

The Black Castle of Adare – The History of a Medieval Castle

CAITRÍONA DEVANE

‘The Maige floweth as far as the bridge of Aghdare, and a small distance above it. It is navigable for boats and barques of thirtie tunns upon spring tide within the distance of a musket shott to ye sd. Bridge which River yields Salmon, Troutes and Eles’.¹

Adare – location and historical backdrop

Desmond Castle in the parish of Adare is situated on the eastern bank of the River Maigue in the townland of Ardshanbally (*Árd Sean Bhaile*), ‘the height of the old settlement’. It lies in the barony of Coshma, a placename derived from *cois Maige* - ‘by the Maigue’. The castle was built adjacent to a ford at which an ancient oak once stood. These features gave rise to the placename *Áth Dara*, ‘the ford of the oak’ which was subsequently anglicised in a variety of ways such as Athdare, Aghdare and Adare. It is said that the *sean bhaile*, or ‘old town’ of Adare stood near the northern entrance to the castle ‘where the remains of a gateway and wall formerly stood’.² A stone bridge, built at the ford of Adare by Gerald fitzMaurice, the fifth Earl of Kildare, between 1390 and 1410 may have replaced an earlier wooden bridge.

Throughout the early-medieval period the district in which Desmond Castle stands was ruled by the dynasty known as Uí Chairbre [Aebda] that had traditionally, from the fifth/sixth century onwards, shared the rotating kingship of Uí Fidgente with their kinsmen, Uí Chonaill [Gabhra]. In the tenth century, Uí Fidgente were subservient to Eóganacht Chaisil, the most powerful branch of the Eóganachta to which the acting provincial kings of Munster belonged. Uí Fidgente benefited from a genealogical link to the Eóganachta by which Uí Chairbre and Uí Chonaill were treated as *sóerthuatha* – ‘free *tuatha*’ – and were not obliged to pay tribute to the provincial king.⁴ In the mid-tenth century the *status quo* in Munster changed and an up-and-coming dynasty called Dál Cais contended for the sovereignty of Munster.⁵ Dál Cais was originally a Déise sept known as Déis Tuaisceart that had originated in the present barony of Small County to the east of Coshma. By the tenth century Déis Tuaisceart had established a base north of the Shannon from where it began to erode the hegemony of the Eóganachta in Munster. Its leaders assumed a bogus genealogy from Cas, who they claimed was a brother of Eógan, the eponymous ancestor of the Eóganachta. It is not until 934 that the spurious dynastic name, Dál Cais, ‘the sept of Cas’ appears in our surviving historical sources.⁶

¹ R.C. Simington, *The Civil Survey, A.D. 1654-1656, County Limerick*, vol. iv (Dublin, 1938) p. 120.

² C.L. Adams, *Castles of Ireland, Some Fortress Histories and Legends* (London, 1904) p. 1.

³ M. Seoighe, *Portrait of Limerick* (London, 1982) p. 125; C. Wyndham-Quin, Countess Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor with Historical Notices of Adare by her son, the Earl of Dunraven* (Oxford, 1865) p. 104.

⁴ M. Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert* (Dublin, 1962) pp 30, 34, 180.

⁵ AI: [*The Annals of Inisfallen*, ed. S. Mac Airt, (Dublin, 1951)].

⁶ AI.

Following the death of the Dál Cais king, Brian Bóromha, at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014, his descendants assumed the dynastic name Uí Briain – the descendants of Brian.

Cenél Eirc

The territory of Uí Chairbre comprised a number of *tuatha*, one of which was called Cenél Eirc, 'the race of Erc', on whose land Desmond Castle in Ardshambally was subsequently built.⁷ The history of Cenél Eirc, albeit sketchy, may have some relevance to the archaeological excavations recently undertaken by Laurence Dunne on behalf of OPW at Desmond Castle and specifically to the hypothesis that Desmond Castle was built 'within an ancient Irish rath'.⁸ This theory, discounted by Etienne Rynne in an *NMAJ* article in 1961 because of the unelevated position of the castle site,⁹ can now be revisited in light of the discovery during archaeological excavation of a 'pre-existing earthen bank', about two metres in height, running parallel with the moat.¹⁰ A pin, unearthed in the drawbridge pit, possibly dates to the sixth or seventh century¹¹ while an axe, a sword-blade and a spear, discovered in the moat by Lord Dunraven in the nineteenth century, belong to the ninth or tenth century.¹²

Cenél Eirc was also known as Uí Meic Eirc – the descendants of the son of Erc – and shared a distant ancestry with the more prominent branch of Uí Chairbre that was subsequently ruled by Uí Donnubáin. While Cenél Eirc was descended from Erc, Uí Donnubáin claimed lineage from Erc's brother Lappa (or Óengus Lappae) whose line was also referred to as Cenél Lappae.¹³ Erc and Lappa's grandfather, also called Erc, was allegedly a son of Cairpre, the eponymous ancestor of Uí Chairpre.¹⁴ Uí Meic Eirc (Cenél Eirc), were identical with or very closely related to the dynasties of Uí Meic Meic Eirc and Cenél Meic Eirc, fading from the historic record after the death of their leader Cúán mac Conaill, the Uí Chairbre king of Uí Fidgeinte, at the battle of Carn Conaill in 649.¹⁵

The downfall of Uí Meic Eirc was documented in the eighth century *Notulae* in the Book of Armagh, in which there is an account of St Patrick's journey among Uí Fidgeinte. The king of Uí Fidgeinte, Lónán mac Eirc, is said to have offended St Patrick, resulting in the saint cursing the Uí Fidgeinte chief by prophesising that none of his descendants

- ⁷ G. Mac Niocaill, (ed.), *The Red Book of the Earls of Kildare* (Dublin, 1964) pp 19, 123; K. W. Nicholls, 'Some Placenames from the Red Book of the Earls of Kildare', in *Dinnseanchas*, 3/2 (Nollaig 1968) p. 25.
- ⁸ Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*, p. 105; Adams, *Castles of Ireland*, p. 3; T.J. Westropp, 'The Principal Ancient Castles of the County Limerick', *Journal of The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 37 (1907) p. 30; H.G. Leask, *Irish Castles and Castellated Houses* (Dundalk, 1951) p. 34.
- ⁹ E. Rynne, 'Was Desmond Castle, Adare, erected on a ringfort?', in *NMAJ*, 8 (1961) pp 193-202.
- ¹⁰ L. Dunne, 'Adare Castle: raising bridges and raising questions', in C. Manning (ed.), *From Ringforts to Fortified Houses, studies on castles and other monuments in honour of David Sweetman* (Bray, 2007) pp 167-8; L. Dunne, 'Summary Excavation Report 2001: 742': online in excavations.ie
- ¹¹ L. Dunne, 'Adare Castle: raising bridges and raising questions', p. 166.
- ¹² Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*, pp 129-30.
- ¹³ M. Herbert and P. Ó Riain (eds. & tr.), *Betha Adamnán: The Irish Life of Adamnán*, Irish Texts Society 54, (London, 1988) pp 52-3.
- ¹⁴ M.A. O'Brien (ed.), *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1976) p. 232; N. Ó Muirille (ed. and tr.), *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach - The great book of Irish genealogies* (compiled 1645-66) by Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh, 5 vols (Blackrock, 2003) ii, pp 594-5; TCD MS 1298, f.135r – penned in Uí Mhaine (east Co. Galway) by Lúcas Ó Dalláin c.1350.
- ¹⁵ W. Stokes (ed.), 'The Battle of Carn Chonaill', in *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 3, Halle/Saale, (1901) pp 206, 207; AI; AU: (*Annála Uladh: Annals of Ulster otherwise Annála Senait, Annals of Senait: a chronicle of Irish affairs from A.D. 431 to A.D. 1540*, 4 vols., eds. W.M. Hennessy, & B. Mac Carthy, (Dublin, 1887-1901); C.S: *Chronicum Scotorum: A Chronicle of Irish Affairs, from the earliest times to A.D.*, ed. W. M. Hennessey; AT: *The Annals of Tigernach*, 2 vols., ed. W. Stokes., reprinted from *Revue Celtique* 1895-96 (Llanerch 1993); AClon; C. Mageoghagan, *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, ed. D. Murphy, (Dublin, 1896); AFM: (*Annála Ríoghachta Éireann: Annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*, 7 vols., ed. J. O'Donovan, (Dublin 1848-51).

would ever become king or bishop. The curse is reiterated in the ninth century *Vita Tripartita*¹⁶ while an obscure passage in *Betha Adomnáin*, 'the Life of Adomnán' alludes to St Adomnán taking the kingship of Uí Fidgente from Cenél Meic Eirc forever and giving it to Cenél Lappae.¹⁷

Royal sites of Cenél Eirc

The name Cathair Chúáin survives in a list of lands belonging to Mainistir an Aonaigh, 'Monasteranenagh', in Co. Limerick, an abbey founded by the Cistercian Order on land donated by Toirrdelbach Ua Briain between 1148 and 1151 following his defeat of the Vikings at Rathmore.¹⁸ The name implies that Cathair Chúáin was originally a stone fort belonging to the above mentioned Cúán mac Conaill of Cenél Eirc.¹⁹ A second fortification dedicated to a member of Cenél Eirc appears in a ninth-century context. The Norse were familiar with the Shannon estuary having first visited it c.812 and they increasingly plundered inland from there.²⁰ In 848 they were routed at Dún Maíle Tuile in Uí Fidgente by Eóganacht Chaisil, allegedly suffering five hundred casualties.²¹ According to *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* the figure was a more modest 120.²² Máel Tuile mac Cúáin of Cenél Eirc, son of the above Cúán mac Conaill, is the only relevant individual after whom the *dún* could be named.²³

It would be speculative to suggest that Desmond Castle was built on the site of Dún Maíle Tuile. It is worth noting, nonetheless, that the Maigue is tidal at Adare and the low draft of Viking vessels would have facilitated Norse expeditions upriver as far as Adare. According to the 1st edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map (1840-41) neap tides are marked as rising to a point opposite Desmond Castle and spring tides to a point c.600 metres upriver opposite the manor house. On the 2nd edition OS map (1920) the tides are marked as rising to a point c.275 metres up river from the castle.²⁴ The Viking camp or settlement at or near Dún Maíle Tuile in Cenél Eirc, whether a temporary base or alternatively a *longphort*, could not have been far from the ford of Adare.

The rise of Uí Briain

A period of unrest following the death of Cellachán, the Eóganacht Chaisil king of Munster, in 954 enabled Dál Cais to consolidate its position in Tuad Mumu – North Munster, sometimes assisted by the Norse who had set up their first permanent base on

¹⁶ L. Bieler (ed.), *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh* (Dublin, 1979) p. 182; W. Stokes, *The Tripartite Life of Patrick with other Documents relating to that Saint*, 2 vols (London, 1887) i, pp 202-05, ii, p. 350.

¹⁷ Herbert and Ó Riain, *Betha Adomnáin*, pp 52-3.

¹⁸ CDI: *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland*, ed. H. S. Sweetman, 5 vols, (London, 1875-86) i, p. 21; T.J. Westropp, 'History of the abbey and battles of Monasteranenagh, Croom, County Limerick, 1148-1603', in *JRS&I* 19 (1889) p. 232; G. Mac Spealáin, *Uí Cairbre Aobhdha (I gContae Luimnighe), a Stair agus a Seanchas* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1960) p. 112. According to Westropp there is a note in Harris' copy of Ware regarding the victory at Rathmore. I have, so far, been unable to trace it.

¹⁹ W. Stokes (ed.), *The Battle of Carn Chonaill* in *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 3, Halle/Saale, (1901) pp 206, 207; AI; AU; CS; AT; A Clon; AFM.

²⁰ CGG: *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh: The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, ed. J.H. Todd (London, 1867) pp 4, 6.

²¹ DAI: (*Annála Inis Fáithleann i mBaile Átha Cliath, Díoglaím Annála, A.D. 250-1320*, as H.I.7, Coláiste na Tríonóide, Áth Cliath, scagadh agus taighde don Chéim Ph.D. le C. Ó Cuilleánáin, unpublished, 1944); CS; AU; AFM 846.

²² CGG, p. 20.

²³ M.A. O'Brien (ed.), *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1976) p. 232; N. Ó Muirille (ed. and tr.), *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach – The great book of Irish genealogies*, compiled 1645-66 by Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh, 5 vols (Blackrock, 2003) ii, pp 594-5.

²⁴ E. Rynne, 'Was Desmond Castle, Adare, erected on a ringfort?', p. 202.

Inis Sibtonn (King's Island) in 922.²⁵ There was also sporadic conflict between Dál Cais and the Vikings as evidenced in 964 when the Dál Cais king, Mathgamain mac Cennétig, marched to Caisel to expel Norse occupants of Eóganacht lands. The excursion was followed by a counter-offensive by Ímar, the Norse king of Limerick, against Dál Cais.²⁶ The instability created an opportunity for Máel Muad mac Brain, king of Eóganacht Raithlind whose *caput* was at Garranes in west county Cork, to assume the kingship of Munster – albeit with opposition.

Donnubán mac Cathail, king of Uí Chairbre and eponymous ancestor of Uí Donnubáin, became an ally of Máel Muaid mac Brain and developed close familial ties with Ímar, the Norse king of Limerick.²⁷ He most likely fought alongside Máel Muad mac Brain in support of Ímar against Mathgamain mac Cennétaig, king of Dál Cais, at the Battle of Sulchóit in 967.²⁸ Mathgamain got the upper hand and by 970 he had overthrown the Eóganacht Raithlind king from the provincial kingship of Munster. Mathgamain's good fortune ran out in 976 when Donnubán mac Cathail took him prisoner at the Uí Chairbre seat of Croom and handed him over to Máel Muad mac Brain who executed him despite a guarantee of his safety.²⁹

Mathgamain was succeeded by his brother, Brian Bóruma, who went on the offensive against the members of the alliance that had been responsible for his brother's death. In 977 he attacked Ímar of Limerick, and killed him and his two sons. He then raided Uí Fidgente where he massacred the Norse. He slaughtered the cattle of Uí Fidgente, seized Cathair Chúáin and killed the inhabitants. According to *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* and the *Dublin Annals of Inishfallen*, Donnubán mac Cathail, the king of Uí Chairbre, was killed in the encounter at Cathair Chúáin.³⁰ Briain Bóruma finally avenged Mathgamain's death in 978 when he killed Máel Muad mac Brain in the Battle of Belach Lechta in the Ballyhoura Hills.³¹

The weakened position of Uí Chairbre opened the door to the Uí Cléirchéin family, who were under the patronage of Briain Bóruma. Cairbre mac Clérchine was given the title 'king of Uí Chairbre' in his obit in 1014,³² and by the middle of the eleventh century a separate máer (steward) of Dál Cais belonging to Uí Cléirchéin was appointed to oversee the ecclesiastical interests of Armagh in Thomond.³³ The success of Uí Cléirchéin at the expense of Uí Donnubáin is apparent in the topographical poem of Giolla na Naomh Ó hUidhrín (obit 1420) that indicates that Uí Donnubáin were resident in Bruree in the period before the Norman incursion while Uí Cléirchéin ruled Uí Chairbre.³⁴ Dál Cais was, meanwhile, weakened by internal rivalry following Brian Bóruma's death in the

²⁵ CGG, 38-9.

²⁶ CGG, 68-71.

²⁷ A. Bugge (ed. & tr.), *Caithreim Cellachain Caisil* (Oslo, 1905) pp 15, 73; CGG, pp 74-5; C. Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ivarr to A.D. 1014* (Edinburgh, 2007) pp 56, 250-51; S. Pender, 'The O Clery Book of Genealogies' in *Analecta Hibernica* 18 (Dublin, 1951) p. 156.

²⁸ CGG, 74-77; AI; DAI.

²⁹ CGG, 86-91; AI; AU; CS; DAI; AT; AFM.

³⁰ DAI; CGG, 102-03. The Annals of the Four Masters do not refer to Donnubán or his death. According to the Annals of Inishfallen, Donnubán did not die until 980 after which he was succeeded as king of Uí Chairbre by his son Uainide who died in 982.

³¹ AI; DAI; AU; CS; AFM; AT; A Clon; D. Ó Murchadha, 'Cenn Ebrat, Slaib Cain, Belach Ebrat, Belach Legtha/Lechta' in *Éigse* 29 (1996) pp 156-7, 164-71.

³² AI; AFM.

³³ A. Gwynn, 'Brian in Armagh (1005)', in *Seanchas Ard Mhacha*, vol. 9/1 (1978) pp 44-50; AU 1053, 1108; S. Ó Ceallaigh, *Gleanings from Ulster History* (Cork, 1951) p. 12.

³⁴ J. Carney, *Topographical Poems by Seaán Mór Ó Dubhagáin and Giolla-na-Naomh Ó hUidhrín* (Dublin, 1943) p. 55.

Battle
son, T
Leins

The T
In 11
grante
the le
O'Ca
ster a
Muns
and E
Cárth
Cárth
succe
betwe
all M
Cashé
secreat
honou

Ca
purpo
purpo
again
pende
mac I
the sh
plott
of Li
Donn
when
Desp
Tuad
was a
of To

It
Caith
étig r
leadir
centu

35 AFM
36 M.T.
i., ec
37 Ibid
38 Bug
39 DAÍ
1947
40 D. Ó

Battle of Clontarf in 1014, a situation which lasted until the accession of Brian's grandson, Toirrdelbach Ua Briain, to the kingship of Munster in 1063. Aided by the king of Leinster, Diarmaid mac Máel na mBó, Toirrdelbach was effectively high-king of Ireland.

The Two Munsters

In 1101 Toirdelbach Ua Briain's son, Muirchertach Mór, who was king of Dál Cais, granted Caisil to the church. The grant was possibly linked to the enforced exodus of the leading families of Eóganacht Chaisil from whom the McCarthys, O'Sullivans and O'Callaghans descend. The exiles successfully established themselves in southern Munster and in 1118 an intervention by Toirrdelbach ua Conchobair, king of Connacht, in Munster politics, recognized two distinct halves to Munster, Tuad Mumu (North Munster) and Des Mumu (South Munster).³⁵ Ua Conchobair acknowledged Ua Briain and Mac Cárthaig as their respective kings. In 1124 Cormac mac [meic] Cárthaig, a grandson of Cárthach, the eponymous ancestor of the McCarthys, became king of Des Mumu. He successfully reasserted his professed inherited rights as king of Eóganacht Chaisil and between 1127 and 1134 the Uí Briain rulers of Dál Cais recognized his position as king of all Munster.³⁶ To celebrate his regained status as provincial king Cormac had built at Cashel the elaborate Romanesque church known as Cormac's Chapel, which was consecrated in 1134 and he also commissioned the saga, *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil*, in honour of his famous ancestor, Cellachán Caisil who had died in 954.³⁷

Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil was commissioned between 1127 and 1135 with the purpose of reinstating Cormac Mac Cárthaig's claim to Cashel. It was propaganda that purported collaboration between Eóganacht Chaisil and Dál Cais in the tenth century against the Norse. In the saga Uí Chairbre and Uí Chonaill, who appear to operate independently of each other, are defeated by an alliance of Cellachán Caisil and Cennétech mac Lorcaín (father of Brian Bóruma). Uí Chairbre, according to the saga, were ruled by the shadowy Uainide mac Cathail who was allegedly slain at Croom where he had been plotting with Brian Bóruma's brother, Donn Cuan mac Cennétig, in support of the Norse of Limerick against Eóganacht Chaisil. Uainide appears to have been a predecessor of Donnubán mac Cathail, king of Uí Chairbre. Donn Cuan mac Cennétig switched sides when the neighbouring lands of Uí Chonaill were promised to him by Cellachán Chaisil.³⁸ Despite the consecration of Cormac's Chapel in 1134, Uí Briain recovered the kingship of Tuad Mumu in 1134. Four years later, the Eóganacht Chaisil king, Cormac mac Cárthaig, was assassinated at Mag Tamnach (Mahoonagh) in western Uí Chonaill at the instigation of Toirrdelbach Ua Briain.³⁹

It has been postulated that events of the twelfth century appear in the subtext of *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil* and that the grant of Uí Chonaill to Donn Cuan mac Cennétig represents 'the fluctuating spheres of influence of Uí Briain and Meic Chárthaig' leading to the concession of Uí Chonaill territory to Dál Cais, perhaps as late as the 12th century.⁴⁰ The subtext is apparent in the context of a subsequent legal case undertaken by

³⁵ AFM.

³⁶ M.T. Flanagan, 'High-Kings with Opposition, 1072-1166', in *A New History of Ireland, Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, vol. 1, ed. D. Ó Cróinín (Oxford, 2005) p. 919.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Bugge (ed. & tr.), *Caithreim Cellachain Caisil*, pp 13-15, 71-5.

³⁹ DAI; AFM; AT; MCB: 'Mac Carthaigh's Book', in *Miscellaneous Irish Annals (A.D. 1114-1437)*, ed. S. Ó hInnse (Dublin, 1947).

⁴⁰ D. Ó Corráin, 'Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil: History or Propaganda', in *Ériu* 25 (1974) p. 23.

the Norman administration in 1206 to determine if the southern portion of Uí Chairbre belonged to the newly-formed Kingdom of Limerick or to the Kingdom of Cork.⁴¹ The latter kingdom names, adopted by the Normans, were based on the regions' largest settlements and represent the Irish divisions of Tuad Mumu and Des Mumu. The inquisition of 1206 is relevant to Uí Chairbre and reflects the division of their territory during the ongoing struggle between Dál Cais and Eóganacht Chaisil. The fluctuating border may have been consolidated to some extent by the aforementioned endowment to the Cistercian Order of land at the ancient Uí Chairbre festival site of Aonach Chairbre by Toirrdelbach ua Briain c.1148, land that subsequently became known as Mainistir an Aonaigh, 'the Monastery of Aonach'.⁴² Adare belonged to Tuad Mumu at this time.

Cormac mac Cárthaig was succeeded as king of Des Mumu by his brother Donnchadh who defeated Toirrdelbach Ua Briain in battle in 1142.⁴³ Donnchadh was later captured and handed over to Ua Briain, dying in captivity at Loch Gur, in the barony of Small County, county Limerick, in 1144.⁴⁴ The endowment of land to the Cistercians at Monasteranenagh, allegedly in thanksgiving for the defeat of the Norse at Rathmore by Toirrdelbach ua Briain in 1148 may, in part, represent a desire by the king of Tuad Mumu to create an irrevocable buffer against their Meic Chárthaig adversaries as well as against the Norse who they had defeated.⁴⁵ The fact that the present parish of Monasteranenagh lies in three separate baronies, Coshma, Small County and Pubblebrien (named after Uí Briain) indicates that Mainistir an Aonaigh was frontier land.

The struggle between Uí Briain and Meic Carthaig for control of Munster intensified dramatically in 1151 when Diarmait mac Cormaic meic Carthaig got support from Toirrdelbach ua Conchobair, king of Connacht, and Diarmait Mac Murchada, king of Leinster, and their combined forces inflicted a decisive defeat on Toirrdelbach Ua Briain at the battle of Móin Mór, in the modern county Cork.⁴⁶ While this endorsed Diarmait mac Cárthaig's position as king of Des Mumu, Toirrdelbach ua Conchobair split Tuad Mumu between Toirrdelbach Ua Briain and his brother Tadhg.⁴⁷ Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair's son, Ruaidrí, added insult to injury when he made an incursion into Tuad Mumu; he carried away many cows and burned Croom and Limerick.⁴⁸ Diarmait mac Cárthaig meanwhile, as regional king of Des Mumu, continued to hold on to lands in Uí Chonaill where, in 1152, he suffered repeated raids by Toirrdelbach ua Briain.⁴⁹

When Toirrdelbach Ua Briain died in 1168, his son and anticipated heir, Muirchertach, was promptly assassinated by rivals within his own clan at the instigation of Diarmait mac Cárthaig. Muirchertach was a half-brother of the powerful Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht, who avenged the assassination by killing the perpetrators. Muirchertach's brother, Domnall Mór ua Briain, assumed the kingship of Tuad Mumu inducing Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht and high-king of Ireland, to march to Knockainy, in the barony of Small County, to take hostages from him. The Connacht king

⁴¹ CDI, i, 44.

⁴² G. Mac Spealáin, *Uí Chairbre Aobhdha (i gContae Luimnighe), a Stair agus a Seanchas* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1960) pp 20-3.

⁴³ MCB.

⁴⁴ DAI; = MCB 1143.

⁴⁵ T.J. Westropp, 'History of the abbey and battles of Monasteranenagh, Croom, County Limerick, 1148-1603', in *JRSAI*, 19 (1889) p. 232.

⁴⁶ DAI; AFM; MCB; AT; A Clon.

⁴⁷ AClon.

⁴⁸ AFM.

⁴⁹ MCB.

again highlighted the twofold division of Munster by giving Des Mumu, to the sons of Cormac mac Cárthaig and Tuad Mumu to Domnall Mór ua Briain. Ua Conchobair then took 720 cattle from Meic Chárthaig as compensation for the assassination of his half-brother, Muirchertach ua Briain.⁵⁰

When Domnall Mór Ua Briain became king of Tuad Mumu in 1168,⁵¹ the exiled king of Leinster, Diarmait mac Murchada, had offered loyalty to Henry II of England. In return, he was given permission to recruit auxiliaries in Wales with whom, on his return to Ireland in August 1168, he recovered the kingdom of Uí Chennselaig in Leinster which he had lost to the high-king, Ruaidrí ua Conchobair, in 1167. In 1169 Mac Murchada captured Wexford, custody of which was given to a Norman called Robert fitzStephen. Soon afterwards, the latter's half-brother, Maurice fitzGerald, arrived in Wexford.

In August 1170 Richard de Clare, i.e. Strongbow, came ashore near Waterford. Within two days he had married Aífe, daughter of Diarmait mac Murchada and half-sister of Domnall Mór ua Briain's wife Órlaith.⁵² In 1170, when Domnall Mór ua Briain was under attack by Ruaidrí ua Conchobair of Connacht, Mac Murchada sent an army under the command of Robert FitzStephen to Limerick to support his son-in-law.⁵³ Diarmait Mac Murchada died early in 1171 and was succeeded as king of Leinster by Strongbow. Ruaidrí ua Conchobair, was, meanwhile, the most powerful of the Irish kings, and shortly afterwards, he took hostages from Domnall Mór Ua Briain.⁵⁴ Henry II now undertook a policy of colonization and arrived in Waterford later in the year. Diarmait mac Cárthaig, the king of Des Mumu, was the first to pay homage to him in Waterford and Domnall Mór ua Briain of Tuad Mumu submitted to him near Cashel the following day. Early in 1174, under Hervey de Montmorency, the Norman attacks on Munster intensified, only to be resisted by Domnall Mór ua Briain who inflicted 'great slaughter' on the Normans in a battle at Thurles.⁵⁵

Continuing hostility between the Irish and the Normans led to negotiations between Ruaidrí ua Conchobair, who was regarded as high-king of Ireland, and Meiler fitzHenry, Henry II's representative in Ireland. The talks led to the Treaty of Windsor which was signed on 6 October 1175. Under its terms, Ruaidrí ua Conchobair recognized Henry II as his overlord. The treaty preserved the Irish system, explicitly recognizing the status of Ruaidrí ua Conchobair as sovereign of the areas not conquered by the Normans. Henry II promised to give military support to the Irish king should his authority be challenged. In return, Ua Conchobair agreed to collect tribute for the crown from all parts of Ireland.⁵⁶

Feuding continued among the indigenous Irish lords. Domnall Mór ua Briain's efforts to stamp his authority on Munster were facilitated by internal warfare amongst Meic Chárthaig and in 1175 Ua Briain passed through Limerick into Eóganacht Locha Léin,

⁵⁰ AFM.

⁵¹ AI; MCB.

⁵² M. Dobbs, 'The Ban-Seanchus', in *Revue Celtique* 48 (1931) p. 23; T. Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach, maraon le Suim Aguisíní* (Dublin, 1940) pp 338, 378; A.J. Otway-Ruthven, *A History of Medieval Ireland* (London, 1968) p. 45; G.H. Orpen, *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* (Oxford, 1892) pp 150-1.

⁵³ A.B. Scott. and F.X. Martin. (eds), *Expugnatio Hibernica—the Conquest of Ireland—* by Giraldus Cambrensis (Dublin, 1978) pp 52-3.

⁵⁴ DAI; MCB.

⁵⁵ AI; DAI; AT; AFM; MCB; AU; ACott: 'The Annals in Cotton MS. Titus A. XXV' [Cottonian Annals; Annals of Boyle] in *Revue Celtique* 41 (Paris, 1924) pp 301-30, vol. 42 (Paris, 1925) pp 283-305.

⁵⁶ AT; Otway-Ruthven, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 56; F.X. Martin, 'Overlord becomes Feudal Lord', in *A New History of Ireland*, ed. A. Cosgrove (Oxford, 1987) pp 106-108; C.O. O'Conor Don, *The O'Conors of Connaught: an historical Memoir, compiled from a MS of the late John O'Donovan, with additions from the State Papers and Public Records* (Dublin, 1891) pp 71-3.

and plundered it.⁵⁷ His ambitions were thwarted when Ruaidrí ua Conchobair, King of Connacht, invited the Normans to join him in an expedition against Ua Briain. Together, they marched into Tuad Mumu, expelled its king and placed a Norman garrison in Limerick.⁵⁸ In 1176 Domnall Mór ua Briain made peace with his powerful Connacht rival and, after acknowledging Ua Conchobair's supremacy as high-king of Ireland, he gave him hostages and returned to Limerick.⁵⁹ The Norman Raymond le Gros, on hearing that Domnall Mór ua Briain was blockading Limerick in early 1176, captured the town and left a garrison there. Ua Briain besieged Limerick and there was a stand off until the Normans surrendered Limerick on hearing the news of Strongbow's death. Custody of Limerick was given to Domnall Mór ua Briain on the understanding that he would return it to the Normans on demand. Instead, the king of Tuad Mumu broke the bridge and razed the town. It was two decades before the Normans again got a foothold in Limerick.⁶⁰

The Treaty of Windsor was broken when Henry II conferred the title 'Lord of Ireland' on his youngest son, John, at the Council of Oxford in June 1177. The newly appointed 'Lord of Ireland' made speculative grants of Des Mumu, referred to as 'the kingdom of Cork' to Robert FitzStephen and Milo De Cogan and exacted tribute from Meic Chárthaig. Tuad Mumu, referred to as 'The whole kingdom of Limerick with the city itself', was likewise granted to Herbert and William FitzHerbert and their nephew Joel de la Pomerai. The grantees of the Kingdom of Limerick renounced their endowment later in the year on grounds that the territory was not yet subject to the king as it still had to be conquered. Limerick was subsequently granted to Philip de Breuse 'for the service of sixty knights'. The grant did not lead to immediate occupation and when De Breuse attempted to lay claim to his grant he was forced to retreat because the Norse inhabitants, at the instigation of Domnall Mór ua Briain, had set fire to the town to prevent it from being garrisoned.⁶¹

A 'great war' broke out in 1177 between Uí Briain and Meic Chárthaig in which Muirchertach ua Briain, a son of Domnall Mór ua Briain, accompanied by the Norman lords Robert FitzStephen and Milo De Cogan, went to Cork and plundered the town.⁶² Having gained the upper hand over Meic Chárthaig, Domnall Mór ua Briain adopted a policy of ethnic dispersal in Tuad Mumu, by which the rulers of Uí Chairbre and Uí Chonaill, with particular reference to Uí Donnubáin, were expelled into the area around Lough Leane and Mangartan.⁶³ Uí Donnubáin subsequently lent their clan name, Uí Chairpre, to the barony of Carbery in County Cork. Tuad Mumu and Des Mumu, viewed by the Normans as the Kingdoms of Limerick and Cork, soon assumed anglicized forms of their Irish names, Thomond and Desmond, in crown documents.

William de Burgo and his relationship with Domnall Mór ua Briain

In 1185 John, 'Lord of Ireland', made his first expedition to his new colony and gave speculative grants in the north-eastern part of Thomond to the Norman lords who accompanied him. When John had motte and bailey castles constructed at Lismore, Ardfinnan,

⁵⁷ AI; MCB 1176.

⁵⁸ Otway-Ruthven, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 56.

⁵⁹ DAI; AFM; AI.

⁶⁰ Scott, and Martin (eds), *Expugnatio Hibernica*, pp 164-7; Otway-Ruthven, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 57.

⁶¹ W. Stubbs (ed.), *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi, Benedicti Abbatis*, 2 Vols., Rolls Series (London, 1867) i, pp 163, 172-73; Scott and Martin, (eds), *Expugnatio Hibernica*, pp 317 n.191, 336 n. 330; AI.

⁶² Scott and Martin (eds), *Expugnatio Hibernica*, pp 164-7, 295 n39; AI; MCB; AFM; AU; ALC: *The Annals of Loch Cé*, 2 vols., ed. W.M. Hennessey (Dublin 1871).

⁶³ MCB; AI.

and
ber
Arc
Bur
ing
de
call
the
fath
and
Tib
inv
Wil
earl
dau
hist
buil
and
the
Wal
Dor
intr
con
mB
dict

64 AU
Sol
65 DA
66 T. I
13
ii,
67 AF
68 T. I
69 RL
Me
ii,
70 MC
71 S.
Arc

and Tipperary to help subdue the country⁶⁴ the fortifications at Ardfinnan and Tipperary came under immediate attack from Domnall Mór ua Briain, the garrison at Ardfinnan suffering casualties on two occasions during the royal expedition.⁶⁵ William de Burgo was among the Norman entrepreneurs who accompanied John to Ireland. According to De Burgo genealogies, such as the sixteenth-century *Historia et Genealogia Familiae de Burgo*, William was married to a daughter of the Saxon king by whom he had a son called Riocard Mór.⁶⁶ Although De Burgo's wife may have been a daughter of Henry II, the name of her son suggests that Henry's successor, Richard I, may in fact have been her father.

In 1192 heavily fortified motte and bailey castles were constructed at Knockgraffon and Kilfeacle with a view to suppressing Domnall Mór ua Briain.⁶⁷ Kilfeacle, like Tipperary, was part of William de Burgo's original grant and it is likely that he was involved in building the castle there.⁶⁸ Sometime before 1193, Domnall Mór ua Briain and William de Burgo forged a strategic alliance and the widowed De Burgo, according to the early-fifteenth century *Book of Lecan*, fathered a second son named Riocard with a daughter of the Thomond king.⁶⁹ The alliance between the two men is hinted at in the historical record of the castle at Brí Uis/Briginis, i.e. 'Bruis' in Co. Tipperary, which was built with the consent of Domnall Mór ua Briain 'as a check on Domnall mac Cárthaigh' and 'to injure Des Mumu therefrom'.⁷⁰

Although the castle at Bruis resembled the previous motte and bailey castles built by the Normans in Munster, the Norman commanders were familiar with stone castles in Wales and England and were aware that Hugh de Lacy had built a stone castle in Trim.⁷¹ Domnall Mór ua Briain was also familiar with formal stone architecture since its introduction to Ireland by continental religious orders in the mid-twelfth century. In this context, the veracity of surviving early-seventeenth-century manuscripts of *Seanchus Síol mBriain*, 'the lore of the seed of Brian' is credible. The narrative, which is not contradicted elsewhere, reads as follows:

Domhnall Mór mac Toirrdhelbhaich mic Diarmada Rí deidénach dhá chóige Mumhan, agus isé do ríne Caisleán Dubh Atha Dara, agus an halla mór don taoibh theas don Chaisleán, agus Caisleán a Chroma cois Mháighe, agus Mainisdir an Aonaich i bPobul Bhriain, Mainisdir Fhearmaighe, agus sé mainisdreacha déag ní sa mhó a Mumhain, agus do iodbhair iad gona mbeathaighthe do Dhia agus dá mhanachaibh do rath a anoma féin.

Domhnall Mór son of Toirrdhelbhach son of Diarmaid, the last King of the two Provinces of Munster, and it is he who built the Black Castle of Adare and the

⁶⁴ AU; AFM; DAI: Lismore is mentioned in the *Dublin Annals of Inishfallon* alone. See also, however, G.H. Orpen, *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* (Oxford, 1892) p. 194.

⁶⁵ DAI; AFM.

⁶⁶ T. Ó Raghallaigh (ed. & tr.), 'Seanchus na mBúrcach', in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 13, vol. ii (1926-7) pp 120-1; S.H. O'Grady (ed. & tr.), *Caithréim Thoirdhealbháigh* (2 vols, London, 1929) i, pp 153, 154, ii, pp 163, 164; Pender, *O Clery Book of Genealogies*, p. 193.

⁶⁷ AFM.

⁶⁸ T.D. Hardy, *Rotuli chartarum in turri Londonensi asservati* (London, 1837), i, pp 118b-119a.

⁶⁹ RIA MS 23.P.2, f. 82r; J. O'Donovan (ed.), *The Tribes and Customs of Hy-Many* (Dublin, 1843) pp 44-5; Otway-Ruthven, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 72; S. Hayes O'Grady, (ed. & tr.), *Caithréim Thoirdhealbháigh*, 2 vols, (London, 1929) i, pp 153-4, ii, pp 163-4.

⁷⁰ MCB; DAI; AI.

⁷¹ S. Duffy, 'The "key of the Pale": a history of Trim Castle', in *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: Excavations 1995-8: Archaeological Monograph Series 6*, ed., A. Hayden (Dublin, 2011) pp 6-28.

great hall to the south of the Castle, and the Castle of Croom by the Maigue, and the Monastery of Aonach [Monasteranenagh] in Pubblebrien, the Monastery of Fermoy, and sixteen more monasteries in Munster, and he gave them and their means up to God and to his monks for the good of his own soul. [TCD MS 1292, f.6v, dated 1608].⁷²

There are structural similarities between Desmond Castle in Adare and the Cistercian monastery at Monasteranenagh that suggest that the abbey was extended by Domnall Mór ua Briain around the time the castle was built in the late twelfth century. The evidence lies in the distinctive style of round-headed twin-light windows, bordered with continuous heavy roll-moulding, in the ruins of the chapel. This window style occurs in Cistercian architecture in Burgundy throughout the second half of the twelfth century,⁷³ but does not appear to have reached Ireland or Britain until the end of the twelfth century.

The architecture visible in the chapel in the Cistercian abbey of Monasteranenagh has been dated between 1170 and 1220.⁷⁴ Identical roll-mouldings occur on similar windows in the 'Great Hall' at Desmond Castle, built in the Romanesque tradition.⁷⁵ Templates taken of the roll-mouldings from Monasteranenagh are identical to those from the Great Hall at Adare suggesting that not only are they contemporaneous but that it is likely that it was the same family of masons who constructed the windows at both sites (L. Dunne *pers. comm.*). The description of Desmond Castle as 'the Black Castle' in the above extract from *Seanchas Síol mBriain* conveys the dark colour of its limestone masonry, particularly when wet.

Although archaeological excavation has revealed that Desmond Castle may have been built on the site of an earlier earthwork, the suggestion that it replaced a previous Norman ringwork⁷⁶ does not stand up to scrutiny due to the failure of Philip de Breuse during the reign of Domnall Mór ua Briain in realizing his grant of the kingdom of Limerick which he had received c.1177. It can be proposed with some degree of confidence that the construction of the original castle in Adare was at least under way during the reign of Domnall Mór ua Briain, whose death occurred in 1194. It was not until 1201 that John, who was crowned king in 1199, revived the De Breuse title to the whole Kingdom of Limerick in favour of Philip de Breuse's nephew, William. William, an absentee, became overlord of Thomond except for the lands of William de Burgo, the church and the city of Limerick. De Burgo, meanwhile, with the support of three sons of Domnall Mór ua Briain, was engaged in a military campaign in Des Mumu in which Amlaib ua Donnubáin, leader of the exiled Uí Chairbre, was killed in 1201.⁷⁷

Geraldine tenure at Adare

Infighting among Uí Briain in the aftermath of Dómnall Mór ua Briain's death in 1194 facilitated the colonization of Tuad Mumu, enabling the Normans to apportion uncon-

⁷² Translation: C. Devane See also TCD MS 1281, f.106v and T. Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach, maraon le Suim Aguisíni* (Dublin, 1940) p. 342.

⁷³ R.K. Morris, 'An English Glossary of Medieval Mouldings: With an Introduction on Mouldings, c. 1040-1240,' in *Architectural History* 35 (1992) p. 3.

⁷⁴ R. Stalley, *The Cistercian monasteries of Ireland, an Account of the History, Art and Architecture of the White Monks in Ireland from 1142 to 1540* (London, 1987) p. 248.

⁷⁵ Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*, pp 122-5; D. Sweetman, *The Medieval Castles of Ireland* (Cork, 1999) p. 37; H.G. Leask, *Irish Castles and Castellated Houses* (Dundalk, 1999) pp 34-5.

⁷⁶ T.B. Barry, 'Anglo-Norman ringwork castles: some evidence,' in *Landscape archaeology in Ireland*, eds. T. Reeves-Smyth and F. Hamond (Oxford, 1993) p. 307; Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, p. 6.

⁷⁷ AI.

quered lands with a view to settling Munster and imposing a feudal model of societal organization. As early as 1195 two brothers, Gerald and Thomas fitzMaurice fitzGerald, sons of the Maurice fitzGerald who landed in Waterford to support Diarmait mac Murchada in 1169, were involved in the exploitation of lands in Limerick. Gerald had inherited the Manor of Maynooth and associated lands from his brother, William of Naas. A charter, drawn up sometime between 1185 and 1189 outlining his inheritance, shows that it included the estate of his brother Alexander who was a key player in the conquest of the Kingdom of Cork. Alexander inherited lands in Des Mumu, 'Desmond', from their half-uncle Robert fitzStephen who died in 1183.

As previously outlined, the division of the province of Munster among Norman magnates that led to the creation of the kingdoms of Cork and Limerick reflected the *de facto* division of Munster into Des Mumu, 'Desmond', and Tuad Mumu, 'Thomond'. Since the district around Adare, in Uí Chairbre, had been fought over by Dál Cais and Eóganaacht Chaisil, the upper and lower portions of the ancient kingdom of Uí Chairbre were initially dealt with separately by the Crown. In 1195 Philip of Worcester, constable of Ireland, granted Uí Chairbre Íochtarach (Ocarbry Lower), initially referred to as Kenry Huetred after the neighbouring Caenraige, to Gerald fitzMaurice fitzGerald.⁷⁸ It was coterminous with the medieval deaneries of Adare and Croom and must therefore have included the two castles built by Domnall Mór ua Briain. Gerald fitzMaurice, meanwhile, through his marriage to Eve de Bermingham, daughter and heir of Robert de Bermingham who held the Barony of Offaly c.1193, inherited his father-in-law's lands, and became the first Geraldine 'Baron of Offaly', following de Bermingham's death in 1197.

Gerald fitzMaurice fitzGerald had a son called Maurice fitzGerald who was a minor at the time of Gerald's death in 1203. In January 1204 King John commanded the Justiciar, Meiler fitzHenry, to take custody of the boy and his inheritance and deliver them to the seneschal, William Marshal.⁷⁹ On 3 April 1206 an inquisition was held to see if certain lands that included 'Karebry Wuhtrah' (Uí Chairbre Uachtarach – Ocarbry Upper), belonged to 'the Kingdom of Cork' or to the 'Kingdom of Limerick': if the lands belonged to the Kingdom of Cork, they would be taken into the King's hands.⁸⁰ The issue was resolved and from then on the two sections of Uí Chairbre, Upper and Lower, were regarded as part of the Kingdom of Limerick.

Eva de Bermingham

Following Gerald fitzMaurice's death in 1203, his widow, Eva de Bermingham, married Geoffrey fitzRobert, the Seneschal of Leinster. She was again widowed in 1211 and by February 1218 she had married Geoffrey de Marisco.⁸¹ De Marisco, who had received extensive grants in west Limerick and Kerry, served two terms as Justiciar of Ireland, firstly between July 1216 and October 1222.⁸² and secondly between June 1226 and February 1228.⁸³

Maurice fitzGerald came of age in 1216 and on July 5th King John ordered that the justiciary give him possession of his father's lands in Ireland on receipt of 60 marks; the

⁷⁸ Mac Niocaill (ed.), *Red Book of the Earls of Kildare*, p. 19; K.W. Nicholls, 'Some Placenames from the Red Book of the Earls of Kildare', in *Dinnseanchas*, 3/2 (Nollaig, 1968) p. 25.

⁷⁹ CDI i, 30.

⁸⁰ CDI, i, p. 44.

⁸¹ CDI, i, p. 121.

⁸² CDI, i, pp 94, 95, 155-6.

⁸³ CDI, i, pp 209, 236.

castles of Croom, and that of Dungarvan in Oglassyn, are listed in the relevant document but the castle in Adare is omitted.⁸⁴ In theory it is possible that Croom was mistakenly written in lieu of Carbery but there is no corroborative source to substantiate this. Geoffrey de Marisco was officially appointed justiciar of Ireland the next day, i.e. on 6 July, by which investiture he was given custody of all of the king's lands in Ireland. Despite being ordered to hand over the FitzGerald estates to Maurice fitzGerald, De Marisco proceeded to administer the inheritance himself and in November 1216 the new king, Henry III, ordered him to hand over possession of Maynooth to the young heir, second baron of Offaly, as well as the lands his father Gerald had possessed when he died.⁸⁵ These lands must have included Adare.

The rationale for the exclusion of Adare Castle in the document of 1216 conceivably ties in with the entitlements of Eva de Bermingham whose independent wealth would have been augmented by dowers received upon the deaths of two husbands. The manor of Adare may have been part of Eva's dower for life following Gerald fitzMaurice's death. This argument is based on a charter dated 4 July 1226 by which Eva's third husband, the again newly, justiciar, Geoffrey de Marisco, was awarded a grant of 'a yearly fair at his manor of Adare for 8 days from the feast of St James [July 25 – Aug. 1]'.⁸⁶ It infers that through his marriage to Eva de Bermingham he held part of the FitzGerald lands in right of his wife's dower. That De Marisco ignored Henry III's order to hand over his stepson's estates, even after the young heir became the second 'Baron of Offaly' on 19 July 1217, is evident from a subsequent command, dated 16 August 1220 when the justiciar was again ordered by the king to give possession to Maurice fitzGerald of all the lands in Ireland 'which descend to him by hereditary right from Gerald, his father, and whereof the latter was seised at his death'.⁸⁷ Although official crown documents indicate that Eva de Bermingham died between June 1223 and December 1226,⁸⁸ her death could not have occurred until after the grant of the yearly fair at Adare on 4 July 1226. After her death, Eva's dower, including the castle at Adare, would have reverted to her son Maurice. There is no evidence that Eva de Bermingham ever resided at Adare. It is likely, however, that De Marisco used the castle as a base in Munster from where he could govern lands that he had been granted in west Limerick and the modern Co. Kerry⁸⁹ and from where he could also oversee projects such as the construction of the castle in Killaloe in 1217.⁹⁰

A dubious account written in Madrid in 1714 by the early-eighteenth-century Spanish historian, Domingo Lopez, corroborates evidence for Maurice fitzGerald's presence in Adare in 1227. The account describes a trip by Patrick Dunbar, the Earl of March, who came to Ireland from Scotland, supposedly on shipping business. Maurice fitzGerald and his son were supposedly visiting the castle at Adare at the time. Maurice considered the accommodation at the local inn unsuitable for Dunbar who was forthwith invited to stay at the castle. Dunbar allegedly spoke in favour of the Trinitarian order, to which FitzGerald said that he would endow one of their priories in Adare. The priory in Adare was the only Trinitarian foundation in Ireland.⁹¹ Maurice fitzGerald took the office of justiciar

⁸⁴ CDI, i, pp 91, 94; T.D. Hardy, *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium in Turri Londinensi 1201-1216* (London, 1835) p. 147; T.D. Hardy, *Rotuli de oblatiis et finibus in Turri Londinensi asservati, tempore regis Johannis* (London, 1835) p. 556.

⁸⁵ CDI, i, p. 111.

⁸⁶ CDI, i, p. 214; T.D. Hardy, *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum in Turri Londinensi*, vol. ii (London, 1844) p. 126.

⁸⁷ CDI, i, p. 146.

⁸⁸ CDI, i, pp 169, 426.

⁸⁹ E. S. Brooks, 'The Family of Marisco' in *JRSAL*, 62 (1932) pp 50-1.

⁹⁰ AFM.

⁹¹ Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*, pp 39-42; J.A. Begley, *The diocese of Limerick, ancient and medieval* (Dublin, 1906) p. 362; Adams, *Castles of Ireland*, p. 3.

in 1232, a position he held until 1245. As justiciar he oversaw the invasion of Connacht between 1234 and 1237 for which he was rewarded with estates in both Connacht and Ulster.

When Maurice fitzGerald died in the monastery of Youghal on 20 May 1257 he was remembered as *scriosaire Gaedhel* 'destroyer of the Irish' due to his harsh actions during his service as justiciar.⁹² His son, Maurice [Maol] fitzMaurice, had been granted Oglassyn/Inchiquin in county Cork before his father's death. The heir's wardship was now claimed by Margaret de Quinci, countess of Lincoln, who sued him for custody of the barony of Offaly and associated lands. Margaret was the widow of Walter Marshall, from whom the deceased Maurice fitzGerald had held the barony of Offaly. She was claiming custody by reason of her dower. By Christmas 1257 an agreement had been reached by which Maurice fitzMaurice quitclaimed the Offaly estates in exchange for holding on to lands in Connacht and Ulster which were granted to him prior to his father's death.⁹³ Maurice fitzMaurice's nephew, Maurice Roe fitzGerald now became heir to the remaining estates and to the title third Baron of Offaly, with Adare becoming part of his inheritance.

Maurice fitzMaurice fitzGerald came of age in 1259 and on 7 Nov. he was granted Athlone Castle and the Shrievalty of Connacht.⁹⁴ The following year he went on the offensive against Uí Briain in Thomond and was defeated. His nephew Maurice Roe fitzGerald, the third Baron of Offaly, reached 'full-age' in 1264.⁹⁵ Soon afterwards he accompanied his uncle Maurice fitzMaurice in what amounted to a private war between the Geraldines on one side and the De Burgos supported by Geoffrey de Geneville and John de Cogan on the other, in an effort to control the northwest. Maurice Roe fitzGerald's sister Juliane was married to John de Cogan's son, John. Hostilities were suspended when both parties were summoned by Henry III to fight for the royalists against the Montfortian baronial revolt in the English midlands in 1265-6.⁹⁶ In England Maurice Roe met William de Valence, a half-brother of the king, whose wife Joan was one of the heiresses to the Marshall estates in Wexford. A marriage alliance seemed beneficial to both parties, de Valence gaining an ally in Ireland while Maurice Roe fitzGerald could raise his status by marrying De Valence's daughter, Agnes. The marriage was confirmed in Kenilworth castle in Warwickshire in August 1266.⁹⁷

De Verdun tenure of Adare

In 1266 'all the lands, castles, tenements &c of Croom and Adare' were among the lands of which John de Verdun was enfeoffed by the third baron of Offaly, Maurice Roe fitzGerald 'by will and ordinance of the king'.⁹⁸ The reason may be connected with De Verdun's exile following his arrest as a Royalist during the Civil War between Henry III and the marcher lords.⁹⁹ Maurice fitzMaurice fitzGerald and his nephew Maurice Roe fitzGerald had been in rebellion in 1264 and had captured the justiciar, Theobald Butler, and John de Cogan, the father-in-law of Maurice Roe's sister Juliane. After this, an

⁹² AFM.

⁹³ CDI, ii, pp 92, 104; *The Thirty-Fifth Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records and Keeper of the State Papers in Ireland* (Dublin, 1902) p. 42; Mac Niocaill, *Red Book of the Earls of Kildare*, pp 32-3.

⁹⁴ CDI, ii, p. 103.

⁹⁵ CDI, ii, p. 122; *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1258-66*, p. 350.

⁹⁶ R. Frame, *Ireland and Britain, 1170-1450* (London, 1998) pp 62-3.

⁹⁷ C. Ó Cléirigh, 'The Absentee Landlady and the Sturdy Robbers, Agnes de Valence', in C.E. Meek and M.K. Simms (ed.), *The Fragility of her Sex? Medieval Irish Women in their European Context* (Dublin, 1996) pp 101-2.

⁹⁸ CDI, iii, p. 364.

⁹⁹ H. Rothwell (ed.), *English Historical Documents 1189-1327* (London, 1975) p. 180; Otway-Ruthven, *Medieval Ireland*, pp 197-8.

expedition, led by Geoffrey de Geneville, was sent to oppose Maurice Roe FitzGerald.¹⁰⁰ If John De Verdun, a brother-in-law of De Genneville, played a part in quelling the unrest in Ireland, he may have been rewarded with some of the FitzGerald lands, including the Manor of Adare, after peace was restored in 1265.¹⁰¹ The suggestion that that De Verdun was exiled 'for a year and a day' ties in well with the latter's short stay at Adare.¹⁰²

Agnes de Valence

Adare and the Limerick estates passed from John de Verdun to the third baron of Offaly, Maurice Roe fitzGerald fitzMaurice, in August 1266 around the time of Maurice's marriage to Agnes de Valence. As part of the marriage agreement, Agnes became joint-owner of all of her husband's property in county Limerick, namely the manors of Adare, Croom, Uregare, Athlacca, Castleroberts, and Grean. It was stipulated that, should Maurice Roe fitzGerald fitzMaurice die before his wife and she without issue, the widow should hold and enjoy the profits of the lands until her death, after which they would revert to Maurice's heirs.¹⁰³ In addition to the Limerick manors Agnes would be entitled to a third of the manors of Maynooth, Rathmore and Geashill as dower. What had seemed a clever plan was turned on its head when Maurice fitzGerald drowned in the Irish sea in July 1268.¹⁰⁴ Maurice left an only son by a previous marriage, Gerald fitzMaurice who would not reach full-age until 1285. His lands were now taken into prerogative wardship by the king. Following Maurice's death in 1268, Agnes' father, William de Valence, took immediate action and in 1270 he bought the custody of Gerald fitzMaurice's lands and the right to his marriage¹⁰⁵ which he sold to Geoffrey de Geneville in December 1283. Geoffrey betrothed Gerald to his own daughter Joan.¹⁰⁶

John de Verdun was poisoned in England in 1274.¹⁰⁷ In 1275 his widow Ailenor initiated legal proceedings against her stepson, Theobald de Verdun, suing for one third of his holdings in England. In June 1278, she judicially contested Agnes de Valence and Agnes' third husband, John de Aveynes, who she accused of withholding her dower in Adare and elsewhere. Ailenor made a bond worth £100 with John de Aveynes 'for the release she had made to him of her dower of the free tenement that her husband had at one time of the gift of Maurice FitzGerald in Ireland'.¹⁰⁸

When Gerald fitzMaurice, the fourth baron of Offaly, came of age in 1285 he dismissed his stepmother Agnes de Valence's marriage agreement with his father and began legal proceedings to recover Adare and the other Limerick manors. Agnes, with the help of her father William, resisted.¹⁰⁹ Gerald had additional troubles on the political front and in 1285 he was taken prisoner by 'his Irish' of Offaly.¹¹⁰ When he died childless on 29 August 1287, however, the threat to Agnes' tenure of Adare and the other Limerick estates was alleviated.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁰ A.Clön.; Frame, 'Ireland and the Barons' Wars', in *Ireland and Britain, 1170-1450*, pp 62-3.

¹⁰¹ M. S. Hagger, *The Fortunes of a Norman Family: the de Verduns in England, Ireland & Wales, 1066-1316*, (Dublin, 2001) pp 94-5.

¹⁰² Rothwell (ed.), *English Historical Documents 1189-1327*, p. 180.

¹⁰³ CDI, iii, p. 364; CDI, iv, pp 320-21; Patent Rolls Edw 1, vol. iii, p. 450.

¹⁰⁴ AFM; AClyn: B. Williams (ed.), *The Annals of Ireland by Friar John Clyn* (Dublin, 2007).

¹⁰⁵ CDI, ii, p. 141.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 500.

¹⁰⁷ AClön 1275.

¹⁰⁸ CDI, ii, p. 276; CCR (Calendar of Close Rolls i, 500; Hagger, *Fortunes of a Norman family*, pp 94-5, 224-5.

¹⁰⁹ CDI, ii, p. 497; CDI, iii, 1285-1292, p. 20.

¹¹⁰ AClyn.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

G
year
fitzT
of O
expe
a cla
prop
mand
set a
one c
to ha
T
in 13
Kilda
Adar
enter
after
died,
Ju
for li
John
in 15
claim
their
castle
the h
footp
ing to
on a
annu
his m
lands
agree
A
attori
Athla
Rath
impr
prop
defau

112 AU
113 Ibi
114 Nio
115 Lar
116 Ma
117 Ibi
118 CD
119 CD
Lan

Gerald's grand-uncle, Maurice fitzMaurice, had died without male heirs the previous year¹¹² and Gerald had begun to transfer his property to his father's first cousin, John fitzThomas fitzMaurice. This paved the way for FitzThomas becoming the fifth baron of Offaly. The agreement between Gerald fitzMaurice and John fitzThomas was at the expense of Gerald's closest relative, his aunt Juliane [fitzGerald] de Cogan who now had a claim on his land.¹¹³ The fact that the deceased earl had not finalized the transfer of his properties to John fitzThomas gave Juliane some rights to her father's property and to manors, including Adare, that Agnes de Valence possessed in Limerick. John fitzThomas set about uniting the Geraldine properties and came to an arrangement with Amabilia, one of his uncle Maurice fitzMaurice's two daughters, who granted him what amounted to half of Maurice fitzMaurice's estate comprising land in Connacht and Munster.¹¹⁴

The history of the Geraldine estates is summarized in an inquisition that took place in 1311 following Agnes de Valence's death. It states that Gerald fitzMaurice granted his Kildare estates to John fitzThomas, with the reversion of the Limerick manors, including Adare, that Agnes de Valence had held for life. It was alleged that Julianne de Cogan entered the Limerick manors after which she gave them to John fitzThomas who looked after them for over a year before granting them to Agnes de Valence for life. When Agnes died, he entered the manors without the king's license.¹¹⁵

Juliane de Cogan had, in essence, swapped Adare and the other manors in Limerick for life-tenure of the manor of Maynooth which was in the possession of her first cousin, John fitzThomas fitzGerald. According to *the Red Book of the Earls of Kildare*, compiled in 1501, this transaction took place in July 1293 when John fitzThomas obtained a quitclaim of Juliane de Cogan's property that included Adare, 'lands and lordships, with all their appurtenances in lordships, demesnes, churches, chapels, and their advowsens in castles and forts, water-mills, lakes, water-courses, fish-ponds, preserves, fords, courts of the hundred, markets, parks, defenses, moors, marshes, waters, meadows, pastures, roads, footpaths, wards, marriages, and escheats, and all other liberties and free customs belonging to the aforesaid manors, lords, and lordships.' Juliane [fitzGerald] de Cogan insisted on a caveat, demanding to her and her heirs one sparrow-hawk or three pence in silver in annual recompense.¹¹⁶ By 1297 Juliane's son, John de Cogan, was showing an interest in his mother's inheritance and he came to an agreement with John fitzThomas, quitclaiming lands that included Adare, Maynooth and other properties that were listed in his mother's agreement with John fitzThomas in 1293.¹¹⁷ His mother, Juliane was still alive in 1309.

Agnes de Valence fiercely defended her interests in Ireland, engaging a succession of attorneys to oversee her property that comprised the manors of Adare, Croom, Uregare, Athlacca, Castleroberts and Grean in Limerick and a third of the manors of Maynooth, Rathmore and Geashill in Leinster.¹¹⁸ In November 1291 her bailiff, John de Valle, was imprisoned when he was unable to account for moneys he had collected from her property. He was freed on bail with John fitzThomas going surety for him. De Valle defaulted in 1293 and John fitzThomas was one of four men held accountable.¹¹⁹ This

¹¹² AU; AConn.

¹¹³ Ibid; G. H. Orpen, 'The Fitzgeralds Barons of Offaly' in *JRSAI*, 44 (1914) pp 110-11.

¹¹⁴ Niocaill, *Red Book of the Earls of Kildare*, pp 33-4, 35-6, 75-80.

¹¹⁵ Lambeth Palace Library MS 608, f. 28.

¹¹⁶ Mac Niocaill, *Red Book of the Earls of Kildare*, pp 31-2, 34-5, 67-9, 96-7.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, pp 41-3, 44-6.

¹¹⁸ CDI, ii, pp 154.

¹¹⁹ CDI, iii, pp 444-5; CJRI (*Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls of Ireland*, vols. 1-ii ed. J. Mills, vol. iii ed. H. Wood & A.E. Langman), i, p. 102.

event foreshadowed an enduring animosity between John fitzThomas and Agnes de Valence that lasted until her death in 1309. FitzThomas was at war with the powerful Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, and with the justiciar William de Vesey lord of the liberty of Kildare. His position gave De Vesey jurisdiction over some of the Geraldine properties and Agnes de Valence sought judgements against FitzThomas in the justiciar's liberty court.¹²⁰ On 29 Sept 1293 FitzThomas accused Agnes de Valency and De Vesey of collusion aimed at enticing Juliane de Cogan to disinherit him.¹²¹ FitzThomas, put out a false rumour that Agnes had died and on 6 October 1294 he sent men into her manors, including Adare and Croom, taking possession of them and carrying off Agnes' movable goods.¹²² Two months later he took Richard de Burgh prisoner, after which he was summoned to England in August 1295 to account for his misdeeds.¹²³ William de Valence took advantage of the situation and extracted an agreement from FitzThomas by which the latter would hand back all the lands he had taken from Agnes and restore all the goods that he had taken and to pay for any damages.¹²⁴ This arrangement would have included the castle and manor of Adare. The animosity between Agnes de Valence and John fitzThomas raised its head again in November 1296 when Agnes granted the manor of Geashill to fitzThomas' enemy, Richard de Burgh.¹²⁵

Agnes pursued the money that De Valle had misappropriated and, according to a hearing held in April 1297, the administration was ordered to collect the debt by seizing the goods and rents of the sureties.¹²⁶ The challenge to Agnes de Valence's entitlements nevertheless continued and a further detailed examination was documented on 4 June 1298 and on 1 November 1299. It outlined the initial transaction that took place between Maurice fitzGerald and John de Verdun in 1266 and Agnes's marriage settlement and the details of her rights were confirmed.¹²⁷ FitzThomas, meanwhile, was redeeming himself to the crown by performing military service in Scotland and in Flanders in the hope that he could gain leniency regarding prosecution. This may have discouraged Agnes from pursuing her claims regarding his surety of De Valle.¹²⁸ By 1298 FitzThomas's feud with Richard de Burgh was resolved and FitzThomas was obliged to hand over his Connacht estates to De Burgh.¹²⁹ He was nevertheless in better standing with the king and in February 1302 he was awarded the right to free warren in all of his manors which included properties such as Adare that were held by Agnes de Valence.¹³⁰

In January 1303 FitzThomas again used the pretext that Agnes de Valence was dead and seized her properties. Agnes retaliated and in March she had letters patent drawn up stating that she was alive, and in good health.¹³¹ In April, FitzThomas was officially informed that Agnes was alive. He was, however, slow to hand back the manors to Agnes and instead he thrashed the property and imprisoned the bailiffs. Agnes recovered her

¹²⁰ CJRI, i, pp 327-8.

¹²¹ H.G. Richardson and G. Sayles, *Rotuli Parliamentorum Anglie Hactenus Inediti 1279-1373* (London, 1935) p. 34.

¹²² CJRI, ii, pp 236, 240-1.

¹²³ CDI, iv, p. 103.

¹²⁴ Ó Cléirigh, 'The Absentee Landlady and the Sturdy Robbers', pp 108-9.

¹²⁵ Mac Niocaill, *Red Book of the Earls of Kildare*, pp 37-8.

¹²⁶ CJRI, i, pp 104-5.

¹²⁷ CDI, iv, p. 320; CPR, Edw. I (1292-1303), iii, p. 450.

¹²⁸ CDI, iv, pp 158, 207, 219.

¹²⁹ CJRI, i, pp 234-6.

¹³⁰ CDI, v, p. 11; Mac Niocaill, *Red Book of the Earls of Kildare*, pp 36-7.

¹³¹ CDI, v, p. 72.

manor
counc
De
fitzTh
d'anc
fitzTh
d'anc
before
John f
groun
John f
Ag
surety
de Val
dead,
there t
king.
was av
recogn
pass.
carryi
certai
gave t
also a
amoun
1305 s
arrears
Th
Kildar
£110,
they a
receiv
II assu
pardon
Edward
Ef
than t
goods
erick I

132 CJRI
133 Caler
134 Mac
135 J. By
136 CJRI
137 CJRI
138 CJRI
139 Cal.
Brew
140 CJRI

manors before the end of the year.¹³² In April 1304 King Edward I ordered the English council to discuss the affairs of his cousin, Agnes de Valence.¹³³

Despite agreements between Juliane [fitzGerald] de Cogan, her son John, and John fitzThomas, the Geraldine lands in County Limerick were contested in an assize of *mort d'ancestor* that took place in Dublin in November 1303 between John de Cogan and John fitzThomas. It was presided over by the Justiciar, John Wogan.¹³⁴ An assize of *mort d'ancestor* sets out to recover lawfully inherited land that has been taken by another before the heir was able to take possession.¹³⁵ John de Cogan's unsuccessful challenge to John fitzThomas regarding the FitzGerald estates, that included Adare, was taken on the grounds that he was a nephew of Maurice fitzGerald, fourth baron of Offaly whereas John fitzThomas was a first cousin. FitzThomas won the case.

Agnes meanwhile set about getting revenge on John fitzThomas for the default of his surety for De Valle and for trespass. In a document dated 16 May 1305, in which Agnes de Valence complained that her husband's nephew maliciously pretended that she was dead, forcibly taking her lands, tenements and rents in Ireland and all her goods found there to the value of £980, while she and her possessions were under the protection of the king. The king had directed FitzThomas to restore them, but he refused. Although she was awarded her possessions by judgement of the court and her life tenure in Adare was recognized, she had not yet got restitution of her goods or any satisfaction for the trespass. Furthermore, John was accused of forcibly entering her manors, of threshing and carrying away her corn, of driving off her cattle, breaking her chests, throwing down certain houses and burning the timber of them and imprisoning her bailiffs until they gave the rents and other issues of the manors levied for her use to FitzThomas. He was also accused of other enormities in contempt of the king and damage to Agnes to the amount of £2,200.¹³⁶ Agnes simultaneously pursued other cases with tenacity and in July 1305 she was awarded 10 marks yearly from a knight named Ulf in part payment of the arrears of Robert le Blound, her late bailiff at Adare.¹³⁷

The case against John FitzThomas was finally heard in April 1306 and, although the Kildare Jury found that Agnes had been trespassed against and assessing her losses at £110, the Limerick jury failed to appear. After being re-summoned and the sheriff fined, they assessed Agnes's losses in Limerick at £606. By May 1307, however, Agnes had received no more than £8 from FitzThomas.¹³⁸ On 11 July 1307, three days after Edward II assumed the throne, John fitzThomas received a pardon for his transgressions. The pardon was in recognition of his services to Edward I, in Scotland and Flanders, and to Edward II in Ireland.¹³⁹

Efforts to collect the surety relating to De Valle's default were no more successful than the case of trespass and the sheriffs of Kildare and Limerick failed to collect any goods on her behalf and were coerced by John fitzThomas who had removed the Limerick livestock to Kerry.¹⁴⁰ She tried, however, to collect damages awarded to her against

¹³² CJRI, ii, pp 75-6, 236, 240-1.

¹³³ Calendar of Chancery Warrants 1244-1326, 212; Ó Cléirigh, 'The Absentee Landlady and the Sturdy Robbers', pp 110-11.

¹³⁴ Mac Niocaill, *Red Book of the Earls of Kildare*, pp 86-90.

¹³⁵ J. Byrne, *Byrne's Dictionary of Irish Local History* (Cork, 2004) p. 200.

¹³⁶ CJRI, ii, pp 75-6, 77-8, 236, 240.

¹³⁷ CJRI, ii, p. 89.

¹³⁸ CJRI, ii, pp 236-7, 240-1, 281, 393.

¹³⁹ Cal. Car. Mss (*Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts preserved in the Archbishopal Library at Lambeth*, 5 vols, eds. J.S. Brewer and W. Bullen), v, p. 364.

¹⁴⁰ CJRI, ii, pp 5, 6-8, 204-13, 213; Ó Cléirigh, 'The Absentee Landlady and the Sturdy Robbers', pp 113-14.

the sheriff and serjeant of Limerick.¹⁴¹ Agnes died before 31 December 1309 when writs were issued to hold inquisitions *post mortum* concerning her property.¹⁴² True to form John fitzThomas immediately occupied manors such as Athlaca that Agnes had possessed, paying no heed to the claims of John de Cogan, the heir of Agnes' sister-in-law, Juliane (Fitzgerald) de Cogan¹⁴³ and it is likely that Adare was treated in like manner. FitzThomas finally succeeded in amalgamating the alienated Geraldine manors of Limerick with the Geraldine estate more than four decades after the marriage of Agnes de Valence to Maurice fitzGerald in 1266.

Following Agnes' death John fitzThomas again occupied Agnes' holdings in 1310, leading to renewed hostility between the fifth baron of Offaly and his cousin John de Cogan. The issue was resolved in FitzThomas' favour by the death of De Cogan in 1311.

The Incorporation of Adare

The restoration of Adare to John fitzThomas was followed by a grant 'for three years', from Edward II to 'the bailiffs and good men of the town of Adare' on 10 July 1310, at the request of John fitzThomas. His aim was to wall the town to protect it from the incursions of the Irish enemy. A grant of customs, containing a minute list of the articles that were for sale on market days, was attached, and permission was given to levy tolls for three years which would be spent on fortifying the town.¹⁴⁴ Adare seems to have been incorporated at this point. Although no archaeological evidence of the town wall has been uncovered to date, Camden describes the 'Adar' of 1686 as 'a little towne in old time fortified'.¹⁴⁵

In 1312 an expedition was led by John fitzThomas and the Justiciar, John Wogan, into Munster at the head of a great army. Its aim was to suppress Uí Briain who were warring amongst themselves. The castle at Adare was used as a base where FitzThomas knighted Nicholas Fitz Maurice and Robert Clahull at a 'great opulent & peacemaking feast'.¹⁴⁶ By 1313 there was a gaol in the town and the protective stone wall of the town may have been completed. There is no evidence that the gaol was located within the castle.¹⁴⁷ When John Tyrel was sentenced by twelve jurors on 12 Nov. 1316, he was delivered to the town provost to be guarded by him and the community of the town.¹⁴⁸

The Earldom of Kildare

Edward Bruce, the brother of Robert Bruce, king of Scotland, landed in Ulster in 1315 with 6000 men. The English king, Edward II, sent an envoy to Ireland with orders to persuade the Norman magnates to sign a form of allegiance. John fitzThomas' name was at the very top of the list. The Scots, who suffered greatly during the general famine of

¹⁴¹ CJRI, iii, 58, 101, 114; Ó Cléirigh, 'The Absentee Landlady and the Sturdy Robbers', p. 113.

¹⁴² Ó Cléirigh, 'The Absentee Landlady and the Sturdy Robbers', p. 114.

¹⁴³ Mac Niocaill, *Red Book of the Earl of Kildare*, pp 125-8.

¹⁴⁴ E. Tresham (ed.), *Rotulorum Patentium et Clausarum Cancellariae Hiberniae Calendarium* (Dublin, 1828) p. 15.

¹⁴⁵ Camden [W. Camden, *Britain, or A chorographical description of the most flourishing kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the ilands adjoining, out of the depth of antiquitie beautified with mappes of the severall shires of England*], p. 81.

¹⁴⁶ CJRI, i, p. 29; *Appendix to the thirty-eighth Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records and Keeper of the State Papers in Ireland*, pp 55, 97; J.T. Gilbert, *The Chartularies of St. Mary's Abbey*, Dublin, 2 vols., (London, 1884) ii, p. 342; A.Clyn, p. 160; R. Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 92; Rev. R. Butler (ed.), *Annales Hiberniae*, pp 60-1; Cal. Car. Mss. v, p. 130, under the year 1313 John fitzThomas's is mistakenly written Morishe fitzThomas, presumably mixed up with the individual of that name who was created Earl of Desmond in 1329.

¹⁴⁷ CJRI, Edw II, 1308-14, p. 237.

¹⁴⁸ CJRI, Edw. II, 1308-14, p. 310.

1316
datin
the b
Kilda
temb
of the
of Ac
Jo
that e
secon
Lord
office
and h
marri
minor
died 7
At
Adare
thirds
Anoth
to wa
ition
a char
a char
since
Th
prop
Count
ian of
the ca
must h
Mauri
paid 1
and th
The
They v

149 ACly

150 M. A

(Dubl

151 C.W.

30.

152 CPR

153 Mac N

154 Ibid.

155 E. Tré

(Caler

of the

156 The F

p. 45.

157 E. Cur

1316, 'went through all the country almost as far as Limerick, burning, slaying, depre-
dating, spoiling towns and castles and even churches.¹⁴⁹ Edward Bruce was defeated in
the battle of Dundalk after which John fitzThomas was rewarded with the title 'Earl of
Kildare'. He did not live long to enjoy his social enrichment as he was killed on 12 Sep-
tember 1316 near Maynooth. His death occurred shortly after he founded the monastery
of the Augustinian Friars in Adare to which he endowed lands and tenements in the town
of Adare. Edward II confirmed these grants on 13 Dec. 1317.¹⁵⁰

John fitzThomas's son, Thomas fitzJohn, who had actively campaigned in the events
that ended in the defeat of Edward Bruce at Faughart in November 1318, became the
second Earl of Kildare and sixth baron of Offaly. In Sept 1320 Thomas was appointed
Lord Justice of Ireland by Roger Mortimer, an office he held for a year. He assumed this
office in 1327 following the accession of Edward III.¹⁵¹ Thomas died as justiciar in 1328
and his estates, including Adare, were granted to Roger Mortimer. Together with 'the
marriage of the heir', the property had fallen into the king's hands 'by reason of the
minority of Richard fitzThomas who now became the Third Earl of Kildare.¹⁵² Richard
died 7 July 1329 at the age of twelve.

An inquisition taken on 12 August 1331 due to Richard's death lists the 'edifices' of
Adare Castle and outlines the condition of the manor which had fallen by as much as two
thirds in value. According to the survey 1,391 acres of demesne lay waste and tenantless.
Another 4006 acres rendered nothing, while betaghs in Kenry returned nothing, all due
to war. The town of Adare is described as having been destroyed by war.¹⁵³ The inquisi-
tion depicts a castle comprising: a hall, a chapel with stone walls roofed with thatch,
a chamber with a plank roof, a tower roofed with slate, a stone kitchen with a slate roof,
a chamber near the stone gate roofed with thatch, window frames not valued at any price
since no one was willing to take them on board on account of the cost of sustaining them.¹⁵⁴

The castle at Adare appears to have been repaired by 1334 when it was among the
properties leased to John Darcy by Edward III. Darcy had married Blanche Roche, the
Countess of Kildare, mother of Maurice fitzThomas fitzJohn, the fourth Earl. As guard-
ian of the young heir, Darcy was, according to the terms of his charter, obliged to upkeep
the castle of Adare as well as its outhouses and other edifices.¹⁵⁵ The Countess' dower
must have figured in Darcy's tenure. Darcy's lease lasted until 24 January 1340 when
Maurice fitzThomas came of age. It is recorded that since 11 November 1337, he had
paid 10 marks per annum, the equivalent of £16, to the exchequer for custody of Adare
and that the castle was to be delivered to the young heir.¹⁵⁶

The Statutes of Kilkenny were enacted in 1366 during Maurice fitzGerald's lifetime.
They were the result of widespread unrest¹⁵⁷ such as conflict between Toirrdelbach ua

¹⁴⁹ AClyn.

¹⁵⁰ M. Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum or a history of the Abbies Pories and Other Religious Houses in Ireland*, 2 vols (Dublin 1786), ii, pp 414-6; King, p. 422; OSL, ii, pp 69-71; AClyn.

¹⁵¹ C.W. Fitzgerald, Marquis of Kildare, *The Earls of Kildare, and their Ancestors from 1057 to 1773* (Dublin, 1858) pp 28-30.

¹⁵² CPR Edward III, 1330-34, pp 484, 537.

¹⁵³ Mac Niocaill (ed.), *Red Book of the Earls of Kildare*, pp 122-4.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 123 [translation: Caitriona Devane].

¹⁵⁵ E. Tresham (ed.), *Rotulorum Patentium et Clausurarum Cancellariae Hiberniae Calendarium* (Dublin, 1828) p. 39; CFR (Calendar of Fine Rolls) iv, pp 300-01; *The Forty-Fourth Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records and Keeper of the State Papers in Ireland* (London, 1912) p. 29.

¹⁵⁶ *The Forty-Seventh Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Records and Keeper of the State Papers in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1915) p. 45.

¹⁵⁷ E. Curtis and R.B. McDowell (eds), *Irish Historical Documents 1172-1922* (London, 1977) pp 52-9.

Briain, Earl of Thomond, and his nephew Brian ua Briain. The conflict resulted in many battles, including one in Monasteranenagh in 1369. The statutes failed to quell the ongoing warfare and Uí Briain rose against Norman authority and the city of Limerick was razed that same year.¹⁵⁸ An account, written in French and dated 15 April 1370, recalls that the justiciar, William de Windsor, and his troops spent twenty-two weeks at Adare restoring peace to the region.¹⁵⁹ Most likely, De Windsor garrisoned the castle for the duration of his stay in Adare.

The town of Adare was under pressure in 1376 and Maurice fitzThomas interceded on behalf of its people. At his behest, Edward III prohibited the officials in Adare from demanding services or customs from the provost or commoners of Adare until the town, 'recently burnt and destroyed by the Irish enemy', should be fully rebuilt and inhabited'.¹⁶⁰ The Earls of Kildare, due to the distance between their *caput* at Maynooth and their county Limerick manors, had difficulty in looking after their holdings and it seems that, while not abandoning their claims to their Limerick lands, they 'were content to cede *de facto* control of the northern (and least fertile) quarter of their Limerick estates to preserve the remainder, which eventually descended to become the barony of Coshma'.¹⁶¹ Maurice fitzThomas, the fourth Earl of Kildare, died on 25 August 1390 having spent much of his life campaigning in both Ireland and abroad. He was succeeded by his son Gerald.

The fourteen-arch stone bridge that crosses the Maigue at Adare is believed to have been built by Gerald fitzMaurice fitzThomas, the fifth Earl of Kildare, between 1390 and 1410.¹⁶² Gerald outlived his only son Thomas who died childless. Thomas, who died in 1432, may have been succeeded by his nephew John Cam who died in 1434. If this is the case, John Cam's son Thomas fitzJohn became the seventh Earl of Kildare. The Geraldines of Kildare supported the House of York in 'the Wars of the Roses' in contrast to the Butlers of Ormond who supported the House of Lancaster. During this period, the Franciscan monastery at Adare, close to Desmond Castle, was built by FitzJohn and his wife Johanna, a sister of the Earl of Desmond. The friary was built in 1464 and consecrated in 1466.¹⁶³ In 1468 Thomas was attainted for his political machinations and his brother-in-law, the Earl of Desmond was executed. After pleading his case, however, the Earl of Kildare was appointed Lord Justiciar. Thomas fitzJohn built a tomb in the Franciscan Friary in Adare where he was laid to rest in March 1478. It indicates that in the fifteenth century the Geraldines of Kildare kept a serious presence in the castle.¹⁶⁴

Gearóid Mór – Garret More

In 1478 Thomas fitzJohn's son became the eighth Earl of Kildare. Known as Gearóid Mór (anglicized Garret More) he served as Lord Deputy of Ireland from 1476 to 1494. He was accused of treason in 1495 by Henry VII's viceroy, Sir Edward Poynings, a charge

¹⁵⁸ AFM; Gilbert, *Chartularies of St. Mary's Abbey*, ii, p. 397.

¹⁵⁹ M. V. Clarke, 'William of Windsor in Ireland, 1369-76', *PRIA* 41 (1932-3) p. 86; Gilbert., *Chartularies of St. Mary's Abbey*, ii, p. 397.

¹⁶⁰ Tresham (ed.), *Rotulorum Patentium*, p. 102.

¹⁶¹ K. Nicholls and P. MacCotter, 'Feudal Warlords: the Knights of Glencorbry', in T. Donovan (ed.), *The Knights of Glin: seven centuries of change* (Glin, 2009) p. 65.

¹⁶² Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*, pp 104, 135-6.

¹⁶³ AFM; J. Ferrar, *History of Limerick, Ecclesiastical, Civil and Military, from the Earliest Records to the year 1787* (Limerick, 1787) p. 194; A. Gwynn and R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses, Ireland* (Dublin, 1988) p. 242.

¹⁶⁴ AFM.

tha
as
cou
in r
we
fac
the
Bri
It is
aga
Gli
for
Gar
mou
war
trea
Earl
Gar
post
Gea
Whe
and
Des
Oge
cam
leav
infra
occa
A
Kild
by G
reve
was
recal
marc
Earl
Sir V
answ

165 Or
166 AF
167 PR
168 AC
169 S. I
170 AC
171 Hoi

that was refuted.¹⁶⁵ Following his release from custody in 1496, Garret was reappointed as king's deputy in Ireland. His son, Gearóid Óg (Garret Oge) was sent to the English court as a hostage to keep the deputy in check. The involvement of the Kildare Geraldines in national politics reduced their capacity to run their extensive estates in Munster which were remote from their caput of Maynooth and difficult to defend. This may have been a factor when they were leased to the Earls of Desmond in the early sixteenth century. In the winter of 1501, Uí Briain aspired to re-conquer confiscated lands and Toirrdelbach ua Briain, Earl of Thomond, razed County Limerick and Garret More's lands in Coshma. It is likely that the Desmond Geraldines would support their distant Kildare relatives against such incursions.¹⁶⁶ That minor branches of the Desmonds, such as the knights of Glin and of the Valley, benefitted from this is evident from the building of an infirmary for the Franciscans at Adare by Edmond, the seventh knight of Glin, who died in 1503.¹⁶⁷

In 1503, Garret More went to England and brought back his sixteen-year-old son, Garret Oge. In 1504 he went on an offensive against the opponents of the Crown. He mounted an offensive against Toirdelbach ua Briain in 1510 that escalated into outright war. Uí Briain inflicted heavy losses on Garret More's army in county Limerick before retreating across the Shannon.¹⁶⁸ It stands to reason that the castle at Adare was used by the Earl of Kildare during this campaign, but there is no written documentation to prove it. Garret More remained on good terms with the crown and served in various government posts until his death in 1513.

Gearóid Óg – Garret Oge

When Garret More died in 1513, his son, Garret Oge, became the ninth Earl of Kildare and was soon appointed Lord Deputy. He quickly fell out with James fitzMaurice of Desmond, who had supported his father, Gearóid Mór, in the offensive of 1510. Garret Oge burned the Desmond lands in Connello in 1514. Although Uí Briain of Thomond came to James fitzMaurice's aid, Garret Oge's army had already departed from Connello, leaving no time for reprisal. It is likely that Adare Castle remained an integral part of the infrastructure of the Earls of Kildare, serving as a barracks for Garret Oge's army on this occasion.

According to an uncorroborated source, written in 1837, Garret Oge, the ninth Earl of Kildare, set out from the castle in Adare in 1519, to face charges brought against him by Cardinal Wolsey.¹⁶⁹ Wolsey had accused him of enriching himself from the crown revenues and of holding traitorous correspondence with the Irish enemies.¹⁷⁰ Garret Oge was vindicated and was allowed to return to Ireland in January 1523. In 1526 he was recalled to London to answer charges that included the accusation that, when mandated to march on Munster and arrest the Earl of Desmond, that he had in fact forewarned the Earl. Garret Oge was released in 1530 and returned to Ireland with the new Lord Deputy, Sir William Skeffington. He was summoned to London for the final time in 1534 to answer charges of disloyalty and was imprisoned in the Tower of London.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁵ Otway-Ruthven, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 408.

¹⁶⁶ AFM.

¹⁶⁷ PRONI MS 3078/2/1/1; Nicholls and MacCotter, 'Feudal Warlords: the Knights of Glencorbry', pp 64-5.

¹⁶⁸ AConn; AFM; AU.

¹⁶⁹ S. Lewis, *Topographical Directory of Ireland*, 3 vols (London, 1837) i, p. 9.

¹⁷⁰ AConn; Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*, p. 106.

¹⁷¹ *Holinshed, Chronicles 1580*, ii, p. 282.

The rebellion of Tomás an tSíoda – Silken Thomas

On hearing false rumours that Gearóid Óg had been executed, his son Tomás an tSíoda – Silken Thomas – started a rebellion. It was the excuse the Crown needed to destroy the FitzGerald of Kildare and all of their castles were forfeited in succession. An extract from a letter written by Lord Ossory to Walter Cowley in June 1535 reads: ‘and besides we entende to attayne the Erle of Kildare’s Lordship and Castels in the countie of Lymeryk’.¹⁷²

Silken Thomas surrendered to the crown in August 1535. He was attainted for high treason in 1536 and his remaining castles and manors, including Adare, were forfeited to the Crown. Meanwhile two of the Desmond Geraldines were in contention over the earldom of Desmond following the death of Thomas fitzThomas, the twelfth Earl of Desmond, in 1534. A paper, written by Robert Cowley to Thomas Cromwell in August or September 1536, noted that ‘the pretensid Erle of Desmond [James fitzJohn, nephew of the deceased] hath lately, as a conqueror, enterid into all the Kinges castelles, garysons, manours, and lands in the countie of Lymeryk, whch apperteyned to the late Erle of Kildare, and accrued unto the Kinges Highnes by the atteynder of the said late Erle of Kildare; that the Deputie and Counsaile dyspose theym [earne]stely and diligently to recover the said lands and garysons to the [Kings] possession, and to reconcile the said pretensid Earl of Desmond to his duety of allygeaunce, and due obeysaunce unto the Kinges Majestie, or els sharpely to prosecute hym, with all extremyte, as the Kinges arrogant rebell’.¹⁷³

On 15 Sept. 1537 James fitzJohn fitzGerald of Desmond was invited to put his claims to the earldom of Desmond before a commission in Dublin and the terms of his submission were outlined, including demands that he give his sons as hostage to the crown and that he renounce the bishop of Rome. James was advised to write to Silken Thomas’ young brother, Gerald (Garret) fitzGerald of Kildare, as the latter’s uncle, Lord Deputy Leonard Grey had done, to advise him to submit, and should he not do so, to treat him as a rebel. Should the young Earl of Kildare submit, he would have the king’s pardon. Following protracted negotiations, mainly due to his distrust of the commission, James fitzJohn fitzGerald gave his sons as hostage and submitted his claim to the Earldom of Desmond for the adjudication of Lord Grey.¹⁷⁴ In his articles of submission on 18 October 1537, an accommodation was reached by which James fitzJohn agreed to take over the lease of Croom and Adare, and other lands belonging to the late Earl of Kildare in Munster, and pay to the king’s officers the rents and profits of the same. This included the castles. At the same time, James’ rival to the Earldom of Desmond, James fitzMaurice whose claim was initially supported by the crown, was described as ‘a bastard and traitor of high treason’. As part of the deal with the government, James fitzJohn was obliged to keep Munster at peace and to hand over his eldest son, Thomas, as hostage.¹⁷⁵ In November 1537 Adare was listed among the castles in Ireland to be guarded. It is stated that ‘to part of the Castles substantial farmers should be appointed, putting the King to no great charge. Constables and garrisons should be English and must be horsemen to be able to defend the king’s tenants about them’. A report written in December, naming the

¹⁷² *State Papers, King Henry the Eighth, Vol ii, Part iii, Correspondence between the Governments of England and Ireland 1515-1538* (London, 1834) p. 254.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp 366-67

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 550; *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, Volume 12 Part 2, ed. James Gairdner (London, 1891) p. 251.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 330; Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*; pp 142-3; *State Papers 1515-1538*, p. 517.

attai
Ratf
rent
S
Lon
were
sout
belie
prot
Lorc
sym
Gera
path
Gera
Thor
prot
Ua D
Ir
spiri
fitzG
ences
regal
the s
com
alleg
A
and C
fitzJo
Earld
a dec
of De
Pope
of the
be ed
A
that C
that ‘
an arc
depos
Earl o

176 Lett
177 Lett
pp 2
178 State
179 Cale
180 Ibid.
181 Lett
VIII,

attainted lands of the Earl of Kildare, list the following Limerick manors, 'Adare, Crom, Ratheaman, Tiberney and Carrickittell' from which James fitzJohn of Desmond took the rents of the first, i.e. of Adare, while the rest lay waste.¹⁷⁶

Silken Thomas and his five half-uncles were executed for treason in the Tower of London on 3 February 1537. Plans by the crown to wipe out the Geraldines of Kildare were, however, short-lived and Silken Thomas' half-brother, Gerald, was smuggled southwards from Maynooth by Thomas Leverous. On 30 December 1537 Gerald was believed by English officials to be staying in the vicinity of Adare and Croom under the protection of the Earl of Desmond. According to a deposition, dated November 1540, Lord Leonard Grey, who served as Lord Deputy of Ireland between 1536 and 1540, was sympathetic to the Kildare Geraldines and when Grey travelled to Munster in pursuit of Gerald, the young earl had left the vicinity a month previously. Lord Deputy Grey's sympathy for Gerald was understandable since Gerald was the son of Grey's sister, Elizabeth. Gerald escaped to Ua Briain who had been foster-father to Gerald's brother, Silken Thomas. He then travelled to Ulick Bourke in Connacht from whom he went to the protection of Ua Conchobar Ruadh of Roscommon before he joined his aunt, the wife of Ua Domnaill, in Donegal.¹⁷⁷

In July 1539, James fitzJohn, the fourteenth Earl of Desmond, was accused of conspiring against Henry VIII with a view to 'setting up [and] restoring' young Gerald fitzGerald, the male heir to the Earldom of Kildare, 'to all the possessions and pre-eminences which his father had, and so finally among them to exclude the king from all his regalities within this land'.¹⁷⁸ Gerald was potentially the eleventh Earl of Kildare. With the support of Lord Deputy Leonard Grey and of Anthony St. Leger who served on the commission dealing with order and establishment of Ireland, FitzJohn withstood the allegation.

A contemporary document dated 1537 (29 Hen VIII) records that the manors of Adare and Croom, and associated properties in Limerick, were not valued because James fitzJohn of Desmond received the profits.¹⁷⁹ In March 1540 James fitzJohn's rival to the Earldom, James fitzMaurice fitzGerald, was killed by James fitzJohn's brother Maurice, a deed that facilitated the ongoing attempts by James fitzJohn to gain recognition as Earl of Desmond from the crown. On 16 January 1541, he renounced the supremacy of the Pope. He reiterated his wish to be granted the lease of Croom and Adare and other lands of the late Earl of Kildare in the county of Limerick, promising to send his son Gerald to be educated in England.¹⁸⁰

A case was made on 20 Sept 1540 against Lord Leonard Grey, in which it was argued that Croom and Adare were given to the earl of Desmond 'for assisting young Gerald' and that 'Conogher', 'an arrant traitor', was made constable of Adare.¹⁸¹ The Earl of Ormond, an arch-enemy of the Desmonds, corroborated this in late November 1540, stating in a deposition that the keepers of Adare and Croom, for fear of being delivered over to the Earl of Desmond by Lord Grey, fled. The constable's appointment was confirmed by

¹⁷⁶ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, vol.12, part 2, pp 385, 461.

¹⁷⁷ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, volume 16, ed. James Gairdner and R H Brodie (London, 1898) pp 22, 129-33.

¹⁷⁸ *State Papers, Hen VIII*, vol. iii, p. 136.

¹⁷⁹ *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts 1515-1574*, i, p. 132.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 174-5; *State Papers Henry the Eighth, 1515-1538*, pp 518, 537.

¹⁸¹ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, vol. 16, 1540-1541 (London, 1898) p. 22; *State Papers Henry VIII*, iii, p. 245.

the Bishop of Meath who stated that Conchobar Ua Ceallacháin was made constable of Adare with the assent of Lord Grey and the previous constable's suit to be restored was disallowed.¹⁸²

Having escaped from the vicinity of Adare to Donegal, Gerald travelled to Europe and was educated in Liege and in Rome. Despite denying that he abetted the escape of his nephew, Lord Grey was attainted of high treason and was executed at the Tower of London on 28 July 1541. Gerald remained on the continent, holding the office of Master of Horse to Cosimo de' Medici, Duca di Firenze. He fought with the Knights of Rome against the Turks before travelling as far as Tripoli in Libya which was under the control of the Knights of St John.¹⁸³ Gerald's tutor, Thomas Leverous, who had saved the life of the young heir, meanwhile, became Bishop of Kildare in 1554 and dean of St. Patrick's in 1555. In 1559 he refused to take the oath of Supremacy by which he would recognize Queen Elizabeth as head of the church. Although pardoned for aiding the young Gerald, he was stripped of his offices and, in later years, kept a Grammar School in Adare which he subsequently moved to Limerick.¹⁸⁴ Gerald, meanwhile travelled to England in 1547 following the death of Henry VIII.

An extract from an assessment undertaken in 1540, for the purpose of surveying and valuing the lands forfeited for high treason, states that the manors of Adare and Croom were in the king's hands. This appears to be despite their being administered by James fitzJohn, the fourteenth earl of Desmond. By 23 September 1541 discussions regarding the official leasing of Adare and Croom to James fitzJohn were underway.¹⁸⁵ A crown survey, dated January 1542, indicates that the old castle at Adare was falling to ruin and in collapse. Eight acres of nearby arable land which was annually 'valued at 16s, but lately, because of the rebellion of James fitzJohn, Earl of Desmond, was now not valued over 8s'.¹⁸⁶ In 1542 the lease for the manors of Adare and Croom to the Earl of Desmond, which in normal times amounted to £20, was not charged.¹⁸⁷ Henry VIII now began to pay more attention to Ireland, leading to the creation of the Kingdom of Ireland in 1542. Both Silken Thomas' father and grandfather had served as Lords Deputy of Ireland and Thomas himself had served as Deputy Governor in his father's absence. Tomás' step-uncle, Lord Grey had also served as Lord Deputy. The king now set about curbing the powers of the lords deputy and introduced policies such as surrender and regrant in order to stitch the Irish chiefs into a new framework. In November 1546 James fitzJohn, who was Earl of Desmond between 1536 and 1558, was finally granted the manors and dominions of Adare and Croom, for life, by fealty at 4*d.* rent.¹⁸⁸

An old broken castle

Following King Edward VI's succession to the throne on 28 January 1547, some of the lands that had been forfeited by Silken Thomas in 1534 were restored to his half-brother

¹⁸² *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, vol. 16, 1540-1541, p. 129.

¹⁸³ H.C.G. Matthew (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography* on CD-ROM (Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹⁸⁴ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, vol. 16, 1540-1541, pp 22, 129, 133-34; CSPI (*Calendar of State Papers, Ireland*, 19 vols) i, p.118; W. Monck-Mason, *History and Antiquities of the Collegiate and Cathedral Church of St. Patrick's Cathedral* (Dublin, 1820) pp 160-4.

¹⁸⁵ *State Papers King Henry the Eighth, vol 3, part III, 1515-1538*, p. 254 note i; *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, vol. 16, 1540-1541*, pp 518, 554.

¹⁸⁶ G. Mac Niocaill, *Crown Surveys of Lands 1540-41, with the Kildare Rental begun in 1518* (Dublin, 1992) p. 177.

¹⁸⁷ *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, i, p. 201.

¹⁸⁸ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, vol. 21 part 2, September 1546-January 1547, ed. James Gairdner and R H Brodie (London, 1910) p. 234.

Gera
firm
Anth
Mar
appo
espe
Your
Kild
Mary
Nov
A
term
Gera
Earl
follo
Irelan
part o
In
descr
castle
the ca
partia
a wat
messu
smyth
was o
reaffir
belong
Earl's

The D
In 156
the fir
Desmo
in Lon
on De
counte
bellior
who su
of 'Co
partool

189 By let
190 Calen
191 AFM
192 NLI M
193 Nicho
194 Calen
195 Calen

Gerald fitzGerald. Soon afterwards he married Mabel Browne. The restoration was confirmed in a charter dated April 1552,¹⁸⁹ partly due to the influence of his brother-in-law Anthony Browne, and Gerald was knighted. Edward VI died on 6 July 1553 and his sister Mary, a devout Catholic, became Queen. Gerald's friend Leverous was, meanwhile, appointed Bishop of Kildare by Queen Mary in 1554. Gerald's star was on the rise, especially after he distinguished himself during the rebellion of Thomas Wyatt the Younger in 1554. On 13 May 1554, he was given the titles 'Baron of Offaly' and 'Earl of Kildare' in tail male, with £20 per annum out of the custom in the port of Dublin. Queen Mary's reign was shortlived and she was succeeded by her sister, Elizabeth I on 17 November 1558.¹⁹⁰

Although the name Desmond Castle is used for Adare Castle to the present day, the term is a misnomer because the castle only remained in the hands of the Desmond Geraldines for the short period of time between the attainder of Silken Thomas, the tenth Earl of Kildare, in 1536 and its administration by the latter's brother and heir, Gerald following the return of Gerald, the eleventh Earl of Kildare, and his brother Edward to Ireland in 1556. According to the annals, there was great rejoicing throughout the greater part of the southern half of Ireland because of their arrival.¹⁹¹

In 1559, a survey of the manor of Adare was undertaken by Symon Barnwall. He described Desmond Castle as follows: 'there standeth by the river of Mage an old broken castle, three quarter upp and one quarter down.' The account describes a bawne encircling the castle, a second wall with two small towers and a vaulted hall on which the roof was partially slated and partly thatched. There were three other houses within the bawne and a watermill near the wall of the bawne on the west side. There were rentals from other messuages with associated outbuildings from a myriad of cottiers that included a 'myller, smyth, carpenter, porter and serjeant'.¹⁹² Rentals confirm that part of the manor of Adare was occupied by the knight of Glin at this time.¹⁹³ Gerald fitzGerald's charter of 1552 was reaffirmed on 30 August 1569 when 'restoration of all the lands, lordships &c., that had belonged to his late father, Garret Oge', was documented. This validation followed the Earl's elevation to the senior 'Earldom of Kildare' on 23 February 1569.¹⁹⁴

The Desmond Wars

In 1569 the title 'Earl of Kildare' was upgraded and Gerald fitzGerald was recognized as the first Earl of Kildare within the English hierarchical system. The fifteenth earl of Desmond, Gerald fitzJames fitzGerald, and his brother John, meanwhile, were imprisoned in London. which allowed their cousin, James fitzMaurice fitzGerald, to impose authority on Desmond. The Earl of Kildare was not party to the revolt which was part of the counter-reformation and in defiance of the plantation of Munster. Two Desmond Rebellions ensued, the first of which was defeated in 1573. Although the Earl of Kildare, who supported the Crown, kept a small retinue in his Limerick manors where the forces of 'Coshmaye' comprised 12 horsemen and 100 footmen¹⁹⁵ it is not known if these men partook in quashing the revolt or if any were garrisoned in the castle at Adare. According

¹⁸⁹ By letter patent.

¹⁹⁰ *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, v (Book of Howth) p. 364.

¹⁹¹ AFM 1153.

¹⁹² NLI MS 41,552/1. (PRONI MS. 3078/1/1/3, f. 165 is a later copy of Barnwall's survey).

¹⁹³ Nicholls and MacCotter, 'Feudal Warlords: the Knights of Glencorbry', pp 64-5.

¹⁹⁴ *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, v (Book of Howth) p. 364.

¹⁹⁵ *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, i, pp 392-3.

to an uncorroborated account, the Castle of Adare was taken by crown forces in 1578 after a siege of eleven days.¹⁹⁶

In 1575 James fitzMaurice of Desmond sailed to Brittany and travelled to the French and Spanish courts and to Rome, successfully lobbying for military aid against the English.¹⁹⁷ He returned on 18 July 1579 with a small force of Spanish and Italian troops. The ships were captured on 29 July 1579. By 18 August he was killed in a skirmish by the Burkes of Castleconnell. In early October John fitzGerald, the Earl of Desmond's brother, engaged in battle with Nicholas Malby at Monasteranenagh and was defeated. Malby proceeded to Askeaton and then to Adare from where he subjugated the people of the neighbourhood. The Earl of Kildare, Gerald fitzGerald, joined Malby at Adare in early October in the company of the new Lord Justice, William Pelham, and the Earl of Ormond who was Governor of Munster. The *Annals of the Four Masters* list Adare among the Limerick castles belonging to the Earl of Desmond in which warders would be stationed, suggesting that the castle may have fallen briefly into the hands of the Desmonds. By 27 November 1579 Malby had decided to put garrisons in the Limerick strongholds and the garrison he assigned to Adare was commanded by George Carew and William Stanley. Soon afterwards John of Desmond, brother of the Earl, with allegedly four hundred kerns and fifty cavalry, besieged the castle at Adare, forcing the garrison to venture out for provision. One hundred and fifty men crossed the Mague into Kenry on this expedition, 'and did great execution'. They helped Ua Briain of Carrickogunnell in taking away a couple of hundred cattle as plunder. Due to the resilience of the garrison, the siege of Adare was lifted.¹⁹⁸

Pelham referred to Gerald fitzGerald, the Earl of Kildare in a letter to the Lord Keeper and Council in Dublin as a result of which FitzGerald was sent a letter, dated 3 November 1579, assuring him that he would suffer no financial loss for having garrisons on his land in Coshma. Pelham explained to FitzGerald that he had made overtures that Desmond come to meet himself and Malby in Connello. The countess of Desmond finally came to the nearby castle at Fanningstown with letters accusing Malby of 'divers hurts' that Ormond inflicted on Desmond in the vicinity of Adare. Pelham wrote that, as he would not consent to their offers, that Desmond was proclaimed a traitor yesterday.¹⁹⁹ In a letter to the justiciar William Pelham, dated 29 January 1580, the Earl of Ormond reported that he found Adare in a very good state.²⁰⁰ An alleged attempt by the Earl of Desmond to capture the castle at Adare is outlined in a missive, dated 26 January 1580, sent to the Council at Dublin by Pelham. The missive describes a ruse by the Earl to take the Castle by sending a young woman as a gift to the constable. Learning that this was a trick, the constable carried the young woman to the top of the castle and threw her, with a stone about her neck, into the river Mague 'by which she was crushed and died'.²⁰¹ The incident caught the attention of Edmund Spenser who described the young lady's demise as follows in the *Faerie Queen*.²⁰²

¹⁹⁶ Lewis, *Topographical Directory of Ireland*, vol. i, p. 9.

¹⁹⁷ CSPI, ii, pp 262, 267.

¹⁹⁸ *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, ii, 1575-1588, p. 225; CSPI, ii, p. 197; Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 359; AFM; Camden, p. 401; *Holinshed*, 1580, pp 420-1 (he says that Sir James besieged Adare).

¹⁹⁹ *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, ii, p. 164; AFM; Hooker in *Holinshed*, pp 420, 423-5.

²⁰⁰ *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, ii, p. 207.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 205. *Holinshed*, 1580, p. 448, has a similar story of the killing of a harlot at Adnagh by fitzMaurice of Lixnaw. It occurs later in the sequence of events. R. Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 368, also refers to Adnagh. The Irish material in the *Chronicles* was updated by John Hooker who was George Carew's legal advisor in Ireland.

²⁰² Spenser, *Faerie Queen*, Bk. v, ii, 27; M.M. Gray, 'The Influence of Spenser's Irish Experience on the Faerie Queene,' in *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 6, o. 24 (Oct., 1930), p. 418.

Herself then took he by the slender waist,
 In vain loud crying, and into the flood
 Over the castle wall adown her cast,
 And there her drowned in the dirty mud.
 But the stream washed away her guilty blood.²⁰³

The castle at Adare was headquarters for the Earl of Ormond. On 11 March 1580, William Pelham, who had become Lord Justice in October 1579, went from Limerick to Rathkeale to confer with Ormond. They were informed that the Earl of Desmond had gathered forces. The day after the meeting in Rathkeale, Ormond and the Lord Justice crossed over the bridge in Adare, razing the countryside as they progressed. They mended the bridge that had been destroyed in the rebellion. The following day they divided the forces and invaded Connello and burnt and spoiled the countryside.²⁰⁴ The castle at Askeaton, the last Desmond stronghold to hold out, surrendered in April 1580. Shortly afterwards, Pelham visited the ward at Adare. He travelled from Limerick by water while a land force was led by Captain Case. Food was in short supply and, after searching the woods, they allegedly took 'a prize of one thousand and two hundred kine, and very good store of sheep, besides the slaughter of many traitors'.²⁰⁵ On another occasion in April 1580, 200 infantry and 50 cavalry were ambushed, in the woods by the Maigue, by 200 rebels and 20 cavalry with muskets. The rebels were defeated and about 60 of them killed. Captain Walker, with the ward of Adare which comprised 300 men, was met about a mile from Adare by the Earl of Desmond with 80 horses and 600 infantry. The Earl and his troops were forced to retreat, with the loss of 60 men and five horses.²⁰⁶ A report that the garrisons planted in Adare and elsewhere were a success, dated 24 April 1580,²⁰⁷ may explain why Ormond 'dislodged' from Adare about that time.²⁰⁸ On 25 June 1580 it was recommended that 'convenient portions of victuals' should be sent to Adare and other garrisons because Pelham was unable to follow the enemy for want of victuals.²⁰⁹

In September 1580, a force of 600 Spanish and Italian troops landed at Smerwick, Co. Kerry. Their garrison was massacred on 10 November and Pelham disbanded most of the army in Munster. The reduced number of military personnel was taken advantage of by Thomas FitzMaurice, who was Baron Lixnaw and Lord Kerry. He allegedly seized the castle of Adare, and put Captain Achin, who was in charge of the first horsemen of Munster, and his garrison to the sword. A few escaped, hiding in the abbey while FitzMaurice 'recovered the fortress'.²¹⁰ FitzMaurice's stay at Adare was short-lived and when word of the siege reached the governor of Munster, Colonel Zouch, he marched to Adare which he found to be abandoned. Zouch followed the Baron of Lixnaw to Lisconnel Wood from where FitzMaurice and his men fled.²¹¹ The English continued to pursue Lixnaw who was defeated by Captain Dowdall near Glenflesk. Dowdall allegedly returned

²⁰³ Spenser, (F.Q., Bk. v, ii, 27).

²⁰⁴ *Holinshed*, pp 429-30; Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, pp 362-63; Ferrar, *Limerick*, p. 28.

²⁰⁵ AFM 1581; Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 364; *Holinshed*, pp 431-2.

²⁰⁶ *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, ii, p. 248.

²⁰⁷ *CSPI, 1574-85*, p. 219.

²⁰⁸ Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 365.

²⁰⁹ *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, ii, p. 265.

²¹⁰ Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 368; *Holinshed*, pp 447-8. According to Ferrar, *Limerick*, pp 430-1, it was Colonel Zouch who disbanded the army.

²¹¹ *Holinshed* and Cox insert the story of the girl being thrown from the castle at Adnagh at this point. There is a suggestion that it is a common ruse. Captain Achin was said to kill one-hundred-and-fifty women and children. See also AFM.

to Adare where he left a garrison before he returned to Cork. The Earl of Desmond appeared again near Adare and skirmished with the English who had many casualties. The English recovered the Abbey of Adare from Desmond's forces with difficulty and left a garrison there.²¹²

The Provost-Marshal of Munster, Sir Warham St Leger, showed some social awareness when he wrote to Queen Elizabeth in 1582, decrying the policy of wasting the countryside. He referred to the 'starving numbers of poor innocent people, being already dead by famine in this province not so few as 30,000 at the least within less than this half-year'.²¹³ The war dragged on until the death of the Earl of Desmond in 1583. It is recorded that soon afterwards John Carrach Burke of Clanrickard, despite being under the protection of the crown, in attempting to take Adare and plunder the countryside, was shot dead by a boy from the castle.²¹⁴

A plan to survey and plant confiscated Munster land was put forward by the vice-treasurer, Henry Wallop whose grant in 1584 included a lease of three abbeys and a friary at Adare. Despite being a senior official he nevertheless failed to procure a seignory in the formal plantation in Munster which he so strongly advocated.²¹⁵ The plantation did not affect the manor of Adare which remained in the hands of Gerald fitzGerald, the eleventh Earl of Kildare until his death in 1585. Following the Desmond Wars, Adare was described by William Camden, who lived between 1551 and 1623, as 'a little towne in old time fortified'. It suggests that the town defences were in ruin.²¹⁶ No reference is made to the castle which is presumably relatively intact.

The Nine Years War

In 1585 Gerald fitzGerald was succeeded by his son, Henry na dTuagh (Henry of the axes), who became the twelfth Earl of Kildare. Unlike the FitzGerald of Desmond whose estates were forfeited to the crown following the Desmond Wars, Henry's sympathies lay with the crown. He died in Drogheda in 1197, however, as a result of wounds or fever.²¹⁷ Henry was succeeded by his brother William.

The victory of Aodh ua Néill – Hugh O'Neill – over the English at the battle of the Yellow Ford in August 1598 gave the dispossessed Irish and the old-Norman families hope of recovering their ancestral lands. James fitzThomas of Desmond realized that he had no future under Elizabeth I and gave his support to the northern rebellion. O'Neill duly recognized FitzThomas as Earl of Desmond.²¹⁸ William, the thirteenth Earl of Kildare, went to England in the Spring of 1598 and drowned the following Spring when returning to Ireland to support the crown against the Irish rebels.²¹⁹ His first-cousin Gerald fitzEdward, whose father, a brother of both Silken Thomas and Gerald, the eleventh Earl of Kildare, was a courtier and an M.P., was his successor and became the fourteenth Earl of Kildare.²²⁰

²¹² Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 368; *Holinshed*, pp 447-8; Ferrar, *Limerick*, pp 430-1. The suggestion has been made by Dunraven in *Memorials of Adare*, pages 114-5, that the events associated with the Baron of Lixnaw may relate to Ardferth rather than Adare.

²¹³ *CSPI, 1574-85*, lxxxv.

²¹⁴ Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*; *Holinshed*, p.454; AFM.

²¹⁵ *CSPI, 1574-85*, pp 42-50, 50-70, 125-47, 210-43, 252-76, 276-92, 292-7; *CSPI, 1588-1592*, pp 372-82; N. Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (Oxford, 2001) pp 108, 110.

²¹⁶ Camden.

²¹⁷ AFM; FitzGerald, *Earls of Kildare*, p. 225.

²¹⁸ P. Walsh (ed.), *Beatha Aodha Ruaidh Uí Dhomhnaill, as Leabhar Lughaidh Uí Chlérigh* (Dublin, 1948) pp 188-9.

²¹⁹ AFM; Fitzgerald, *Earls of Kildare and their ancestors*, pp 227-8.

²²⁰ AFM; Fitzgerald, *Earls of Kildare and their ancestors*, p. 228.

In October 1598, the Irish army marched through Limerick, burning towns and taking prey; they camped in Fanningstown, in the parish of Adare. The following night they camped in Adare after which William Farmer, a surgeon with the English troops, complained that he was robbed of more than £400 worth of plate, carne and cattle.²²¹ According to an obscure document, dated 30 October, 'Mr. Marshal's castles' at Adare and at Bruff were among the castles taken'.²²²

On 15 April 1599 Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, arrived in Dublin with over 17,000 troops.²²³ The initial strategy to attack the north was soon reconsidered and Essex garrisoned the pale before he directed his attention towards Munster. His campaign brought him to Adare in June 1599 where his army and that of the Earl of Ormond camped on the banks of the Maigue. James fitzThomas fitzGerald of Desmond, accompanied by between 2000 and 3000 men, retaliated, setting about dismantling the bridge at Adare. Essex described Adare as 'a town of the Earl of Kildare's, in the midst of woods and bogs'. The Earl of Desmond did not succeed in preventing Essex and his troops from crossing the bridge.²²⁴ Essex led infantry across the bridge from the castle and billeted them in the abbey in order to guard the bridge overnight. The following day they advanced through Rower Bog, in the parish of Adare, and came face to face with the forces of James fitzThomas, the Súgán Earl of Desmond. Essex's men were cut off in a narrow pass. According to Irish sources a great number of them were slain; English State Papers, in contrast, account for six of Essex's men being killed and twenty wounded, compared to a hundred deaths on the side of the rebels. The English suffered further casualties the next day at Finniterstown, which, although in the parish of Adare, is in the barony of Connello Upper. Sir Henry Norris was wounded and had his leg amputated by the above-mentioned surgeon, William Farmer, but died shortly afterwards. A few days later, Essex and Ormond parted company and the campaign in Munster was put on hold.²²⁵ Following the appointment of Sir George Carew as President of Munster on 6 March 1600, the Earls of Kildare, Ormonde and Thomond were appointed to his Council. Disquiet was ongoing. It is written at the end of June 1600 that Carew sent Maurice Stacke with 50 men to Kerry where he surprised Liscahane Castle, burnt Adare and 'preyed the Country, and preserved himself safe till Sir Charles Wilmot came to his relief'.²²⁶

In July 1600, the 'abbey of Adare' where Mr. George Thornton had thirty gunmen, munition and victual, was forsaken when the men fled from the rebels.²²⁷ On May 15th 1600 it was reported that Pierce Lacy had burnt the castle and town of Bruff.²²⁸ An account written by the President of Munster, George Carew, to the Privy Council, dated 18 July 1600, describes how he was forced on one occasion to go to Cork for want of provisions. He marched through Glin, Foynes and Askeaton and passed Adare on 14 July 1600. Adare, described as a manor house of the Countess of Kildare, was 'wholly ruined' by Piers Lacy. Despite its condition, Carew lodged there.²²⁹ The plantation of Munster halted and many of the planters fled to England.

²²¹ William Farmer, 'Chronicles of Ireland 1594-1613', ed. C.L. Falkiner in *The English Historical Review*, 22/85 (1907) p. 110.

²²² *CSPI 1598, Jan.—1599*, p. 330.

²²³ *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, v, pp 314-16.

²²⁴ *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, iii, p. 304.

²²⁵ AFM; H. Wood (ed.), *The Chronicle of Ireland 1584-1608 by James Perrott* (Dublin, 1933) pp 165-7; *Ireland under Elizabeth*, Don Philip O'Sullivan Bear, *Chapters towards a History of Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth*, ed., M.J. Byrne (Dublin, 1903) pp 124-6.

²²⁶ *CSPI, 1600 ix*. Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 429.

²²⁷ *CSPI, 1600*, p. 325; AFM.

²²⁸ *CSPI, 1600*, p. 186.

²²⁹ *CSPI, 1600 ix*, p. 413; See also S. O'Grady, *Pacata Hibernia*, vol. i (London, 1896) p. 97; *CSPI 1600*, p. 319.

When Gerald fitzEdward fitzGerald, who was born and reared in England, became the fourteenth Earl of Kildare, the widows of two earls survived. The dower of Mabel Browne, the widow of the eleventh Earl, who lived until 1610, comprised Maynooth and Graney, Mabel had a grand-daughter Lettice who brought a legal case against Mabel and the fourteenth earl, accusing Mabel of having altered the will of her husband Gerald and thereby depriving Lettice of her grandfather's inheritance. The court found some anomalies after which an agreement was made allowing Lettice to become Baroness of Offaly. Frances Howard, the widow of Henry na dTuath, lived until 1628.²³⁰ From the time of Gerald's accession to the earldom in 1599, the dowers, jointures and settlements of these women were seriously depleting the income of the fourteenth earl whose wife had no dower. It is likely that the castle at Adare, described as a manor house of the Countess of Kildare in 1600, was possibly part of the dower of Frances Howard, widow of Henry na dTuath.

On 11 July 1600 George Carew commented that the garrisons at Askeaton and Kilmallock had made a good start, 'having left nothing unspoilt and unburnt that was within our reach. Scarcity already beginneth, and when famine shall succeed there is no mean for the rebel long to subsist'.²³¹ The conditions would have been similar in the vicinity of Adare. In the meantime, on 20 July Carew expressed the hope that, by September, James fitzThomas fitzGerald of Desmond and Piers Lacy would become no better than wood-kerns.²³² On 17 September 1600 Carew wrote to Sir Robert Cecil saying that he had lately moved the garrison from Askeaton to Adare. Its commander, the Lord of Thomond, had now joined with the forces of Kilmallock with the purpose of hunting down the Súgán Earl of Desmond. Three times that month James fitzThomas had fled with heavy casualties.²³³ Carew's hopes were soon realized and, by October, James fitzThomas was banished into Laois with Piers Lacy. FitzThomas' son and eighty of his best men had been killed and Crown interests in Connello were reported to be prospering.²³⁴ An uncorroborated record states that the garrison of Adare Castle suffered greatly in 1600 when the castle was put under siege. The soldiers were without food for many days and got a supply of water by excavating a subterranean passage to the bed of the river.²³⁵ The Nine Years War ended on 30 March 1603 when Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, submitted to Mountjoy and a warrant of pardon was sent to him. On 4 September 1607 Hugh O'Neill and Hugh O'Donnell sailed to the Continent from Lough Swilly.

Gerald fitzEdward fitzGerald, the Earl of Kildare, played no significant role in the Nine Years War. Following his death in February 1612 he was succeeded by his infant son, Gerald who died in 1620. His first cousin George, the sixteenth Earl of Kildare who was aged 8, succeeded him. George's inheritance was on the verge of bankruptcy following a series of minorities and encroachments from local speculators that encumbered it. George became the ward of Richard Boyle, 1st Earl of Cork whose daughter he married. In December 1629 Boyle, meanwhile, gave the stewardship of Adare and other Limerick lands to William Creagh.²³⁶ A difference of opinion between George and Richard Boyle after he came of age in 1633 was settled by the intervention of the lord deputy, Went-

²³⁰ Fitzgerald, *Earls of Kildare*, pp 216, 225, 231, 232.

²³¹ *CSP1, 1600*, p. 319.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 324.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 435.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 453.

²³⁵ Lewis, *Topographical Directory of Ireland*, i, p. 9; Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*, pp 119-20.

²³⁶ NLI MS 18,999 (Lismore Castle Papers).

worth, after whom George called his second son Wentworth.²³⁷ In 1640 George took a seat in the House of Lords as he had done in 1634, and with the outbreak of the 1641 rebellion, he became governor of Kildare, remaining loyal to the protestant cause.²³⁸

The Cromwellian War

The period between 1641 and 1653 was one of civil, political and economic upheaval that began in a revolt aimed at reclaiming lands confiscated for the Ulster Plantation after the Nine Years War. It coincided with civil war in England between royalists and parliamentarians. The rebellion in Ireland, which began in October 1641, spread. Many of the rebels took up the royalist cause while others remained neutral. In December 1641 St Leger, President of Munster, began to suppress the insurrection in Tipperary. When the Association of the Confederate Catholics of Ireland was founded in Kilkenny in 1642, George Fitzgerald, a Protestant, did not support moves to improve the situation of Irish Catholics. In Limerick, most of the castles of those who supported the Parliamentarians against Charles I were captured by the confederate rebels. Adare Castle experienced several sieges during this period, when it was taken by Lord Castlehaven, who supported the Confederates, and retaken by Cromwell's son-in-law, General Ireton.²³⁹

In Spring 1642 Major-General Purcell was in charge of the Confederates at Adare who may have already laid siege to the castle.²⁴⁰ In June the Confederates captured King John's Castle in Limerick, an event that bolstered their support in Munster. The Irish rebels sequestered the castle's brass demi-canon, a brass saker and an iron saker which were transported by river to Adare. The guns were to be brought on a forthcoming expedition to reclaim territory that had recently been taken by Parliamentary forces in Cork. The artillery, stored in Adare, was most likely kept in the castle for protection. The objective to gain control of castles in County Cork failed and the Adare guns were taken by Parliamentary forces.²⁴¹ In contrast, the castles in Limerick such as Croom, Kilfinny, Rathkeale, Lough Gur, Askeaton and Newcastle, in addition to that in Adare, were captured without resistance.²⁴² It has been written that Adare Castle endured several sieges during the Confederate wars, when it was taken by James Touchet (Lord Castlehaven) on behalf of the confederates. This information is omitted, however, from Touchet's memoirs.²⁴³

In January 1646 George, the sixteenth Earl of Kildare, stood bail for the royalist agent the Marquis of Glamorgan and in 1647 he acted as governor of Dublin under the Parliamentarian colonel Michael Jones, after which he received a weekly pension of 46s. from the government in 1649. George subsequently complained to the chief justice of Munster that 'he and his family had been driven to great extremities and endured much hardship in England and Ireland through his constant adherence and faithful affection to the parliament of England. He had dispatched his wife and some of his servants to Ireland in

²³⁷ Fitzgerald, *Earls of Kildare*, pp 243-4.

²³⁸ A.B. Grosart (ed.), *Lismore Papers* (1886) vol. 4, pp 267-8.

²³⁹ J. Begley, *The Diocese of Limerick in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Dublin, 1927) p. 219; Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*, p. 120.

²⁴⁰ TCD, 1641 Deposition Project, f.372r-373r (online); T.J. Westropp, 'The Principal Ancient Castles of the County Limerick, Part II, The Tudor Period', *JRSAI*, vol xvii (1907) p. 162.

²⁴¹ TCD MS 840, f. 105r-105v; Gilbert, *Chartularies of St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, i, pp 92-4; K. Wiggins, *Anatomy of a Siege, King John's Castle Limerick* (Bray, 2000) pp 225-7.

²⁴² TCD MS 840, ff.103r- 104r; TCD MS 829, ff.138r-138v, 254r-254v; Wiggins, *Anatomy of a siege*, pp 225, 227, 280; Begley, *Diocese of Limerick in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, p. 219.

²⁴³ Begley, *Diocese of Limerick in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, p. 219; Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*, p. 120; Adare is not mentioned in J. Touchet (ed.), *Memoirs of James Lord Audley Earl of Castlehaven, his engagements and carriage in the wars of Ireland from the year 1642 to 1651* (London, 1820).

hopes to raise a considerable sum out of his estate for his enlargement and subsistence.²⁴⁴ The castle in Adare was subsequently retaken by General Ireton, Cromwell's son in law. According to local tradition, a portion of the walls now wholly ruined at the south-eastern angle of the river front, was destroyed during a siege at this period, by cannon placed on the opposite hill.²⁴⁵

The Restoration of Charles II - The Act of Settlement

After defeating the Confederates and their royalist allies, the parliament passed *the Act of Settlement* in September 1653, a decree that enabled the enforcement of a policy of mass confiscation of land from Irish Catholics as punishment for the rebellion and to pay for the war. The Earl of Kildare's lands were not sequestered since the Earl was Protestant. Notwithstanding, a garrison was placed at Adare.²⁴⁶

The rent-roll of the Earl of Kildare's estate indicates, that, on March 3 1656, the manors of Croom and Adare were leased to Sir Percy Smith and others at an annual rent of £321, but were worth much more.²⁴⁷ When the Civil Survey was compiled in the middle of the seventeenth century George, the sixteenth Earl of Kildare, was the proprietor of the manor, castle, bawne and plowland of the 'Castle of Athdare'. He is described as having 'English interest'.²⁴⁸ The 'burgesse plowland' lying to the east of the bridge, together with nineteen tenements and gardens, a salmon weir mearing with the River of Maige, and four other burgage plots to the west of the bridge, were held by Piers Creagh fitzPiers of Limerick, Alderman and Irish Papist.²⁴⁹ These are the burgage plots that helped identify Cenél Eirc as the dynastic group in which territory Desmond Castle was built.²⁵⁰

The occurrence of red brick in an oven at Adare Castle, excavated by Laurence Dunne, is evidence that the Castle was in use in the mid seventeenth century at the time the Cromwellian garrison was placed there.²⁵¹ A late unsupported reference regarding the castle says that it was dismantled by the parliamentary forces, by order of the Lord Proctor, Oliver Cromwell, in 1657.²⁵² According to tradition, 'the portion of the walls, now wholly ruined, at the south-eastern angle of the river front, was destroyed during a siege of that period, by cannon placed on the opposite hill'.²⁵³

Following George's death in 1660, his son Wentworth, born in 1634, became the seventeenth Earl of Kildare, a position he held until 1664. Wentworth was succeeded by his son John who lived until 1707. His cousin Robert became the eighteenth Earl of Kildare.²⁵⁴ Meanwhile, Thady Quin (1645-1725), a lawyer who successfully navigated the Jacobite-Williamite wars of the late-seventeenth century, bought land near Adare in 1675. In 1678 he leased 1000 acres of forfeited land that had been granted to the Ormsby family.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁴ FitzGerald, *Earls of Kildare*, p. 246.

²⁴⁵ Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*, p. 120.

²⁴⁶ Begley, *Diocese of Limerick in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, p. 233.

²⁴⁷ Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*, p. 146.

²⁴⁸ Simington, *Civil Survey, Limerick*, p. 142.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

²⁵⁰ Nicholls, 'Some Placenames from the Red Book of the Earls of Kildare', p. 25; Mac Niocaill, *Red book of Earls of Kildare*, p. 123.

²⁵¹ L. Dunne, summary report 2002: 1072, online at excavations.ie.

²⁵² Lewis, *Topographical Directory of Ireland*, vol. i, p. 9; *Saturday Magazine*, No. 510, June 13th 1840, p. 226; Adams, *Castles of Ireland*, p. 6.

²⁵³ Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*, p. 120.

²⁵⁴ FitzGerald, *Earls of Kildare*, pp 251-66.

²⁵⁵ Introduction to University of Limerick *Summary List*, MSS D/3196, 2; MSS D/3196/A/2/1-7.

Ada
On 2
sterli
the e

A cor
Adar
indet
to se
estate
cated
Acco
mone
since
mano
from
decea
and l
Adare

256 Univ
Dunr
257 FitzG
258 Intro

Adare – the departure of the Earls of Kildare

On 26 April 1683 Thady Quin obtained a half-yearly lease for three lives at £108.2s sterling per annum, made up of goods or lawful money of England. The lease, from John the eighteenth Earl of Kildare, was of a portion of his estate about Adare that included the:

Manor Mills of Adare and all the cabins, gardens, waste ground and old Bawn (Castle), Fair and markets in the town of Adare, together with all customs and tolls and other duties belonging to or which shall belong to the said Mills, Fairs and Markets except one house of tenement and garden for the bailiff and or Sergeant (situate) and lying and being in the town and fields and manor of Adare and Co. of Lymerik’.

A condition in the lease was that Thady Quin would build an inn in the English style in Adare.²⁵⁶ The rent was to be paid to the steward. Around 1692 Quin’s landlord John, the indebted eighteenth Earl of Kildare, obtained ‘a private Act of Parliament’, enabling him to sell his estates in Co. Limerick. The 1st Duke of Richmond, into whose hands the estates fell, was one of the Earl’s principal creditors. Richmond’s affairs became complicated as he had borrowed money from Thady’s son, Valentine Quin, amongst others. According to his will, dated 19 March 1704, the Earl, John, left the future purchase-money of his Limerick estates to the Duke of Richmond, who succeeded to the estates since they had not been sold at the time of the Earl’s death in 1707.²⁵⁷ In 1721, the manorial lands, leased from the Earl of Kildare by Thady Quin in 1683, were bought from the trustees of the Richmond estate by Valentine Quin (1692-1744), son of the deceased Thady, who subsequently bought additional townlands of the estate in 1724 and 1726. Before 1721, his lease included a three-life lease of ‘the Castle ploughland of Adare’.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ University of Limerick MSS D/3196/K/3/4; Introduction to University of Limerick, MSS D/3196 *Summary List*, 2; Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor*, p. 146.

²⁵⁷ FitzGerald, *Earls of Kildare*, p. 267.

²⁵⁸ Introduction to University of Limerick *Summary List*, MSS D/3196, 5.