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**English Influence of Irish Ambition? An
Assessment of Irish Church Reform,
c.1049-1169**

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**English Influence or Irish Ambition? An assessment of Irish Church
Reform, c.1049 – 1169**

Contents

List of abbreviations	5
Introduction	6
Chapter 1: Pre-reform era, c. 1049 – 1101	15
Chapter 2: Twelfth-Century Reform of the Irish Church	26
Conclusion	38
Bibliography	41

List of Abbreviations

<i>AClon</i>	<i>Annals of Clonmacnoise</i>
<i>AFM</i>	<i>Annals of the Four Masters</i>
<i>AI</i>	<i>Annals of Inisfallen</i>
<i>ALC</i>	<i>Annals of Loch Cé</i>
<i>AMul</i>	<i>Annals of Multyfarnham</i>
<i>AT</i>	<i>Annals of Tigernach</i>
<i>AU</i>	<i>Annals of Ulster</i>
<i>CS</i>	<i>Chronicum Scotorum</i>

Introduction

In 1049 the appointment of Pope Leo IX saw the beginning of a wave of Church reform throughout Europe.¹ Initially focused on the abolition of clerical marriage and simony, the 'buying and selling of holy things' but specifically concerning payments for ecclesiastical offices; reform shifted in 1073 when Pope Gregory VII undertook what historians often refer to as the "Gregorian Reform".² Pope Gregory produced the *Dictatus papae* in 1075, a 27-point document focusing on authority of investiture.³ The Gregorians condemned lay investiture, a layman, such as a king, investing a bishop or abbot into office, however the issue went beyond this concerning general interference by the laity in ecclesiastical affairs.⁴ Church reform spread throughout Europe, beginning in Ireland in the early twelfth century. This dissertation will assess the causes of, influences upon, and motivations of, Irish Church reform.

Scholarship predominantly approaches Irish Church reform by veiling the process of reform in external actions, particularly those of England, shrouding Irish actions in English influences. John Watt strongly undertakes this approach, persistently highlighting English actions, arguing that it is unnecessary 'to emphasize that the movement for reform came from within' Ireland, refuting the

¹ Donald, F. Logan, *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages*, second edition, (London: Routledge, 2002), 105-10.

² Logan, *Church in the Middle Ages*, 105-10.

³ *Dictatus papae*, E.F. Henderson (tr.), in *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1910), 366-367.

⁴ Logan, *History of the Church*, 112-3. ; Norman F. Cantor, 'The Crisis of Western Monasticism, 1050-1130', *The American Historical Review*, 66, (1960), 55.

need to discuss internal actions towards reform.⁵ D. Bethnal, although less hard-line than Watt regarding the actions of the Irish, also approaches the subject from an English point of view, attributing Irish Church reform to links between England and Ireland.⁶ Similarly, Kathleen Hughes' credits reform in Ireland to the pressure applied by Canterbury's Archbishops upon Ireland.⁷ Furthermore, when analysing events in Ireland Hughes frequently ascribes their occurrence to external influence. For example, in assessment of the synod of Ráith Bresail in 1111, Hughes discusses its relation to England, noting for example 'its position of obedience to Canterbury' and how the 'archbishop of Canterbury failed to secure any permanent control over the jurisdiction of the Irish Church' rather than Irish actions or the effect it had on Ireland, removing agency from Ireland.⁸

These studies are, of course, not without merit. The English influence upon Ireland was an important aspect in Irish Church reform and must not be overlooked. However, in these studies, external influences take precedence and the local Irish conditions, actions and motivations are overlooked.

This English focused scholarship is commonly a product of the source material available.⁹ Evidence for Irish Church reform is fragmentary; there 'is no substantial or coherent body of material' available, meaning historians have to

⁵ John Watt, *The Church and the Two Nations in Medieval Ireland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 4. ; John Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1972), 1-7, 14.

⁶ D. Bethnal, 'English Monks and Irish Reform in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Historical Studies*, 8, (1971), 111-36.

⁷ Kathleen Hughes, 'The Celtic Church and the Papacy', in C.H. Lawrence (ed.) *The English Church and the Papacy in the Middle Ages*, (London: Burns and Oats, 1965), 26.

⁸ Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society*, (London: Methuen & Co., 1966), 258.

⁹ M.T Flanagan, *The Transformation of the Irish Church in the Twelfth Century*, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), 2.

piece together evidence from different Irish annals and from English and European sources.¹⁰ Irish annals are difficult sources to work with. Ireland is not lacking in annals and ‘few European countries, if any, can claim a similar body of literature on a national scale.’¹¹ However, many of the annals have large gaps, such as the *Annals of Ulster* (hereafter *AU*), which has no entries 1132-1155, and others discontinue part way through the chronology of Irish Church reform, such as the *Chronicum Scotorum* (hereafter *CS*), which ends in 1150, prior to many reform synods, such as the synod of Kells 1152.¹² Moreover, annal entries are brief, simple sentences.¹³ Annals developed from notes in the margins of Easter tables used to calculate the date of Easter, hence only simple sentences would fit in the margins.¹⁴ Additionally, the nature of annals ‘non-judgemental vocabulary’, and ‘bare statements of fact’ makes intentions behind actions hard to establish, not to mention that annals are often anonymous or written by multiple authors, making intention even harder to judge.¹⁵ This bare statement of fact and lack of judgement often leaves much to be desired by the historian. For example, the *Annals of Tigernach* (hereafter *AT*) record that ‘a synod was convened by the bishops of Ireland and the cardinal of S. Peter’s successor at Drogheda; and there they ordained certain regulations.’¹⁶ This entry records a location of the synod at Drogheda, and a name, ‘cardinal of S.

¹⁰ Flanagan, *Transformation of the Irish Church*, 1.

¹¹ F.X. Martin in G. Mac Niocaill, ‘The Medieval Irish Annals’, *Medieval Irish History Series*, 3, (Dublin: Published for the Dublin Historical Association, 1975), 5.

¹² *The Annals of Ulster*, B. MacCarthy (trans.), vol. 2, (Blackrock: Edmund Burke, 1998), 127, (hereafter *AU*). ; *Chronicum Scotorum*, W.M. Hennessy (trans.), (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866), 345, (hereafter *CS*). ; Flanagan, *Transformation of the Irish Church*, 34.

¹³ J. Radner, ‘Early Irish Historiography and the Significance of Form’, *Celtica*, 23, (1999), 313-4.

¹⁴ Mac Niocaill, ‘The Medieval Irish Annals’, 13.

¹⁵ Nicholas Evans, *The Present and the Past in Medieval Irish Chronicles*, (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010), 226. ; Radner, ‘Early Irish Historiography’, 313-4.

¹⁶ *The Annals of Tigernach*, Whitley Stokes (trans.), vol. 2, (Felinfach: Llanerch Publishers, 1993), 389, (hereafter *AT*).

Peter's successor', however, we are unaware of the number of bishops present, what these 'certain regulations' were that they ordained, and how these regulations were received. Elsewhere in Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the quality of written sources improved, hence historians often turn towards non-Irish sources, particularly English, sources, to gain a better picture of Irish Church reform.¹⁷

However, Marie Flanagan's approach is different focusing on local Irish initiatives, and analysing the impact of reform on lay society.¹⁸ However, external influences, which undoubtedly played a part in part Irish Church reform, are lost in her narrative, as Flanagan only returns to their significance in her conclusion.¹⁹ Louis Hamilton undertook a similar study on the impact of Church reform on the localities in Italy, and Steven Vanderputten's book on monastic reform in Flanders, has a similarly narrow focus, concentrating not on 'the main protagonists of the reforms', but rather on seven individual institutions.²⁰

This dissertation will take inspiration from these works to discuss whether Irish Church reform was the result of English influence and actions, or whether it was motivated more by Irish desire. This dissertation will study the internal conditions in Ireland similar to Flanagan, Hamilton and Vanderputten without, however, eclipsing English influence, as this is an important factor in Irish Church reform. English action will be acknowledged but placed in the context of

¹⁷ Flanagan, *Transformation of the Irish Church*, xi, 6.

¹⁸ Flanagan, *Transformation of the Irish Church*, 34-91, 92-117, 244.

¹⁹ Flanagan, *Transformation of the Irish Church*, 244.

²⁰ Louis I. Hamilton, *A Sacred City: Consecrating Churches and Reforming Society in Eleventh Century Italy*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 4-7. ; Steven Vanderputten, *Monastic Reform as a Process: Realities and Representations in Medieval Flanders, 900-1100*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2013), 3-13.

the internal situation in Ireland. This will demonstrate that English influence was an important aspect contributing to Irish Church reform, but there were also internal factors that made reform possible and often were the main motivation for reform. This dissertation will achieve a balance between English and Irish actions, something which scholarship has not currently been able to achieve.

The question of the influence upon Irish Church reform is not one currently confronted by historians. Historians have been content to place the motivations for reform solely upon English influence, and narratives predominantly concern what happened, what decrees were passed, and who was involved, rather than an analysis of who or what influenced these reform to occur.²¹ This dissertation will therefore shed new light onto the causes of Irish Church reform.

Church reform in Ireland will not be referred to in this dissertation as “Gregorian Reform”, opting instead to simply refer to the reform movement as “Irish Church reform” or a similar phrase. Reform in Ireland did focus on reforms initiated by the *Dictatus papae* concerning investiture, and reform did begin in the twelfth century, the period of reform of Pope Gregory VII’s followers, the Gregorians.²² However, Irish reform was broader than this as it also focused on reforms of the movement prior to Gregory, regarding simony and marriage.²³ The use of the term “Gregorian Reform” would skew the impression of the Irish reform, overshadowing efforts to reform simony and marriage laws, as “Gregorian

²¹ Watt, *Church and the Two Nations*, 4. ; Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 1-2. ; Aubrey Gwynn, ‘The Origins of the See of Dublin’, *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 57, (Jan. 1941), 40. ; Aubrey Gwynn, ‘The Origins of the See of Dublin’, *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 57, (Feb. 1941), 102. ; Hughes, *Church in Early Irish Society*, 253.

²² Flanagan, *Transformation of the Irish*, 2. ; Cantor, ‘Crisis of Western Monasticism’, 56.

²³ Sean Duffy, *Ireland in the Middle Ages*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), 52.

Reform” is most notable for its efforts surrounding investiture, so consequently will not be used.²⁴

This dissertation will utilise Irish annal entries. Despite the problematic nature of Irish annals, annal entries are often the only primary account of events. Furthermore, the action of writing something down in the Middle Ages was a laborious task and the price of vellum on which they frequently wrote was high, suggesting that what they did write down they saw as having high importance.²⁵ This can be used to infer the importance of specific individuals and events. English sources, will also be consulted, however, they will not be merely taken at face value but will be closely analysed, looking into the language used to fully assess their significance. Furthermore, English sources will be read in conjunction with Irish annals, enabling an analysis of external influence within an Irish framework. This approach ensures agency for Ireland by identifying the importance of Irish actions without ignoring the very real influence of England.

Many sources consulted are translations, predominantly from Latin or Gaelic. J.O. Prestwich warns of the dangers of ‘uncritical acceptance of all translations’.²⁶ The translated annals and other translated sources selected for this dissertation have all received excellent reviews in reliability and accuracy.²⁷

²⁴ Logan, *History of the Church*, 106.

²⁵ J. Radner, ‘Early Irish Historiography’, 314.

²⁶ J.O. Prestwich, ‘Mistranslations and Misinterpretations in Medieval English History’, *Peritia*, 10, (1996), 324.

²⁷ Bernadette Cunningham, ‘John O’Donovan’s Edition of the Annals of the Four Masters: An Irish Classic’, *European Studies*, 26, (2008), 129-49. ; E.G. Quin, ‘Review: The Annals of Inisfallen by Seán Mac Airt’, *Irish Historical Studies*, 8, (1952), 168-71. ; Giles Constable, ‘Review: The Letters of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury by Lanfranc; Helen Clover; Margaret Gibson’, *Speculum*, 56, (1981), 159-60. ; R. Dudley Edwards, ‘Review: The Annals of Loch Cé’, *Irish Historical Studies*, 2, (1941), 334-5. ; Vernam Hull, ‘The Middle Irish Preterit Passive Plural in the Annals of Ulster’, *Language*, 28, (1952), 107-8.

The only criticism of translations is regarding usability of some editions. For example, Quin notes that the index in the Annals of Inisfallen (hereafter *AI*) are difficult to use for someone unacquainted with Irish history, and Hughes notes that *AT* are 'tiresome to use' as the translation is embedded within the original text.²⁸ Although some editions are less easy to use, the translations themselves are reliable, meaning analysis of annal entries is a more reliable process.

A chronological chapter structure will be employed, enabling this dissertation to assess Irish and English sources in conjunction with each other. The first chapter will discuss the period prior to the first reform synod of Cashel 1101. Historians frequently reference letters from Archbishops Lanfranc and Anselm to Irish clergy and laity in this period, referring to them as evidence of external influence over Irish reform. However, approximately thirty years passed between the first letter surviving from Lanfranc to Irish individuals c.1074, and the first reform synod at Cashel 1101.²⁹ This chapter will therefore assess this pre-reform period and why reform did not occur sooner, specifically looking at the political situation in Ireland at this time impacting upon delayed reform, something not acknowledged by current scholarship.³⁰

Chapter two will discuss twelfth century reform, a large time period, but explicitly discussing the extent to which decrees passed at reform synods are subject to English influence. The individuals present at the reform synods will also be

²⁸ Quin, 'Review: The Annals of Inisfallen', 170-1. ; Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources*, (London: Camelot Press, 1972), 100.

²⁹ Watt, *Church and the Two Nations*, 1.

³⁰ Watt, *Church and the Two Nations*, 4. ; Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 1-2. ; Gwynn, 'Origins of the See of Dublin', (Jan.), 40. ; Gwynn, 'Origins of the See of Dublin', (Feb.), 102. ; Hughes, *Church in Early Irish Society*, 253.

identified and the impact their presence would have had upon the nature of reform will be analysed.

However, reform synods after the English invasion of Ireland, 1169, will not be included.³¹ Historians frequently include these synods within Irish Church reform narratives.³² This is because the *Laudabiliter*, a papal bull written between c.1155 and 1160 by Pope Adrian IV to Henry II of England, notes the reason for the English invasion of Ireland was in order to further reform the Irish Church:

[...] pleasing and acceptable to us that you should enter that island for the purpose of enlarging the boundaries of the church, checking the descent into wickedness, correcting morals and implanting virtues, and encouraging the growth of the faith in Christ [...]³³

This is present too, in a series of letters from Pope Alexander III to Henry II, from c.1172 noting that the people of Ireland are 'without fear of God' and are 'abjuring the practice of the Christian faith'.³⁴ However, the synods after the English invasion will not be included in this dissertation as the reforms undertaken were significantly different to the pre-invasion reform era. After the English invasion, Irish Church reform became an attempt to anglicise the Irish

³¹ Robin Frame, *Colonial Ireland, 1169-1369*, second edition, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), 8.

³² Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 28-40. ; Aubrey Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1992), 271-311. ; M.T. Flanagan, 'Henry II, the Council of Cashel and the Irish Bishops', *Peritia*, 10, (1996), 184-121.

³³ David Douglas and George Greenaway (eds.), *English Historical Documents, vol. 2, 1042-1189*, (London: Eyre Methuen, 1981), 828. ; Pope Adrian IV, 'Laudabiliter', in Gerald of Wales, *Expugnatio Hibernica*, A.B. Scott and F.X. Martin (ed. trans.), (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978), 145-7.

³⁴ Pope Alexander III, in *English Historical Documents*, 830-3.

Church, rather than reforming the Irish Church itself.³⁵ This is evident in the decrees of the synod of Cashel 1172, preserved in Gerald of Wales' *Expugnatio hibernica*, in which it is noted that 'in all parts of the Irish Church all matters relating to religion are to be conducted hereafter on the pattern of the Holy Church, and in line with the observances of the English Church', and that the aim of the synod was 'to assimilate the condition of the Irish Church to that of the Church in England in every way possible'.³⁶ Rather than reforming the Irish Church, the synod of Cashel 1172 is aiming to make the Irish Church like the English Church. This is considerably different to the pre-reform period, in which reforms concerned reforming the Irish Church, not anglicising the Irish Church. Therefore, this dissertation will not discuss these considerably different, anglicising reform synods, as they should be treated as a separate subject.

Therefore, this dissertation will address the period from c.1049, with the initiation of Church reform in Europe, up until the English invasion beginning in 1169.

³⁵ Duffy, *Ireland in the Middle Ages*, 73-4.

³⁶ Gerald of Wales, *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 101.

Chapter 1: Pre-reform era, c. 1049 – 1101

Historiography of Irish Church reform points to the pre-reform period c.1049 – 1100, as evidence for the influence of England, particularly the Archbishops of Canterbury, over Irish Church reform.³⁷ Canterbury expressed a sense of authority over Ireland in correspondence with Irish clergy and laity. However, Canterbury's authority was limited and did not have as great an impact upon Irish Church reform as has been suggested by historians.

Canterbury's influence was strong over the See of Dublin. Canterbury consecrated Dublin's first seven bishop until the Synod of Kells in 1152, when Canterbury's influence over Dublin took a marked decline.³⁸ In consultation of the letters of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury 1070-1089, and Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury 1093-1109, to key figures in Dublin, the sense of Canterbury's authority is present.³⁹ In c.1074 Lanfranc wrote to Guthric, king of Dublin, informing him that Patrick had been consecrated bishop of Dublin. The authority of Lanfranc is evident, firstly, by noting that Patrick was 'sent to us to be consecrated'.⁴⁰ Lanfranc is pointing to his superiority in that he is the one consecrating Patrick, that only Lanfranc could adequately consecrate him to ensure it would be 'in due form to his appointed duties'.⁴¹ Furthermore, Lanfranc

³⁷ Watt, *Church and the Two Nations*, 4. ; Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 1-2. ; Gwynn, 'Origins of the See of Dublin', (Jan.), 40. ; Gwynn, 'Origins of the See of Dublin', (Feb.), 102. ; Hughes, *Church in Early Irish Society*, 253.

³⁸ Gwynn, *Irish Church*, 51.

³⁹ Helen Clover and Margaret Gibson, in Helen Clover and Margaret Gibson (eds. trans.), *The Letters of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 2. ; Walter Fröhlich, in Walter Fröhlich (ed. trans.), *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, vol. 1, (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1990), 10-15.

⁴⁰ Lanfranc, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 67-8.

⁴¹ Lanfranc, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 67-8.

writes how he 'sent him [Patrick] back to his own see' after his consecration in Canterbury.⁴² The use of 'sent' demonstrates power is being exercised by Canterbury in sending Patrick away, that it was Lanfranc's decision when and where he would go. Additionally, in this letter Lanfranc mentions the need for reform of the Church of Ireland, insisting on the failings of the See of Dublin and reforms which must be undertaken.⁴³ In c. July 1073 Pope Gregory VII wrote to Lanfranc calling for him to ensure that the Irish Church reformed in line with the rest of Europe. Gregory instructs Lanfranc to 'ban the wicked practice which we have heard rumoured of the Irish', specifically referring to their deserting or sale of their wives, the 'craving for worldly glory and the delights of the flesh', and that their conduct is corrupting their clergy and laity by 'luring their charges into every kind of sin'.⁴⁴ In Lanfranc's letter to Gutheric, he notes these failings by the See of Dublin, such as Irish men taking 'wives from either their own kindred or that of their deceased wives', as well as offenses relating to the selling of wives, clearly taking instruction from Pope Gregory's letter a year earlier. Lanfranc instructs that these offences should be corrected 'for the sake of God and your own soul', demonstrating Lanfranc's authority over Dublin by instructing that these actions should be rectified.⁴⁵

Anselm continued to have authority over Dublin. In a letter to Samuel, bishop of Dublin, in c. 1100-1103, Anselm condemns Samuel's acts of giving away gifts Lanfranc had gifted the church of Dublin, expelling monks without good reason,

⁴² Lanfranc, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 67-8.

⁴³ Lanfranc, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 67-8.

⁴⁴ Gregory VII, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 65-7.

⁴⁵ Lanfranc, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 67-9

and having the cross carried in front of him rather than behind.⁴⁶ Anselm demonstrates his authority like Lanfranc by referring to these actions as incorrect and insisting they be corrected, stating 'I instruct you do it no longer'.⁴⁷ This demonstrates that Canterbury felt authoritative over Dublin as evidenced through their requests for reform.

This relationship was not reserved for Dublin however. Although limited impact in consecrating bishops outside of the See of Dublin, consecrating only one bishop in Waterford and one in Limerick, in letters to the rest of Ireland Lanfranc and Anselm apply the same tone of authority.⁴⁸ In c.1074 Lanfranc wrote to Toirdhealbhach Ua Briain, king of Munster, regarding concerns of correct investiture, noting that bishops are being 'consecrated by a single bishop', and simony stating that 'holy orders are conferred by bishops for money'.⁴⁹ Similarly, Anselm's letter to Muirchertach Ua Briain, king of Ireland, in c.1106, notes investiture concerns, remarking that bishops 'are being irregularly consecrated ... either by one bishop alone, or in places where they ought not to be ordained', alongside the issue of clerical marriage, noting that ecclesiastics should not live in fear 'under the name of marriage'.⁵⁰ Letters by Lanfranc and Anselm demonstrate external influences for reform upon the Irish Church, as the Archbishops utilise their authority to instruct Irish bishops and kings in how the errors of the Irish Church should be rectified.

⁴⁶ Anselm, in Walter Fröhlich (ed. trans.), *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, vol. 2, (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1993), 281-2.

⁴⁷ Anselm, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 2, 281-2.

⁴⁸ Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 3.

⁴⁹ Lanfranc, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 71-3.

⁵⁰ Anselm, in Walter Fröhlich (ed. trans.), *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, vol. 3, (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1994), 202.

This is the position historians frequently ascribe to, that Irish Church reform was the product of the influence of Archbishops Lanfranc and Anselm.⁵¹ However, what is ignored is that Lanfranc began to instruct Ireland to reform the Church in 1074 with letters to Gutheric, and to Toirdhealbhach Ua Briain.⁵² However, the first movement towards reform was not until 1101, with the synod of Cashel.⁵³ The approximate thirty-year period of inactivity towards Church reform is ignored in scholarship but is a period which casts doubts on the importance one should place on English influence upon Irish Church reform.

The letters of Lanfranc are less authoritative than those of Anselm suggesting that activity towards reform did not happen for nearly thirty years as for approximately twenty of those years Lanfranc was using a much less forceful approach. For example, Lanfranc's letter to Toirdhealbhach Ua Briain begins by praising the practice of Christianity in Ireland, that there are 'so many remarkable instances of the godly humility' before turning to 'certain reports' which are 'quite the opposite' of this 'godly humility'.⁵⁴ During the medieval period, letter-writing manuals were produced to guide the writer through the production of a letter.⁵⁵ These manuals state that after a formal greeting to the receiver of the letter, the author must include 'a section to win the receiver's sympathy, attention and good will', before making their request.⁵⁶ Lanfranc's

⁵¹ Watt, *Church and the Two Nations*, 4. ; Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 1-2. ; Gwynn, 'Origins of the See of Dublin', (Jan.), 40. ; Gwynn, 'Origins of the See of Dublin', (Feb.), 102. ; Hughes, *Church in Early Irish Society*, 253.

⁵² Lanfranc, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 67-8, 71-3.

⁵³ Watt, *Church and the Two Nations*, 1.

⁵⁴ Lanfranc, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 71-3.

⁵⁵ Malcolm Richardson, 'The Ars Dictaminis, the Formulary, and Medieval Epistolary Practice', in Carol Poster and Linda C. Mitchell (eds.), *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present: Historical and Bibliographic Studies*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 52

⁵⁶ Richardson, 'Medieval Epistolary Practice', 56.

complements to Toirdhealbhach demonstrate correct letter writing etiquette. Anselm also undertakes this writing practice. In a letter to Muirchertach, Anselm remarks that Muirchertach lets the 'people of your kingdom live in such peace'.⁵⁷ However, despite this complement, Anselm's letter remains authoritative. The difference between Anselm and Lanfranc's attempts 'to win the receiver's sympathy' is that Anselm's complement does not undermine his calls for reform. Lanfranc complements the pious practice of the Irish, and hence praises the Irish Church, whereas Anselm's praise is referring to peace of the country, not praise of the Church. This means Lanfranc's message for reform becomes contradictory to his previous complement and the call for reform becomes lost, causing Lanfranc's letter to be less authoritative than Anselm's.

Furthermore, the language used by Anselm is more authoritative than Lanfranc. In a letter to Gutheric, Lanfranc writes 'we think that it may be useful to encourage you' to reform, 'with some words of advice'.⁵⁸ The use of 'we think' is not a strong expression of authority, implying this is what 'we think' you should do, not what is correct to do by canon law. Similarly, the use of 'encourage' and 'advice' imply that Gutheric has a choice of whether or not to follow Lanfranc's advice, Lanfranc is not instructing him to do these things, merely encouraging or advising him to. Anselm, on the other hand, uses more urgent, demanding language such as 'implore', 'admonish', 'I instruct', 'God forbid!' to name but a few phrases, demonstrating a more forceful, authoritative approach.

⁵⁷ Anselm, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 3, 202, 214.

⁵⁸ Lanfranc, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 67-8.

Moreover, instead of stating the consequences of not reforming, Lanfranc identifies the rewards of reforming; 'you can offer God no greater or more pleasing gift' than to undertake this reform.⁵⁹ Although this would have caused desire to reform in order to please God, a less forceful tone is created than, for example, by Anselm in a letter to Muirchertach Ua Briain, in c.1107 in which he notes that Muirchertach must enact these reforms 'so that when you pass from the earthly kingdom you may come to the heavenly one.'⁶⁰ Anselm provides an ultimatum: if you do not reform, you will not get to heaven. Anselm's ultimatum is a more forceful approach, rather than Lanfranc's outcome of a 'pleasing gift' for God, which does not suggest any negative consequence of not undertaking reform, just a positive one if you do.

Finally, the authoritative tone of Lanfranc's letters is undermined from the start by referring to himself in all surviving correspondence to Ireland as either 'archbishop not by his own merits', or 'Lanfranc, a sinner and unworthy'.⁶¹ From the beginning of his letters Lanfranc undermines his authority by painting himself as unworthy, suggesting that he is not qualified to instruct on how Ireland should reform.

It is agreed by historians that letters 'are an important source' for medieval study.⁶² They can also be problematic. A private letter 'contains communications of a private or semi-private character'; as the letter was not for

⁵⁹ Lanfranc, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 72-3.

⁶⁰ Anselm, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 3, 202, 215-6.

⁶¹ Lanfranc, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 67, 71, 155.

⁶² Walter Ysebaert, 'Medieval Letters and Letter Collections as Historical Sources: Methodological Questions, Reflections, and Research Perspectives (Sixth-Fifteenth Centuries)', in Christian Høgel and Elisabetta Bartoli (eds.), *Medieval Letters, Between Fiction and Document*, (Belgium: Brepols, 2015), 33.

public consumption the views expressed by the author are more likely to be genuine.⁶³ However, letters were frequently used for didactic purposes or as a rhetoric exercises, containing letters that were 'style exercises or fictional letters' meaning the contents of a letter might not be genuine.⁶⁴ Moreover, the use of letter manuals meant letters were highly constructed to fit a specific form.⁶⁵ Furthermore, throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries it was popular to compile, edit and circulate letter collections.⁶⁶ Lanfranc and Anselm were likely to be conscious of what they wrote in their letters, as, despite the letters being private between sender and recipient, Lanfranc and Anselm would be aware that their letters might be kept and reproduced for collections. Hence, either their original letter would be written in such a way so as to be pleasing to the reader, and to maintain their reputation, or, would be edited at a later date for these reasons.⁶⁷ Despite these issues, the tone across all the letters from Lanfranc is less forceful, and similarly the letters by Anselm all have a more forceful nature. Furthermore, the chronology of the period of inactivity fits with their writing style, as during the period of letters written by the more authoritative Anselm, reform began, with the first reform synod in 1101. Furthermore, these are the only surviving sources which demonstrate the potential intent of Lanfranc and Anselm, and hence it would be wrong to ignore them based upon the difficulty of using them. It is beneficial to be aware of the problems with letter sources, however, when the letters of Lanfranc and Anselm are compared with other letters in their collections, and when the letters are

⁶³ Fröhlich, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 1, 23.

⁶⁴ Fröhlich, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 1, 24. ; Richardson, 'Medieval Epistolary Practice', 52. ; Ysebaert, 'Medieval Letters', 46.

⁶⁵ Richardson, 'Medieval Epistolary Practice', 52-60.

⁶⁶ Fröhlich, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 1, 23-4.

⁶⁷ Ysebaert, 'Medieval Letters', 46.

analysed in comparison to other events occurring during that same time period, the conclusions to be drawn from the implications of the letters are much stronger.

This suggests that this thirty year period of reform inactivity was the consequence of a lack of authority by Lanfranc in his correspondence with Ireland, leading to a lack of pressure for reform until Anselm's more forceful approach demonstrated by the fact that the first reform synod in Ireland took place in 1101, when Anselm was still archbishop of Canterbury and was still actively writing letters to Ireland regarding reform.⁶⁸ This suggests that influence upon Irish Church reform was more from Anselm himself rather than Canterbury as a whole.

However, Anselm was Archbishop for eight years before the first movements towards reform occurred in 1101, despite his authoritative letters.⁶⁹ This is the result of the turbulent political situation in Ireland at that time. Ireland was a politically fragmented nation with power lying predominantly 'in four or five provincial dynasties' ruled by kings.⁷⁰ Muirchertach Ua Briain, king of Munster and Ireland features prominently in this period in Irish annals, with references to him predominantly regarding battles in which he was involved.⁷¹ In 1089 *Annals of the Four Masters* (hereafter *AFM*) record Muirchertach Ua Briain plundering

⁶⁸ Anselm, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 2, 280-2, vol. 3, 202, 205, 214-6.

⁶⁹ Fröhlich, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 1, 10-15.

⁷⁰ Robin Frame, *The Political Development of the British Isles, 1100-1400*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 1.

⁷¹ *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters*, John O'Donovan (trans.), (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1851), 927, (hereafter *AFM*). ; Seán Duffy, 'The Western World's Tower of Honour and Dignity: The Career of Muirchertach Ua Briain in Context', in D. Bracken and D.O. Riain-Raedel (eds.), *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century: Reform and Renewal*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 65.

the churches around Loch Tibh and in 1092 leading an army into Connaught and carrying away hostages.⁷² Irish kings were fighting for control and to gain the ultimate title of 'king of Ireland'.⁷³ Muirchertach, however, had a long period of political instability in the late eleventh century. In 1075 the *Annals of Loch Cé* (hereafter *ALC*) report that Muirchertach was defeated by 'the Airghialla' and 'many were slain.'⁷⁴ In 1090 the *AFM* note that Muirchertach invaded Meath but 'the Munstermen were defeated and slaughtered', and in 1091, after 'a peace was made between Muirchertach Ua Briain and the sons of Tadhg Ua Briain ... the sons acted treacherously towards them' and plundered them.⁷⁵ However, in the late 1090s, Muirchertach's fortunes began to improve, winning more battles, culminating in a greater level of authority and domination, as demonstrated by an entry in the *Annals of Inisfallen* (Hereafter *AI*) from 1105 in which it is noted that Muirchertach was powerful enough to banish Donnchad Ua Mail Shechnaill.⁷⁶ Muirchertach's political situation identifies why Anselm's authoritative approach did not have an impact upon reform in Ireland until 1101. The improvement in the political standing of Muirchertach in the late 1090 and early 1100 corresponds to movements towards reform with the synod of Cashel in 1101. Muirchertach Ua Briain is recorded in the annals as the instigator of the Synod of Cashel.⁷⁷ This demonstrates that the turbulent political situation in Ireland impacted upon reform, as only once the political situation was stable

⁷² *AFM*, 937, 943. For other examples of Muirchertach's battles see: *AU*, 27-9. ; *CS*, 295.

⁷³ *AFM*, 927.; Duffy, 'Career of Muirchertach', 65.

⁷⁴ *The Annals of Loch Cé*, W.M. Hennessy (trans.), (London: Longman and Co., 1871), 69, (hereafter *ALC*).

⁷⁵ *AFM*, John O'Donovan (trans.), 939, 941.

⁷⁶ *ALC*, 83, 85, 87. ; *AFM*, 961. ; *The Annals of Inisfallen*, Seán Mac Airt (trans.), (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1951), 263-5, (hereafter *AI*).

⁷⁷ *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, Denis Murphy (trans.), (Dublin: University Press for the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1896), 188, (hereafter *AClon*). ; *AFM*, 967.

could Muirchertach turn his attention to Church reform, despite Anselm's calls for reform in Ireland prior to this.

Muirchertach is recorded in the annals as the instigator of the synod of Cashel 1101.⁷⁸ However, Anselm did not write to Muirchertach Ua Briain concerning Church reform until 1106 and 1107, after the reform synod at Cashel 1101, suggesting internal Irish action was vital in the formation of the synod of Cashel.⁷⁹ In the surviving letters there is no evidence that Anselm corresponded with Muirchertach before he instigated the synod of Cashel. Anselm did correspond with bishops of Munster, such as Domnald of Cashel, Gilbert of Limerick, and the bishop of Waterford, regarding reform.⁸⁰ This indicates that the Munster bishops must have requested Muirchertach to convene a reform synod. This demonstrates that English influence was an important factor in Irish Church reform, however, English influence alone was not enough; internal actions by the bishops of Munster asking Muirchertach Ua Briain, the king of Munster, to convene a synod was a pivotal factor in progression of reform.

This approximate thirty-year period of inactivity regarding Irish Church reform is overlooked in scholarship. However, it has demonstrated that Canterbury did have strong links with Ireland and these links did have a nature of authority about them so consequently England did have influence over Ireland. However, this thirty-year period of inactivity after Canterbury began requesting reform

⁷⁸ *AClon*, 188, ; *AFM*, 967.

⁷⁹ Anselm, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 3, 202, 214-6.

⁸⁰ Lehane Brendan, *The Quest of Three Abbots: Pioneers of Ireland's Golden Age*, (London: Camelot Press, 1968), front matter, ; Watt, *Church and the Two Nations*, 30. ; Anselm, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 2, 131-4, 137-8, 150-1, 280, vol. 3, 204, 205.

demonstrates that Lanfranc had less influence in Ireland than Anselm, because of his less authoritative nature of his communications. Under Anselm, reform still did not happen for another eight years despite his authoritative letters due to the political instability of Muirchertach until 1101. Therefore, it is important to consult both the English influences and the internal situation in Ireland, as the internal situation was key as to why reform began when it did. Furthermore internal factors in Ireland played a greater role in enabling Church reform than previously assumed by historians, relating to not only the political situation but also the actions of the Munster bishops to convince Muirchertach Ua Briain to convene a synod. Therefore, this chapter has viewed external influences in the context of the internal situation concluding that in the pre-reform period, external factors were important, however so long as the internal situation remained unreceptive to change, reform could not happen.

Chapter 2: Twelfth-Century Reform of the Irish Church

Approximately twenty-four reform synods were convened in Ireland throughout the twelfth century, fourteen of which were prior to the English invasion of Ireland.⁸¹ Historiography of Irish Church reform focuses heavily on reform synods, discussing the decrees passed and their implications for the course reform took focussing on the synods of Cashel 1101, Ráth Breasail 1111 and Kells 1152.⁸² This chapter will also look into these synods as further analysis of the decrees passed at these synods can be done as it demonstrate the extent to which Irish Church reform was internally or externally motivated, which is not currently consulted in historiography. Furthermore, as discussed in the introduction, the history of Irish Church reform is predominantly available in annals; however, the brief entries in the annals means decrees passed at synods are not usually recorded. For the synods of Cashel, Ráth Breasail and Kells, however, decrees have been preserved in sources other than the annals. Therefore, when analysing the significance of decrees passed at synods, only these three synods can be examined as only they have a substantial body of evidence available. The remainder of the chapter will look beyond these three synods, analysing the significance of the individuals present at reform synods, to determine whether reform was internally motivated or encouraged by English authorities.

⁸¹ David N. Dumville, 'Councils and Synods of the Gaelic Early and Central Middle Ages', *Quiggin Pamphlets on the Sources of Medieval Gaelic History*, 3, 1997, 37-9.

⁸² Gwynn, *Irish Church*, 155-270. ; Hughes, *Church in Early Irish Society*, 258-69. ; John Mac Erlean, 'Synod of Raith Breasail: Boundaries of the Dioceses of Ireland, A.D. 1110 or 1118', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 3, (1914), 1-33.

This chapter will demonstrate that the period of Irish Church reform in the twelfth century was much more internally motivated than is portrayed by current scholarship. However, it will also identify that English external influence was not the main external authority; in the twelfth century Rome had a direct influence upon Irish Church reform, unlike the pre-reform period when Rome looked to England to enforce reform of the Irish Church, with Pope Gregory's letter to Lanfranc 1073 asking Lanfranc to enforce reforms upon the Irish Church.⁸³

Irish annals record some of the decrees passed at the synod of Kells but none of the Irish annals record the decrees passed at the synod of Cashel or of Ráth Breasail. However, the decrees passed at these synods are recorded in other sources. The eight decrees passed at the synod of Cashel have been preserved in 'the genealogies of the O'Brien family' in a text called *Senchas Síol Bhriain*.⁸⁴ The translation of this text by O'Grady has been criticised by Aubrey Gwynn, who has rectified some of his translations, so consultation of this source utilising both O'Grady and Gwynn's translations is vital.⁸⁵ This is the only surviving copy of the proceedings of the synod of Cashel, meaning it cannot be compared to check accuracy.⁸⁶ However, the *Senchas Síol Bhriain* has the same date of 1101 and location of the synod in Cashel, as the Irish annals. Furthermore, the decrees passed at the synod correspond to letters of response from Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, to Muirchertach Ua Briain following the

⁸³ Gregory VII, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 65-7.

⁸⁴ *Senchas Síol Bhriain*, Standish Hayes O'Grady (trans.), 'Caithréim Thoirdealbhaigh', *Irish Texts Society*, (London: Irish Texts Society, 1929), 27, 185.

⁸⁵ Gwynn, *Irish Church*, 156-79.

⁸⁶ Flanagan, *Transformation of the Irish Church*, 2.

synod.⁸⁷ Therefore, the reliability of this source increases as it has corresponding elements with other sources, even though it cannot be compared to an equivalent. The first decree of the synod of Cashel concerns the punishment for simony and the fifth and eighth decrees concerns marriage practices, the fifth decree noting how 'no erenagh of a church in Ireland should have a wife' and the eighth how no one should marry someone that is 'near akin'.⁸⁸ These decrees passed at the synod of Cashel reflect earlier calls for reform made by Archbishops of Canterbury, Lanfranc and Anselm, both of whom wrote letters concerning men who marry 'their own kindred' as well as warnings against simony noting how 'holy orders are conferred by bishops for money'.⁸⁹ This demonstrates the influence Canterbury had on this stage of reform.

However, the second decree concerns lay investiture, that 'neither king nor chief' should be paid 'rent or tribute' by a church, meaning a reduction in the power of the laity over the Church and in their potential to invest bishops or abbots.⁹⁰ The third decree also concerns lay power over the Church, noting 'that no layman should be an erenagh in Ireland', an erenagh being the ruler of a monastery and its lands, hence abolishing lay rule over churches.⁹¹ Neither Lanfranc nor Anselm request Irish ecclesiastics to confront lay power over the Church. Lanfranc and Anselm do note issues with investiture, but this is a problem with ecclesiastical investiture, Lanfranc noting that bishops are being

⁸⁷ Anselm, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 3, 202, 214-6.

⁸⁸ *Senchas Síil Bhriain*, vol. 27, 185. ; Gwynn, *Irish Church*, 156-8.

⁸⁹ Lanfranc, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 67-9, 71-3. ; Anselm, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 2, 281-2, vol. 3, 202, 214-6.

⁹⁰ *Senchas Síil Bhriain*, vol. 27, 185. ; Gwynn, *Irish Church*, 156-8.

⁹¹ *Senchas Síil Bhriain*, vol. 27, 185. ; Gwynn, *Irish Church*, 158-65.

‘consecrated by a single bishop’ and Anselm noting that bishops ‘are being irregularly consecrated ... either by one bishop alone, or in places where they ought not to be ordained’.⁹²

Although pertaining towards investiture, it is not concerning lay investiture. Therefore, although Canterbury had some influence over the synod of Cashel, as discussed, the synod was also motivated and influenced by Ireland itself, demonstrated by a reforming agenda not requested by Canterbury. This agenda was in line with the wider European Church reform movement, as Europe at this time was undergoing the investiture controversy. The investiture controversy surrounded the issue of lay investiture, kings investing bishops and abbots into office, as well as general interference by the laity into ecclesiastical affairs.⁹³ Ireland including this issue in their own reform movement demonstrates their connection to Europe and that Ireland was not reforming purely due to force from Canterbury, but reforming on their own terms and on the issues that they felt mattered.

After the synod of Cashel, Irish Church reform took a greater turn away from Canterbury. After the synod of Cashel, Anselm wrote to Muirchertach Ua Briain, king of Ireland twice, requesting Muirchertach to continue to improve upon reforms undertaken at the synod of Cashel, noting how Muirchertach needs ‘strength to bring to completion those things which you perceive he wants you to do’, and continues addressing issues of kinship marriages, consecration of bishops and simony, referring to reforms already decreed at the synod of

⁹² Lanfranc, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 71-3. ; Anselm, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 3, 202.

⁹³ Logan, *History of the Church*, 112-3. ; Cantor, ‘Crisis of Western Monasticism’, 55.

Cashel, which Anselm wanted Muirchertach 'to bring to completion'.⁹⁴ However, at the next reform synod at Ráth Breasail, diocese organisation was addressed, rather than further reforms as begun at Cashel, as Anselm requested. The reforms surrounding diocese restructuring demonstrate initial English influence in reform but the subsequent decline of this being replaced either by other European external influence or by Irish desires.

The principal source for the proceedings synod of Ráth Breasail is the seventeenth-century *History of Ireland* by Geoffrey Keating.⁹⁵ Although from a later period than twelfth-century Irish Church reform, Keating's *History of Ireland* will be treated as a primary source; Keating's *History* is the first and only account of the proceedings of the synod of Ráth Breasail, and it is written much like an annal rather than a secondary work. Therefore Keating's *History of Ireland* benefits from an analysis in the nature of a primary text. Keating writes that his information about the synod of Ráth Breasail comes from 'an old book of annals of the church of Cluain Eidhneach Fionntain' which is in reference to the Book of Clonenagh, a book referred to by no source other than Keating and which is unfortunately now lost.⁹⁶ This is problematic, as what Keating relates as being the contents of the book cannot be confirmed by another source. Although not ideal, this source is our only documentation of the proceedings of the synod of Ráth Breasail and therefore, so long as awareness is made of its potential unreliability, must be used in consultation of the question of the proceedings of the synod of Ráth Breasail.

⁹⁴ Anselm, *Letters of Anselm*, vol. 3, 214-6, 202.

⁹⁵ Flanagan, *Transformation of the Irish Church*, 2.

⁹⁶ Geoffrey Keating, in David Comyn (ed. trans.) *The History of Ireland, Book II*, vol. 3, (London: Irish Texts Society, 1908), 299. ; Flanagan, *Transformation of the Irish Church*, 2.

The synod of Ráth Breasail agreed to ‘twelve bishops in Leath Mogha and twelve bishops in Leath Cuinn’, with the archbishop of Cashel presiding over Leath Mogha ‘as chief prelate’ and the ‘archbishop of Ard Macha’, or as Flanagan refers to it Armagh, presiding over Leath Cuinn.⁹⁷ Historians frequently credit this choice by Ireland to divide their diocese into two archdioceses each presiding over twelve dioceses, to England, of Ireland adopting England’s model of two archbishoprics in Canterbury and York.⁹⁸ England also had two archbishoprics, Canterbury and York, each presiding over twelve bishops. This is noted by Keating also, in his opening description of the synod of Ráth Breasail:

Just as twelve bishops were fixed under Canterbury in the south of England, and twelve bishops in the north under the city of York, a similar arrangement was made at the Synod of Ráth Breasail in Ireland⁹⁹

However, the situation is puzzling as Dublin was excluded from the synod of Ráth Breasail. As mentioned in chapter 1, Canterbury had a significant influence in Dublin.¹⁰⁰ Keating attributes Dublin’s exclusion from diocesan organisation to the fact that ‘it was not customary with its bishop’, as Dublin’s bishop was required to be consecrated by the archbishop of Canterbury, and

⁹⁷ Keating *History of Ireland*, vol. 3, 299-301. ; Flanagan, *Transformation of the Irish Church*, 34-5.

⁹⁸ Gwynn, *Irish Church*, 181. ; Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 13.

⁹⁹ Keating, *History of Ireland*, vol. 3, 299-300

¹⁰⁰ Gwynn, ‘Origins of the See of Dublin’, (Jan.), 40-41. ; Gwynn, ‘The Origins of the See of Dublin’, (Feb.), 102-107. ; Gwynn, *Irish Church*, 51.

thus could not be presided over by archbishops of Armagh or Cashel.¹⁰¹ Others, Watt for example, have attributed the exclusion of Dublin to tensions between Dublin and other Irish bishoprics. Watt highlights a letter sent from Dublin to the archbishop of Canterbury in 1121; ‘the bishops of Ireland are very jealous of us ... because we are unwilling to be subject to their rule but wish to always be under your authority’.¹⁰² Both the problem of Dublin being subject to Canterbury’s authority, and ‘jealous’ tension between Dublin and the rest of Ireland, contributed to Dublin being excluded from the synod of Ráth Breasail. Dublin was the area of Ireland in which England had the greatest influence and its exclusion indicates that the synod of Ráth Breasail had a distinctively anti-English character. This coupled with the Irish adoption of an identical diocese structure to England paints a contradictory picture. This contradictory nature is not addressed in scholarship but this dissertation will now turn to this issue.

Firstly, the original comparison by Keating must be analysed. Keating is English and therefore it would have been natural for him to strike a comparison between the diocese structure of Ireland and England.¹⁰³ Secondly, the wording used by Keating has been overlooked by historians but alludes to it being his own comparison, not one made by the Irish themselves. Keating’s introductory description of the synod of Ráth Breasail where this comparison is found between English and Irish diocese structure, is his own; it is not a direct copy from the Book of Clonenagh. This is evident from his description as he speaks of the Book of Clonenagh as a separate text from his own, for example, he

¹⁰¹ Keating, *History of Ireland*, vol. 3, 301.

¹⁰² Anon., in Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 14.

¹⁰³ David Comyn, in David Comyn (ed. trans.), *The History of Ireland, Book II*, vol. 1, (London: Irish Texts Society, 1902), ii.

notes an omission in the Book of Clonenagh: 'the old book does not so state [...]'.¹⁰⁴ As Keating's introductory description is his own words, this demonstrates that the comparison between English and Irish diocese structure is his own comparison, not one written in the Book of Clonenagh. Therefore, scholarship should be cautious when attributing Irish diocese structure to the English model.

Secondly, in the synod of Kells in 1152, diocese organisation was restructured again, installing two new archbishops, making the total number of archbishoprics to four: Cashel, Armagh, Dublin and Tuaim.¹⁰⁵ By 1152, Gregory, the final bishop of Dublin to be consecrated by Canterbury, had begun to break free of the Canterbury-Dublin tie, enabling him to become archbishop of Dublin in 1152 in the synod of Kells.¹⁰⁶ Ireland was not following English style diocese structure as England had only two archbishoprics, Canterbury, presiding over the southern province, and York, presiding over the northern province, and remained as such until the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, Ireland's establishment of four archbishoprics did not come from England. Inspiration could have come from Europe, as Ireland had close links with Germany, with several Irish communities established there, and Germany certainly had a more complex diocese structure than the English model.¹⁰⁸ Equally, however, it could be internally motivated, a re-balance of power within

¹⁰⁴ Keating, *History of Ireland*, vol. 3, 299-302.

¹⁰⁵ AT, 389. ; *The Annals of Multyfarnham*, Stephen de Exonia and Bermadette Williams (trans.), (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), (hereafter *AMul*), 134. ; Keating, *History of Ireland*, vol. 3, 309-17.

¹⁰⁶ Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 14.

¹⁰⁷ G.W. Bernard, *The Late Medieval English Church: Vitality and Vulnerability Before the Break with Rome*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 56-67.

¹⁰⁸ Gwynn, *Irish Church*, 42. ; John M. Jeep (ed.), *Medieval Germany: An Encyclopedia*, vol. 6, (Abingdon: Psychology Press, 2001), 168-9.

Ireland. The exact influence is unknown, however it demonstrates Irish internal motivation for Church reform, moving away from an English diocese structure to model their own, possibly inspired by European structures or purely to re-balance power in their own country, simultaneously breaking the Canterbury-Dublin tie. This further complicates the issue of Irish diocese structure being modelled off English diocese structure.

It is probable that initially the Irish diocese structure as instigated at the synod of Ráth Breasail was modelled off English diocese structure, as both countries end up with two archbishoprics each presiding over twelve bishops, thus demonstrating English influence in Irish Church reform. However, it would be wrong to overly stress the influence of England in this synod, as the synod of Ráth Breasail had a distinctive anti-English element, with the deliberate exclusion of Dublin, England's closest Irish connection, demonstrating Irish motivation and desire for reform. Furthermore, forty years later, Irish diocese structure altered again, deviating from English diocese structure. This demonstrates the changing influences upon Irish Church reform throughout the twelfth century. At Ráth Breasail, England still had a certain amount of influence, however the synod still had an anti-English element and therefore was motivated also by internal desires. As the twelfth century progressed, Irish influence over Church reform increased, with their remodelling of diocese structure at the synod of Kells being either their own model or one they adopted from somewhere else in Europe, however, it was certainly not one based on an English structure.

This change over time of influence upon Irish Church reform is also reflected in the individuals present at synods. The annals of Ireland occasionally note the names of individuals present at the synods. The individuals present are significant as their character, contacts and actions outside of the synods reveal the level of influence England, and indeed Rome, had upon the reform movement. Recording the names of individuals is quite detailed recording for an annal, as annals are mostly brief statements, therefore, the specific individuals recorded must be significant to the scribe to merit documentation.¹⁰⁹

Irish annals often mention Papal legates as attending synods. Papal legates, native individuals appointed by the Pope as a way of delegating papal power in that country, are usually mentioned in Irish Church reform scholarship, however, with the exception of Aubrey Gwynn, a more detailed analysis of papal legates is not common.¹¹⁰ Building on Gwynn's assessment of papal legates, it is evident that Ireland was more closely linked to Rome than it was to England. During the twelfth century, Ireland had six papal legates.¹¹¹ The annals expressly mention legates attending synods in years 1153, 1157, 1158, 1162, and 1166.¹¹² This demonstrates links between Ireland and Rome as the Pope appointed the papal legate.¹¹³ The fact that Ireland's synods include the papal legate demonstrates an external influence of Rome acting upon Ireland.

¹⁰⁹ Radner, 'Early Irish Historiography', 313-4.

¹¹⁰ Gwynn, *Irish Church*, 116-7. ; Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 9-10. ; Aubrey Gwynn undertook a comprehensive study of Irish Papal legates in Gwynn, *Irish Church*, 116-54.

¹¹¹ Gwynn, *Irish Church*, 116-54.

¹¹² *AClon*, 201-2. ; *CS*, 129-31, 133. *AFM*, 1125, 1129. ; *AT*, 407. ; *AI*, 301.;

¹¹³ Gwynn, *Irish Church*, 116-7.

However, Ireland's internal drive for reform was still maintained. Firstly, the papal legate was a native of Ireland, demonstrating internal motivation for reform as the native papal legate is striving to conform to the Pope's wishes and to reform Ireland inline with Rome and the rest of Europe. It demonstrates Ireland's desire to be part of a wider European network, rather than purely taking instruction from Canterbury. Furthermore, the annals often portrayed the successors of Patrick as being just as significant as Ireland's papal legates. The annal entries which refer to Irish papal legates presence at synods also refer to the presence of the successors of Patrick, for example, *AU* notes that a 1158 synod was attended by 'the successor of Patrick and along with the Legate', and similarly, *AT* notes that at a synod in 1162 'S. Patrick's successor and the Legate' were present.¹¹⁴ These entries place importance on the presence of both the successor of Patrick, and the papal legate by specifically mentioning both in their entry. This suggests that even though Irish reform had an external focus towards Rome, it did not lose its internal drive for reform as the Irish character of the reform was maintained with Irish ecclesiastical members being seen as being as important as Irish papal legates.

This increased focus towards Rome with the mention of papal legates began only after the visit of the successor of Peter, Cardinal Johannes Papiron.¹¹⁵ Cardinal Papiron was Rome's papal legate, whom Pope Eugenius III sent to Ireland in 1151 to oversee the synod of Kells 1152.¹¹⁶ However, it was after Papiron's visit when the Irish annals began mentioning the presence of papal

¹¹⁴ *AU*, 133. ; *AT*, 407. For other examples see, *AFM*, 1125, 1129.

¹¹⁵ *AFM*, 1095.

¹¹⁶ Stephen de Exonia and Bernadette Williams in *AMul*, 134. ; *AFM*, 1101-3.

legates at synods, expressly mentioning legates attending synods in years 1153, 1157, 1158, 1162, and 1166.¹¹⁷ Prior to this, the main ecclesiastical members mentioned at synods were the successor of Patrick, such as 1111 'including Cellach, comarb of Patrick', 'eminent bishop of Ireland, Cellach, coarb of Patrick', or 1148 the presence of Malachias 'of the Chair of Patrick', 'comarb of Patrick'.¹¹⁸ This suggests that the second half of the twelfth century had a greater focus towards Rome. However, as discussed the second half of the century did maintain an Irish character, with the continued importance of the successors of Patrick at synods.

This chapter has demonstrated that there was a change of external influence upon Ireland over time throughout the twelfth century. There was some initial influence from England in early reforms, however over time, external influence came more from Europe and Rome than from England. The synod of Kells 1152 seems to be a key turning point, with a reorganised dioceses structure not resembling England's, as well as increased mention of ecclesiastical officials with direct relations to Rome. However, it has also been demonstrated that internal Irish ambition for Church reform was always present, with early reforms initiated by Ireland pertaining to those being undertaken in Europe, as well as Irish ecclesiastical officials continued importance throughout the reform process.

¹¹⁷ *AClon*, 201-2. ; *CS*, 129-31, 133. *AFM*, 1125, 1129. ; *AT*, 407. ; *AI*, 301.

¹¹⁸ *ALC*, 101. ; *AI*, 269. ; *AFM*, 1083-5. ; *CS*, 345.

Conclusion

The question of the influences upon Ireland in before, and throughout, Church reform has not been a question scholarship has consulted, opting instead to assume acceptance that influence for Church reform upon Ireland came directly from England.¹¹⁹

This dissertation has demonstrated that English actions were influential upon Irish Church reform. Letters from Lanfranc and Anselm in the pre-reform period concerning issues in need of reform in the Irish Church would undoubtedly have had some affect upon their recipients, particularly Anselm's letters with their forceful, authoritative nature. The reforms requested by Anselm and Lanfranc were recognised and implemented at the synod of Cashel, passing decrees concerning marriage practices and simony. However, the extent of English influence is questionable. There was approximately thirty years of inactivity regarding Irish Church reform, despite reform requests from Lanfranc and Anselm.

This thirty-year period of inactivity surrounding Irish Church reform has been overlooked in scholarship but demonstrates that internal actions are pivotal in the reform movement. Irish actions themselves have frequently been overlooked by scholarship but they demonstrate that internal motivations were the main influence over Irish Church reform. The political situation in the pre-

¹¹⁹ Watt, *Church and the Two Nations*, 4. ; Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 1-2. ; Gwynn, 'Origins of the See of Dublin', (Jan.), 40. ; Gwynn, 'Origins of the See of Dublin', (Feb.), 102. ; Hughes, *Church in Early Irish Society*, 253.

reform era was a major contributing factor as to why reform did not begin until 1101, that prior to this Muirchertach was too politically unstable to initiate a reform movement, and only once he was politically secure did reform synods begin. Furthermore, during twelfth century reform synods, not all of the decrees passed were those requested by Canterbury. This is particularly telling at the synods of Ráth Breasail and Kells, with Ireland choosing to reform its diocese structure, particularly at Kells when Ireland reformed its dioceses contrary to those of England. By looking at twelfth-century Irish Church reform from an internal perspective it is clear that Ireland was well linked to Europe and Rome, with the presence of papal legates and Cardinals at later reform synods. However, this external influence from Rome did not eclipse internal Irish influence as even when external actors of cardinals and papal legates were mentioned, the 'successor of Patrick' was also always mentioned alongside them, demonstrating the Irish individuals were judged equally as important as the European individuals.

This dissertation has acknowledged that external influences were important in the progression of the reform movement and it has been shown that the external influencers changed over time. In the late eleventh century and early twelfth century, external influence came from England. However, from the mid-twelfth century, external influence emanated from Rome and Europe instead, by-passing England, unlike the pre-reform era when in 1073 Pope Gregory VII requested Lanfranc to initiate reforms in Ireland.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Gregory VII, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 65-7.

Overall, this dissertation has demonstrated that English influence was certainly a factor in the early stages of Irish Church reform, however, it was not the main factor as often suggested in scholarship. Overtime, external influence switched from England to Rome. Furthermore, despite external influence, there was consistently an internal Irish desire for reform, which is overlooked in scholarship. Therefore, I respectfully disagree with John Watt's view that there is no need 'to emphasize that the movement for reform came from within,' as movement from within was a major factor in initiating reform and a consistent feature throughout the reform process.¹²¹

¹²¹ Watt, *Church and the Two Nations*, 4.

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