Settlement in the Anglo-Norman Manor of Shanid
*c.*1200-*c.*1650

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A study and analysis of settlement patterns and land usage in the West Limerick manor of Shanid from the arrival of the Normans to the Cromwellian conquest. The importance of the Shannon estuary as a focus for settlement throughout the period is emphasised. Links with earlier centres of defence and power are highlighted as is the close association with church sites.

Very little is known about secular settlement and how space was organised during the medieval period. Outside of the Pale on the east coast, the English administration in Dublin was only a marginal presence. The single most important administrative and economic unit in this period was the Anglo-Norman manor. Local case studies focusing on the manor and examining the distribution of castles, villages and scattered rural settlement can help us achieve a better understanding of settlement patterns and land usage in medieval Ireland. To date such an emphasis has been underutilised and this approach should provide fresh insights into Anglo-Norman and English colonisation. The following essay will focus on an examination of one such manor, Shanid, in county Limerick.

Following the Norman invasion of Ireland in 1169, the invaders spread westwards across the country. Fortified enclosures and castles were built as part of the colonizing process to secure these newly acquired lands. The first encroachment into county Limerick was in 1198 when a castle was built at Ardpatrick in the southeast of the county. In 1199, Thomas Fitz Gerald, the son of Maurice Fitz Gerald one of the most important Norman invaders that arrived in Ireland in 1169, was granted lands known at Fontymkill near Kilfinnane in southeast Limerick. The westward expansion of the Normans continued and according to the *Annals of Innisfallen*, a castle was erected at Askeaton in 1199. Thomas Fitz Gerald's son, Thomas was eager to acquire more land and in 1237 he received some of the lands of one of his father's closest allies, William de Burgh, at Shanid and Killeedy in west Limerick. This is the first reference to the Manor of Shanid.

The initial stage of the conquest of these new lands was marked by the construction of defensive earthworks known as mottes. These flat top earthen mounds were often surrounded by a fosse. A timber tower and palisade was erected on top of the mound. At Shanid Castle, the motte and fosse can still be seen, the stone castle was built later when control of these lands was on a more secure and permanent footing. In 1282, it is recorded that Thomas Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald, whose descendants would later become the earls of Desmond, held a cantred in Cunyl (Connello) called Shenede (Shanid). The first mention of a castle at Shanid[1] is in the Inquisition of 1298 following the death of Thomas Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald. Shanid became the first chief castle of the Desmond Fitzgeralds and from their early association with these lands; they went on to derive their battle cry, 'Shanid Abu', (Shanid forever).[2]

[1] SMR, Limerick 19:81.

[2] Anthony M. McCormack, *The Earldom of Desmond 1463-1583*, (Dublin, 2005) pp 26-9; Thomas Johnson Westropp, 'The Ancient Castles of the County of Limerick', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy,* vol. xxvi, no. 10 (1906-07) pp 203-4, 243.

One has to ask why was their settlement at Shanid of such importance to the Desmond Fitzgeralds to be used as a rallying cry, why weren't their early acquired lands at Kilfinnane and Killeedy as important? The answer may lie in who held sway in this district prior to their arrival. As they had done in England and Wales, the Normans tended to step into the shoes of the previous rulers and landholders. From the early tenth century the *Uí Chonaill Gabhra* controlled a large kingdom and their king was one of the major overlords in county Limerick.[3] One of their chief strongholds was the large trivallate ringfort on Knockourha Hill, the hill directly north of Shanid Castle. Where the *Uí Chonaill Gabhra* kings were inaugurated is not known. There is evidence from around the country of large stones being used as inauguration platforms by Anglo-Norman and Gaelic families in the medieval period. The Clanrickard Burkes of Connaught used a small stone boulder, known later as the 'wishing chair' as an inauguration platform. The *Clann Aodha Buidhe* branch of the *Uí Neill* in east Ulster had an inauguration chair, described as a 'large cumbersome monolith'. Interestingly both stones were situated southeast of their strongholds on the down slope of hills.[4] Southeast and near the foot of Knockourha Hill is the minor place-name Gourbawn, *An Gabhar Bán*, 'the white goat'. This place-name, according to Ó Muraile, 'is likely a reference to a large rock'.[5] Therefore it should be considered that this may have been the inauguration site of the *Uí Chonaill Gabhra* and also of the Desmond Fitzgeralds. It was of particular importance to the new ruling Norman families who later adopted Gaelic customs to choose a site that would add some gravitas to their past, and that was perhaps the reason that the Fitzgeralds picked Shanid as their headquarters. It was across the valley from the chief *dún* of the *Uí Chonaill Gabhra,* and if Gourbawn was also their inauguration site, this also served a strong purpose in maintaining their legitimacy as rulers of these newly conquered lands.

O'Connor has described that the Anglo-Norman settlement in county Limerick occurred on two levels. First, the lands were divided up into fourteen cantreds each focused on at least one centre or castle as a focal or strong point. These focal points included Shanid, Askeaton, Rathkeale and Newcastle West. Many of these centres developed at previous important strategic points where there were existing high status ringforts. The case for Shanid is outlined above. There was a large trivallate ringfort at Knockane overlooking the Arra valley at Newcastle West, the *dún* on the island on the river Deel at Askeaton was claimed by the Kings of Munster in the tenth century and at an important crossing point on the Deel at Rathkeale there was another ringfort situated on the highest land for miles around.[6] The initial problem faced by the Anglo-Normans in winning these new lands was security. The construction of strong castles was vital in controlling these newly won lands. Such buildings had twin purposes, as a residence and for defence.

The first recorded castle in the manor of Shanid was Robertstown castle recorded between 1222 and 1230 as 'the castle of Robert Guher or Gore'. The castle at Robertstown[7] and the secure anchorage for boats it provided was essential for the development of trade in this part of county Limerick. Today, a small fragment of the castle tower survives

[3] Thomas Johnson Westropp, 'A Survey of the Ancient Churches in the county of Limerick', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxv, section c, no. 8 (1905) p. 332.

[4] Elizabeth FitzPatrick, 'Assembly and Inauguration Places of the Burkes of Late Medieval Connacht', in Patrick J. Duffy, David Edwards and Elizabeth FitzPatrick (eds), *Gaelic Ireland, c.1250-c.1650, Land, Lordship and Settlement*, (Dublin, 2001) pp, 360, 372-3.

[5] Private correspondence from Professor Nollaig Ó Muraile, Roinn na Gaeilge, NUIG.

[6] Patrick J. O'Connor, *Exploring Limerick's Past, An Historical Geography of Urban Development in County and City* (Newcastle West, 1987) pp 11-2; Westropp, 'Ancient Castles', p. 203; Ordnance Survey 6 inch Maps Nos. 29 and 36, 1923.

[7] SMR, Limerick 10:13.

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positioned away from the outer defences. Many castles built prior to the mid-thirteenth century have a tower isolated within the outer defensive wall. The site picked was a good one, on a small headland with water on three sides, a strong defence was only required on the fourth landward side. Westropp, writing in the early twentieth century, describes the surviving features of this defensive wall as 'fragments of a strong wall across the neck of the peninsula'.[8] When the tide was in it was a difficult place to attack and when the tide receded, the exposed coastal slob made it an impossible task to approach the castle from the seaward side. While Shanid castle was first recorded in 1298, there may, according to Frame, have been a fortification there some one hundred years earlier when the original Anglo-Norman expansion south of the Shannon was made.[9] The castle made use of a natural hillock which had a steep gradient on the northern side and this was improved by the building of a motte and fosse. The castle consisted of a strong tower on the eastern side that was eleven metres high. The tower was surrounded by an outer wall two metres thick and five metres high. The castle was surrounded by a moat four metres wide. Given its elevation and the surrounding topography this was an excellent defensive structure. Shanid castle developed as a frontier fortification. As the frontier moved outwards, castles such as Shanid became redundant. Defence was its primary purpose, the castle interior was small in area being less than ten metres across and it did not have a complex of buildings, such as a great hall where the Earl of Desmond could receive and entertain guests and see to the administration of his lands. It seems likely that Shanid castle's heyday was in the fourteenth century. It lost out to Askeaton castle *c.*1410-40, as the earls of Desmond expanded their lands, and a more comfortable and striking seat was required to emphasize their wealth and power.[10]

When the Desmond Fitzgeralds were granted the Manor of Shanid in 1237, this did not mean they had dominion over these lands. They were checked by a lack of resources; Maurice Fitz Gerald was only a minor Norman soldier and they encountered family misfortune, John Fitz Thomas and his son, Maurice Fitz John were slain in the battle of Callan in 1261; the terrain in the manor was difficult, over two thirds of the manor contained uplands above one hundred metres; and the resistance of the native Irish caused setbacks, their castles in Connello were burned by the McCarthys following the battle of Callan.[11] It took many years for the Norman control of Shanid to become secure and to open up these newly acquired lands for settlement. When Thomas Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald, father of the first earl of Desmond, died in 1298 an inquisition was undertaken into his estates. In county Limerick he held four manors, Shanid, Newcastle, Killeedy and Glenogra. The manor of Shanid at that time covered a large area of northwest county Limerick that may have included all the lands inside the following external boundaries, from Glancorby (Glin) to Adthe (Athea), along the hills through Rathronan and north to the Shannon estuary at Mohyrgan (Morgans). At the demesne at Shanid it was found there were only 360 acres of arable land and sixteen acres of meadow. No rent is recorded as having been received from farmers. There was no pasture or park land, 'as no one

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[8] Geraldine Stout and Matthew Stout, 'Early Landscapes: from prehistory to plantation', in F. H.A. Aalen, Kevin Whelan and Matthew Stout (eds), *Atlas of Irish Rural Landscape* (Cork, 1997) p. 57; Westropp 'Ancient Castles', p. 242.

[9] Robin Frame, *Colonial Ireland, 1169-1369* (Dublin, 1981) pp 96-7.

[10] Rev. J. Dowd, *Round about the County of Limerick* (Dublin, 1896) p. 201; Westropp, 'Ancient Castles', p. 243; Goddard H. Orpen, 'Notes on some County Limerick Castles', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquities of Ireland*, vol. xix (1909) p. 34.

[11] John Begley, *The diocese of Limerick, ancient and medieval* (Dublin, 1906) p. 154; Frame, *Colonial Ireland*, p. 35; McCormack, *Earldom of Desmond*, pp 30-1.

would rent pasture there'.[12] This suggests that very little of the land at Shanid was under the firm control of the Desmond Fitzgeralds and as a consequence it was too dangerous to have cattle in pasture. Near Shanid Castle there is only one garden described as belonging to a dwelling. The impression is given is of a mainly wild and lawless country. A further example can be given of the loose control exercised by the Desmond Fitzgeralds at this time. Rabbits were introduced by the Normans into the country as a food source and one of the places where such warrens were situated survives in the place-name Conigar, *An Coinicéar*, 'the rabbit-warren' near Askeaton. However the 1298 Inquisition reported that all the rabbits in the manor of Shanid had been killed by foxes.[13] Sixty years after these lands were acquired by the Desmond Fitzgeralds; Anglo-Norman settlement had only gained a small foothold.

Anglo-Norman manors were sub-divided into smaller manors held by lesser lords or free tenants. At Shanid these manors included Glin, Dunmoylan, Robertstown, Ballyegny and Kilcosgrave and were appropriated to the lord's kinsmen and associates. These vassals generally held their lands at a nominal rent in return for levels of knight service and retained some land as demesne and sublet the remainder among different categories of tenants. Among these chief tenants in 1298 were John Fitz John (ancestor of the Knights of Glin) at Glin and Morgans, Margery Gore at Robert's castle (Robertstown), Raymond De Valle at Dunmoylan, Robert De Valle at Ballyegny and William Rothelan at Kilcosgrave.[14] The distribution of these settlements was affected by influences, such as soil quality and defensibility. The sites of all these minor manors were on good quality agricultural land. The sites at Kilcosgrave, Dunmoylan and Ballyegny were adjacent to rivers and streams, and Glin, Robertstown and Morgans were situated on the Shannon estuary, so that these natural resources could be exploited economically. Interestingly five of the six minor manors were situated on the lowlands. The only exception was Glin on the Glencorbry River at the foot of the hill country. A few kilometres to the east the arable lands around the mouth of the Owvaun River at Loghill were not settled, as these were the church lands, part of the manor of Loghill and the property of the bishop of Limerick.[15]

It is not clear what structures were built in the early phase of settlement at these minor manors. Keegan forms the view that 'the initial phase of manorial establishment' in west Limerick was 'enabled through the use of earth-and-timber fortifications'.[16] The burning of the Desmond Fitzgerald castles in Connello in 1261 by the McCarthys also lends support to this view. If these castles had been of stone they would not have burned. Moated sites have recently been recognised at Morgans North,[17] Sroolane close to Robertstown[18] and at Old Abbey near Kilcosgrave.[19] Moated sites have been dated to the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries and may have been utilised in the early phase of Anglo-Norman settlement. These moated sites were surrounded by a wooden

[12] Begley, *diocese of Limerick, ancient and medieval*, p. 158. Art Ó Maolfabhail, *Logainmneacha na hÉireann imleabhar: I, Contae Luimnigh* (*Baile Átha Cliath*) 1990) pp 8, 186, 224.

[13] Ó Maolfabhail, *Logainmneacha Contae Luimnigh*, p. 138; Begley, *diocese of Limerick, ancient and medieval*, p. 160.

[14] Begley, *diocese of Limerick, ancient and medieval*, p. 159. A free tenant was a freeman, most commonly holding land by knight service, whose tenure was protected by the royal courts.

[15] Ibid., pp 204-5.

[16] Mark Keegan, 'The archaeology of manorial settlement in west county Limerick in the thirteenth century' in James Lyttleton and Tadhg O'Keeffe (eds), *The Manor in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2005) p. 29.

[17] SMR, Limerick 10:26.

[18] SMR, Limerick 10:65.

[19] SMR, Limerick 19:24.

palisade and water-filled moat and were likely compact military bases that were designed to intimidate the native Irish community. The moated site at Sroolane was an impressive forty-six metres by forty-three metres.

Other early settlement structures that were utilised by the Normans in this period included rectangular enclosures and ringforts. Rectangular enclosures were built as part of the second part of the colonising process that took place after the lands were granted to the Norman lords. These were the early farms of substantial farmers who were not granted manors and could not afford to build castles and yet lived in districts where some provision for defence was required. Excavated rectangular enclosures show evidence of occupation from the late thirteenth century to the mid-fourteenth century. Around Shanid there is evidence of the rectangular enclosures at four sites Shanid Upper,[20] Moig,[21] Tubbrid,[22] and Aughinish East.[23] Around each enclosure there was a defensive rectangular earth work with a wooden palisade that had dwellings, stables and agricultural buildings constructed of timber, and stone where it was plentiful, within and without the enclosure. These rectangular enclosures could measure thirty metres square.[24] All fours sites were established on good quality agricultural lands and their distribution highlights that the sites at Shanid Upper, Moig and Tubbrid were situated near streams, while the site at Aughinish Island was in close proximity to the fresh water lakes in the northeast of the island. It is clear that a nearby water source was of importance in the selection of all four sites.

The situation that existed at the end of the thirteenth century with little land in pasture or under the plough had changed completely by the mid-fifteenth century when the manor was firmly under Anglo-Norman control. In the 1452 Rental of Connello the rents paid by free tenants amounted to £2.8s.10d. The rent paid by farmers was £22.17s.8d. almost ten times the contribution of the free tenants. The importance of dairying and hill pastures to the income of manor is reflected in the rents paid by farmers. The hill pastures at Knocknagornagh (Athea) and Bellaghdrome (Flean More, Glin) each contributed 15 shillings in rent. Shore lands were also important for dairying with Foynes Island having a rent charge of 20 shillings and nearby on the mainland Granagh 15s.7d. As described by Horning, there was an extensive 'exploitation of grasslands to support often sizeable cattle herds' during the medieval period.[25]

While contemporary accounts and this rental highlight the supremacy of dairying in the medieval economy, corn was also of importance. Corn was milled at Shanid manor from the thirteenth century with the mill of New Grange (Shanagolden) recorded in 1298 and 1452 contributing a yearly rent to the manor.[26] During the Anglo-Norman period

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[20] SMR, Limerick 19:84.

[21] SMR, Limerick 19:93.

[22] SMR, Limerick 19:136.

[23] SMR, Limerick 10:108.

[24] Kevin D. O'Conor, 'The Morphology of Gaelic Lordly Sites in North Connaught', in Duffy, Edwards & FitzPatrick (eds), *Gaelic Ireland*, pp 338-45. Ordnance Survey Maps Nos. 10 and 19, county Limerick. See www.archaeology.ie for a site report on the moated site at Sroolane (SMR, Limerick 10:65).

[25] Audrey Horning, 'Ireland: Medieval Identities, Settlement and Land Use', in Neil Christie and Paul Stamper (eds), *Medieval Rural Settlement, Britain and Ireland, AD 800-1600* (Oxford, 2012) p. 181. Granagh was a land unit near Foynes village, see Begley, *diocese of Limerick, ancient and medieval*, p. 324.

[26] Begley, *diocese of Limerick, ancient and medieval*, pp 160, 323-4. The reason the site of New Grange is attributed to Shanagolden is due to the Inquisition of 1613. In this document Old Abbey and the rectories of Kilmoylan, Dunmoylan, Robertstown and New Grange were held by Sir J. Jephson. The only rectory in these parishes that was not mentioned was Shanagolden and New Grange was therefore likely the name given to the lands around the village. See Westropp, 'Ancient Churches', p. 395.

there was also a water-mill at Dunmoylan and although there is no historical record of a mill having been at Robertstown prior to the Munster Plantation in 1608, it is likely a mill was incorporated into the manor structure there since the early phase of Anglo-Norman settlement. Records from the seventeenth-century Civil Survey show that there was over three hundred acres of arable land at Shanid; corn was likely grown there to supply the mill at nearby Shanagolden village. At Dunmoylan and in the contiguous townlands of Kilcolman and Dooncaha three hundred acres of arable land are also recorded. At Robertstown there was also three hundred acres of arable land. This suggests that these mills were established where the adjoining lands were fertile and capable of growing large quantities of corn.[27]

Rural settlement in the medieval period is a lost world, which can to some extent be recreated by the examination of townland names. These place-names are one of the most important keys in understanding medieval patterns of settlement As pointed out by Ó Muraíle, the presence of places-names implies some degree of human habitation somewhere in the vicinity of the place-names.[28] The place-name evidence for Shanagolden Catholic parish shows that seventeen of the twenty-seven place-names that were first recorded during the years 1100 to 1600 refer either to settlement or land holding units.[29] The prefix *baile* (place, town, land, settlement, farm) occurs five times. For example we get Ballyane, *Baile Uí Éidhin*, 'the place of Éidhin', Ballycormick, *Baile Uí Chormaic*, 'the place of Ó Chormaic', Ballylin, *Baile Uí Fhloinn*, 'the place of Ó Floinn', Ballynacragga, *Baile na Craige*, 'the place of the rock' and Ballynash, *Baile an Naiseach*, 'the place of An Naiseach'. *Baile* is in all but one case combined with a personal name of the person who had once farmed these lands. The next most important group of cultural places are those that refer to an early church settlement, Morgans, *Muirgheadain*, 'a maritime spot', Kilcosgrove, *Cill Choscráin*, 'the church of Coscrán' and Kilmoylan, *Cill Mhaolán*, 'the church of Maolán'. The last two have *cill* combined with the names of holy men to whom the original foundation of these churches is attributed. Old Abbey, *Mainister na gCailleach*, 'monastery of the nuns' also refers to a medieval religious house. Two place-names refer to ancient forts. Deelish, *Duílis*, 'black enclosure' and Dunmoylan where *Dún* is combined with a personal name, *Maoilín*, 'the fort of Maoilín', that may indicate the fortress of a chieftain that goes back to pre-Norman times. Shanid may translate as *Seanaid*, 'a place of meeting', perhaps recording an important ancient gathering of some kind. Another group of place-names describes land divisions, Cloonty, *Na Cluainte*, 'the meadows', Tiermore, *Tír Mhór*, 'the big district', Carrowclogh, *An Cheathrú Chlochach*, 'the stony quarterland' and Cloonyclohassy, *Cluain Uí Chlochasaigh*, 'the meadow of Ó Clochasaigh'.

Interestingly in this region Anglo-Norman names did not take hold. The only reference to Anglo-Norman settlement is at Robertstown where the Old English element 'town' was combined with an Anglo-Norman personal name, *Baile Riobaird*, 'the town of Riobaird'. Also of interest in this heavily castelled region is that 'castle' is not recorded among the place-names. Significantly, sixteen of the twenty-seven place-names that are recorded during this period are found in the hill country or within a kilometre of the foot of the hill region. A number of these place-names have the prefixes *baile* 'home-place' and *cluain*

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[27] Westropp, 'Ancient Castles', p. 244; Robert C. Simington (ed.), *The Civil Survey A.D. 1654-6 County of Limerick, Vol. IV with a section of Clanmaurice Barony, Co. Kerry* (Dublin, 1938) pp 321-7.

[28] Nollaig Ó Muraíle, 'Settlement and Place-names', in Duffy, Edwards & FitzPatrick (eds), *Gaelic Ireland*, p. 223.

[29] Shanagolden Catholic parish is taken for this analysis because it contained the core area of the manor of Shanid and has the three different types of landscape found in this region, lowlands, a hill district and shore-lands.

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'meadow', combined with a personal name. The 1298 Inquisition records that the native Irish had been driven into the hill region west of Shanid Castle.[30] This suggests that the native Irish farmed land in family groups in the hill region in distinct territorial units, and the flat lands to the east of Shanagolden village had dispersed holdings of an Anglo-Norman open field system with less likelihood of family names surviving.

Ten place-names described topographical features, Shanagolden, *Seanghualainn,* 'the old shoulder', Ardaneer, *Árd Inbhir,* 'the high place of the river mouth', Aughinish, *Eachinis,* 'horse-island', Foynes Island, *Oileán Fainge,* 'island of (unclear meaning)', Craggs, *An Chreag,* 'the rock', Knockpatrick, *Cnoc Pádraig,* 'the hill of Patrick', Sroo-lane, *An Sruthlán,* 'the small stream', Durnish, *Dairinis,* 'oak island', Leahys, *Liatha,* 'the grey lands' and Corgrig, *Corr gCraig,* 'height or corner of the rocks'. These place-names for the most part describe a single, outstanding important feature on the landscape. With the exception of Shanagolden, all are situated near the Shannon estuary. This could be interpreted that there was greater settlement near estuaries and rivers during the heyday of the Desmond lordship. This has also been found in other areas of the country. As Nolan has found in south Leinster, Anglo-Norman settlement generally followed 'river corridors'.[31] In the largely pastoral medieval economy all year round grazing was important. This meant the utilisation of various types of land at different elevations. As described by Whelan, hill pastures were 'especially important for summer butter-making'.[32] Such pastures were available at Knocknabooly, *Cnoc na Buaile,* 'the hill of the booley' in Loghill parish west of Shanagolden village.

These local place-names also indicate the importance of winter grazing grounds and stony terrain to farmers with three place-names referring to this type of landscape at Craggs, Ballynacragga and Carrowclogh. The pre-eminence of the 'black' or 'Kerry cow' in dairying due to its high milk yield and disease resistance and its tolerance of outdoor wintering meant that cattle during this period were rarely housed for the winter. [33] Having good underfoot conditions in such landscapes were essential for the winter grazing of cattle and providing feeding for cattle when other land was not available because of water logged surfaces due to poor weather conditions. Such winter grazing grounds were likely jealously guarded.

An important feature in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was the establishment of towns and other smaller settlements in the countryside. Where settlements had taken hold in the vicinity of castles, charters were awarded to hold markets and fairs, such as at Adare in 1226.[34] This was an encouragement to craftsmen and merchants to congregate close to the manor, in order to provide services and supplies to the lord of the manor. These charters increased the importance of these settlements in the surrounding tributary area. As a consequence, communities might expand and generate wealth that could be taxed and provide an extra source of income to the lord of the manor. In the study area there was a village settlement at Shanagolden from pre-Norman times recorded in 1165. With Anglo-Norman patronage this settlement expanded and by 1336 the village had one hundred burgesses, indicating a population of perhaps three hundred and fifty. Among the principal burgesses were Maurice Chathmarciadh, Gibbon De Valle (Wall), Alan

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[30] Begley, *diocese of Limerick, ancient and medieval,* p. 158.

[31] William, Nolan, *Fassadinin, Land, Settlement and Society in South-East Ireland,* 1600-1850 (Dublin, 1979) p. 43.

[32] Kevin Whelan, 'Clachans: landscape and life in Ireland before and after the Famine', in Patrick J. Duffy and William Nolan (eds), *At the Anvil; Essays in honour of William J. Smyth* (Dublin, 2012) p. 453.

[33] Kevin Whelan, 'The modern landscape: from plantation to present', in Whelan & Stout (eds), *Atlas of the Irish Landscape,* p. 71.

[34] O'Connor, *Exploring Limerick's Past,* p. 15.

O'Kaellagy, Henry Connaght, Thomas Cynachtach, Julius Tonchyn and John Moyan.[35] These names indicate there was an influx of Norman settlers into the district. The De Valles were from Pembrokeshire in the West of England, as were the Desmond Fitz-geralds.[36] Personal networks together with geographical proximity resulted in the De Valles following the Fitzgeralds in settling in this part of county Limerick leasing the manors of Dunmoylan and Ballyegny and also having a burgess holding in Shanagolden village. These burgesses who held land in the village on the main street also had land holdings in the countryside putting them in a perfect position to exploit the agricultural hinterland for the produce the market town required. Shanagolden is a good example of the success of a village settlement in the medieval period. Superbly situated on the edge of a district of good agricultural land and at the foot of the hill country where its markets could avail of the products supplied by the Norman free tenants of the lowlands and the Irish Betagh who farmed land in the upland region.[37] The village prospered too because it was also near the seats of power of its aristocratic patrons, the Earl of Desmond's castles at Shanid and Corgrig.

Anglo-Norman settlement in the region was reinforced by patronage of the Church. Prior to the arrival of the Normans there were diocesan churches recorded in 1201 at Shanagolden, Ardaneer, Dysert (Morgans), Loghill, Bealachdroma (Flean More) and Kil-fergus.[38] These new Norman landholders gave endowments to the Church and thus established a close link between the secular and ecclesiastical organisations. This is often symbolised by the close proximity of churches and castles in rural settlements, as in the example of Robertstown. The granting of tithes from a lord's demesne to a particular church also had the consequence of other churches ceasing to exist. The churches at Ardaneer and Bealachdroma are not recorded beyond the thirteenth century, while new churches became established at Dunmoylan, Kilmoylan, Robertstown and Aughinish.[39] Significantly, three of these newly established churches were situated in close proximity to the residences of free tenants, and the fourth, Aughinish, was near the site of a rectang-ular enclosure and later a tower house.

Lords of the manor also gave endowments to religious houses to which the Anglo-Normans had connections. In the English West Country from where the Desmond Fitz-geralds came there were a number of important Augustinian friaries. Thomas Fitz Gerald granted lands at the east of Shanagolden village to the Augustinian nuns to establish the house of Saint Catherine of Oconyl (Connello) c. 1240. The site picked had good drainage being crossed by a number of streams and it was on the edge of rocky limestone land that could be reclaimed into good quality agricultural lands to help support the religious community. By the early sixteenth century the convent held a large landholding at Old Abbey, Ballyknockane, Mullagh and Craggs.[40]

For social, economic and political reasons the building of tower houses flourished in many parts of the country from the fifteenth century. A tower house was generally

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[35] Seán Mac Airt (ed.), *The Annals of Innisfallen* (Dublin, 1977) p. 299; Michael Dolly, *Anglo-Norman Ireland* (Dublin, 1972) p. 50; Begley, *diocese of Limerick, ancient and medieval* , p. 205; O'Connor, *Exploring Limerick's Past*, p. 16.

[36] Frame, *Colonial Ireland*, pp 35, 91

[37] Betagh or as written in Irish, *biatach*, 'food provider' was a term used to describe unfree Irish tenants bound to the lord of the manor. They generally lived in their own communities, associated with, but apart from, the manor or manorial village. See Begley, *diocese of Limerick, ancient and medieval,* p. 160.

[38] John Fleming, 'The formation of the medieval church in Limerick', in Liam Irwin, Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh and Matthew Potter (eds), *Limerick History and Society, Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish County* (Dublin, 2009) p. 13.

[39] Westropp, 'Ancient Churches', pp 394-400.

[40] Frame, *Colonial Ireland*, p. 93; Westropp, 'Ancient Churches', p. 395; John Begley *The diocese of Limerick in the six-teenth and seventeenth centuries*, (Dublin, 1927), p. 113; Ordnance Survey Map no. 19, county Limerick, 1923.

rectangular in plan and was a defensive building; its builders were concerned with security of their family and possessions. A tower house and bawn could be used to protect the extended family and a valuable cattle herd when raiding parties and not marching armies was the most common form of localised warfare. Enclosed bawns to accommodate the protection of the cattle herd are known to have been attached to the castles at Shanid, Dysert, Aughinish and Dunmoylan.[41] Cattle were driven to these sheltered places for morning and evening milking. These buildings were not fortresses, but the landlord's mansion at the time, busy with the daily routine of life in the manor. As highlighted by Creighton and Barry, 'many tower houses were centres of settlement nucleation'.[42] This was due to the trades and services a tower house required. Such settlement foci are shown in Down Survey maps and sketches from county Limerick between 1655 and 1658; the castles at Ballysteen near Askeaton, Loghill and Killacollum near Kildimo are drawn with a number of houses in close proximity.[43]

When precisely these tower houses were built is far from clear. In Shanagolden Catholic parish none of the tower houses, Corgrig, Foynes Island, Knockpatrick, Dysert, Aughinish, Morgans, Lower Shanid, Kilcosgrave and Craggard, are recorded before the sixteenth century. The historical record suggests Corgrig tower house was built by 1540, as Don Gow, Constable of the Earl of Desmond at Corgrig, is recorded in that year taking a tax of one hundred oysters from each boat sailing up the Shannon to Limerick. The tower house at Dysert, by far the best preserved, is first recorded in 1638 but features of the building are from the late fifteenth century.[44] Donnelly suggests that many tower houses may have been built in the early fifteenth century during the long reign of James, the sixth earl of Desmond, who held this title from 1411 to 1462, concluding that the social and economic stability that was attained during this mainly peaceful period likely generated the wealth necessary to support widespread tower house construction.[45] There certainly was major building works taking place throughout this part of the Desmond lordship at that time. The Franciscan friary at Askeaton was built by 1440 and the medieval churches at Robertstown and Knockpatrick date from the fifteenth century. However in the 1452 Rental of Connello only Kilcosgrave is mentioned from the list of tower houses above as being the property of a free tenant of the manor of Shanid.[46] This further supports the suggestion that it was after the mid-fifteenth century before many of these tower houses were built.

As Donnelly has shown, by the sixteenth century there was a proliferation in the number of free tenants in the lowlands of county Limerick.[47] The reasons for this are varied. The expansion of Anglo-Norman settlement had brought more land under cultivation. By having more free tenants the land could be exploited more thoroughly, and importantly, as observed by MacCurtain, an increase in the number of free tenants meant that in times of conflict they could be 'called up for military service' to the lord of the

[41] Westropp, 'Ancient Castles', pp 242-4. See www.archaeology.ie for a report on Aughinish tower house, (SMR, Limerick 10:20).

[42] Oliver Creighton and Terry Barry, 'Seigneurial and Elite Sites in the Medieval Landscape' in Neil Christie and Paul Stamper (eds), *Medieval Rural Settlement, Britain and Ireland, AD 800-1600* (Oxford, 2012) p. 69.

[43] Thomas Johnson Westropp, 'The Principal Ancient Castles of the County of Limerick', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, part 2, vol. xxxvii (1907) p. 157; Down Survey Map of Connello, 1658.

[44] Westropp, 'Ancient Castles', pp 241-2.

[45] Colm J. Donnelly, 'Tower Houses and Late Medieval Secular Settlement in County Limerick', in Duffy, Edwards & FitzPatrick (eds), *Gaelic Ireland*, p. 327.

[46] Begley, *diocese of Limerick, ancient and medieval*, p. 323; Westropp, 'Ancient Churches', pp 393-6.

[47] Donnelly, 'Tower Houses in County Limerick', in Duffy, Edwards & FitzPatrick (eds), *Gaelic Ireland*, p. 327.

manor.[48] Among the free tenants by the late sixteenth century was Terrlagh McMorierto who held Dysert and yearly paid for twelve gallowglasses and gave four cows in fees to the earl of Desmond. Shanid Lower castle close by Shanid castle was held by the Mac Sheehys, the traditional gallowglasses of the earls of Desmond. Ulick Wall held the 'great castle' at Dunmoylan. The Lacys, MacClancys and the Nashs held the castles at Bally-clogh, Robertstown and Ballycullen respectively. At Morgans castle, Edmund McPhillip was a sub-tenant of the Knight of Glin. As was common practice, some castles were held directly by the lord of the manor.

Shore lands and fisheries, and in particular control of the Shannon estuary, were important and the tower houses at Foynes Island and Corgrig were held directly by the earl of Desmond.[49] The concentration of these tower houses was on the fertile low lands, which had a strong pastoral economy. No castle is situated in the hill region of Shana-golden Catholic parish, an area of poor quality lands. In the wider hill region of west Limerick, only two castles, at Moneymohill and at Port, Abbeyfeale are situated in the hill country, and both are on the edge of that region. One should also take account of the strategic sitting of these castles. Many, Corgrig, Foynes Island, Robertstown, Aughinish, Dysert, and Morgans are situated on the Shannon estuary. It was the same in neigh-bouring districts. The castles at Glin, Killacolla, Loghill, Tomdeely, Courtbrown and Beagh are all situated in close proximity to the shore line. These castles on the southern shore of the Shannon estuary were a show of strength and were likely necessary in protecting valuable fisheries and coastal dairy lands. In particular these tower houses provided a buffer against raiding parties that could come by boat. Over land ample warning would spread of a raiding party or small army on the move, but by water little or no warning would be available. The sitting of these castles close by the shore provided effective resistance to raiding parties penetrating deep into the Desmond heartland.

The failure of the Desmond rebellion of 1579-83 resulted in wholesale changes to the ownership of property in this part of county Limerick. Documents relating to the confis-cation of property hint at the nature of territorial units in Anglo-Norman Shanid. During the rebellion a number of the minor lords of the district were slain. Edmund Oge Lacy of Ballyclogh castle, Askeaton was killed at Knockpatrick church. According to local tradition, Ulick Wall of Dunmoylan castle was put to death by Oliver Stephenson who was the English appointed constable of Glin castle during the rebellion. As a reward from the Crown, Stephenson received a lease for twenty-one years on Wall's land in 1582 at an annual rent of £5.12s.[50] This property was excluded from the Munster Plantation that was to follow. The manor contained the following land units; Dunmoylan, 'the great and small' Carrons, Kilcolman, Banogue (northern Dunmoylan), Tiermore, Ballyegny, Bally-steen, the two Dooncahas, Moneymohill, Lisbane, Ballymakery and Ballinloughane, as well as a number of other place-names that have not survived in use in the present day townland network.[51] These places indicate the territorial structure of the landscape in the Anglo-Norman period. Locally the boundaries of these units had to be of significance and

[48] Margaret MacCurtain, 'A lost landscape; the Geraldine castles and tower houses of the Shannon estuary, in John Bradley (ed.), *Settlement and Society in medieval Ireland: studies presented to F. X. Martin* (Kilkenny, 1988) p. 442.

[49] Begley, *diocese of Limerick, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, pp 110, 112, 124-5; Westropp, 'Ancient Castles', p. 42; P. Fitzgerald and J. J. McGregor, *The history, topography and antiquities of the county and city of Limerick*, Vol. 1 (Limerick, 1826) p. 365; Michael MacCarthy-Morrogh, *The Munster Plantation, English Migration to Southern Ireland, 1583-1641* (Oxford, 1986) p. 9.

[50] Begley, *diocese of Limerick, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, pp 110, 133 ; Westropp, 'Ancient Castles', p. 42; *The Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Philip & Mary and Elizabeth I, volume 2, 1558-1586* (Dublin, 1994) p. 535.

[51] *Irish Fiants, volume 2*, p. 535.

well known to enable the transfer of these land units. One also has to ask why the manor had these boundaries. Some geographers have suggested that the parishes when they were established in Anglo-Norman areas were based on 'already established manorial estates'.[52] However, the manor of Dunmoylan was not based on a parish and consisted of part of four medieval parishes, Kilbradran, Kilcolman, Dunmoylan and Shanagolden.

When trying to reconstruct the configuration of this landscape the following may be observed. Topographical features were important as boundary markers. The division of Carrons was divided by a stream into a large and small division, thus 'the great and small' Carrons. The division of Dooncaha covered a fairly large area west of Dunmoylan, some land in the west was in the hill country and the remainder in the east was on the lowlands, thus it was called 'the two Dooncahas' for land description purposes, and in Peyton's Survey of 1586 these lands were called Dooncaha East and West. These territorial units reflect the precise human response to the ecological potential of the district. The smallest land units were on the arable lowlands, Kilcolman, 136 acres, Ballysteen 218 acres and Carrons 317 acres, and the largest land units were in the hill country with Moneymohill containing an area of 3,860 acres covering the modern day townlands of Park, Moyreen, Bauraneag, Knockfinnisk, Gortadroma and Moneymohill.[53] Bauraneag is recorded in Peyton's Survey as 'Barney' and the land there was also wooded. The translation of the place-name is *Barr an Fhiaigh*, 'the high ground of the hunting', suggesting that by the end of the sixteenth century settlement had not reached beyond the one hundred and twenty metre contour line. Settlement was shaped by physical geography. The Anglo-Norman lords and their associates were, of course, interested in profitable land, particularly good arable land. Intensive occupation tended not to take place in the boggy uplands.[54]

The major transfer of land in this district during the Munster Plantation was the granting of the manor of Corgrig in 1587 to William Trenchard, one of the new English adventurers. Also known as Shanagolden manor, the survey indicates that the principal castle in the manor was no longer Shanid Castle, the base of power had moved to Corgrig Castle, previously the residence of a constable of the Earl of Desmond.[55] Trenchard took up residence at Corgrig Castle, and was to retain 1,500 acres for himself and allocate the rest to other English settlers. He was bound by his agreement as an Undertaker to erect houses for ninety-five families, one of which was for himself, six for free tenants, six for farmers and forty-two for copyholders. Seventeen plowlands were held by Trenchard as a demesne and from these lands the native Irish had been evicted.[56] In 1611, an inquisition

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[52] Patrick J. Duffy, 'Social and Spatial order in the MacMahon lordship of Airghialla', in Duffy, Edwards & FitzPatrick (eds), *Gaelic Ireland*, p. 135.

[53] Simington (ed.), *The Civil Survey*, pp 321-7; Begley, *diocese of Limerick, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, pp 111, 113;*The Census of Ireland for the year 1851, part 1, showing the Area, Population, and Number of houses by Townland and Electoral divisions, Volume II, Province of Munster*, p. 255. The acreage of the townlands is taken from this census. Some geographers have concluded that the modern townlands are accurate records of the geography of medieval land units, see Patrick J. Duffy, 'Social and Spatial order in the MacMahon lordship of Airghialla', in Duffy, Edwards & FitzPatrick (eds), *Gaelic Ireland*, p. 137, and William Nolan, 'Excavating, mapping and interrogating ancestral terrains', in Duffy & Nolan (eds), *At the Anvil; Essays in honour of William J. Smyth*, p. 21.

[54] Ó Maolfabhail, *Logainmneacha Contae Luimnigh*, p. 68; Begley, *diocese of Limerick, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, pp 111, 113.

[55] *The Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns During the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Philip & Mary and Elizbeth I, volume 3, 1586-1603* (Dublin, 1994) pp 34-5; Begley, *diocese of Limerick, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, p. 132; Westropp, 'Ancient Castles', p. 241.

[56] Begley, *diocese of Limerick, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, pp 132, 195; A plowland was a small territorial unit used in Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A copyholder held land from the lord of the manor and had to render services to the lord: his land could not be inherited.

took place into the lands held by the English Undertakers. It was found that the Manor of Corgrig known as Mount Trenchard containing 12,000 acres by the first survey in 1586 was now found to hold 4,014 English acres. Corgrig Castle had been repaired at the cost of £200. William Trenchard was dead and his son, Francis, held 700 acres of demesne. Being based in the castle at Corgrig these lands were likely around the castle in the present day townland of Corgrig.

There were sixteen English tenants on the estate who held leases on farms totalling 1,156 acres. Some Irish were living on the estate, it was not known how many, but none held land directly from Trenchard. By May 1622, Francis Trenchard had died and it was his agent, David Barry, who reported that the estate had an annual rent of £50.3s.6d. David Barry was also a free tenant and held the castle at Balliehan (Ballyegny) and 600 acres of land. On his lands there was one English tenant named de Thomas May, who lived in a stone house. John Ley was a free tenant at Sallinaclogh (Ballyclough) Castle and held 320 acres of land. At Kilcosgrave Castle, Richard Gyll was a free tenant holding 320 acres of land. Tandish Greyne held the castle at Thannet (Shanid) and 700 acres of land. The land leased to free tenants and farmers had increased to 1,902 acres. There were thirty English tenants on the estate who had obtained leases, no Irish tenant was recorded. The acreage held by these tenants ranged from 22 to 240 acres. Many lived in stone houses in 'the English manner'. The most common holdings were between forty and eighty acres. One English tenant, Edward Norris, had only a house and garden plot.

The most common lease was for one life. Others were for twenty-one years and thirty-one years, and four families had leases of ninety-nine years.[57] In the eleven years from 1611 to 1622, the number of English tenants and the land leased to English tenants had almost doubled. In spite of the death of William Trenchard and his son Francis during the thirty years since the Trenchards were granted the Manor of Corgrig, and the difficulties of the conflict of 1598 to 1601 brought to the region, the settlement of the estate had achieved some early success with almost one half of the land in the estate been leased to farmers of English descent. The survey also shows that the early Anglo-Norman settlement foci of Shanid, Kilcosgrave and Ballyegny retained their importance in terms of the settlement and security for these new English settlers.

The Confederate War of 1641-53 brought renewed conflict to the region and many atrocities took place. In 1641, Shanid Castle and Shanagolden village were pillaged by Confederate forces under Colonel Morris Harbart.[58] Aughinish tower house, owned by the English planter, George Courtenay was defended by Nicholas Meade but was forced to surrender to Confederate forces and some of the garrison was imprisoned, while others were drowned off Thomond Bridge in Limerick City.[59] As a consequence of the war, many of the recently planted English settlers decided to leave. For example, the free tenants, David Barry, John Ley and Tandish Greyne are not recorded for Ballyegny, Ballinaclogh and Shanid in the 1650s. After 1653 the victorious Cromwellians confiscated the lands of all Catholics, both Irish and Anglo Irish. However the government had little accurate information on the extent and nature of these lands. In the Civil Survey of 1654-6 each townland was surveyed estimating the acreage of profitable arable land, meadow and woods, and also unprofitable land, such as bogs and mountain and a valu-

[57] Begley, *diocese of Limerick, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, p. 203; Victor Treadwell (ed.), *Irish Commission of 1622, An Investigation of the Irish Administration, 1615-1622, and it consequences, 1623-1624* (Dublin, 2006) pp 483-4, 502-3.

[58] Westropp, 'Ancient Castles', p. 243.

[59] Begley, *diocese of Limerick, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, p. 219.

ation put on these lands. The parts of the manor that were long characterised by Church and Anglo-Norman settlement were focal points of some importance. Shanid had the highest valuation at £120, followed by Robertstown £80, Dunmoylan £50 and Corgrig, Morgans and Shanagolden village each returned a valuation of £40. The lands around these settlement foci were likely developed from the early Norman period attracting farmers and artisans to the vicinity of these settlements. The high valuation of these lands also suggests that there must have been an underclass of tenant farmer that became prosperous with the aid of beneficial rents from the landlords of these townlands.[60]

No Down Survey parish maps are known to have survived for the manor of Shanid, so we have little information on the nature of rural settlement in the late medieval period. While Andrews concludes, that Irish maps have limited usefulness in understanding the late medieval landscape,[61] they can, when used with contemporary sources together with an in-depth knowledge of the local landscape, provide fresh insights into the nature of settlement. Down Survey maps from elsewhere in county Limerick, such as the medieval parish of Iveruss in the present Catholic parish of Askeaton-Ballysteen shows cabin clusters at Mitchelstown, Ballinacourty and Milltown, suggesting that such settlements were common in the lowlands of county Limerick. There is strong evidence throughout the country that cabin clusters were widespread. For example, in Smith's survey of 1612 in county Monaghan settlement in rural areas was described as consisting of many 'towns'.[62] Such clusters may have been useful for defence in case of attack during these years of turbulence and conflict.

The surveyors in the 1650s had little or no interest in the lower classes of society, their remit was the ownership of the land, its population and its boundaries. However returns from the 'Census of 1659' can give some clues into settlement patterns at this time. This 'census' recorded the households that were liable to pay the 1660-1 Poll Tax. The total number of liable households in the civil parishes of Kilmoylan, Morgans, Robertstown and Shanagolden was 411; of these 32 (8%) were Protestant and 379 (92%) were Catholic households.[63] By far the largest number of houses was the seventy-four recorded at Shanid. Elsewhere townlands along the Shannon estuary recorded comparatively high numbers, Morgans 32, Aughinish, Fawnamore and Craggs 30, Leahys 24 and Ballyna-cragga 21. The only exception to this was Mullagh on the Ahacronane River returning twenty-one houses. It appears that the population were attracted to the arable low lying agricultural lands along the Shannon estuary, the river meadows near Creeves and to the fertile lands at the old settlement centre at Shanid.[64] The number of houses in these townlands certainly hints that settlement clusters were present. In particular, the numbers of houses at Shanid was greater than in the nearby villages of Shanagolden (36) and Loghill (57), suggesting there may have been a number of settlement clusters throughout the townland.

Settlement in the manor of Shanid was influenced by a number of phases of colonization. In the early stages of Anglo-Norman settlement, coastal landing places were

[60] Simington (ed.), *The Civil Survey A.D. 1654-6 County of Limerick,* pp 321-7.

[61] John Andrews, 'The Mapping of Ireland's Cultural Landscape, 1550-1630', in Duffy, Edwards & FitzPatrick (eds), *Gaelic Ireland,* p. 179.

[62] Patrick J. Duffy, 'Social and Spatial order in the MacMahon lordship of Airghialla', in Duffy, Edwards & FitzPatrick (eds), *Gaelic Ireland,* p. 133; Andrews, 'The Mapping of Ireland's Cultural Landscape, 1550-1630', in Duffy, Edwards & FitzPatrick (eds), *Gaelic Ireland,* p. 169.

[63] These four civil parishes make up the present Catholic parish of Shanagolden.

[64] Séamus Pender (ed.), *A Census of Ireland circa 1659 with Supplementary Material from the Poll Money Ordinances (1660-1661)* (Dublin, 1939) p. 281.

selected because of their topographic suitability. Currents, tides, anchorages, a suitable location for defence and the nature of the coast were important. Robertstown was select-ed because it contained a small headland that was easily fortified and defended. A rocky knoll to the west gave some protection to boats at anchor to the prevailing westerly winds and it was also situated on good quality agricultural lands that could be exploited. With an anchorage secure, it was time for the invaders to move further inland and where better then to settle than the base of political power in the district in the previous centuries. The site of the castle at Shanid was selected because of its proximity to Knockhoura, the headquarters of the *Uí Chonaill Gabhra* tribe. It seems likely there was a tribal inaugur-ation site nearby and this may have been re-used to give substance to the legitimacy of the Desmond Fitzgeralds as the new rulers of these recently acquired lands.

Many of the sites chosen by this new ruling class owe their locations to the prior existence of bivallate and trivallate ringforts in fertile areas. Among the influx of Anglo-Norman settlers into the region, some were wealthy enough to build castles and left evidence of their tenure on the landscape, others were not as well off and left little trace perhaps only the remnants of a rectangular enclosure on the ground. Other settlers, bur-gesses, artisans and merchants put down roots in Shanagolden village and this settlement expanded to accommodate them. A strong link developed between the Anglo-Norman landowners and the Church. The early settlement centres at Glin, Robertstown, Dun-moylan, Ballyegny and Kilcosgrave were in close proximity to a church, suggesting that the support of the Church was actively sought by the settlers.

By the late thirteenth century the native Irish were driven into the western poorer upland soils. Agricultural practices carried out by the Irish were likely more family based and as a consequence, in the upland region a number of *baile* and *cloon* place-names combined with Irish family names survive from the medieval period. The presence of bawns and corn mills suggest the dual nature of the agricultural economy. All year round grazing was important. In the summer time booleying or summer grazing was availed of in hilly terrains, while in the winter time stony terrain that provided good underfoot conditions and winter grazing opportunities were important to farmers with three town-lands referring to this type of landscape.

As with other Anglo-Norman manors in the late medieval period, settlement and defence tended to be centred on the maritime zone. These shore lands were some of the most fertile in the region. The strategic siting of castles on these lands was useful in con-trolling the Shannon estuary, exploiting these lands economically and also providing a buffer against attack. Large and small territorial units were present within the Anglo-Norman manor. Smaller units were common on the better-endowed lowland region, while in the poorer soils in the upland region they were larger land units with settlement by the late sixteenth century not reaching above one hundred and twenty metres.

Following the Munster Plantation, the early Norman centres at Shanid, Ballyclogh and Ballyegny continued to be of importance as settlement foci and for security for the new English settlers. What is clear is that the lands of Anglo-Norman lords that were intensely settled since the thirteenth century continued to be important for agricultural output having the highest land valuations in the mid-seventeenth century. Throughout the late medieval period and early modern period in the manor of Shanid the consideration of where to settle was primarily an economic one.