

# IRISH HISTORICAL STUDIES

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Vol. XXXIII No. 129

May 2002

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## Edward II and Ireland (in fact and in fiction)

One of the most familiar facts in the history of the medieval lordship of Ireland is that, despite plans by Henry III in 1243 and by Edward III in 1331–2, no king of England came to Ireland between the expedition of King John in 1210 and those of Richard II in 1394–5 and 1399. I am not about to subvert the historical record by revealing a previously unknown royal visit to Ireland, but there is, as I shall try to demonstrate, enough evidence, some of it very strange indeed, to justify the title of this article. The unknown author of the prophecy entitled the *Verses of Gildas*, who was *apparently* writing in the middle of the reign of Edward II,<sup>1</sup> forecast that in 1320 the king of England would come to Ireland after the passing of a certain grave crisis. Once in Ireland, he would bring about peace between the English and the Irish, who would live together in harmony under one English law. The English would demolish the walls of their fortifications, while the Irish would cut down the woodlands which served as their defences.<sup>2</sup> On a charitable interpretation, one might find a parallel between these predictions and the letter written to Edward II by Pope John XXII in May 1318, in which the pope asked the king to give his attention to the grievances of the Irish:<sup>3</sup> these grievances had been expressed at length in the famous Irish Remonstrance, which had probably been composed towards the end of 1317 and had recently been received in Avignon.<sup>4</sup> One might also seek a parallel in the petitions addressed to Edward II by some of his English subjects in

<sup>1</sup>B.L., Arundel MS 57, ff 4v–5v. I use the word *apparently* because prophetic writings of this kind were commonly adapted to fit the circumstances of different reigns. The discussion which follows is based on my paper ‘Edward II and the prophets’ in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *England in the fourteenth century: proceedings of the 1985 Harlaxton Symposium* (Woodbridge, 1986), esp. pp 194–5.

<sup>2</sup>Expressions like this may provide a clue to the origin of the much-debated Hiberno-English term *culchie*, one of whose possible derivations is the Irish *coill-teach*, ‘a wooded place’: see T. P. Dolan, *A dictionary of Hiberno-English* (Dublin, 1998), p. 83.

<sup>3</sup>Cal. papal letters, 1305–42, p. 440; Augustine Theiner (ed.), *Vetera monumenta Hibernorum et Scotorum* (Rome, 1864), pp 201–2.

<sup>4</sup>For a discussion of the date and circumstances of composition of the Remonstrance see J. R. S. Phillips, ‘The Irish Remonstrance of 1317: an international perspective’ in *I.H.S.*, xxvii, no. 106 (Nov. 1990), pp 125–9.

Ireland at a date between 1317 and 1319, in which it was suggested firmly that the existence of more than one legal system in Ireland was contributing towards increased disorder and that all those who were loyal to the crown, whether they were English or Irish, should come within the bounds of the English common law.<sup>5</sup> One might then turn to the next prediction in the *Verses of Gildas*: that, having settled Ireland in peace, Edward II would invade Scotland in the company of the English, the Irish and the Welsh. Exercising further charity, this might seem to be a reference to the use of Irish troops in the Anglo-Scottish wars, as had been done in the past and as occurred again in 1322. However, as the *Verses of Gildas* unfold, charity is soon overwhelmed by a series of fantasies of the most absurd and improbable kind. Having invaded Scotland, Edward II would put to flight a certain rebel named Robert who would then spend the rest of his life as a wanderer. Edward would conquer France and Egypt and regain the Holy Land, after which the pope would three times offer him the crown of the world, which in the end he would graciously accept. Edward's career would then culminate in the defeat of the emperor of Constantinople, the conquest of the world, the subjection of the pope and cardinals, who would be forced to live by the apostolic rule, and the abolition of the very name of pope. Sadly, Edward's real-life career was to end in 1327 in the ignominy of deposition and imprisonment in Berkeley castle near Bristol. He almost certainly met his death there, and, if he did escape, it was only to the life of a wanderer which the *Verses of Gildas* had so confidently forecast for his old enemy, Robert Bruce of Scotland.

In reality Edward II never had any direct personal contact with Ireland. The author of the *Verses of Gildas* evidently hoped he would come to Ireland; in 1323 he was urged to come to Ireland by the members of his Irish council, in case of a landing by Roger Mortimer of Wigmore;<sup>6</sup> he tried unsuccessfully to come in 1326 when fleeing from his enemies;<sup>7</sup> and when he did finally arrive, it was only in fiction, as we shall see later.<sup>8</sup> Two of the closest of Edward II's encounters with things Irish would have been in 1309, when his favourite Piers Gaveston returned to England after a short period of exile as king's lieutenant in Ireland and could tell him tales of campaigning against the Irish of the Wicklow mountains,<sup>9</sup> and again in 1310, when a certain 'Brother Malachy of Ireland', who had studied theology at Oxford, preached before Edward and his court and excoriated them for their sins.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup>G. O. Sayles (ed.), *Documents on the affairs of Ireland before the king's council* (Dublin, 1979), nos 136, 137.

<sup>6</sup>Robin Frame, *English lordship in Ireland, 1318–1361* (Oxford, 1982), p. 167.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp 138–9.

<sup>8</sup>See G. P. Cuttino and Thomas P. Lynam, 'Where is Edward II?' in *Speculum*, liii (1978), pp 522–44.

<sup>9</sup>J. S. Hamilton, *Piers Gaveston, earl of Cornwall, 1307–1312* (Detroit & London, 1988), pp 58–61.

<sup>10</sup>Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum* (25 vols, Rome, 1733–1886), vi, 176. Malachy is not any further identified but may be Malachy of Limerick, the probable author of a famous treatise, *De veneno*, on the seven deadly sins: see E. B. Fitzmaurice and A. G. Little (eds), *Materials for the history of the Franciscan province of Ireland, A.D. 1230–1450* (Manchester, 1920), pp 54–8.

I shall come back to Edward II in a moment, but first I want to make some general remarks on the nature of the authority which Edward II and other medieval English kings exercised in Ireland. Professor Rees Davies has commented that to describe medieval Ireland as either lordship or colony is ‘a false alternative’ which ‘belongs to that category of *questions mal posées* with which our history books are strewn. Men could speak the language of “lordship” and of “colony”, with all the assumptions and attitudes implied in them, almost in the same breath.’<sup>11</sup> I would argue that another *question mal posée* is to talk about the results of the Anglo-Norman intervention in medieval Ireland as an ‘incomplete’ or a ‘failed’ conquest. Now it is obviously the case that many parts of Ireland did not experience control by Anglo-Norman lords or settlement by an English colonial population (we can, of course, argue over the exact proportion of Ireland which was not controlled or influenced in this way).<sup>12</sup> It is also obviously the case that the system of English royal government, which had first been established in Ireland during the reign of Henry II, did not operate effectively, or at all, in much of Ireland. This, it is argued, clearly indicates an ‘incomplete’ or a ‘failed’ conquest.

My objection here is not to the term ‘conquest’, for conquest there most certainly was, but rather to the notions of incompleteness and failure, which assume that a ‘complete’ conquest of Ireland was ever sought after or was even likely. The appropriate comparison, I think, is with Wales, which was conquered piecemeal by Normans and Anglo-Normans in the generations after 1066: the result was the Welsh March, a collection of lordships whose extent varied according to the enterprise and aggression of individual lords and the enterprise and aggression of their Welsh opponents. The main interest of the English crown was to ensure that the native Welsh rulers did not get out of control and, when they did so, to mount a military expedition to bring them to heel once more: the campaigns by Henry II in 1157 and 1164 and by Henry III in 1245 are good examples. Never was there any suggestion either that all the lords of the March should band together or that the crown itself should attempt to achieve a systematic conquest of all the areas remaining under Welsh control.<sup>13</sup> Such a course of action was often beyond the military and financial resources available to the crown. But it was also, and more fundamentally, an unnecessary course of action. To quote Rees Davies again, ‘the language of lordship was familiar to those who thought in terms of domination and subjection, of a feudal nexus and a personal relationship’.<sup>14</sup> Provided that the king of England’s lordship was recognised and

<sup>11</sup>R. R. Davies, ‘Lordship or colony?’ in James Lydon (ed.), *The English in medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1984), p. 157.

<sup>12</sup>My colleague Dr Howard Clarke has some interesting thoughts on this problem in his paper ‘Decolonization and the dynamics of urban decline in Ireland, 1300–1550’ in T. R. Slater (ed.), *Towns in decline, A.D. 100–1600* (Aldershot, 2000), pp 157–92.

<sup>13</sup>The only obvious exceptions to this generalisation are the well-known recommendations of Giraldus Cambrensis on how to conquer the Welsh and his suggestion that all the Welsh should be removed from Wales to other countries and the land turned over to forest: see Davies, ‘Lordship or colony?’, p. 150.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

observed in practice by Welsh rulers such as Owain Gwynedd and Rhys ap Gruffudd (whose own exercise of lordship was acknowledged in the title by which he was commonly known, *yr Arglwydd Rhys*, ‘the Lord Rhys’) in the twelfth century, or Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in the thirteenth, there was no need or desire for the king of England to go further. The English royal intervention which produced the actual conquest of Wales in 1277 and in 1282–3 came about in the end partly because the Welsh, in the persons of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and his brother Dafydd, were no longer prepared to play by the old rules. The risk, from an English point of view, of an independent and centrally governed Welsh principality on England’s western flank was becoming too great.<sup>15</sup> For his part, Edward I bore a considerable degree of responsibility for provoking the Welsh by demanding a greater practical recognition of his lordship than in the past: ‘the intensification of lordship’, as it has been called.<sup>16</sup> However, it is not clear whether, even in 1282–3, Edward I really wanted an outright conquest of Wales,<sup>17</sup> with the associated costs of establishing a permanent system of government and building and garrisoning massive fortifications to resist any future Welsh revolt. In other words, the English conquest of Wales came about as a last resort, when ‘the language of lordship’ was still being used but was no longer understood as it had been in the past.

It is possible to apply some of these conclusions to the relations between the English crown and medieval Ireland. Perhaps there was a time at which the king of England thought seriously of a thoroughgoing conquest of Ireland along the lines of the Norman conquest of England long before. But if there was such a time, it is not obvious. If an Irish ruler, such as an O’Connor in Connacht or a MacMurrough in Leinster, had appeared with the power and prestige of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in Wales,<sup>18</sup> or if any of the attempts to revive the high-kingship from the 1250s onwards had been successful, or if a member of the Anglo-Norman nobility had attempted to overthrow royal authority in Ireland, then *perhaps* a king of England would have conducted a serious war of conquest in Ireland.<sup>19</sup> English lordship, pro-

<sup>15</sup>For the move towards a more centralised government in independent Wales on the eve of the conquest see David Stephenson, *The governance of Gwynedd* (Cardiff, 1984); J. Beverley Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd: prince of Wales* (Cardiff, 1998).

<sup>16</sup>See R. R. Davies, *Domination and conquest: the experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, 1100–1300* (Cambridge, 1990), ch. 5.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Robin Frame, *The political development of the British Isles, 1100–1400* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1995), p. 143: ‘Yet there is little to suggest that Edward himself was dominated by imperial dreams, devoted to the construction of a unitary monarchy of the British Isles, or even irredeemably hostile to regional custom.’

<sup>18</sup>Cf. James Lydon, ‘Lordship and crown’ in R. R. Davies (ed.), *The British Isles, 1100–1500: comparisons, contrasts and connexions* (Edinburgh, 1988).

<sup>19</sup>This is assuming that the material resources were available and that other political or military distractions did not get in the way of such a war of conquest — all of them big assumptions. Edward I’s conquest of Wales between 1277 and 1283 was made possible by the fact that, for once, England was at peace both internally and with all its other neighbours; and also because, again most unusually, adequate financial resources existed in the form of grants of taxation by the English parliament and of loans from Italian bankers. It is not an exaggeration to say that Wales was

vided that it had adequate recognition, remained a sufficient and sufficiently flexible basis for English rule in Ireland.<sup>20</sup>

When Edward II succeeded his father, Edward I, as king of England, lord of Ireland and duke of Aquitaine in July 1307, he also inherited a host of problems, some of which were to have a significant bearing either on the nature of royal policy towards Ireland or on the amount of time available for Irish affairs. Since 1296 England and Scotland had been engaged in a bitterly fought war, which was now beginning to turn slowly in favour of Scotland, following the accession of Robert Bruce as king of Scots in 1306. The war had also imposed serious strain on the English system of administration and had led to the accumulation of an enormous debt of about £200,000 sterling, and there were ominous signs that the pressures of royal taxation and administrative abuses would no longer be tolerated by some of the king's leading subjects.<sup>21</sup> The Anglo-Scottish war thus contributed to the political crises which marked most of the reign of Edward II. After 1307 the war was to go from bad to worse, with the Scots regularly raiding the northern counties of England, humiliating a large English army at Bannockburn in June 1314, and then invading Ireland in May of the following year.<sup>22</sup> However, no English king could accept that the war was unwinnable,<sup>23</sup> and

conquered as much by the newly developed systems of national taxation and international credit as it was by military means: see Richard W. Kaeuper, *Bankers to the crown: the Riccardi of Lucca and Edward I* (Princeton, 1973), esp. ch. 4; idem, 'The role of Italian financiers in the Edwardian conquest of Wales' in *Welsh Hist. Rev.*, vi (1972–3), pp. 387–403. Such favourable circumstances were never to recur.

<sup>20</sup>I am not alone in the view that the medieval English crown was not seeking a 'final conquest' of Ireland: see also Davies, *Domination & conquest*, pp. 111–12. Professor Robin Frame's papers 'The "failure" of the first English conquest of Ireland' and 'England and Ireland, 1171–1399' in his *Ireland and Britain, 1170–1450* (London, 1998) throw a great deal of light on the nature of English rule in medieval Ireland, but neither paper directly addresses what the ultimate intention of the English crown may have been.

<sup>21</sup>The political and administrative problems that arose during the reign of Edward I and were bequeathed to Edward II are very clearly analysed by Michael Prestwich in his *War, politics and finance under Edward I* (London, 1972).

<sup>22</sup>For the course of the Anglo-Scottish war from its beginning in 1296 see G. W. S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the community of the realm of Scotland* (3rd ed., Edinburgh, 1988), and Colm McNamee, *The wars of the Bruces: Scotland, England and Ireland, 1306–1328* (East Linton, 1997). The best narrative account of the war in Ireland, 1315–18, is now to be found in McNamee's book. The close relationship between Scotland and Ireland, which goes far to explain the Scottish intervention in Ireland in 1315, is fully explored in the very illuminating article by Seán Duffy, 'The Bruce brothers and the Irish Sea world, 1306–29' in *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, no. 21 (summer 1991), pp. 59–70. For an overall interpretation of the origins, course and significance of the Bruce invasion of Ireland see Robin Frame's revised version of his paper 'The Bruces in Ireland, 1315–1318' (first published in *I.H.S.*, xix, no. 73 (Mar. 1974), pp. 3–37) in his *Ireland & Britain, 1170–1450*.

<sup>23</sup>Indeed, a contemporary author, John of London, writing at the time of Edward I's death, thought the war had been won when he praised Edward for victories over all his enemies: 'Now, at the end of time, with great King Edward, we have borne a ten-year war with Philip, famous king of France; we have won back Gascony, taken by guile, with force of arms; we have got Wales by slaughter; we have invaded Scotland and cut down her tyrants at the point of the sword' (quoted in Beryl Smalley, *English friars and antiquity in the early fourteenth century* (Oxford, 1960), p. 9).

Scotland was to remain one of Edward II's preoccupations throughout his reign. Only in 1328 was an uneasy peace made between the young Edward III and Robert Bruce.

In 1307 another uneasy peace already existed, this time between England and France. From 1294 until 1299 the two kingdoms had fought one another to a military and financial standstill in Gascony and in the Low Countries. The treaty of Paris in 1303 formally ended the war but left many unresolved problems which were eventually to lead to a renewal of hostilities in 1324 and which also lay at the heart of the much greater Anglo-French war which began in the mid-1330s.<sup>24</sup> The 1303 treaty also committed the future Edward II to marry Isabella, daughter of Philip IV of France, the marriage finally taking place in January 1308. Throughout Edward II's reign the preservation of good relations with France was of the greatest importance, both for continued English control of territory in south-western France and also to ensure that the French would not offer assistance to England's enemies in Scotland. In return, England had to offer some comfort to France against its own enemies, most notably in the county of Flanders. It was no accident that in March 1315, two months before Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland, the Scots were busy loading thirteen large ships with cargoes of arms and food at a Flemish port, or that the Flemish pirate John Crabbe harassed English shipping in the North Sea.<sup>25</sup> Flemish sympathy for the Scots was not new in 1315, but had probably been given added impetus by Edward II's promise during a state visit to Paris in 1313 that he would not help Flanders against France.<sup>26</sup> Towards the end of the reign England's relations with France deteriorated once again: in 1324–5 the two countries fought another war in Gascony; France became a haven for Edward II's enemies, especially Roger Mortimer and Edward's estranged wife, Isabella; and the final disasters of the reign swiftly followed.

Like other English kings before him, Edward II did, however, have at least one important ally, in the form of the papacy. Although often critical of particular royal policies, the papacy could usually be relied upon to come to the

<sup>24</sup>The best examinations of relations between England and France in this period are Malcolm Vale, *The Angevin legacy and the Hundred Years War, 1250–1340* (Oxford, 1990), and Elizabeth Lalou, 'Les négociations diplomatiques avec l'Angleterre sous le règne de Philippe le Bel' in *La 'France Anglaise' au moyen âge: colloque des historiens médiévistes français et britanniques, actes du III<sup>e</sup> congrès national des sociétés savantes* (Poitiers, 1986), Section d'histoire médiévale et de philologie, i (1988), pp 325–55.

<sup>25</sup>J. R. S. Phillips, 'The mission of John de Hothum to Ireland, 1315–1316' in James Lydon (ed.), *England and Ireland in the later middle ages* (Dublin, 1981), pp 62, 67. For a general view of the war at sea see McNamee, *Wars of the Bruces*, chs 5–6.

<sup>26</sup>Stephanus Baluzius (Étienne Baluze), *Vitae paparum Avenionensium*, ed. Guillaume Mollat (4 vols, Paris, 1914–27), i, 21–2. For a full examination of this very important episode in Anglo-French relations see Elizabeth A. R. Brown and Nancy Freeman Regalado, 'La grant feste: Philip the Fair's celebration of the knighting of his sons in Paris at Pentecost of 1313' in Barbara A. Hanawalt and Kathryn L. Reyerson (eds), *City and spectacle in medieval Europe* (Medieval Studies at Minnesota 6, Minneapolis & London, 1994), pp 56–86.

aid of the monarchy at moments of domestic crisis.<sup>27</sup> In 1309 Clement V annulled the sentence of exile imposed on Piers Gaveston; and on several occasions during the reign of Edward II papal envoys visited England to mediate between the king and his political opponents. Edward could rely on the papacy for particular support against the Scots, whose king Robert Bruce had been excommunicated for the murder of his rival John Comyn in 1306. This meant, for example, that when a new pope, John XXII, was elected in August 1316, Edward II could appeal confidently to him for assistance.<sup>28</sup> In April 1317 the pope issued bulls ordering the Scots to observe a truce in their war with England, until the arrival of two papal envoys<sup>29</sup> in England to negotiate a permanent settlement. The papal orders applied equally to the Scottish campaigning in the north of England and in Ireland.<sup>30</sup> Predictably, Robert Bruce took no notice, and refused even to take delivery of the bulls, on the grounds that the pope did not give him his rightful title of king.<sup>31</sup> This, of course, was the very period when the Irish Remonstrance was being composed and transmitted to Avignon. It is hardly surprising that the Remonstrance, with its litany of justifiable complaints against English rule in Ireland, made so little impact at Avignon or that John XXII's admonishment of Edward II amounted to little more than a gentle slap on the wrist.<sup>32</sup> In return for papal support, Edward's own envoys had promised at a meeting in Avignon in April 1317 that Edward would pay an annual tribute of 1,000 marks for England and Ireland.<sup>33</sup> This tribute (divided between 700 marks for England and 300 marks for Ireland) had first been promised by King John in 1213 as part of the solution to his dispute with Pope Innocent III,<sup>34</sup> but since then had frequently fallen into arrears: by 1317 these amounted to £16,000 (24,000 marks). Edward's envoys paid the trib-

<sup>27</sup> As Innocent III had done in 1215 after King John was forced to give his approval of Magna Carta.

<sup>28</sup> John XXII was personally less favourable to Edward II than his predecessor Clement V, who had a particularly close relationship with the English monarchy, but his overriding interest in preserving the peace of Christendom so that the great military powers, especially France and England, could embark on a new crusade, made him unsympathetic to the Scots. For a discussion of Anglo-papal relations during the pontificates of Clement V and John XXII see J. R. Wright, *The church and the English crown, 1305–1334* (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Studies and Texts 48, Toronto, 1980), esp. pp 168–73; J. A. Watt, *The church and the two nations in medieval Ireland* (Cambridge, 1970), pp 183–97.

<sup>29</sup> Cardinals Luke Fieschi and Gaucelin d'Eauze.

<sup>30</sup> The English diplomatic mission to Avignon in early 1317, which led to the appointment of the papal envoys and to the issue of the bulls directed against Scottish intervention in Ireland, is discussed in J. R. S. Phillips, *Aymer de Valence, earl of Pembroke, 1307–1324* (Oxford, 1972), pp 107–11.

<sup>31</sup> Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, pp 246–7.

<sup>32</sup> See Phillips, 'Irish Remonstrance of 1317', pp 112–29. For a critical edition of the Remonstrance see Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon*, ed. D. E. R. Watt *et al.* (9 vols, Aberdeen, 1987–98), vi, pp xxi–xxv, 384–404, 465–83.

<sup>33</sup> They met in the chamber of the cardinal of Pellegrue (Baluze, *Vitae paparum Avenionensium*, ed. Mollat, ii, 130).

<sup>34</sup> Watt, *Church & two nations*, p. 84.

ute for 1316–17; further sporadic payments were made until 1320, when they ceased altogether; but nothing was paid off the arrears. Neither did Edward II take any notice of the pope's further demand that he should render homage and fealty, which was the other part of the package agreed in 1213.<sup>35</sup>

If there had ever been a moment or a period at which the English monarchy seriously intended to conquer Ireland, that opportunity had long passed by the time of Edward II's accession in 1307. The growing need from the mid-1270s for the justiciars of Ireland to undertake regular campaigns against the Irish in Leinster was not matched by any attempt to preserve the resources of the lordship of Ireland for use within Ireland. Quite the reverse: as Professor Lydon has shown so effectively, money, manpower and supplies were regularly being shipped out of Ireland from the early 1280s for use in Edward I's wars in Wales and in Scotland. About £30,000, for example, of the estimated £80,000 total cost of building Edward I's castles in Wales came from the Irish exchequer.<sup>36</sup>

At first sight it appears that this policy changed under Edward II. In 1311 or early 1312 he ordered that in future Irish revenues should be used in Ireland in order to keep the peace because 'divers Irish of our land of Ireland, our felons and rebels, both because of this same lack of money and their customary pugnacity ... [are] day by day perpetrating burnings, homicides, robberies, and other innumerable and intolerable transgressions'.<sup>37</sup> The timing of the letter was probably influenced by the administrative reforms which were then being introduced in England by the Ordainers, but the wording suggests that it was also a response to a plea for assistance from the justiciar of Ireland and his colleagues in Dublin.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> W. E. Lunt, *Financial relations of the papacy with England to 1327* (Cambridge, Mass., 1939), pp 166–9. Since the 1213 agreement between John and Innocent III was a fundamental document in English claims to exercise authority in Ireland, it is surprising that neither Edward II's Scottish nor his Irish opponents appear to have used the failure to pay tribute or to perform homage and fealty as a legal weapon against him at the papal curia. Instead the Remonstrance of 1317 concentrated on the alleged English failure to observe the terms of an even earlier document, Adrian IV's bull *Laudabiliter* of c. 1155. On the place of *Laudabiliter* in fourteenth-century Anglo-Irish relations see J. R. S. Phillips, 'The Remonstrance revisited: England and Ireland in the early fourteenth century' in T. G. Fraser and Keith Jeffery (eds), *Men, women and war: Historical Studies XVIII* (Dublin, 1993), pp 16–17, 23–4. For a recent edition of the text of *Laudabiliter* see Bower, *Scotichronicon*, ed. Watt *et al.*, vi, pp xxi–xxii, 402–5, 481–3.

<sup>36</sup> *New hist. Ire.*, ii, 196; J. F. Lydon, 'Edward II and the revenues of Ireland in 1311–12' in *I.H.S.*, xiv, no. 53 (Mar. 1964), pp 56–7.

<sup>37</sup> *New hist. Ire.*, ii, 201–2, citing Lydon, 'Edward II & the revenues of Ireland in 1311–12', pp 52–3.

<sup>38</sup> The language used in Edward II's letter closely resembles the appeals for assistance regularly addressed to the royal government in England by the king's officials in Ireland during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This particular letter has not survived, but there are many such documents in the Public Record Office class of Ancient Correspondence (SC 1). Good examples are the complaints about the state of Ireland made by the justiciar Geoffrey de Geneville in the mid-1270s and those of the deputy justiciar John Morice in the early 1340s (P.R.O., SC 1/5/96; SC 1/18/12, 13, 16; SC 1/38/108). In a postscript to a letter written early in the reign of

In practice, the exploitation of Irish revenues continued almost up to the moment of the Bruce invasion in May 1315, when it soon became apparent that any money in the Irish exchequer would have to be used at home.<sup>39</sup> This should now have meant that any additional resources would come from the English exchequer, but very little financial assistance was to be forthcoming, since money was also in short supply in England. Even the attempt that had been made in September 1314 to send 1,000 marks to Ireland to pay the wages of Irish troops who were supposed to go to Scotland failed when the messenger was robbed near Denbigh in North Wales. During the period of the Bruce invasion itself, between 1315 and 1318, the only money sent from England for use within Ireland was a sum of £400 paid in April 1316, and even this had to be borrowed from an Italian merchant company, the Ballardi of Lucca.<sup>40</sup>

This was not the full story, however. Although the actual time and place of the Scottish landing in Ireland in May 1315 probably came as a surprise, there is evidence that Edward II and his government in England knew that the Scots were planning an attack and took steps to meet it.<sup>41</sup> In early July 1315, after the news of the invasion had reached England, Edward wrote to all the leading Anglo-Norman magnates in Ireland, asking them for infor-

Edward I the unidentified author delivered himself of the following cry from the heart: 'Benedictus auctor pacis altissimus pacificata est terra Hibernie adeo quod in singulis locis eiusdem vigent pax et tranquillitas hiis diebus' (*ibid.*, SC 1/62/41).

<sup>39</sup>Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', pp 65–6.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp 62–3, 66. To put matters in a wider perspective, it is important to note that, although the financial resources of Ireland were severely depleted through their use in English wars outside Ireland, Ireland was not uniquely affected in this way. The financial pressures on England itself were also extreme from the 1290s onwards. As already indicated above (n. 21), these pressures had much to do with the political crises in England at the end of the reign of Edward I and were a major cause of the crises during the reign of Edward II: see Prestwich, *War, politics & finance*; J. R. Maddicott, *The English peasantry and the demands of the crown, 1294–1341* (*Past & Present Supplement* 1, Oxford, 1975). Severe shortages of money to prosecute the continuing war with Scotland were a feature of most of the reign of Edward II, until after 1322 when the revenues received by the English exchequer from the confiscated lands of the earl of Lancaster and the other participants in the civil war of 1321–2 finally made Edward II financially secure: see Wendy Childs, 'Finance and trade under Edward II' in John Taylor and Wendy Childs (eds), *Politics and crisis in fourteenth-century England* (Gloucester, 1990), pp 19–37; Mark Buck, *Politics, finance and the church in the reign of Edward II: Walter Stapeldon, treasurer of England* (Cambridge, 1983); Natalie Fryde, *The tyranny and fall of Edward II, 1321–1326* (Cambridge, 1979), esp. ch. 7. The 'imperial vision' of the English kings required that all their dominions should contribute to their financial needs. However, Edward II's attempt to extend this principle to his other major possession, the duchy of Aquitaine in south-western France, met with little success: see Elizabeth A. R. Brown, 'Gascon subsidies and the finances of the English dominions, 1315–1324' in *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History VIII* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1971), pp 37–73, 142–5. The timing of Edward II's attempt to tax his Gascon subjects was, however, a direct consequence of the Scottish victory over England at Bannockburn in June 1314 and of the Scottish invasion of Ireland in May 1315: *ibid.*, pp 55–62.

<sup>41</sup>Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', pp 65–7.

mation on the activities of the Scots and appealing for their assistance in resisting the invasion.<sup>42</sup> In September 1315 Edward also sent John de Hothum, his expert on Irish affairs, to report on the situation and to co-ordinate resistance to the Scots.

Hothum organised the defences of Dublin against a possible Scottish attack during the autumn and winter of 1315–16. At the critical time in early 1316, when it seemed that the Scots were about to overrun the lordship of Ireland, Hothum also applied all his diplomatic skills and experience to the task of encouraging the Anglo-Norman magnates, whose confidence and mutual trust had been severely undermined by the Scottish victories at Connor and Kells in September and November 1315. The inconclusive battle fought at Ardscull in Kildare on 26 January 1316 was as much the product of Hothum's energies as the result of Scottish exhaustion after eight months of campaigning, the winter weather, and the severe famine affecting Ireland and indeed the whole of north-western Europe.<sup>43</sup> Ardscull is a classic illustration of 'the fog of war', since the two opposing armies appear to have been acutely conscious of their own problems and unaware of those facing their opponents. The result was a cautious encounter, with very few casualties on either side. Although no one could have foreseen it at the time, the events at Ardscull were a turning-point in the war in Ireland, since a further Scottish victory would have deprived the lordship of its last field army. The English crown would then have been forced either to divert to Ireland substantial resources which it could not afford, or, and perhaps more likely, to give up the struggle altogether. Instead the Scots withdrew into Ulster to fight another day. Despite a further Scottish campaign in the direction of Dublin and the south-west in 1317, the balance of forces within Ireland gradually shifted until the defeat and death of Edward Bruce at Faughart in October 1318.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup>J. R. S. Phillips, 'Documents on the early stages of the Bruce invasion of Ireland, 1315–1316' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxxix (1979), sect. C, pp 249–50. At least eleven of the thirty men written to are known to have replied: *ibid.*, pp 257–65.

<sup>43</sup>Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', pp 68–71. The events at Ardscull are described in the reports sent to England in mid-February by Hothum himself and by one of his clerks: see Phillips, 'Documents', pp 251–3, 255–7. Hothum says that the battle was fought *en dur champ*, which might indicate, if taken literally, that the ground was frozen, or that it was an unsuitable place for a battle; a more likely explanation, as my colleague Dr Alan Fletcher, of the Department of Old and Middle English at University College Dublin, has suggested, is that the phrase should be taken as a metaphor for the harshness of battle. On the military situation in Ireland in 1316 see also McNamee, *Wars of the Bruses*, pp 177–9. On the effects of the famine on Ireland and, more generally, on Britain and north-western Europe see *ibid.*, p. 179; Ian Kershaw, 'The great famine and agrarian crisis in England, 1315–1322' in *Past & Present*, no. 59 (May 1973), pp 3–50; W. C. Jordan, *The great famine: northern Europe in the early fourteenth century* (Princeton, 1996). This was one of the most serious famines experienced in northern Europe and, like the Irish famine of the 1840s, was remembered for generations afterwards.

<sup>44</sup>For a narrative of the remainder of the war see McNamee, *Wars of the Bruses*, ch. 5. These were the circumstances under which the Remonstrance was composed and sent to the newly elected Pope John XXII in the autumn of 1317. From this point

Although the English government gave titles and privileges to a number of the resident magnates to ensure their continued loyalty,<sup>45</sup> and sent a high-ranking magnate, Roger Mortimer, lord of Wigmore and of Ludlow in the Welsh March and lord of Trim and of Leix in Ireland, to take command in Ireland in November 1316, to a large extent the defence of the lordship of Ireland *on land* was conducted for the remainder of the war with little reference to England.<sup>46</sup> Instead Edward II and his government had to turn their attention to even more urgent problems. They were aware, for example, that the Welsh might revolt in sympathy with the Scottish invasion of Ireland, and precautions were therefore taken to ensure that all the royal castles in Wales were in good repair and well garrisoned.<sup>47</sup> But above all, the most immediate threat to England was in England itself. The Scottish raids against the northern counties of England, which had begun early in the reign of Edward II, continued with renewed intensity after the crushing defeat of the English forces at Bannockburn in June 1314. It has been estimated that by the summer of 1315 about one-fifth of the kingdom of England was subjected to Scottish raids and forced to pay tribute to the Scots. The Scots also attempted to capture the strategically placed border towns

of view, the Remonstrance can be seen almost as an act of desperation, in the hope that the pope might give Edward Bruce and his Irish allies the success which military actions alone had not achieved: see Phillips, 'Irish Remonstrance of 1317', pp 112–29.

<sup>45</sup>For example, Edmund Butler was created earl of Carrick in September 1315, and John fitz Thomas FitzGerald became earl of Kildare in May 1316: see Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', pp 63, 74–5; idem, 'Documents', pp 268–9. The financial value of the lands with which these two new earldoms were endowed, and of the earldom of Louth created in 1319 to reward John de Bermingham's defeat of Edward Bruce, was less generous than in similar cases in England, but the new earldoms were also endowed with extensive liberties which greatly increased their real value. Although these new earldoms (and those of Ormond and Desmond in 1328 and 1329) in Ireland, where Ulster had hitherto been the only earldom, were created at times when the government in England needed to be sure of support in Ireland, they nonetheless marked a significant change in the policy of the English crown. They also reinforced the separation that was already growing between the noble families of Anglo-Norman Ireland and those of England and the Welsh March: see Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', pp 74–5, 77; idem, 'The Anglo-Norman nobility' in Lydon (ed.), *English in medieval Ireland*, pp 102–4.

<sup>46</sup>Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', p. 76.

<sup>47</sup>There is evidence that in 1316–17 Edward Bruce was negotiating with native Welsh leaders in the hope of provoking another revolt against English rule. One important figure, Gruffudd Llwyd, seems to have responded and was briefly imprisoned: see R. R. Davies, *Conquest, coexistence and change: Wales, 1063–1415* (Oxford, 1987), pp 387–8. For the relationship between events in Ireland and those in England and Wales during this critical period see also J. Beverley Smith, 'Gruffydd Llwyd and the Celtic alliance' in *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, xxvi (1976), pp 463–78, and idem, 'Edward II and the allegiance of Wales' in *Welsh Hist. Rev.*, viii (1976–7), pp 139–71.

of Carlisle in July 1315 (unsuccessfully) and Berwick in April 1318 (successfully).<sup>48</sup>

Most available resources had to be concentrated against this threat, but there was one other important theatre of English military operations which had a more direct effect on the war in Ireland: the naval campaign in the Irish Sea. As early as June 1315 orders had been given to use all available Irish revenues to maintain a royal fleet in the Irish Sea, but too late, since the Scots had already landed in Ireland.<sup>49</sup> Shortage of money often hampered naval operations: an elaborate plan to hire five Genoese galleys, with a total of 1,000 men, to operate in the Irish Sea in the summer of 1317 never materialised,<sup>50</sup> while the order for John of Athy to muster fifteen ships to attack the Scots in the seas between Scotland and Ireland at about the same time apparently resulted in only six ships.<sup>51</sup> But John of Athy did succeed on 2 July 1317 in defeating and killing Thomas Dun, the most notorious of the pirates or privateers in Scottish service.<sup>52</sup> It is difficult to assess the exact contribution of the naval war to the eventual defeat of Edward Bruce at Faughart in October 1318, but it is hard to believe that it had no effect. Whatever the explanation, Faughart was the only clear-cut English military victory during the reign of Edward II.<sup>53</sup>

On a totally different front, Edward II attempted to exploit his good relations with the papacy to ensure that, whenever possible, senior appointments in the Irish church would not go to native Irishmen. This was ostensibly a reaction to the emergency of the Bruce invasion, but it was really a continuation of a policy which had seen, for example, the appointment since 1306 of a series of archbishops of English origin to the see of Armagh.<sup>54</sup> In 1317 Edward II gained approval of the appointment of the chancellor of Ireland, William FitzJohn, to Cashel: as in Armagh eleven years earlier, this involved introducing an English prelate into a province which had previously been under Irish control. In contrast, the confirmation of the appointment of an Englishman, the former treasurer, Alexander Bicknor, as archbishop of Dublin, at about the same time, was routine. Edward was also very anxious about the seditious preaching of certain Irish Franciscans on behalf of Edward Bruce: in August 1316 he sent an English Franciscan, Geoffrey of Aylsham (who had earlier been his candidate for appointment to Cashel), to see Michael of Cesena, the

<sup>48</sup>Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', pp 62–3; idem, 'Documents', pp 247, 250–51, 265–6. For a detailed examination of the Scottish raids see Jean Scammell, 'Robert I and the north of England' in *E.H.R.*, lxxiii (1958), pp 385–403, and McNamee, *Wars of the Bruces*, esp. chs 2–3.

<sup>49</sup>Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', p. 67.

<sup>50</sup>McNamee, *Wars of the Bruces*, p. 181.

<sup>51</sup>Accounts for naval operations in the Irish Sea under the command of John of Athy, 25 Apr. – 24 June 1317 (P.R.O., E 101/531/15).

<sup>52</sup>McNamee, *Wars of the Bruces*, p. 184. Dun may have been from Downpatrick in Ireland.

<sup>53</sup>It was small comfort after the disaster of Bannockburn in 1314.

<sup>54</sup>John Taaffe (1306–7); the Dominican friars Walter Jorz (1307–11) and Roland Jorz (1311–22); and Stephen Segrave (1323–33).

minister general of the Franciscan order, to persuade him to stop the hostile preaching.<sup>55</sup> In 1317 the pope duly obliged with a denunciation of disloyal friars. There are now grounds for suspecting that one of these disloyal friars, the Franciscan Michael Mac Lochlainn, the unsuccessful Irish candidate for the see of Armagh in 1303 and a future bishop of Derry, was the author of the Irish Remonstrance of late 1317 which invited the pope to cancel English authority over Ireland and replace it by the rule of Edward Bruce.<sup>56</sup> Later, in 1324–5, Edward II tried to persuade the pope to reduce the number of Irish dioceses from thirty-four to eighteen, leaving unaltered only the five dioceses of the Dublin province. The reasons given were the small size and the poverty of some dioceses, but the real intention once again was to reduce the degree of Irish control. The pope was sympathetic and in 1327 ordered a number of unions of dioceses, but in the end nothing came of the plan.<sup>57</sup> One of Edward II's earlier schemes also unravelled at about the same time: when William FitzJohn, archbishop of Cashel, died in 1326, his successor was an Irishman (John (Seoán) MacCarwell) and, like FitzJohn's predecessor (Maurice MacCarwell), a member of a powerful ecclesiastical dynasty in Munster.<sup>58</sup>

Edward II's envoy to Avignon in 1324–5, Philip of Slane, the Dominican bishop of Cork, had also presented the pope with an abbreviation in Provençal of the *Topographia Hiberniae* of Giraldus Cambrensis, to help him in his deliberations.<sup>59</sup> However, by the autumn of 1326 it was Edward II rather than Pope John XXII who was most in need of a guide to Ireland. Edward's estranged wife, Isabella, and her followers landed without opposition at Orwell in Suffolk in late September 1326. Deserted by many of his own supporters, in early October Edward and Hugh Despenser the Younger fled westwards from London towards Despenser's lands in South Wales, and on 21 October he and Despenser sailed from Chepstow for Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel. It is very likely, as two separate chronicle sources record, that they were planning to escape from there to Ireland.<sup>60</sup> Instead

<sup>55</sup> Watt, *Church & two nations*, pp 185–6.

<sup>56</sup> For the possible authorship of Michael Mac Lochlainn see Phillips, 'Remonstrance revisited', pp 17–20, 24–7; and for a critical edition of the Remonstrance see Bower, *Scotichronicon*, ed. Watt *et al.*, vi, pp xxi–xxv, 384–404, 465–83.

<sup>57</sup> Watt, *Church & two nations*, pp 192–6; idem, 'Negotiations between Edward II and John XXII concerning Ireland' in *I.H.S.*, x, no. 37 (Mar. 1956), pp 1–20.

<sup>58</sup> This family's contribution to the history of the medieval Irish church would bear closer examination. For the role of an earlier member of the family, again at a delicate period in Anglo-Irish relations, see J. R. S. Phillips, 'David MacCarwell and the proposal to purchase English law, c. 1273 – c. 1280' in *Peritia*, x (1996), pp 253–73.

<sup>59</sup> This is now in the British Library as Add. MS 17920; it is mentioned in Watt, *Church & two nations*, p. 192, and also in Aubrey Gwynn, *Anglo-Irish church life: 14th and 15th centuries (A history of Irish Catholicism)*, ed. Patrick J. Corish (Dublin & Sydney, 1968), ii, pt 4), p. 11.

<sup>60</sup> Frame, *English lordship in Ireland*, pp 138–9, citing *Chronicon de Lanercost*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (Bannatyne Club, 65, Edinburgh, 1839), pp 256–7, and *Chronica Adae Murimuth*, ed. E. M. Thompson (Rolls Series, London, 1889), p. 49. Despite the likelihood that Edward II hoped to escape to Ireland, it is astonishing that specialists in English history have declined to take it seriously or to consider the possible consequences of Edward II's possession of a power base in Ireland.

they were blown back into Cardiff by an unfavourable wind; Edward was captured and in January 1327 was forced to accept his deposition as king.<sup>61</sup>

Edward II did not reach Ireland in 1326, but it is interesting to speculate as to what might have happened if he had succeeded. Although the government of the lordship of Ireland had been worried in 1323 that Roger Mortimer of Wigmore might come to Ireland after his escape from the Tower of London, there is no evidence to show that he had a significant following in Ireland by the time he and Isabella invaded England in 1326.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, if Edward II had landed in the south-east of Ireland, for example in Waterford or Wexford,<sup>63</sup> he might have found a friendly reception in the lordship of Wexford, which had been in royal hands since the death of the earl of Pembroke in 1324; in the lordship of Carlow, which belonged to his half-brother, the earl of Norfolk; and in the lordship of Kilkenny, two-thirds of which was in royal control, while the remainder was held by Despenser.<sup>64</sup> More important, he would probably also have been well received in Dublin, the centre of the government of the lordship. Alexander Bicknor, archbishop of Dublin, who was on bad terms with both Despenser and the king, was in England;<sup>65</sup> while the justiciar, John Darcy, a former retainer of the earl of Pembroke who had been a loyal supporter of the king, would almost certainly have been sympathetic to Edward.<sup>66</sup>

A strong indication of the likely attitude of the Dublin government can be found in the fact that, although Edward III was proclaimed king in England on 25 January 1327, the new king's authority was not proclaimed in Ireland until 13 May. Darcy had been replaced as justiciar and left Ireland twelve days earlier, on 1 May, but his successor, the earl of Kildare, found difficulty in asserting his authority for some time afterwards.<sup>67</sup> If Edward II really had been alive and well and living in Ireland, his position as the legitimate crowned king of England and lord of Ireland would have been extremely strong; no amount of manoeuvring in England by Mortimer and Isabella could have concealed this fact. Edward II could then have been removed from office only by another round of bloody civil war. From a base in Ireland Edward in his turn might have raised an army to restore his

<sup>61</sup>See Fryde, *Tyranny & fall of Edward II*, ch. 13; Claire Valente, 'The deposition and abdication of Edward II' in *E.H.R.*, cxiii (1998), pp 852–81.

<sup>62</sup>Frame, *English lordship in Ireland*, pp 165–8.

<sup>63</sup>These were likely destinations for any crossing of the Irish Sea beginning in the Bristol Channel.

<sup>64</sup>Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp 233–4; Frame, *English lordship in Ireland*, p. 169.

<sup>65</sup>R. M. Haines, *The church and politics in fourteenth-century England: the career of Adam Orleton, c. 1275–1345* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 157.

<sup>66</sup>Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp 261, 268.

<sup>67</sup>Frame, *English lordship in Ireland*, p. 139; see also *ibid.*, pp 174–82. It is also worth suggesting in passing that the famous inauguration in 1327 of Donal MacMurrough, as king of Leinster, the first such inauguration since the twelfth century, may have been an Irish reaction to the events in England, based perhaps on a belief that the deposition of Edward II had removed the legitimacy of English rule in Ireland: see *New hist. Ire.*, ii, 302.

authority in England.<sup>68</sup> He would certainly have found allies in Wales,<sup>69</sup> and probably in Scotland,<sup>70</sup> as well as in England itself.<sup>71</sup> He would also have had the money to pay an army, since it is known that a sum of £29,000 from the English treasury was formally delivered to him at Chepstow on 20 October, the day before he attempted to escape to Ireland.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup>Frame, *English lordship in Ireland*, pp 138–40. The well-informed Lanercost chronicler recorded the fears of Edward II's opponents that 'if the king could reach Ireland and gather an army there, he might cross to Scotland and, with the help of the Scots and the Irish, invade England' (*ibid.*, citing *Chron. Lanercost*, pp 256–7).

<sup>69</sup>He had loyal allies in Wales, especially Gruffudd Llwyd in the north and Rhys ap Gruffudd, 'who was virtual governor of south-west Wales in the first half of the fourteenth century' (Davies, *Conquest, coexistence & change*, pp 409–10, 415–16; see also R. A. Griffiths, *The principality of Wales in the later middle ages: the structure and personnel of government*, i: *South Wales, 1277–1526* (Cardiff, 1972), pp 99–102). Although Gruffudd Llwyd had been suspected of treasonable negotiations with Edward Bruce in 1316–17 and had briefly been imprisoned during the English civil war of 1321–2, his leadership of a Welsh revolt in North Wales had been largely responsible for the defeat of Roger Mortimer and his Marcher allies; meanwhile, Rhys ap Gruffudd had played a similar role against the Marchers in South Wales: see Davies, *Conquest, coexistence & change*, p. 387; Griffiths, *Principality of Wales*, p. 99; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp 221–2. Events in the autumn of 1326 moved so fast that neither man was able to intervene to save Edward II from capture by his enemies: see Griffiths, *Principality of Wales*, p. 100; Fryde, *Tyranny & fall of Edward II*, pp 189–90.

<sup>70</sup>One ally was Rhys ap Gruffudd, who fled to Scotland after the fall of Edward II, was involved in September 1327 in an unsuccessful plot to free Edward II from captivity, and then fled once more to Scotland: see Griffiths, *Principality of Wales*, p. 100; Fryde, *Tyranny & fall of Edward II*, pp 189–90; McNamee, *Wars of the Bruce*, p. 240. Another ally was the Scottish earl, Donald of Mar, who had spent most of his life at the English court and had a close personal loyalty to Edward II; he too went to Scotland, where he involved himself in schemes to restore Edward II to his throne, and also accompanied Robert Bruce's invasion of England in the summer of 1327: see McNamee, *Wars of the Bruce*, p. 240; Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, p. 252. A third potential ally may have been none other than Robert Bruce himself (see n. 74).

<sup>71</sup>The situation in England was probably far more fluid than the rapid fall of Edward II in the autumn of 1326 would suggest. Although Edward II and Despenser had many enemies, not all of these were certain that exchanging the rule of the king and his favourite for that of Isabella and Mortimer was a good bargain. The hostilities between Henry, earl of Lancaster, and Mortimer in the winter of 1328–9, the execution of Edward II's half-brother the earl of Kent in March 1330, and Mortimer's own fall and execution in October–November 1330 show how close England was to a renewed civil war. The persistent rumours that Edward II was still alive and might be restored to his throne only served to stir the pot even more vigorously. See Fryde, *Tyranny & fall of Edward II*, pp 217–25.

<sup>72</sup>*Calendar of memoranda rolls (exchequer), Michaelmas 1326 – Michaelmas 1327* (London, 1968), p. 36, no. 212. The sum of £10,000 which John Langton sent by water from Gloucester and which was received at Chepstow by 17 October was probably a part of the overall total of £29,000 rather than an addition to it (Fryde, *Tyranny & fall of Edward II*, pp 189, 267). The twenty-six barrels, each containing £500 in silver pennies, which were later found among Edward II's possessions in Despenser's castle at Caerphilly near Cardiff, were probably the residue of the sum of £29,000: see account of John de Langton, clerk, for the treasure, goods and chattels found at Caerphilly (P.R.O., E 352/120, mm 39, 39v (1 Edw. III)). Langton was the exchequer official who had delivered the £29,000 to Edward II on 20 October.

They were strange times, but stranger still were to follow. No sooner had Edward II been deposed than it seemed that there were people queuing up to restore him. Robert Bruce of Scotland was one of them. In the early weeks of 1327 the justiciar of Ireland, John Darcy, was in communication with Scotland through the agency of a Franciscan, Henry Cogery, who had been there 'in order to further certain confidential business touching the lord king'.<sup>73</sup> It has been plausibly suggested that Robert Bruce's landing in Ulster in April 1327 was 'prompted by Cogery's mission' and that 'King Robert had hopes of gaining the support of Anglo-Irish lords, and conceivably of Edward II's ministers in Ireland, for a junction with Mortimer's enemies in Wales and an invasion of England itself'.<sup>74</sup> Bruce had good reason for wanting to restore his old enemy to the English throne. It was rumoured that even before his imprisonment and deposition Edward II had promised to recognise Bruce as king of Scots in return for help. Bruce was also well aware that a restored Edward II would have been likely to concede English claims over Scotland. If Bruce really had been seeking to use Ireland as a means of restoring Edward II, he did not succeed. Instead his armies followed the traditional line of attack by invading England directly in June 1327 and maintaining pressure until 9 October, when the young Edward III began the preliminaries for peace.<sup>75</sup>

In September 1327 yet another plot to release Edward was discovered, this time led by Edward's Welsh ally, Rhys ap Gruffudd.<sup>76</sup> Shortly afterwards it was officially announced that the former king was dead, having almost certainly been murdered; and in December he was buried with great ceremony in St Peter's abbey, Gloucester.<sup>77</sup> However, rumours soon began to circulate that Edward II was not dead after all but had escaped from cap-

<sup>73</sup>Frame, *English lordship in Ireland*, pp 139–40. Payment for this visit to Scotland was made on 6 February 1327 when 'in Ireland . . . the king, both officially and in men's minds, was still Edward II' (*ibid.*, p. 140).

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>75</sup>McNamee, *Wars of the Bruces*, pp 239–42, 244–5; Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, pp 252–5.

<sup>76</sup>Fryde, *Tyranny & fall of Edward II*, p. 202. The conjunction of this plot with the Scottish invasion of England and the fact that it came soon after an attempt in July 1327, which had almost succeeded in releasing Edward II, made it a very serious threat to the new régime. It was most unlikely that Edward would be left alive. See T. F. Tout, 'The captivity and death of Edward of Carnarvon' in *The collected papers of Thomas Frederick Tout* (3 vols, Manchester, 1932–4), iii, 145–90, esp. pp 155–66. The text of the legal record (5 Edw. III) which contains details of Rhys ap Gruffudd's conspiracy is printed *ibid.*, iii, 184–9. For the career of Rhys ap Gruffudd see also above, nn 69–70.

<sup>77</sup>The classic account of Edward II's imprisonment is still Tout, 'Captivity & death of Edward of Carnarvon'. Edward died on 21 September. The desperate nature of the situation is vividly conveyed in a surviving letter from Edward III to the earl of Hereford, telling him how the news of his father's death had been brought on 23 September during the night (*de deinz la nuyt*); the king also reported that he had heard that the Scots were about to invade England with the intention of conquest (P.R.O., DL 10/253 (Duchy of Lancaster royal charters): Lincoln, 24 Sept. 1327).

tivity; and it is one of these rumours which provides the final bizarre twist in the tale of Edward II and Ireland.<sup>78</sup>

A fourteenth-century register of documents belonging to the diocese of Maguelone, near Montpellier in the far south of France, contains a letter addressed to Edward III of England by a papal notary named Manuel Fieschi.<sup>79</sup> Fieschi tells of a meeting with a man who had identified himself as Edward II and who had then made a confession in which he narrated a long and circumstantial tale, according to which Edward had escaped from Berkeley castle in disguise. After many wanderings through France, Germany and the Low Countries, Edward had ended his journey in northern Italy. There he had become a hermit at the castle of Melazzo north of Genoa and had later moved to another hermitage in the isolated Benedictine abbey of Sant'Alberto di Butrio a little to the east, 'always the recluse, doing penance' and praying to God for Edward III and other sinners. But before setting out on his continental travels Edward had spent nine months in Ireland, until he decided that he might be discovered if he stayed there any longer. What he did there and who sheltered him we are not told; nor shall we ever find out, since the story in the Fieschi letter is a clever fabrication.<sup>80</sup> So ends the history of Edward II's relations with Ireland, with

<sup>78</sup>For discussions of the rumours of Edward II's escape and survival, which persisted long after 1327, see Tout, 'Captivity & death of Edward of Carnarvon'; Cuttino & Lynam, 'Where is Edward II?'; and R. M. Haines, '*Edwardus redivivus*: the 'after-life' of Edward of Caernarvon' in *Bristol & Gloucestershire Arch. Soc. Trans.*, cxiv (1996), pp 65–86.

<sup>79</sup>Archives départementales de l'Hérault, Series G. 1123, f. 86r (Cartulaire de Maguelone, Register A). Thanks to a research grant from the Faculty of Arts at University College Dublin, I had the opportunity to examine this document and its surrounding material in the summer of 1997. The letter is preserved in the middle of an unrelated collection of charters concerning the bishop's property rights in the small town of Cournonceral, also near Montpellier. It is undated, but there are reasons for assigning it to the years 1336–8. The letter has been known since its discovery in the nineteenth century by Alexandre Germain, professor of history at the University of Montpellier. He announced his discovery to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres in Paris on 21 September 1877 (the anniversary of Edward II's death); the document was published by the local scholarly body, the Société Archéologique de Montpellier, in 1878 as 'Lettre de Manuel Fiesque concernant les dernières années du roi d'Angleterre Édouard II', and republished in *Mémoires de la Société Archéologique de Montpellier*, vii (1881), pp 109–27. It has since been referred to many times, most recently in Cuttino & Lynam, 'Where is Edward II?', and Haines, '*Edwardus redivivus*'. For a recent transcription of the Latin text of the letter and a good translation see Cuttino & Lynam, 'Where is Edward II?', pp 537–8, 526–7.

<sup>80</sup>The problems raised by the Fieschi letter are extraordinarily complex and confusing. The best surveys of the evidence at present are those by Cuttino and Lynam ('Where is Edward II?'), who seem inclined to accept the truth of the story, and Haines ('*Edwardus redivivus*'), who takes a sceptical view, as I do myself. I have little doubt that the body which was buried with great ceremony in St Peter's abbey, Gloucester, in December 1327 and over which a magnificent tomb was erected a few years later was that of Edward II. The man whom Fieschi met was almost certainly an impostor.

a tale worthy of Umberto Eco's gallery of eccentrics and fanatics gathered somewhere not far away in another northern Italian Benedictine abbey.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>By coincidence the events of Eco's *The name of the rose* are set in 1327, the year of Edward II's 'escape'. By further coincidence, Brother William of Baskerville, the fictional hero of the novel, is supposed earlier to have been in Ireland to examine the Alice Kyteler affair. Not surprisingly, the story of Edward II's exile at Melazzo and S. Alberto di Butrio is well known in Italy. It was publicised in a paper by Costantino Nigra, 'Uno degli Edoardi in Italia: favola o storia?' in *Nuova Antologia: Revista di Lettere, Scienze ed Arti*, 4th ser., xcii (1901), pp 403–25, and by Anna Benedetti in her short monograph, *Edoardo II d'Inghilterra all'abbazia di S. Alberto di Butrio* (Palermo, 1924). There are plaques to commemorate Edward II's 'presence' at Melazzo, and another at S. Alberto di Butrio, marking the supposed 'tomb' of Edward II. The website (now deleted) for the castle of Melazzo stated as a fact that Edward II stayed there between 1330 and 1333; the former abbey of S. Alberto has been occupied by a modern religious community since 1899, while the local tourist website records the tradition that Edward II had also been there as a hermit.

This is a revised version of my presidential address, delivered to the Irish Historical Society on 9 December 1997. I have also taken the opportunity to incorporate some material from another paper, 'The Anglo-Scottish wars and Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland, 1315–1318', which I gave to the Military History Society of Ireland on 8 January 1998.