The O'Briens in Munster After Clontarf.

(Continued from Vol. II., p. 152).

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III.

THE REIGN OF MUIRCHERTACH O'BRIAIN, KING OF MUNSTER (1086—1096) AND KING OF IRELAND (WITH OPPOSITION), 1096—1114.

A.

KING OF MUNSTER.

(1).

Diarmait, of course, objected to this ill-treatment. He found refuge in Leinster, and in the following year, 1087, joined the army of that kingdom under Domnall, son of Mael na mb6, in an unsuccessful battle against Muirchertach (ATig., CS., AI., AFM.). The encounter took place at Ráth Eadair, which is probably to be identified with Benn Etair, Howth (Onom.). On the Leinster side were slain, not only Murchad Ó Domnaill, King of Uí Dróna, and Ua Néill, of Mag dá chon (Fearann Ua Néill, near Wicklow-Carlow boundary; Moyleaomb, partly Co. Carlow and partly Co. Wicklow), but apparently also Conall Ua Ciarmaca, King of Aine (and a supporter of Diarmait Ó Briain). Two more of the Ua Cettada family ended their lives in this year (AI.), one slain in Osraige (probably on this expedition), the other dying in Limerick.

The next mention of Diarmait Ó Briain in 1089 shows him with a fleet in Cloyne, which he plundered. He robb'd the reliquary of St. Finbarr and slew 200 of the community (AI.). In 1092 he was expelled again by Muirchertach, this time into Ulaid (AFM.). Thus it took years before an understanding between the two brothers could be reached. The reconciliation came in 1093, when Muirchertach and Diarmait met at Cashel and again at Lismore, in the presence of Domnall Ua hEanna (chief bishop of Munster; if not, indeed, of all Ireland in that day), and the nobles of the southern kingdom. Terms of peace were arranged and the two swore on the Bachall Iose and various other relics to observe them faithfully (AI.).

The presence of Ulaid kings and princes at Cenocraid in the days of Toirrdelbach Ó Briain and the interference of that monarch in Ulaid affairs shows his ambition to be regarded as King of Ireland. Domnall Ua Lochlainn,

39. For the use of Mael in such names cf. Strachan, Contributions to the History of Middle Irish Declension, p. 11.
as was but natural, wished to keep the O Briens far away from the Northern states. When Muirchertach Ó Briain, as sole successor to his father, adopted Toirrdelbach's policy as his own, friction between him and Ua Lochlainn became inevitable. In the first years of this struggle the honours went in great part to the Cenél Eogain king. Faced by a brother in revolt and by that brother's party within Munster territory, Muirchertach was unable to gather forces strong enough to undertake victorious enterprises. In 1088 Ruadri O Connor, king of Connacht, defeated Muirchertach's fleet twice, once at Inis Adarcaich (Incherky), an island in the Shannon, in the parish of Lusmagh, King's Co., when the Munster fleet was sailing towards Loch Ribh; and again on the Atlantic coast, when the same fleet sailed out to attack Connacht. These were unpleasant setbacks for Muirchertach. The Connachtmen then passed over to the offensive. They invaded Corcumruad three times, and denuded it of cattle. Success made them incautious (AFM.) and on the third expedition three prominent Connacht leaders were slain. These were Gilla coirpthe, son of Cathal Ua Mugróin, toisech of Clann Chathall, Cúisínna, son of Murchad Ódair Mac Muirchertaig, toisech of Clann Tomaltaig and Mac Gillacairt Mhic Eichtigern, toisech of Corca Achlann (A.Tig., CS.).

Nor was this all. Profiting probably by Muirchertach's double failure, Domnall Ua Lochlainn entered Connacht and secured hostages from Ruadri O Connor. The Annals of Tigernach record that Domnall had entered into an agreement to come to O Briain's aid (fo cumgellad Muirchertaig hui Briain) but this, to say the least of it, is very difficult to believe. It may be, however, that at the beginning of Muirchertach's reign Domnall Ua Lochlainn was ready to come to a modus vivendi with him. The same Annals go on to suggest that Domnall was indignant at Muirchertach's failure to keep faith with him, and determined on reprisals. Ruadri O Connor was forced to maintain the northern army for a fortnight (A. Tig.). Then O Connor joined forces with Ua Lochlainn and the two marched into Munster. Whether they proceeded first to Killaloe and then to Emly by Limerick or vice versa is not quite clear. They were fortunate in the fact that Muirchertach was away on an expedition in Leinster (AI). Thus the Leth Cuinn army was able to plunder Munster unmolested. They burnt Emly, Limerick (all the Annals), Mungret (AI) and devastated Loch Gair, Brugrig, Drumní Uf Cleirchéin (Dromín), three miles north of Kilmallock, Dún Aiched (Dunachip, near Croom, O'D.). Four years before (1084), at Móin Cruinnóit, near Leixlip, Muirchertach O Briain had defeated and slain Donnchad Cael, son of Art in Coilech Ua Ruaire, and had carried off his head in triumph to Limerick (A.Tig.). It was buried apparently "on the hills of Singland." Now it was retrieved and carried back to Connacht (AU., A.Tig., CS., ALC., AFM.). At Killaloe they plundered and demolished Cathair Cindchóraid (AI). Having secured 160 prisoners and hostages (43) and aitkre (44) they returned home well pleased with themselves (CS., AFM.). The chief of these hostages was the son of Madadan (45) Ua Cennéidig (Mùscraige Tíre), the

40. The Corca Achlann were settled in East Roscommon. Chief family, Mac Branain.
41. ALC., AI suggest the former course; AU., AFM., CS. the latter. Emly first would be deteilt, Killaloe first would be tuathal. Hence the second alternative is less likely.
42. St. Patrick's Churchyard.
43. 100 prisoners, ete Gallu agus Gaedelo (A.Tig.).
44. For the meaning of this term see Thurneysen, Die Bürgschaft, Berlin, 1926; pp. 61-74. In brief, the aitkre was a guarantor responsible in his person for the fulfilment of the stipulated obligations. His status was thus closely akin to that of the gidd, hostage.
45. A.Tig. read Mathgamain.
son of Eochaid O Loingsigh (Arada Tire). Muirchertach O Briain had to buy a number of prisoners back at the cost of cows, horses, gold, silver, flesh meat (carna) (A.Tig. AFM.), so that this expedition in its immediate and its remoter consequences cost Munster a pretty penny.

(2)

Muirchertach did not long postpone the effort to restore Munster fortunes. Next year (1089), according to the Annals of Inisfallen, he raided Mide and fixed his camp on Loch nAininn, at the door of the Ua Maelsechlainn king. Thence he proceeded to Leinster, where he slew Donnchad, son of Domnall Remar, and took the kingship of Leinster and Æth Cliath himself after he had placed Enda, son of Diarmaid mac Mair na mbo, in fetters. Later he proceeded to Conacht, where he cut down “ind Ruadbethech” (represented by townland of Roehagh, parish of Killeely, Co. Galway), and pitched his tent on Loch Cime (Lough Hacket). All this suggests unbroken and, indeed, overwhelming success! For once, however, it is to be feared that these Annals, in the fervour of their panegyric, are definitely misleading. The more impartial sources have a very different tale to tell. Not victory but disaster was the keynote of this year (1089) for Muirchertach. He did, it is true, bring his Munster army in a great fleet upon Loch Ribh, where he plundered the islands, Inis Clothrainn, Inis Bóinne, Inis Aingin and Chlain Emain (Cloonown, parish of St. Peter’s Athlone). Ruadri O Connor, however, brought troops to occupy Inis Adarcach (bar. Lusmagh, just north of L. Derg) and Rechra, on the Shannon below Clonmacnois, so that the fleet could not return without battle. When the Munstermen reached Clonmacnois on their return journey they were attacked and driven back to Ath Luain. Here the king of Mide, Domnall, son of Flann O Maelsechlainn, was waiting to oppose them. Caught between two fires they were forced to surrender, which they duly did to O Maelsechlainn, who possessed himself of their ships and stores. Having placed themselves under his protection, they were conveyed overland in safety to Munster. This was certainly a very inglorious ending to what had been conceived as an important campaign. And salt was soon to be rubbed into the wounds! Ruadri O Connor and Domnall O Maelsechlainn sailed down the Shannon in ships of which some, no doubt, were taken from Muirchertach at Ath Luain, and plundered Munster as far as Clain caein Modimóg in the plain of Caisel so that “it is doubtful if they left a beast or a human being” in all the territory which they visited. It would appear that there was later a partial recovery in Munster, for before the year ends it is related that the datimbing of Lusk was burnt by men from that kingdom, when 160 people lost their lives in the conflagration.

46. This suggests that the hostages were taken from the Tipperary side of the Shannon, opposite Clare. If this be so, the O Kennedys were settled at this date in Tipperary. There is nothing to show that the Leth Cuinn army penetrated beyond Killaloe.

47. Enda mac Diarmada.

48. Reochrath agus Buidre in beithe (A.Tig.). The “Ruadbethech” (AI.) may be a misunderstanding of the above place name.

49. A.Clon. also record these events.

50. CS. says definitely “is na longaib sin.”

51. i. Ormond (A.Tig.) to Cill Dalua agus Dál Cais (CS.), Uaithne Tire agus Uaithne Fidbaide (Rb.).
As for Donnchad, son of Domnall Remar, king of Leinster, whose death is ascribed in the Munster source to Muirchertach, it is certain that he met his end in quite a different manner. He was, in fact, slain by a Leinster rival, Conchobar Ua Conchobair Fáilge, and the people of western Leinster at Rath Mór in Uí Maelrubha (LL. list) "by unfair advantage" (AFM., cf. A.Tig., ALC. "a suis"). Thus Muirchertach had nothing to do with Donnchad’s death.

In general, then, Muirchertach at this time was faring none too well. Formal recognition of his weakness was afforded in 1090, when a cómdáil mhór was held between the country’s chief rulers, Ua Lochlainn, O Briain, O Maelsechlainn and Ruadri O Connor. It is significant that Leinster was not represented. No doubt its relative insignificance was due to dynastic trouble. (53) O Briain, O Maelsechlainn and Ruadri O Connor gave hostages to Domnall Ua Lochlainn, whose superiority they thus acknowledged (A.U., CS., AFM. The last source alone mentions O Connor) and they parted in peace and good fellowship "(caimhchomrac—good will).

But these estimable sentiments were soon forgotten! In fact, the rest of the year was filled with fighting. Muirchertach led an army into Mide, and was defeated at Mag Léna, near Tullamore (54) by Domnall, son of Fiann O Maelsechlainn. His chief losses were Maelsechlainn O Dúgalaig (Múscraige Tire), Mac Coinín Ua Dubginn (Dál Chais) and a Leinster prince, Mælmóra Ua Domnall. (55) Domnall O Maelsechlainn followed up his success by attacking Munster. He plundered Dún na Sgíath (near Tipperary) and all Ormond; while Ruadri O Connor, not to be outdone, appeared at Dún Aichéd (Dunachip, near Croom) in the heart of Co. Limerick. Muirchertach O Briain by stratagem (CS., A. Tig.) reached Loch Ríach (Lochmagra), and later with the men of Munster and the Norse of Dublin raided West Leinster (cendar Laigen). Thence they proceeded to Brega, as far as Áth Buide (Athboy), having arranged with Domnall Ua Lochlainn (at the cost of two hostages) to protect them from attack by O Maelsechlainn or O Connor (othá sin iar A.Tig., AFM.).

Next year (1091) there were the customary depredations. The Connaughtmen RAIDED Munster (AFM.); whilst Muirchertach illuminated Christmas Eve and the morning of Christmas Day (aideche Notlacc Mór) in Uí Fáilge by taking from it “the prey of the firebrands” (crech na n-aithinna). Meanwhile, however, Muirchertach had tried to come to an agreement with the sons of his late brother, Tadg. Peace was made and the men of Thomond returned home, but the sons of Tadg acted treacherously and apparently brought more Connaught raiders into Thomond territory (AFM.). The sons of Tadg, in the sequel, must have fared badly, for they have no prominent place in the later record of the O Briens.

52. Rí Laigín agus Gall (A.Tig.).

53. Donnchad, son of Domnall Remar, had been succeeded by Enda, son of Diarmait (Mac Mail na mbó), first cousin of the dead king. In 1091 he is found slaying Murchad, son of the late Donnchad; and in 1092 he was himself slain (cf. LL. list) by Donnchad, son of Murchad (sl. 1091 ? or Murchad, so. Diarmait mac Mail na mbó, died 1070 ?) and Conchobar Ua Conchobair Fáilge, who thereupon held the kingdom jointly for two years (LL. list, 39 d), when Ua Conchobar was taken prisoner by Muirchertach O Briain and apparently restored to his old position in Leinster. The Annals of Inisfallen claim that Muirchertach O Briain marched into Leinster, and that Ua Conchobair Fáilge “came into his house” (1092).

54. Fir coll (A.Cl.). a Feralb Coll (A.Tig.).

55. “Son of the King of Uí Cendsealgaig” (AFM.). “Prince of Uí Censelaig” (A.Cl.). But as Enda was not a descendant of Domnall Remar this looks unintelligible.
In the north the perpetual feud between Cenél Eogain and the Ulaid had again led to war (AI, A.Tig., AU, CS, ALC). A battle was fought at Bélgoirt-in-jobhair (par. Killelagh, bar. Lockinsholin, Derry), in which Donnsléibe Úa hEochada, king of Ulaid, was slain by Domnall Úa Lochlainn (1091). Donnchad Úa hEochada became king in his place, according to the Annals of Inisfallen, and this is borne out by AU, which give Donnchad as king in 1094. It is obvious, therefore, that Domnall Úa Lochlainn was maintaining his superiority over the east Ulster Kingdom.

A casual reference in this year (1091) to a duel between Cinaed Úa Mórdha, king of Laigis, and Maelruanaid, son of Cúcoirne Ó Cerbaill, king of Eile, in which both fell, shows that Muirechertach Ó Briain had a house at Caisel (AFM). Though living, therefore, at Killaloe, he took care to keep control over the old city of the Munster kings. At this time the Eoganachta, though weak, were not negligible. Donnchad, son of Cárthach, king of the Eoganachtact Caisil, was to be killed next year (1092) by Cellachán Caisil (great-great-grandson of the previous Cellachán, and ancestor of the O'Callaghans) and his successor, Muiredach Mac Cárthaig was to die in the same year. His son Cormac was to play a role of some note in 12th century Munster.

The year 1092 was to witness some important changes on the Irish stage. Chief amongst these was the blinding of Ruadri na saige buide ('of the yellow bitch') O Connor, King of Connacht, by Flaithebertach O Flaithebertaig and his friend Fogartach O Fogartaig, though Ruadri had been seven times godfather to the O Flaithebertaig children. This led to a period of confusion in Connacht. It would appear that Munster was implicated in this deed, for the Book of Lecan (630 b) records that at the blinding of Ruadri one of his sons, Conchober, was killed by Munstermen. Corroboration of this view is afforded by the Annals of Inisfallen, which claim that at Ruadri's death, Muirechertach Ó Briain became Ardri Connacht. He no doubt wished to do so, if only he had the power. He marched into Connacht and took hostages. But greater danger threatened at the moment from another side. Almost immediately, it would seem, the O Ruairc (Commaicne AFM) appeared in the O Connor home territory of Sil Muiredaig and left Mag A1 without a beast (AFM). It is true that Tadhg, son of the blinded Ruadri, is given as King of Connacht in the Chronicon Scotorum and A.Tig, when he was slain a suiis in 1097, but the other sources are not so definite. AU. call him rigdomna Connacht, and AFM. lord of Sil Muiredaig. As he was but 19 years old when his father was mutilated (24 at his death, A.Tig.) he was obviously too young for the kingship of Connacht, at least under normal circumstances. In the LL. list (41 a b) Domnall, son of Tigernán Úa Ruairc is regarded at Ruadri's successor as King

56. AI. record (1092) that Donnchad hua Eochada, ri Ulaid, was deposed and banished to Cenél Eogain and Goll Garbraige placed in his stead. Thus Donnchad was king 1091-5; Goll Garbraige was king 1096-1108. Donnchad was king again until 1113, when he was blinded. This is apparently the true course of events (cf. the Annals in general; and note AU, ALC, etc., s.a. 1111, when Donnchad is mentioned as king). In the LL. list, however, 41 d, Goll Garbraige is given as king in immediate succession to his father, and though he is credited with a reign of but four years (1091-5) he is found as king of Ulaid in 1108, when he was attacked by other princes and nobles of the state and beheaded. Then Donnchad O hEochada became king and ruled for five years (3 in LL. list) till he was banished by Domnall Úa Lochlainn, and soon afterwards blinded by his successful rival (AFM.). See also below, p. 17.

57. cf. AFM. 1092.
of Connacht. He is given a reign of seven years and is called by various titles at his death in 1102. The notice in AFM. that he was lord of Bréifne and Conmaicne and of all Connacht for a time may be taken as approximately correct. He was made king of Connacht by Muirchertach O Briain in 1095 (AI), so that the seven years’ reign in LL. would be 1095-1102. He was the last of the O Ruairc to be regarded as in any sense King of Connacht (LL. list). I take it then that the kingship was in dispute between Tadg, son of Ruadri O Connor and Domnall, son of Tigernán O Ruairc, till the former’s death in 1097; and then between Domnall, son of Ruadri O Connor and Domnall, son of Tigernán O Ruairc. According to the LL. list Domnall, son of Ruadri O Connor, would have expelled O Ruairc from the kingship of Connacht in 1099, and continued on the throne until deposed in favour of his brother, Toirrdelbach Mór, in 1106 (A.Tig.).

Another important Connacht prince at this epoch was Tadg, son of Cathal. But the dominating influence in the whole kingdom was undoubtedly Muirchertach O Briain. According to the Annals of Inisfallen Muirchertach became ardri Connacht when Ruadri O Connor was blinded in 1092. Next year, when he led an army into western territory, the Síl Muiredaig came ina airecht, that is to say, recognised him as their superior king. He placed Aed, son of Cathal O Connor, in bonds, and placed Gilla na naem O hEidin in his stead as king of the Síl Muiredaig. Within the year 1093 this Aed, while a prisoner at Limerick, was assassinated by Fogartach O Fogartaig, the O Flaithbertaig henchman. An uncle, Niall the athchéréch O Connor, son of Ruadri, was slain about the same time by the Conmaicne (AFM.). The Connachtmen, very naturally, resented O Briain’s suzerainty and turned against him. Muirchertach marched once more into their kingdom. From the O Flaithbertaig he exacted a fine of 240 cows for the slaying of Aed, son of Cathal O Connor. He plundered Síl Muiredaig, took Gilla na naem O hEidin and the son of Tadg O Coincennmain (king of Uí Diarmaita) prisoner, and expelled the O Connors of Síl Muiredaig into Tir Eogain, but he was unable to keep them there.

About this time, apparently, Tadg, son of Ruadri O Connor, assumed control of the home territory. Next year (1094) Muirchertach O Briain proceeded against him, but met with no success. Another Munster effort to reduce him appears to have been made, but it is likely that the Munster forces participating in this expedition were in the nature of auxiliaries to O Flaithbertaig of Iar Connacht, who had instigated the campaign. The combined forces were defeated by Tadg O Connor at Fidnach, where a little more than 300 were slain (ALC.). Amid the fallen were Amlaib Ua hAíchir (of the Uí Conmaicne, near Ennis), Donnseáibe Ua Cennfaelaid (of the Uí Cairbre Aebda) and Gilla-fursa Ua Maelmuaid (of the Fir Cell). Tadg then plundered West Connacht. A year later, his namesake and cousin, Tadg, son of Cathal, was slain by Munstermen (1095). The confusion after the blinding of Ruadri was thus extreme.

58. Rí Conmaicne (AU), rí ar Conmaicneib agus coimsightheoir ar Connaichaib, "master over Connacht," (ALC.). AI. say simply : Mac Tigernain ua Ruaire do marbad de bráthair a thill. A.Tig.: Donnall mac Tigernain hua Ruaire rí Connacht agus Hua Britiú agus Conmaicne a(d) tempus oceisus est Í Muintir Bolais. AFM. : Tigerná Bréifne agus Conmaicne agus Connacht uile fri rí.

59. This Cathal was brother of Ruadri, and son of Aed ind gai bernaig.

60. AI. say that the king of Síl Muiredaig who was placed in fetters was an O Connor.

61. Cúircumarad, and other smaller states. There is no mention of Muirchertach or of any O Briens. The Annals say loosely that the Munster troops were from "Thomond."
From his persistent interference in the western kingdom it is evident that Muirchertach was increasing in power. Diarmait, his brother, had been expelled to Uaid in 1092 (AFM.). Muirchertach had brought a fleet up the Shannon and ravaged Clonmacnois in that year (A.Tig., CS., AFM.). In the following year (1093), as we have seen, he drove the leader of the Sii Muiredaigh into Tireogan. Meanwhile Domnall Us Lochlainn had not remained inactive. He had been dealing determinedly with opposition to himself within the Cenel Eogain. In 1090 the heads of two septs, Clann Diarmata (62) and Cenel Moen (53) had been slain by him, on the same day. Further west in Tir Conaill, he had the king, Aed Us Canannain, blinded in 1093; and to the east he had Domnsléibe O hEochada, king of Uaid, slain in the battle of Bel-goirt-an-iobhair in 1090. In every direction, therefore, throughout the North he was imposing his authority.

The stage was thus set once again for a serious collision between the two kings. Neither was anxious to avoid it. Muirchertach opened the campaign (1094) by an attack on Ath Cliath. The position in that city requires some comment. Mention has already been made of its ruler, Godfraid, who on the death of Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó in 1072 came apparently under the lordship of Toirrdelbach O Briain. When Gilla Pádraig was consecrated Bishop of Dublin at Canterbury in 1074, Lanfranc wrote letters to Godfraid and to Toirrdelbach. (64) Godfraid’s reign ended in 1075. He was expelled in that year by Toirrdelbach and died while collecting a fleet to enable him to return. (65) Domnall, son of Murchad, son of Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó, then assumed the kingship of Dublin, but he died that year. His successor was Muirchertach, son of Toirrdelbach O Briain (A.L. Whether Muirchertach ever lived amongst the Norse, and whether his title was more than nominal, cannot be stated with certainty. In 1084 he led (with his brother, Tadg) a section of his father’s army into O Ruairc territory. When Donnochad Cael, son of Art in Coilech O Ruairc, invaded Finegall it is significant that it is Muirchertach O Briain, with the men of Munster, Leinster and the Norse, who took the field successfully against him. In the next year, 1085, Toirrdelbach takes an active part in the election and consecration of a new bishop, Donngus (O hAingill), for Dublin (Annals of Dublin). (65a) It would appear then that up to the death of Toirrdelbach in 1086 Muirchertach O Briain exercised effectively control over the Norse city. Whether he resided there normally himself, or had a deputy of Norse race to govern for him, is nowhere recorded. It may be taken for granted, too, that during this period the claim of the Uf Cendselaig kings to lordship over Dublin.

63. Barony of Raphoe, Co. Donegal, until driven across the Foyle by Cenel Conaill. At this time Gillaclrist Us Luinig (Looney) represented the sept, but its chief family was O Geirmredaig (Gormley).
64. Ussher, Synloge, 490-4. It is to be noted, however, that the letter to Lanfranc, asking that Gilla Pádraig should be consecrated, is from the clergy and faithful of the church of Dublin only (Ussher, Works IV., 488). But the notice in the St. Mary’s Abbey Annals adds: “petente Goderico rege.” No mention is made of Toirrdelbach.
65. Godfraid us Regnaill ri Atha Cliath do innarba dar muir do Toirrdelbach hum Briain agus a éc re muir anail ar tinid mórloingse doenhum hErend (AL)
was not dropped. The death of Toirridelbach (1086) and the preoccupation of Muirchertach in Munster, probably gave Donnchad, son of Domnall Remar, King of Leinster, an opportunity of asserting himself. We find him in that year helping the Norse to overthrow Maelsechlainn Mac Conchobair Uí Mhaelsechlainn and the men of Mide at Crinach (called Maídhm na Crinnahe, AFM.) within the present city.\(^66\) This suggests that at Toirridelbach's death Donnchad, son of Domnall Remar, revived successfully the Leinster claim to the lordship of the Norse city. But Muirchertach, now King of Munster, had no intention of abandoning his pretensions to the same sovereignty. I take it, then, that this was the major issue in the battle between Muirchertach O Briain and Donnchad, son of Domnall Remar, which was fought in 1087 at Ráth Édair ( Benn Édair),\(^67\) within sight of Dublin. As Muirchertach won a decided victory, it follows that from that day forward he is to be regarded as once again overlord of the Dublin Northmen. Donnchad, son of Domnall Remar, disappointed in Dublin, turned his attention to Waterford, which he attacked by sea (AI.) in the next year (1088), but despite help from Desmuma (read Dési Muman?) he failed to take the fortress and suffered a defeat at Inis Teimle (Little Island, in the Suir, near the town, between Uí Cenelseig and Dési Muman). Encouraged apparently by this success, the Norse of Ath Cliath, Portlárige and Loch Garman united\(^68\) and attempted to plunder Corcach (Muman), but they were grievously handled by the Uí Íchech Muman (AU., AFM.). At his death in 1089 Donnchad, son of Domnall Remar, is called "rí Laigen agus Gall" (A.Tig.), but it is not clear that this is more than a traditional honorific title. In the Annals of Inisfallen, where it is stated falsely that Muirchertach was responsible for Donnchad's death, it is added that Muirchertach took the kingship of Laigen and the Foreigners, but Muirchertach was not in a position to make good such a claim in what, for him, was a rather unfortunate year. The Norse, therefore, may have profited by a breathing space.

Just at this time, too (1089), Rhys ap Tewdwr, expelled from his kingdom in Wales, found refuge in Ireland. He collected a fleet, returned and succeeded in subduing his enemies. "And he gave an immense sum of money and captives (An. Cambriæ) to the sailors, Scots and Irish, who had come to aid him" (Brut y Tywysogion).\(^69\) It is most likely that this fleet had come from Dublin and that the wealth returned thither. Yet in the following year, 1090, the Norse of that city are found with Muirchertach O Briain and the men of Munster ravaging parts of Leinster and Brega (A.Tig.), so that the Munster King was still their acknowledged overlord. A year later, however, a native Northman, Godfraid, son of the son of Aralt, became King of Dublin (A.Tig.). It is to be presumed that he did so with Muirchertach's permission, but if this were so, good relations did not continue, for Godfraid, King of Dublin, was now regarded as an enemy. The fact seems to be that Godfraid was profiting by the rivalry of O Briain and Ua Lochlainn to play them off one against the other (Leth Cúind agus Godfraid rí Atha Cliath, AI).

Muirchertach thus thought the time had come to move against the Norse

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68. This is the first appearance of the Wexford Norse on the stage of history.

69. His death at the hands of the "French." that is to say, the Normans settled in Breochcning, is recorded in AI., 1093; Brut, 1091; A.Cambridgæ, 1091.
city (1094). He proceeded through Osraige (70) and Leinster and added their contingents to his forces. Conchobar O Conchobair, king of Ui Fáilge, (71) who was offering opposition, was taken prisoner and put in fetters (AL). Donnall Ua Lochlainn, on his side, collected the army of Leth Cuinn. It included the Cenél Conaill, the Ulaid under Domnall Ua hEíchada and the men of Mide, under Domnall O Maelsechlainn. Godfraid, too, king of Dublin, was an ally, and he disposed of 90 ships (AFM., cf., AL, A.Clon., A.Tig., AU, ALC., CS.). Domnall marched from Mide into the plain of Leinster (72) and turned northwards towards Dublin where the army of Muirchertach lay encamped. Strange to relate, no battle ensued, for the men of Munster and their supporters retired, leaving the field to Ua Lochlainn (AFM.). He, too, withdrew, for it was not his policy to offend the Leinstermen by ravaging their territory. But hardly had he gone when the Munster army returned, no doubt quite unexpectedly, to find that they had the field to themselves. (73) Godfraid, in Meánaich, was expelled from the kingship of Dublin, and died of the pest next year (1095), probably in Man or the Hebrides. A party, too, had risen in Mide against Domnall, son of Flann O Maelsechlainn. Muirchertach used the occasion to depose him and exile him to Airgialla. He soon returned at the head of a small troop and seized cows in Luigne and Brega generally. The irate owners of these animals gave pursuit and were assisted by a section of the Munster army (AFM.). Domnall, son of Flann O Maelsechlainn, was overtaken at Loch Leane (Loch Lebinn), in the north east of Westmeath, a mile south-west of the village of Fobar and on a hill near by, in cnoc uas Fobar Féichin, (74) he was overcome by superior forces and killed. He fell, in fact, by the hand of one of the Luigne (the son of Aigennan), his own late subjects, a rather sad and inglorious ending to his royal career. (75)

(6)

Muirchertach was less successful in Connacht, for an army which he led thither in 1094 had to be brought back re infecta (AFM.). Later, however, he proceeded by lake and land against the men of Mide, whom he "besieged" in Mag Lena, near Tullamore, in the territory of Fir Cell. (76). All that emerges clearly is the fact that the men of Mide had to make submission. The kingdom was divided by Muirchertach between Domnchad, son of Murchad O Maelsechlainn (77) and Conchobar, son of Maelsechlainn Bàin. (78)

70. Domnchad Mac Donncaill Mhic Gilla Pádraig had been slain 1090. He was succeeded by Gilla Pádraig Ruad, who reigned 13 years (LL.49 o) and was slain in 1103 (AFM., etc.).

71. King of Leinster (A.Clon.).


73. This is the AFM. sequence and it is convincing.

74. Not the Ben of Fore, P. Walsh, IER, Febr., 1941, p. 172.

75. Inselfh hic annus (A.Tig.). All this is found very briefly in AU, A.Tig., CS, AL. A.Tig ascribes the slaying of the King of Mide to Muirchertach, and AL say that he made Mac Maelsechnaill king in place of Donnall, i. Conchobar, son of Maelsechlainn Bàin, slain 1087. cf. P. Walsh, IER, Febr., 1941, p. 173. The long account is from AFM.

76. Al. These annales continue : is anlaid dorone Muirchertach in forbas, but the next few lines are unfortunately illegible.

77. This Murchad was slain in the round tower at Kells in 1076 while king of Mide. He was son himself of Flann (blinded 1037), son of Maelsechlainn Mór.

78. Son of Conchobar, king of Mide 1050-73, son of Domnall, above, son of Maelsechlainn Mór.
This is an event of considerable importance. Joint reigns were known from early times (79) and quite recently, at the death of Toirrdelbach O Briain, 1086, his three sons (Tadg, Muirchertach and Diarmait) could at least contemplate (AI) a three-fold partial succession. But the division of a major Irish kingdom like Mide, by an outside authority like the king of Munster, in the avowed interest of a Divide et Impera policy, was a phenomenon hitherto, I think, unknown. By an irony of fate, Munster was to experience, perhaps more than Mide or any other state, the lamentable effects of this new principle in the next century. But the momentary advantage was obvious. The two O Maelsechlainn gave hostages to Muirchertach O Briain (AI).

From the point of view of the Munster King, the position in Connacht was still very unsatisfactory. He had supported the Iar-Connachta (O Flaitbhergadaig) against the Síl Muireadaig (O Connors), but the resounding victory of Fidnach, won by Tadg, son of Ruadri O Connor in 1094 over O Flaitbhergadaig, Connemara, and other small states of Munster, proved that the Síl Muireadaig were still a power in the western land. In 1095, then, he moved once more against them. A large fleet was sent to Loch Ríbh whilst the army of Muirchertach laid siege to Dún Taíis (80) from January 6th, Feast of the Epiphany, to February 2nd, Feast of the Purification of Our Lady (ó Nollaig Bhece co féil Muire geimrit). Both the Conmaicne (O Ruaire) and Síl Muireadaig (O Connors) submitted (AI only). Muirchertach could thus return home, where he was cheered by the appearance of Donnchad (son of Murchad, son of Flann) O Maelsechlainn, king of Íar Mide. Donnchad received 20 oxs. of gold by way of tuarastal for his voluntary act of homage (AI only). Soon, however, there was a recurrence of revolt in Connacht. Muirchertach set out again with the army of Leth Moga, this time to Mag Ai, the heart of Síl Muireadaig territory. The O Connors and the O Ruaire united against him and a clash (debaid) took place between the respective troops of horse (marcsluag). Victory went to the Munstermen, and Tadg, son of Cathal O Connor, rigdomna Connacht, was killed with many others (81). No doubt the Connacht states once more submitted. The slaying of Domhall Ua Muireadaig (O Muiregáin, AFM.), énri Tethbha, and Amlaib, son of Mac Conneadha (Mac Name), while in fettors in Munster, is to be connected closely with these events. They may have been in Muirchertach's power as hostages. Further west in Connacht there was strife between the Luigne and the Conmaicne (represented roughly by the bishoprics of Achnony and Ardagh). Tailech O hEagra was killed by the Cenél Dubán (82). Luigne and the west were devastated and many of the nobles went to Munster for protection and redress. (83) Muirchertach again marched into Connacht and encamped on Mag ó bhFlachrach (not identified) from the middle of the summer to Michaelmas (September 29th). He banished Síl Muireadaig (the leading O Connors) and Conmaicne (the leading O Ruaire) from Mag Ai and Mag Luirg down to the Dubhbréine (or, as we would be likely to express it, up into the County Leitrim). When this had been done O Ruaire (84) submitted, and the high-king-

79. The term for joint-ruler was Leth-ri.
80. Not identified. AFM. put this event in the previous year, 1094.
81. AI, AFM. do not give the circumstances. Not a word of these events is to be found in AU. or the other Annals.
82. A branch of the Conmaicne. Two other branches were the Cenél Cais and the Cenél Luigna (AFM).
83. This is the sense of AI.
84. He was Domnall, son of Tigernán, son of Ualgarg, son of Niall, son of Art Uallach.
ship (árdríge) of Connacht was given to him, except Uí Fiachrach, Uí Maine
and Luigne, and a hostage from every household (tellach) in Conmaicne and
Sil Muire daig was given to Muirchertach O Briain.

It is remarkable that so much fighting took place in this year, 1095, for
during it the country was ravaged by a great pestilence, said to have been more
severe than anything experienced since the Buide Conaill of 664-5 (A.Clon.).
A fourth part of the population were reputed to have perished. Donngus, bishop of Dublin, and many other ecclesiastics and scholars, succumbed to it;
also Domnall Dub O Fergaile, king of the Fortuathla Laigen, Mathgamain O
Segda, king of Corco Duibne, O hAinbid, king of Airgialla, O Connor, king
of the Clanachta Glinne Geimn (AFM.), Domnall Mac Beóllan, flaithe of Dún na
sciath (near Tipperary), Finn Ua Dúngalaigh, rigdomna of Múscraige Tíre,
Mac Tairrín Ua Connean maer larmuman, Ua Matudáin, ri Sil Anmeha, Godfrait, ex-king of Dublin, and two O Fallomain of Clann Uadach. The mor-
tality (mortlaid) continued into the following year, when various exceptional
religious exercises were prescribed for the people.

B

KING OF IRELAND
(WITH OPPOSITION)

(1)

That Muirchertach O Briain enjoyed the predominant position in Ire-
land at this time may be deduced from a letter written to him by St. Anselm.
It seems to have been carried from England to Ireland by Samuel O Hanly, who
was created Bishop of Dublin at Winchester in April 20th, 1096. The super-
inscription reads: "To Muiriardach, by God's grace the glorious king of Ireland,
Anselm, the servant of the Church of Canterbury, (sends) greeting, with prayers
that he may be ruled and protected by God's mercy." Outside of Ireland,
therefore, in 1096, Muirchertach, rather than Domnall Ua Lochlainn, was re-
garded as High-King.

Each chafed at the limitation placed on his power by the other's exis-
tence! In the political field the two continued to show determination and
enterprise, and consciences none too tender. Thus we are told that in 1096
Muirchertach betrayed, not merely for diplomatic advantage, but for sordid
self, the king of Delbna Mór, Gillaoissen Mac Coirtain, to his enemies, the
Uí Loegoire of Mide, who put him to death immediately. The price paid was

83. The parts withheld are noteworthy.
84. AL. alone record all this.
85. AFM. Victims could not be counted. AL.
86. This was Donngus hua Aingli, episcopus Atha Cliath (AL)
87. Mention of a local chief like this Domnall is very unusual.
88. Godfrait in Meránach (AL, AFM.) ri Ath Cliath agus Inse Gall. He had been king
of Dublin, 1091-4, when he was driven out by Muirchertach O Briain, who thereupon took over
the kingship. Godfrait was the second of his name to have ruled over Dublin.
90. Delvin, Co. Westmeath. Its chief was O Finnallain (Fenlon). Later this became
the Nugent country.
30 ozs. of gold and 100 cows and 8 aitire (AFM). This is, indeed, a notice so surprising that it excites suspicion. AU. and A.Tig. record simply the slaying of Mac Coirtén by the Uí Loegaire. The Annals of Clonmacnois perhaps suggest the truth when they state that the chief of Delvyn was slain by the race of Lagery, after he was delivered to them by King Muirchertach, "for taking from them three ozs. of gold, 100 cows and 8 prisoners." The event, thus interpreted, becomes more intelligible. Mac Coirtén, the king of Delbna Mór, invaded the territory of his neighbours, the Uí Loegaire, and imposed his authority upon them. Not only they, but Muirchertach, objected to this upheaval in the balance of Midhe power. Muirchertach, therefore, interfered by taking Mac Coirtén prisoner and handing him over to the Uí Loegaire, who may have been his traditional overlords.  

There was, it may be added, a powerful reason why Muirchertach should not allow himself flagrantly to transgress the moral law in that year (1096). There was a prophecy or ancient superstition that if St. John's Day, June 24th, fell on a Friday the result would be disastrous. Now this evil omen was fulfilled in 1096. To make matters worse a pestilence had broken out on August 1st of the preceding year (1095) and had continued to May, 1096, causing innumerable deaths. A wave of irrepressible fear swept over the whole country. Profiting by the opportunity, the successor of St. Patrick and the leading clergy encouraged the people to cultivate a penitential state of mind. Abstinence from flesh meat (tréadhneas) was prescribed from Wednesday to Sunday once a month (gacha ml), while every day of the year, save Sundays, feastdays and days of special solemnity, was to be a fast day. Alms and other offerings were to be distributed for God's sake. Kings and chiefs, in consequence of this exhortation, granted saoire to many churches that were in financial straits (robatar andochiar). Muirchertach seems himself to have given good example to the lesser rulers. According to the Annals of Clonmacnois, "the king of his great bounty gave immunities and freedom to churches that were charged with cess and extraordinary country-charges, with many other large and bountiful gifts."

In another direction, too, Muirchertach's zeal for the welfare of the Church found useful expression. Though it was now almost the end of the century (1096), the converted Northmen of Waterford had not yet been provided with a bishop. Local prelates, no doubt, from Lismore, Ardfinn, or some other neighbouring church, obliged by rendering the episcopal ministrations needed. Now, however, it was decided to grant the faithful of Waterford a bishop of their own. Muirchertach, as King of Munster, and (in his personal opinion, at any rate, also King of Ireland) gave the proposal his full support. Others who concurred were his brother, Diarmait, Domnall Ua hÉanna, of

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93. The Uí Loegaire were a distinguished Uí Néill state, descended from Loegaire, King of Ireland in St. Patrick's day, while the Delbna were traditionally subordinate.

94. Cf. A.Tig. exit malus annus ui veniat bonus annus. A bliadain na féile Eoin.

95. OS. cf. AFM, ALC, AU. The people were saved through the fastings of the comarba Pádraig and the clergy of Erin in general. A.Clun.

96. Reconciled with Muirchertach in 1093. cf. supra, p. 1. In the document which embodies these decisions he is called Dormoth dux, frater regis. The title may mean that Muirchertach allowed him to exercise authority as a local prince over Waterford; but it may also mean that he had a recognised position as the most powerful prince in Munster after Muirchertach. Diarmait's status in the southern kingdom at this time is, in fact, quite obscure. What is, however, certain is that he did not lose contact with the O Briain patrimony round Killaloe.
Dál Chais, Muirchertach’s friend, and the most outstanding ecclesiastic in Ireland that day, Ua Dúnáin, of Mide, a bishop, too, and second in national prestige only to Ua hÉanna, Samuel Ua hAingli, bishop of Dublin, and Ferdennach, a bishop of the Leinstermen, connected with Kildare. Armagh was still ruled by a lay abbot, and the country thus lacked its normal ecclesiastical head as well as a properly constituted hierarchy. Once again, then, as in the case of Dublin, an appeal was made to Britain for help. Muirchertach and his host of influential supporters were obviously determined that the new diocese should be established and its bishop instituted in a manner that would leave no ground for objection to the reform party within the Church. They chose an Irishman, Maelissa Ua hAinmire, who had been trained in regular discipline in the strict Benedictine monastery of Winchester, for the responsible post, and sent him to St. Anselm for consecration. For Maelissa, as for Samuel of Dublin, Canterbury was a distinguished and readily accessible Catholic metropolitan see, to which obedience in matters ecclesiastical might laudably be sworn. This point of view was accepted without demur by the Irish king and the Irish bishops already mentioned. It is true that awkward possibilities lurked within the arrangement, but it pleased the Irish leaders as the one solution which then seemed feasible of the knotty canonical problem. (For a full discussion of these events see Fr. A. Gwynn, IER., January, 1942).

But the whole year was not spent in religious retreat, or in the settlement of ecclesiastical problems. Worldly affairs, too, received attention. Muirchertach rebuilt Kincora (AFM), which had been levelled by Leth Cuinn forces in 1088. Limerick, which would lie completely under his control, was destroyed by a conflagration, apparently of accidental origin. Outside of Ireland, Muirchertach lost a nephew, Amlaib, the son of his late brother, Tadg, who was killed in the Isle of Man (AFM). Whether the two were on friendly or hostile terms is nowhere indicated. Elsewhere throughout Ireland a number of rulers fell either in domestic quarrels or in inter-state feuds.

Next year (1097) the fiery rivalry between O Briain and Ua Lochlainn flamed up afresh. Muirchertach led the host of Leth Moga to Mag Muirtheme (Mag Conaille, AFM). In this army the men of Mide and of part of Connacht were included. Domnall Ua Lochlainn mustered the forces of the North and marched to Fid Conaille to the meet the challenge. But the successor of St. Patrick, Domnall, hurried south to act as peacemaker and his efforts were blessed with success. “God and the comarba Phátraic (AU., ALC., AFM.) made peace between them.” Muirchertach, of course, returned from Ulaid territory without hostages or booty (A.Clon.).

In Connacht, at this period, the confusion was, if anything, worse confounded. Domnall, son of Tigernán O Ruairc, had been made king of the whole western state by Muirchertach O Briain in 1095. After the blinding of Ruadri O Connor in 1092 the chief prince of O Connor blood had been Ruadri’s son, Tadg. Now, in 1097, Tadg was slain in a dynastic quarrel (A.Tig., AU., AFM.). The assassin was the son of Cúluachra O Maelbrennáin, (98) one of Tadg’s aes gráda. At the time of his death the unfortunate prince was but 24 years old (A.Tig., AFM.). Flaithebertach Ua Flaithebertaig, King of Iarthar Connacht,

98. Belonging to the sept named Clann Chonchobair, settled near Ballintober, Co. Roscommon.
was hardly the instigator of this deed, though he was peculiarly obnoxious to the O Connors since the blinding of Ruadri na saige buide. He did, however, turn it to his advantage, for he seized apparently the patrimony of Aed ind gai bernaig Ua Conchobair and assumed control over Cell Muiredaig (CS., AFM.) and all Connacht (A.Tig.). As might be expected, this outrage to O Connor sentiment, no less than to O Connor interest, was fiercely resented, and Flaithebertach O Flaithbertaig was slain by a Sli Muiredaig henchman (Matadan Ua Cuanna) in the following year (1098). The blinding of Ruadri na saige buide was thus avenged.

Once again (1098) Muirchertach O Briain led an army against the North. About this time he lost his mother (99) and his wife, Dubchollaig, daughter of Diarmait, son of Tadg, but these losses were not allowed to interfere with his warlike operations. He plundered Mag Dairbre (near Loch Dairbrech, Derryvaragh) in Tethba and proceeded to Shiab Fuait in Airgialla, to attack Domnall Ua Lochlainn, but no conflict is recorded, though an encounter probably took place, for O Briain returned without hostages or attire (AFM.). Ua Lochlainn was probably engaged in the same year in a battle against the Cenél Conaill, who were defeated by the Cenél Eogain at Persat Súillige (“crossing of the Swilly,” Farsetmore, near Letterkenny).

Otherwise the year is marked by events of minor importance only. In Leinster, Diarmait, son of Éanna, son of Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó, was slain by the sons of Murchad, son of Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó, his first cousin. (Cf. Table).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Donnchad, “Mael na mbó,” King of Uí Censtdelaig. sl. 1006.</th>
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<tr>
<td>(1) Diarmait, KL. 1042—’72.</td>
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<td>Domnall Remar. sl. 104.</td>
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<td>(3) Óna, KL. sl. 1092.</td>
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<td>(2) Donnchad, KL. sl. 1089.</td>
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<td>(5) Diarmait, KL. died 1117.</td>
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<td>Murchad, 1070.</td>
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<td>(4) Donnchad, KL. (100) sl. 1115.</td>
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<td>Domnall Ko. Dublin, sl. 1075</td>
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<td>(Mac Murchada hui M. na mbó. AI).</td>
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<td>Diarmait na nGall, KL.</td>
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<td>Murchad sl. 1091.</td>
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<td>Maelmórd.</td>
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99. Derbforgaill, daughter of Tadg Mac Gilla Pádraig. She was Tadg O Briain’s mother also (A.Clach, AFM.), but not, apparently, Diarmait’s. She died at Glendaloche (AFM.).

100. Muirchertach Mac Gillamecholmóg is given as King of Leinster at the Battle of Mag Coba in 1106 (CS, AFM.; but not in AU, ALC. He was rather chief king of North Leinster, cf. p. 4, n58.).
In Ulaid territory three Norse ships were captured and their crews, to the number of 120, slain. In Tethba, there was a feud between the O Harts (East) and the Foxes (West). In Munster, Macgillachoinnig Ua hUraidain, a foster-brother of Murchad O Briain, son of Tadg, son of Toirrdelbach Mór, was slain by the Clann Choscrig (Uí Bruin Seóla: Mac Aeda, Mac Hugh, represented east of Galway Bay) and the Eoganachta Tuaiscirt Cliach, and 30 people, men and women, were killed as a reprisal for his death (AFM.). In Mide two of the O Maelsechlamins, Donnchad, son of Murchad and Conchobar, son of Maelsechlainn Bán, laid the kingdom waste during their quarrels. A notable loss to the Church was Domnall Ua hÉanna, of the Dál Chais, the chief bishop of Munster, who died at the age of 76.

On the major issue between O Briain and Ua Lochlainn no decision had as yet been reached. In 1099 Muirchertach again led the forces of Leth Moga to Sliabh Fuait, where Domnall Ua Lochlainn came to meet him. In assessing the relative strength of the two kings at this point, it will be noted that O Briain was consistently on the offensive. Once more the comarba Pátrice acted as peacemaker and a truce of a year was mutually accepted. Soon afterwards the Cenél Eogain, under Ua Lochlainn, attacked the Ulaid, whom they defeated at Craeb Tulcha in Co. Antrim. Cavalry seem to have played the chief part in this engagement. The Ulaid left the camp to the Cenél Eogain, who plundered it and cut down the tree which gave its name to the site “Craeb Tulcha.” Two hostages were then handed over, and the abbot of Bangor went security for Ulaid good conduct, after which the hosts separated. In Thomond, Donnchad Ua hAíchir, king of Mag Adair, and Murchad mac Conmara meic Domnail, king of Uí Caisín, died in this year.

Coming to A.D. 1100 we find the honours going rather to Ua Lochlainn than to O Briain. The latter led an army to Eas Ruad on the Erne, where he was opposed successfully by the Cenél Conaille, so that he had to return to Munster empty-handed. Yet a sop to his pride was to come from overseas. According to Brut y Tywysoigion, the Norman lord Ernulf of Pembroke sent Gerald the Steward to Ireland to ask the hand of a daughter of Muirchertach O Briain for his son.\(^{(101)}\) This young noble was King of the Isle of Man. A fleet of the Norse sent by Muirchertach to Inis Eogain\(^{(102)}\) met with a still more unpleasant fate, for they were defeated and many of them killed by the sword or by drowning (AU., A.Tig., ALC.).\(^{(103)}\) Domnall Ua Lochlainn, on his side, led an army into Brega and Finegall to Ath Cliath (AI), which he plundered. He also took prisoner Donnchad Ua hÉochada, King of Ulaid, by guile (A.Tig., AU.) and a number of Ulaid nobles along with him. Catching the prevailing fever, as it were, the Leinstermen led an army to Sliabh Fuait, devastating Airgialla, including the Uí Méith and the Fera Rois (A. Tig., AFM.).

If the year 1100 did not favour Muirchertach’s arms the following year was to bring a turn for the better in the wheel of his fortunes. He began by

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101. For the circumstances attending the offer, see below, p. 19.
102. To Doire (AFM.).
103. According to A.Clon. there were two expeditions. Muirchertach O Briain accompanied the fleet to Derry and shared in its ill-success.
holding a Cémdaí Letha Moga at Caisel, where the distinguished rulers and clergy of that half of Ireland gathered about him. Thither, too, came Ua Dúnáin, the most important bishop in Ireland since the death of Domnall Ua hEenna. Ua Dúnáin belonged to Mide. At that gathering it was decided to grant Caisel of the Kings to the Irish Church forever. The cynic may smile over this gift, for Caisel was the patrimony of the Eoganacht rather than of the Dá Chais (O Briens) and by thus alienating the site to the Church Muirchertach was ensuring that the McCarthys would not return to it. Thus the grant might seem to spring from political rather than from religious motives. Muirchertach was killing two birds with one stone. He was excluding his rivals from Caisel, their paternal home, for ever; and he was winning the favour of the Church by an act of grace that would have permanent beneficial results. It must be said, however, that the deed was not regarded in this light by contemporaries. Muirchertach was sanguine enough to assume that Caisel would remain indefinitely in the hands of his descendants. Thus he regarded the Munster capital as his own and its abandonment as a genuine sacrifice. The McCarthys, indeed, may have been consulted about the transference. If not, they soon came to give it their consent. Far from depriving the Church of the O Brien grant, the noble Cormac McCarthy, when he rose to power a generation later, embellished the site with the lovely chapel which after the lapse of 800 years does honour to his name. It may thus be concluded that in initiating the transfer, as apparently he did in 1101, Muirchertach O Briain was acting as the representative and spokesman of all Munster.

The acta of the synod are given briefly in the Senchas Sil Bhrainn. According to this account the decrees were (1) that never again should the Church of God be bought for money by clerics who had recently been laymen or clerics who had returned to the secular state (do athlaochaib nó do aithileirchib); (2) that never again for ever should rent or tribute be paid to king or chief (toisech) by the Church in Ireland; (3) that henceforth lay people should not be erenachs; nor should a single Church have two erenachs save where it lay on the border of two kingdoms (í gcomrac dá chóiged); (4) that no erenach of a Church should be a married man; (5) that he who committed the crime of (murder by) treachery (fell) or murder of kin should not be allowed sanctuary (comaire; (6) that the crimes of clerics or poets should not be tried by secular courts (gan . . . do thabairt don tuata); (7) that no man in Ireland should take to wife his father’s wife, or his grandfather’s, either his sister or his daughter, either his brother’s wife, or any women whatsoever as near in relationship to him as the foregoing.

The leaders and chief councillors in this synod were: Muirchertach, High-King of Ireland, and Diarmait, his brother, King of Munster, and Maelmuir Ua Dúnáin, Legate, distinguished bishop and wielder of the highest ecclesiastical authority in Ireland by appointment of the Pope, with the priests and bishops and many of the lower clergy of Ireland.

104. The “cráibdic Eireann” were to possess it henceforth, and no king or cleric was to have a claim upon it (AFM.).
105. The McCarthys and their kin.
107. e.g., in Cálthréim Toidelbaig I., 174-5, II., 185.
108. He must have been nominated by Paschal II. soon after the news of the fall of Jerusalem.
109. Ardri Eireann, agus Diarmuid a derbrathaer, ri Muman, agus Maelmuir Ua Dúnáin, áirdlegáid áirdengeag agus áirdsenoir Inse Eireann in ugardas ón bPápa eside, co saeractaib agus episcopai agus cléirchib immdaid Eireann im maleit ris.
In other ways, too, the year 1101 may be regarded as the most remarkable in Muirchertach's career. He collected a great host from Munster, Leinster, Osraige, Mide and Connacht (A.F.M., A.Cl.) and proceeded by Eas Ruaid into Inis Eogain. He burnt fortresses (duine) and churches (cella), including Fathan (Othan Mura) and Ard Sratha. When he arrived at the great Cenél Eogain stronghold of Ailech (Grianán Ailig) not only did he level it to the ground but he ordered each of his men to put a stone in his knapsack (cloch gacha builce lóim) and carry it back to Limerick in revenge for the destruction of Cennóraid by Domnall Ua Lochlainn in 1058. Then the host marched by Fertas Camsa (Camus Macosquinn) across the Bann to its mouth (Tuatha Inbir. A.I.). Cúl Rathain was burnt and many slain (A.L.C., A.F.M.). The Ulaid gave Muirchertach their hostages. Strange to relate, there is no record of this symbol of submission in Cenél Conaill or Cenél Eogain; on the contrary, the Annals of Tigernach state definitely that he failed to secure hostages. It would appear, therefore, that his progress through these territories partook of the nature rather of an injurious raid than of an effective invasion. "An slóighedh timechill," which occupied six weeks (A.F.M., A.Cl.), though it brought Muirchertach much prestige, as successful circuits always did, brought him less concrete political advantage. He returned to Mide by the Slige Midluachra and continued his journey home by the Slige Dála.

His chief endeavour obviously had been to detach the Ulaid from Domnall Ua Lochlainn and win them over to his own side. But Domnall, too, had a card in his hand which he now put on the table. There was, as we have seen, much dissension about the kingship within the Úa hEochada family. Domnchad Úa hEochada had been king of Ulaid for a period. He had been deposed by Úa Lochlainn in 1095 and the Goll Gorbraige (Eochaid, son of Donnsléibe Úa hEochada) had been made king in his stead. It was this Goll who had submitted to O Briain. Meanwhile Domnchad had been held by Úa Lochlainn in fetters. A change of policy now took place. Domnall Úa Lochlainn determined to use Domnchad Úa hEochada against the unsatisfactory Goll. The comarba Pátrice and his clergy acted as intermediaries. On December 22nd, 1101 (A.U., A.L.C., A.F.M.), Úa Lochlainn and Domnchad Úa hEochada met in the damhaq at Armagh and swore mutual oaths of peace on the Bachall Isa and other relics. Domnchad was then released and his son and foster brother given to Úa Lochlainn as pledges for the fulfilment of his promises. The two kings then laid waste Ulaid territory. Donnchad, of course with extreme regret because the sufferers were his own people, but with a certain resignation for the chief victim was meant to be his successor in the kingship, the Goll Gorbraige. The latter, however, seems to have held his ground. He apparently attributed a share of the blame for the new development to Armagh, for AI (alone) record an attack by the Úi Echach Ulad (presumably in Goll's interest) on the primatial church and the slaying of twenty-four of its people (do tuicht na cille).

What may be called a private raid on a large scale was made by Domnchad (son of Murchad, son of Flann, son of Maelsechlaeinn Mór) O Maelsechlaeinn, joint king of Mide, into the neighbouring lands of Fermmag in Airgialla

110. From 1091 onwards. Cf. p. 3, n.56.

111. AI. alone. This suggests the order of events which otherwise would remain inexplicable.
and Conaille, traditionally attached to Dál nAraide. He collected a large spoil of cows, but the king of Fernmag and Airgialla, Cúcaisil Ua Cerball, gave pursuit and overtook one section of the host at Airgetglen (Moneyglen, parish of Donaghmoyne, Monaghan). A battle was fought in which 200 of the Mide men were killed, including the king of Bregmaine, Echtigern Ua Braein (AU., ALC., AI., AFM.).

An interesting reference to bands of _cethern_ comes from Clonmacnois (1101). Two such groups, the Muintir Tadgáin and the Muintir Cineith quarrelled and fought at the monastery, and the latter group suffered defeat. The one casualty of consequence was the Gilla Finn mac mic Ulacháin, king of Sil Anmachada. What his connection with the _cethern_ was is nowhere indicated.

The pillaging of Inis Cathaig in this year (1101) may have been the work of Magnus Barefoot, King of Norway. His appearance as an invader is recorded (CS., AFM.), but his activities in this respect are conjectural. The Annals of Ulster say simply that Inis Cathaig was plundered by the foreigners. In the Annals of Inisfallen the report is just a trifle more detailed. Many objects of value were taken away and great evil was wrought. The name of Magnus is not mentioned, but the marauding fleet is said to have come round from the north. We may take it then as probable that Magnus was the offending party.

This view is confirmed by the notice that, in 1102, Muirchertach O Briain and Magnus made a year's truce (A.Tig., CS.). The latter had come to the Isle of Man with a large fleet (AU., ALC.) and had crossed over to Dublin, where Muirchertach gathered a host to oppose him (AFM.). Not merely was a truce concluded, but Muirchertach gave his daughter in marriage to Sigurd, son of Magnus (AFM., cf. AI.). At this time Sigurd was King of the Isles (Orkney Saga, Ed. Taylor, p. 198), and King of Man (Brut y Tywysogion). What the happy couple thought of this arrangement is not clear, for Sigurd's age in 1102 was only 12, while Blathmuine's was only 8! (114)

(6).

By this time King Magnus of Norway was a well-known figure in Scotch and Irish waters. He had levied troops and set out on a conquering expedition in 1098. Having raided the Orkneys, he deposed the earls, Paul and Erland, and sent them to Norway. (115) The boy Sigurd, his son, was named ruler in their stead. Next he subdued the Hebrides. Logmacr (Lagmann), son of Guðrød, King of the Hebrides, was made prisoner. Then he sailed to the Menai Straits, where he fought a great battle against the two Norman earls, Hugh (the Stout) of Avranches, Earl of Chester (1071—1101) and Hugh (the Proud) of Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury. (116) Hugh the Proud was so clad in plate armour that nothing was visible but his eyes. Arrows and swords were used.

112. Really 'Bareleg,' that is to say, Kiltwearer.
113. The word, probably Ireland, is erased or was never written.
114. The Orkneyinga Saga, p. 262, places the marriage in 1099, when he was nine and she five!
116. These were not brothers or sons of "Kostnam, who at that time was King of Ulster in Ireland." The Orkneyinga Saga is wrong on this point.
King Magnus and a man from Helgeland concentrated their shots on Hugh the Proud and succeeded in shooting him through the eye! The Normans then fled and King Magnus took possession of Anglesey.

From the Welsh point of view a vivid account of these events is given in "Brut y Tywysogion." William Rufus and his knights were at this period engaged in the subjugation of Gwynedd (N. Wales). In the south, Gerald the Steward (ancestor of the FitzGeralds) had been made warden of a castle at Pembroke, and was ravaging the borders of Menevia (Mynyw). The attack of 1098 was the third made by the Normans against North Wales. A good defence of Anglesey had been staged by the Welsh. To their support came a fleet that was at sea from Ireland, which had accepted gifts and rewards from the French. Finally Welsh morale began to collapse and the leaders Cadwgan, son of Bleddyn, and Gruffudd, son of Cynan, retreated to Ireland, fearing treachery from their own men. Anglesey then surrendered to the Normans. These had barely begun to rejoice in their victory when King Magnus appeared in the Strait. From the battle which ensued he emerged victorious. The Welsh story is that very soon he abandoned the conquered island (Anglesey) so that the Normans could return "and reduce all, great and small, to be Saxons." This proved so intolerable that there was another rising, led by Owain, son of Edwin, the very man who had himself in the first instance brought the Normans into Anglesey. The leaders before mentioned, however, Cadwgan and Gruffudd, returned from Ireland a year later and made peace with the Norman conquerors on terms that were advantageous to themselves. Between Ireland and Wales at this epoch there was thus quite a close connection.

To return to King Magnus Barefoot. He left Anglesey (1098) and sailed back along the south coast of Scotland. The Scotch king, Eadger, son of Maelcolm (1097-1107), himself by no means secure on the throne, thought better to come to terms with him. All the islands to the west of Scotland, between which and the mainland a helm-bearing ship could pass, were ceded to the Norwegian. He is said to have enlarged his territory by drawing his ship across the narrow isthmus between east and west Loch Tarbert, thus adding Cemntire to his realm. For more than a century and a half these islands were to remain detached from the Scottish state. Magnus sailed home via the Hebrides and the Orkneys.

When William Rufus was slain in 1100, his successor as King of England was his brother, Henry I. The Normans were a quarrelsome lot and dissension soon broke out between the king and Robert de Beleame, Earl of Shrewsbury. A brother of the latter was Ernulf, who in the carving up of Wales had received as his share Dyved (Demetia) and had built the castle at Pembroke. Both sides prepared for hostilities. The Norman lords fortified their strongholds and secured the help of their Welsh retainers. At this stage Ernulf bethought him of Ireland as a possible source of badly needed supplies. He sent, therefore, as his representatives Gerald the Steward and others to ask Muirchertach O'Briain for his daughter's hand in marriage. This was easily obtained and the messengers returned delighted to their country (Brut. 1100, 1102). In the Annals

117. Muirchertach seems to have had no part in these transactions. For his one recorded dealing with William Rufus, cf. Hamer, Chronicle, p. 194: "From thence (Osmontowne in Dublin), anno 1098, King Rufus, by licence of Murchard, had that frame which made up the roof of Westminster Hall, where no English spider webbeth or breedeth to this day."

118. Skene I., 442.

119. Orkneyinga Saga, p. 203.
the only reference to this event is the bald statement that in the year 1102: Muirchertach made marriage alliances with the French (Normans) and with the Norse. Muirchertach sent his daughter and many armed ships with her to Ernulf’s assistance. Ernulf went to welcome the bride and the fleet. Mean-while King Magnus had appeared again in Anglesey. He cut down timber which apparently he caused to be transported to the Isle of Man. There he built and garrisoned three castles and gave the kingship of the island to his son. Hearing of what Ernulf had done he, too, sent messengers to Ireland asking for a daughter of Muirchertach for the youthful king. This he joyfully obtained. Frantic efforts were made by Ernulf and his brother to secure Magnus as an ally against Henry, but all negotiations failed. In the sequel the two brothers submitted and retired to Normandy. There is a vague and curious reference to this episode in William of Malmesbury (Gesta Regum II., 404-5). :

Hiberniensium regem Murchardum et successores eius, quorum nomina fama non extulit, ita devotos habuit noster Henricus ut nihil nisi quod eum palparet, scriberent, nihil nisi quod iubaret, agerent; quamvis feratur Murchardus, nescio qua de causa, paucis diebus inflatus in Anglos egisse. Sed mox pro interdico navigio et mercimonio navigantium tumorem pectoris sedasse. Quanti enim valeret Hibernia si non adnavigaret merces ex Anglia? Ita pro penuria, immo pro inscientia cultorum ieiunum omnium bonorum solum agres- tem et squalidam multitudinem Hiberniensium extra urbes producit. Angli vero et Franci cultiori genere vitae urbes nudinarum commercio inhabitant.

"So devoted was the king of the Irish, Muirchertach (O Briain) and his successors, whose names I have not heard, to our Henry, that they never wrote a line save what would flatter him and never did anything save what he ordered. It is, however, related that for some reason or other Muirchertach for a short time took up an attitude unfavourable to the English. He was soon brought to his senses by an order forbidding all shipping and trade between the two countries. For how wretched would be Ireland’s state were goods not borne to it from England? Owing to the poverty and ignorance of the inhabitants, the land outside of the cities produces nothing but a dirty mob of tillers of the soil. How different are the English and Normans, who live in towns and have all the culture proper to shops and market-places."

Muirchertach’s lapse, which this very superior person, William, does not specify, was the support of Ernulf and his brother against the king. When the two were defeated and compelled to retire to Normandy, Muirchertach apparently begged St. Anselm to appeal to Henry I. for clemency towards his son-in-law. A letter of Muirchertach to the great prelate expresses his gratitude for St. Anselm’s good offices in this respect.

The O Briain ruler did not spend all the year marrying off his daughters. His arm is found reaching to the seacoast of Munster. In a local quarrel between Corca Loegde and the Uí Echach Muman, a distinguished prince of the latter sept, Mac na hErlaime Ua Donnchada (Ua Cellaig, Al.) had been slain. The Uí Echach replied by plundering Ross Ailthe, the chief church

120. In quo anno (1102) dorone Muirchertach clemmas re Francaib agus Lochmannehaib (Al.).
121. Brut says of Muirchertach: Kanys pennat oed hwñnw or Gwydyl, “for he was chief of the Gaels.”
122. Thus in 1102 the O Donnchada family of Cenél Loeguire was still in Uí Echach Muman.
of Corca Loegde. Muirchertach arrested the pillagers and handed them over to the community, the airchinnnech and Fachtna (AL), who would see to it that they made due reparation.

A truce for a year was also concluded between Muirchertach and Domnall Ua Lochlann, after the former had marched as far north as Conaille Muirthemne (AL). Hostages for the maintenance of peace were placed in the keeping of Domnall, son of Amalgaid, the comarba Pátricce at Armagh (AU. ALC.).

Domnall Ua Lochlann would be likely to welcome this respite, for in 1102 the Cenél Eogain were again at loggerheads with the Ulaid. An army was led to Mag Coba in Dál nAraide by Ua Lochlann (AL). The Ulaid placed their reliance on a stratagem. They penetrated into the Cenél Eogain camp by night (123) and slew Sitrec Ua Macsabaill, (124) king of Carraig Brachtaid and Sitrec Mac Conrach (Curoi AFM.), Mic Eogain and many others (AL., AU., ALC., AFM.). By this means Ua Lochlann was made to suffer a temporary check.

Next year, 1103, the conflict flared up afresh. Domnall Ua Lochlann fell in force upon the Ulaid. These appealed to Muirchertach O Briain for aid. The southern king gathered a mighty host from Munster, Leinster, Osraige, the Norse, Mide, (125) Connacht. (126) Muirchertach at the head of these battalions, marched to Mag Coba. Thence they moved into the plain of Armagh and laid siege for a week (127) to the town. Ua Lochlann at the time had led his forces to Uí Bresail Macha in the immediate neighbourhood. Having wearied of the siege (or rather of trying to effect an entrance by negotiation), Muirchertach led his troops to Aenach Macha and Emain Macha and back to Armagh. This time he was apparently allowed to enter the city, where he made a present of 8 ozs. of gold to the church and promised 8 score of cows. His generosity was an earnest that towards the Church of Armagh his sentiments were kindly, as beffited a ruler trained in the O Brien tradition. In his diplomatic and military ambitions, however, the clergy could not take his side (AU.), so Muirchertach retired to Mag Coba. There he divided his troops into three sections (AL). The men of Desmond were allowed to return home (AL). With the king of Mide and the king of Connacht he set out on a raiding expedition through Dál nAraide. There a number of nobles were lost, including his grand-nephew, Domnagh, son of Toirrdelbach, son of Diarmait, Muirchertach’s brother; also the son of O Connor Ciarrage, and gentlemen named Peataedameain O Beóain and Domnican Ua Duibhchinn (Deegan).

The third section of the army had been left behind at Mag Coba. It was drawn chiefly from Leinster, Osraige and the Norse, but there were some small Munster contingents (AFM.). (128) Domnall Ua Lochlann determined to attack these. He led his forces against their camp on Wednesday, August 5th, and met with spirited resistance (AU., AFM). A major battle developed and ended

122. Baegul longpuriit do imred forru (AL).
124. Hua Maelabaill AL., a contemporary entry, which shows that the “f” was then lost.
125. Donnchadh O Maelseclann (CS.).
127. Fornight (A.Tig.)
128. “Much of Munster army and a few from Mide and Connacht.” (A.Tig.).
in victory for Ua Lochlainn. Muirchertach Mac Gillamacholmóg,¹²⁹ “King of Leinster,” fell,¹³⁰ with Murchad O Lorcaín, king of Uí Muireadgaig, and his brother. There fell also Muirchertach Mac Gormáin, king of Uí Bairrech, many of the Uí Cendeselaig, including Rían, king of Uí Driona (ancestor of the O Ryaun) and Gillapádraig Ruad, king of Osraige (LL., 40 e, Lec. 98 r d), and Mac Iarainn Ua Fiachrach, king of Uí Enechglais. The Norse of Ath Cliath lost Thorstan, son of Eric, Pol, son of Amann (Hammond), and Beollan (Bolli or Bjorn), son of Armund. Further losses were two O Bric of the Déisi, O Fálbhe, a rigdamna of Corca Duibhe, O Muireadgaig of Ciarraige Luachra and his son. This was undoubtedly a great triumph for Ua Lochlainn, the Cenél Eogain and Cenél Conaill (AU., ALC., AFM.). Among the trophies captured were O Briain’s royal tent (puball) and cairimillinne (banners?).

Soon afterwards, king Magnus of Norway met his end. The Brut y Tywysogion (p. 75, A.D. 1101-1103) has a scandalously false account of this event. Its purport is that Magnus had but a small fleet when he made depredations on the shores of Britain. When the Britons saw this they swarmed like ants in pursuit of spoil from the mouths of their caves. Magnus rashly gave them battle and was slain.

For the final chapter of his life the fullest account is in the Heimskringla (pp. 602 ff. New Ed.). This represents King Muirchertach O Briain as cooperating with him in Dublin and Finegall (Co. Dublin). As we know from Irish sources the situation was quite different. Muirchertach hastened to Dublin to oppose King Magnus. Nor is there any support for the Heimskringla statement that Magnus spent the winter with Muirchertach in Connacht, where “he set his men to rule the land he had won.” This, indeed, is fantasy. When spring came, says Heimskringla, Magnus and Muirchertach led their (common) army into Ulster, “where they fought many battles and won the land.” “After winning the greater part of Ulster, Muirchertach went to Connacht.” The fact, as we know, is that Muirchertach, in 1103, did invade Ulaid, with the forces of all Ireland save the North, and without Norwegian help. Even then, far from winning the greater part of Ulster, his forces suffered an important defeat. His one satisfaction was that he was not engaged in the unfortunate battle personally.

King Magnus made ready his ships to sail for Norway. He set his men to rule the land in Dublin.¹³¹ He lay off Ulster with all his army and they were ready to sail. They thought they needed a shore-killing of cattle and King Magnus sent his men to King Muirchertach, with the word that he should send him a shore-killing and mentioned the day before the feast of St. Bartholomew (Aug. 23rd) if his messenger got there safely. But on the eve of the feastday, the cattle had not come. On the feastday itself (August 24th) when the sun rose, King Magnus went up on land with the greater part of his army and left the ships. He would look for his men and the shore-killing. The weather was warm and the sun shining; their way lay over marshes and moses and


¹³⁰. He was rather chief king of North Leinster.

¹³¹. For this statement there is no confirmation in Irish sources.
plank bridges were laid thereover; there were copses on both sides. As they proceeded they came to a very high hill, and from there they looked far and wide and saw a great cloud of dust up in the land. They talked among themselves as to whether it might be an Irish army; but some said it might well be their own men with the shore-killing. They stopped where they were. Then said Eyvind Elbow: "King! What thinkest thou of this journey? Thou art thought to go unwarily. Thou knowest that the Irish are treacherous. Think now of a good plan for thy army." Said the king: "Let us draw up in line, and the king and Eyvind took their place in front. King Magnus had his helmet on his head and a red shield whereon a lion was laid in gold. He was girt with a sword called Leggbitr (Legbiter), the best of weapons. Its hilt was of walrus tooth, and the handle was covered with gold. He had a spear in his hand, and over his shirt he wore a silk jacket, wherein a lion was sewn with gold silk in front and behind. It was the talk of men that nobody had ever seen a manlier or a bolder man. Eyvind, too, had a red silk jacket, rather like the king's. He, too, was a big, handsome man, and very warlike in appearance.

When the cloud of dust came nearer, they recognised their own men. They came with the shore-killing which the Irish king had sent them, for he had kept his promise to King Magnus. Then they turned back to their ships. It was about the hour of noon. And when they came out on the marshes they marched slowly because of the mossy ground. Then the (132) Irish army broke out from every corner of the wood and straightaway fell to battle. The Norse were marching separately and many soon fell. Said Eyvind: 'King! things are going badly for our men, let us think of a good plan.' The King answered: ‘Call the whole army round the standard with the roar blast. The men who are here shall make a shield wall. Thereafter we shall draw away over the marshes. Once we are on level ground there will be no risk.' The Irish shot boldly and they fell quickly; but there always came other men to take their place. When the King came to the next dyke there were only a few places where it could be crossed and it was difficult to go forward. Many Northmen fell there. The King shouted to Torgrim Skinhood and bade him go over the dyke with his troop. 'We shall guard it meanwhile,' he said, 'so that no harm will come to you.' Then go to the holme (133) which lies there and shoot at them while we get over the dyke. Your men are good bowmen.' But when Torgrim and his men got over the dyke they threw their shields over their backs and ran helter skelter for the ships! When the King saw that he said: 'Unmanly dost thou leave thy king! Unwise was I when I favoured thee against thy enemy (Sigurd the hound), he would never have left me thus.' The King fell wounded. He was stabbed with a spear through both legs above the knee. He grabbed the spear between his feet, broke it off and said: 'That's how I deal with spears, my lad.' Soon after he received a blow of an axe on the neck, and this proved to be his death wound. Those who were left then fled. The two who were last to run carried his "Legbiter" and his royal standard to the ships. Those who escaped sailed away at once in the autumn. When they reached the Orkneys and Sigurd learned of his father's death he joined company with the crews and sailed for Norway. He left behind him in the west the daughter of the Irish King. (134) King Magnus was barely thirty when he fell. When accused, as he often was, of rashness, he was accustomed to reply: 'A King should stand for his country's honour and glory, not for a long life.'

132. "An" Irish army would here be a more correct expression.
133. This word is applied to a low flat tract, or island, or bank of a river.
134. That is to say, he did not take his wife, Muirchertach's daughter, with him to Norway.
From the Heimskringla account it might be concluded that Muirchertach O Briain had acted treacherously towards the Norwegian King, and had thus brought about his death. The charge, if made, would be completely unfounded. Muirchertach had observed loyally the terms of the truce made a year earlier with Magnus. When the latter asked him for provisions before he set sail for the Isles and Norway, Muirchertach might have pleaded the difficulty of his position. Part of his army had just met with a severe reverse (August 5th). His own position in the North was practically untenable, and he must at this moment have been preparing to withdraw. Yet, as the Norse source admits, he provided the emissaries of Magnus with the food for which they had begged. Of course the cattle slain for this purpose would have been taken from the Ulaid. When Magnus and his men, no doubt in some numbers, left their ships and came ashore in Ulaid territory to meet another section of Norse who were making their way to the same ships with appropriated Ulaid cattle, it need not cause surprise to find that the Ulaid regarded these Northmen as enemies engaged in despoiling their territory. Thus the Ulaid were quite justified in attacking them. All Irish accounts agree that King Magnus was killed by the Ulaid while engaged in a foray in their territory. This in substance is the truth. There is no question of treachery on Muirchertach's part. It may, on the contrary, be said that he remained loyal to his engagements even to the point of generosity.

That King Magnus had designs on Ireland need not be doubted. The fact was recognised and put on record in Irish sources (CS, A.Tig., AFM.). He had contemplated the reduction of all Ireland (forbase for Érenn uile). He was thus a formidable enemy, as the English and Scotch kings had likewise reason to know. Ordericus Vitalis relates (cf. Heimskringla, p. 605n) that he stored an immense sum of money at Lincoln in the keeping of a rich merchant of the town. This man supplied him, when called upon, with arms, plate and whatever else the royal service needed. Having learnt of the King’s death, he hurried home and used what was left of the Norwegian treasure as his own. Thus he speedily amassed enormous wealth. King Henry of England, too, learned of King Magnus’s death, and was greatly relieved. Henry also heard of the merchant at Lincoln and called upon him to disgorge his ill-gotten gains. The merchant at first denied that he had ever held any such deposit, but the King took steps (no doubt with thumb screws and the like) to improve his memory. When arrested and convicted he handed over to the King more than 20,000 pounds of silver. This citizen of Lincoln, who acted as banker to the King of Norway, is himself an interesting illustration of the mercantile connection between those two countries. Ireland, too, would have her share in such commercial activity.

Not only in Ulaid but in Cenél Conaill Ua Lochlainn experienced difficulty in keeping his Northern region in control. In the latter state he expelled Ua Canannain from the kingship (AU, ALC, AFM.). The Cenél Eogain rechtaire at Telach Oc, Ragnall Ua hOcain, was slain by the men of Mag Itha.

The battle of Mag Coba had brought no real decision between the O Briain and the Ua. Lochlainn kings. In 1104, therefore, the two were again active. Muirchertach O Briain led an army to Mag Meirthemne and destroyed...

135. “Tre baegul” (AI), i.e., when placed in an awkward situation, from which he failed to extricate himself. There is no suggestion that an unfair advantage was taken of him.
the tillage of the plain. With him was at least one Mide ruler, Cúulad Ua Caildelbain, for that prince fell accidentally from his horse near Dundalk and suffered injuries from which he died a month later (AU., ALC., A.Tig., AFM.) Ua Lochlainn replied by attacking Mag Coba and securing the hostages of the Uíliad. Then he proceeded against the Ui Laegaire, who had aided O Briain, and burnt a large part of their territory. It would appear that among the Ui Laegaire themselves there were different ideas as to policy, and that Ua Lochlainn spared those of its leaders who supported his pretensions against the southern king.

Events in Mide led to renewed interference by Muirchertach O Briain in the affairs of that territory (1105). Since 1094 the midland kingdom had been held jointly by Donnchad, son of Murchad, son of Flann O Maelsechlaïn and Conchobar, son of Maelsechlaïn Bán O Maelsechlaïn. In this year Conchobar, king of Mide, was killed by the Ul Úa Bréifne, with whom the Gailenga, but not the Connaicne, were now intimately connected (AU., A.Tig., AFM., 1105). He had been taken at a disadvantage (AFM., tria baoghal). About the same time another scion of the family, Domnall, son of Got O Maelsechlaïn, was slain by the Conaillach. Donnchad was thus left in sole possession of the kingship, but just as at an earlier period, when he became joint ruler, his position now was not independent of O Briain. The latter moved to Mide, where he entered into negotiations with Donnchad (AFM.). No agreement could be reached (AFM.) O Briain, therefore, expelled Donnchad O Maelsechlaïn altogether from Mide. The deposed king went to Airgialla, which he used as a base for raids on the east of Mide (AFM., A.Clon). Muirchertach O Briain, at the head of a great army (AFM., A.Clon.) pursued him to Mag Conaille, where three nights were spent (AI.) Muirchertach then moved to Cúl Ua naeda, where he encamped (AI.). He punished the protectors of Donnchad by burning their corn (AFM., A.Clon.). Next he made a foray to Slieva Guaire (Sliabh Gorgy, in Gallenga, Co. Cavan) and took cows and spoil. The Ul Úa Bréifne had to redeem these by giving Muirchertach four hostages (AI.). As Donnchad O Maelsechlaïn and the Munster king could not even now come to terms, the latter divided the kingdom between the two sons of Domnall, son of Flann, son of Maelsechlaïn Mór O Maelsechlaïn, Muirchertach and Murchad.

Domnall Ua Lochlainn, as might be expected, took violent exception to this settlement of the affairs of Mide by Muirchertach O Briain. Once again conflict seemed to be unavoidable, but Domnall, son of Amalgaid, comarba Pátraic, applied himself with all ardour to the maintenance of peace. He journeyed to Áth Cliath on his thankless mission and there took seriously ill, so that his end seemed to be approaching. Wishing to die in his primatial city, he was carried to Domnach Airthir Emna (Donnycarney, O’D.) on the way homewards and there became so weak that Extreme Unction was administered (AFM., AU., ALC.). At Duleek (Daimliag Ciannain) he breathed his last, on August 12th, 1105.

136. Rí Mide (A.Tig.): tigerna Temrach agus Bregh uile agus Lethre Midhe (AFM., A.Clon.); rí Airthir Mide (AI.).

137. AU., ALC., say that the expulsion was from the sovereignty of the west of Mide; AI. say that Muirchertach killed Donnchad. A.Clon. suggest that the deposition was not the work of Muirchertach O Briain, though he did interfere afterwards. The most convincing account is in AFM.

138. Dublin already was becoming a species of national clearing house or capital. But note that it was now dominated by O Briain. If Dublin was not as much his home as Kineora, it was at least a place where business could normally be done with him.

139. AFM. wrongly take this Daimliag to be the daimliag at Ardmacha.
Cellach, son of Aed, son of Maelisa of the same sept, was elected to succeed Domnall as comarba “by the choice of the men of Ireland” (a toga fer nErenn (ALC., AU., AFM.). This does not mean that an election was held all through the country; but that he was chosen in Armagh and that the appointment was generally regarded as fit and proper. He began a new era by having himself ordained priest on St. Adamnan’s day, September 23rd, his predecessors for about a century and a half having preferred to remain in the lay state. The event was to be of signal importance in the reorganisation of the Irish Church. What Domnall had not an opportunity of doing while he was alive he apparently achieved by his death, since peace was for the moment maintained between the two kings.

(10)

The question of the Mide kingship was as yet far from settled. Domnall Ua Lochlainn took up the cause of the dethroned half-king (AU.) and the two raided Westmeath (tairthar Mide). There, however, Donnchad Ua Maelsechlainn was overtaken while scouting (for sceimled) by a branch of the Ui Meic Uais of Mide (the Ui Minnecein AFM., or in singular, Ua Minnecain, CS.) and slain.\(^{140}\) A further step was taken when Muirchertach O Maelsechlainn was deposed in 1106, no doubt by, or at the instigation of, his brother, Murchad, who thereupon took possession of the whole kingdom, which he was to rule through many tribulations till 1153, that is to say for 47 years. Muirchertach O Maelsechlainn did not abandon his claims. He is mentioned as Rí Temrach in A.Tig. in 1109, when Muirchertach O Briain is found once more aiding Murchad O Maelsechlainn. Muirchertach O Maelsechlainn rigdamna Temrach agus (ri) tairthair Mide for a time (AFM.) died in 1143. Henceforward Muirchertach O Briain was to exercise only spasmodic influence (cf. 1109) on the destiny of the O Maelsechlainn, but there were others only too ready to take his place.

In this year (1106), however, Muirchertach O Briain seems to have taken a hand in arranging the dynastic affairs of Connacht (AU. addition, AFM.). Domnall, son of Ruadri O Connor was deposed and his throne given to his brother, Toirrdelbach, who was to become in time the most distinguished king of his race in the history of Ireland. His capacity, even at this early period, was realised by the men of Connacht, for they acquiesced in the change, and, perhaps, carried it through completely on their own account.\(^{141}\) The new king was inaugurated at Ath in Tearmainn\(^ {142}\) instead of Carn Fraioch, near Tulsk, the traditional place where this ceremony was staged by the Síl Muireadhaig.

An important ecclesiastical event of the year was the death of Caínncom-rac Ua Baigill, Bishop of Armagh (as distinct from comarba of Armagh). Cellach, the recently elected comarba, was in Munster on visitation when this event occurred. A conference was called in which it is to be assumed that Muirchertach O Briain played the leading part,\(^{143}\) though the chief rulers, lay

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140. A.Tig. has the false record that he was slain by Munstermen. AI. say a suis.

141. A.Tig. D’aithrigad do Chonnonchtaibh. CS. id. A. Boyle and AI. attribute the change to O Briain.

142. For Ath in Tearmainn, cf. Archiv. Hiberniae III. 18: diocese of Tuam from Ath an Tearmainn to the Shannon. Thus it lay not on the Shannon but at the opposite side of the diocese. Lynch, Camb. Evers. II. 787 n36, makes it Termonkeelin (Caoilinn), or Termon More or Termon Beg, in the parish of Kilkeevin, about one mile east of Castlerea, Co. Roscommon.

143. AU: a forceogra fer nErenn. ALC: a comairie fer nErenn.
and clerical, may also have been consulted. It was decided that Cellach should be consecrated bishop, and this was duly done, so that the succession of St. Patrick, with the jurisdiction attached to it, was held by one who was also Bishop of Armagh for the first time in several centuries.

A great weakness in the whole conduct of ecclesiastical affairs in Ireland was thus removed. The incident is significant, since its shows that the need for reform was thoroughly realised not only by Muirchertach O Briain, with his Norman and Canterbury connections, but also by many other men of good will throughout the country.

Next year (1107) the armies of the two kings were not set in motion against each other. Cellach, the new bishop and ruler of Armagh, used his good offices as peacemaker to such effect that the year 1108 also passed without a renewal of hostilities (AU, ALC).

Two serious fires wrought havoc in the south. In the first (1107) Cenn-córaid was burnt, between Easter Sunday and Low Sunday, and 60 vats of mead and beer (brogódid) were destroyed. This was indeed a blow to the royal cellarer! Next year (1108) the city of Limerick was burnt on the eve of St. Patrick's Day (AFM, cf. AU, ALC, AI). The cause was apparently lightning. Nothing escaped except the market place outside the walls. This is the first business record of the kind known to me. Another interesting reference to the city is implicit in the death of Ua Becáin, rechtaire Luimnig (mayor or governor of the city?), who met an unhappy end in this year (AI). Other unusual records are the obits (1108) of Cúcenaig Ua Maelgirrm, fiaith-briguig Airthir Muman, and Gilli Ailbe Ua Ciarmaice (Kirby) laech senór Muman (AI). The former was apparently the chief gentleman farmer in Ormond, and was obliged to exercise hospitality on a princely scale, a duty inherent in the title (fiaith !); while the latter, king of the Eoganachta Aine (AU, 1109), though a layman, is given a title commonly reserved for ecclesiastics. He was a man, we may reasonably conclude, whose high moral character made a deep impression upon contemporaries.

Among the minor kings the mortality was not exceptional. In the North Conchobar Cisenach, son of Donnslébe Ua hEochada (AU, A.Tig., ALC, AI) got killed in Fermag (AU, 1107). In some sources he is called king of Ulaid (A.Tig., CS), but the others (AU, ALC, AFM) more correctly call him a ríg-domna of that kingdom. The actual ruler, his brother, Goll Gorbraige (Eochaid, son of Donnslébe Ua hEochada) was captured in a house by rival dynasts, Ua Mathgamna and Ua Maelruanaid, and beheaded in the following year (1108, AU, A.Tig., AI, CS, ALC, AFM). Down in Kerry the king of the Eoganachta Locha Léin, Muirchertach Ua Cearbaill, and his follower, Cinaed Ua Muirchertaig, were slain in a skirmish (a cleith) by Oengus Ua Cinaedca and the whole Uí Cinaedca family or sept (AI, la a bráithir feisin, AFM.). Domnall, son of Donnchad O Ruairí, king of Bréifne, was slain by his neighbours, the Coirpre Gabra (A.Tig., AU, AFM). In a raid on the former state, Aed Ua hInnreachtaig (Hanratty) was killed; while a year later (1108) their king Domnall Ua hAmbeith (Hanvey) met a similar fate, apparently in a raid by the Ulaid.

144. He had been priest since September 23rd, 1105.
146. As father-in-law of Ermulf and friend of St. Anselm.
147. AU, A.Tig., CS. A bad year for thunder and lightning. Many people and cattle were killed.
148. AI. cenmiotha in marggad Immaig.
Between Church and state, too, there were some troublesome incidents. In West Clare a chief called Mac fir chogtha (choegha in MS., AI) Úi Domnail Mic Diarmata (of the O'Donnell family?) died suddenly after the community of St. Senan on Inris Chathaig (Samud Senaín) had fasted against him for a week (AI). In the midlands the question of taxing a church led to a dispute between Clonmacnois and one of the Ó Maelsechlainn princes. The Church, whose saire was contested was Cell Mór in Mag Enir (CS. cf. A.Tig.). What happened is unknown. It was probably quarrels of the same kind that led to the plundering of Mungret by Muirchertach O Briain in 1107 (AFM.). Scandalous as this episode is, a worse is recorded a year earlier (1106) in the Annals of Clonmacnois when "the family of Kilkeney gave an overthrow to the family of Leghlyn." Church was thus contending with church in some squabble about property!

The problem of the High-Kingship remained meanwhile incapable of solution. In 1109 Muirchertach O Briain, who at the moment was in close alliance with Murchad Ó Maelsechlainn of Mide, profited by the latter's difficulty in overcoming the Úi Briúin Bréfne (Ó Ruaire) to lead a strong Munster army to his aid. Many cows and prisoners were taken, some from the lands of Loch Uachtar, Co. Cavan (A.Tig., AFM.). Ó Ruaire collected his troops, and having attacked Ó Maelsechlainn separately, drove him from his camp (A.Tig., AFM.) with loss (Gilla Fulaire and others were killed). Domnaill Ó Lochláinn, who had every objection to the appearance of a Munster host on the Ulster border, led his troops to Sliab Fuaith. An encounter was avoided by the energy of the primate, Cellach, who succeeded once again in getting the kings to agree to a year's truce.

Muirchertach O Briain would appear to have gone home. Domnaill Ó Lochláinn, having set his army in motion, was anxious to use it. The Cenél Eogain therefore and the Cenél Conaill marched to Mag Bresail to attack the Uí in Mag Coba; but the Ulaid avoided defeat by giving the Northern Úi Néill leaders three hostages of their choice (AU., AFM., A.Tig, in part). Murchad Ó Maelsechlainn, too, set out on a predatory expedition into the territory of the Fir Rois, where he slew the king, Óa Finn, in violation of an oath sworn before Cellach on the Bachall Iosa. This brought upon his head an anathema from the clergy at Armagh. Soon afterwards Aed Ó Ruaire (Gilla srónmáel?) broke into his camp twice and slaughtered his people (AU., A.Tig., ALC., AFM.). The men of Bréfne marched apparently as far as Ard Brecán, where they took some captives from the Church and burnt others with it (A.Tig.).

An unfortunate event of the year 1109 was the killing of Gilla Pádraig Ruad, king of Osraige, by another young man while weight-throwing (ag cur cloiche). There is no detail to report as to how the accident happened.

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149. A.Tig has Muiredach, apparently a mistake for Muirchertach (CS.). It is to be noted that Muirchertach at this period, though deposed, was contesting the kingship (AU., A.Tig., 1109).

150. The point at issue may have been friction between Mungret, an old monastic church with a venerable tradition, and the upstart Norse city of Limerick. Muirchertach favoured the latter against the former.

151. AFM. read "agus Connachtaíb" for "a Connachtaíb," "into Connacht" (cf. A.Tig)

152. AI add that he brought neither hostage nor òlltre from the Gilla srónmáel (Flaitheb) O Ruaire, but they omit the cause.
From the military point of view the Connacht kingdom held the central position in the operations of 1110. Domnall Ua Lochlainn raided the territory in force and carried off cattle and spoils in thousands (AU., AFM.). There is no record of any battle. Two encounters took place, however, between Toirrdelbach O Connor and his nearer neighbours. In the first he dealt severely with the Conmaicne Réin. Three O Farrells and other leaders were slain. This battle was fought beside Cruacha, whether the Conmaicne had obviously penetrated. Later at Mag Brenghair (not id.) the men of Brefine defeated the Sil Muireadhaig and some princes of the latter people. On the whole, therefore, the O Connor king had an unpleasant, though by no means a disastrous year. Its one advantage was that it accelerated his training as a commander of armies.

The obits of the year 1110 are not without interest. Domnall Ua Lochlainn lost his queen, Bébhinn, daughter of Cinnéide O Briain. As she belonged to the Telach O C O Briain, who were on bad terms with the O Briain rulers of Munster, the marriage did not indicate an alliance between the two houses. There died, too, Gormlaith, daughter of O Connor Ciarrain, who was queen of the Uí Echach Muman. Gilla Coluin O Maoelmuaid, king of Fer Cell, and his queen were assassinated by the Geocach Ua H'aillen, under what circumstances is not related. The lady was a daughter of O Briain, king of Dési Muman (AI.). An O Briain prince who died was Murchad, son of Muircheartach's late brother, Tadg. Remarkable is the notice of the death of Ua Flainn Mac Flanchada, obviously head of the Mac Clancy family who acted as brehons to the O Briains. He was buried at Inisfallen (Inis Fachlann), and may thus have been engaged as professional lawyer by one or other of the south Munster lords (AI).

(12)

From the ecclesiastical point of view the year 1111 was among the most important in the history of the country. The re-organization of the Church was at last systematically undertaken. Lay and clerical authorities met in a national convention which by the nature of its deliberations was in many respects a national synod. Keating (i.e.) has two references to what appear in his text to be different gatherings. In the first he says (p. 296) that Muircheartach O Briain bestowed Caisel on the Church as an offering to God and St. Patrick in the first year of his sovereignty (flaitheas), in the year of Our Lord 1106; and about this time there was a general convention of the men of Ireland, clerics and lay, with Muircheartach O Briain, King of Leth Moga, at their head, at Fiadh Mic Aonghusa. The second reference (p. 298) quoting from the (lost) old book of the Annals of Cluain Eidnech (in Leix) says that in 1110 a Seanadh or Cóimhthíl chotcheann was convened. Now the date 1106 for the grant of Caisel is wrong (for 1101 is the correct year) and the same approximate date for the gathering at Fiadh Mic Aengusa is likewise at fault, for the reliable sources place this event in 1111. None of the Annals speak of a synod at Ráth Breasail in 1110, and the acta of this synod as recorded by Keating are so far

153. Two O Muireadaig—O'Murrays—from the lower part of Roscommon, near Athlone (at Ballymurray, O'D.), were killed (AU., A.Tig., ALC., CS., AFM.).

154. Keating III., p. 298, gives the year 1110 (1100 by misprint), but this is contrary to the evidence of the Annals. These are trustworthy, whereas Keating is unreliable in his dates. But the slight divergence may be caused by different systems of dating. Thus the period of January 1st to March 25th would be 1110 on one system and 1111 on the other.

reaching that they could not have been passed over in silence by the annalists. An interlinear note in the Annals of Inisfallen identifies Fiadh Mic Aenghusa with Ráth Breasail. Finally the Annals of Loch Cé speak of “a synod of the clergy of Ireland in Fiadh Mic Aenghusa in Uisnac” while the Chronicon Scotorum and the Annals of Tigernach distinguish between the gathering at Fiadh Mic Aenghusa and the synod at Uisnac. The Four Masters mention but one gathering at Fiadh Mic Aonghusa. O’Donovan adds that this place was near the hill of Uisnac, but his note seems to be based on a previous note of Colgan (Trias Thau., p. 299) which itself was probably dependent on an older note in some book of annals that identified Fiadh Mic Aonghusa and Uisnac. There are thus many problems that call for solution.

Lanigan in his Ecclesiastical History (IV., 37, 38, 40, 43), after some hesitation, distinguished between the synods of Fiadh Mic Aenghusa and Uisnac, both held in 1111, and a later synod of Ráth Breasail, which he assigned to the year 1118 (p. 38). The reason for this last-named date is interesting. In the Annals of Tigernach the Mide bishop, Maelmuire Ua Dúnain, is called Airdespoc Muman. Lanigan took this to mean Airdespoc Caisil. He concluded, therefore, that Maelmuire Ua Dúnain was archbishop of Cashel in 1111, and retained that office till his death in 1117. As the archbishop of Cashel who signed his name to the Acta of Ráth Breasail was Maelisa Ua hAímnlre, Lanigan argued that Maelisa succeeded Maelmuire Ua Dúnain at the latter’s death in 1117, and that the synod of Ráth Breasail was thus held between 1117 (when Maelmuire died) and 1119 (when Muirchertach O Briain died), for the convening of Ráth Breasail is attributed by Keating to Muirchertach. The year was thus probably 1118.

In this argument, however, the premisses are faulty. It is true that in the Annals of Tigernach at 1111 and the Annals of the Four Masters at 1117 Maelmuire is styled Airdespoc Muman, but such a title finds no support in the other very reliable sources. In the Annals of Inisfallen and the Chronicon Scotorum at 1111 he is called airdespoc Erenn; in AU., ALC and AFM., uasal shenóir Erenn. In a charter in the Book of Kells (Gilbert Facs. IX) he is mentioned as a surety in a land purchase transaction by the priest of Kells. A fellow-surety was Domnall, son of Flann O Maelsechlainn, king of Tara, slain in 1094. In this document Ua Dúnain is called inad episcop Ua Dúnain .i. senóir Lethe Cuind. Again at his death in 1117 he is called in OA. Maelmuire Ua Dúnain airdespoc na hErenn, sui crábuid agus ecna; A.Tig. airdespoc Erenn quievit i Cluain Iraird; AU. sui episcop Gaidel agus cenn cléirech nErenn, in 77 anno acetas suae (he was born in 1040); CS. airdespoc Erenn cenn ecaid agus crábaid Iarthair domain, quievit in Christo i Cluain Iraird. We may take it, then, that Ua Dúnain was in the Ireland of his day the prelate whose personal prestige was highest, but that he never took upon himself the government of Cashel or any other Munster diocese. His home connections were with Mide, where he died at Clonard. The title airdespoc Muman is probably a slip in Tigernach, or in his source, whence it passed into the Four Masters and Keating. There is thus no difficulty in dating the Synod of Ráth Breasail to 1111. Furthermore, it is extremely probable that Ráth Breasail is another name for the Synod of Fiadh Mic Aenghusa mentioned by all the sources save Keating under this year. If Keating (III. p. 296, 298) gives the two names

156. There are other grave errors in A.Tig. at this period, e.g., as to the death of St. Malachy’s father at Mungrat in 1101.
157. Cf. Synod of Mellifont=Synod of Drogheda. We may note that Ráth Breasail was not a town. The assembled Fathers and Lords would be scattered over a wide area. They may have lived during their deliberation in Fiadh Mic Aenghusa and met in Ráth Breasail, a big fortress like that of Rathurles, near Nenagh.
as if they referred to separate synods the likely explanation is that he is quoting from distinct sources. His first reference to Fiad Mis Aenghusa is substantially that found in the Annals of Tigernach (including Ua Dúnain, airde scop Muman), though Keating absurdly explains *comarba Pádraig* to mean “biocaire genera1ta an phriomáidh,” “the Primate’s Vicar-General.” His second reference is taken, as he relates himself, from the only full records of the synod and its doings, that found in the (now lost) Annals of Clonenagh. He did not advert to the fact that two reports dealt with the same synod.

There are, therefore, good grounds for identifying Ráth Bresail and Fiad Mic Aenghusa, and dating the synod to the year 1111.\(^{158}\)

Where were Ráth Bresail and Fiad mic Aenghusa situated? Evidence on the point is scanty. O’Donovan was inclined to identify the place with Mountrath, basing his view on an old life of St. Cainnech which equated *Móin na Rátha* with *Móin Rátha Bresail*.\(^{159}\) There is, however, an alternative and more convincing method of approach to the problem, though it does not lead to more than an approximate conclusion. This is a poem in the Book of Lestier (45 a) beginning: “Críthchan clothri cóicid hErenn,” attributed to Dubthach moccu Lugair. Its content is a panegyric of *Críthmaind, son of Ónáidh Cendsalech*, King of Leinster. The distich of value for our purposes runs:

\[
\text{Cath na Samaire ar Samain, isé rosfossaig,}
\text{Datuc in maidm ac Ráth Bresail, ar Maig Mossaid.}\(^{160}\)
\]

Ráth Bresail is thus placed on Mag Mossaid. Now in the Life of St. Mochoemóg reference is made to this plain (VSH. II., p. 174-5). Fállice Flann, King of Cashel (died 637?), had a vision in which he was taken by the hand and led to the southern wall of the Rock, where he had a vision of all Mag Feimini (et vidit totum campum Femin, cui imminet arcx Cassel). Then he was taken to the northern wall of the Rock, where he had a similar vision, “id est campum Mossadh plenum choris pulcherrimis qui candidis velaminibus tegabantur: arcx anim Cassel in confinio duoruorum speciosorun camporum constat. Femyn, scilicet et Mossadh.”\(^{161}\)

It would appear, then, that Mag Mossaid lay to the north of Cashel and was visible from it. The barony of Eliogarty is, therefore, likely to have contained much or all of it (Onom.). A difficulty which arises from the poem is the suggestion that this battle on Mag Mossaid was the battle of the Saimair for that river (the Morning Star, running through Brufl) lies many miles to the west in south Limerick. Perhaps the reference is to the Suir, which cuts the barony of Eliogarty in two in its course from Holy Cross to Templemore by Thurles. The original reading may thus have been: —*Cath na Siiure*, instead of Cath na Samaire. At any rate, Mag Mossaid seems to lie north of Cashel and we are not likely to be far wrong if we place Ráth Bresail, and the adjoining Fiad Mic Aenghusa, in the Eile territory of that county. More precise than this we cannot at the moment be.

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158. Lynch, Cambrensis Eversus II., 52, held this view. Lanigan rejects it strongly E.H. IV., p. 40, but on insufficient grounds.


161. St. Patrick was with the saints from Mag Femin: St. Brigid and St. Ita were with the virgins from Mossad.
In their very brief account of the synod the Annals do no more than mention a few of the leading personages—Cellach, comarba of Pádraig, Ua Dúnáin, usal seanóir Érenn, and Muirchertach O Briain, with the nobles of Leth Moga—though they emphasise the enormous size of the gathering. More than fifty bishops (162) attended, 300 priests; and more than 3,000 mic ecclesia, which is to be translated “ecclesiastical persons” rather than “seminarists” or “young clerics.” (163) The Chronicon Scotiae gives eight deacons, and a number of cleriq so great that they could not be counted. In the strict canonical sense this was not, of course, a synod at all. It was rather a parliament or a convocation of clergy and laity to deal with the general question of ecclesiastical reform. The numbers present show the zeal of the nation at this period to set its house in order in this respect. Added to the impulse from abroad—the whole development in Europe since the days of Gregory VII, the direct influence of Lanfranc and St. Anselm, the new situation caused by the rise of the Norse bishoprics in Dublin, Limerick and Waterford, the contacts of Muirchertach O Briain with Canterbury, the English and Norwegian Kings—was an overwhelming fund of good will at home. Men like Domnall O hÉanna, Maelmuire Ua Dúnáin and Cellach of Armagh are in themselves proof of the intense desire of the Irish people to harmonise their ways with those of reformed western Christendom. There was every reason to expect then that the synod would be fruitful in results.

An extra reason for hope at Ráth Breasail was the presence in the assembly of a new dignitary, the Papal Legate. This institution had come to play an important part in the work of reform in the second half of the 11th century. It was now everywhere recognised as a normal feature of the machinery of ecclesiastical government. Ireland’s Papal Legate was now Gilla Espuig (164) bishop of the Norse see at Limerick. Unlike the bishops of Dublin and Waterford (165) Gilla Espuig (Gilbert) owed no allegiance to Canterbury. The first that St. Anselm heard of his consecration was in a letter addressed to him by Gilla Espuig in the summer of 1107, in which the bishop of the Norse see congratulated the great English Primate on his return from his second exile (1106). From this letter it is clear that the two had met a year or two before, probably at the Synod of Rheims. Perhaps St. Anselm had a share in the nomination of Gilla Espuig to the position of Papal Legate in Ireland by Pope Pascal II. This took place some time before the convening of the synod in 1111; how much earlier it is impossible to tell. There was, however, an interval sufficient to enable Gilla Espuig to commit to writing what may be described as a programme of reform. He composed a tract “De Statu Ecclesiae” for the guidance of those who shared his views. Its chief features (166) may be given in summary form. It is addressed to the “bishops and priests of the whole of Ireland at the request of many among them.” Bishops are to rule all churches within their jurisdiction. The head of each parish is a priest, who rules the

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162. CS. gives in a later hand 58; the doubt about the VIII. being due to the illegibility of the original.

163. The idea is “those attached to churches or to the ecclesiastical life.” It would include hermits, non-ordained monks and many others whose status was lay.

164. Cf. supra, p. 16 where Ua Dúnáin is mentioned as Legate. In this year Ua Dúnáin would be an old man of 71.

165. Cf. p. 13, Maellsa Ua hAnmirn consecrated by St. Anselm in 1096.

166. The fragments preserved are in Ussher, Works IV. 501. PL. 150, 985.
parish church. The head of each monastery is an abbot, a priest who rules the monastic church. From his pontifical church, where is his see (sede) the bishop governs all inferior churches. He may have as many as 1,000 churches under him; he must have ten. His immediate superior is the archbishop, who is subject to the Primate, who himself is subject to the Pope. An archbishop must have at least three suffragan bishops: he must not have more than twenty. The Primate must have at least one subject archbishop; he must not have more than six. Here was in diagram an outline of the reform which the Church in Ireland should undergo.

It would appear that even before the synod was convened one step had been taken in accordance with Gilla Esquig's programme. Cellach had become bishop of Armagh in 1106. This was the primatial see. According to theory, therefore, Cellach should have at least one archbishop subject to his jurisdiction. Obviously it would be well that the new metropolitan see should be in Leth Moga. Policy, again, would suggest that the choice of see should meet with full support from Muirchertach O Briain. No doubt after consultation with that king, Cellach selected Cashel as the seat of the second archbishop. This in itself was a delicate compliment to Muirchertach, whose generous grant of the old Munster capital to the Church was gratefully acknowledged. The first archbishop of Cashel was no less wisely chosen. He was the saintly Maelisa Ua hAinmire (Malchus), who had been consecrated bishop of Waterford by St. Anselm in 1096, and had taken the oath of canonical allegiance to Canterbury. By accepting the transfer from Waterford to Cashel he moved automatically out of the jurisdiction of the English metropolitan see into the jurisdiction of Armagh. This event cannot be dated accurately. It probably took place either shortly before or during the synod of Ráth Breasail. In accordance with the arrangement come to at the synod, his old diocese of Norse Waterford would be included in a new Irish diocese of Lismore and Waterford, coterminous with Déi Munan, over which, as over the other Munster dioceses, Maclisa would henceforth exercise metropolitan rights. It would appear that he never relinquished his connection with his old see, and that when matters had settled once more, he resigned from Cashel and returned to Lismore, where he died in 1135.

The Annals in their notice of Fiadh Mic Aenghusa, make no mention of Gilla Esquig among the chief leaders. Their record, however, is incredibly brief, and the dignity of Papal Legate was so new that contemporaries did not immediately realise its significance. From Keating (Annals of Clonenagh) we learn that as the Pope's Legate in Ireland at the time, Gilla Esquig presided at the gathering. Its chief purpose was admittedly to provide Ireland with a number of territorial dioceses on the ordinary model. As in all such assemblies, the first great difficulty was the drafting of a proposal practical enough to be used as a basis for discussion. This was found in a manner as ingenious as it was unexpected.

When Pope Gregory the Great despatched St. Augustine as a missionary to England he authorised him (167) to consecrate twelve bishops who would be under his own jurisdiction as Archbishop of London (which church, rather than that of Canterbury, was to be the Metropolitan see of the south); and at the same time to send a bishop to York "so that if that city and the country

surrounding received the word of God, the said bishop be empowered to make twelve bishops more and to be himself their metropolitan.” In fact the scheme thus adumbrated could never be put into operation, for the success of Pope Gregory’s missionaries fell far short of expectations. In the main, however, this document gave a line to the Irish leaders in their thorny deliberations. England, without Wales, was not in area very much larger than Ireland. If the great St. Gregory thought that such a region should have twenty-six bishops then the same number might be taken as roughly the total which Ireland should possess.

Another principle agreed upon was that Leth Cuinn and Leth Moga should be on terms of equality. Thirteen dioceses, therefore, were to be apportioned to each half. The question of metropolitan jurisdiction was settled by making Cashel the chief see of Leth Moga. This was in accordance with Pope Gregory’s letter and saved the Primate of Armagh from the irregularity (as it would be according to the theory of Gilla Eispig in his “De Statu Ecclesiae”) of having under him twenty suffragan bishops. Whether, as Lawlor supposes, Cellach had already in 1106 taken this step, by creating Cashel an archbishopric and translating Maelisa Ua hAinmire from Waterford to it, is doubtful. Before Ráth Breasail Ireland had no normally constituted sees, and Cellach as Primate need have felt no scruples. The decision to make Cashel not only a see but a metropolitan see may have been taken by the Synod itself.

Coming to the distribution of the dioceses, it was decided that Ulster should have six (Ard Macha, Clochar, Ard Sratha, Doire (Rath Bhoth), Conninire, Dún dá Lethglas); Connacht five (Tuaim dá Gualann, Cluain Fearta Bréainn, Conga, Cill Alaid, Ard Charna), and Mide two (Daimliag, the Brega section; and Cluain Traird, the western section). Leth Moga comprised Munster and Leinster. In the former kingdom there were to be seven bishoprics (Caisel, Lios Mór, Corcach, Ráth Maige Descirt (Ard Fearta), Luimneach, Cell Dalua, Imlech Iubair). Leinster, exclusive of Dublin, was to have five (Ceall Chainnig (Osraige), Leitigleann, Cill Dara, Gleann dá loch, Fearna (or Loch Garman). Including Dublin, there would be thus in Leth Moga thirteen dioceses and in the whole country twenty-six.

The Fathers assembled and their counsellors did not regard these divisions as final. Indeed it is expressly stipulated that the Connacht clergy and the Leinster clergy are to have further discussions on the subject and to make such adjustments as they think proper, the sole restrictive condition being

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168. The use of this letter suggests the influence of Irishmen like Ua hAinmire trained by Anglo-Norman Benedictine monks. But Bede, of course, was always a popular author in Irish schools.

169. St. Bernard’s Life of St. Malachy, Intro., p. XVI.

170. The O Connors had moved from Siol Muiredaig to the district round Tuam by this time.

171. Clonmacnois would thus be included in the diocese of Clonard.

172. This is also Fr. MacErlane’s view. Archiv. Hibs. III, 2. Fr. Kelly, in edit. of Cambrensis Eversus II, 763, n. 17 and 792, n. 93, takes the other view, that there were to be 24 only. Lawlor does not seem to have known this, as Cambrensis Eversus is not given in his Bibliography. Neither does he seem to have known of Fr. MacErlane’s article, though it was published in 1928.
that neither kingdom is to have more than five bishoprics.\(^{173}\) With regard to
the North, to Munster and to Mide, it was apparently taken for granted that
the decisions come to at the Synod would not be questioned. The fact suggests
that the representation from these areas was large—at least on the ecclesiasti-
cal side.\(^{174}\)

Judged by results, the work done by the Synod of Ráth Bresail was of
the very highest order. They reckoned on a total of twenty-six bishops for
the country; to-day the number of diocesan bishops is twenty-eight. No doubt
modifications were necessary. Some small states made good their right to eccle-
siastical as well as civil autonomy. Among these were the Aíde (Cell maic
Duach) and the Luigne-Gailenga (Achonry) in Connacht; whilst the Sil Muire-
daig also asserted themselves and secured a diocese of their own round Ros
Commáin (later Elphin). In Munster the Corca Loigde (Ross Ailither) and the
Corcumruad (Cell Finnabrach) refused to be absorbed, and the Eile (Roscrea,
at Kells, 1152) made an unsuccessful effort in the same direction. Leinster
remained satisfied with the Ráth Bresail arrangement of its destinies;\(^{175}\) and
the North, though it shifted boundaries, left the Ráth Bresail dispositions
largely undisturbed. Owing to its long tradition as a separate entity, the Dál
nAraide of the south were not incorporated in the diocese of Down. Much of
the old Pictish territory (excluding Conaille) was accorded independent status,
with a see at the ancient monastic church of Droome. There is a suggestion
that even this was left an open question by the Synod, for the diocese of Down,
alone among those constituted, lacks the indication of its boundaries in the old
record.\(^{176}\) The Bréfone territory in Cavan and Leitrim, which increased in
importance under the O Ruaire in the first half of the twelfth century, was also
to receive a bishop of its own.\(^{177}\)

Strange to relate, the people of Mide, from whom, it would seem, acqvi-
sence was expected, since the chief ecclesiastic—from the point of view of per-
sonal prestige—present at the Synod was their own bishop, Ua Dúnáin, were
the first to attempt revision. Within the same year, 1111, a local synod was
convened at Uisnech and attended by Murchad O Maelsechlainn, as King
of Mide, and Eochaid O Cellaig, as the chief civil ruler of Brega.\(^{178}\) Here it was
decided to make Cluain Iraird the see for Brega, or the eastern division of the
kingdom, instead of Daimhlaig, as the Synod of Ráth Bresail had envisaged. For
the western division Clonmacnois was to be the see, replacing Clonard.\(^{179}\) So

\(^{173}\) Exclusive of Dublin in Leinster. That this was included in Glenndáloch is a
mistaken view. One fact alone, the presence of Muirchertach O Briain at Ráth Bresail, would
make its inclusion most unlikely. In the boundaries of Glenndáloch (cf. Keating III, 300),
Finegall territory as far as Rechru (Lambay Island) and Grianóg (due west in Meath) is
included, but this does not mean that the episcopal see within the city was held to be
suppressed, though it does suggest that the see did not extend far beyond the city walls—
if it was not actually confined within them.

\(^{174}\) Domnall Ua Lochainn and the Ulaid king were obviously not present.

\(^{175}\) Prescinding from the connection of Dublin with Canterbury, which led to trouble
in 1121.

\(^{176}\) This, however, may be a copyist’s mistake. Connor, as pointed out by Charles Mac
Neil, has a double set of boundaries, the southern part of which may be those of Down. cf.

\(^{177}\) A Bréfone bishop is mentioned in A.Tig., 1136.

\(^{178}\) A.Tig., CS. distinguish clearly the two synods. At Uisnech were the two Mide
rulers and no other princes. ALC combine unjustifiably the two notices, to give “Fladh moc
Aenghusa at Uisnech.”

\(^{179}\) Gilla Crist Ua Maeléin, abbot of Clonmacnois, was the chief ecclesiastic present
at this synod (CS).
outstanding; indeed, had been the place of Clonmacnois in the history of the Irish Church that its omission from the list when sees were being constituted, must be regarded as extremely surprising. The difficulty in its way was the obvious fact that it lay outside of Mide proper, in the state of Deblina Ethra, a territory subordinate to the Mide kings, but not immediately under their rule. So serious was this obstacle that the Synod of Uisnach was unable to overcome it. Clonmacnois could not establish itself as the see of Mide. Thus at Kells in 1162 the Fathers were to revert to the Ráth Breasail project of episcopal churches at Duleek and Clonard; but by this time Kells, too, was managing to maintain itself as a small see, while Clonmacnois was too great ever to be suppressed.

On the whole, then, the work of the synod, notwithstanding the very artificial nature of the original draft proposal, based on St. Gregory's letter, was to stand well the test of history. Much, of course, remained to be done. It is one thing to draw up a constitution, quite another to set it working smoothly, especially when this means running counter to a host of vested interests. Various comarbadad had to be dispossessed of their ecclesiastical holdings. It would seem that in many cases the transfer was effected by leaving the hereditary families in possession as tenants. Superficial bishops had to be tolerated till they died. Boundaries had to be adjusted: revenues provided for the diocesan prelates. All this was to be duly achieved in time and with no very serious disturbance to the edifice erected at Ráth Breasail.

Though Cellach, the Primate, was present at Ráth Breasail he was not accompanied by Domnall Ua Lochlainn and the northern princes. Indeed their presence at such a gathering would be hard to conceive, seeing that the vexed question of superiority between Ua Lochlainn and Muircheartach O Briain remained unsettled. We may take it, however, that the rulers of the North agreed in principle to the holding of the Synod, for they put its decisions into effect to the best of their ability. In fact everything goes to show that in the matter of reform there was practical unanimity throughout the whole country.

(15).

Stress has been laid on the division of the island into territorial dioceses, and this was undoubtedly the chief work of the synod. But its activity would certainly not be confined to what, in the ultimate analysis, was a question of mundane organisation. Reform in the field of morals would loom at least equally large as a subject for discussion. On such points, too, the Synod would have made known its will. In the records, however, there is an almost exasperating lack of detail. Thus the Annals of Tigernach state simply that many regulations were made by the Synod. The Annals of Ulster, Loch Cé and the Four Masters note that the purpose was “im eráil riagla agus sobésa for cáidhe eter tuath 7 eclair,” to prescribe canons of good conduct for all, both lay and clerical! The Annals of Inisfallen are a little more expansive in their comment. According to them, the best discipline and law ever made in Ireland is to be attributed to the Ráth Breasail assembly.  

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180. Fr. Gwynn suggests with much probability, that the cause of the difficulty was the personal character of Gilla Crist Ua Maeléoin, who was of lay erenach extraction and out of sympathy with the Ráth Breasail reform.
181. Lawlor. Intro. XXVIII, n.1. It was suppressed c. 1213.
182. Recinded riagla imda isin tseanadh sin.
183. They say the maithi Eireann archon were present; whereas AU., &c., give mathe Letha Moga only.
184. Conderinsat smacht agus reft is ferr dorónad rempu riam in hBrind.
The principal abuses that excited comment abroad are mentioned by St. Anselm in two letters to Muirchertach O Briain. Fr. Gwynn (185) would date the first of these epistles to about Easter, 1096, when Samuel O hAngli (just consecrated Bishop of Dublin) was on the point of leaving Winchester for Ireland. Speaking to the king, St. Anselm says (Ussher, Works, IV., p. 521) "it is reported here that marriages are dissolved in your kingdom without any cause, and that (wives) are exchanged. It is said, too, that relatives by blood (cognati) are not ashamed to live in public as man and wife, either under the name of marriage or otherwise; and this without a word of blame, though it is proscribed by Canon Law. Bishops, we hear, are also consecrated irregularly, whether by a single bishop, or in a place that is unbecoming—bishops, I say, who should give others perfect example in their own observance of the laws of the Church. I ask you, beg of you, exhort you," St. Anselm continues, "as one whom I much love, and whose good I desire in everything, to consult with upright and able men in your kingdom and remedy these and any other abuses that in your wisdom and greatness you may judge to need correction; and I pray God that when the time comes you may pass from this earthly kingdom to the kingdom of Heaven." Similar in tenour is the second letter, written probably in 1103, or after St. Anselm's second return from exile in 1106. By this time he would probably have heard of the reform effort inaugurated at Cashel in 1101. Its address runs: "To Muriardach, glorious King of Ireland, Archbishop Anselm, servant of the church of Canterbury: faithful service with prayers that he may merit the heavenly kingdom by his rule on earth." After some remarks about the pleas of which he takes in hearing good news of Muirchertach, he goes on. Therefore, glorious son, most dear to us in God, I beg of you to reform with all earnestness and care what needs reform in your kingdom, according to the Christian faith. And, indeed, an abuse is said to exist among the people whom you have undertaken to rule which urgently needs correction, for it is altogether contrary to Christian principles. It is said that men exchange their wives in the open market as they would barter a horse for a horse, or any other piece of property for its kind; and that they leave their wives without any reason, but just because the whim seizes them.(186) Again it is said that bishops in your country are chosen without respect to place (passim) and without any fixed see; and that consecrations are performed by an unaired bishop, just like the ordinations of priests. This is contrary to the sacred canons, which decree that those who have been so instituted or consecrated should be deposed from their office of bishop, with their consecrators. For a bishop cannot be appointed according to God unless he have a fixed diocese (parochia) and people subject to his rule; since in secular life itself a man cannot have the name or office of shepherd unless he has a flock to feed. The episcopal state is seriously cheapened if a man is made a bishop who, when consecrated, has no idea of where or whom he is to rule as prelate. Nobody should be consecrated by less than three bishops, for the particular reason that his faith, life, devotion to duty, as one who must watch, may be approved by suitable witnesses, determined by law; and for many more general reasons as well."


186. On marriage, cf. Lawlor's note in the Life of St. Malachy, p. 162-3, where all references are given. There was legislation on the point at the Synod of Cashel, 1172. Giralda
V. 282 (Expug. Hib.) gives us: quod universi fideles . . . repudiato cognatum et affinium contubernio legitima contrahent matrimonio et observant. That is all. Outside reformers like Lanfranc, St. Anselm and St. Bernard were interested mainly in the removal of such moral abuses, whereas Irish reformers concentrated from the first on diocesan organisation, allowing moral reforms to come later.
These contacts of Muirchertach O Briain with St. Anselm and of Gilla Espuig with the same saint, and in general Irish contacts with Norman England and the Continent at a time when reform, so long overdue, was everywhere in the air, obviously prepared the way for the Synod of Réabha Bresail.

(16)

Some Irish connections with Wales during these years deserve mention. The "Brut y Tywysogion" recounts that in 1105 "a certain nation, not recognised in respect of origin and manners . . . was sent by King Henry into the country of Dyfed. And that nation seized the whole centre of Rhos, near the mouth of the Cleddyw, having driven off the people completely. That nation, as it is said, was derived from Flanders, the country which is situated nearest to the sea of the Britons." Owing to sand and an unfertile soil the land was overpopulated, and they had begged King Henry to give them a place where they might dwell. He sent them to Rhos, where they expelled the proprietary inhabitants once for all. Meanwhile Gerald, steward (ystewart) of Pembroke, founded the castle of Kennarch Bychan, where he settled with his riches, his wife, his heirs and all dear to him; and he fortified it with a ditch and wall and a gateway under lock and key.

Next year, 1106, Cadwgwgan, son of Bleddyn, prepared a feast for the nobles of his country (Ceredigion) and invited to it his son, Owain, from Powys. When the feast was ended, Owain heard that Nesta, daughter of Rhys, son of Tewdwyr, and wife of Gerald the steward, was in Gerald's castle of Kennarch Bychan. Owain and she were second cousins. Instigated by the devil, he came on a certain night to the castle with a troop of about fourteen men. They broke into the fortress without attracting attention and began to set the place on fire. A shout was raised. Nesta contrived the escape of her husband and then faced the intruders. They searched everywhere for Gerald but failed to find him. Then they carried off Nesta with her two sons and a daughter, and another son of Gerald's by a concubine, and spoiled and laid waste the castle. Owain took Nesta as his mistress. Cadwgwgan, his father, fearing the wrath of King Henry when he learned that his steward had been insulted, endeavoured to prevail on Owain to restore to Gerald his wife and the other spoils. Owain refused. Nesta did, however, get him to agree to send back to Gerald the four children. An army was collected by Rickart, bishop of London, against Owain and his father. Their private enemies were also paid to endeavour to assassinate them. The two fled to a ship that was in Aberdovey "which a little before had arrived with merchandise from Ireland." Owain crossed to this country with a few companions and was well received by Muirchertach O Briain, "the supreme king of Ireland; for he had been previously with him and had been educated with him during the war in which Anglesey was ravaged by the two earls, and had been sent by his brother with presents to Muirchertach." Cadwgwgan made peace with King Henry and paid a fine of one hundred pounds for his territory of Ceredigion. Cadwgwgan also agreed to have nothing to do with his son, Owain. Some of the latter's followers returned secretly from Ireland. Owain also returned to Powys, and having united forces with a cousin, Madog, and robbed "in the country of the French and in England," Owain's companions went into Dyfed, to pillage the country and seize the people and carry them to the ships that had come with him from Ireland. King Henry replied by depriving Cadwgwgan of his territory (Ceredigion). Owain and Madog again repaired to Ireland. But Madog soon returned "not being able to stand the savage ways of the Irish." Owain remained on for some time. Madog in 1108 attacked and slew his uncle, Iorwerth, in a house which he had set on
fire. He was outlawed by the king. Cadwgan made his peace with Henry and Owain was invited to return from Ireland. He did so and gave pledges to the king. Madog had Cadwgan slain. In 1110 Madog fell into Owain's hands and was immediately blinded. A year later Owain accompanied King Henry to Normandy. Next year 1112 saw the first Norman bishop installed at Menevia "against the will and in contempt of all the learned men of the Britons." Gruffudd, son of Rhys, son of Tewdwr (king of South Wales), came from Ireland to Dyfed, who in his youth had gone with some of his kindred to Ireland, where he remained until he arrived at maturity. Wearied of the long estrangement, he returned to his patrimony. He passed about two years, sometimes with Gerald the Steward at Pembroke castle,(187) at other times with his kindred; sometimes in Gwynedd; sometimes absent from place to place. King Henry made many efforts to get him captured or murdered. Owain took the king's part in these events, but was himself slain by Gerald the Steward and Flemings in 1114. Gruffudd, son of Rhys ap Tewdwr, lived on to 1137.

Not only Gerald the Steward, then, and other Normans,(188) but many of the Welsh lords as well travelled to Ireland. The country was thus, as rarely before, kept in living touch with the course of affairs in England and abroad.

It may be taken for granted, too, that the Normans had no intention of calling a halt to their conquests once they had reached Anglesey and the western coast of Wales. Their zest for adventure and their lust for other people's property were not likely to be stopped by the Irish sea. A clear hint in this direction is contained in an anecdote related by Giraldus Cambrensis.(189) He is discussing the boasts to which kings were prone. Thus when Richard Coeur de Lion built the immensely strong castle in Château Gaillard (in 1197-8), Philip Augustus came to see it with his courtiers. They all praised its beauty and its seemingly impregnable bastions. Then said Philip with an oath: "If it were made of iron I'd storm it." When this was told to Richard, he got into a paroxysm of anger and retorted: "By God's throat (per gorgiam Dei)," said he, for he was accustomed to use such enormous oaths, "If 'twere made of butter, I'd hold it against that fellow and his crew!"

Something similar was the boast of an earlier Norman King. From the rocks near St. David's, we are told, the hills of Ireland are visible in calm weather; and no wonder, for the voyage thither across the Irish Sea takes no longer than a short day. Now William II., commonly called Rufus, the son of William the Bastard, and King of England and Normandy, having in the course of a courageous journey reached this point in Wales, stood on these rocks and caught a glimpse of Ireland. Those round him heard him exclaim: "I'll bring my ships to this place, use them as a bridge and conquer that country." The story of the threat was carried to Murchad, King of Leinster.(190) He thought over it for a while and then said: "Did Rufus add ' with God's help? ' " (si Deo placuerit). The answer was "No." "Then," said Murchad, "he's relying on his own

187. His brother-in-law; for Nesta and Gruffudd were brother and sister.

188. "Brut," 1100 (=1101).


190. Probably Donnochad, son of Murchad, son of Diarmait Mac Mall na mbó and father of Diarmait na nGall. Donnochad was slain in 1115. His uncle, Enda Mac Murchada, king of Leinster, was slain A.D. 1100. See table, p. 14.
human power only, not on that of God. Therefore, I have no fear of him. (191) A significant feature of this tale is the intimation that the Normans were toying with the idea of invading Ireland from the moment they reached the Welsh coast.

(17).

To return to the Ireland of 1111. The political position in the North was such that there was little likelihood of that part of the country acting at Ráth Bresail as an undivided unit. Despite their many defeats, the Ulaid in this year had the courage to take the offensive and raid Telach Oc, where they cut down the venerable old trees (bileda). Niall, son of Domnall Ua Lochlainn, replied by penetrating into their territory as far as Drochert na feirse (192) and securing an indemnity of 3,000 cows. (193) Later, however, a meeting was arranged between the kings of Conaill and Ulaid, and Domnach Ua hEochada made complete submission to Domnall, giving the aitire that he demanded. This treaty was to last for a little more than a year.

In the immediate dynastic circle of Muirchertach O Briain there were some quarrels. Domnall, son of Tadg (Muirchertach’s brother, who died at Killassie a month after his father) left Munster in an indignant mood (194) and went to the north of Ireland. Afterwards he took by force the kingship of the Isles (Al). In the Orkneyinga Saga (ch. XLVI., pp. 205-6), there is mention of Dufnjall, son of Earl Dungatir (Domnall, son of Duncan), who fought against the earls Hakon and Magnus of the Orkneys, his second cousins. The date (1107/1117?) would suit the expedition of Domnall, son of Tadg O Briain, and he may be the prince whom the Norse earls assailed, for a Domnall, son of Duncan, has not been identified. (195) According to the Norse account, Domnall fell at the hands of the earls. Skene (Celtic Scotland, p. 445) says that in 1113 Olaf, son of Godfred (Gudrör, whose brother, Lagman, son of Godfred, King of the Isles, was captured by King Magnus of Norway in 1098), “who had taken refuge with the King of England, recovered the possession of the now independent kingdom of the Isles and ruled them for forty years.” In the Dál Chais genealogies (B.B. and H.1.7; cf. Lebor Muimneach, ed. Torna, p. 299) mention is made of this Domnall in the following words: “It is he who took the kingship of the Isles and Galloway, and who was killed by the Connachtmen. He had secured the kingship of Thomond for a single year after Muirchertach had taken to his bed.” It looks, therefore, as if he went on an adventure to the Hebrides and met with some success; only to be driven out later, when he returned to his native Clare. When Muirchertach fell sick in 1114, this Domnall became an important person. (197) Muirchertach recovered much of his power in 1115, and in that year Domnall is found fighting a battle, apparently on Muirchertach’s behalf, against the Leinstermen at Dublin. It was in this year (1115) that he was slain by the men of Connacht (AI).

192. Al. The place was near Newcastle, Co. Down. Onom.
193. AU. has 1,000, changed to 3,000. ALC., AFM., Al. Mac Meic Loichlaind
194. Fo dimaig Al.; diomhnaig, Keating, FF.
196. “Isé roghaibh rígse Inse Gall agus Gall-Gaedhil, agus roimhradh le Connacht, iar ngabáil rígse Tuadmuman son bhliadhain smáin iar loige Muirchertaig.”
197. cf. p. 45.
Something similar was the relationship of Brian, son of Murchad (198) O Briain with Muirchertach. This young prince was a grand-nephew of Muirchertach and a nephew of the Domnall just mentioned. In 1111 he left the High King because of a dispute (for deibid) and went to Leth Cuinn; but in 1116 he is found on Muirchertach’s side against Diarmaid, when the latter laid siege to Limerick. He was slain in 1118 by Tadg Mac Carthaig (father of Cormac) and the men of Desmond.

We have noted already that at the Synod of Ráth Breasail Clonmacnois was ignored, obviously not by accident. In this connection it is interesting to find that the relationship of the monastery with Muirchertach O Briain was far from good. In fact, Muirchertach, though busy himself, sent an army of Dál Chais to plunder Clonmacnois in this year (A.Tig., AFM.). Sometime earlier, apparently (AL, A.Tig.), he had himself led a plundering party to Commaine, Tethba (A.Tig.) and Bréfné (AL), which he devastated. Women and cows were taken by Muirchertach as spoils to Munster, despite the efforts of the O Ruairec to ward Muirchertach off from them.(199)

Muirchertach’s hold on Dublin at this period is seen from a long visit which he paid to the city. (200) He stayed from St. Michael’s Day (September 28th) to Christmas, a period of just three months. This again suggests that he would countenance no effort to suppress the bishopric of that city, though the very purpose of this journey may have been his wish to incorporate it into the Irish ecclesiastical system. If that were his aim, he failed.

From Connacht Toirrdeilbach O Connor led a raiding party as far as Termann Dabéog. This was the territory in Donegal that lay beside St. Patrick’s Purgatory. No mention whatever is made of the latter celebrated place of pilgrimage. Indeed, the universal silence in connection with it up to this time goes to show that its fame had not as yet begun to grow. In other words, Lough Derg was not a traditional place of pilgrimage and did not become so before the 12th century.

After so much movement there was a year (1112) of comparative peace. Domnall Ua Lochlainn raided Finegall, as far as Dubgall’s bridge, or the gates of Dublin, and carried off a spoil of cattle and prisoners. In the south, Cathal, a grandson of Domnall, son of Dubdáboirenn, of the Úi Eachach Muman, was killed treacherously by his son-in-law, Aed Ua Ceallacháin. The connection between slayer and slain suggests that at this time a section of the Eoganachta of Caisel had begun to move to the south.

Hitherto the Cenél Eogan and the Cenél Conaill had acted generally in co-operation against the common enemy, Muirchertach O Briain. Now they fell to quarrelling among themselves. Niall, son of Domnall Ua Lochlann, according to the Annals of Inisfallen, took the kingship of Cenél Conaill. Next year he appeared in that capacity at his father’s airecht in Athlone. The fact is thus established, though on a priori grounds a proceeding so unprecedented would seem impolitic to the point of folly. There was undoubtedly trouble between the two peoples, for Donnchad, son of Eigertach O Tairchert, chief of the

198. Son of Tadg, son of Toirrdeilbach Mór, son of Tadg, son of Brian Boruma.
199. AL cotarat a mna águs a mba co firu Muman iarna nimgabail don Gilla Maerón Ua Ruairg.
200. AL do dul fo tirus (turus) co Ath Cliath.
Clann Snedgaile (Clannelly, west of Letterkenny) was killed by Niall Mac Lochnaill (AU., AI., ALC., AFM.). But the dispute, such as it was, cannot have gone very deep, for very soon the two great branches of the Northern Uí Neill were again companions in arms.

The Ulaid seemed destined to remain the bone of contention in the North. In 1113 Domnall Ua Lochnaill advanced against them to Glenn Righe (the Newry valley) in force, for with him were the Cénél Conaill and the Airgialla. They banished the ruler, King Domnchad Ua hEochada, from his kingdom, which they thereupon divided into three parts, one to Ua Mathgamna, one to a son of Domnchad, the third and best (for it included Uí Echach Coba and the rest of Dál nAraide) to Domnall himself. This again was a very serious interference with the principles of Irish policy as hitherto recognised. That Domnall Ua Lochnaill should rule as his patrimony a large part of the old kingdom of Ulaid was held to be an intolerable usurpation. Muirchertach at once showed angry disapproval. He collected a large army from Munster, Leinster and Connacht and marched to Mag Coba to the aid of the expelled king (AU., ALC., AFM.). Domnall Ua Lochnaill again collected his forces and marched to Mag Coba to meet the rival army. War seemed to be inevitable, but the Archbishop of Armagh, Cellach, used his good offices to effect and the conflict was avoided (AU., AL.). Domnchad Ua hEochada, however, was blinded by Eochaid Ua Mathgamna and his other enemies among the Ulaid (AU., AFM., ALC.). This seems to have led to a renewal of hostilities, O Briain, no doubt, assuming that Ua Lochnaill had instigated the act. So once more the army of Leth Moga moved north and reached Grianóg (Greenogue Moat, near Ratoath) in Brega. Domnall Ua Lochnaill and his army moved to Cluain Caoin (Clonkeen, bar. of Ardee, Co. Louth) in Fir Roi, not far away, and both armies remained for a month within easy marching distance of each other, ready at a moment’s notice to advance to the fray. An effort was apparently made to bring O Briain and Ua Lochnaill together. The latter refused (A.Tig.), but sent Cellach the archbishop with proposals for peace. They were accepted; and the two monarchs swore on the Bachall fosa to refrain from hostilities for a year.

On this occasion there is no mention of the men of Mide in Muirchertach's army, though they had taken their place in it beside the Connachtmen and the Leinstermen on previous occasions. They obviously refused to obey his summons. This, I think, will explain the bald statement found in the Annals of Tigernach that Murchad O Maiochlaghlaínn, king of Mide, was arrested by Muirchertach O Briain. With the strong forces that now lay at his beck and call in Brega, Muirchertach was able to resort to disciplinary measures against the Mide king.

(19).

Soon, however, the Irish political world was thrown into a ferment of agitation by a sad event. Muirchertach O Briain fell gravely ill in the middle of summer, 1114. Though the terms employed are indefinite, (201) the likelihood is that he was struck down by paralysis. His age was now 64, for he had been born in 1050 (A.Tig.) and his activity since youth had been prodigious. Now he wasted away and became a living skeleton. (202) The news tra-

201. Teidhm galair móir, AU., ALC., AFM. galar AL., A.Tig. mórgalar CS.

velled quickly throughout the land. There were immediate consequences both within his domestic circle and outside of it. Pressure was brought to bear on him to resign his throne to his brother, Diarmaid, but this he resolutely refused to do. His point of view, no doubt, was that the sickness was temporary and that he would speedily recover.

Meanwhile an opportunity was offered to Domnall Ua Lochlainn which he was not slow to seize. He led an army to Ráth Connaig (Rathkenny, bar. Up. Slane, Meath), where Eochaid Ua Mathgamna, king of Uaithi; Domnchad Ua Loingsig, king of Dál nAraide, Aed Ua Ruairc, king of Bréforc, and Murchad O Maelsechlainn, king of Midhe, made submission. Now that O Briain was hors de combat they were compelled to come to terms with his rival. Their contingents were added to the Cenél Eogain army. Having crossed the Shannon, the combined forces marched to Dún Leoda (at Ballinasloe), where Toirrdelbach O Connor with the men of Connaught, and Niall MacLochlainn, with the Cenél Conaill, (whose kingship he had taken the year before) came in a viuucht (AU, ALC. CS. and A.Tig., are rather on their own). The host, now swollen by accretions from the Cenél Conaill and the Connachta, proceeded to Telach Uí Degaid, where a cavalry encounter (A.Tig.) took place at Belata between the Connachtmen and the men of Munster. Victory went to the former (A.Tig.) and two Dál Chais chieftains were slain, Cathal Ua Duibhchind (Deoghan) and an O Gráda. Toirrdelbach O Connor, however, was not quite at one in policy with the northern kings. He entered on his own account, to their declared chagrin (dar sárgad Lethe Cuinn), into a treaty of peace for a year with the Munstermen. The motive can only be guessed. Possibly Toirrdelbach did not wish to derive excessive profit from Muirchertach O Briain's misfortune. Possibly he did not wish to do anything that would increase Ua Lochlainn's strength. As there was now obviously a rift in the lute between Leth Cuinn and Connaught, the expedition to Munster was as good as over. Domnall Ua Lochlainn, therefore, accepted a year's truce and returned home through Connaught (AU, ALC, AFM). From his point of view the development had been disappointing. After his overwhelming success in the north, the midlands and the west, the results in Munster were almost in the nature of an anticlimax. He could console himself with the thought, however, that further opportunities would come. With Muirchertach on his bed of sickness, and the question of succession intricate and fraught with danger, Munster was deprived of direction and leadership.

Within the O Briain family the undifying dispute came to an end when Diarmaid O Briain had his brother expelled from Limerick and taken to Killaloe (AI). It would look as if Muirchertach had been making Limerick his capital. Since he also controlled Dublin, he was far more of a city ruler than any

203. T.Tig.: co ndeighad a tás a Éirinn.
204. "Corosc fer ríg," AU, "he parted with his kingdom." I take this to mean that he was unable to administer it; not that he gave up his title.
205. cf. above, p. 42, and CS. 1114. Domnchad Ua hEochada was blinded by Ua Mathgamna, who then became king.
206. In Gilla srónamael, apparently. cf. A.Tig. 1114.
207. cf. Dicert Uí Degaid (Dysert O'Dea), not far from Corofin, Co. Clare.
208. A.Tig. The rest less clearly.
209. So I interpret AU, ALC, AFM.
of his ancestors. Diarmait, despite the opposition of Muirchertach, took over the government of Munster. (210)

(20).

Conflicts of a minor nature, personal and otherwise, were not usually numerous in this year, 1114. Toirrdelbach O Connor drove his brother, Domnall, from the western kingdom into Munster. Domnall had been deposed in 1106, after a reign of four years, and was evidently still regarded as a menace. Later that year he was captured by the Uí Maine and handed over to Toirrdelbach, to be held, no doubt, in safe custody (A.Tig., AFM., CS.). Toirrdelbach also expelled the Conmaicne (211) from Mag Ai, the old Síl Muireadaigh homeland. Their presence in that area would explain his inauguration at Áth an Tarmainn, rather than at Carnfraoch (1106). It would also go far to explain why Tuaim was regarded as the chief see of Connacht at Ráth Breasail (1111). Their hold on their old Roscommon territory was at the moment uneasy, and their power was centred definitely west of the Suck. Toirrdelbach himself was to die, not in any Roscommon monastery, but in Cong, Co. Mayo. The Síl Muireadaigh, newly liberated, made a raid on the Uí Fhachraigh Aidne, do chaithem a feóir cocus a harba (A. Tig.). Co-operation, as far as it went, between Toirrdelbach O'Connor and Murchad Ua Maelsechlainn in Domnall Ua Lochlainn's army did not prevent Toirrdelbach from raiding Mide. Neither did similar co-operation deter Murchadh from a raid on Bréfne and the Gilla srónmála Ua Ruaire (A.Tig., CS., AFM.).

In the south of Leinster a battle was fought between Donnchad, son of Murchad, son of Diarmait Mac Mair na mbó, then reckoned as king of Leinster, (212) and Maelmordá Ua Domnall, (213) who is called King of the Uí Cend-selaig (A.Tig.). In the North, also, one of the Mac Lochlainn princes (Muirchertach) met his death; as did Ruadhrí O Canannáin, who would possibly have been King of Cenél Conaill (214) if Niall Mac Lochlainn had not intruded himself into the government of that state.

To the miseries of the year were added some form of cattle disease (215) that did widespread damage, and various other troublesome maladies (agus-galra imarcradhacha). Indeed the writer in the Annals of Inisfallen reckons the year as beyond redemption. (216) But the most unfortunate circumstance of all in his eyes was the sickness of the King of Ireland.

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210. AU., ALC., A.Tig. put this event before Ua Lochlainn's appearance in Clare. AL gives this order: (1) sickness of Muirchertach; (2) invasion of Ua Lochlainn; (3) Diarmait's assumption of royal power. It may be taken as probably correct. Note that no O Briain princes are mentioned in the opposition to Ua Lochlainn. They were all then at sixes and sevens.

211. That is, the Conmaicne Réin; chief family, O Farrell.

212. He died in 1115.

213. Son of Donnchad (slain, 1089), son of Domnall Remar (slain, 1049), son of (Donnchad) Mael na mbó.

214. A.Tig., ri Cenéoil Conaill. AU., etc., réidonna C.C.

215. Boar. Not foot and mouth disease, as this does not generally kill.

216. "Uch tra," he says, 'imad na n-oílse nucnetam a n-in(n)isín. Catha 7 chongala, crecha 7 marbaí duine, sáraighthe cell 7 nímed fo Erind, eiter tuaidh 7 eclais.
Muirchertach, in fact, recovered, and in 1115 suborned the Norse of Limerick to take Diarmait prisoner on his behalf. This they duly did. Muirchertach travelled from Killaloe back to Limerick and placed Diarmait in fetters (AI, cf. CS., AU., ALC., A.Tig.). To show that he had lost none of his former military capacity, Muirchertach led an army to Osraige and Leinster. Donnchad, son of Murchad, King of Leinster, tried to turn him back by force of arms but suffered defeat. There were Munster casualties in these encounters, for among those killed were a Mac Flannchada, an O Crinain and two O Fógarta. Muirchertach then moved towards Brega, where Ard Breccain and other churches were burnt (AU., etc.); and to Clonmacnois, where many were slain (CS.).

At this point Toirrdelbach O Connor determined to take a hand in the political game. He marched through Dál Chais territory to Limerick (ALC.), subdued opposition and took hostages. Then he came to an arrangement with Domnall, son of Tadg O Briain, by virtue of which Domnall was to be King of Thomond (A.Tig.), if not of all Munster. In accepting this position he was openly taking the side of O Connor against Muirchertach O Briain. But he soon repented (A.Tig.). It was probably on Muirchertach’s behalf that he led an army to Dublin where, with the aid of the Norse, he defeated a strong Leinster force. The casus bell i I take to be Leinster’s old claim, since the days of Diarmait Mac Mail na mbó, to sovereignty over the Norse city. Actual rule they had lost to the O Briain kings; but they had not, of course, abandoned the pretension that they were the rightful overlords. The notorious fact of Muirchertach’s illness gave them an opportunity of reaffirming their claim. But once again they were at fault in their calculations. Not only did Domnall O Briain, who had the support of the citizens, hold his own, but the two chief Leinster leaders,(217) Donnchad, son of Murchad, son of Diarmait Mac Mail no mbó, and Conchobar O Conchobair, king of Uí Fáilge, perished on the battlefield. On the Munster side the outstanding loss was Domnall O Conchobair, son of the king of Ciarrraighe Luachra (AI.). O Briain suzerainty over Dublin thus remained unshaken.

Meanwhile Toirrdelbach O Connor had been at the door of death. An aggrieved faction of the O Flaithbertaig of West Connacht made a murderous attack upon his life. He escaped; but was so grievously wounded that little hope could be entertained of his recovery. His strong constitution did in the end prevail, and before the year was out he was once again in the field. The defection of Domnall O Briain had come as an added political blow. Perhaps the two are connected in so far as Domnall had renounced allegiance to O Connor only when news had come of the latter’s grave mishap. Be that as it may, Toirrdelbach took ill the action of his unstable ally. He marched into Thomond again and had Domnall slain (A.Tig.). Later he brought a fleet upon the Shannon and plundered Connaicne, whose king at this time was Domnall, son of Cúsléibe O Fergail. On the Mide side, too, he had made his influence felt. His wife, Orlaithe, daughter of Murchad O Maelsechlainn, had just died (A.Tig.). Murchad O Maelsechlainn had now to make complete submission (A.Tig., AFM.). He fortified Buinde an Beithe,(218) no doubt a strong position on or beside the river. Having made generous offerings to the church at Clonmacnois, he rounded off an exciting year by dividing Mide into two, and giving one half to

217. Classed together as joint kings (LL. 39 d.).
218 Buide in AFM.
Murchad and the other to his brother, Maelsechlainn O Maelsechlainn. Murchad replied at once by having the obnoxious brother slain (A.Tig., CS., AU., ALC., AFM.).

In general, then, the lapse of a single year since the sickness of Muirchertach O Briain had wrought an extraordinary change in the Irish political scene. Bad weather added to the toll of suffering, and real want was felt in many parts, especially in Leinster (AU., CS., ALC.). What is, perhaps, most noteworthy in the new situation is the fact that Toirrdebalch O Connor, rather than Domnall Ua Lochlainn, appears to be reaping the chief advantage from it. At this period the Connacht king was but 27 years of age, (219) whereas Domnall Ua Lochlainn was 67. Toirrdebalch's career was merely beginning; Domnall's was drawing to its close. The former, with his advantage of full forty years, was far ahead of the distinguished Cenél Eogain monarch in energy.

(22)

More distressing than all the other features of the year 1116 was the continuance of plague and famine (220) in Leth Moga. Perhaps it was the fear of this pestilence as much as any other cause that prevented Domnall Ua Lochlainn from military operations in the south when such activity was calculated to bring him immense advantage. The Chronicon Scotorum gives a heart-rending account of the miseries then suffered. "A great famine," it relates, "was experienced in the spring, so that a man would sell his son or daughter for food; and people were driven to eat each other, and dogs. Leinster was turned into a desert, save a small portion of it, and the Leinstermen were scattered through Ireland by sheer force of hunger." It is interesting in this notice that the eating of dog flesh is regarded as absolutely repugnant, like the eating of human flesh.

With the coming of summer and autumn the food situation probably improved. At any rate, the warriors did not let the trying year pass idly by. Muirchertach O Briain accentuated the troubles of the Leinstermen by leading an army to attack them and wreaking much havoc in their midst. Their king at that time was Diarmait, son of Enna, son of Diarmait Mac Mael na mbó. (221) Toirrdebalch O Connor, on his side, invaded Munster, where he burned and destroyed the fortresses of Boroma and Cennocraid, and collected cattle and prisoners; but the last named were eventually left behind as an offering "to God and St. Flannan." (222)

(23)

Among the O Briain leaders no peaceful settlement had been reached. Diarmait had managed to free himself from his fetters, apparently as a result of a general family conference, for he had bound himself to observe certain conditions, the chief of which, obviously, was the recognition of his brother as king. He now renounced these obligations, thereby violating his oaths, (223) and

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219. He was born in 1088.
220. AU. Magna pestilentia famis adhuc ardet i Leith Moga.
221. Diarmait ruled 1115-1117. CS. makes him son of Enna, son of Murchad. The LL. list, while not specific, suggested that he was son of Enna, son of Diarmait Mac Mael na mbó. If this be correct his connection with the namesake who was slain in 1093 (AU., etc.), remains obscure.
222. The Annals of Ulster record this event very discreetly in the sentence: "Cell-dalna coma tempoll do loscadh!" AFM. repeat; but this burning may, in fact, have been accidental.
laid siege to Muirchertach in Limerick (A.I.). On the latter’s side the most important young O Briain prince was Brian, son of Murchad, son of Tadg, a grand-nephew of Muirchertach and Diarmait. They were unable to defend the town, and Muirchertach had to resign his crown into Diarmait’s hands (A.I., A. Tig.). The discomfited and disappointed monarch, whose writ for a generation had run over so large a portion of the country, retired to Lismór, there to await life’s end in religious seclusion. But, like other kings before and since, he found it hard to make his last bow on the stage of politics, and the bitterness of yet another failure to regain his throne awaited him before he found peace in death.

Diarmait O Briain was now King of Munster (1116). The all-too-successful attack on Killaloce by Toirrdelbach O Connor gave the new ruler an opportunity of showing his mettle as a leader. He collected, then, an army, and marched into Connacht territory, but alas! he did not get further than in Ruadhheideach (Rooveagh), about five miles south of Oranmore, when disaster befell him. His troops were slaughtered and forced to retreat with such rapidity that they left their supplies—food, horses, weapons, armour—behind. A more inauspicious opening campaign for a king whose throne was unstable could hardly be imagined!

Something had to be done about this defeat, and soon. In the following year, therefore (1117), Diarmait O Briain and the men of Munster again fared forth into Connacht. They reached Tir Flachrach and Tir Briuin, and so got as far north as Mayo. Perhaps it was at Leacain in Tir Flachrach Muaidhe that a battle was fought between the Connachtmen under the son of Cathal O Connor and Brain, son of Murchad O Flaithbertaig, on the one side, and Toirrdelbach O Briain, son of Diarmait, on the other. Victory went to the men of Connacht. Following up their advantage, the Connacht leaders led a battalion into Munster (CS.) and devastated as far as Sliab Crot (the Glen of Aherlow), Claire (Dún gCláire, near Duntryleague, in south Limerick), and Sliab Cua (the Knockmealdown Mountains). A Munster force was sent to cut them off, but suffered defeat at Leitreacha Odráin (Latteragh, Upper Ormond), where two O Cennédig were slain (A.Tig., CS., AFM.). The fortune of war was thus proving unfavourable to Diarmait O Briain. Nor had he any need to go to Connacht to find trouble. It will be remembered that Muirchertach O Briain was supported in Limerick by the young prince, Brian, son of Murchad (son of Tadg) O Briain. Brian now did his part in rendering Diarmait uncomfortable by staging an encounter in which many nobles were slain. In the campaigns of this year the movements are so rapid that they suggest the employment of cavalry rather than infantry. Instead of large armies, then, we are to picture to ourselves in these clashes comparatively small troops of horse.

Murchad O Maelsechlainn, king of Mide, like Diarmait O Briain, had unhappy experiences during this year (1117). He was outwitted and defeated.

224. Corragaib bachaill, A.I.
225. AFM., or sons, AU. cf. Cathal mac meic Cathail Ul Chonchobair, A.Tig.
226. From this record the presumption is that the O Kennedys had settled in Ormond by the beginning of the 12th century.
227. AT. Roen catha la Briain Mac M. for Dál Chais inromarbait meic ríg 7 toisech 7 alti multi.
(baegul madma ?) by the Leinstermen and the Norse of Dublin. He lost contact with his camp, and could not make his way back to it for three days. The CS. record implies that he wandered about in the search, but is tantalisingly taciturn about the circumstances. We may, perhaps, conclude that the place in which the camp was pitched was not well known to him; and further conclude that he was thus the aggressor and that the men of Leinster and the Norse took advantage of his ignorance by exploiting their superior knowledge of Leinster territory. Finally, from a notice in the following year (1118) that Murchad O Maelschlaillann was taken prisoner in Dublin, we may draw the conclusion that the casus bellorum was Murchad’s efforts to establish himself as overlord of Ath Cliath. This was resented by the Leinster king, with whom the Norse sided.

In the North a battle was won by the Cenél Conaill at Cell Mac nEnain over the Cenél Eogain na hInris, the section of the sept settled in Inis Eogain. The point at issue was no doubt connected with Niall Mac Lochlainn’s seizure of the Cenél Conaill kingship; for the family inheritance of the Mac Lochlainns seems to have lain within the peninsula.

(24).

Diarmaid O Briain did not long survive his occupation of the Munster throne. In 1118 he died at Corcach Mór Muman, after unction and penance (231) (AI., ALC., AFM. mortuus est, AU., A.Tig., CS.). With the southern city he probably had an intimate connection, going back to the early days of his struggle with Muirchertach. As king of Munster he would have a special interest in keeping it devoted to himself, that danger of schism might be averted and the state preserved in its traditional extent. Of the unsavoury quarrel between the brothers none but the cynic can speak with indifference. When we remember the cruelty with which Muirchertach was treated in his closing years, we should remember, too, the ruthlessness with which Diarmaid was driven from his share in the royal inheritance after Tadg’s death. There were faults in plenty on both sides, and in the end a rough equality in retribution. Diarmaid’s anxiety to oust his ailing brother from the kingship may seem to us pointless as well as wicked, but such it certainly was not. A very definite purpose lay behind the greedy eagerness. In 1114 the brothers were elderly men, for whom life was well-nigh over. In what concerned their own persons it mattered little what the immediate future might bring. Each, however, was the father of sons, and it was manoeuvring for position to leave these sons favourably placed that brought friction and bad temper into their mutual relationship. If Diarmaid, then, died soon, while Muirchertach was still living, he died leaving his children the better hand to play; and it is they, not Muirchertach’s sons, who were to be the leading representatives of Dál Cais in the following decades and generations.

228. The O Briain grip on Dublin had now relaxed and the Leinster kings were creeping back. Diarmaid, son of Eodh, son of Diarmaid Mac Mael na mbó, King of Leinster, died in Dublin in this very year, 1117. Cf. p. 46, n.221.

229. “Nights” in Irish. AL


231. AL, ALC, AFM. mortuus est, AU, A.Tig., CS.

232. From the letter of St. Anselm, Ussher, Works, IV., 518, we know that in 1096 Diarmaid was “dux” of Waterford.
After Diarmait’s death there was a moment of hesitation in Munster. Brian, son of Murchad O Briain, has already been mentioned more than once. Generally speaking, he had been on Muirchertach’s side in the prolonged domestic squabbles. Now that Diarmait was no more it is probable that he called for Muirchertach’s restoration to the throne of Munster. **(233)** Objections were raised by Tadhg Mac Cáithaig and the men of Desmond; **(234)** also, of course, by the sons of Diarmait. In the course of the struggle Brian O Briain **(235)** was killed. Tórrdealbadh O’Connor was thus given an ideal opportunity for interfering in Munster affairs. He marched to Gleann Magair (Glanmire), near Cork, accompanied by Murchad O Maelsaehlaimn, king of Mide, and Aed O Ruairc, king of Bréfne, ostensibly to give aid to Muirchertach O Briain (AI). At Glanmire, however, O’Connor adopted another line of policy. **(236)** He made peace with Tadhg Mac Cáithaig (AI), dropped Muirchertach O Briain and divided Munster into two parts, giving Desmond to Tadhg Mac Cáithaig and Thomond to the sons (Conchobar, Toirrdelbach, others?) of Diarmait O Briain (AU, A.Tig., ALC., AFM.). Hostages for the observance of this arrangement were taken from both sides. They included Cormac mac meic Cáithaig (son of Muiredach, son of Cáithach), the brother of Tadhg. **(237)** The hopes of Muirchertach O Briain were now dashed, and for the last time. He would return, then, no doubt, to Lismore, and prepare himself for eternity, as a yet more unfortunate king (viewed from the human standpoint), Ruadri na saige buide O’Connor, Toirrdealbach’s father, had been doing since his blinding in 1092. Ruadri died at Clonmacnois this year, 1118. **(238)**

The young king of Connacht had shown his strength in the arrangement of Munster affairs at Cork. **(239)** Very soon he was to give further proof of his growing power. He called to his colours again Murchad O Maelsaehlaimm of Mide and Aed O Ruairc of Bréfne (A.Tig.). At the head of this army he proceeded to Leinster, where he received hostages. Domnall O Maelsaehlaimm, who was a prisoner in Dublin, was released by him. He beleaguered and stormed the Norse city (A.Tig.) and took over its government himself, after he had expelled Domnall Gairlamach O Briain, who had been ruling for a short time **(240)** in the O Briain interest (A.Tig.). That this Domnall should have been able to secure a hold on the Norse city at such a time, when O Briain fortunes were at a low ebb, is a tribute to the prestige and perhaps the popularity which Muirchertach (and his father, Toirrdelbach) had won among the foreigners. **(241)**

233. He was hardly set on securing the throne for himself, as he was relatively young. *Sinnsearacht* was an important principle and would help him later (since he was Tadhg’s grandson?) if he could keep himself in the foreground.

234. The Mac Carthys are now unequivocally leaders in the south.

235. Rí Tuadmuman. A.Tig.

236. AL, iop deib ar Muirchertach.

237. The latter died (in 1124) at Cashel.

238. He is called in CS, ri Sil Muireadhaig; which suggests that he was given a local kingship; but he was buried at Tuaim Gréine (CS.). There is a suggestion, too, of death in exile.

239. Toirrdelbach was 30 years old in 1118.

240. Diarmait Mac Eanna, king of Leinster, had died in 1117.

241. I take this Domnall to be Muirchertach’s son, *unde* Clann Domnall na darach T Clann Toirrdealbaig Duinn. He had a brother, Mathgamain, *unde* Clann Mathgamna—the Mac Mahons of Corca Baisclain.
Yet another illustration of Toirrdelbach O Connor’s predominance over the O Briains was afforded before the year ended. He led a huge army to Killaloe and hurled Cennóraid, stone and wood, into the neighbouring Shannon.\footnote{242}

(26)

On March 13th of the following year, 1119, the earthly pilgrimage of Muirchertach O Briain, “prop of the glory and magnificence of the western world,” came to an end.\footnote{243} Five full years had passed, as the records note, since he had been struck down by illness, and the inference is that he had never really recovered (A.Tig., AFM.). The place of his death is not mentioned, but it was probably Killaloe, for in the church of that town he found a last resting place. Though his reign was to close in bodily infirmity, in sorrow and the sense of frustration, his place in history is secure as the greatest of all the Uí Briain, the most distinguished descendant of the illustrious Brian. A hard man in a harsh world, he never lost sight of the higher issues, and might have put his country on the way to a happier future had he succeeded in bringing her into obedience to his rule. At the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries, the period of religious reform, the period of the Crusades, the period of intellectual and artistic rebirth, he is the one ruler of European calibre among the Irish princes and kings.

C.

THE AFTERMATH.

(1)

After Muirchertach’s death the leadership of his house passed to Conchobar and Toirrdelbach, his nephews, sons of his brother, Diarmait. These, however, were unable to make much headway. When their fleet, manned by the men of Thomond, attacked Clannraige Luachra the result was a severe defeat (A.I. 1119). Against Toirrdelbach O Connor they were quite unable to defend themselves. He, too, brought a squadron down the Shannon, largely, it would seem, for the purpose of driving the O Briain ships off it.\footnote{244} In his train was the King of Leinster, Énda, son of Donnchad, son of Murchad, son of Domnchad Mál no mbó; the King of Osraige, Domnchad Mac Gilla Pádraig, and the leaders of the Norse of Dublin. They stayed at Killaloe as long as supplies lasted,\footnote{245} thus making it clear to the country that in power the O Connors were now definitely in advance of the O Briens.

Nor was the predominance of Connacht challenged by Donnall Ua Lochlainsn. In this year, indeed, on the Feast of the Three Innocent Children\footnote{246} he lost his son, Niall, who was killed by the Cenél Moain (O Gairmledaigh).

\footnote{242} AU, ALC, put in 1119. A.Tig., AFM. in 1118. The event may have taken place at the turn of the year.

\footnote{243} In bona fine vitam finivit, after triumphs as a king and as a penitent, ALC.

\footnote{244} Do chaithmore dhíd fer Muman. A.Tig.

\footnote{245} Féil na tri mac n-annac. cf. Martyr. Gorm., Dec. 16th.
As this was a Cenél Eogain sept, the quarrel must have been on some domestic issue. His age at his death was only 28.\(^{247}\)

A crime which caused great indignation\(^{248}\) was the slaying of Cucollchaillé Ua Baigelláin, árdollam Erenn ar dán, ar déire, ar ainech 7 ar coindirce coitichinn frí tríu ag 7 tríume, by the men of Lurg and Tuath Rátha (bar. Magheraboy, Fermanagh). With him were killed his wife, his two sons and 35 others, mostly people of the household, but with a sprinkling of guests. All perished in the one dwelling on April 5th, the Feast of St. Becan, son of Cula. No explanation of the holocaust is forthcoming.

Next year (1120) Toirrdelbach O Connor and Domnall Ua Lochlainn became involved in a serious dispute. The former had led an army into Mide and expelled Murchad O Maelsechlainn, who took refuge in the North. His cause was espoused by Domnall Ua Lochlainn. The Annals of Inisfallen state definitely that the original attack of O Connor on Maelsechlainn was treacherous (crech mebla), for peace had been made between the two, and the comarba of Patrick (Cellach, Archbishop of Armagh), and Domnall Ua Lochlainn were sureties for its observance.\(^{249}\) The northern army marched to Athlone (AU., A.Tig., AFM.), where Toirrdelbach O Connor and the men of Connacht made a sídh ceilige “deceitful peace” with Ua Lochlainn. Toirrdelbach, in other words, had no intention of observing its conditions.

Earlier in the year Toirrdelbach had built three bridges, one at Athlone and a second at Ath Croca (near the present Shannon Harbour) over the Shannon; whilst the third was over the Suck at Dún Leodha (Dunlo). The three of these together would bring him, of course, far-reaching strategical advantages. He also celebrated the Aenach Tailten, so that his prestige in the country was overwhelming.

In the south (AI. 1120) there was an interesting clash between the Eoganacht and the Dál Chais. The former, under Tadg Mac Carthaig, had collected an army in Desmond and marched into Osraige, whose king was compelled to submit and give hostages. In return Mac Gilla Pádraig received a great stipend (tuairastal) of gold and horses. But he soon received something else as well. The O Briain rulers regarded the Mac Carthy expedition as an attack upon the whole Dalcassian position in Munster. They, too, raided Osraige and put the king, Donnchad Mac Gilla Pádraig, and his chief nobles in fetters. They also took captives and hostages (braigide) which, with admirable discretion, they offered to Toirrdelbach O Connor. In other words, they were seeking, with his powerful aid, to out-manoeuvre the Mac Carthys in Munster. This, however, was not quite the policy which Toirrdelbach favoured, as the following year was once again to show.

\(^{(2)}\) Early in the year 1121, on the Feast of Mochuaróg (February 9th), Domnall, son of Ardgar Mac Lochlainn, “the most distinguished of the Gaedhil for his fine form, his race, his good sense, his military prowess, his good

\(^{247}\) Occissus est a suis AI, 1120. A.Tig. also, 1120.

\(^{248}\) cf. AI escani Dé for each n-oen daróni in gním (sehn).

\(^{249}\) A.Tig. and CS. give a somewhat different account. The géill taken from Mide were under the protection of the Bachall Isa. This would explain both O Maelsechlainn’s flight to Ailech and the determination of the Ua Lochlainn to give him support.
fortune and his constancy, his generosity in giving," died at Derry in the 73rd year of his life and the 38th of his reign. He had upheld the honour of the Úi Neill against the Dál Chais and the men of Munster, and had resisted all efforts of Muirchertach O Briain to bring him into subjection. On the other hand, the impression is given that he had always been content with a rather negative policy. He hardly left the Ulster borders save where such a movement was needed in self-defence. A strong, consistent effort to win the kingship of Ireland was never made by him. Once the north, in its old extent as the Cóiced Ulad, was secure, his fundamental desire was apparently satisfied. As far as we know, he never travelled and never entered into communication with the European world outside. Intellectually and politically he was a much smaller man than Muirchertach O Briain, but in a sturdy spirit of independence he kept the southern monarch always at bay, checkmated his every move to control the north and thus prevented him from becoming in the full sense King of Ireland. His point of view can be understood and respected; but it is open to doubt whether it led ultimately to his country's good.

By his death Tóirrdelbach O Connor was left without a rival as the most important ruler in the country.