

Impact of the anglo norman colonisation on agriculture history essay



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In this paper we are going to comment the different events which led into the transformation of the Irish society during the Anglo-Norman colonisation, regarding key social activities such as agriculture, economy, settlement patterns and structures, religion practice and structure and legal system during the High Middle Ages (1169-1300).

Firstly, we are going to explain who were the so-called Anglo-Normans and why they decided to colonise Ireland. Once we have clarified who they were and what their intentions were, we shall analyse how they colonised the island and how these people interacted with the natives from the island, eventually resulting in the change of the early Irish people's costumes and everyday economic, political and social activities, entering into a world in which there was a shared ideology, custom, law, and culture that was common to all western Europe during the High Middle Age (Katherine Simms: 1989).

Broadening more on the transformation of the Irish society, we are going to focus mainly in the agriculture, economy and the settlement patterns and structures.

The Anglo-Normans

The term Anglo-Norman is used to describe the descendants from the Norman people who settle in England following the Battle of Hastings (1066).

The Normans were a group of people who came from Normandy,[1] a region located in northern France, situated along the English Channel coast. They were descendants of the Norsemen, Scandinavian tribes (also known as Vikings) who found that territory in the 9th century (Duffy, 2000).

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This people, liderated by William of Normandy, ruled and settle in England and vast parts of Wales (their descendents in this country are known as Cambro-Normans) following the Battle of Hastings (1066) and, after 1169, vast parts of Ireland (called there Hiberno-Normans). According to F. X. Martin words, (1987, p. liii) the coming of these people to the British islands was part of a large migratory movement of peoples looking for outlets beyond the immediate boundaries of settled feudal Europe.

The early Normans spoke a Germanic language known as Old Norse, however this language would evolve and mixture with the Romanic dialect spoken in Normandy, resulting in the Norman language. In Britain, the tongue developed into the insular dialect known as Anglo-Norman or Anglo-French, which become the literary and spoken language of the élite and was used for administrative purposes from the 13th until the 15th century (Foster, 1989). This language heavily influenced the Old English, name given to the early form of the English language spoken in England at that time, especially in the vocabulary (Durkin, 2009).

The Conquest

The Anglo-Norman colonization of Ireland began in 1169, when small groups of Anglo-Normans under Richard De Clare (called Strongbow) arrived from the south of Wales (Orel, 1979). In Robin Frame words, this invasion can be regarded as the first act in the prolonged, frequently miserable, drama of relations between England and Ireland (Frame, 1981). It took place between 1169 and 1240, however, it was never complete, leaving large parts of the island unconquered (Frame, 1981).[2]

Before the Anglo-Norman conquest, Ireland was ruled by a handful of provincial Gaelic dynasties constantly fighting over wealth and the supremacy of the whole island (Frame, 1981).[3] During one of these dynastic fights, the King Diarmait Mac Murchada (anglicized as Dermot Mac Murrough) of the province from Leinster was dispossessed from his kingdom and forcibly exiled by the new High King, Ruaidri mac Tairrdelbach Ua Conchobair (anglicized as Rory O'Connor) from the Western kingdom of Connacht (Frame, 1981).

After Dermot was expelled from his territories, he sailed to England seeking aid from Henry II (the Anglo-Norman king of England, the first one who used the title of "King of England" (BBC Researchers, 2004), who had already expressed his interest in dominating Ireland (Duffy, 2000). When he found that Henry II was in Aquitaine (France), he travelled there looking for his assistance to recruit Norman knights in order to attempt recruiting foreign forces to recover his lost throne (Flanagan, 1989). In 1167 he came back to Ireland followed by a small group of Flemish knights regaining the territory Uí Cennselaigh. Two years later, in 1169 with the arrival of Robert Fitz Stephen and his men (comprising Norman, Welsh and Flemish knights), Dermot could restore the control of some of the counties from his old kingdom. Like Stephen, the record of these early invaders was to achieve rapid military success and obtain material rewards (Foster, 1989). He named his son-in-law, Norman Richard de Clare, known as Strongbow, heir to his kingdom, who, like many blue-blooded knights, came to the other side of the sea seeking reputation, patronage and heiresses in order to achieve the position denied in England and Wales. This caused consternation to King Henry II of

England, who was afraid of the establishment of a rival Norman state in the neighbouring Ireland (Foster, 1989).

In October 1171, Henry II landed with his large fleet at Waterford (Duffy, 2000), after he had been authorised by the pope Adrian IV[4]to take control over Ireland (Simms, 1989). According Robin Frame words, this authorization was given in order to enlarge the boundaries of the Church, to proclaim the truths of the Christian religion to a rude and ignorant people and to root out the growths of vice from the field of the Lord (1981, p. 12). Following the death of his first son, Henry II named his younger son John, who was already “ Lord of Ireland”, King of England, becoming Ireland part of the English Crown (Flanagan, 1989).

Changes

Administration

A history of medieval ireland p. 118

Side by side with this secular organization of the manor went its ecclesiastic organization. As we have seen, the organization of the new territorial dioceses initiated at the beginning of the twelfth century was substantially complete before the Normans came. But parochial organization was another matter, and it seems probable that no more than a bare beginning had been made in this, and that almost everywhere the defined, organized territorial parish was still unknown. The synod of Cashel of 1171-2 decreed that everyman should pay tithe to his parish church, and it seems reasonably clear that this marks

Law

A short history of Ireland John Ranelagh

The Normans brought to Ireland not only a strong military tradition, but also a different Anglo-Norman legal structure of Common Law based upon the personal ownership of land and not, as in Irish Brehon Law, ownership vested in an extended clan or family.

The yoke of obedience was never properly positioned by the Normans in Ireland, but at several times Anglo-Irish legislators attempted to impose penal laws of the type suggested by Giraldus (29). The first Irish parliament was recorded in 1264, established on the English model, with Norman-Irish representatives coming from every part of the country except Connaught and West Ulster. By 1300 some towns and boroughs were also represented, but with the exception of brief periods in the seventeenth century, not only in 1922 did an Irish parliament represent the mass of the native Irish people. One of the first laws passed by the thirteenth-century Irish parliament prohibited the Norman-Irish from wearing Gaelic dress because it confused relationships between the governors and the governed.

The Brehon laws: a legal handbook

Escrito por Laurence Ginnell

Following the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, the Celtic legal system was kept over the greater part of the country; but only in its shattered and incomplete condition, and only in with a view to the interests of isolated and rival communities or rival individuals; never universally or with a view to the

interests of the nation as a whole, and never with the old unquestioned power and full reverential obedience. The Anglo-Irish, wherever they were sprinkled throughout the country, except the Pale, did in the main adopt the Irish laws, language, dress, and customs; and such of them as attained sufficient power became Irish chiefs, and appointed their own brehons in the Irish way. But the nation considered as a political unit had lost the essential attributes and organisms of a state, and the statesmanship of England was directed to the prevention of re-organization and the fomenting of disorder. In obedience to this statesmanship a so-called parliament, consisting mainly of self-elected English officials, was held in Kilkenny in 1367, and an Act was passed, written not in Irish, nor even in English, but in Norman-French, branding the Irish as enemies, and penalizing the adoption of their dress, manners, language and laws. Various other measures conceived in a like spirit followed. They were not immediately successful in their direct object; but they were too successful in sowing discord among people who wanted only to be let alone, and they armed and created an opportunity for miscreant adventurers hungry for a morsel of prey. This later was the main object of those measures. The trade of fomenting disorder thrived apace. It was the only trade that did. The Gaelic race, with its peculiar institutions, national and domestic, was kept disorganized until disorganization became its normal condition. It was not so much that civilization was undergoing a change as that it was being strangled. There were two nations in the land, animated not by a desire to evolve a better condition of things, but by a mutual desire to thwart each other at every hand's turn. Neither was able to establish a central government for its own of sufficient potency to enforce its own views. Each was able and willing to prevent the other from doing it.

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Religion

A short history of Ireland John Ranelagh

Within a generation of the conquest, most of the leading churchmen in Ireland were Normans, and they secured their wishes of the papacy, decreed by the synod of Cashel, that “ the divine offices shall be celebrated according to the usage of the Church of England”. They also secured that the Church in England would be loyal to the British crown. This loyalty

Ranelagh, John. (1999) A Short History of Ireland. 2nd ed Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

However, the Irish Church with its secularization and rejection of Episcopal authority was becoming increasingly anomalous. Between 640 and 1080 there was not written correspondence between the Irish Church and the papacy; no Irish armies took part on the Crusades. Both these facts reflect the way in which Ireland was removed from the mainstream of European politics and society. While this preserved Gaelic culture, it also meant that Gaelic culture influenced the Irish Church. By the Eighth century, before the Viking onslaughts, Gaelic customs had given rise to lay abbots, married clergy, pluralism and family succession to ecclesiastic office in the Irish Church. In the Roman Church, which by the twelfth century had succeeded in establishing its dominance in Britain and the rest of Europe, reforms had ended similar abuses and had created a similar Episcopal hierarchy recognizing papal authority in Church affairs. Pope Gregory VII In the programme “ Unity and Purity” included Ireland as being within his

jurisdiction and, to carry out papal wishes, the Norman archbishops of Canterbury revived their claim to be supreme over Ireland.

Canterbury's claim over Ireland dated from the sixth century when St Augustine was appointed first archbishop of Canterbury by Pope Gregory I with authority over the British Islands as a whole. This authority remained nominal until, after their conversion, Danes in Ireland chose to join Danes in England and recognize Canterbury's ecclesiastical primacy over Armagh or local Irish abbots. Thus there was a constant pull from England exerted upon Leinster, Dublin and the other towns of Ireland's eastern seaboard, and on occasion archbishops of Canterbury used their claim to press the case for reform of the Irish Church upon Irish high kings. Recognizing the need for reform, Irish Church leaders set about reorganizing the Irish Church on Roman lines and sought papal approval for their efforts. In 1150 and Italian, Cardinal Paparo, was appointed first papal legate to Ireland, and in 1152 he attended a synod at Kells, CO. Meath, convened by the abbots and bishops of the Irish Church. At this synod Paparo, with his papal authority, ratified an episcopal organization for the Irish Church consisting of thirty-six bishoprics and four archbishoprics at Cashel, Tuam, Dublin and the primacy of Armagh. In return for selecting Dublin as the metropolitan see for Leinster, churchmen there at last accepted Armagh's authority instead of Canterbury's. However, in order for the reforms to succeed against generations of different practice, the support of a powerful, central authority was required. Such an authority did not exist in Ireland -at any one time there were at east three leading kings with competing claims -and so on in 1155 , by the papal bull "Laudabiliter", Pope Adrian IV granted the lordship of Ireland to the powerful

King Henry II of England “ to reveal the truth of the Christian faith to peoples still untaught and barbarous”. Pope Adrian IV (the only English pope in history) saw that if Henry II expanded his power to Ireland, then there would be an opportunity to secure firm control of the Church there too. The Pope’s right to grant such an authority derived from the “ donation of constantine” whereby the papacy claimed to have assignment temporal sovereignty over all islands converted to Christianity. (Ireland, and indeed all islands on which Christ, the sun of justice, has shed his rays, and which have received the teachings of the Christian faith, belong to the jurisdiction of the blessed Peter and holy Roman Church).

History of Ireland: from the Anglo-Norman invasion till the union of the country with Great Britain. Volume I

The conquest of England by the Duke of Normandy was hailed by the descendants of the Danes in Ireland as a triumph that prognosticated the revival of their own power and eminence. They relinquished the name of Ostmen for the more important title of Normans. They also broke off their connection with the Irish church, asserting, with truth, that they had been instructed in Christianity by the Saxons; and they sent over their bishop-elect of Dublin to receive ordination from Lanfranc, the Norman Archbishop of Canterbury. This was the first step towards submission; but it was not made without resistance; for a letter is extant from the people of Dublin to Ralph, Archbishop of Canterbury, about 1121 in which they complain about the dislike shown to them by the Irish Bishops, on account of them having submitted to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of a foreigner. However,

eventually the Irish clergy ended up accepting the Roman church, in the year <https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-the-anglo-norman-colonisation-on-agriculture-history-essay/>

1152, a synod was convened at Kells, over which Cardinal Paparo, the apostolic legate, presided. There, for the first time, palls were distributed to the Irish prelates, and the authority of the pope was formally acknowledged, the other enactments made at the same time clearly show the motives by which the clergy were induced to resign their independence: tithes never before collected in Ireland, immunities hitherto withheld, the freedom of their order from taxation and civil jurisdiction were granted at this synod,; and thus, the last of the Western national churches was united finally to the Roman see.

Agriculture

Once the conquerors had militarily subjugated the island, they began to follow a policy of economic colonisation.

Large long-term investments were made in the island by the Normans, who sought wealth in return. They brought from England a highly developed agricultural system, which was based on the manor^[5] and on a mixture of pastoral and arable farming techniques (Duffy, 2000). As a result of this intensive farming method, large areas of woodland were cut down to create new lands to exploit economically. Nevertheless, there were vast areas which were not occupied as there were not attractive economically.

According to Robin Frame, the intensive occupation tended not to occur in places above the 120 m (1981, 71).

Irish farmers were not expelled from the lands, however, in order to develop the more intense and productive farming techniques, it was necessary to import equipped English peasants to alleviate the lack of work force (Frame,

1981). This people were attracted by better working conditions and profitable available lands to work (Duffy, 2000). As Katharine Simms states (1989, p. 53), the sudden acquisition of large areas of underpopulated agricultural land in Ireland meant wealth for those who could develop its full potential. Eventually, the intensive occupation of the lands would lead to an economic boom in the Irish economy which will be adressed later on.

A history of medieval Ireland

There were six classes of tenants to be found in Norman-Irish manors: free tenants, farmers, gavillers, cottiers, betaghs and burgesses. Not every manor had all of these, but all had most of them. The free tenants fall into two sub-groups: the strictly military tenants, who owed personal service in war, or scutage in lieu of it, and were liable to all the accidents of feudal tenure; and others who held in fee-farm, who held, that is, in perpetual heritable dependent tenure, like the military tenants, but owed instead of military service, a money rent, fixed for ever by the character of first enfeoffment of their ancestors. Normally all free farmers owed suit to the court of the fee, usually once a fortnight, but sometimes only twice a year, while some were altogether exempt.

Below the free tenants came the farmers: men holding their land on lease for a term of years at a money rent, usually related precisely to the acreage which they held. They were clearly of exactly the same class as the smaller free tenants, who indeed not uncommonly augmented their inherited holdings by taking some additional land on farm. They seem normally to

have owed suit of court, and they often owed labour services in addition to their money rent (XXX)

The gavillers were tenants-at-will, whose holdings seem in practice to have descended from father to son. They owed labours services and did suit at lord's court, as well as paying a money rent.

Cottiers held only their cottages and crofts, and pay a money rent and labour services (XXX). They were the permanently employed farm servants, who were paid a small money wage, plus substances allowances of grain. They seem to be personally free.

The betaghs had approximately the same position as the English villein. They were bound to the land and owned by the feudal lord. (XXX) The average betagh holding seems to have been from seven to ten acres. And by the end of the thirteenth century their labour services seems had often been commuted for a money rent.(REF112)

Finally we come to the burgesses, who held their burgages at a low fixed rent, and they owed suit not to the court of the manor, but to their own court, the hundred, whose judgment was the judgment of their fellow burgesses. But though they had the elements of an urban constitution, and many of them were no doubt artisans and petty merchants, they not uncommonly owed labour services, ranging from carting iron and salt, to drawing hay, reaping and drawing corn, and repairing the mill-pond. The average burgage holding consisted of only some three acres in the fields, besides the burgage plot itself, but it is probable that they rented some other lands.

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The agricultural structure of the new manors was clearly modeled on English practice. The betaghs no doubt cultivated their own lands on the native system, but there is adequate evidence of the dispersed strip holdings of the English open field system all over the area which, as we have seen, was populated by English settlers. (zonas pobladas por ingleses ver pagina 116) indeed on the archbishop's lands in co. Dublin strips and furlongs persisted in some places till the early nineteenth century., though elsewhere they seem to have disappeared much earlier. But the lord's lands seem usually to have been separate from those of the tenants, and there is evidence that a good deal of consolidation of strips was going on in the 14th century. A three course rotation was that commonly used, as in England: winter corn (wheat or rye), spring corn (oats); fallow. There is evidence that the eight ox plough was that commonly used. There was a good deal of sheep farming, and the custom on the export of wool, woolfells and hides yielded considerable sums under Edward I, while in the same period large quantities of grain were exported to supply the king's armies of Scotland.

Economy

The introduction of new farming techniques and better equipped working forces contributed to an economic boom that introduced Ireland in the European trade routes of the High Middle Ages. As we have said before, the Normans made large investments on the island seeking wealth in return. The foreign colonial manors with their advanced agricultural systems improved and increased the production getting surpluses which were sold in the country and imported to the foreign markets, as well (Simms, 1989).

In Katharine Simms words, these structural efforts contributed to change the Irish economy from a primary subsistence economy, based on self-sufficiency farming (the farmers grow only enough food to feed their family), to a market economy, in which the prices of goods are set by the supply and demand of the market (1989, p. 55).

Defended space: Around the tower was the bailey, an open area enclosed by a defensive wood fence called a palisade.

Motte and bailey: In early medieval castles a strong tower was built on a mound of earth called a motte.

Outer Bailey: Often there was a separate bailey connected to the tower by a fortified causeway.

Causeway

Palisade

Settlement patterns and structures

Following the Anglo-Norman invasion, the new settlers started to build impressive structures such as castles, churches, abbeys and fortifications. According to Harold Orel (1979, p. 95), the most majestic legacy left by the Normans in the island were the castles rather than the churches or other kind of edification.

One of the most popular structures built by the conquerors was the Motte-and-bailey castle (Orel, 1979).[6]

This building, used for security reasons, was very useful for the Anglo-Normans in the recent Irish occupied territories, as it was quick to build, and it was not necessary trained work force to erect it (Orel, 1979). The building

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consisted of an earthwork with a wooded tower built on it, surrounded by a fence made of wood (Thomas, 2009). As soon as the Normans had become more powerful on the newly occupied area, they would change the wood for stone so that the structure would avoid fire and strong attacks from the Irish Resistance.[7]The best contemporary example of this kind of building is the Trim Castle, found on County Meath, Leinster (Orel, 1979).

As Robin Frame states in *Colonial Ireland 1169-1369* (1981, p. 72), the castles built by the settlers were not merely defensive structures but buildings provided with complex functions from which authority was radiated outwards as a sign of power over the newly conquerer land. As the conquest of Ireland advanced, more castles were built, and thus, the Anglo-Norman élite, formed by great lords, sub-tenants and ecclesiastics, motivated the immigration of English vassals to hold their land and exploited it economically (1981, p. 77).

With respect to the religious buildings, the Normans replaced the traditional Irish Romanesque style by the Early English Gothic, importing new motifs[8]and materials which were unknown in Ireland. Compared to the Irish churches, the Anglo-Norman churches were smaller and had a more conservative architecture. They consisted of a single portal, located at the west side of the building and a chancel arch and were characterised by its verticality, arcaded walls and the rich decoration of its chancel arch (Orel, 1979).[9]

Norman stone carving ornamentation to doorway and chancel arches

Another important print left by the Anglo-Normans was the support to the foundation of new settlements in the overwhelmingly rural Ireland. During the Anglo-Norman colonisation, the foreign lords encouraged the creation of new towns in their newly conquered lands, seeking develop local and regional trade centres in order to create wealth (Frame, 1981).

Regarding the settlement patterns, the Anglo-Normans introduced a more efficient and elaborated way of land planning. Instead of follow the natural topography of a place, as the early inhabitants of Ireland used to do, they developed straight lines, bordered by long narrow plots, drawn to provide the maximun number of premises the befits of a street frontage (Simms, 1989).

Mark Hennessy (2004, p. 113) classifies three different types of Anglo-Norman settlements in Ireland: Principal seigneurial centres with a borough, Principal seigneurial centres, and Secondary seigneurial centres. The first type of settlement consiststed of a castle, a parish church, a range of monopolies and substancial nucleated settlements, it was densely populated; the second one compriseded a parish church, and a range of monopolies, it lacked of nucleated settlements. The third one had a mill as a central-place function, it lacked of a parish church.

Depending on the ownership of the land, we can classify the Anglo-Norman influence on the settlement patterns in four categories: heavy (the future lands known as the The Pale, owned by the English king), high (boroughs located in lands owned by English lords), medium (settlements outside the boroughs owned by English lords) or virtually nil (lands owned by Gaelic

dynasties). Due to the lack of English vassals, the Anglo-Norman élite from the light-occupied areas were forced to keep Irish people as tenants whilst they tried to encourage English work force to settle in their lands (Hennessy, 2004). As a result, this Anglo-Norman settlements were usually heavily influenced by the Gaelic townland system (Hennessy, 2004).

Conclusion

The invasion and later colonisation of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans was decisive to the later development of key activities such as agriculture, economy and settlement patterns which were poorly developed during the early High Middle Ages.

The Anglo-Normans influenced the natives from the island, bringing Ireland to the Western European mainstream, especially thanks to the growth of the trade network, which left an open door to future cultural and economic exchanges.

As we mentioned at the beginning, the Norman invasion and the cultural and economic colonisation of the island could be seen as the first act in the prolonged, frequently miserable, drama of relations between England and Ireland (Frame, 1981) which last until our contemporary time.