, ed. Gearóid Mac Niocaill and Patrick F. Wallace, Galway 1988, 254–70.

²⁴ Patrick F. Wallace, 'The English Presence in Viking Dublin', in *Anglo-Saxon Monetary History*, ed. Blackburn, 201–21.

²⁵ Christopher N. L. Brooke and Gillian Keir, *London 800–1216: The Shaping of a City*, London 1975, 139–40.

²⁶ Wallace, 'The Economy', 225.

²⁷ *Vita Edwardi*, 22–3, suggests that some English nobles, as well as merchants, learnt Irish. An 'average standard' (*mediocritatem*) is referred to, which the audience of the text is assumed to have encountered.

²⁸ *Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)*, ed. and trans. Séan Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill, Dublin 1983,

tion to chronicle records of royal pilgrims travelling from Ireland to Rome in the eleventh century.²⁹ Although these high ranking pilgrims desired to perform a conspicuous act of piety, their journeys can also be seen as a political exercise. They networked with the prominent ecclesiastical and lay households where they stopped en route. Ultimately some may have desired to win the ear of the pope on particular issues, as the papacy became increasingly influential in North European politics.

Gwynn initially identified seven kings who set off for Rome from Ireland from 1028 to 1064. He attributed this vogue to Knútr's visit to Rome in 1027. On this trip he obtained guarantees of safe passage and freedom from tolls for other pilgrims travelling to Rome.³⁰ Gwynn identified the first royal pilgrim from Ireland as Sigtryggr, king of Dublin; and two more kings of Dublin also went to Rome.³¹ He concluded that royal pilgrimage to Rome began in Ireland as a Scandinavian phenomenon which was then copied by indigenous rulers.

Later in the same year, Gwynn published another article which brought newly discovered material to light.³² He identified two more Irish kings who undertook this pilgrimage. The first travelled in 1026, thus preceding the journeys of Sigtryggr and Knútr. Furthermore this evidence demonstrated that most kings travelling to Rome were Irish rather than Hiberno-Scandinavian. Therefore this trend cannot be seen as a primarily Scandinavian phenomenon, and native Irish rulers were not lagging behind in their contacts with the rest of Christendom.³³

Clerical links further demonstrate that direct links existed between Ireland, England and the Continent at this date. Irish churchmen had a strong presence in the Rhineland and Lorraine where reformed Benedictinism had taken hold.³⁴ The comings and goings of Irish ecclesiastics, and mention of their influence at the Imperial court, can be seen in the chronicle of Marianus Scotus, an *inclusus* at Mainz.³⁵ Many of the clerics travelling to the Continent would have travelled via England. Some would have returned or sent books and letters bringing news and ideas to Ireland.³⁶

Nevertheless, a better-documented era of ecclesiastical contacts began during the pontificates of Lanfranc and Anselm at Canterbury. These archbishops consecrated several clerics, including Irishmen trained in England, as bishops of Dublin and Waterford.³⁷ There was a strong political dimension to this aspect of reform, and it was associated with Canterbury's claim of primacy over the churches of Ireland. I

s.a. 1034.2; Philip Grierson, 'The Relations between England and Flanders before the Norman Conquest', *TRHS* 4th ser. 23, 1941, 71–112, at 72–3; Aubrey Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Blackrock 1992, 37–8.

²⁹ Aubrey Gwynn, 'Ireland and Rome in the Eleventh Century', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 5th ser. 57, 1941, 213–32.

³⁰ *John of Worcester*, *s.a.* 1031.

³¹ Gwynn, 'Ireland and Rome', 224–6.

³² Gwynn, *The Irish Church*, 84–98.

³³ Marie Therese Flanagan, *Irish Society, Anglo-Norman Settlers, Angevin Kingship*, Oxford 1989, 11.

³⁴ Gwynn, 'Ireland and Rome'; Jean-Michel Picard, 'The Cult of Columba in Lotharingia (9th–11th Centuries): The Manuscript Evidence', in *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars*, ed. John Carey *et al.*, Dublin 2001, 221–36.

³⁵ *Mariani Scotti Chronicon*, ed. Georg Waitz, *MGH SS* 5, Hanover 1844, 481–564.

³⁶ The royal dynasty of Uí Briain were prominent patrons of reform. This interest may have begun with Donnchad son of Brian: *Annals of Inisfallen (MS Rawlinson B 503)*, ed. and trans. Séan Mac Airt, Dublin 1951, *s.a.* 1040.6, 1050.2, 1064.5; [*Annala Rioghachta Eireann*], *Annals of the [Kingdom of Ireland by the] Four Masters*, ed. and trans. John O'Donovan, 2nd edn, 7 vols, Dublin 1856, *s.a.* 1050; David N. Dumville, *Councils and Synods of the Gaelic Early and Central Middle Ages*, Cambridge 1997, 35–6.

³⁷ Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 7–55.

will treat this topic in greater depth below, while discussing political links between England and Ireland.

It can be shown that clerics and pilgrims, as well as traders and merchants, were significant groups crossing the Irish Sea in the eleventh century. Contacts across the Irish Sea were not exclusive to the Hiberno-Scandinavian population of Ireland; and they increasingly included the native Irish. A consideration of political events highlights the importance of exiles, mercenaries, and diplomats, who also sailed across the Irish Sea. It is to this topic that I wish to devote the rest of the paper. From an Irish perspective, the crucial players in these relations were the viking dynasty of Ívarr, who ruled Dublin and the Hebrides, and the Irish provincial overkings who sought to bring Dublin under their control. However, I shall discuss these relations within the familiar framework of the reigns of successive English kings, beginning with Æthelred the Unready.

Æthelred's reign coincided with the onset of the so-called Second Viking Age in Britain. Viking attacks began in the 980s, and they led ultimately to the conquest of England by Sveinn, king of Denmark, in 1013. It can be argued that there was an Irish Sea dimension to these events. Simon Keynes has suggested that some of the raids against western England, at the beginning of Æthelred's reign, were directed from viking colonies in the Gaelic world.³⁸ It may be worth noting that viking attacks on Cheshire and Southampton in 980 coincided with a campaign against Wales by the Hiberno-Scandinavian king of Man and the Hebrides, Guðrøðr Haraldsson.³⁹ Guðrøðr's main enemy at this point, Hywel, king of Gwynedd, was allied with Ælfhere, earl of Mercia. This would have made Cheshire fair game for an attack. Guðrøðr also assailed Dyfed in 982, and his southerly campaigns may be linked with raids across the Bristol Channel, in Devon and in Cornwall, in 981 and 982.⁴⁰ The early raids against western England could therefore represent the escalation of a political dispute which began between the dynasty of Ívarr and kings in Wales.

Irish chronicles report the appearance of warships from Scandinavia in the Irish Sea from 986.⁴¹ This new fleets are identified as *Danair*, 'Danes'.⁴² Their arrival was to have serious consequences for England. It was not long before an alliance developed between some of the Danish fleets and the Hiberno-Scandinavian dynasty of Ívarr. In 987, some joined forces with Guðrøðr Haraldsson on the Isle of Man.⁴³ Their alliance may have continued into the following year, when raids were recorded against Devon and South Wales.⁴⁴

Contingents from Ireland also joined in viking raids against south-west England. Numismatic evidence shows that coin dies taken from mints at Bath, Watchet and Lydford were used to produce some of the earliest coins minted at Dublin from about

³⁸ Simon Keynes, 'The Historical Context of the Battle of Maldon', in *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, ed. Donald Scragg, Oxford 1991, 81–113, at 85.

³⁹ ASC MS C, s.a. 980; *Brut y Tywysogyon or The Chronicle of the Princes – Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. and trans. Thomas Jones, 2nd edn, Cardiff 1973, s.a. 980.

⁴⁰ ASC MS C, s.a. 981, 982; *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s.a. 982.

⁴¹ *Annals of Ulster*, s.a. 985[=986].2 and 3, 986[=987].1 and 3, 989[=990].1; *Annals of the Four Masters*, s.a. 985 [=986], 986 [=987], 989 [=990]. After 990 the term *Danair* does not reappear until 1014.

⁴² *Dictionary of the Irish Language, Compact Edition*, ed. E. G. Quin et al., Dublin 1983, 182, cols D: 82–4. This term seems to be introduced in chronicles initially to distinguish vikings from Scandinavia from vikings settled in Ireland. From the early eleventh century the label describes vikings in general. Its meaning later extends to foreigners and bandits.

⁴³ *Annals of Ulster*, s.a. 986[=987].1.

⁴⁴ ASC MSS CDE, s.a. 988; *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s.a. 988.

995. It is likely that these dies were stolen in raids.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the supply of booty from England may have served as an economic stimulus as it was traded through the port. This may have influenced the decision to mint coin regularly in Dublin at this time. In 990 Scandinavian fleets also co-operated with Dubliners during their campaigns in Ireland.⁴⁶ This highlights a sense of connection between events in Ireland and Britain.

It is a striking that after 990 there are no more attacks by *Danair* ('Danes' rather than Hiberno-Scandinavians) recorded against Ireland.⁴⁷ Nevertheless the number of raids on England dramatically increased during these years. England offered richer pickings and a more centralised system of government which would have enabled greater tributes to be raised; but this cannot be the whole story. The pattern of attacks is radically different from that of the First Viking Age when Ireland suffered in no less measure than England. It seems possible that the Danish fleets agreed, or decided, not to mount further attacks within the sphere of influence of the dynasty of Ívarr.

The Scandinavian attacks on England from 991 were more focused on eastern areas of the kingdom, and they were on a bigger scale than those of the 980s.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, these years appear to have been marked by increasing competition for control of the western sea-lanes. Brian Bóruma, overking of Munster, temporarily brought all the major viking ports in Ireland under his control, and he may have sought to extend his authority in Man and the Hebrides. He may have allied with, or subdued, Røgnvaldr, king of the Isles, as Røgnvaldr died in Munster in 1005.⁴⁹ If so, Brian's activities may have provoked Sveinn to intervene in Irish Sea affairs. He attacked the Isle of Man in the 990s, and some of his ships were wrecked off the Welsh coast in 1011.⁵⁰ These actions may have then prompted English fleets to invade Strathclyde and Man in 1000 and Dyfed in 1011 to try to offset Sveinn's influence there.⁵¹ According to Adam of Bremen, Sveinn also took shelter with a *rex Scothorum*, but the identity of this king, whether Scottish or Irish, is unknown.⁵²

In 1000 a fleet which had been ravaging Wales and southern England, departed to Normandy.⁵³ This event raises a further question of links between vikings based in the Irish Sea region and the rulers of Normandy. The *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, written by William of Jumièges, may shed some light on this issue. This history was composed within living memory of the Danish conquest of England. However, the evidence sometimes poses problems of interpretation.⁵⁴

William asserted that Knútr, son of Sveinn of Denmark, sought military help from Lagmann, king of the Swedes, and Óláfr, king of the Northmen, after the death of his

⁴⁵ K. Bornholdt, 'Myth or Mint? The Evidence for a Viking-Age Coinage from the Isle of Man', in *Recent Archaeological Research on the Isle of Man*, ed. P. J. Davey, BAR 1999, 199–213 at 204; Wallace, 'The English Presence', 212.

⁴⁶ *Annals of the Four Masters*, s.a. 989 [=990]; *Annals of Ulster*, s.a. 989[=990].1.

⁴⁷ Furthermore there is a general decrease in viking activity in Ireland in 1001×1013.

⁴⁸ Keynes, 'The Historical Context', 88.

⁴⁹ Etchingam, 'North Wales', 180; *Annals of Inisfallen*, s.a. 984.2.

⁵⁰ *Annales Cambriae* (B), s.a. 992, 1011; *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s.a. 995.

⁵¹ ASC MS E, s.a. 1000; *Annales Cambriae* (BC), s.a. 1011; *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s.a. 1012.

⁵² Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, ii, 32 (ed. Bernard Schmeidler, *MGH SRG* 1917, 95; *Adam of Bremen, History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, trans. Francis J. Tschann, New York 1959, 78).

⁵³ ASC MS E, s.a. 1000.

⁵⁴ *Jumièges* i, xx.

father in 1014.⁵⁵ Óláfr has been identified as Óláfr Haraldsson, future king and patron saint of Norway.⁵⁶ However there was no king of Sweden called Lagmann. Adigard des Gautries recommended the emendation *Sudrorum* for *Suauorum*, thus identifying Lagmann as a king of the Hebrides.⁵⁷ This interpretation has been espoused by Elisabeth van Houts who has noted that William of Jumièges was prone to make ‘ingenious identifications of peoples’.⁵⁸ Thus Lagmann may have been a member of the Hiberno-Scandinavian dynasty of Ívarr which was active in the Irish Sea.

Some support for this theory comes from the name. Lagmann is derived from Old Norse *lögmaðr* (‘lawman’). This was used as a personal name in Ireland, the Northern Isles and the Hebrides from the tenth century, but it is not attested in Scandinavia.⁵⁹ According to the Annals of Ulster and an early twelfth-century Irish saga *Cogad Gaedel re Gallaib*, Óláfr son of Lagmann Guðrødsson fought at Clontarf in 1014, alongside a contingent of warriors from the Hebrides.⁶⁰ James Henthorn Todd concluded that Lagmann was a son of Guðrøðr, the king of the Isles and a member of the dynasty of Ívarr, who died in 989.⁶¹ Thus two independent lines of scholarship serve to identify Lagmann as a king of the Hebrides and Man in the early eleventh century. Nevertheless his career has been neglected by historians.

William of Jumièges reported that, after Lagmann and Óláfr assisted Knútr, Richard, duke of Normandy, courted their support in his struggle against Odo, count of Chartres. The Capetian king Robert II intervened to arrange a peace between the two sides. As a result, Lagmann and Óláfr were presented with gifts and persuaded to return to their own countries.⁶² The precise chronology of these events is uncertain. However, it does seem that Lagmann was rubbing shoulders with leading figures in England, Normandy and Scandinavia.

Lagmann was not the only viking from the Irish Sea zone whom Continental accounts identify as co-operating with Danes. The chronicler Ademar of Chabannes wrote that a joint fleet from Denmark and Ireland raided Aquitaine and then fought in Ireland, probably at the battle of Clontarf on Good Friday in 1014.⁶³ In this conflict the vikings of Dublin and their allies opposed the troops of Brian Bóruma and his allies. Welsh and Scandinavian sources report that Sigtryggr, the king of Dublin, hired foreign fleets to fight for him in the battle.⁶⁴ Doubtless there were mercenary

⁵⁵ *Jumièges* ii, 18–21.

⁵⁶ *Jumièges* ii, 24–9; *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, ed. and trans. Alistair Campbell, 2nd edn, Cambridge 1998, 76–82. Cf. Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae* ii, 51 (ed. Schmeidler, 112; trans. Tschan, 90).

⁵⁷ Adigard des Gautries, *Les Noms de personnes scandinaves en Normandie de 911 à 1066*, Lund 1954, 69, note 12.

⁵⁸ *Jumièges* i, xxxv, li and ii, 20, note 1.

⁵⁹ Carl Marstrand, *Bidrag til det Norske Sprogs Historie i Irland*, Oslo 1915, 74; Donnchadh Ó Corráin, ‘The Vikings in Scotland and Ireland in the Ninth Century’, *Peritia* 12, 1998, 296–339, at 308.

⁶⁰ *Annals of Ulster*, s.a. 1014.2; *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh: The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, §78 (ed. and trans. James Henthorn Todd, RS 1867, 136–7).

⁶¹ *Cogadh*, ed. and trans. Todd, 271.

⁶² *Jumièges* ii, 24–7.

⁶³ *Ademari Cabannensis Chronicon* iii, 53–5 (ed. P. Bourgain *et al.*, *CCCM* 1999, 172–3); David N. Dumville, ‘Images of the Viking in Eleventh-Century Latin Literature’, in *Latin Culture in the Eleventh Century*, ed. Michael W. Herren *et al.*, 2 vols, Turnhout 2002, i, 250–63, at 255. The date 1018 is editorial. It is likely, but not certain, that the battle described is Clontarf: Lesley Abrams, ‘England, Normandy and Scandinavia’, in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill and Elisabeth van Houts, Woodbridge 2003, 43–62, at 53; Benjamin Hudson, ‘Knútr and Viking Dublin’, *Scandinavian Studies* 66, 1994, 319–35, at 321.

⁶⁴ *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s.a. 1014; *Njáls Saga*, §155 (ed. Einar Óline Sveinsson, Reykjavík 1954, 445;

fleets available in Insular waters following the Danish conquest of England. This battle in Ireland was reported in Britain, Scandinavia and the Continent, and this may reflect the wide geographical range of the participants hired to fight in this conflict. The events leading up to the Danish conquest of England therefore indicate significant contact between England, Ireland and the Hebrides.

After Knútr became king in England in 1016, he maintained an interest in Irish Sea affairs. His claims in Denmark and in Norway involved him in foreign campaigns for part of his reign.⁶⁵ These concerns may have encouraged Knútr to secure the western fringes of England from attack. One of Knútr's skalds, Óttarr svarti, asserted that Knútr succeeded in becoming king of the Danes, the Irish, the English and the Isles.⁶⁶ Rather much has been made of this statement by historians. To explore it further I shall discuss Knútr's relations first with Ireland and then with the Hebrides.

Benjamin Hudson has provided the fullest argument that Óttarr svarti called Knútr king of the Irish because he was overking of Dublin.⁶⁷ The argument is based on a wide range of evidence, some of which is rather tentative. While there seem to have been close links between England and Dublin, it is possible that Knútr's power over Dublin has been exaggerated.⁶⁸ For example, it is far from clear that the *Sitric dux* who witnessed a charter (or charters) in 1026x1031, was Sigtryggr, king of Dublin, who ruled until 1036.⁶⁹ Furthermore Hudson suggested that the church of St Bride in Fleet Street near was founded by Irish merchants brought to the city under the sponsorship of Knútr. However, there is no evidence to support this assertion: there is no clear evidence when the church was founded.⁷⁰ The argument that Canterbury enjoyed primacy over Dublin during Knútr's reign, which was advanced by Aubrey Gwynn, also needs to be questioned. This theory has been challenged in recent years, by Marie Therese Flanagan and others, due to the lack of contemporary evidence. Canterbury's ecclesiastical authority over Dublin is first witnessed unambiguously in 1074 when Lanfranc consecrated a bishop of Dublin. A letter sent by Lanfranc, in this year, alludes to the custom of previous archbishops. However, this may or may not refer to the custom of consecrating bishops of Dublin.⁷¹ During Knútr's reign, Æthelnoth of Canterbury took an active interest in foreign churches, which included his consecration of a Danish bishop.⁷² Thus it is possible, but far from certain, that a bishop of Dublin was consecrated in England during Knútr's reign. Such a consecration need not have required formal recognition of Canterbury's metropolitanical

trans. Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson, Harmondsworth 1960, 344); cf. Benjamin Hudson, 'Brjáns saga', *Medium Ævum* 71, 2002, 241–68.

⁶⁵ M. K. Lawson, *Cnut, The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century*, Harlow 1993, 81–116.

⁶⁶ *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*, ed. F. Jónsson, 4 vols, Copenhagen 1908–15, A, i, 299 and B, i, 275.

⁶⁷ Hudson, 'Knútr'.

⁶⁸ Aubrey Gwynn, 'The First Bishops of Dublin', *Reportorium Novum, Dublin Diocesan Record* 1, 1955–6, 1–26, at 3–6; Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 10; Lawson, *Cnut*, 106.

⁶⁹ S 962, 963, 971. All these charters appear to have been drawn up at Crediton. Only one of the witness lists may be contemporary with the grant it subscribes.

⁷⁰ The late tenth- or eleventh-century date assigned to this church is based on conjecture: Brooke, *London*, 138–40; Hudson, 'Knútr', 330–1.

⁷¹ Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 9–19; Philpott, 'The English and Irish Churches', 191–2; Martin Holland, 'Dublin and Reform of the Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Peritia* 14, 2000, 111–60, at 111–12.

⁷² Hudson, 'Knútr', 327; Lesley Abrams, 'The Conversion of the Scandinavians of Dublin', *ANS* 20, 1997 (1998), 1–29, at 27–8.

authority, as Lesley Abrams has pointed out.⁷³ It should not be assumed that the assertions of primacy made by Canterbury after 1066 would have applied in Cnut's reign. Circumstances within the English Church under Lanfranc were very different.⁷⁴

While some aspects of Hudson's argument are debatable, he has drawn attention to important evidence of contact between Knútr and Sigtryggr of Dublin. Hudson has highlighted the significance of a coin of Sigtryggr of Dublin minted from a die probably produced in Chester. This bears the legend *Sihtric rex Irum* ('Sigtryggr king of the Irish').⁷⁵ It seems likely that this die was produced with Knútr's consent. It is tempting to draw a parallel with the coin minted at Chester in 946×950 for the Welsh king Hywel Dda, during the reign of Eadred.⁷⁶ Sigtryggr's coin indicates strong trading links and co-operation between England and Dublin. This impression is reinforced by the large number of English coins found in Ireland, deposited from about 1000 to 1030. Hundreds of coins of Dublin from this period have also been found in Scandinavia.⁷⁷

Hudson has drawn attention to collaboration between Sigtryggr and Knútr in their foreign policy. This is witnessed by the report in the Annals of Tigernach that the English and the men of Dublin led a joint attack on Wales in 1030.⁷⁸ It seems that the two kings had complementary interests in Wales. Knútr seems to have encountered opposition from Wales throughout his reign. Russell Poole has argued, using the evidence of the skaldic verse *Liðsmannaflokkr*, that Welsh troops opposed Knútr during the siege of London in 1016.⁷⁹ M. K. Lawson has also noted that Knútr granted lands to men in his service with greater density along the Welsh border, suggesting particular concern for the security of those regions.⁸⁰ Knútr may have chosen to join forces with Sigtryggr in 1030 as his naval resources and influence in the Irish Sea might help to curb the power of troublesome Welsh kings.

Co-operation between England and Dublin in Wales could have begun as early as 1022. Welsh chronicles report the arrival in this year of Rhain *Scotus*, a pretender to the kingship of South Wales.⁸¹ Rhain claimed to be a son of Maredudd (r.988–89). It seems that Rhain had spent some time in Ireland and gathered military support there. Nevertheless, it is far from clear who supported him.⁸² The Hiberno-Scandinavian dynasty of Ívarr had a long history of intervening in Welsh affairs. Nevertheless, Seán Duffy has convincingly argued that Welsh chronicles identify Rhain's supporters as Gaels rather than vikings from Ireland.⁸³ Was this Irish contingent therefore seeking to establish a candidate in Wales contrary to the interests of the dynasty of Ívarr? If so, potential supporters of Rhain include Niall, overking of Ulaid (who was locked in a feud with Dublin at this date), Donnchad of Brega and Donnchad of Munster.⁸⁴ In

⁷³ Lesley Abrams, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia', *ASE* 24, 1995, 213–49, at 227.

⁷⁴ Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 13–16.

⁷⁵ Hudson, 'Knútr', 323–4.

⁷⁶ C. E. Blunt, 'The Cabinet of the Marquess of Ailesbury and the Penny of Hywel Dda', *British Numismatic Journal* 52, 1982, 117–22.

⁷⁷ Wallace, 'The English Presence', 208–9.

⁷⁸ *Annals of Tigernach*, s.a. 1030 (ed. and trans. Whitley Stokes, 2nd edn, 2 vols, Felinbach 1993).

⁷⁹ Russell Poole, 'Skaldic Verse and Anglo-Saxon History: Some Aspects of the Period 1009–1016', *Speculum* 62, 1987, 265–98.

⁸⁰ Lawson, *Cnut*, 165.

⁸¹ *Annales Cambriae* (BC), s.a. 1022; *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s.a. 1022.

⁸² David E. Thornton, 'Who was Rhain the Irishman?', *Studia Celtica* 34, 2000, 131–48.

⁸³ Duffy, 'Ostmen', 382–4.

⁸⁴ *Annals of Ulster*, s.a. 1022.4, 1023.2, 1026.1.

the same year as Rhain's coup, an English fleet attacked South Wales.⁸⁵ It seems unlikely that this was a coincidence. Earl Eilaf, who led the expedition, was high in royal favour at the time and probably had Knútr's support.⁸⁶ The attack may have been timed to challenge Rhain and his Irish supporters. Knútr was perhaps suspicious of letting an Irish ruler extend his power into Britain at this date. He may have also wished to protect the trading interests of Dubliners along the Bristol Channel.

As I have already mentioned, the English and the men of Dublin attacked Wales in 1030. The expedition probably targeted Rhydderch ap Iestyn, a southern king who had recently extended his rule over Gwynedd.⁸⁷ Both Knútr and Sigtryggr of Dublin had cause to resent Rhydderch's growing power. This mighty Welsh king could threaten the English border, while Sigtryggr's interests in North Wales would be affected by Rhydderch's possession of Gwynedd. According to the thirteenth century Welsh 'Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan', Sigtryggr's son Óláfr founded a fort on Anglesey before 1034.⁸⁸ As the Annals of Tigernach report that Óláfr paid 120 Welsh horses to the king of Brega in 1029, the fort could have been founded before that date.⁸⁹ To cement Dublin's influence in Wales, Óláfr's daughter married Cynan ab Iago, one of Rhydderch's rivals in Gwynedd.⁹⁰ It seems that Knútr was willing to allow Sigtryggr to extend his influence in Wales as a counter-balance to Rhydderch.⁹¹

Knútr was clearly more powerful than Sigtryggr. Nevertheless, historians may have exaggerated the extent of England's dominion over Dublin in these years. I have already discussed the evidence for collaboration between Danes and Dubliners prior to Knútr's reign. The alliance between Sigtryggr and Knútr may have been a natural extension of this friendship. The two rulers co-operated closely in trade, in their policy towards Wales, and perhaps in religious matters. However, there is nothing in English or Irish sources which demonstrates that Knútr was the overking of Sigtryggr.

Knútr's relations with Echmarcach, king of Man and the Hebrides, appear to have been less agreeable than his friendship with Sigtryggr. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reports that Knútr received the submission of Echmarcach in 1031, along with Mael Colaim of Alba and Macbeth of Moray.⁹² Echmarcach was a member of the Hiberno-Scandinavian dynasty of Ívarr. This may have led Óttar svarti to assert that Knútr held 'Irishmen' under his sway. Knútr may have chosen to demand Echmarcach's obedience, because he was an enemy of Sigtryggr. Knútr may also have feared that he might ally with a foreign king.

Echmarcach and Sigtryggr were rival members of the dynasty of Ívarr. Sigtryggr's activities in Wales curtailed Echmarcach's influence in the Irish Sea. Previous kings of Man and the Hebrides had played an active role in Wales.⁹³ This may have prompted Echmarcach to develop an alternative power-base on the Rhinns of

⁸⁵ *Annales Cambriae* (BC), s.a. 1022.

⁸⁶ Simon Keynes, 'Cnut's Earls', in *The Reign of Cnut, King of England, Denmark and Norway*, ed. Alexander R. Rumble, London 1994, 43–88, at 58–60.

⁸⁷ Maund, *Ireland*, 162.

⁸⁸ *A Mediaeval Prince of Wales: The Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, ed. and trans. D. Simon Evans, Felinfach 1990, 24, 55. Paul Russell is preparing an edition of the newly discovered twelfth-century Latin version.

⁸⁹ *Annals of Tigernach*, s.a. 1029; Etchingham, 'North Wales', 162.

⁹⁰ *A Mediaeval Prince*, 24, 54.

⁹¹ *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s.a. 1033, 1035. The Irish killed Rhydderch and the English killed his son Caradog.

⁹² ASC MS E, s.a. 1031; Benjamin T. Hudson, 'Cnut and the Scottish Kings', *EHR* 107, 1992, 350–60.

⁹³ *Mariani Scotti Chronicon*, s.a. 1065.

Galloway, which was mentioned at his death.⁹⁴ Echmarcach ousted Sigtryggr from Dublin soon after Knútr's death. It may be that Echmarcach was prevented from acting sooner because of his oath to Knútr.

Echmarcach's predecessor Lagmann had been allied both to Duke Richard II of Normandy and to Óláfr, king of Norway. Neither power was well disposed towards Knútr in 1030.⁹⁵ Knútr may have taken action in 1031 to ensure that Echmarcach did not continue an alliance either with Richard or with a rival faction in Norway.⁹⁶ Local rivalries in the Irish Sea zone therefore appear to take on a broader political dimension during the reign of Knútr due to a network of external relations.

During the long reign of Edward the Confessor in England, Anglo-Irish relations assumed a different character. The *Vita Ædwardi Regis* stresses the harmony which Edward enjoyed with his neighbours at the beginning of his reign, 'all Britain, together with the jagged islands of adjacent kingdoms and monarchies, settling down in the calm of peace'.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the image may be more literary ideal than reality. Unlike Knutr, Edward did not enjoy good relations with Dublin. Instead Ireland became a haven for subjects who flouted the authority of the English king.

The most important aristocratic faction in England during Edward's reign was the house of Godwine. There is evidence that the family had important and lasting connections with Ireland. Godwine's daughter Edith was fluent in Irish. In *Vita Ædwardi* her skill is presented as highly prestigious and equal in significance to her knowledge of Danish and French (perhaps hinting that other English nobles at this date sought to learn these languages). Members of the family of Godwine fled to Ireland in political exile on more than one occasion.⁹⁸ It appears that the families of Godwine and the overking of Leinster, Diarmait, also exchanged gifts.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, some unnecessary doubt and surprise has been expressed about this evidence.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, the importance of this connection has been somewhat underestimated.

The relationship of the house of Godwine with Ireland may have originated in common economic interests. Godwine controlled ports in Sussex, which he inherited from his father, and ports in Wessex, where he was made earl by Knútr.¹⁰¹ These interests would have brought him into contact with Irish merchants from an early date. In addition, he probably benefited from growing trade between Ireland and the south and west of England during the eleventh century. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reports that Godwine exported slaves, and his wife is also reputed to have done so.¹⁰² Tolls from Sussex ports for the sale of slaves are also mentioned in Domesday

⁹⁴ Francis John Byrne, 'Onomastica 2: Na Renna', *Peritia* 1, 1982, 267.

⁹⁵ Simon Keynes, 'The Æthelings in Normandy', *ANS* 13, 1990 (1991), 173–205; Hudson, 'Cnut', 359.

⁹⁶ For Duke Richard's links with the Irish Sea, see: *Rodulphus Glabri Historiarum libri quinque*, ii, 3, ed. and trans. J. France, Oxford 1989, 54–7; *De Moribus et Actibus Primorum Normanniae Ducum*, §103, ed. Jules Lair, Caen 1865, 265; *Dudo of St Quentin, History of the Normans*, trans. Eric Christiansen, Woodbridge 1998, 140.

⁹⁷ *Vita Ædwardi*, 118–19: 'ut quiescente in pacis quiete uniuersali Britannia, cum adaicentium regnorum monarchiarumque angularibus insulis'.

⁹⁸ *Vita Ædwardi*, 22–3, 40–1; Ben Hudson, 'The Family of Harold Godwinson and the Irish Sea Province', *JRSAI* 109, 1979, 92–100.

⁹⁹ *Annals of Inisfallen*, s.a. 1068.5; Frank Barlow, *The Godwins, the Rise and Fall of a Noble Dynasty*, Harlow 2002, 120.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 24; *Vita Ædwardi*, lxvi; Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, London 1970, 120.

¹⁰¹ Keynes, 'Cnut's Earls', 70–4.

¹⁰² *ASC MSS CD*, s.a. 1036; *Gesta Regum* i, 363 (bk II, c. 200); David Pelteret, 'Slave Raiding and Slave Trading in Early England', *ASE* 9, 1981, 99–114.

Book.¹⁰³ As Dublin was a centre for the slave trade in Northern Europe, Godwine's dealings probably encouraged contacts across the Irish Sea.

As Godwine's family received further promotion during Edward's reign, their economic links with Ireland would have grown stronger. When Edith married King Edward, she received Winchester and Exeter as morning gifts. Both towns enjoyed considerable trade with Ireland and Edith benefited from their wealth.¹⁰⁴ Godwine's sons Swegn and Harold also received earldoms in the 1040s. Significantly, Swegn's earldom included control of Bristol. This port was of pivotal importance for Anglo-Irish trade in the eleventh century.¹⁰⁵ The family of Godwine thus derived income from areas which had trade with Ireland, and which might be vulnerable to attack from Ireland.¹⁰⁶ In the light of these circumstances, Edith's knowledge of Irish and her family's contacts with Ireland may be interpreted.

The first evidence of contact between the family of Godwine and Dublin is, however, hostile. The two parties initially supported opposing factions in Wales. From 1039 a claimant to the throne of Gwynedd, Cynan ab Iago, took refuge in Dublin.¹⁰⁷ He was exiled during the reign of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, king of Gwynedd, who succeeded Cynan's father.¹⁰⁸ The Dublin vikings led campaigns against Gruffudd in 1042 and 1044 and provided support for his enemies in South Wales.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, in 1046 Gruffudd ap Llywelyn allied with Swegn Godwinsson, and they campaigned together in Wales.¹¹⁰ Perhaps in retaliation, a viking fleet from Ireland joined ranks with a rival of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn in 1049. They ravaged English territory beyond the Usk while Swegn Godwinsson was in exile in Flanders.¹¹¹ Perhaps as a result of this hostility, the house of Godwine allied with the overking of Leinster, Diarmait mac Maól na mBó, who controlled the viking ports of Wexford and Waterford. The same king also conquered Dublin in 1052.

In 1051, a connection between Diarmait and the house of Godwine is first witnessed when the family was outlawed by Edward. Two sons of Godwine, Harold and Leofric, fled to Diarmait. They took a ship from Bristol which had been prepared by their brother Swegn. Meanwhile Godwine and another son, Tostig, went to Flanders.¹¹² The family's prior links with Flanders are well attested.¹¹³ This raises the question why some of the family chose to seek refuge elsewhere.¹¹⁴ They may have decided to split for security reasons, should a host prove false, or in case enemies sought to pursue them. The division also enabled the family to seek support in different locations. Flanders and Ireland were both places where a mercenary fleet could be recruited. Frequent commerce between the three countries would also

¹⁰³ *Domesday Book*, Sussex (26a) 12, 1.

¹⁰⁴ *Domesday Book*, Devon (100a) C, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Gwynn, 'Medieval Bristol'.

¹⁰⁶ Peter A. Clarke, *The English Nobility under Edward the Confessor*, Oxford 1994, 164–205; David Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford 1981, 100–5. King Edward would also have benefited significantly from Irish trade.

¹⁰⁷ Duffy, 'Ostmen', 386.

¹⁰⁸ *Annales Cambriae* (C), s.a. 1039; *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s.a. 1039.

¹⁰⁹ The terminology used in Welsh chronicles indicates that vikings from Ireland opposed Gruffudd ap Llewelyn in 1042 and 1044. Other unidentified vikings (whom it is tempting to associate with the kingdom of the Isles) waged war against Gruffudd's enemies in the south in 1039 and 1042: *Annales Cambriae* (BC), s.a. 1039, 1042, 1044; *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s.a. 1039, 1042, 1044.

¹¹⁰ ASC MS C, s.a. 1046; Maund, *Ireland*, 127–8.

¹¹¹ ASC MS D, s.a. 1049.

¹¹² ASC MSS CDE, s.a. 1051.

¹¹³ Grierson, 'The Relations', 95–100.

¹¹⁴ Barlow, *Edward*, 120.

enable messages to pass between members of the family during their exile. By using these opportunities, the family of Godwine was able to organise a two-pronged attack on England in 1052. While Harold sailed from Ireland with nine ships, Godwine set out with a fleet from the River Yser. Their campaign successfully and dramatically restored the house of Godwine to power.¹¹⁵ Diarmait no doubt hoped to gain from his timely support. His link with the house of Godwine would have brought some prestige. He may also have sought economic benefits. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reports that Harold seized cattle, captives, and property in Somerset.¹¹⁶ Some of this loot may have made its way back to Ireland. Diarmait may have hoped also for future benefits from this relationship.

The next prominent outlaw who fled from England to Ireland was Ælfgar, son of the Mercian earl Leofric. Ælfgar had fallen foul of the house of Godwine, and he was accused of treachery in 1055. He promptly withdrew to Ireland and collected eighteen warships. He then sought help from Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, king of Gwynedd, and they invaded Herefordshire.¹¹⁷ Harold Godwinsson was sent to put down the invasion, but he failed to engage his opponents in battle. In the truce which resulted, Ælfgar was restored to his former status. Three years later Ælfgar was exiled again. On this occasion he allied with Gruffudd ap Llywelyn and a fleet under the command of the Norwegian prince, Magnús, son of Haraldr hardráði. This included vikings from the Orkneys, the Hebrides, and Dublin.¹¹⁸ The combined forces attacked England, and Ælfgar was again restored. There has been some speculation as to where Ælfgar recruited support in Ireland. Kari Maund regarded the approach of Irish kings as opportunistic and mercenary in their involvements in England. She credited Diarmait mac Maól na mBó with providing help first to the family of Godwine in 1052, and then to their enemies in 1055.¹¹⁹ Colmán Etchingham has nevertheless questioned this conclusion. He has suggested that Ælfgar may have had recourse to Diarmait's great rival, Donnchad, overking of Munster in 1055.¹²⁰ During his second exile Ælfgar received help from an Irish Sea fleet under Norwegian control. At this date the Norwegian crown seems to have backed a branch of the Hiberno-Scandinavian dynasty of Ívarr which was opposed to Diarmait.

The alliance which Diarmait had fostered with the family of Godwine appears to have weathered the events of the 1050s. They made common cause against Gruffudd ap Llywelyn after Ælfgar's death in 1062. In 1063, Harold Godwinsson and his brother Tostig led a major campaign against Gruffudd by sea and land. The Dubliners had sheltered Gruffudd's rival Cynan ab Iago and Diarmait may have assisted Cynan's return to Wales at this point. According to the Annals of Ulster the son of Iago killed Gruffudd.¹²¹ The king's head and the prow of his ship were sent to Harold as gifts. These trophies were then forwarded to King Edward.¹²² The success of this campaign may be a consequence of co-operation between Diarmait and the family of Godwine.

The assistance given by Magnús Haraldsson, Hebrideans and Dubliners to Ælfgar

¹¹⁵ *Vita Ædwardi*, 40–5.

¹¹⁶ ASC MSS EF, s.a. 1052.

¹¹⁷ ASC MSS CDE, s.a. 1055; Maund, *Ireland*, 136.

¹¹⁸ *Annals of Tigernach*, s.a. 1058.

¹¹⁹ Maund, *Ireland*, 135, 165.

¹²⁰ Etchingham, 'North Wales', 154.

¹²¹ *Annals of Ulster*, s.a. 1064.8; Benjamin T. Hudson, 'The Destruction of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn', *Welsh Historical Review* 15, 1990–1, 331–50.

¹²² ASC MSS DE, s.a. 1063.

in 1058 also seems to have been motivated by something other than immediate gain. Magnús was attempting to extend Norwegian authority in the Irish Sea by backing a faction opposed to Echmarcach.¹²³ It could be argued that Magnús was attempting to strengthen Norwegian power in the Isles as a future springboard for the conquest of England.¹²⁴ The seriousness of Norwegian designs on England were demonstrated following the death of Edward the Confessor in 1066 when Haraldr hardráði invaded England.¹²⁵ Adam of Bremen mentioned the participation of an Irish king and a Scottish king in this campaign. This indicates the presence of an Irish Sea contingent at the Battle of Stamford Bridge.¹²⁶

It is striking that during the reign of Edward the Confessor political exiles could rally support in Ireland which helped to restore them to power. These events suggest the increasing willingness of Irish rulers to participate in events in England. In the reign of William the Conqueror, this threat from Ireland continued. In the immediate aftermath of the battle of Hastings, two of Harold's sons fled to King Diarmait in Leinster.¹²⁷ Harold's wife Ealdgyth initially travelled to Chester, and his mother Gytha fled to Exeter.¹²⁸ Both were ports of departure for Ireland.¹²⁹ At this stage Gytha may have made contact with her nephew, the Danish king Sveinn Estrithson. Two sons and a daughter of Harold fled to his court. From these refugees, the family plotted their return to power.

Diarmait supported two attempts by the sons of Harold to win control of England. The first was made in 1068. Godwine Haroldsson led a 'pirate-fleet' up the River Avon to Bristol. However, the townsmen made a successful defence. The fleet then landed in Somerset, where an indecisive battle was fought, and Godwine returned to Ireland.¹³⁰ A second invasion was planned in 1069. This coincided with an invasion from Denmark and a series of local rebellions against William the Conqueror. Orderic Vitalis related that Diarmait helped to raise a fleet of sixty-six ships under the command of two sons of Harold. This fleet then sailed to Exeter, but it was heavily defeated. According to Orderic only two small boatloads of survivors made their way back to Ireland.¹³¹

After the failure of these uprisings, William vigorously and infamously set about subduing northern parts of the kingdom. The efforts of the sons of Harold had failed. Their supporters, Diarmait, overking of Leinster and Dublin, and Sveinn of Denmark, had taken a chance in supporting them. Nevertheless, the gamble could have reaped significant rewards, had it paid off. Hope that William the Conqueror could be defeated seems to have persisted, at least in Denmark. Sveinn Estrithson planned another invasion of England in 1075. He may have made overtures to Dublin for support. It is interesting that a warship made from Dublin oak c.1042 and repaired in the Irish Sea region c.1075 has been recovered from Roskilde

¹²³ Cf. *Chronica Regum Mannie et Insularum*, s.a. 1047 [=1066] (ed. and trans. George Broderick, Belfast 1979); Duffy, 'Irishmen', 106–8.

¹²⁴ Maund, *Ireland*, 166, has suggested that the Irish Sea was an odd place to begin an invasion of England. However, it was a good recruiting ground for military support.

¹²⁵ ASC MSS CDE, s.a. 1066.

¹²⁶ *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae*, iii, 51 (ed. Schmeidler, 356; trans Tschan, 159).

¹²⁷ Orderic ii, 224–5.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*; *John of Worcester*, s.a. 1066; Hudson, 'The Family', 93.

¹²⁹ J. O. Prestwich, 'Military Intelligence under the Norman and Angevin Kings', in *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy: Essays in Honour of Sir James Holt*, ed. George Garnett and John Hudson, Cambridge 1994, 1–30, at 5–8.

¹³⁰ ASC MS D, s.a. 1068.

¹³¹ Orderic ii, 224–5.

fjord.¹³² It is possible that Diarmait's successor in Dublin, Guðrøðr Óláfsson, was providing warships for Sveinn. Nevertheless, Guðrøðr died in the same year, and Sveinn's expedition never landed in England.¹³³

Benjamin Hudson has argued that Toirrdelbach Ua Briain of Munster, the new overking of Dublin, followed a more friendly policy towards William than either Diarmait or Guðrøðr.¹³⁴ This theory is supported by numismatic evidence. From about 1074 until about 1088 the Dublin mint imitated English coin-issues. The weight ratio of Irish to English coins in this period also remained constant at the workable rate of 3:2.¹³⁵ Hudson has interpreted this as a sign of better trade relations between the two kingdoms. William also seems to have encouraged closer ecclesiastical links between England and Ireland. Nevertheless these links do not necessarily indicate friendship between the kings of England and Munster. Lanfranc consecrated bishops of Dublin in 1074 and 1085, and letters have survived from him to Guðrøðr, king of Dublin, and to Toirrdelbach Ua Briain of Munster and his clergy.¹³⁶ Toirrdelbach Ua Briain may not have been the prime mover in securing the consecration of a bishop of Dublin in Canterbury in 1074, as Guðrøðr, a member of the dynasty of Ívarr, ruled there until 1075.

Guðrøðr may have considered that Bishop Patrick's consecration in England was desirable as it avoided accepting the authority or intervention of one of the Irish ecclesiastical *familiae*. A more distant ecclesiastical overlord may have been preferred.¹³⁷ In the text of Patrick's profession of obedience to Canterbury, the use of terminology is politically charged. Lanfranc used the title 'primate of the British Isles'. Dublin is called 'the metropolitan church of Ireland'. This served both to flatter the powers of Dublin and to strengthen Lanfranc's claims.¹³⁸ It is unlikely that the clergy of Toirrdelbach Ua Briain would have accepted these assertions. In practice the titles were quite unfounded but they were perhaps meant to establish a precedent for future claims.

After Toirrdelbach took the overkingship of Dublin in 1075, Lanfranc sought to extend his own influence in Munster. He wrote to the leading bishop of the province and his clergy.¹³⁹ In 1085, a new bishop of Dublin, Donngus, was consecrated in Canterbury. Flanagan has pointed out that the wording of his profession of obedience was very different from his predecessor's.¹⁴⁰ Lanfranc was styled merely 'archbishop of Canterbury', and Dublin was not referred to as a 'metropolitan church'.¹⁴¹ It may

¹³² Sean McGrail, 'Ship Timbers from Wood Quay, Dublin and Other Medieval Sites in Ireland', *Bullán* 1, 1994, 49–61, at 50; N. Bonde and O. Crumlin-Pedersen, 'The Dating of Wreck 2 from Skuldelev, Denmark', *Newswarp* 7, 1990, 3–6; Tinna Damgård Sørensen, 'Les bateaux Skuldeler (Roskilde) et leurs répliques modernes', in *L'héritage maritime des Vikings en Europe de l'Ouest*, ed. Elisabeth Ridel, Caen 2002, 199–227, at 204.

¹³³ ASC MSS DE, s.a. 1075; *Annals of Inisfallen*, s.a. 1075.2.

¹³⁴ Benjamin Hudson, 'William the Conqueror and Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies* 29, 1994–5, 145–58.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 153–4; Wallace, 'The English Presence', 209.

¹³⁶ *Lanfranc's Letters*, nos 9, 10, 49.

¹³⁷ In the late tenth century, kings of Dublin developed links with the church of Iona and the *familia* of Columba. The growing influence of their rivals, Clann Cholmáin, over the church of Kells, which headed the *familia*, may have encouraged Dubliners to foster links elsewhere: Edel Bhreathnach, 'Columban Churches in Brega and Leinster: Relations with the Norse and the Anglo-Normans', *JRSAI* 129, 1999, 5–18.

¹³⁸ *Canterbury Professions*, ed. M. Richter, Torquay 1973, no. 36; Philpott, 'The English and Irish Churches', 193–7; Holland, 'Dublin and Reform', 112–16.

¹³⁹ *Lanfranc's Letters*, no. 49.

¹⁴⁰ Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 19; but cf. Holland, 'Dublin and Reform', 118–19.

¹⁴¹ *Canterbury Professions*, no. 51.

be that Toirrdelbach Ua Briain and his bishops objected to Lanfranc's claims and that they had to be toned down. Nevertheless, Toirrdelbach encouraged the consecration, perhaps to serve his own political agenda: the church of Armagh claimed primacy over the churches of Ireland, and its relations with Toirrdelbach were perhaps cooling at this date.¹⁴² Lanfranc's intervention may have been used by Toirrdelbach to snub Armagh.

Lanfranc's influence over the Irish Church was encouraged by the papacy. Gregory VII wrote to Lanfranc in the 1070s, mentioning rumours of the immoral marriage practices of the *Scotti*.¹⁴³ Lanfranc was vested with authority to punish these crimes. As the Normans appear to be the generators of anti-Irish propaganda from the eleventh century, it is tempting to attribute to them the rumours of Irish immorality which incensed Gregory.¹⁴⁴ After all, adopting the moral high ground had served as a useful political weapon in 1066 when the papacy blessed the banners of William the Conqueror.¹⁴⁵ Lanfranc may have hoped that by reporting on the poor state of the Irish Church he would be assigned responsibility to sort it out.

It seems that there was scope for competition between Uí Briain overkings and William the Conqueror, as well as common interest. In particular, Uí Briain seem to have resented the rapid conquest of territory in North Wales achieved by the Normans.¹⁴⁶ Perhaps in an effort to counter this intrusion, Uí Briain supported the claims of Gruffudd ap Cynan to the throne of Gwynedd. In 1075 Gruffudd defeated his Welsh enemies with the support of Muirchertach Ua Briain, who was then king of Dublin.¹⁴⁷ However, a revolt soon forced Gruffudd back to Ireland. Another invasion was made in 1081, with the support of Muirchertach's brother.¹⁴⁸ As a result Gruffudd was restored to power in the north, and his ally Rhys ap Tewdwr was placed in a much stronger position in the south.¹⁴⁹

Both rulers were thus indebted to Irish support. These actions may have provoked William to intervene directly in Welsh affairs. In 1081 he visited St Davids and seems to have struck a deal with Rhys.¹⁵⁰ Robert Babcock has highlighted evidence in Domesday Book that Rhys agreed to pay William an annual tribute of forty pounds, in exchange for recognition of his power in South Wales.¹⁵¹ This agreement drew Rhys within William's sphere of influence. Gruffudd was subjected by harsher means, as he was captured by Hugh, earl of Chester, and imprisoned for twelve years.¹⁵² The speed with which Irish intervention in Welsh politics brought about William's reaction, suggests that he was not entirely trusting of their motives.

William may have perceived Ireland as a potential threat throughout his reign. Orderic Vitalis identified the Irish as among his most dangerous foes.¹⁵³ The island

¹⁴² Armagh was allied with Cenél nEogain, who became a threat to Uí Briain, following the accession of Domnall Mac Lochlainn, overking of Cenél nEogain, in 1083. Friendship between Uí Briain and Armagh was restored in 1103: Ó Corráin, *Ireland*, 141, 147; Holland, 'Dublin and Reform', 133.

¹⁴³ *Lanfranc's Letters*, no. 8.

¹⁴⁴ Dumville, 'Images of the Viking'.

¹⁴⁵ It is notable that fewer royal pilgrims travelled from Ireland to England after 1066. Gwynn, *The Irish Church*, 37–8, attributed this to worsening relations between England and Ireland.

¹⁴⁶ Hudson, 'William', 148.

¹⁴⁷ *A Mediaeval Prince*, 28–9, 59; *Annales Cambriae* (C), s.a. 1075; *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s.a. 1075.

¹⁴⁸ *A Mediaeval Prince*, 36–8, 67–9; *Annales Cambriae* (BC), s.a. 1081; *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s.a. 1081.

¹⁴⁹ Robert S. Babcock, 'Rhys ap Tewdwr, King of Deheubarth', *ANS* 16, 1993 (1994), 21–35, at 26.

¹⁵⁰ *Annales Cambriae* (BC), s.a. 1081; *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s.a. 1081; ASC MS E, s.a. 1081.

¹⁵¹ Babcock, 'Rhys', 21.

¹⁵² *A Mediaeval Prince*, 38, 69.

¹⁵³ *Orderic* iv, 42–3.

had long served as a refuge for political enemies and as a recruiting ground for mercenaries and fleets.¹⁵⁴ The concern of William's earls regarding attacks from the Irish Sea was very tangibly manifested in the castles they built along the coast.¹⁵⁵ William may have sought to resolve these dangers through diplomatic channels. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 'If he had lived only two years more he would have conquered Ireland by his astuteness and without any display of force.'¹⁵⁶ This has led to speculation. It evokes a similar boast of the Roman governor Agricola in AD 81. Tacitus wrote: 'I have often heard Agricola say that Ireland could be reduced and held by a single legion and a few auxiliaries, and the conquest would also pay from the point of view of Britain, if Roman arms were in evidence on every side and liberty banished off the map.'¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the Romans did not conquer Ireland. Similarly, the statement in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle should not be used to suggest that Ireland's subjection by the English in the 1170s was an inevitable progression of events from the reign of William the Conqueror.¹⁵⁸

In the reign of William Rufus, contingents from across the Irish Sea continued to oppose the extension of Norman power in Wales.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, ecclesiastical links remained strong as bishops from Dublin and Waterford were consecrated at Canterbury.¹⁶⁰ Relations between Muirchertach Ua Briain and England became more strained during the reign of Henry I. In a fascinating sequence of events, Muirchertach married one of his daughters to the rebel Arnulf de Montgomery. He then married another to Magnús, king of Norway, while Magnús was seeking to establish a power base in the Irish Sea.¹⁶¹ This prompted Henry to impose a temporary embargo on Irish trade.¹⁶² After 1101 Muirchertach Ua Briain stopped the consecration of bishops of Irish ports in England.¹⁶³ This practice was resumed only after his death in 1119.¹⁶⁴

In conclusion, it seems that Ireland had an important role in English affairs in the eleventh century. This relationship was expressed through trade and religious links, and through the political involvements of Irish kings in English affairs. There are

¹⁵⁴ Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 48–9, 59–60.

¹⁵⁵ *A Mediaeval Prince*, 39, 70.

¹⁵⁶ ASC MS E, s.a. 1086.

¹⁵⁷ Tacitus, *Agricola*, §24 (*Tacitus, Dialogus, Agricola, Germania*, ed. and trans. William Peterson, London 1914, 211). This was perhaps imitated by Gerald of Wales, *Itinerarium Cambriae*, ii.2 (*Giraldi Cambrensis*, vi, 108–9; *The Journey through Wales and the Description of Wales*, trans. Lewis Thorpe, Harmondsworth 1978, 169).

¹⁵⁸ John Gillingham, 'A Second Tidal Wave? The Historiography of English Colonization of Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the 12th and 13th Centuries', in *Historiographical Approaches to Medieval Colonization of East Central Europe*, ed. Jan M. Piskorski, Boulder 2002, 303–27, at 315, has noted that the use of the label 'Norman' to identify the invaders of 1169 has the implied effect of 'linking subsequent conquests in Wales and Ireland with the Norman Conquest of England in 1066'.

¹⁵⁹ *Annales Cambriae* (BC), s.aa. 1088, 1091; *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s.aa. 1088, 1091.

¹⁶⁰ Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 20–1.

¹⁶¹ Anthony Candon, 'Muirchertach Ua Briain, Politics and Naval Activity in the Irish Sea, 1075 to 1119', in *Keimelia*, ed. Mac Niocaill and Wallace, 397–415; E. Curtis, 'Muirchertach O'Brien, High King of Ireland and his Norman Son-in-law, Arnulf de Montgomery', *JRSAI* 51, 1921, 116–24. Curtis perceived Arnulf as a precursor of Strongbow, whose example planted the idea of conquest 'in the minds of the restless and greedy Norman race'.

¹⁶² *Gesta Regum* i, 738–9. bk V, c. 409. This passage exaggerated Muirchertach's obedience to Henry. Similarly, *Chronica Regum Mannie*, s.a. 1098, exaggerates his obedience to Magnús *berfætr* ('Barefoot' or 'Barelegs').

¹⁶³ Muirchertach improved relations with Armagh: *Annals of Ulster*, s.aa. 1103.5, 1105.3, 1106.6; Holland, 'Dublin and Reform', 128–33.

¹⁶⁴ Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 25–30.

recurrent themes in these relations, such as the passage of exiles or enemies across the Irish Sea to seek help, and the attempts of rulers on both sides of the Irish Sea to influence Welsh politics. While initially these links focused on the Hiberno-Scandinavian population in Ireland, increasingly in the eleventh century the Irish themselves played a crucial role in events across the Irish Sea.

It seems appropriate to ask why Irish rulers in the eleventh century sought greater involvement in English affairs. To some extent this can be explained by political developments within Ireland. As power became more centralised, claimants to the overkingship of Ireland may have sought to validate their power through external recognition. Furthermore, as Irish kings controlled viking towns from the late tenth century, their interests were naturally drawn into the external political and economic interests of these ports.¹⁶⁵

However, the question also has a broader dimension. As Michael Richter has demonstrated, Irish kings were not only interested in England. They were interested in external affairs in general.¹⁶⁶ This awareness was manifest early on by the pilgrimages to Rome which were undertaken from the 1020s. Irish rulers were not exceptional in their attitude. Both at the fringes of Christendom and at the core, the eleventh century was characterised by growing aristocratic mobility and communication across regional boundaries.¹⁶⁷ Ultimately these developments sprang from increasing opportunities. The growth of trading networks (which was to some degree indebted to vikings) facilitated external communication.¹⁶⁸ In Ireland, as elsewhere, individuals responded to rising opportunities for external contact, encouraged perhaps by ambition and natural curiosity.

I have argued that modern narratives of Anglo-Irish relations in the eleventh century are sometimes overshadowed by the consequences of the invasion of 1171. By projecting back the origins of English overkingship in Ireland, and downplaying Ireland's earlier political significance, historians may imbue the invasion with an air of predictability (and, in extreme cases, justification). Comparison may be made with the debate over conditions within Ireland in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries.¹⁶⁹ One perspective is that Ireland was economically and politically backward. Therefore invasion by a more developed and progressive neighbour was 'inevitable'.¹⁷⁰ Historians opposed to this view have stressed that Ireland was becoming part of a European mainstream in the eleventh century.¹⁷¹ In order to contribute to, or to break away from, these debates, more research is necessary in the relatively

¹⁶⁵ See above, note 8.

¹⁶⁶ Michael Richter, 'The European Dimension of Irish History in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Peritia* 4, 1985, 328–45.

¹⁶⁷ Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonisation and Cultural Change 950–1350*, London 1993. One example, to illustrate this trend, is the Kingdom of Alba. Macbeth (1040–57) undertook a pilgrimage to Rome and allowed Normans to settle in his territory. His successor Maelcolaim III (1058–93) married foreign royal ladies, first, Ingibjorg, and then Margaret. His sons famously laboured to increase Scotland's contacts with Continental Europe. As a rather conspicuous sign of foreign contacts, his son Edgar (1097–1107) sent a camel to Muircertach Ua Briain. *Annals of Inisfallen*, s.a. 1105.7.

¹⁶⁸ David Griffiths, 'Exchange, Trade and Urbanisation', in *From the Vikings to the Normans*, ed. Wendy Davies, Oxford 2003, 73–104.

¹⁶⁹ Marie Therese Flanagan, 'Strategies of Lordship in Pre-Norman and Post-Norman Leinster', *ANS* 20, 1997 (1998), 107–26, at 109–10.

¹⁷⁰ G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, 4 vols, Oxford 1911–20, i, 20–37; Beckett, *The Anglo-Irish Tradition*, 17–18. Cf. Carty, *Was Ireland Conquered?*, 18–19.

¹⁷¹ Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Nationality and Kingship in pre-Norman Ireland', *Historical Studies* 11, 1975, 1–35; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200*, London 1995, 291–2.

neglected fields of Irish history and Anglo-Irish relations in the eleventh and earlier twelfth centuries.¹⁷² The diversity of political links between England and Ireland requires greater recognition. The role of these interactions within a broader network of economic, cultural and religious contacts offers many opportunities for future discussion.

¹⁷² Several commentators have drawn attention to the lack of research on this period: Ó Corráin, *Ireland*, 201–2; Duffy, 'Irishmen', 93; Denis Bethell, 'English Monks and Irish Reform in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Historical Studies* 8, 1969, 111–35, at 111; Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 2.

