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THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL TRIM, COUNTY MEATH

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

'I am absolutely printing in Trim an account of the castle thereof: [it] may lay the foundation for something better, either by myself or some other person'

<div align="right">

DEAN RICHARD BUTLER

TRIM, 28 JUNE, 1835[1]

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Between 1835 and 1861, Richard Butler wrote four editions of his history of Trim.[2] In the 140 years since that time, the publication of a large corpus of primary documents relating to medieval Irish towns has been accompanied by a revolution in approaches to source material and research methodology. More recently, archaeology has come to play a central role as a means of understanding Ireland's urban past. Large-scale excavations have been carried out in many towns and an Urban Archaeology Survey has been completed. Very little synthesis has been done, however, and where it has, it has been confined to the largest of Ireland's towns. Consequently, almost nothing is known about the smaller, more typical, market towns of medieval Ireland.

The present study is the first major work on Trim since 1861 and is a synthesis of all archaeological and historical information for any medieval Irish town. The principal reasons for selecting Trim are the quality and quantity of its surviving medieval remains, the availability of a substantial amount of documentation, and the fact that a number of major archaeological excavations have taken place there.

This thesis is the result of a multi-disciplinary approach, founded on a systematic analysis of all published and unpublished documents, a thorough review of the archaeological excavations, and an architectural survey of the town's upstanding medieval remains. This three-pronged approach has been complemented by

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[1] In a letter to his friend, Cosmo Innes. See Harriet Butler, A memoir of the Very Rev. Richard Butler, Dean of Clonmacnois, and Vicar of Trim (unpublished, 1863), p. 84.
[2] Richard Butler, *Some notices of the castle and of the ecclesiastical buildings of Trim* (1st ed. Trim, 1835; 2nd ed., Trim, 1840; 3rd ed., Trim, 1854 (reprint, 1978); 4th ed., Dublin, 1861).

numismatics, town-plan analysis, and an examination of all available cartographic, photographic and other topographical sources.

This methodology has permitted the investigation of political, social, economic and religious developments from the arrival of the Anglo-Normans to the end of the middle ages. The medieval town is placed in the context of the extensive Anglo-Norman lordship of which it was the administrative, judicial and financial centre. The evolution of the town is traced and charted in detail, as are its administration, its trading and commercial functions, its role as an ecclesiastical centre, and its topographical layout.

It is clear from a range of documentary sources that Trim was an ecclesiastical centre of some note before the coming of the Anglo-Normans and, while it was initially intended that this thesis would cover that period as well as the centuries after 1172, it soon became apparent that the nature and extent of the earlier material would be better served as the subject of a separate study. The present work, then, focuses on the period from 1172 but it must be borne in mind that Trim had gone through several stages in its evolution before that time.

This case-study is intended as a contribution to the understanding and interpretation of urban life in medieval Ireland. Its primary purpose is to lay permanent foundations for the study of medieval towns in this country.

❖ CHAPTER 1

THE PRIMARY SOURCES FOR A STUDY OF MEDIEVAL TRIM

Introduction

Broadly speaking, the range of sources for information relating to the development of medieval Trim can be divided into three main categories: documentary, archaeological and topographical.

There are five main categories of written sources in which information relating to Trim in the period *c.*1170-*c.*1541 is present: a) contemporary accounts; b) annals; c) government records; d) ecclesiastical records; and e) private records.

The rich documentary record for medieval Ireland can be usefully supplemented by the evidence of archaeology. Archaeological sources may be sub-divided into three categories: a) upstanding remains; b) results of archaeological excavations and monitoring; and c) stray finds.

In addition to the documentary and archaeological records, important information is available in a number of topographical sources. These include town-plans, maps, drawings, early photographs and aerial views.

Documentary sources

Contemporary accounts

Expugnatio Hibernica: the conquest of Ireland, the first book on Irish history by someone who was not Irish, was written by a priest, Giraldus de Barri, no later than 1189.[1] Giraldus Cambrensis, as he is better known, was a prolific chronicler and vividly recounts the coming of the Normans to Ireland. *Expugnatio Hibernica* is an extremely useful source and throws a great deal of light on the earliest years of Norman activity across the country. For instance, the reader is provided with much valuable information on the fortifications that were built during this first phase of settlement. The destruction and abandonment of the castles at Duleek and Trim, for example, and their subsequent repair and restoration are clearly recorded.[2]

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[1] A. B. Scott and F. X. Martin (ed.), *Expugnatio Hibernica, the conquest of Ireland: by Giraldus Cambrensis* (Dublin, 1978), p. xii.
[2] Scott & Martin, *Expugnatio*, p. 141.

The second contemporary source that contains information regarding Trim is a lengthy epic poem that Goddard Orpen named *The song of Dermot and the Earl* when he published the text in 1892. The authorship of the poem is still enigmatic, despite the work of several commentators,[3] but its contents are particularly useful for scholars interested in developments in Ireland just after the arrival of the Normans. The earliest known description of Trim Castle is to be found in the lines following 3222, where Hugh de Lacy is said to have 'fortified a house at Trim and threw a trench around it and then enclosed it with a stockade'.[4] Later, the poem recounts how 'Hugh Tyrrell went to Trim and re-fortified his fortress; after that he guarded it with great honour'.[5]

There is no doubt that these contemporary accounts are valuable sources for certain aspects of medieval history. There are, however, doubts about their reliability, their accuracy, and their impartiality. For example, although they agree that Trim Castle was destroyed and rebuilt, *The Song* and *Expugnatio* disagree about who was responsible for the rebuilding.[6] There is also the in-built bias that one finds in almost every account of every event and so, if these sources are to be used to their full potential, it is imperative to bear in mind who wrote them (if the authorship is known), for what reason, against what background, and when.

Annals and chronicles

Annals have been defined by Mac Niocaill as 'a record of events arranged under the year of occurrence, without any necessary connection between them'.[7] The most commonly accepted theory as to the origin of the Irish annals, which Binchy described as 'the most copious and reliable sources for the history of native Ireland for over a thousand years',[8] is that they derive from marginal entries in the

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[3] Joseph Long, 'Dermot and the Earl: who wrote "The Song"?' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxxv (1975), sect. C, no. 13, pp 263-72.
[4] G. H. Orpen (ed.), *The song of Dermot and the Earl* (Oxford, 1892), ll 3222-5.
[5] Orpen, *The song*, ll 3338-40.
[6] Orpen, *The song*, ll 3338-9; Scott & Martin, *Expugnatio*, pp 140-1.
[7] Gearóid Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals* (Dublin, 1975), p. 13.
[8] D. A. Binchy, 'Lawyers and chroniclers' in B. Ó Cuív (ed.), *Seven centuries of Irish learning: 1000-1700* (2nd ed., Cork, 1971), pp 50-61, at p. 51.

Easter tables.[9] The *Annals of Ulster* (hereafter *A.U.*) are regarded by many scholars as being especially accurate and are certainly the most valuable of all the Irish annals.[10]

Other Irish annals contain valuable details about many aspects of life in medieval Ireland, and occasional references are made to people, buildings and events at Trim. For example, *Mac Carthaigh's Book* records the building of castles in Meath at Dunshaughlin, Trim, Skryne, Navan and Knowth in the year 1176.[11] The *Annals of Clonmacnoise* (hereafter *Ann. Clon.*) provide a morbid portrayal of Trim in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: they record an execution there in 1215,[12] a man being held captive in 1381,[13] and another prisoner dying of the plague in 1383.[14] The *Annals of Loch Cé* (hereafter *A.L.C.*) and *The Annals of Connacht* record the slaughter of ten priests in Trim in 1414,[15] an attack on the town in 1422,[16] and the death of another prisoner in 1447.[17]

Other medieval Irish annals, including the *Annals of Inisfallen* (hereafter *Ann. Inisf.*) and especially *Annals of the Four Masters* (hereafter *A.F.M.*), are fruitful sources of data relating to medieval towns, particularly those, like Trim, which existed as pre-Norman settlements.

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[9]Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals*, p. 13; F. J. Byrne, 'Seventh-century documents' in *I.E.R.*, cviii, 5th ser. (July to Dec. 1967), pp 164-77, at p. 181; A. P. Smyth, 'The earliest Irish annals: their first contemporary entries and the earliest centres of recording' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxxii (1972), sect. C, no. 1, pp 1-48, at p. 42; Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'The historical and cultural background of the *Book of Kells*' in F. O'Mahony (ed.), *The Book of Kells: proceedings of a conference at Trinity College Dublin, 6-9 September 1992* (Dublin, 1994), pp 1-32, at p. 3; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 'Early Irish annals from Easter tables: a case re-stated' in *Peritia*, ii (1983), pp 74-86.
[10]Tomás Ó Máille, *The language of the Annals of Ulster* (Manchester, 1910); Binchy, 'Lawyers & chroniclers', p. 55; Liam de Paor, *Saint Patrick's world: the Christian culture of Ireland's apostolic age* (Dublin, 1993), p. 117; Timothy O'Neill, *The Irish hand* (Portlaoise, 1984), p. 50.
[11]Séamus Ó hInnse (ed.), *Miscellaneous Irish Annals, AD 1114-1437* (Dublin, 1947), p. 61 (*Mac Carthaigh's Book*).
[12]Denis Murphy (ed.), *The Annals of Clonmacnoise* (Dublin, 1896), p. 228.
[13]*Ann. Clon., s.a.* 1381.
[14]*Ann. Clon., s.a.* 1383.
[15]A. M. Freeman (ed.), *Annála Connacht, ... (A.D. 1224-1544)* (D.I.A.S., 1944), s.a. 1414.
[16]*Ann. Conn., s.a.* 1422.
[17]W. M. Hennessy (ed.), *The Annals of Loch Cé: a chronicle of Irish affairs, 1014-1690* (2 vols, London, 1871; reflex facsimile, I.M.C., Dublin, 1939), *s.a.* 1447.

Nonetheless, one cannot automatically assume that all entries in the annals are entirely accurate. Some of the annals, like *A.F.M.*, were not completed until the middle of the seventeenth century and are, at best, third-hand. It is thus possible that some of the facts have been altered or omitted through transcription, translation, faulty memory and partisan pen. In order to use the texts safely, it is necessary to remember how far removed from the events the writers were, what prejudices they may have had, and how the content of the present documents might differ from the earliest editions. A careful source-criticism of the annalistic sources from which the seventeenth-century compilers drew is essential.

One of the most useful chronicles for the student of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Ireland is the '*Annales Hibernie ab anno Christi 1162 usque ad annum 1370*', more often referred to as 'Pembridge's Annals' or 'Pembridge's Chronicle'. These Latin annals are extant in two fifteenth-century manuscripts;[18] they were published in 1607 by Camden and were partly (though unsatisfactorily) edited by Gilbert in 1884.[19] At the end of the entry for 1347 in the manuscript in Trinity College Dublin is written '*hic finitur cronica Pembrigii*'.[20]

A series of references in his chronicle betray Pembridge's keen interest in Meath and in particular in the de Geneville and Mortimer families.[21] Flower concluded that 'it may be worthwhile suggesting that Pembridge was a follower of Roger Mortimer, earl of March, who played so great a part in Irish history between 1308 and 1321'.[22] A certain Richard Pembridge was indeed a follower of Roger Mortimer at this time,[23] but, although the chronology would fit, recent research has shown that he was not the author of the chronicle of that name.

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[18]T.C.D., MS 583; Bodleian Laud Misc. 526.

[19]Camden, *Britannia*, pp 794-832; J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin* (2 vols, London, 1884), ii, 303-98.

[20]T.C.D., MS 583, fol. 34ᵛ.

[21]Camden, *Britannia*, pp 799, 800, 805, 807, 810, 811; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 315, 317, 318, 330, 332, 337-8, 343-4, 345, 348, 358.

[22]Robin Flower, 'Manuscripts of Irish interest in the British Museum' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 2 (Jan. 1931), pp 292-340, at p. 321, note 7.

[23]*D.N.B.*, under 'Pembridge, Richard'.

Thanks to Connolly's work on the medieval Irish Exchequer documents, Williams has been able to identify the compiler of 'Pembridge's Chronicle' as John de Pembridge, a Dominican prior in St Saviour's, Dublin in the fourteenth-century.[24] He was prior there, either permanently or intermittently, from 1319 or before to at least 1337.[25] As there seems to be no direct connection between John de Pembridge and Meath or the de Geneville/Mortimer families, it is possible that his interest in Trim and these families was simply due to the presence of a priory of his order there and the fact that de Geneville was its founder.

Pembridge ceased making entries in his chronicle in 1347. It may be that he suffered the same fate as the Franciscan annalist at Kilkenny, John Clyn, who seems to have died of the Black Death in 1349.[26] Whatever Pembridge's fate, somebody else took on to continue his chronicle from 1347. Analysing the internal evidence, Gwynn suggested that this continuator, who made entries down to *c.*1370, was without doubt 'an Anglo-Irish Dominican friar, who was most probably resident in the great Dominican convent of Trim'.[27] Gwynn also believed that Pembridge's successor inserted entries in the earlier section (at for example 1204, 1210, 1212, 1219, 1231, 1234...), and that these entries evidenced his particular interest in Meath, in aristocratic genealogies and in the Dominican order in Ireland (with interests such as these, one can see why the de Genevilles would figure prominently in his work).

John Aubry, sometime prior of the Dominican priory of Trim, was elected Bishop of Ardagh in 1373 and was confirmed and consecrated by the archbishop of Armagh.[28] Two of the other candidates for the position opposed the appointment,

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[24]Bernadette Williams, 'The Dominican annals of Dublin' in Seán Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin II: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin Symposium 2000* (Dublin, 2001), pp 142-68, at pp 151-68.
[25]Philomena Connolly (ed.), *Irish exchequer payments, 1270-1446* (Dublin, 1998), pp 337, 342, 345, 351, 357, 408.
[26]Richard Butler (ed.), *The annals of Ireland by Friar John Clyn* (Dublin, 1849).
[27]Aubrey Gwynn (ed.), 'Some unpublished texts from the Black Book of Christ Church, Dublin' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 16 (Mar. 1946), pp 281-337, at pp 322-3; Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals*, p. 38.
[28]H. J. Lawlor (ed.), 'A calendar of the register of Archbishop Sweteman' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, xxix (1910-11), sect. C, no. 8, pp 213-310, at pp 241-2; Thomas Burke, *Hibernia Dominicana, sive historia provinciae Hiberniae ordinis praedicatorum* (Cologne, 1762), pp 60, 465; J. J. McNamee,

however, and Aubry never occupied the see. Fenning has suggested that Aubry, who was also prior of Dublin for a time in the 1350s, may have been the continuator of *Pembridge's Chronicle*.[29] Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to prove such a theory.

There is one other connection between *Pembridge's Chronicle* and Trim, however. A copy of what is described as 'an Irish chronicle in Latin belonging to the period 1162-1370 made in the late sixteenth century' is to be found in the Northampton County Record Office.[30] The dates covered in this chronicle are exactly the same as in Pembridge's. The manuscript is endorsed '*Francisus Agard me possidet*'. It is quite likely that this was the same Francis Agard who served as rector of Trim from 1538, when he was 15 years of age.[31] Agard may have got his copy of the chronicle at the Dominican priory itself, less than 200m to the north of St Patrick's parish church.

During the middle ages, Trim was held successively by three important Anglo-Norman or English families: the de Lacys, the de Genevilles and the Mortimers. Consequently, medieval English chronicles such as those by Roger de Howden, William of Newburgh, Benedict of Peterborough, and Roger Wendover, which record information about these families, contain references of use to the present study.[32] The granting of Meath to Hugh de Lacy in 1172, for instance, is recorded

'Ardacha Dominicana' in *Journal of the Ardagh and Clonmacnoise Antiquarian Society*, no. 12 (1951), pp 5-27, at pp 5-7.

[29]Hugh Fenning, 'The Dominicans of Trim: 1713-1833' in *Riocht na Midhe*, ii, no. 4 (1962), pp 21-32, at p. 18, referring to T.C.D., MS F.4.23 [now MS 654].

[30]B. C. Donovan and David Edwards (ed.), 'British sources for Irish history before 1485: a preliminary handlist of documents held in local and specialised repositories' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 37 (1998), pp 191-220, at p. 195; idem, *British sources for Irish history 1485-1641* (Dublin, 1997), p. 200; Northampton County Record Office, F (M) Misc. vols 39.

[31]*State papers, Henry VIII* (11 vols, London, 1830-52), ii, *part iii (continued), correspondence, 1538-1546*, pp 484, 486, 568-9.

[32]William Stubbs (ed.), *Chronica magistri Rogeri de Hovedene* (4 vols, R.S., London, 1868-71); William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, in Richard Howlett (ed.), *Chronicles of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I* (4 vols, R.S., London, 1884-9); William Stubbs (ed.), *The chronicle of the reigns of Henry II and Richard I, A.D. 1169-1192, known commonly under the name of Benedict of Peterborough* (2 vols, R.S., London, 1867); H. G. Hewlett (ed.), *The flowers of history by Roger Wendover: from the year of our lord 1154, and the first year of Henry the Second, King of the English* (3 vols, London, 1886-9).

by Howden and Peterborough,[33] while de Lacy's death in July 1186 is noted by Newburgh, Wendover and Matthew Paris.[34]

The great French chronicler of the fourteenth century, Jean Froissart, recounts how it was to March Herald, the Mortimer herald, that he made enquiry when wishing to find out more about the arms of Sir Henry Cristall, an English knight who had spent much time in Ireland.[35] March Herald had served Edmund Mortimer in Ireland from May 1380,[36] and he may have played a part in the creation of a series of armorial shields displayed at St Patrick's Church in Trim at this time (see CHAPTER SEVEN).

Government sources

The records of central administration, both Irish and English, are a key source for almost any Irish medieval study. The most useful survey of these records is the recently published guide by Philomena Connolly.[37] Unfortunately, there are large lacunae in the Irish records, particularly where rural areas and smaller towns are concerned. There are no known surviving medieval civic records for Trim, for example, and a fire in the Four Courts in Dublin in June 1922 destroyed a vast section of the archives of central administration.[38] Only a handful of manuscripts survived.

Fortunately, some of the papers had previously been transcribed, catalogued or calendared. For instance, none of the records of chancery (the secretariat of the Dublin administration) survived the fire, but a Latin calendar of these documents had been published by the Irish Record Commission under the editorship of

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[33] *Hovedene*, ii, 34; idem, *Benedict of Peterborough*, i, 163.

[34] Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, i, 240; Hewlett, *The flowers of history by Roger Wendover*, i, 136; H. R. Luard (ed.), *Matthew Paris: Chronica majora* (7 vols, R.S., London, 1872-84), ii, 324; Frederic Madden (ed.), *Matthew Paris: Historia Anglorum* (3 vols, R.S., London, 1866-9), i, 434, ii, 510, iii, 206.

[35] John Jolliffe (ed. and trans), *Froissart's Chronicles* (Classic Penguin, London, 2001), p. 370.

[36] *D.N.B.*, Mortimer, p. 120; Gilbert, *Viceroys*, p. 245.

[37] Philomena Connolly, *Medieval record sources* (Dublin, 2002).

[38] Herbert Wood, 'The public records of Ireland before and after 1922' in *R. Hist. Soc. Trans.*, 4th series, xiii (1930), pp 17-49.

Edward Tresham in 1828.[39] In 1978 a project was initiated with the aim of reconstructing the Irish chancery rolls from surviving extracts, transcripts and various letters. A pilot reconstruction of the close roll for 48 Edward III (1374-5) was published in 1992, but nothing else has appeared since.[40] Records of chancery are particularly useful for looking up, say, grants of privileges and exemptions, licences to export, and orders for works on castles and defences.

The exchequer at Dublin, headed by the treasurer, was the chief financial institution in medieval Ireland. Among the officials who rendered annual accounts to the central exchequer were sheriffs of counties, seneschals of liberties, officials of towns and cities, and custodians of lands held temporarily by the king. The exchequer produced two main series of records, the pipe rolls and the memoranda rolls. Trim features periodically in these financial records, particularly under the years during which the town and liberty were held by the crown.

Although no original pipe rolls survive, the earliest one (14 John, 1211-12) has been published in full and calendars in English of those from 1228 to 1348 had also been prepared before the originals were destroyed in 1922.[41] Extracts from the receipt rolls and the issue rolls for the period up to 1307 have been published in Sweetman's *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland*.[42] Two draft accounts survive that would have been included in the pipe rolls, but neither has yet been published. The first is the escheator's account of receipts for 1341-3, dealing primarily with lands in counties Louth and Meath.[43] The second is an account for the year 1360 of lands held by Roger Mortimer in counties Kildare, Kilkenny and Meath.[44] Both are of obvious interest to the present study—the latter, for instance,

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[39]Edward Tresham (ed.), *Rotulorum patentium et clausorum cancellariae Hiberniae calendarium* (Dublin, 1828).

[40]Elizabeth Dowse and Margaret Murphy (ed.), 'Rotulus clausus de anno 48 Edward III – a reconstruction' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 35 (1992), pp 87-104.

[41]Oliver Davies and D. B. Quinn (ed.), 'The Irish pipe roll of 14 John, 1211-1212' in *U.J.A.*, 3rd ser., iv (1941), supplement; M. J. McEnery (ed.), 'Accounts of the great rolls of the pipe of the Irish exchequer 13 Hen. III-22 Edw. III' in *P.R.I. rep. D.K.*, xxxv-xxxix, xlii-xlv, xlvii, liii-liv (1903-07, 1911-13, 1915, 1926-7).

[42]H. S. Sweetman (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1171-1307* (5 vols, 1875-86).

[43]B.L. Add. Charter 13598.

[44]P.R.O. London, E 101/244/3.

includes a list of administrative officers employed at Trim with details of their salaries.

The surviving Record Commission calendar in the National Archives includes material from the reigns of Henry III (1216-72) and Edward I (1272-1307),[45] while the Royal Irish Academy has a full transcript of the roll for 45 Henry III (1261-2) and of most of the roll for the following year, as well as short extracts from later rolls.[46] Sir William Betham extracted information from the pipe rolls and two volumes of material transcribed by him are preserved in the National Library of Ireland.[47] In addition, there is a seventeenth-century collection of extracts from the pipe rolls in the library of Trinity College Dublin.[48]

The memoranda rolls included copies of chancery letters, details of appearances by those making payments and presenting accounts, and various memoranda concerning specific matters pertaining to accounts, audits, disputes and related legal proceedings.[49] Two original memoranda rolls (1309-10 and 1319-20) are in the National Archives in Dublin and that is also the repository for the 43 volumes of the Record Commission's manuscript calendar (mainly of the fourteenth-century memoranda rolls, although some fifteenth-century material is included).[50] One of the most useful types of material in the memoranda rolls is the enrolments of writs from chancery instructing the barons of the exchequer to give allowance in an account for certain (specified) expenditures made by the person accounting.[51] For instance, if money had been spent by an individual on repairs to a castle that was in royal hands, this would be taken into consideration when it came to drawing up his end-of-year accounts. To this end, the description of the nature of expenditure is often quite detailed. The most informative descriptions of

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[45]Nat. Archives, RC 11.
[46]Royal Irish Academy, MSS 12. D.9-10.
[47]N.L.I., MSS 760-1.
[48]T.C.D., MS 671.
[49]J. F. Lydon, 'Survey of the memoranda rolls of the Irish exchequer, 1294-1509' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 23 (1966), pp 49-134.
[50]Nat. Archives, EX 1/1-2; RC 8/1-43.
[51]Connolly, *Medieval record sources*, p. 22.

Trim Castle in the fourteenth century are contained the memoranda roll for 1366-7.[52]

On a regular basis the exchequer would receive from the royal courts estreats, or details of money owed to the crown as a result of legal proceedings. Once these had been dealt with, they were gathered together as rolls. The only estreat roll to survive the fire of 1922 was that recording sums due from County Meath in 1463-7. This roll has recently been conserved and is in the National Archives in Dublin.[53] A great deal of information regarding land ownership can be derived from the reports on inquisitions held before the king's officials at Dublin, and a calendar of the inquisitions relating primarily to Dublin, though with much detail on other areas as well (including Trim), was compiled by Griffith in 1991.[54]

A considerable body of material relating to the social and economic history of medieval Irish towns is contained in the records of the court held before the justiciar, or chief governor, of Ireland. This was an itinerant court, which administered justice in the king's name. It dealt with a variety of actions including criminal cases brought in the name of the king, civil cases between private individuals and assizes (essentially civil actions relating to the possession of land).[55] The common (or 'Dublin') bench was a separate court that dealt solely with civil matters.

Detailed records were kept of all court cases and, once a case was closed, the documentation was gathered together to form a roll. Of the 488 medieval plea rolls stored in the Four Courts in 1922, only three survived relatively intact. These are now in the National Archives in Dublin along with two others that had fortunately been 'borrowed' from the Four Courts prior to the fire.[56] A number of others, or fragments thereof, were recovered after the fire but are in need of

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[52]Nat. Archives, RC 8/29, pp 238-9, no. 630, pp 500-1, no. 508.
[53]Nat. Archives, EX 1/3; Connolly, *Medieval record sources*, p. 22.
[54]M. C. Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions formerly in the office of the Chief Remembrancer of the Exchequer, prepared from the MSS of the Irish Record Commission* (Dublin, 1991).
[55]Connolly, *Medieval record sources*, p. 24.
[56]Nat. Archives, KB 1/1, CB 1/9, CB 1/10; KB 1/2, CB 1/5.

extensive conservation. Two complete rolls and some other fragments are held by the British Library in London.[57] The Public Record Office of Ireland had begun a project to publish English calendars of the justiciary rolls but only two volumes were completed before the fire in 1922.[58] A third volume, based on unpublished extracts, was brought out in 1956.[59] The National Archives has further calendars that it intends to publish in the near future, along with the two original rolls for the reign of Edward II.[60]

The Irish Record Commission prepared a calendar of plea rolls extending to twenty volumes, but only thirteen of these survive.[61] A Latin calendar of the common bench roll for 10 Edward I (1282-3) is held by the Royal Irish Academy,[62] while a number of fragmentary collections of extracts, notes and transcripts also exist.[63]

The king's council in Ireland consisted of the main officers of the Irish administration—chancellor, treasurer, escheator and justices—and its primary function was to advise the justiciar on a range of issues.[64] The only extant roll of proceedings of this council (for 1392-3) was edited by James Graves and published in 1877.[65] This volume contains a number of references to Trim, including one relating to the imprisonment of certain persons in the castle there as a result of the non-payment of debts.[66]

[57]B.L., Add. Charters 13598-600. These are available on microfilm in N.L.I.
[58]James Mills (ed.), *Calendar of the justiciary rolls... of Ireland: XXIII-XXXV years of Edward I* [1295-1307] (2 vols, P.R.O.I., Dublin, 1905-14).
[59]Herbert Wood, A. E. Langman and M. C. Griffith (ed.), *Calendar of the justiciary rolls... of Ireland, I to VII years of Edward II* [1308-14] (P.R.O.I., Dublin, [1956]).
[60]Nat. Archives, KB 1/1-2 (originals); KB 2/1-12 (calendars); Connolly, *Medieval record sources*, p. 26; idem, 'Medieval records' in William Nowlan and Anngret Simms (ed.), *Irish towns: a guide to sources* (Dublin, 1998), pp 69-78, at p. 76.
[61]Nat. Archives, RC 7/1-13.
[62]Royal Irish Academy, MS 12. D.12.
[63]Connolly, *Medieval record sources*, p. 26.
[64]Connolly, *Medieval record sources*, pp 26-7.
[65]James Graves (ed.), *A roll of the proceedings of the king's council in Ireland for a portion of the sixteenth year of the reign of Richard II, 1392-93* (London, 1877).
[66]*Proc. king's council*, p. 206.

The statute rolls of the medieval Irish parliament comprise a bulk of data relating to enactments, government decisions, and policy. All of the original rolls, which began as a series in 1427, were destroyed in 1922, but the rolls for the period from 1427 to 1472 had fortunately been published before then, and a further volume, covering the period from 1473 to 1483, was later compiled from transcripts.[67] A recently published volume brings the series up to 1537.[68] Each volume contains the original French text with a parallel English translation. As no statute rolls were kept before the reign of Henry VI, the volume of material relating to this period was compiled by Berry from a variety of official, ecclesiastical and private sources.[69] Other documentary evidence relating to parliaments and great councils in Ireland in the middle ages has been printed by Richardson and Sayles.[70]

As a liberty, Trim had its own administrative system, similar to that of central administration, including courts, a chancery, an exchequer and a system of county organisation under a sheriff appointed by the chief officer, or seneschal, of the liberty. Each of these administrative bodies would have generated a large amount of documentation, as all official correspondence, judicial proceedings and financial accounts, as well as charters, writs and deeds were typically recorded in great detail. From the thirteenth through to the fifteenth century, there are regular references to the records and rolls that were housed at Trim Castle.[71] When the liberty was seized into the king's hand in 1322, for instance, a large coffer containing records, rolls and other memoranda concerning the liberty of Trim was

[67]H. F. Berry (ed.), *Statute rolls of the parliament of Ireland: reign of King Henry the Sixth* (Irish Record Office Series of Early Statutes, ii, Dublin, 1910); H. F. Berry and J. F. Morrissey (ed.), *Statute rolls of the parliament of Ireland: reign of King Edward the Fourth* (2 vols, Irish Record Office Series of Early Statutes, vols iii-iv, Dublin, 1914-39 [the first volume was prepared and published before the fire in the Four Courts in 1922; the second volume was compiled after that date from surviving transcripts]).

[68]Philomena Connolly (ed.), *Statutes rolls of the Irish parliament, Richard III - Henry VIII* (Dublin, 2002).

[69]H. F. Berry (ed.), *Statutes and ordinances and acts of the parliament of Ireland: King John to Henry V* (Irish Record Office Series of Early Statutes, i, Dublin, 1907).

[70]H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles (ed.), *Parliaments and Great Councils of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1947).

[71]Richard Butler (ed.), *The annals of Ireland by Thady Dowling* (Dublin, 1849), p. 17; G. O. Sayles (ed.), *Documents on the affairs of Ireland before the king's council* (Dublin, 1979), pp 284-5, no. 299.

seized from Trim Castle and brought to Dublin.[72] The documents were deposited in the Dublin exchequer and a special lockable cask was purchased to hold them.[73] The records were again carted to Dublin in 1331, but seem to have been returned to Trim subsequently.[74]

For some reason, Trim Castle was not the only repository for documents relating to the liberty and at one stage the charters from Henry III granting Trim to the de Genevilles were stored at the Franciscan friary in the town.[75] Nonetheless, the castle was where a large majority of the documents were stored, most of the time.

In April 1400 the records in Trim Castle were committed to the custody of Thomas de Everdun, Master of the Rolls and acting Lord Chancellor of Ireland.[76] In c.1425 Philip White, clerk, was made keeper of the treasury of books and records in the castle,[77] and by 1460 the duke of York had granted to Nicholas Harpisfeld the offices of chancellor of green wax, chief remembrancer of the exchequer and clerk of the rolls of chancery of Trim.[78] There is a tantalising reference, dating to 1485, to the Red Book of Trim (*le ruge livre de Trym*), but nothing more is known of this document.[79]

Shortly before 1494 the rolls, records and memoranda kept at Trim were stolen 'by diverse persons of malice prepensed'.[80] The treasury at Trim had been the repository of the records, rolls and inquisitions not only of Trim itself, but also of the earldom of Ulster and the lordship of Connaught. An act was passed in

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[72]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 299.
[73]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 287.
[74]Nat. Archives, RC 8/16, pp 22, 26.
[75]James Mills and M. J. McEnery (ed.), *Calendar of the Gormanston register* (Dublin, 1916), p. 7.
[76]*Rotulorum patentium et clausorum cancellariae Hiberniae calendarium* (Dublin, 1828), p. 156, no. 33.
[77]J. S. Brewer and William Bullen (ed.), *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts preserved in the archiepiscopal library at Lambeth* (6 vols, London, 1867-73), *v, The Book of Howth*, p. 356.
[78]H. F. Berry (ed.), *Statute rolls of the parliament of Ireland, reign of Henry VI* (Dublin, 1910), pp 796-7.
[79]Philomena Connolly (ed.), *Statutes rolls of the Irish parliament, Richard III - Henry VIII* (Dublin, 2002), pp 66-7.
[80]J. G. Butler (ed.), *The statutes at large passed in the parliaments held in Ireland... 1310-1800* (20 vols, Dublin, 1786-1801), i, 51-2; D. B. Quinn (ed.), 'The bills and statutes of the Irish parliaments of Henry VII and Henry VIII' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 10 (I.M.C., 1941), p. 93.

Poyning's parliament for the recovery of the files, but nothing seems to have come of it, and none of the local government records of the liberty of Trim survive.[81]

Fortunately, however, the records of central administration are replete with references to the administration of Trim. This is partly as a result of the seneschal's duty to report to the Dublin exchequer and that some court cases were brought before the royal courts, but primarily it is due to the fact that Trim was so often taken into the king's hand, whether as a result of confiscation or the minority of an heir.

In 1932, Herbert Wood published a paper entitled 'The muniments of Edmund Mortimer, third earl of March, concerning his liberty of Trim'.[82] To this paper is appended a catalogue of deeds from the Black Book of Wigmore that were listed there under the heading of *Midia in Hibernia*. This catalogue is particularly valuable as it contains previously unpublished deeds, including grants, licences and charters relating to the de Lacys, de Genevilles and Mortimers—many of which relate directly to Trim.

A series of unpublished accounts for the decade to 1360 now in the Public Record Office in London relates to lands held by the Mortimer family in Counties Kilkenny, Tipperary, Dublin and Meath.[83]

From the late twelfth century, Trim was a borough with its own town officials, and this gave rise to a further collection of administrative documentation, including court rolls, financial records, letters and petitions and various chancery records. As one has come to expect, almost nothing of this has come down to us, but a number of highly significant documents have survived pertaining to the

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[81]Wood, 'The public records of Ireland before and after 1922', p. 21; *Calendar of the state papers relating to Ireland, 1509-73* [etc.] (24 vols, London, 1860-1911), p. 15, no. 76.
[82]Herbert Wood (ed.), 'The muniments of Edmund Mortimer, third earl of March, concerning his liberty of Trim' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, xl (1931-2), sect. C, no. 7, pp 312-55.
[83]P.R.O., SC 6/1237/24-34.

running of the town in the middle ages. These comprise mainly charters and murage grants and some have been published.

Of particular importance to students of medieval urban history in Ireland is the volume produced by the Irish Record Commission of charters and privileges granted to cities, towns, religious houses and other corporate bodies for the years from 1171 to 1395.[84] Transcripts of a number of documents relating to Trim are printed in this collection, including charters, letters, and murage grants.[85] Mac Niocaill's *Na Buirgéisí XII-XIV Aois* deals with Irish boroughs in the medieval period—the first volume is a collection of charters and other documents (published in Latin with a commentary in Irish), while the second contains essays on various aspects of town life and government.[86] Among the charters printed in the first volume is that issued by Walter de Lacy for Trim *c.*1194, in which he grants to his burgesses the *legem Bristoll'*.[87]

Although Gilbert's *Historic and Municipal documents of Ireland, 1172-1320,* deals primarily with Dublin and Drogheda, it also contains some references to other towns and cities.[88] There are several entries of use to the present study, including, for example, a reference to Roger, a miller from Trim, early in the thirteenth century.[89]

Not all of the surviving Trim charters have been published, and several are available in manuscript form only, some being medieval transcripts while others are later copies. Although it is clear that some of the charters have been lost completely, the medieval practice of reciting all previous charters to a town at the beginning of a new one means that the contents of the earlier (and mostly

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[84]*Chartae, privilegia et immunitates, being transcripts of charters and privileges to cities, towns, abbeys, and other bodies corporate, ... 1171-1395* (printed for the I. R. C., 1829-30; published 1889).
[85]*Chart. privil. immun.,* pp 10, 36, 53-4, 89.
[86]Gearóid Mac Niocaill, *Na Buirgéisí XII-XV aois* (2 vols, Dublin, 1964).
[87]Mac Niocaill, *Na Buirgéisí,* i, 74-5, ii, 327, 481.
[88]J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *Historic and municipal documents of Ireland, 1172-1320* (Dublin, 1870).
[89]*Hist. & mun. doc. Ire.* p. 33.

disappeared) charters can often be reconstructed from a much later document. Such is the case for Trim.

A medieval enrolment of the charter granted to the town of Trim by Henry VI in 1430 is preserved in the National Archives in an eighteenth-century binding.[90] This manuscript, which runs to almost 10,000 words, incorporates a recitation and confirmation of both Walter de Lacy's twelfth-century grant of rights and privileges and Henry IV's 1407 charter, which is otherwise lost to us.

Fortunately, considering the paucity of documents surviving in Ireland, a large corpus of material relating to this country is present in the records produced by the king's administration in England. Much of this is preserved in the Public Record Office in London, and a considerable portion has already been published—some in its entirety, some in English translation and some in calendared form—and most is comprehensively (though not exhaustively) indexed.

The three main series of chancery documents (patent rolls,[91] close rolls,[92] and fine rolls)[93] have all been published and these constitute one of the most valuable sources of information relating to medieval Trim. The charter rolls contain enrolments of grants of liberties and privileges and the liberate rolls record orders for payment out of the exchequer.[94]

Lists of other specifically Irish material contained in the archives of chancery, exchequer and ancient petitions at the Public Record Office in London have been

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[90]Nat. Archives, MSS Co 1814; 2533 (2-504/9, no. 225, part 3), pp 291-320.
[91]Thomas Astle and John Caley (ed.), *Calendarium rotulorum patentium* (London, 1802); T. D. Hardy (ed.), *Rotuli litterarum patentium... 1201-16* (Rec. Comm., London, 1835*); Patent rolls of the reign of Henry III... 1216-[1232]* (2 vols, P.R.O., London, 1901-3); *Calendar of patent rolls... 1232-[1509]* (53 vols, P.R.O., London, 1891-1971).
[92]T. D. Hardy (ed.), *Rotuli litterarum clausarum... [1204-27]* (2 vols, Rec. Comm., London, 1833-44); *Close rolls of the reign of Henry III... 1227-[1272]* (14 vols, P.R.O., London, 1902-38); *Calendar of the close rolls... 1272-[1509]* (47 vols, P.R.O., London, 1892-1963).
[93]*Calendar of the fine rolls... 1272-[1509]* (22 vols, P.R.O., London, 1911-62).
[94]T. D. Hardy (ed.), *Rotuli chartarum in Turri Londinensi asservati [1199-1216]* (London, 1837); *Calendar of charter rolls... 1226-[1516]* (6 vols, P.R.O., London, 1903-27); T. D. Hardy (ed.), *Rotuli de liberate ac de misis et praestitis regnante Johanne* (London, 1844); *Calendar of the liberate rolls... 1226-[1272]* (6 vols, P.R.O., London, 1916-64).

drawn up by Connolly and published in *Analecta Hibernica*.[95] Similarly, Sayles'
Documents on the affairs of Ireland before the king's council is a collection of
material of Irish interest, mainly from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[96] It
includes letters, reports and petitions sent from the justiciar and council in Ireland
to the council in England, as well as similar items from municipal authorities and
private individuals.

Another series of English records in which material pertaining to Ireland is to be
found is the inquisitions *post mortem*. Although Irish material would normally be
kept in the chancery in Ireland, in cases where the deceased held lands in both
Ireland and England—such as the de Lacys, de Genevilles and Mortimers—copies
of the inquisitions relating to the Irish lands were sent to the English chancery.[97]
A calendar of the inquisitions *post mortem* from the time of Henry III to the end
of the fourteenth century has been published in sixteen volumes,[98] while a seven-
volume calendar of miscellaneous inquisitions has also been printed.[99]

The accounts of the Irish administration were enrolled in the exchequer in
England when the Irish treasurer made his annual deposition there. Consequently,
information relating to expenditure in Ireland, much of which has been lost in this
country, is preserved in London. Much of this material was used by Connolly to
supplement information from the issue rolls when she was compiling the calendar
of Irish exchequer payments.[100] This volume contains a wealth of specific detail
regarding wages, payments and expenditure on, for example, goods, building
materials, repair works and construction projects.

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[95]Philomena Connolly, 'List of Irish material in the class of chancery files (recorda) (C. 260)
Public Record Office, London' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 31 (1984), pp 1-18; eadem, 'Irish material in the
class of ancient petitions (SC 8) in the Public Record Office, London' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 34 (1987),
pp 1-106; eadem, 'Irish material in the class of chancery warrants series I (C 81) in the Public
Record Office, London' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 36 (1995), pp 135-61; eadem, 'List of Irish entries on
the memoranda rolls of the English exchequer, 1307-27' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 36 (1995), pp 163-218.
[96]Sayles, *Documents on the affairs of Ireland*.
[97]Connolly, *Medieval record sources*, p. 35.
[98]*Calendar of inquisitions post mortem, Henry III-[15 Richard II]* (16 vols, P.R.O., London, 1904-
74).
[99]*Calendar of inquisitions miscellaneous, 1219-[1422]* (7 vols, P.R.O., London, 1916-69).
[100]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*.

Ecclesiastical sources

The second major category of documentary source material for the present study consists of ecclesiastical records, and the largest corpus of information is contained in the Vatican archives.[101] To date, calendars have been published of papal letters from 1198 to 1513, and of papal petitions from 1342 to 1419.[102] Useful information pertaining to the social and ecclesiastical history of Trim is contained in documents such as approvals and confirmations of abbatial elections, collations to the benefice of Trim and grants of indulgences for anyone contributing to the repair of monastic buildings in the town, as well as letters relating to burial rights, dispensations to marry, financial transactions and various disputes.[103]

Editions or calendars of papal letters relating specifically to Ireland have been published for Popes Innocent III (1198-1216), Innocent IV (1243-54) and Clement VII (1378-94),[104] and two volumes of papal documents relating to Ireland were published by Sheehy in the 1960s.[105] One other series of papal records containing information of use to the present study is the *obligationes pro annatis*, which contains particulars of certain financial obligations on the part of persons provided to benefices together with other relevant details. The volume dealing with the dioceses of Ulster (including Trim, in the diocese of Armagh) was published in 1909 and reissued in 1912.[106]

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[101] M. J. Haren, 'Vatican archives as a historical source to *c.*1530' in *Archiv. Hib.*, xxxix (1984), pp 3-12.

[102] W. H. Bliss, J. A. Twemlow, C. Johnson [and others] (ed.), *Calendar of entries in the papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: papal letters [1198-1513]* (20 vols, London and Dublin, 1893-1998) [this project is ongoing]; *Calendar of entries in the papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: petitions to the pope, 1342-1419* (London, 1896).

[103] *Cal. papal letters, 1198-1304*, p. 513; *1305-42*, pp 171, 241, 480; *1362-1404*, pp 210-11, 348; *1404-15*, p. 91; *1417-31*, pp 254-5; *1447-55*, p. 72.

[104] P. J. Dunning, 'Letters of Pope Innocent III to Ireland: a calendar' in *Archiv. Hib.*, xiii (1947), pp 27-44; Canice Mooney, 'Letters of Pope Innocent IV relating to Ireland' in *Collect. Hib.*, ii (1959), pp 7-12; C. Burns, 'Papal letters of Clement VII (1378-94) relating to Ireland and England' in *Collect. Hib.*, xxiv (1982), pp 7-44.

[105] M. P. Sheehy (ed.), *Pontificia Hibernica: medieval papal chancery documents concerning Ireland, 640-1261* (2 vols, Dublin, 1962, 1965).

[106] *De annatis Hiberniae: a calendar of the first-fruits' fees levied on papal appointments to benefices in Ireland, A.D. 1400-1535, extracted from the Vatican and other Roman archives*, i: Ulster, ed. M. A. Costello and Ambrose Coleman (Dundalk, 1909; reissued, Maynooth, 1912)

The seven surviving medieval episcopal registers for the diocese of Armagh form a further rich source of information on Trim.[107] To date, the registers have been published of Archbishops Milo Sweteman (1361-80),[108] John Swayne (1418-39),[109] John Mey (1443-56),[110] and Octavian de Palatio (1478-1513),[111] while calendars in English have been compiled from the registers of Archbishops Sweteman,[112] Nicholas Fleming (1404-16)[113] and George Cromer (1521-42).[114] The register of Archbishop John Prene (1439-43) has not yet been published but the manuscript is in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and a transcript made by William Reeves is in the library of Trinity College Dublin.[115] This register contains several informative entries concerning the parish church at Trim and the Augustinian priory there.[116]

Ecclesiastical records relating to the diocese of Dublin are worthy of consultation for a study of any medieval Irish town, and the register known as *Crede Mihi*, compiled in the thirteenth century, has information of particular relevance to the present study.[117] A calendar of the register of Archbishop John Alen (1529-34) has also been published, and it contains material from the twelfth century onwards.[118] The only surviving register of testamentary matters is that for the

[107]Art Cosgrove, 'The Armagh Registers: an under-explored source for late medieval Ireland' in *Peritia*, vols 6-7 (1987-8), pp 307-20.

[108]Brendan Smith, *The register of Milo Sweteman, archbishop of Armagh, 1361-1380* (Dublin, 1996).

[109]D. A. Chart, *The register of John Swayne: archbishop of Armagh and primate of All Ireland, 1418-1439* (Belfast, 1935).

[110]W. G. H. Quigley and E. F. D. Roberts (ed.), *Registrum Iohannis Mey: the register of John Mey, archbishop of Armagh, 1443-1456* (Belfast, 1972).

[111]M. A. Sughi, *Registrum Octaviani, alias Liber Niger: the register of Octavian de Palatio, archbishop of Armagh, 1478-1513* (2 vols, I.M.C., 1999).

[112]Lawlor, *Cal. reg. Sweteman*.

[113]H. J. Lawlor (ed.), 'A calendar of the register of Archbishop Fleming' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, xxx (1912-13), sect. C, no. 5, pp 94-190.

[114]L. P. Murray [and Aubrey Gwynn] (ed.), 'Archbishop Cromer's register' in *Louth Arch. Soc. Jn.*, vii (1929-32), pp 516-24; viii (1933-6), pp 38-49, 169-88, 257-74, 322-51; ix (1937-40), pp 36-41, 124-30; x (1941-4), pp 116-27, 165-79.

[115]P.R.O.N.I., DIO. 4/2/5-6; T.C.D., MS 557/5-6.

[116]T.C.D., MS 557/5, pp 73, 316, 477, 479, 487, 490, 511; T.C.D., MS 557/6, pp 54-5, 80, 83, 90-1, 98-9, 278.

[117]J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *Crede Mihi: the most ancient register book of the archbishops of Dublin before the Reformation* (Dublin, 1897).

[118]Charles McNeill (ed.), *Calendar of archbishop Alen's Register, c.1172-1534* (Dublin, 1950).

diocese of Dublin during the time of Archbishops Michael Tregury (1449-71) and John Walton (1472-84), and that was published by Berry in 1898.[119]

Each monastic house in medieval Ireland kept its own records—administrative, financial, religious, property-related, annalistic, and others. As these regularly refer to lands and people outside the immediate community concerned, those that survive are a useful source for many areas of medieval research. For instance, most religious houses held farms and other properties in areas outside their own locality and the records that they produced often contain information relating to these lands. Unfortunately, most medieval monastic records for Ireland have become lost, most being dispersed or destroyed at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century.

Thankfully, the cartularies of a number of houses do survive—mostly those in Dublin. Records from St Mary's Abbey,[120] St Thomas' Abbey,[121] and All Hallows Priory[122] have been published, as has the register of the Hospital of St John outside the New Gate of Dublin.[123] The Register of Kilmainham is a chapter act book of the Hospitallers there and relates mainly to the first half of the fourteenth century.[124] From County Westmeath, the register of the priory of Tristernagh (Kilbixy) came out in 1941.[125] A number of English and Welsh houses had property in Ireland and two in particular—Llanthony Prima in Wales and Llanthony Secunda near Gloucester—record in their cartularies information of significance to the present study.[126]

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[119]H. F. Berry (ed.), *Register of wills and inventories of the diocese of Dublin... 1457-1483* (Dublin, 1898).

[120]*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin.*

[121]J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *Register of the abbey of St Thomas, Dublin* (London, 1889).

[122]Richard Butler (ed.), *Registrum prioritas omnium sanctorum juxta Dublin* (Dublin, 1845).

[123]E. St John Brooks (ed.), *Registrum chartarum hospitalis Sancti Johannis Baptistae extra novam portam civitas Dublin: register of the hospital of St John the Baptist without the New Gate, Dublin* (Dublin, 1936).

[124]Charles McNeill (ed.), *Registrum de Kilmainham: register of chapter acts of the hospital of St John of Jerusalem in Ireland, 1326-39* (Dublin, [1932]).

[125]M. V. Clarke (ed.), *Registrum cartarum monasterii B.V. Mariae de Tristernagh... : register of the priory of... Tristernagh* (I.M.C., Dublin, 1941).

[126]E. St John Brooks (ed.), *The Irish chartularies of Llanthony Prima and Secunda* (I.M.C., 1953).

The only religious house in Ireland for which an obit book survives is that of Holy Trinity (Christ Church), Dublin, but it contains a number of references to Trim.[127] Calendars or editions of several other collections of medieval documents from Christ Church have also been published.[128]

Three copies survive of a seventeenth-century manuscript entitled '*q. Annal Coenob. Dominic. Trim*' and '*Chron. Cuiusdam fratris ord. Praedicatorum*'.[129] Each document consists of extracts transcribed from the Dominican annals of Trim, preceded by a chronological list of twenty-four thirteenth-century Irish Dominican foundations (beginning with Dublin and Drogheda in 1224 and ending with Kilmallock in 1291) and a list of Dominican provincial chapters ending with that of 1347.[130] The annals themselves cover the period from 432 (the coming of Patrick) to 1274 (the foundation of the Dominican houses at Rathfran and Derry).

Of the thirty-three entries up to 1260, twenty-five are virtually identical to entries in the *Annals of Multyfarnham*, suggesting that a common source was used for the compilation of both sets of annals. After 1260 the similarities cease. As the Trim priory was not established until 1263, it is to be expected that information for the pre-1263 section of the annals would have to be sourced elsewhere, and it is also logical that after that date the annals would be compiled independently, annually, at Trim itself. It has been suggested that the source for the earlier section was an older set of annals from the Dominican priory of either Drogheda or Mullingar, but this is difficult to prove.[131] Unfortunately, the original Trim annals do not survive, and little is known about the copied extracts that do.

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[127]J. C. Crosthwaite (ed.), *The book of obits and martyrology of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, commonly called Christ Church, Dublin* (Dublin, 1844); Raymond Refaussé with Colm Lennon (ed.), *The registers of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin* (Dublin, 1998).

[128]'Calendar to Christ Church Deeds, [1174-1684]' in *P.R.I. rep. D.K.* xx (1888), app. 7, pp 36-122; xxiii (1891), app. 3, pp 75-152; xxiv (1892), app. 8, pp 100-94; James Mills (ed.), *Account roll of the Priory of the Holy Trinity, Dublin, 1337-1346* (Dublin, 1891); H. J. Lawlor, 'A calendar of the Liber Niger and Liber Albus of Christ Church, Dublin' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, xxvii (1908), sect. C, pp 1-93; Aubrey Gwynn (ed.), 'Some unpublished texts from the Black Book of Christ Church, Dublin' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 16 (Mar. 1946), pp 281-337; M. J. McEnery and Raymond Refaussé, *Christ Church deeds* (Dublin, 2001).

[129]T.C.D., MS 579/2, ff 343-5; Rawlinson B. 484; Clarendon MSS B.M. Add. 4789, ff 206ᵛ-207ᵛ.

[130]Williams, 'The Dominican annals of Dublin', pp 150-1.

[131]Williams, 'The Dominican annals of Dublin', p. 151.

A medieval breviary from St Mary's Augustinian priory, Trim, is preserved in the library of Trinity College Dublin.[132] This manuscript, which has been found to belong to a small class of Arroasian breviaries and other liturgical books, is divided into two distinct parts.[133] The first comprises a complete calendar of the liturgical year (containing many Irish saints, including some local to the Meath area), and a Psalter, while the second consists of an incomplete breviary. The breviary seems to originate in the twelfth century, but has many entries dating to later centuries. It appears to have been kept by Geoffrey Dardis after the suppression of the monastery in 1539, and his obit is recorded under 24 February (no year is given).[134] The deaths of several other canons of the priory are recorded in a later hand in the calendar section of the manuscript (Thomas Nugent, d. September 1521; Patrick Smart, d. 1577).[135]

The survey of former monastic possessions carried out in 1540-1 sheds important light on the layout of religious houses at the time of the dissolution, as well as giving details of what lands they held, what buildings were still standing, and who had taken possession of each religious house.[136] At Trim, extents were made of the Franciscan friary and the Augustinian and Dominican priories in October 1540.[137]

Private records

Secular landholders also produced records, and there are several collections of family documents that contain information pertaining to Trim in the middle ages. The *Gormanston register* was compiled for Sir Christopher de Preston, mainly in the period 1397-8 and deals with the property of the Preston family in Meath and Louth (see FIG. 1.1).[138] The register, a calendar of which was published in 1916, consists of title deeds not only of the Preston family but also of allied families

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[132] T.C.D., MS 84.

[133] Aubrey Gwynn, 'A breviary from St Mary's Abbey, Trim' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, iii, no. 4 (1966), pp 290-8.

[134] T.C.D., MS 84, f. 1ᵛ.

[135] T.C.D., MS 84, f. 5ʳ.

[136] N. B. White (ed.), *Extents of Irish monastic possessions, 1540-1541, from manuscripts in the Public Record Office, London* (I.M.C., 1943).

[137] *Extents Ir. mon. possessions*, pp 302-9.

[138] *Gormanston reg.*

including the de Lacys. Among the material relating to Trim are charters, grants, and indentures, together with the names of seneschals, sheriffs, treasurers, foresters and abbots at the beginning of the fourteenth century.[139]
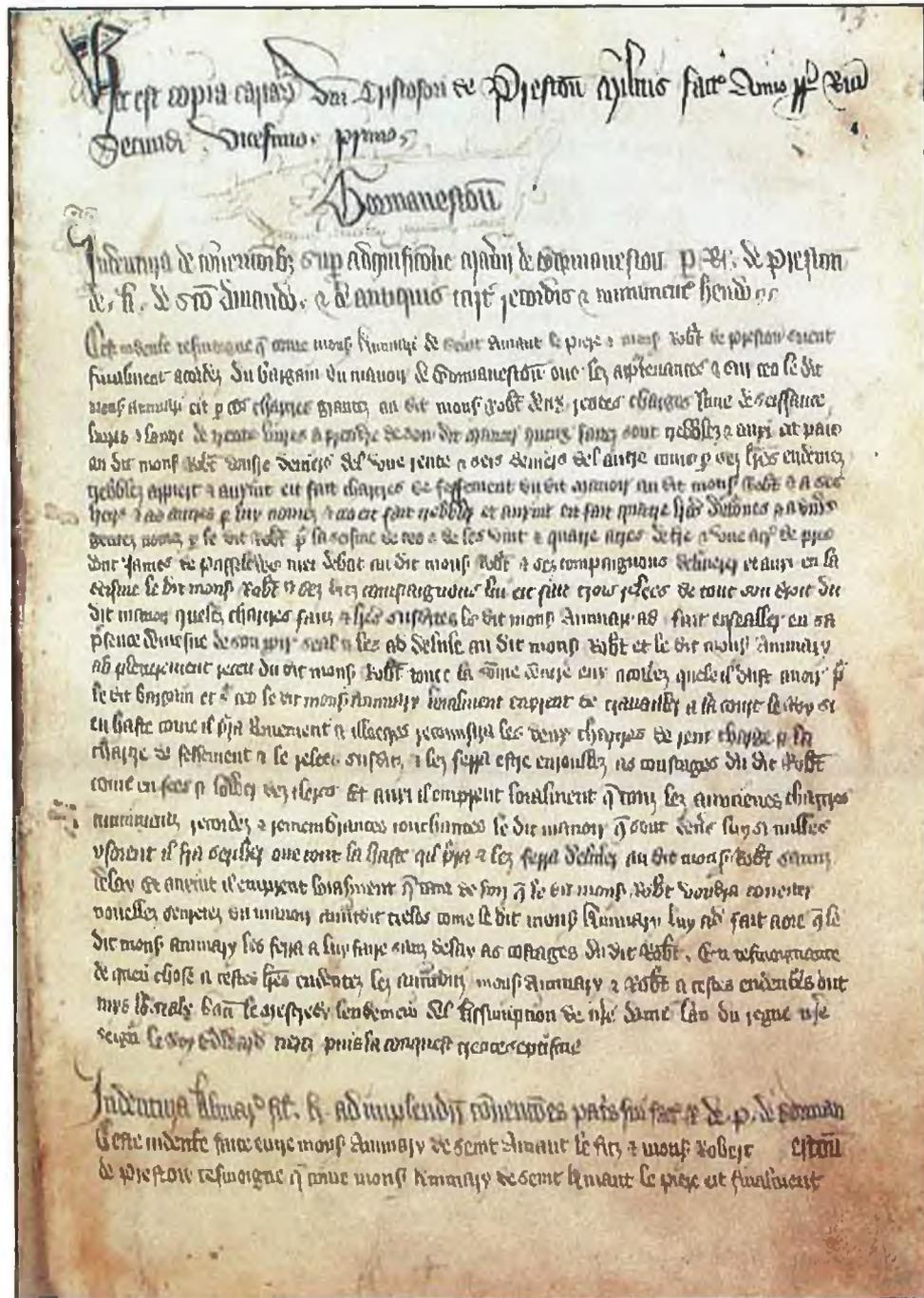
FIG. 1.1 N.L.I. MS 1646: The Gormanston Register, fol. 13. Source: Noel Kissane (ed.), *Treasures from the National Library of Ireland* (Dublin, 1994), p. 140.

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[139]*Gormanston reg.*, pp 8, 13, 152, 169, 170, 176.

The collection of manuscripts known as the *Dowdall deeds* provides a source of information on several aspects of medieval Trim from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century.[140] Although the documents deal primarily with properties held by the Dowdalls in Louth, there are also references to other towns; in particular, there are mentions of assizes, courts, parliaments and quarter sessions held at Trim from the end of the fourteenth century.[141] Other private records, such as the *Ormond deeds*,[142] which relate to that family's property in Kilkenny, Tipperary and Dublin, and *The red book of the earls of Kildare*,[143] also contain occasional references to Trim.

Documentary sources: pitfalls, lacunae and substitute material

A variety of difficulties is to be encountered when dealing with written sources for the middle ages. For some, the language of the texts acts as a barrier—English translations have yet to appear for many of the Latin, Irish and Norman-French documents, and even some of the earlier material in English is hard to decipher.

The greatest difficulty, however, particularly in terms of the government sources, is the dearth of material. The already fragmentary nature of the documentary record was exacerbated by the devastating fire of 1922. Even before then the archives were deficient in many ways, but where there were chinks in the record prior to 1922, now there are chasms. What remains is disparate and uneven in its coverage, and many large lacunae are left to be filled by constructive guesswork, suggestion and the evidence of non-documentary sources.

Fortunately, it is possible in some instances to substitute later copies or transcripts for missing material. For instance, by the end of sixteenth century and into the seventeenth, a number of people had already begun to use the medieval government records for research purposes. In some cases it is now possible to use the fruits of their work for contemporary research. Extracts and notes that have

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[140]Charles McNeill and A. J. Otway-Ruthven (ed.), *Dowdall deeds* (Dublin, 1960).

[141]*Dowdall deeds*, pp 122-4, 110, 208-9, 349.

[142]Edmund Curtis (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond deeds, 1172-1603* (6 vols, Dublin, 1932-43).

[143]Gearóid Mac Niocaill (ed.), *The red book of the earls of Kildare* (Dublin, 1964).

particular significance to the present study were made and collected by men such as William Gerrard (late sixteenth century),[144] Sir George Carew (d. 1629),[145] Sir James Ware (d. 1666),[146] Walter Harris (d. 1761),[147] and Sir William Betham (d. 1853).[148]

Archaeological sources

Upstanding remains

Trim is dominated by its castle and the associated complex of structures, but these are by no means the only medieval buildings in the town. Substantial stretches survive of the town wall as well as the Sheep Gate, one of the fortified points of access to and egress from the medieval town. The narrow bridge over the Boyne retains much of its medieval fabric and may indeed be the oldest surviving functioning bridge in the country. At St Patrick's Church are the vestiges of a multi-period medieval chancel and five-storey tower of late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century date. A large collection of medieval funerary monuments and architectural fragments is also present at the church as well as one of Ireland's finest examples of carved stonework—a hexagonal shaft ornamented with the sculpted figures of six apostles (see CHAPTER SEVEN).

There are two probable fifteenth-century fortified town houses on the north side of the river close to the belfry of St Mary's Augustinian priory. This tower, which is almost 40m in height, is the tallest medieval building in Ireland. It is the most prominent surviving section of the medieval monastery, but a complex of earthworks at the site clearly marks the foundations of the now-disappeared

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[144]Charles McNeill, 'Lord Chancellor Gerrard's notes of his report on Ireland, 1577-8' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 2 (1931), pp 93-291.

[145]*Cal. Carew MSS, Howth.*

[146]*The whole works of Sir James Ware concerning Ireland, revised and improved... Newly translated into English, revised and improved with many material additions and continued down to the beginning of the present century by Walter Harris* (2 vols, Dublin, 1764); Sir James Ware (ed.), *Ancient Irish histories: the works of Spencer, Campion, Hanmer and Marleburrough* (2 vols, Dublin, 1809; originally published in 1633); idem, *Rerum Hibernicarum annals* (Dublin, 1664).

[147]Walter Harris (ed.), *Hibernica: or some ancient pieces relating to Ireland* (Dublin, 1747; 2nd ed., 1770); Charles McNeill, 'Harris: *Collectanea de rebus Hibernicis*' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 6 (Nov. 1934), pp 248-450; N.L.I., MS 13/1-18: Walter Harris, *Collectanea de rebus Hibernicis*.

[148]N.L.I., G.O. MSS 189-192 (plea roll extracts), 193 (patent and close roll extracts); N.L.I., MSS 760-1 (pipe roll extracts). Detailed notes on these extracts are given by P. B. Pharr in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 27 (1972), pp 26-31, as part of a survey of all the Betham manuscripts.

buildings and walls. At the south side of the town, on a slight rise overlooking the Boyne, are the remains a small medieval church at the site of the leper hospital of Mary Magdalene.

Close to the known site of the Franciscan friary, two medieval stone heads have been incorporated into the gable end of a small cottage, while several other pieces of medieval masonry and window tracery are known from gardens and yards around the town.

A preliminary survey of the medieval architecture of Trim was carried out for the Urban archaeology survey of County Meath in 1984, and this report is a starting point for any study of these buildings.[149] Casey and Rowan also discuss these structures in their 1993 publication, *The buildings of Ireland: North Leinster*.[150] A major architectural survey of Trim Castle has recently been completed, revealing a range of previously unknown information about the design of the keep and the building methods used in its construction.[151]

The observations of some eighteenth- and nineteenth-century antiquarians are also sometimes useful, particularly where the buildings or features to which they refer are no longer extant. Of course, Richard Butler's is the most important of these works, but other writers such as Burke, Conwell, Evans, Wilde and Callary also made comments that are pertinent to the present study.[152]

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[149]John Bradley, Urban archaeology survey of Co. Meath (Unpublished report prepared for the Office of Public Works, 1984).
[150]Christine Casey and Alistair Rowan, *The buildings of Ireland: North Leinster* (Dublin, 1993), pp 508-20.
[151]Kevin O'Brien (Dúchas: The Heritage Service), pers. comm.
[152]Butler, *Trim* (1854); Burke, *Hibernia Dominicana*; E. A. Conwell, 'A ramble round Trim' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, ii, ser. 4 (1872-3 [1874]), pp 361-430 (reprinted as *A ramble round Trim amongst its ruins and antiquities* (Dublin, 1878)); John Evans, *Trim: its ecclesiastical ruins, its castle, etc., together with a collection of documents not hitherto published and notes of Trim and its environs for past two centuries* (Dublin, 1886); W. R. Wilde, *The beauties of the Boyne and its tributary the Blackwater* (3rd edition, Dublin, 1949), p. 74; Philip Callary, 'The tower and church of St Patrick, Trim' in *I.E.R.*, v (Jan. - June 1899), pp 30-47; idem, 'The black friary of Trim' in *I.E.R.*, vii (Jan. to June 1900), pp 400-11; idem, 'The grey friary of Trim' in *I.E.R.*, ii (July to Dec. 1913), pp 473-90.

Buildings and structures that are known from the documentary record to have existed at Trim in the middle ages but which are no longer extant include houses, cottages, shops, workshops, a guildhall, four town gates, water-mills, eel weirs, and a Franciscan friary and a Dominican priory with their respective monastic complexes. The sites of some of these features are known, but further archaeological investigation is likely to be the sole method by which any trace of the others may be found.

Results of archaeological excavations and monitoring

More archaeological investigations took place in Trim in 1999-2000 than in all previous years combined. Without exception, each of the fifteen excavations or monitoring exercises in these two seasons was carried out in advance of construction.

Although most of the archaeological investigations are unfortunately restricted by time and financial constraints, they have yielded some very important data. A short season of investigation was carried out at the library site on High Street in 1987, and this revealed portions of the foundations of medieval structures and a small assemblage of imported pottery from both Ham Green, near Bristol, and the southwest of France.[153] Pottery is a particularly useful indicator for tracing trading contacts, and the evidence from Trim suggests links with Britain and France in the thirteenth century. Cattle, horse, sheep (or goat), pig, dog, and hare were all represented in the collection of animal bones retrieved on the site.

In the summer of 1988 a team from Florida Atlantic University carried out a geophysical survey (including soil resistivity, proton magnetometry surveys and low altitude, infra-red aerial photography) at the site of the Dominican priory at Trim.[154] This survey showed subsurface features, which were identified as different parts of the monastic buildings, including kitchen, cloisters, living

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[153] Claire Walsh, 'An excavation at the library site, High Street, Trim' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, viii, no. 3 (1990-1), pp 41-67.
[154] W. J. Kennedy, An archaeological survey of the Black Friary site, Trim, Ireland (Unpublished report prepared for the Office of Public Works, 1989; now in files of Dúchas: The Heritage Service).

quarters, refectory, tower, chancel and entrance. Unfortunately, the excavations that were proposed to follow the survey have not taken place.

The renewal of water- and sewage-pipes in Trim in 1996 involved the digging of trenches, as much as 3m wide, along most of the major streets in the town.[155] All of this work was monitored by archaeologists. A medieval street surface of cobbling was exposed along most of the length of Market Street, and a mortared limestone wall was located beneath Loman Street. The latter was interpreted as a possible boundary wall for St Patrick's church and graveyard. A portion of the town wall, 3m in width, was revealed under Emmet Street, and several other sections of wall were also recorded during the monitoring. Organic deposits of medieval date included animal bones, leather off-cuts, and pottery sherds.

In addition to the small-scale investigations, two major campaigns of excavation have taken place at Trim Castle, first in the 1970s and then in the 1990s.[156] Under the directorship of P.D. Sweetman, the earlier investigation concentrated on the towers of the curtain wall, the west gatehouse and the bawn area between the keep and the south curtain wall.[157] The excavations revealed the foundations of a small oratory-like building which appeared to pre-date the arrival of the Normans at Trim.[158] Investigations around the curtain wall yielded important information regarding the castle's defences, and the discovery of over ninety thousand sherds of locally manufactured pottery demonstrated the significance of local craftsmen in a small medieval Irish town.[159]

Further research excavations were carried out at Trim Castle between 1995 and 1998 by Alan Hayden.[160] This work revealed the possible location of the mint,

[155]Rosanne Meenan, 'Trim' in Isabel Bennett (ed.), *Excavations 1996: summary accounts of Archaeological excavations in Ireland* (Bray, 1997), p. 89.
[156]P. D. Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle, Co. Meath, 1971-74' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxxviii (1978), sect. C, no. 6, pp 127-98; Alan Hayden, 'Trim Castle' in Isabel Bennett (ed.), *Excavations 1996: summary accounts of Archaeological excavations in Ireland* (Bray, 1997), pp 89-90; idem, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8* (forthcoming).
[157]Sweetman, 'Trim Castle', p. 131.
[158]Sweetman, 'Trim Castle', p. 185.
[159]Sweetman, 'Trim Castle', pp 156, 161.
[160]Alan Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8* (forthcoming).

which is known to have functioned at the castle from at least 1460, while an examination of the walls of the keep showed that some of the original timbers survived *in situ*.[161] Dendrochronological analyses on the wood confirmed that there had been three main phases of construction and that the earliest stone structure had been commenced as early as 1172. Condit has underlined how the provision of dendrochronological dates from the Trim keep has 'contributed in highly scientific terms to an understanding of how the physical remains [...] relate to the historical documentation'.

Stray finds

In addition to artefacts recovered in the course of archaeological excavation, items discovered by chance, despite usually being removed from their archaeological context, are a useful source of information for a study of the development of any area—rural or urban.

Over the years, a wide range of medieval artefacts has been picked up in and around the town, mostly by people carrying out gardening or building work, but also by those involved in drainage projects on the Boyne. It is also clear that the open ground around the castle was used from the late seventeenth century for growing potatoes and other vegetables and that the digging sometimes revealed objects of medieval date. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, for instance, a silver signet ring was found at the castle.[162] The ring, which was presented to George IV during his visit to Ireland in 1821, bore the letter 'I' surmounted by a ducal coronet, and at each side a branch of the *Planta Genista* or broom plant, the emblem of the Plantagenet family. A fifteenth-century bronze crucifix was found in the field known as the Greek Park in 1901,[163] and a medieval bronze basin of similar date was recovered from the north bank of the Boyne in 1970.[164]

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[161]Tom Condit, 'Rings of truth at Trim Castle, Co. Meath' in *Arch. Ire.*, x, no. 3 (autumn, 1996), pp 30-3.
[162]C. C. Ellison, 'Richard Butler—historian of Trim' in *Riocht na Midhe*, iii, no. 2 (1964), pp 132-9, at pp 136-7; *Dublin Saturday Magazine*, ii, 374.
[163]John Healy, 'Crucifix found at Trim' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, xxx (1901), p. 176.
[164]Nat. Museum files, Nat. Mus. Ire. 1970:219.

In June 1975 the stretch of the Boyne adjacent to Trim Castle was dredged as part of the Boyne Drainage Scheme. A large quantity of archaeological material was revealed in the dredged material that was subsequently dumped along the riverbank. This included pottery, metal objects, animal bones and shells, a random sample of which was collected by a local man and presented to the museum.[165]

The largest collection of medieval artefacts from Trim was that assembled by Richard Butler in the nineteenth century. Although the exact context in which most of the items were discovered is unknown, Butler recorded the general find spots of many of the objects. For instance, one of the ring brooches from his collection was unearthed in the rectory garden, while a second was dug up in the yard of the castle.[166] Both brooches are now in the National Museum of Ireland (where the provenance of one, on display, is erroneously given as 'Newtown Trim').[167] In 1830 a gold ring bearing the arms of the Fox family was found in a garden in Scarlet Street (now Loman Street),[168] and six years later a small pair of silver-inlaid spurs was found in the yard of Trim Castle during the planting of potatoes.[169]

It was in this way that many artefacts came to light, and Butler rewarded all those who brought them to him. He accumulated a collection of over 430 coins, including a complete series from Henry II to Victoria, all found at Trim.[170] In December 1846 the great Danish archaeologist Jens Worsaae came to Trim with William Todd to visit Butler and to look at his collection of coins and artefacts.[171] In 1853 many of these objects were displayed at the Great Exhibition in Dublin.[172] After his death, Butler's coins, seals and many other objects were presented to the

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[165]Nat. Museum files, Nat. Mus. Ire. 1976:625-40.
[166]Butler, 'A memoir of Richard Butler', pp 96-7; Ellison, 'Richard Butler', p. 136; Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 160.
[167]Nat. Mus. Ire. R 4001-2.
[168]Ellison, 'Richard Butler', p. 136; Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 83, note; Butler, 'A memoir of Richard Butler', p. 96.
[169]Butler, 'A memoir of Richard Butler', p. 97; Butler, *Trim*, 1854, p. 54.
[170]Butler, 'A memoir of Richard Butler', p. 96; Conwell, 'A ramble round Trim', p. 417.
[171]Butler, 'A memoir of Richard Butler', pp 135-6; David Henry (ed.), *Viking Ireland: Jens Worsaae's accounts of his visit to Ireland: 1846-7* (Balgavies, Angus, 1995), pp 9, 84.
[172]Richard Hitchcock, 'Notes made in the archaeological court of the Great Exhibition of 1853' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, ii (1852-3), pp 280-95, at p. 287.

Royal Irish Academy, and they have subsequently been merged in the collections of the National Museum of Ireland.[173]

Some of the artefacts from Trim have been studied in detail and published by experts in the relevant field, and such is the case for one stone axe, two bronze axes and three ring brooches (see CATALOGUE).[174] Most of the objects, however, have sadly not been given this much attention. The National Museum of Ireland maintains files on most of the objects in its collections and there are descriptions and catalogue-style entries for many of the Trim artefacts among their records. Items in other repositories such as the British Museum (London) and the Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto) are similarly catalogued, but most of those in private possession have never been described in detail. Unfortunately, in several cases, objects mentioned by writers over the years have since become entirely lost, and even the whereabouts of much of the Butler collection is now a matter of guesswork.

Topographical sources

For urban sites such as Trim, useful information can be derived from a study of the site and situation of the town itself, the positioning of the upstanding remains (both intra- and extra-mural), the layout of streets and street-blocks and the pattern of burgage plots and property boundaries. Town-plan analysis is a technique pioneered by Conzen in the 1960s and provides an added dimension to the study of medieval urban developments.[175]

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[173]Ellison, 'Richard Butler', p. 136.

[174]See for example Gabriel Cooney and Stephen Mandal, *The Irish Stone Axe Project: Monograph I* (Bray, 1998), pp 151 (illustration 5.14.4), 206-7 (description); Peter Harbison, *The axes of the Early Bronze Age in Ireland* (Prähistorische Bronzefunde IX, I, Munich, 1969), p. 58: No. 1735, Plate 71:1; p. 62: No. 1903; M. B. Deevy, *Medieval ring brooches in Ireland: a study of jewellery, dress and society* (Bray, 1998), RB 80 (class 2b), pp 109-10, plates 6,7; RB 103 (class 3b), p. 116, plate 11; RB 123 (class 7), pp 123-4, plate 19.

[175]M. R. G. Conzen, *Alnwick, Northumberland: a study in town-plan analysis* (Institute of British Geographers, 27, London, 1960); idem, 'The plan analysis of an English city centre' in *Proceedings of the International Geographical Union Symposium in Urban Geography, Lund, 1960* (Lund studies in geography, series B, human geography, 24, Lund, 1962), pp 383-414; idem., 'The use of town plans in the study of urban history' in H. J. Dyos (ed.), *The Study of Urban History* (London, 1968), pp 113-30.

The analysis of town-plans may even reveal information pertaining to pre-urban phases in the development of the settlement. The pattern of the streets in Trim, for instance, is atypical of standard Anglo-Norman towns in Ireland. Part of the explanation for this is perhaps the town's pre-Norman role as an ecclesiastical centre. The radial course of Castle Street, Bridge Street, High Street and Navangate Street may preserve part of the line of an early monastic enclosure.

The study of contemporary property divisions can yield useful information relating to different stages in the development of a town, and the survival-rate of medieval property boundaries at Trim seems to be particularly good. The long, narrow burgage-plot pattern pre-dominates and has been preserved over a wide area within the town. The presence of a similar pattern of property boundaries outside the town wall behind Emmet Street suggests the existence of suburbs there in the middle ages.

It is very rare that a sketch or painting from the medieval period survives and none of Trim is known to exist. Nonetheless, illustrations and drawings from the seventeenth century and later can often be very useful aids for medieval studies, especially for recreating an image of landscape or urban layout. They can be useful for pinpointing the location of churches and private houses as well as helping the observer to envisage the original appearance of structures that have since been demolished. There is a large collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century topographical illustrations of Trim in the National Library of Ireland.[176] These include drawings by notable antiquarians such as Petrie, Wilde and Wakeman, as well as works by Sandby, Grose and du Noyer. The Four Courts Press has recently published a second volume of the National Library's collection of Gabriel Beranger's drawings of the antiquities of Ireland and the drawing of Trim Castle serves as an example of how even nineteenth-century illustrations can be of use to a student of medieval town-scapes.[177] A large section of the curtain

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[176]R. M. Elmes, *Catalogue of Irish topographical prints and original drawings* (Dublin, 1975), p. 206.
[177]Peter Harbison (ed.), *Gabriel Beranger's drawings of the principal antique buildings of Ireland* (Dublin, 1998), p. 193.

wall that is clearly represented in that drawing has since disintegrated and so that illustration is now one of the very few records of that part of the castle's defences. Among the drawings of heraldic shields under the heading '*in ecclesia de Trim*' in a late sixteenth-/early seventeenth-century manuscript in the library of Trinity College Dublin are several unidentified shields no longer present in the church at Trim, including one showing the arms of England (three lions passant gardant) impaling those of Mortimer and de Burgh.[178] Another of the shields shows the arms of France and England quartered with a label of three points charged with torteaux. These sketches are the only surviving evidence for the presence of these armorial shields in St Patrick's Church, and without them one more piece of Trim's medieval past would be lost.

Early maps and surveys are of particular interest to students of medieval urban history as they may indicate the site of disappeared churches, bridges or monuments, they can sometimes show burgage plots, property boundaries and town walls as well as being a fairly reliable guide to street pattern and town layout. Excellent sources that cast light on the medieval period are the mid seventeenth-century *Civil Survey* and *Down Survey*.[179] The coverage and accuracy of these surveys was unprecedented and they contain a number of useful details for the study of medieval Trim.[180] The 1658 Down Survey map of 'Trim parrish' shows little detail of the town itself but a cut-stone wall is clearly illustrated and a gate is shown on the north side.[181]

The National Library of Ireland has a manuscript map dating to 1770 of 'several tenniments and lotts of ground in the town and libertie of Trim'.[182] It is often maps such as this that show details of medieval property boundaries, streets and buildings that survived more or less intact up to that time. Although none of the

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[178]T.C.D., MS 807, fol. 380.

[179]R. C. Simington (ed.), *The civil survey, A.D. 1654-6: the County of Meath, v* (Dublin, 1940).

[180]R. W. D. Edwards and Mary O'Dowd, *Sources for early modern Irish history, 1534-1641* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 124.

[181]N.L.I. Microfilm Pos. 7382 (a), MS 715 (Copy of Down Survey maps).

[182]N.L.I., MS 21 F. 70 (7, 8): 'several tenniments and lotts of ground in the town and libertie of Trim'.

circuit of Trim's wall is shown on the 1770 map, some of the property boundaries clearly follow the line of that wall.

The most useful maps for a study of the walls of Trim date to the 1830s, and these may all be the result of a single survey. One of the medieval gates—the Water Gate—and sections of the 'old town wall' to the east and west of the town are shown on the map accompanying the 1835 report on Irish Municipal Corporations.[183] The first edition of Butler's *Trim Castle* (1835) also has a map of the town (at 18":1 mile), showing part of the wall on the east side of the town (including the Sheep Gate).[184] The 1835-6 Ordnance Survey maps show the town's walled circuits in the greatest detail.[185] They identify the site of each of the five gates, and details of buildings and property divisions are also shown. The large-scale maps (on which the later, reduced-scale ones were based), now in the National Archives in Dublin, show particularly clearly details that are no longer present. For instance, although no mural towers survive at Trim today, a square tower with the legend 'tower in ruins' is clearly marked at the southwest corner of the circuit on the 5':1 mile map. Further to the north, on the same map, an angular outward bulge in the line of the wall may indicate the former presence of a second tower.[186]

Because such a large amount of destruction has taken place in our towns within the last century, photographs taken in the last one hundred and fifty years can be very useful. The comprehensive photographic record that exists of the townscape of the late nineteenth and twentieth century can throw light on some questions relating to the urban topography of the middle ages. An example of this is a photograph taken in Trim by Jane Shackleton in 1889.[187] The photograph is a close-up of the Water Gate, a medieval structure of which no other record exists.

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[183] *Mun. corp. Ire., rep., app. I.*
[184] Butler, *Trim* (1835), facing frontispiece.
[185] Nat. archives, OS 140: Trim, part 2 (drawn 1836).
[186] Bradley, Urban archaeol. surv., Meath, p. 163; Avril Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1992), i, 196.
[187] *Riocht na Midhe*, vii, no. 3 (1984), p. 62.

Aerial photography has come to play an important role in our understanding of past landscapes. There is a small collection of aerial views of Trim in the files of Dúchas: The Heritage Service, and it is possible to identify a number of earthworks in these that are almost impossible to discern at ground level. In combination with town plans, aerial photographs can also be a useful tool for deciphering different phases of development within urban areas.

❖ **CHAPTER 2**

THE LIBERTY OF MEATH AND THE LORDSHIP OF TRIM, 1172-1541

Introduction

The development of Trim from the 1170s cannot be fully understood in isolation from the Anglo-Norman lordship of Meath of which it became the administrative, judicial and commercial centre. From this time Trim played a dual role, as caput of a rich and extensive lordship on the one hand and as a fortified market town with extensive mercantile connections and an independent administration on the other. The history of the town and that of the lordship are inextricably linked.

The lordship was held successively by three important families: the de Lacys; de Genevilles; and Mortimers, before being inherited by Richard, duke of York, in 1425. This chapter charts the political development of the lordship and the succession of its lords and ladies from the original grant of Meath in 1172 to its division into two counties in 1541.[1]

Hugh de Lacy's tenure as lord of Meath (1172-86)

Among the knights who landed in Ireland with Henry II in October 1171 was Hugh de Lacy, fifth Baron Lacy by tenure, whose family originally came from Lassy, in Normandy.[2] In April of the following year, as Henry was preparing to leave Ireland, he summoned Hugh and issued to him a charter granting the whole of the ancient kingdom of Mide, 'as Murchada Ua Máel Sechnaill held it', for the service of fifty knights.[3] Ua Máel Sechnaill had died as king of Mide almost

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[1] From 1172 when the original grant of Meath was made to Hugh de Lacy, until 1244 when it was divided between two de Lacy heiresses, the entire area was known as the lordship of Meath. After 1244 the eastern part, centred at Trim, was referred to most commonly as the liberty of Trim or, less frequently, the liberty of East Meath. When the county of Meath was created in 1297 it included both parts of the original lordship, but only the liberty of Trim enjoyed the complete range of rights and privileges granted in 1172. In 1330 these rights and privileges were broadened to cover the western part of the county, making the extended liberty of Trim almost equivalent to the old lordship of Meath. From this time the nomenclature varies widely, with sources referring variously to the lordship of Meath, the liberty of Meath, the county of Meath, the lordship of Trim and the liberty of Trim. For the purposes of the present study, the entire area is referred to as the lordship of Meath for the period Apr. 1172-May 1244. The eastern section, with which we are primarily concerned, is called the liberty of Trim for the period June 1244-1330. From 1330 the entire area, reunited, is referred to as the liberty of Trim. Where other sources are being quoted, their nomenclature is retained.

[2] Orpen, *The song*, ll 2601-6; *D.N.B.*, under 'Lacy. Hugh de'.

[3] *Gormanston reg.*, pp 6, 177; Wood, 'The muniments', p. 330, deed xxiv; Orpen, *The song*, ll 2725-2732; for a discussion of the importance of this grant, see J. F. Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland in the middle ages* (Dublin, 1972), pp 44-5; A number of sources state that the original

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twenty years previously in 1153, and Henry's grant must be viewed in the context of the political situation in Mide in the years prior to the arrival in Ireland of the Anglo-Normans.[4]

According to both the *Book of Leinster* and *The Song*, Diarmait Mac Murchada was recognised as king of Mide as well as Leinster when he died in 1171.[5] As Mac Murchada's designated heir, Richard fitz Gilbert alias Richard de Clare (otherwise known as Strongbow) could easily have argued a case for possession of the kingdom of Mide. On the other hand, Giraldus Cambrensis refers to Tigernán Ua Ruairc as king of Mide when describing his death at the hands of de Lacy in 1172.[6] To complicate matters further, Domnall Bregach Ua Máel Sechnaill, who had submitted to Mac Murchada in 1170, was recognised only as king of eastern Mide; it was his brother Art who held power in the western sector.[7]

Faced with the possibility of at least four 'legitimate' claimants to the kingship of Mide, Henry II imposed his own solution on the situation. By defining the borders of the kingdom as they were in 1153, he ignored all subsequent divisions, overlooked each of the contemporary claimants and the rights of the pre-Anglo-Norman proprietors, and introduced de Lacy as an 'independent' overlord. This arrangement was to benefit Henry in more ways than one. The king was also determined that none of the Anglo-Norman lords in Ireland could establish predominant power and perhaps an independent Anglo-Norman state. The grant of Meath and particularly the extensive rights and privileges that went with it established Hugh de Lacy as a counterpoise to the tremendously capable and equally ambitious Strongbow, lord of Leinster. This 'balance of power' appears to have worked, for the first few years at least.

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grant of Meath by Henry II to Hugh de lacy was for the service of 100 knights, but this seems to be due to confusion with a later charter, see *Hovedene*, ii, 34; idem, *Benedict of Peterborough*, i, 163.
[4] *Ann. Clon.*, *s.a.* 1153; *A.F.M.*, *s.a.* 1153.
[5] R. I. Best, Osborn Bergin, M. A. O'Brien and Anne O'Sullivan (ed.), *The Book of Leinster, formerly Lebar na Núachongbála* (6 vols, D.I.A.S., 1954-83), i, 184; Orpen, *The song*, ll 16-19.
[6] Scott & Martin, *Expugnatio*, pp 112-13.
[7] *Ann. Tig.*, *s.a.* 1170, 1173; *Misc. Ir. Annals*, *s.a.* 1171.4, 1185.1; *A.U.*, *s.a.* 1170; *Ann. Inisf.*, *s.a.* 1173.7.
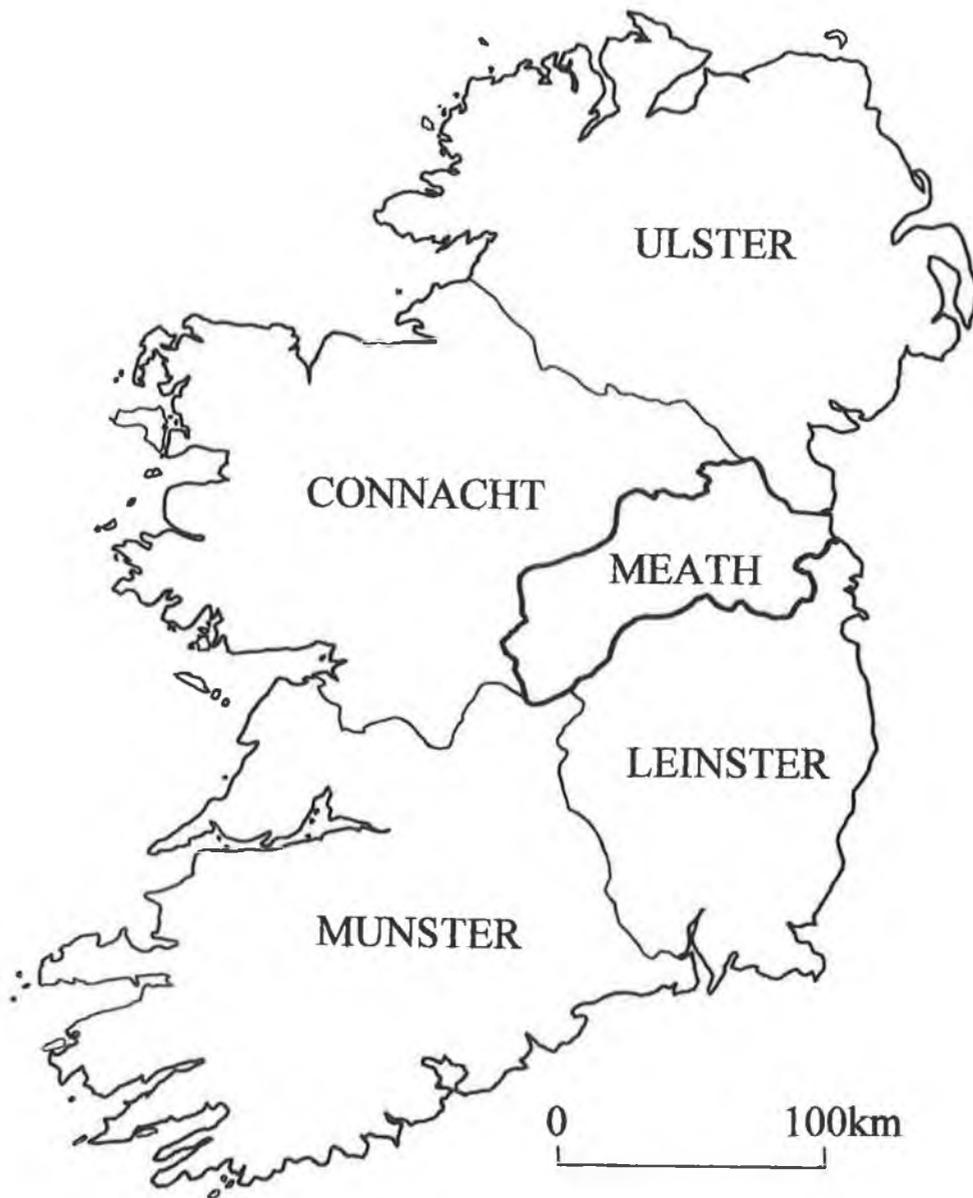
FIG. 2.1 Map of Ireland showing the Anglo-Norman lordship of Meath
(largely coterminous with the ancient kingdom of Meath).
Source: *N.H.I.*, ix, p. 45, map 47.

Meath was granted to Hugh as a liberty, which has been defined as an area granted to 'a subject to whom the king delegated a portion of his royal prerogative (*jura regalia*)'.[8] The terms of the hereditary grant, including an assurance to Hugh of 'all liberties and free customs which the king has or may have there', created what was practically a palatine lordship. According to the recital of this deed in 1330, Hugh's charter granted him complete jurisdiction and cognisance of all pleas, including arson, rape, treasure-trove and forestalling, and he was entitled to appoint a chancellor, a treasurer, and other officers, and to have all appropriate seals.[9] Nowhere else in Ireland was the king's prerogative delegated to such a great extent. Indeed in 1399 the king's council in Ireland reported that 'the county of Meath is a liberty of an earl Palatine, and given to others, and the king has nothing [there]'.[10]

FIG. 2.2 Hugh de Lacy, from N.L.I. MS 700: Giraldus Cambrensis, *Expugnatio Hibernica*. Source: Kissane, *Treasures from the National Library of Ireland*, p. 138.

[8]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 312.
[9]*Chart. privil. immun.*, pp 53-4; Wood, 'The muniments', pp 312-13, 328, deed ix [*Cal. chart. rolls, 1327-41*, pp 176-7].
[10]Edmund Curtis and R. B. McDowell (ed.), *Irish historical documents, 1172-1922* (London, 1943), pp 68-9.

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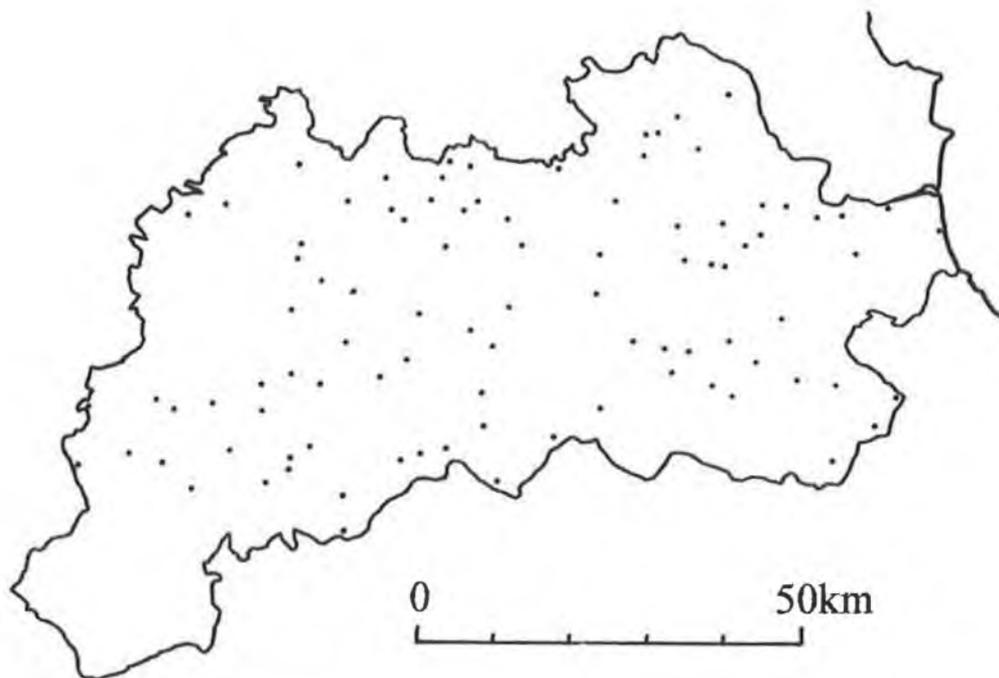
FIG. 2.3 The distribution of mottes in the lordship of Meath. Source: B.J. Graham, 'The mottes of the Norman liberty of Meath' in Harman Murtagh (ed.), *Irish midland studies: essays in commemoration of N. W. English* (Athlone, 1980), pp 39-56, at p. 43, fig. 2.

The ancient kingdom of Mide included not only the present counties of Meath and Westmeath, but also the baronies of Garrycastle and Kilcoursey (now the north-western part of Co. Offaly) and the eastern part of modern day Co. Longford around Granard—in total it extended to almost 325,000 hectares (see FIGS 2.1 and 2.4). The transformation of this kingdom into a feudal lordship consisted of a blend of change and continuity. Although it has been suggested that the de Lacy lordship of Meath was quite a new political identity, in that its boundaries did not exactly mirror those of any single earlier political unit, it is clear that in most places the earlier borders were maintained, and that where they were not, the new frontier was shaped by geographical features and by existing territorial units.[11] In a recent study, Bhreathnach has argued that 'far from entering virgin territory and creating a new landscape, the Anglo-Normans found in south Brega[12] an

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[11]Robert Bartlett and Angus Mackay (ed.), *Medieval frontier societies* (Oxford, 1989), pp 23-47, at p. 31; Edel Bhreathnach, 'Authority and supremacy in Tara and its hinterland c.950-1200' in *Discovery Programme Reports: 5* (Dublin, 1999), pp 1-23, at pp 16-17.

[12]Paul Walsh defined Brega, in the sense of a minor kingdom, excluding subordinate territories, as being 'in the heart of the present county of Meath, east and south of the River Boyne, where the barony of Skreen lies today', see 'Meath in the Book of Rights' in John Ryan (ed.), *Féil-sgríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill* (Dublin, 1940), pp 508-21, at p. 509.

established pattern of territorial division and of settlement, an established structure of authority, no doubt with a concomitant system of economic distribution and collection of tribute or taxes, and an evolving, parallel ecclesiastical framework. Rather than ignore this existing polity, they proceeded to mould it according to their own administrative, economic and military structures'.[13]

Hugh de Lacy was a diplomat, a strategist, and an opportunist. That he was also appointed justiciar of Ireland, and bailiff of the city of Dublin with a garrison of twenty knights is a further indication of the king's estimation of his worth and ability.[14] When Hugh set about establishing control in Meath and securing his extensive lordship, it was done primarily through subinfeudation and the systematic construction of a network of fortifications (see FIG. 2.3).[15] The method of subinfeudation is illustrative of the amalgam of change and continuity. For example, Hugh granted to Hugh Hussey 'all the land of Dies [Deece] which Schachlin [Mac Gilla Sechnaill] held', thus clearly replacing a local king with an Anglo-Norman knight in a pre-defined land-unit.[16] Similarly, the charter granted by Hugh to Gilbert de Nugent states that he was to hold Delvin as it was held by O'Fuinnaláin in the time of the Irish (*quam in tempore Hibernicorem O'Finelani tenuerant*).[17]

Another case of the superimposition of new order on pre-existing structures in Meath is Hugh's selection of Trim as the *caput* of the lordship. Monastic centres, sheltering traders and artisans, and built on fords and transport routes, were natural candidates for the administrative seats and strongholds of the fledgling

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[13]Bhreathnach, 'Authority & supremacy in Tara', pp 16-17.
[14]The various administrative roles carried out by de Lacy have recently been discussed, see M.-T. Flanagan, 'Household favourites: Angevin royal agents in Ireland under Henry II and John' in A. P. Smyth (ed.), *Seanchas: studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin, 2000), pp 357-80.
[15]Orpen, *The song*, ll 2940-5, 3129-207; Scott & Martin, *Expugnatio Hibernica*, p. 191; G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans, 1169-1333* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20; reprint, 4 vols, Oxford, 1968), ii, 75-90; B. J. Graham, 'Medieval settlements in County Meath' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, v, 4 (1974), pp 40-59; idem, 'The evolution of the settlement pattern of Anglo-Norman Eastmeath' in R. H. Buchanan, R. A. Butlin and D. McCourt (ed.), *Fields, farms and settlement in Europe* (Belfast, 1976), pp 38-47; idem, 'The mottes of the Norman liberty of Meath' in Harman Murtagh (ed.), *Irish midland studies: essays in commemoration of N. W. English* (Athlone, 1980), pp 39-56.
[16]Orpen, *The song*, ll 3162-3; Harris/Ware, i, 193; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 85, note 5.
[17]Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 252-3, referring to *Betham's collections* [from the patent rolls].

feudal system in Ireland. The importance of Trim in pre-Anglo-Norman times was clearly recognised by the new settlers and they endeavoured to turn this to their advantage. Trim was to become the administrative centre of Meath, with its focus of control and organisation at the castle, the construction of which must have got underway soon after Henry II made his grant to Hugh (see CHAPTER SIX).[18] The land was fertile and productive, there was an established crossing point on the river, the location was known to traders and merchants, and a certain level of organisation was already in existence. Trim Castle was built on land belonging to the church, and rent for the site of the castle, town and bridge of Trim was paid to the church from the twelfth to the nineteenth century.[19] The establishment of the caput of the lordship at Trim was part of a recognisable pattern within the structure of subinfeudation, and many seigniorial manors in Meath were centred at locations that were (or had been) either early Christian monasteries or important churches (e.g. Clonard, Duleek, Fore, Kells, Skryne and Slane).[20]

Hugh de Lacy did not spend much time in Ireland during the first five years of his lordship of Meath, but when he did, he apparently acted diplomatically with the local Irish and made peace with them at every opportunity.[21] Later indeed, after the death of his first wife, Rose de Monmouth, Hugh forged a crucial Hiberno-Norman alliance by marrying a daughter of the Irish high-king Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, the man who had not long previously razed to the ground the first de Lacy fortification at Trim (see CHAPTER SIX).[22] Despite Hugh's diplomatic tactics, efforts at bringing Meath under feudal control were not without impediments, and during 1173 and 1174 the Anglo-Normans suffered a number of defeats and setbacks. It was perhaps in retaliation for this that in 1175 'Manus O'Melaghlin,

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[18]Orpen, *The song*, ll 3338-9; Scott & Martin, *Expugnatio*, pp 140-1.
[19]Sheehy, *Pontificia Hib.*, i, 86-8, no. 30. Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 71-2, recorded that the bishops of Meath were still (1854) paid by the treasury £3 15s a year, out of the manor of Trim, while J. B. Cullen, *The Hill of Slane and its memories, and the Castle of Trim, County Meath* (The Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, Dublin, 1909), p. 32, and Evans, *Trim: its ecclesiastical ruins*, p. 9, asserted that, up until the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869, the bishops of Meath were entitled to £2-3 quitrent from the crown out of the castle and liberty of Trim.
[20]Graham 'The evolution of the settlement pattern of Anglo-Norman Eastmeath', p. 42.
[21]Orpen, *Normans*, i, 325-6, ii, 51-4; W. E. Wightman, *The Lacy family in England and Normandy, 1066-1194* (Oxford, 1966), pp 193-4; Scott & Martin, *Expugnatio*, p. 191.
[22]Wightman, *The Lacy family*, p. 191.

lord of East Meath, was hanged by the English, after they had acted treacherously towards him at Trim', where he had been held prisoner.[23]

When Henry II's son John, then nine years of age, was made lord of Ireland in 1177, a new charter was drawn up by which the grant of Meath to Hugh was confirmed, but for the increased service of one hundred knights, to be held of both Henry and John.[24] Orpen pointed out that the increased feudal service—one hundred knights instead of fifty—may have been due to the fact that Hugh de Lacy had by then been appointed *custos* of the crown lands of Dublin and of the northern part of Leinster.[25] Hugh had been further rewarded by his appointment as *procurator generalis* of Ireland in the same year (although Flanagan has shown that in reality this appointment did not come into effect until 1181).[26] By the reign of Edward III the number of knight's fees owed by Meath to the crown had reverted to fifty (or the equivalent of £100), exactly as stated in *The Song* with regard to the original grant, and as provided in John's confirmatory grant to Walter de Lacy in 1208.[27]

Hugh de Lacy was murdered at Durrow, Co. Offaly on 25 July 1186.[28] By the time of his death, he had accumulated such a large power-base in Ireland that he was even referred to by some annalists as 'king of all Erin'.[29] Giraldus and William of Newburgh claimed that the king suspected Hugh of wanting to usurp the kingdom of Ireland for himself, and Newburgh believed that de Lacy had 'so extended his boundaries and prospered and increased so much in magnitude of wealth and power that he now became formidable, not only to his enemies, but

[23]*A.F.M., s.a.* 1175; *Misc. Ir. Annals, s.a.* 1176 (*Mac Carthaigh's Book*).
[24]*Benedict of Peterborough*, i, 163; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 30-2.
[25]Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 31-2.
[26]Scott & Martin, *Expugnatio*, pp 182-3; Flanagan, 'Household favourites', p. 368.
[27]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 382; Mary Bateson, 'Irish exchequer memoranda of the reign of Edward I' in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xviii (1903) pp 497-513, at p. 505 (this entry probably dates to the first half of the fourteenth century); *Gormanston reg.*, p. 178; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 232.
[28]*A.F.M., s.a.* 1186; Meredith Hanmer, 'The chronicle of Ireland' in James Ware (ed.), *Ancient Irish histories: the works of Spencer, Campion, Hanmer and Marleburrough* (2 vols, Dublin, 1809), ii, 322-3; Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, i, 240; *Wendover*, i, 136; Luard, *Matthew Paris*, ii, 324; Madden, *Matthew Paris*, i, 434, ii, 510, iii, 206; Richard Butler (ed.), *The annals of Ireland by Friar John Clyn* (Dublin, 1849), p. 6; Richard Butler (ed.), *Jacobi Grace, Kilkenniensis, annales Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1842), pp 18-19.
[29]*A.L.C., s.a.* 1185, 1186.

even to his associates ... he now appeared to affect the kingdom of Ireland for himself rather than for the English king: so much so indeed that, as report states, he provided himself with a royal diadem'.[30] It is hardly surprising then that Henry is said to have openly rejoiced on hearing the news of de Lacy's murder.[31]

Walter de Lacy's tenure as lord of Meath (1194-1241)

Hugh's son Walter was to be his heir, but although he was granted the family estates in Normandy by 1189 and lands in Herefordshire by 1191, Meath may have been withheld from him until as late as 1194.[32] It was in that year that Richard I confirmed to Walter the grant made by Henry II to Hugh. Walter was to hold the land under the conditions that had been laid out in the earlier charter, which he possessed along with several other related documents.[33] In June of the following year John, then lord of Ireland, reconfirmed the king's grant.[34] Later in 1195, however, Walter forfeited his lands after he and John de Courcy, with whom he jointly held the office of justiciar, had made attempts to 'conquer the English of Munster and Leinster'.[35] Walter was fined 3,100 marks *pro habenda benevolentia Regis et saisina terre sue* [3 marks was the equivalent of £2].[36] He paid 1,300 marks up front and agreed to clear the rest in annual instalments of £200. This massive fine far outweighed the entire annual revenue from the de Lacy properties in Ireland, England and Normandy combined—for the twelve months before they were returned to him, Walter's lands yielded almost £760 to the Norman exchequer at Caen.[37] The Norman exchequer did not deal in sterling however, and it has been estimated that the Angevin currency was worth only about a quarter of the former—meaning that Walter's lands may have yielded less

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[30] Scott & Martin, *Expugnatio*, pp 190-3; Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, i, 239-40.

[31] *Hovedene*, i, 350, 361; Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, i, 239-40.

[32] J. H. Round (ed.), *Calendar of documents preserved in France, illustrative of the history of Great Britain and Ireland, 918-1206*, p. 217, no. 618; *Gormanston reg.*, pp 6, 177-8; Wood, 'The muniments', pp 312-55, 330, deed xxv; Wightman, *The Lacy family*, pp 16, 201-2, 221. It has been shown however that Walter may have come into his inheritance in Ireland at the same time as in England and Normandy, see Joe Hillaby, 'Colonisation, crisis-management and debt: Walter de Lacy and the lordship of Meath, 1189-1241' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, viii, no. 4 (1992-3), pp 1-48, at pp 7-8.

[33] *Gormanston reg.*, pp 177-8.

[34] *Gormanston reg.*, pp 6-7, 178; Wood, 'The muniments', p. 330, deed xxvi.

[35] *N.H.I.*, ix, 470; *A.F.M., s.a.* 1195; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 90.

[36] *Pipe Roll, 10 Richard I*, 213-14.

[37] Wightman, *The Lacy family*, pp 223-4; *Rot. Normanniae*, ii, lxx.

than £200 annually at the end of the twelfth century. Fortunately for Walter, his debt repayments were cut to 200 marks in 1201 and further reduced to 100 in 1207.[38]

Walter's estates were restored to him in a piecemeal fashion, but the replevin of Meath must have taken place by 3 September 1204, on which day Walter was granted permission to hold annual fairs at Kells, Lochsewdy and Trim.[39] On 23 April 1208 John, by now king, confirmed the grant of Meath to Walter but, significantly, he reserved for himself the four pleas of the crown—rape, arson, forestalling and treasure-trove.[40] Never again was Walter to enjoy the degree of authority he had inherited from his father.

In 1210, despite the best efforts of Walter's diplomatic negotiators and the fact that his fine had been almost completely cleared, the lordship of Meath was seized once more by the royal authorities and was put under the seneschalship of William le Petit, formerly Walter's constable, after the de Lacys had again fallen from favour.[41] With the de Lacys neatly sidelined, John marched into Meath and on 2 July set up camp *apud pratum subtus Trim*, where he and his retinue stayed for two days.[42]

By this time Walter had fled to France, and it is recounted in some sources that he and his brother Hugh worked for some time in the gardens, orchard and latrines of the abbey of St Taurin at Evreux.[43] This was the Benedictine house to which the de Lacys' grandfather, Hugh (d. 1186), had granted all the churches of Fore in

[38]Hillaby, 'Colonisation, crisis-management & debt', pp 24-5.
[39]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 229.
[40]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 382.
[41]*Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 20-1, 44-5; Hillaby, 'Colonisation, crisis-management & debt', pp 14-15. Le Petit also served as justiciar of Ireland at this time, *Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, p. 66.
[42]T. D. Hardy, *A description of the patent rolls in the Tower of London; to which is added an itinerary of King John, with prefatory observations* (London, 1835) [after p. 180, no page numbers given]; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 247-9; G. H. Orpen, 'Athlone Castle: its early history, with notes on some neighbouring castles' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, xxxvii (1907), pp 257-76, at pp 260-1.
[43]*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 311; Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 24-5; Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, ii, 511; Luard, *Matthew Paris*, ii, 530; Madden, *Matthew Paris*, ii, 122; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, pp 121-2; Luard, *Annales Monastici: A.D. 1-1432*, iv (*Annales Prioritatus de Wigornia: A. D. 1-1377*), p. 399.

Meath, including the priory of SS Taurin and Fechin.[44] The abbot at Evreux was so impressed with the work carried out by the de Lacy brothers that he appealed to the king to pardon them. John agreed to this but ordered Walter and Hugh to pay another fine. Whatever about the accuracy of this romantic anecdote, a substantial fine was certainly imposed on the de Lacys, and they had great difficulty in raising the funds to meet it. In July 1213 Walter was replevied of his lands in England, with the exception of Ludlow, on condition that he hand over four hostages (including his young son Gilbert) as a guarantee of his good behaviour.[45] Walter's Irish lands were kept from him however, and the fine was upheld.

By 16 March 1215 the money had still not been paid and the charters relating to Walter's lands and tenements in both England and Ireland were confiscated by the king's officials and deposited in the New Temple, London, to be returned when Walter had cleared the outstanding debt.[46] At the same time the king ordered the archbishop of Dublin, among others, to collect the issues of all Walter's Irish lands 'as he had conferred with the king about making a fine for his lands as well in that country as in England'.[47] A deed agreed between Walter and the king, sealed and dated 5 July 1215, specifies that Walter was to pay 4,000 marks (one quarter of which was to be paid into the Irish exchequer immediately) for the restoration of his Irish lands, and that his son was to remain a hostage until such time as the fine was paid in full.[48] All deeds between Walter and the king were to be deposited with the Knights Hospitallers of London until Walter had settled the fine. The day after this deed was signed, John directed that Walter be replevied of Trim Castle and certain other castles in Meath once he had given security for the fine.[49]

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[44] *Cal. doc. France, 918-1216*, p. 105.
[45] *Rot. litt. claus., 1204-24*, pp 134, 147; *Rot. litt. pat., 1201-16*, pp 99, 112, 113.
[46] *Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 541.
[47] *Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 542.
[48] *Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 596; *Rot. litt. claus., 1204-24*, p. 71b.
[49] *Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 612; *Rot. litt. pat.*, p. 148b; Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*, ii, 373-4; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 225; Wood gives 1220 for the year of this mandate, but it is not clear where this information derives from, Wood, 'The muniments', p. 313. A. J. Otway-Ruthven agrees that the mandate was issued in 1215, see 'The partition of the de Verdun lands in Ireland in 1332' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxvi (Apr. 1968), sect. C, no. 5, pp 401-55, at p. 414.

By the end of July Walter had been received into the king's 'full grace' and the process of restoring his lands recommenced.[50] On 1 August, John wrote from Bridgenorth to the justiciar in Dublin appending a copy of the agreement made with Walter regarding the 4,000-mark fine.[51] John ordered that Walter was to have seisin of his Irish lands—even if he could only manage to find security for a quarter of the fine, as he had already delivered his son Gilbert to the king as a hostage. Once Walter's lands had been returned to him, the justiciar was to notify Walter's knights and free tenants and to ensure that they 'be intentive to him as their lord'. John issued a separate command to the knights and tenants themselves, ordering them to be 'intentive and respondent' to Walter once he had been replevied of his lands.[52]

On 2 August John ordered the justiciar to return to Walter any profits that the latter's lands had yielded since 29 June.[53] Similarly, Walter was to be given back all ships that had been taken into the king's hand.[54] In August 1216 John directed the justiciar that Walter should 'have peace touching his fine with the king for his lands in Ireland'.[55] By this time all of Walter's lands in Meath had been restored to him, with the exception of the town of Drogheda and its castle, which were retained by the crown until at least 1220.[56] Despite having his lands restored to him, Walter was to continue making repayments on his fine. Financial pressures had built to such a degree that in 1219 Walter wrote to Hubert de Burgh, justiciar of England, requesting permission to defer settlement of his account.[57]

Sometime in 1223 or 1224, when a tenant of Walter complained to the king that he had not been treated fairly in Walter's liberty court at Trim, the justiciar once

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[50]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 596, 612, 628, 952-3.
[51]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 632.
[52]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 628, 631.
[53]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 637.
[54]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 638.
[55]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 628, 718; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1216-25*, p. 78; Wood, 'The muniments', p. 313.
[56]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 952.
[57]Shirley, *Royal letters*, i, no. 656, pp 42-3.

again took the lordship into the king's hand.[58] Walter was to act as 'sheriff and keeper of pleas of the crown in his own lands' and to answer to the king in his court of Dublin, but would evidently not receive any of the customary profits of the lordship. It is unclear exactly how and why this arrangement came about, but some details of the case were reiterated at an inquisition before the bishop of Meath in 1267.[59] It was heard how a certain Robert Moloony had murdered Richard Randolph's brother and was called to trial in Walter's court at Trim. Richard appeared in court in armour on the appointed day, but Robert remained in Trim Castle. Walter adjourned the court, but Richard complained to the justiciar, who brought the matter before the king's court at Dublin. The lordship of Meath was seized by the king's ministers. Even when he eventually succeeded in having his franchise restored, however, it was not long until Walter had to make further forfeits.

At Easter 1224, Trim Castle was seized by the king as a result of 'transgressions of his [Walter de Lacy's] men of Meath in harbouring Hugh de Lascy [*sic*] in Ireland, pillaging and burning the king's land, killing and holding his men to ransom'.[60] Henry was to hold the castles of both Trim and Ludlow for two years, during which time Walter was to return to Ireland with the king's men to pursue those who had transgressed against the king. Walter was to be permitted access to Trim Castle during this time, and refuge was also to be provided there for his retinue. Confirmation of this was made at the end of March 1224 when a mandate was issued to the justiciar declaring that 'Walter de Lacy is to have the hall, houses, and chambers in the castle of Trum [*sic*], in which he and his retinue may dwell while he is fighting the enemies of the king and himself'.[61]

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[58]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, no. 1645; Gerard McGrath has calculated that this forfeiture must have taken place in 1223-4, 'The shiring of Ireland and the 1297 parliament' in J. F. Lydon (ed.), *Law and disorder in thirteenth-century Ireland: the Dublin parliament of 1297* (Dublin, 1997), pp 107-24, at p. 114, note 48.

[59]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, no. 810; *Calendar of inquisitions miscellaneous (chancery) preserved in the Public Record Office* [1219-1422] (7 vols, London, 1916-69; reprint, vols i-iii, Nendeln, 1973), i (1219-1307), p. 115, no. 339.

[60]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1180; the text is reproduced in Appendix I of W. W. Shirley (ed.), *Royal and other historical letters illustrative of the reign of Henry III from the originals in the P.R.O.* (2 vols, London, 1862), i, 1216-35, p. 507.

In that year much of Meath was 'wonderfully afflicted and wasted by reason of the private quarrels and civil wars between William Marshal and Hugh de Lacy'.[62] Chroniclers wrote of 'the rage and furie of those garboiles' and of 'the shedding of much blod'. In the summer, Marshal, recently appointed justiciar, landed at Waterford and rode from there to Trim Castle. Finding it occupied by certain 'knights and others not assigned for its custody', Marshal and Walter de Lacy together laid siege to the castle.[63] Other barons from the area came to render their service to Marshal who sent his cousin Sir William le Gros, together with twenty armed knights and twenty armed soldiers, to relieve Carrickfergus Castle, which was being besieged by Walter's brother, Hugh. After a period of seven weeks Trim Castle was surrendered on 11 August.[64] During the siege Marshal spent upwards of £16 a day, exclusive of certain expenses and the pay of foot soldiers, although he had received only £20 throughout the entire siege.[65] During the campaign, letters from the king had been delivered to Marshal at Trim,[66] and when the siege was over Marshal replied with a long report describing how successful it had been.[67]

In May 1225 Walter was fined a further 3,000 marks on account of the role played by tenants of his who had supported Hugh de Lacy against the king.[68] He was to pay the fine in instalments of 500 marks but he would not be replevied of Trim and a number of other castles until the fine was settled in full. Between 1225 and

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[61]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1176; *Rot. litt. claus., 1204-24*, p. 591.

[62]*Rot. litt. claus., 1204-24*, pp 618, 643b; Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*, p. 377; Richard Butler (ed.), *The annals of Ireland by Thady Dowling* (Dublin, 1849), p. 14 [*s.a.* 1227]; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 120.

[63]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 1202, 1203, 1205; Shirley, *Royal letters*, i, no. 833, pp 500-3; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 314; Aquilla Smith (ed.), '*Annales de Monte Fernandi*' (Dublin, 1842), reproduced in *Tracts relating to Ireland* (printed for the Irish Archaeological Society, Dublin, 1843), *s.a.* 1224, p. 12; Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 28-9; Camden, *Britannia*, p. 799; this reference also appears in the Kilkenny Chronicle in the Cotton MS. *Vespasian B. XI*, see Flower, 'Manuscripts of Irish interest', p. 331; Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*, p. 377; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 120; *N.H.I.*, ix, 471.

[64]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, 1203. In a letter to the justiciar of England in 1224, John Marshal stated that the siege of Trim Castle had lasted five weeks, *Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1205.

[65]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 1203-5.

[66]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1202.

[67]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1203.

[68]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 1273, 1289, 1474; *Rot. litt. claus., 1224-7*, pp 39, 67, 125-6, 206.

1226 the custody of Trim Castle was assigned to Marshal, but it was subsequently restored to Walter, despite the fact that the balance of his fine remained unpaid.[69]

In March 1227 the king commanded the justiciar to have Walter settle two outstanding fines—the 3,000 marks of 1225 and the 'residue' of the 4,000-mark fine imposed by John in 1215.[70] Walter was to continue paying instalments of 500 marks on agreed dates until such time as both fines were cleared. If he did not observe these terms, the justiciar was to take Trim Castle back into the king's hand as well as 50 marcates of land belonging to Walter in Ireland.

Once again the king relented however, accepting 400 marks in 1230 and reducing the repayments further to 200 in 1231.[71] Walter seems to have been granted further respite on the half-yearly repayment due at Michaelmas 1231.[72] Trim remained in Walter's hand, despite the fact that in 1234-5 he still owed a total of £2,747 1s 10d.[73] Indeed, this amount was to remain unpaid until 1255 when Richard de Wodeton and Henry de Stratton, seneschals for Meath, settled the remainder of Walter's outstanding fines.[74] Walter, who seems to have spent much of the period from 1230 to 1233 in England,[75] had borrowed considerable sums of money from certain Jewish moneylenders in order to cover his expenditure and repayments of fines. Aaron of York, David of Oxford and, in particular, the Hamo family of Hereford bankrolled Walter through some of the hardest times.[76]

Walter's failing health was an issue from at least 1237,[77] and early in 1241, having become blind and crippled, he died in England.[78] Although Irish annalists

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[69]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1231.

[70]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1575.

[71]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 1575, 1857, 1925.

[72]*Close rolls, 1227-31*, p. 565; R. A. Brown (ed.), *Memoranda rolls, 16-17 Henry III, preserved in the Public Record Office* (London, 1991), no. 22.

[73]*P.R.I. rep D.K. xxxv, app.*, p. 34.

[74]*Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 432.

[75]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 1850, 2079.

[76]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 2079. De Lacy's association with Hamo has been dealt with in some detail by Hillaby, see 'Colonisation, crisis-management & debt', pp 35-42; idem, 'A magnate amongst the Marchers: Hamo of Hereford, his family and clients' in *Jewish Historical Studies*, xxxi (1988-90), pp 23-82.

[77]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 2429; *Close rolls, 1237-42*, p. 11.

[78]*Ann. Clon., s.a.* 1241; Camden, *Britannia*, p. 799; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 315; Luard, *Matthew Paris*, iv, 93, 174; Madden, *Matthew Paris*, ii, 447, 510, iii, 283; Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 30-1; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 123 [the year given for de Lacy's death in *Howth* is 1230, but

described him on his death as the 'bountifullest Englishman for horses, cloaths, mony and goold, that ever came before his tyme into this kingdome',[79] Walter de Lacy died bankrupt beyond repair. His life was dogged by debt, and that indebtedness was also to burden the careers of his inheritors.

In 1238, after the death of his son Gilbert, Walter had named his grandson (also Walter or, more familiarly, Watekin) as his heir,[80] but the latter also pre-deceased him and his granddaughters Matilda and Margaret became his co-heiresses. Both girls seem to have been minors however,[81] and in March 1241 the de Lacy lands and castles in Ireland were granted by the king to Walter de Godarville who had been sent to Ireland by royal authority.[82] Nor were the de Lacy debts overlooked, and on 23 May the king directed a writ of *fieri facias* to the archdeacon of Dublin to attach the 'corn, stock, and other chattels of Walter de Lascy in Ireland in order to discharge his debts due to the king'.[83] In June the king issued a mandate to the justiciar and one each to Walter's executors directing them 'not to permit Walter's chattels to be administered until his debts to the king are paid'.[84]

Matilda de Lacy's tenure as lady of Meath (1244-52)

On 16 June Matilda (who had been in the custody of Geoffrey de Alençon) and Margaret de Lacy were summoned before Henry III in London.[85] Efforts to secure possession for the young ladies' of their inheritance appear to have been further thwarted by their grandfather's outstanding debts. The king ordered both the justiciary and the executors of Walter's will 'not to permit any execution to be made of the goods late of the said Walter before satisfaction has been made to the king of the debts of the said Walter'. Such satisfaction must have been made by June 1244 for in that month the de Lacy lands and castles in Ireland, with the

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this may be a confusion with Walter's son Gilbert who possibly died in that year, see *Close rolls, 1227-31*, pp 464-5].

[79]*Ann. Clon., s.a.* 1241.

[80]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 2451.

[81]P.R.O., E 163/1/10.

[82]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 2429, 2451, 2507, 2508; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1232-47*, p. 246.

[83]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 2511, 2582.

[84]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 2519.

[85]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 2519; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1232-47*, p. 263.

exception of Trim Castle, reverted to Matilda and Margaret.[86] The lands were to be held, without partition, until further orders. Matilda was married to Peter de Geneve and Margaret to John de Verdun (see FIG. 2.5, fold-out genealogy).[87]

The purparty allocated to the de Verduns consisted primarily of most of the western half of the de Lacy lordship of Meath, and was centred at the manor of Lochseudy. The de Verduns also held two substantial tracts of land in the eastern part of Meath, centred at Kells and Duleek respectively (see FIG. 2.4). The rest of the lands of Meath, comprising the balance of the eastern half of the lordship, centred at Trim, and a number of enclaves in the west, was to be held by Matilda and Peter. Trim Castle was to remain in the king's hand, and in the custody of Walter de Godarville who was to receive an annual fee of 40 marks [or 40 marcates of land] from Peter and Matilda for as long as the castle was in his custody.[88] On 25 March 1246 a mandate was issued to de Godarville ordering him to deliver Trim Castle to John FitzGeoffrey, justiciar of Ireland, whom the king had appointed its custodian.[89] A mandate issued to the justiciar of Ireland on 26 March 1249 indicates that a certain William Badleu had recently held the custody of Trim Castle on behalf of Peter de Geneve.[90]

The restoration of Meath to the de Lacies had been a rare opportunity for the king's ministers, and they seized it in full. They ensured that the great lordship was carefully dissected so that it could no longer present any threat to the crown, while the most important fortification remained in royal hands. In addition, the lands were to be held on the same restricted terms as Walter de Lacy had held them on his death—the four pleas of the crown were reserved to the king.

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[86]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 2662, 2699; *Close rolls, 1242-47*, pp 186, 203; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1232-47*, p. 429; According to Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*, pp 387-8, 'Gualter Lacy, Lord of Meath', died in 1233 'leaving behind him two daughters'—this is a confused entry, and presumably refers to Walter's son, Gilbert, who was never lord of Meath.
[87]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1232-47*, p. 429; Luard, Matthew Paris, v, 91; Madden, *Matthew Paris*, iii, 66; Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 30-1.
[88]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 2662, 2699; *Close rolls, 1242-47*, pp 23, 186.
[89]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 2817; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1232-47*, p. 476.
[90]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 2984.
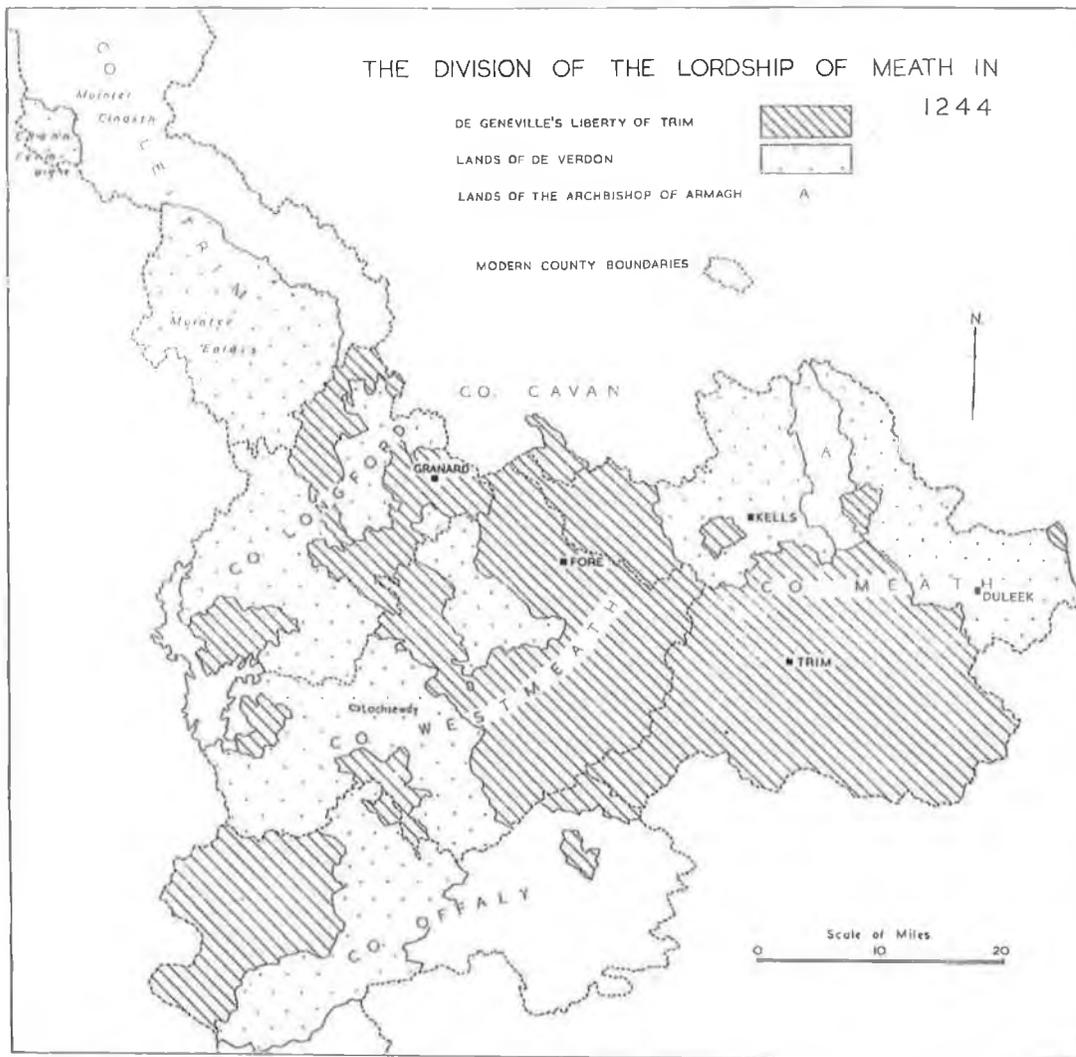
FIG. 2.4 The division of the lordship of Meath in 1244. Source: Otway-Ruthven, 'The partition of the de Verdun lands', plate lxiii.

Geoffrey de Geneville's tenure as lord of Trim (1252-1308)

Peter de Geneve died in 1249 and by 1252 Matilda had married Geoffrey de Geneville, a French nobleman in the service of the king.[91] Geoffrey, a younger brother of Sire Jean de Joinville, friend to and biographer of Louis IX of France, was lord of Vaucouleurs in Champagne and a companion of Henry III.[92] In

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[91]*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 315; Luard, *Matthew Paris*, v, 90-1; Madden, *Matthew Paris*, iii, 66.

[92]For further biographical details on Geoffrey de Geneville, see Romuald Dodd, 'Geoffrey de Joinville - Lord of Trim' in *The Watchman*, v, 10 (Autumn 1939), pp 3-7; G. W. Watson, 'The families of Lacy, Joinville, Geneva and La Marche' in *The Genealogist: a quarterly magazine of genealogical, antiquarian, topographical, and heraldic research*, xxi, part I (July 1904), pp 1-16, 73-82, 163-72, 234-43; H. F. Delaborde, *Jean de Joinville et les seigneurs de Joinvilles* (Paris, 1894); Michael Altschul, *A baronial family in medieval England: the Clares, 1217-1314* (Baltimore, Maryland, 1965), pp 191-2. In 1292 de Geneville is described as 'the king's [Edward I] beloved and faithful Geoffrey de Joinville', see G. O. Sayles (ed.), *Select cases in the court of the King's Bench under Edward I* (London 1972), ii, no. 52, pp 125-35.

August 1252 Henry issued a grant to Geoffrey and Matilda by which the liberties and free customs enjoyed by Walter de Lacy were restored.[93] An inquisition was held regarding custody of the lands of Meath, and in July 1253 a new mandate was issued to John FitzGeoffrey to allow the de Genevilles to enjoy the same liberties in Meath as had been enjoyed by Walter.[94] That these liberties were still restricted, however, is clear from a further grant the following year by which Geoffrey and Matilda were permitted to issue their own writs within the liberty, which Walter had not been licensed to do.[95] Now, for the first time since 1224, the entire range of rights and privileges granted to Hugh de Lacy in 1172 were to be enjoyed in Meath. The power to issue writs was a key privilege for the lord of a liberty—effectively, it enabled him to try cases against himself, within his own liberty; more importantly, as was later to become apparent, it meant that an assize of *novel disseisin*, in a case arising within a liberty, had to be taken in the liberty itself. In February 1254 a mandate was issued to the justiciary of Ireland requiring that they return to the de Genevilles all of the king's writs that concerned the liberty of Trim in the period during which it was in the king's hand and that were attached in the king's court at Dublin at that time.[96]

Although initially Trim Castle was kept from the de Genevilles, the town continued to function as the *caput* of the de Geneville lands in Meath. In 1254 Henry III ordered the justiciar to restore Trim Castle, and the moiety of 40 marcates of land that the king had retained for the custody of the castle, to Geoffrey as the right and inheritance of his wife.[97] One condition of this restoration was that Geoffrey and Matilda were to 'surrender the castle to the king when he wills'. The grant was renewed three years later, and again in 1261.[98] The 1254 grant had been made at Bordeaux under the king's small seal, but when

[93]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 330, deed xxviii; *Gormanston reg.*, pp 7, 178; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, nos 69, 78; *Close rolls, 1251-3*, pp 363, 396; *Cal. chart. rolls, 1226-57*, p. 401.
[94]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, nos 195, 256.
[95]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, no. 398; and confirmed in 1257, *Cal. pat. rolls, 1232-47*, p. 544.
[96]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, no. 332.
[97]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, nos 391, 402; *Close rolls, 1253-4*, p. 28; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1247-58*, pp 325, 335, 544; Wood, 'The muniments', p. 328, deed i.
[98]*Gormanston reg.*, pp 7, 179; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, no. 398; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1232-47*, p. 544; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1266-72*, p. 109.

confirmation of it was made at Shrewsbury in 1267, it was approved with the great seal.[99]

It was at about this time that complaints were made by the abbot and convent of Mellifont against de Geneville.[100] It was alleged that Geoffrey's bailiffs extorted fees from the convent and their tenants, which were, in fact, due to the king. In doing so, it was said, these bailiffs were perpetuating 'the bad practices of Walter de Lacy and his brothers, who for their own benefit pillaged the monastery of its goods and granges. No prince or prelate could check their violence'. Bailiffs of the liberty of Trim had earlier been accused of unlawfully taking beasts belonging to the abbot of Mellifont.[101] The lords of Meath and Trim had extensive rights to prises—Walter de Lacy had been accustomed to taking not only corn, but also 'great horses, palfreys, and other horses, oxen and cows', for which he would apparently pay the appropriate price.[102] It seems that the run-in with Mellifont occurred when the Trim bailiffs overextended their 'rights' once too often.

Despite de Geneville's royal favour and his undoubted loyalty to the crown, over the next fifty years he had to devote a considerable amount of time and resources to defending the liberty of Trim against the king's ministers. Although the first few years of the de Geneville lordship witnessed a period of calm and expansion, the richness and importance of the area, its proximity to Dublin, and what, to royal officials at least, seemed like unnecessary privileges, soon combined to involve its lord and lady in a lengthy series of disputes with the Dublin authorities. Already in the 1250s there is evidence of friction between de Geneville and the administration at Dublin.[103] The only period at which Trim seemed secure from the king's ministers was from August 1273, when de Geneville was appointed to the office of justiciar, with extensive powers.[104] The appointment was relatively

[99]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1266-72*, p. 109; Wood, 'The muniments', p. 328, deed ii.
[100]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, nos 634-5; Shirley, *Royal letters*, ii, no. 817, pp 135-6.
[101]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, no. 336.
[102]*Gormanston reg.*, pp 13-14.
[103]Shirley, *Royal letters*, ii, no. 817, pp 135-6.
[104]Camden, *Britannia*, p. 800; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 317, 318; Smith, 'Annales de Monte Fernandi', ii, *s.a.* 1273; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 170; Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 36-7; *N.H.I.*, ix, 471; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, pp 198-202; J. T. Gilbert, *History of the Viceroys of Ireland; with*

short-lived however, as de Geneville was, by his own request, replaced in June 1276.

A very full statement of the liberties accorded by the lords of Meath to their 'magnates' is found in a general charter, issued by de Geneville in *c.* 1266, which is preserved in no fewer than three chartularies.[105] Such a full statement is unique in Ireland and sheds useful light on the legal arrangements made between the first two de Lacy lords of Meath and their magnates. Hand has carefully gone through the various versions of the charter and has identified the main points contained therein.[106] Essentially, the charter outlines procedures for pleas, inquisitions, compensation, detention of criminals and confiscation of chattels, as well as defining areas of jurisdiction and the functions of a sheriff in such matters.

In 1279 Geoffrey was moved to petition the king concerning grievances he had with the king's justices and ministers in Ireland.[107] Geoffrey complained that, despite the fact that his franchise was outside the county of Dublin, the chancellor had written to the sheriff concerning 'many matters' when he ought to have written to either Geoffrey or his seneschal. Geoffrey was also angered that his steward had been told that he should 'cause many men of his franchise to be put under surety and others to be attached by their bodies to come to answer at Dublin'. Geoffrey had been told that an inquisition had found that 'he and his men received the king's felons and burners of the king's land and outlaws'. King Edward was anxious to be informed about the titles Geoffrey had to liberties in Ireland and so, at the end of December, he requested that transcripts of the appropriate rolls held in the exchequer at Dublin be sent to him.[108]

notices of the Castle of Dublin and its chief occupants in former times (Dublin, 1865), p. 108; Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland*, pp 125-6. His accounts as justiciar are given in *P.R.I. rep. D.K. xxxvi*, 40, 41; Geoffrey de Geneville also served as justiciar for a time in 1264, see A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The chief governors of medieval Ireland' in H. B. Clarke (ed.), *Medieval Dublin: the living city* (Dublin, 1990), pp 172-81, at p. 173; *N.H.I.*, ix, 471.

[105]*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, i, 275-7; *Reg. Tristernagh*, pp 52-4; *Gormanston reg.* pp 5-6, 176-7; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 400.

[106]G. J. Hand, *English Law in Ireland, 1290-1324* (Cambridge, 1967), pp 133-4.

[107]*Cal. close rolls, 1272-9*, p. 548.

[108]Wood, 'The muniments', pp 330, 337, deed xxiii.

In 1281 an inquisition was held into the de Geneville claims in Meath. It found that the de Geneville liberty was *extra fines cuiuslibet comitatus* and that all writs for execution should be directed to Geoffrey and Matilda or their seneschal, and not to the king's sheriff.[109] Geoffrey argued that the delivery of writs directly to him as lord of Trim enabled the king's business to be conducted more efficiently. The extent of Geoffrey's power can be ascertained from the findings of the king's court at Salisbury in 1289.[110] It recognised that he had the right to exercise royal power by his seal and to have his own seneschal and sheriff. His court had greater jurisdiction than a county court, being allowed to plead all pleas, including the four pleas of the crown. At this time, Trim possessed a jurisdiction wider than that of any other Irish liberty—it was the only one in which the pleas of the crown were not reserved to the jurisdiction of the king.[111] Trim was also profitable—the de Genevilles owed the crown between 25 and 28 knights' fees for the liberty, but they were paid a total of 59½ fees by their tenants.[112]

Geoffrey had to defend his liberty not only from the royal authorities, but also from Gaelic incursions that threatened from all sides. In order to ensure that his tenants were armed appropriately, he issued an order by which property holders of varying status were directed to be equipped with specified weapons and armour.[113] Depending on the size of their holdings, tenants were to be furnished with a horse, a habergeon, a headpiece, a lance, and/or a bow and quiver of arrows. Farmers were to be armed according to the quantity of their goods, and merchants according to their merchandise. Geoffrey also claimed to the government that he could legitimately conclude 'private' truces with the Irish who disputed the king's authority, so long as the justiciar of Ireland was not actually campaigning against the leaders in question.[114] Such an arrangement was not entirely unusual at that time—the lords of March claimed and exercised a similar right in Wales. In October 1281, for instance, Roger Mortimer, lord of Wigmore,

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[109]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, no. 1666; Hand, *Eng. law in Ire.*, p. 124.
[110]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92*, no. 525.
[111]Hand, *Eng. law in Ire.*, pp 11, 113, 124.
[112]*Gormanston reg.*, pp 10-13; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'Knight service in Ireland' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, lxxxix (1959), pp 1-15.
[113]*Gormanston reg.*, pp 10, 182.
[114]*Gormanston reg.*, pp 181-2.

settled a treaty of 'peace and concord' (*fedus pacis et insolubilis concordie*) with the prince of Wales, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd.[115] Interestingly, in 1267 Geoffrey had also had power to treat of peace with Llywelyn.[116]

Despite Geoffrey's extensive powers—and perhaps because of these powers—in 1289, the Dublin bench ruled that the liberty of Trim was to be taken into the king's hand. The king and his council, however, declared that this ruling was erroneous and, detailing the reasons, they overturned the decision.[117] In April of the following year there was a further vindication of the rights claimed by the de Genevilles. Edward I confirmed that men of the liberty of Trim must not be called upon to answer outside their liberty, except for pleas touching the king (*breve quod homines de Trim non cogantur placitare extra libertatem suam*).[118] Similar rulings are known from a number of other towns in the thirteenth century.[119]

In addition to Geoffrey's ongoing court-cases with the crown authorities, he was involved in a number of legal confrontations with the abbot of St Thomas, Dublin, regarding certain advowsons of churches within the liberty of Trim.[120]

In 1286 a certain Nicholas Bacon, son of William Bacon,[121] appeared in court in Trim and after subsequent appearances (and non-appearances) in court in Dublin over the following three years, was sent to prison.[122] In June 1293 Bacon was still in prison in Trim and the justiciar ordered Geoffrey to inquire into the actions of

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[115]R. R. Davies, *Lordship and society in the March of Wales, 1282-1400* (Oxford, 1978), pp 219-20; J. G. Edwards (ed.), *Littere Wallie: preserved in Liber A in the Public Record Office* (Cardiff, 1940), pp xxxix, 99-100.

[116]*Cal. pat rolls, 1266-72*, pp 105, 108, 111.

[117]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92*, no. 525.

[118]*Chartae, privilegia et immunitates*, p. 36.

[119]Adolphus Ballard and James Tait (ed.), *British Borough Charters 1216-1307* (Cambridge, 1923), pp 148-55; Hand, *Eng. law in Ire.*, p. 134, note 7.

[120]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92*, nos 452, 526, 599, 1075; *Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303*, p. 104; G. J. Hand, 'Two hitherto unpublished membranes of Irish petitions, presented at the midsummer parliament of 1302 and the Lent parliament of 1305' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxxi (1971), sect. C, no. 1, pp 1-18, at pp 8-9.

[121]The Bacon family were for a time hereditary chief sergeants of Meath: Nicholas (1314-15); John (1343); Nicholas (1353); Thomas (c.1425); Thomas Bermyngham (Thomas Bacon's grandson); Patrick Bermyngham (Thomas Bermyngham's grandson) all held the office, see *Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 192-5; *P.R.I. rep D.K. xxxix, app.*, p. 57; *Cal. close rolls, 1343-8*, p. 286; *Cal. chart. rolls, 1349-54*, p. 569; Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, pp 354-5, no JI 55.

his seneschal in the matter; Geoffrey did so, and upheld the decision of his seneschal.[123] When requested by the king to release Bacon, Geoffrey refused. A further writ ordered the parties before the justiciar and council at Dublin, and the liberty of Trim was taken back into the king's hand due to Geoffrey's 'contempt in refusing to execute the king's mandates'.[124] Early in 1294 Geoffrey addressed a long petition to the king, complaining that the treasurer and barons of the Dublin exchequer had violated his franchise of Trim.[125] The petition included a recital of a writ of 1284 ordering the justiciar to respect the findings of the inquisition of 1281, and a request that the record of the Bacon case should be brought *coram rege* at the next parliament. The king referred this petition to the justiciar of Ireland, commanding that certain documents and records be sent to the king so that he might have them before him at a parliament that was to be held later that year.[126] In June 1294 Geoffrey went to England and ultimately managed to have his liberty replevied.[127] Edward I issued an order to the justiciar of Ireland and the treasurer of the exchequer of Dublin to restore to Geoffrey his liberty of Trim, which the king had 'caused to be taken into his hand for certain causes'.[128] Geoffrey was pardoned for disobeying the royal mandates and his lands were fully restored in May 1295. He had been on the king's service in Wales in December 1294, and it was on account of this service that the restoration was made.[129]

New difficulties arose for the de Genevilles in January 1297. The justiciar ordered the seneschal of Meath, Simon de Geneville (Geoffrey's son), to have a jury before him to answer questions relating to the rights of the crown, but Simon did not obey.[130] In July 1297 Geoffrey secured writs from the king to the justiciar and the chancellor of Ireland reminding them to respect the procedure set out in the

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[122]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92*, nos 265, 342, 386, 457, 476, 821.
[123]Hand, *Eng. law in Ire.*, p. 125.
[124]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1292-1301*, p. 135; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1293-1301*, no. 208, *1302-7*, no. 146.
[125]Sayles, *Documents on the affairs of Ireland*, pp 37-9, no. 51, from Ancient Petition, no. 2389; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1293-1301*, no. 125.
[126]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1293-1301*, no. 125.
[127]*Cal. close rolls, 1288-96*, p. 352, *Cal. pat. rolls, 1292-1301*, p. 135.
[128]*Cal. close rolls, 1288-96*, p. 852; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1293-1301*, no. 149.
[129]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1293-1301*, nos 187, 211; *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 2, no. 18; *Cal. close rolls, 1288-96*, p. 352; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1292-1301*, p. 135; Wood, 'The muniments', p. 329, deed xvii.
[130]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303*, p. 79.

inquisition of 1281.[131] It was found that the king's ministers in Dublin had been behaving erratically in this regard, sending writs to Geoffrey sometimes directly, sometimes via the sheriff of Dublin. Later in 1297, while he was abroad with the king, acting as his marshal, Geoffrey complained of an infringement of his franchise in Ireland. King Edward wrote to his son and his council in support of Geoffrey's complaint.[132] Despite the fact that the king had ordered John Wogan, justiciar of Ireland, to grant to Geoffrey respite for all debts due to the exchequer while the latter was in the king's service abroad, Geoffrey complained about Wogan to John Langton, the chancellor of England, and Roger Brabazon, the chief justice of the English king's bench.[133] The king ordered Langton to render to Geoffrey as much justice and favour as if the king himself were present.

In 1299 Walter Troman, seneschal of Trim, again refused to obey a writ to have a jury before the justiciar, on the grounds that no certain place was named in it and that the liberty ought to return writs only to Dublin.[134] When, in May, Troman was questioned in court about his refusal to obey the writ, he replied that he was no longer seneschal of Trim and that any questions on the matter ought to be directed to the new incumbent of that office, Richard Taffe. Taffe, also present in court, stated that he had been appointed only eight days previously and that he had not yet taken oath or carried out any duties as seneschal. Repeatedly, decisions at court were made and overturned on legal technicalities and sometimes obscure loopholes. In October 1299 Robert de Dalinghowe, another Trim bailiff, again made a challenge on behalf of Geoffrey that no one of his liberty ought to come before the court elsewhere than at Dublin.[135]

Geoffrey de Geneville spent much of the period from 1297 to 1300 on the king's business in France and Rome.[136] At every opportunity, especially when Geoffrey

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[131]*Cal. close rolls, 1296-1302*, pp 49-50; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92*, no. 1186.

[132]Sayles, *Documents on the affairs of Ireland*, p. 47, no. 58.

[133]*Cal. close rolls, 1296-1302*, pp 109, 116; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92*, no. 1186; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1293-1301*, no. 447.

[134]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303*, p. 242.

[135]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303*, p. 293.

[136]G. P. Cuttino (ed.), *Gascon Register A (Series of 1318-19)* (London 1975), nos 311, 314, 315, 318, 322, 324; *Cal. close rolls, 1296-1302*, pp 109, 116, 256, 393.

was out of the country, the king's ministers in Ireland made attempts to seize the liberty of Trim.[137] On one occasion in 1300, when Geoffrey's services were required by the king in England, the seneschal of Trim replied to a writ from Dublin only out of 'respect to the King' and 'saving the state of the liberty of Trim and the profit of Geoffrey de Geneville'.[138] The questions over the administration of Trim around the turn of the fourteenth century may explain why the office of seneschal changed hands on no fewer than eight occasions in the six years from 1297 to 1303 (see CHAPTER THREE).

On another occasion in 1299 Geoffrey complained to the king that, after a ruling had been made on a case in the court of Trim, John Wogan, the justiciar, brought the case before him at Dublin and annulled the Trim judgement.[139] The king ordered Wogan to send the records of the pleas in both Trim and Dublin to England where they would be scrutinised.

The county of Meath was created in 1297.[140] It was to include 'as well the liberty of Trim as the land of Theobald de Verdun, and all the lands of the crosses being within the precinct of Meath, and that there be henceforth a sheriff there, and that he hold his county court at Kells on each Thursday after the county court of Dublin, and he shall make executions in the aforesaid liberty of Trim when default is found'. The crosslands (i.e., lands held of the crown by the prelates, monasteries and churches) within the liberty of Trim were regarded as part of the county, not of the liberty. It is not entirely clear what effect the reorganisation of Meath had on the status of the liberty of Trim, although there was to be a series of confrontations between the seneschal of Trim and the sheriff of Meath in the following years. It seems that the liberty of Trim had less independence than previously and that despite greater responsibility being given to its officials, county authority intervened more often and more effectively—this, of course,

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[137]Hand even goes so far as to suggest an element of personal feud between Geoffrey de Geneville and Richard de Barford, treasurer, see *Eng. law in Ire.*, p. 130.

[138]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303*, p. 308.

[139]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303*, p. 289.

[140]*Stat. Ire., John-Hen. V*, pp 198-9; Lawlor, 'Calendar of the Liber Niger & Liber Albus', pp 43-4; Philomena Connolly, 'The enactments of the 1297 parliament' in Lydon, *Law & disorder*, pp 139-61, at pp 150-1.

suited Dublin. The fact that Meath usually shared a sheriff with Dublin served to complicate matters further.[141]

In 1301 Geoffrey again complained that the Dublin authorities had breached his franchise, and that the treasurer had erroneously amerced Geoffrey's seneschals on several occasions.[142] In April of that year writs were issued, once again referring to the findings of the inquisition of 1281, ordering the justiciar to allow Geoffrey the full enjoyment of his liberty.[143] The justiciar and chancellor were told of the king's will 'that Geoffrey and Maud [Matilda] shall not be unduly aggrieved in the premises contrary to the tenor of the king's grant [..], but wishing to treat them most favourably in consideration of the good service that has been long and gratefully rendered to him by Geoffrey'.[144] These writs seem to have relieved the liberty from pressure by the justiciar and the chancellor, but it was soon attacked on two new fronts—by the Dublin bench and the exchequer.

Despite being forbidden in 1301 from interfering with the liberty of Trim, the justices of the bench proceeded to hear an assize of *novel disseisin* that had been brought against the de Genevilles.[145] In Hilary term 1301 Geoffrey and his seneschal were called to defend the actions of their seneschal in obstructing the sheriff and the barons of the exchequer in their attempts to have certain persons of the liberty of Trim brought before their court in relation to some fraudulent activities.[146] Again Geoffrey referred the exchequer to the inquisition of 1281, insisting that Trim was outside the jurisdiction of the Dublin authorities. While Geoffrey and his seneschal were in conference outside the court, an adjournment was made until the day after Ash Wednesday 1302. When that day came Geoffrey

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[141]A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'Anglo-Irish shire government in the thirteenth century' in *I.H.S.*, v, no. 17 (Mar. 1946), pp 1-28, at pp 5-6.

[142]Sayles, *Documents on the affairs of Ireland*, pp 54-5, no. 65, from Ancient Petition, no. 5644.

[143]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1293-1301*, no. 798; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1292-1301*, p. 589; *Cal. close rolls, 1296-1302*, pp 443-4.

[144]As though to illustrate the service rendered by de Geneville, on the same day the king ordered the exchequer at Dublin to write off £124 of the money owed to them by de Geneville in lieu of expenses due to him for a trip he made to the court at Rome on the king's behalf, see *Cal. close rolls, 1296-1302*, p. 444.

[145]Nat. Archives, RC 7/7, pp 486-8.

[146]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1302-7*, no. 170; Hand, *Eng. law in Ire.*, p. 127, referring to P.R.O., KB 27/171/67-67d (*Cal. doc. Ire., 1302-7*, no. 170, is, according to Hand, 'hopelessly inadequate').

was represented in court by his seneschal, his attorney general and his wife. The attorney refused to answer further without the original writ, but a judgement was given nonetheless. The liberty was to be forfeited. Geoffrey and Matilda were amerced, and their seneschal was sent to prison.[147]

Geoffrey was furious. After Easter, John Wogan, the justiciar, came to the exchequer and, in the presence of the treasurer and the barons, the case was recited before him. Anselm Coterel, seneschal of Trim, 'propounded certain charters of kings of England' and Geoffrey submitted a lengthy petition (in French), meticulously and forcefully setting out the wrongs and grievances that he had endured.[148] Geoffrey vigorously attacked the conduct of the exchequer in a masterpiece of prose. He claimed that the Dublin exchequer had tried to proceed as if by *quo warranto* against him, though liberties such as his were 'without the bounds of any county' and were consequently exempt from such procedures.[149] Those assembled also heard that 'no servant, sheriff or minister of the king ought to meddle with any office within the liberty [of Trim]', but the treasurer and barons claimed that the 'liberties propounded are in lesion of the crown and of the king's dignity'. In addition, the lord of Trim alleged that the day after Ash Wednesday, on which day the adjourned court-case had been heard, was out of term (*extra terminum placitandi*) and that his attorney had pointed that out at the time. On reviewing the evidence, the king's council determined that 'the whole process of caption of the liberty into the king's hand arose from a personal trespass inflicted upon the seneschal'. Accordingly, a mandate was issued to restore Trim to the de Genevilles.[150] In November 1302 the liberty, already replevied by the treasurer and the barons until Michaelmas of that year, was to be further replevied until Pentecost 1303.[151]

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[147]Hand, *Eng. law in Ire.*, p. 127.

[148]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1302-7*, no. 170; Hand, *Eng. law in Ire.*, pp 128-9, referring to P.R.O., SC 8/48/2389.

[149]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1302-7*, no. 170.

[150]Hand, *Eng. law in Ire.*, p. 129, referring to P.R.O., KB 27/171/67d.

[151]*Cal. close rolls, 1296-1302*, p. 564; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1302-7*, no. 146.

Matilda died sometime between 1302 and 1304 and the liberty of Trim passed to her husband Geoffrey for his lifetime.[152] In May 1305 Geoffrey again petitioned the king concerning allowances due to him and injuries done to him and his seneschals by the treasurer and justices.[153] Later in the same year Nicholas Passelewe, sergeant, came to the exchequer at Trim with a sheriff's warrant looking for pledges from the seneschal of the liberty of Trim, Walter Troman.[154] Refusing to co-operate, Troman argued that Passelewe had no jurisdiction in Trim, which was outside the county of Meath, and that the seneschal of Trim answered solely to the sheriff of Dublin, in person. The justiciar upheld Troman's contention. In 1306, in response to an incident in which the sheriff of Dublin had entered the liberty and made summonses, Geoffrey once again insisted that all writs concerning the liberty of Trim ought to be directed to him personally or to his seneschal.[155] In the same year Geoffrey complained that annual fees due to him for certain lands in Meath (including the castle and town of Drogheda on the side of Meath) had not been paid for more than thirty years, and that these moneys should be offset against debts owed by him to the exchequer in Dublin.[156] The king agreed and ordered the exchequer to adjust the accounts accordingly.[157]

Geoffrey de Geneville was by this time an elderly man and much of the administration of the liberty of Trim must have been left to officers such as Anselm Coterel, Richard Taffe, Walter Troman (all seneschals), Roger le Colount (chancellor), John de Fraunceys (treasurer), Simon Croimhall (clerk), and Thomas Chaumbiroun (sheriff).[158] On Christmas Eve 1307, the king gave licence to Geoffrey to hand over all his lands in Ireland to his newly wed granddaughter, Joan, and her husband, Roger Mortimer.[159] At the end of September 1308, having

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[152]T.C.D. MS 583, ff 10ᵛ-11ʳ; Camden, *Britannia*, p. 805; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 330, 332; Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 46-7, 48-9; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 126; Wood, 'The muniments', p. 317; Watson, 'The families of Lacy, Joinville, Geneva and La Marche', p. 5.

[153]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire.,1305-7*, pp 72-3; *Cal. close rolls, 1302-7*, pp 416, 477; Hand, 'Irish petitions', p. 14; Hand, *Eng. law in Ire.*, pp 129-30; Harris, *Hibernica* (2ⁿᵈ ed., Dublin, 1770), pt 2, pp 149-50.

[154]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire.,1305-7*, pp 132-3.

[155]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire.,1305-7*, p. 241.

[156]*Cal. close rolls, 1302-7*, p. 416.

[157]*Cal. close rolls, 1302-7*, p. 477; *Cal. justic. rolls, 1305-7*, p. 73.

[158]*Gormanston reg.*, p. 169; *Cal. justic. rolls Ire.,1305-7*, p. 218.

[159]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 328, deed vii; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1307-13*, p. 33.

given possession of his properties to the Mortimers, Geoffrey retired to spend the rest of his days at the Dominican Friary he had founded at Trim.[160] Geoffrey de Geneville died in the autumn of 1314 and was buried in the Dominican Friary at Trim.[161]

Roger Mortimer's tenure as lord of Trim (1308-30)

Of Norman descent, Roger Mortimer was heir to Wigmore and other estates in the Welsh marches and was later to become the first earl of March. In December 1307 the justiciar at Dublin was ordered to deliver to Mortimer the lands of his inheritance in Ireland.[162] The following April, Mortimer was given a seven year grant to impose pavage and murage tax on goods being brought into Trim for sale.[163] Mortimer seems either to have forfeited some of his rights or not to have been granted them in 1307 for, on 20 July 1309 a mandate was issued to the justiciar of Ireland ordering him to restore to Mortimer the liberties that his predecessors had enjoyed in Trim.[164]

Unlike de Geneville, the first difficulties Mortimer encountered in the liberty of Trim were not created by the king's ministers. In 1309 men from Carbury invaded 'parts of Trym, committing manslaughter, destroying by fires and [causing] other damages'.[165] Edward II ordered the justiciar and chancellor of Ireland to investigate the incidents and, if appropriate, to issue pardons to Mortimer's men, who had killed several of the invaders and had burnt some houses while 'repelling and pursuing malefactors'.

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[160]T.C.D. MS 583, fol. 13ʳ; Luard, *Annales Monastici*, iv (*Annales Prioritatus de Wigornia*), p. 560; Camden, *Britannia*, p. 807; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 281, 293, 337-8; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 170; Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 54-5; Henry Marleburrough, 'The chronicle of Ireland' in Ware (ed.), *Ancient Irish histories: the works of Spencer, Campion, Hanmer and Marleburrough* (2 vols, Dublin, 1809), ii, 4, gives the year that 'Lord Jeffery Genvill became a Fryer at Trym, of the order of the preachers' as 1309.
[161]T.C.D. MS 583, fol. 15ʳ; Camden, *Britannia*, p. 810; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 343-4; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 131.
[162]*Cal. close rolls, 1307-13*, p. 15.
[163]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1307-13*, p. 70.
[164]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 16b, no. 50.
[165]*Cal. close rolls, 1307-13*, p. 188.

In 1313 the abbot of St Thomas, Dublin, once again raised the question of the cross-lands.[166] On 13 May the king sent a writ to John Wogan, justiciar of Ireland, ordering him to enquire whether the advowsons of churches within the liberty of Trim were held by the lords of Trim or the abbots of the abbey of St Thomas, Dublin. Mortimer claimed that trespassers within the lands of the churches in his liberty should answer to his seneschal and bailiffs, and to no one else, and it was found that this had been the case since the time of the de Lacys. The justiciar adjudged the evidence inconclusive (despite the fact that an inspeximus of Henry III's grant to de Geneville had been made) and nothing was done on that occasion.[167]

Mortimer appears to have forfeited his lands 'by reason of his tenants' rebellion during the Scotch war'.[168] These tenants were the de Lacys, descendants of a brother of Hugh and Walter, who had been accused of inviting Edward Bruce to Ireland and later withdrawing from the battle and acting as the Scots' guides in Meath and Offaly, but were later acquitted of these charges.[169] Sometime before Christmas 1315 Bruce and his men had marched into Meath and came up against Mortimer at Kells.[170] Mortimer seems to have fled, but Bruce spent Christmas at the de Verdun manor of Lochsewdy as Mortimer's retainer, Walter Cusack, was resident in Trim Castle.[171] Bruce also spent some time in Trim towards the end of 1316, and again in about May of the following year.[172] In the month after Easter, Bruce came to within four miles of Trim, and 'there encamped in a certain wood, and staid seven days to refresh his men, who had nearly perished of hunger and fatigue, and many were left there dead'.[173] The presence of Bruce's army in the

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[166]Nat. Archives, EX 2/3, m. 22d (memoranda rolls 3 Edw. II; part ii).

[167]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 328, deed iii.

[168]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 329, deed xviii.

[169]*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 407-9; Nat. Archives, KB 2/8, pp 44-7 (justiciary rolls).

[170]Colm McNamee, *The wars of the Bruces: Scotland, England and Ireland, 1306-1328* (East Lothian, Scotland, 1997), p. 177; May McKisack, *The fourteenth century, 1307-1399* (Oxford, 1959, reprinted 1963), p. 43.

[171]*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 348; Camden, *Britannia*, p. 811.

[172]*Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 140; Brendan Smith. *Colonisation and conquest in medieval Ireland: the English in Louth, 1170-1330* (Cambridge, 1999); Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, pp 228, 231; Olive Armstrong, *Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland* (London, 1923), p. 127.

[173]*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 302; Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 86-7.

district may have been a factor in the provision of the interim murage grant that was made to the town of Trim at about this time.[174]

Roger Mortimer was appointed king's lieutenant in Ireland in November 1316, and he took up office the following April.[175] It is likely that this appointment played no small part in helping Mortimer secure a grant in September 1317 by which all lands within the liberty of Trim, for whatever reason forfeited, were restored to him[176] (some of the lands had already been restored the day he was appointed lieutenant).[177] These grants enabled Mortimer to issue new charters granting portions of land within the liberty of Trim, formerly held by tenants now disgraced, to new tenants. For example, in May 1318 the chancery at Trim issued a charter to Isolde Hacket granting to her, for life, one messuage and two carucates of land at Athcor [Athcarne?].[178]

Mortimer had been acquitted of any role in the Bruce affair, but those who had colluded with Bruce were sought out and severely punished. After Easter in 1318, John de Lacy was brought for trial to Trim Castle, where he was sentenced to be 'strait dieted' (death by starvation), 'and so he died in prison'.[179] At Whitsuntide in 1317 Roger Mortimer had summoned the de Lacys to Trim by letter, but they had refused to come.[180] Mortimer then sent Hugh de Custes, a knight, to treat of peace with the de Lacys, but they killed him, and it was almost certainly in retaliation for this act that John de Lacy was so cruelly punished at Trim the following year.

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[174]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1313-17*, p. 349.

[175]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1313-17*, p. 563; Rymer, *Foedera* (3rd edition, 1739), ii, part i: 1312-46, pp 103-4; *N.H.I.*, ix, 472. Mortimer's appointment seems to have been made in order that he might deal with the critical state of affairs in Ireland—it seems strange then that he did not take up the position until a further five months had elapsed.

[176]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 333, deed vi.

[177]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 329, deed xviii.

[178]Wood, 'The muniments', pp 329, 336, deed xxi. By a quitclaim of Apr. 1328 Isolde released this land, Wood, 'The muniments', pp 329, 336-7, deed xxii.

[179]T.C.D., MS 583, fol. 23r; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, cxxxi, 358; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 143; Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 92-3; a similar sentence was handed down to Sir Robert de Coulrath, custodian of Greencastle, in 1315, see *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, cxxxi, 345.

[180]Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 86-7; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 140.

In March 1319 Mortimer was appointed justiciar of Ireland, and he held this office from June of that year until December 1320.[181] The paucity of documentary evidence relating to Trim for this period may be seen as an indication of relative stability and the inability of the Dublin administration to seize the liberty while its lord also held the office of justiciar. Things reverted to a familiar pattern little more than a year later, however, when Mortimer fell from royal favour and was replaced as justiciar by the earl of Kildare.[182] Mortimer had been involved in a series of conflicts with Edward II and early in 1322 the king had him imprisoned in the Tower of London.[183] He was to be executed, but in July his sentence was commuted to life in prison. On 1 August 1323 Mortimer affected only the second escape in the Tower's long history when, with the aid of the bishop of Hereford, he appears to have drugged his guards, climbed out through a hole in the roof and made off to France.[184]

During Mortimer's time in prison, on 24 March 1322, proceedings of *quo warranto* were held before the justices itinerant at Drogheda concerning the claim by the Mortimers of the right to hold pleas at Trim.[185] The Mortimers were represented in court by their attorneys, who traced the Mortimer claim back to Walter de Lacy and argued that the hearing could not proceed without the de Verdun representatives of the other purparty, some of whom were under age.[186] The court proceeded nonetheless (perhaps because the de Verduns had forfeited their part of Meath 40 years previously), and it was judged that the liberty of Trim ought to be taken back into the king's hand.[187]

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[181]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1317-21*, pp 317, 558; Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 96-7; *N.H.I.*, ix, 472.
[182]*N.H.I.*, ix, 472.
[183]Michael Packe and L. C. B. Seaman, *King Edward III* (London, 1983), pp 18-19; McKisack, *The fourteenth century*, pp 61-2, 73.
[184]Packe & Seaman, *Edward III*, 18-19; H. F. Hutchison, *Edward II: the pliant king* (London, 1971), pp 129-30; Natalie Fryde, *The tyranny and fall of Edward II, 1321-1326* (Cambridge, 1979), pp 160-1.
[185]Sayles, *Documents on the affairs of Ireland*, p. 279, no. 297, referring to P.R.O., KB 27/273/128 (Trinity 1328): appeal cases from Ireland on the king's bench rolls of Edward III.
[186]Wood, 'The muniments', pp 341-5.
[187]Wood, 'The muniments', pp 337-47, deed xxix.

Not surprisingly, the officials acted with alacrity. Within a week of the court's decision, Henry Kempe had been made constable of Trim Castle.[188] Not long after that, a large coffer containing documents, rolls and other memoranda concerning the liberty of Trim was seized from Trim Castle and brought to Dublin.[189] A special lockable cask was purchased to hold the Trim manuscripts, which were deposited in the Dublin exchequer.[190] An inspection of the royal accounts for the next few years puts into perspective the determination and speed with which all of this took place. Trim was a source of considerable revenue and during the period from 1322 to 1327 while it was in the king's hand, it raised £1500—approximately £300 a year—for the Irish government (the total includes £52 from lands in Kildare).[191] The Trim revenue made up about 12% of all receipts (c.£2,500 per annum) recorded by the Irish treasurer for this period.[192] This money provided an important boost for the exchequer and was made available to support the cost of shipping supplies to England.[193]

The income from the liberty of Trim would certainly have been even higher had some of its assets not been embezzled. An English council memorandum, possibly dating from 1326, contains evidence given by a certain Roger Ufton, to the effect that the archbishop of Dublin and Richard Tuyt (who had been placed by John de Bermingham, earl of Louth, in possession of some of the Mortimer holdings) had shared the proceeds of the sale of some of Mortimer's goods, and that Louth had helped himself to the contents of Trim and four other castles and also to some of Mortimer's livestock.[194] Louth and Edmund Bermingham had both had grants of

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[188]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 36, no. 81; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 320.

[189]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 299.

[190]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 287.

[191]P.R.O., E 101/238/3, 7, 10, 16, 21, 27; E 101/239/3; Robin Frame, 'Power and Society in Ireland, 1272-1377' in *Past & Present*, no. 76 (Aug. 1977), pp 3-33, at p. 16. The value of Trim in the 1320s was comparable to many lesser Welsh marcher lordships—see Davies, *Lordship & Society*, p. 196.

[192]H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, 'Irish Revenue, 1278-1384' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxii (May 1962), sect. C, no. 4, pp 87-100, at p. 100.

[193]Nat. Archives, RC 8/12, pp 693-5; *Cal. fine rolls 1319-27*, p. 121; *Cal. close rolls 1318-23*, p. 432.

[194]Frame, *English Lordship in Ireland*, p. 65, referring to P.R.O., E 163/3/12 and p. 166, referring to P.R.O., C 49/5/11.

Mortimer and de Lacy forfeitures under the Irish seal.[195] Another man to profit illegally from Mortimer's absence was Walter de Iseltep, rector of St Patrick's Church, Trim. De Iseltep, son of a deacon from Winchester, had come to Ireland in about 1300.[196] By 1307 he had become a baron of the exchequer and in 1314 he was appointed treasurer of Ireland.[197] De Iseltep was still treasurer in 1318[198] and he had been appointed to the especially profitable rectory of St Patrick's, Trim, by the early 1320s, at a time when he was also a canon of St Patrick's, Dublin.[199] In the English exchequer in 1326 charges were brought against de Iseltep, an old associate of the archbishop of Dublin, for failing to account in full for £500 received from Roger Mortimer's lands in Trim.[200] These were just part of a whole series of charges of fraud, concealment and deceit brought against de Iseltep. For two decades from 1326, de Iseltep was involved in dozens of accounting irregularities, extortion, and complicity, running up debts of over £1,300.[201]

Perhaps in an effort to establish firmer control on the financial administration of Trim, John Fraunceys of Drogheda and Richard Goldyng were appointed as king's receivers for the manor of Trim from 25 March 1326.[202] Adam Payn and Pagan Tancard replaced them by letters patent dated 19 May 1327.[203]

Edward II died at Berkeley Castle in 1327. All of the evidence suggests that he was murdered at Mortimer's behest.[204] In theory, the fourteen-year-old Edward III was now king but in practice, it was Mortimer himself, in association with Isabella, widow of Edward II, who pulled the strings. Perhaps unusually,

[195]Nat. Archives, RC 8/12, p. 767; RC 8/14, pp 87-8, 752; Frame, *English Lordship in Ireland*, p. 166, referring to P.R.O., E 101/238/10.
[196]*Cal. papal letters, 1305-42*, p. 241.
[197]Mills, *Account roll of the Priory of the Holy Trinity*, p. 169.
[198]*Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 142.
[199]Mills, *Account roll of the Priory of the Holy Trinity*, pp 169-70; *Cal. papal letters, 1305-42*, p. 241; M. H. MacInerny, *A history of the Irish Dominicans* (Dublin, 1916), p. 384.
[200]Connolly, 'List of Irish entries on the memoranda rolls of the English exchequer, 1307-27', pp 212-3, no. 147.
[201]For details of some of these accounting irregularities and de Istelep's lavish spending, see Mills, *Account roll of the Priory of the Holy Trinity*, pp 169-70; Connolly, 'List of Irish entries on the memoranda rolls of the English exchequer, 1307-27', pp 212-3, no. 147.
[202]*P.R.I. rep. D.K. liv*, 44-5.
[203]*P.R. I. rep. D.K. liv*, 44-5.
[204]Clifford Brewer, *The death of kings: a medical history of the kings and queens of England* (London, 2000; reprinted 2001), pp 59-64; McKisack, *The fourteenth century*, pp 94-6.

Mortimer did not become regent, but he quickly established a power-base in England and it was not long before he began to re-confirm his position in Ireland as well.

The liberty of Trim was restored to Mortimer in August 1327 in recognition 'for service to Queen Isabella'.[205] The justiciar of Ireland was ordered to restore to Mortimer 'the seals of the chancery and exchequer of the liberty of Trim, as well as the rolls of pleas, writs and memoranda, feet of fines and all other things relating to that liberty which were in the king's treasury or in the justiciar's custody'.[206] Mortimer's power at this time was reinforced in August 1328 when he was appointed to the office of justice of Wales, for life, with power to remove and replace incompetent constables, bailiffs and other ministers.[207] By this time the Mortimers were the only politically powerful English family to maintain an active interest in Ireland.

There were clearly further concerns over the revenue from Trim and, in February 1328, six months after the liberty had been restored to the Mortimers, the king issued an order to the treasurer of the Irish exchequer concerning the issues of the liberty of Trim which had been received by Reginald de Staunton, sometime seneschal of Trim, while those lands were in Edward II's hand.[208]

On 27 August 1328 Roger and Joan were given royal licence to grant to their son John 'in fee tail, the castles, manors, honors [*sic*], rents, lands and tenements in Ireland, with the liberties, royalties, knights' fees and advowsons held by them in chief of the said Joan's inheritance'.[209] A second grant was issued to Roger by which he was entitled to enfeoff John of his lands.[210] It is not clear why Roger and Joan thought it necessary to provide for John in such a way, but it is possible that

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[205]*Chartae, privilegia et immunitates*, p. 53; Wood, 'The muniments', pp 337-47, deed xxix; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1327-30*, pp 159, 185, 238; N.L.I., *Harris Collectanea*, ii, 1326-59, MS 2., f. 7; Russell Library, Maynooth, MS O'Renehan, 3, R.b.1, pp 416-18. Together, Roger Mortimer and Isabella had led the revolution that toppled Edward II in the winter of 1326-7.
[206]*Cal. close rolls, 1327-30*, p. 159.
[207]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1327-30*, p. 317.
[208]*Cal. close rolls, 1327-30*, p. 260.
[209]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1327-30*, p. 317; Wood, 'The muniments', p. 328, deed x.

a prospective marriage was a factor. On 28 August the king granted licence to John to endow at the church door any wife he may marry with £1,000 worth of land out of those granted to him by his parents.[211]

In April 1330, as a result of a petition made by the Mortimers to Edward III, and 'considering the good services of the said Roger', the Mortimer portion of Meath was re-united with the lands which had been held by the de Verduns from 1244 until Theobald de Verdun forfeited them to Edward I in 1280.[212] By the 1330 charter, the king granted to the Mortimers 'that they shall have and exercise at their castle of Trym all kind of jurisdiction and the cognisance of all pleas arising in the lands and tenements in the purparty of the said Margery [de Verdun] and also have a chancery and an exchequer and their own seals therein'. Mortimer had royal jurisdiction with palatine rights throughout all Meath and Louth, making the extended liberty of Trim almost equivalent to the old lordship of Meath. In addition, Mortimer was granted custody of the liberty of Kildare during the minority of the earl of Kildare, and cognisance of all pleas there, including those that had arisen before the date of his charters.[213] In June 1330, in what was perhaps a diplomatic gesture following the reunification of the Meath lands, Roger Mortimer appointed Nicholas de Verdun as seneschal of Trim.[214] Milo de Verdun may have been appointed constable of Trim Castle at about the same time, and he certainly held the position by 1334.[215]

Throughout 1330, however, Mortimer had been slipping from royal favour in England.[216] Combined with a track record of ruthlessness, deceit and treachery, his overriding ambition and ill-advised policies lost Mortimer friends and made

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[210]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 329, deed xiv.

[211]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 329, deed xiii.

[212]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 328, deed ix; *Cal. chart. rolls, 1327-41*, p. 176; *Cal. close rolls, 1279-88*, pp 55-6; *Cal. fine rolls, 1272-1307*, p. 129; *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1252-84*, nos 1670, 1673; Michael Prestwich, *Edward I* (London, 1988), p. 539.

[213]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1327-30*, p. 538; *Cal. chart. rolls, 1327-41*, pp 175-7; Wood, 'The muniments', p. 329, deed xii.

[214]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1330-4*, p. 264; N.L.I., MS 761, ff 43-5; Nat. Archives, RC 8/15, p. 607.

[215]Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 32-3; *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 45b, no. 78.

[216]McKisack, *The fourteenth century*, pp 96-101.

him enemies. On 29 November 1330, he was attainted and hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn, and all of his estates and properties were seized.[217]

Joan Mortimer's tenure as lady of Trim (1330-55)

It was soon realised that some of the lands that were seized had not been held by Mortimer himself, but by his wife Joan, and that their confiscation by the Dublin administration was unjustified.[218] The liberty of Trim was a case in point. On 12 January 1331, within six weeks of Roger's execution, the king intervened to protect Joan's interests, and she soon gained the release of lands that she and Roger had held in jointure.[219] Resident in England, in March 1331 Joan appointed attorneys to take over the running of her Irish lands for two years.[220] These attorneys, John de Frisyngfeld and Reginald de Staunton,[221] in turn appointed Joan's uncle, Simon de Geneville, as seneschal of Trim, a role he had also fulfilled thirty-five years previously.[222] In October 1331 the king ordered the justiciar of Ireland not to distrain Joan 'for her homage and fealty for the lands that she holds in chief, as she has done homage and fealty to the king'.[223]

All of this greatly angered Anthony de Lucy, the justiciar of Ireland, and his Dublin administration and, on 26 November 1331, Trim was again taken into the king's hand, and the records of the liberty were once more carted to Dublin.[224] De Lucy had clearly been looking for some sort of technicality on which to make the confiscation, and it had come to his attention that, when the liberty of Trim was restored in 1327, on Roger Mortimer's return from exile, it was granted to Roger himself, and that Joan's title hinged on this grant. The timing of the confiscation is also worthy of note, being as it was just days after Joan had secured permission to

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[217]John Jolliffe (ed. and trans.), *Froissart's Chronicles* (Classic Penguin, London, 2001), p. 52; William Stubbs (ed.), *Chronicles of the reigns of Edward I and Edward II* (2 vols, London, 1882-3), i, 352, ii, 101-2, 291; Flower, 'Manuscripts of Irish interest', p. 339.

[218]*Cal. close rolls, 1330-3*, pp 99, 105, 110, 371; *Cal. close rolls, 1341-3*, p. 349; *P.R.I. rep. D.K. xliv*, 23.

[219]*Cal. close rolls, 1330-3*, pp 110, 269, 371.

[220]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1330-4*, p. 85.

[221]De Staunton was replaced as attorney by John de Corbaly in Jan. 1332, *Cal. pat. rolls, 1330-4*, p. 248, but the following Dec. Joan Mortimer nominated William and John de Staunton as her attorneys in Ireland, for two years, *Cal. pat. rolls, 1330-4*, p. 380.

[222]Nat. Archives, RC 8/16, pp 19-20, 22.

[223]*Cal. close rolls, 1330-3*, p. 269.

remove the body of her husband from Coventry and have it buried, with the rites of the church, at Wigmore.[225] If de Lucy believed he could take advantage of what must have been a difficult time for Joan Mortimer, he was mistaken. Joan made a petition at Westminster in order to establish that she had held the liberty in her own right, by inheritance from her grandfather, Geoffrey de Geneville.[226] As part of the preparations for her defence, Joan requested from the chancellor an exemplification of the original grant of Meath from Henry II to Hugh de Lacy, as her document was 'becoming worn with age'.[227] Joan also wrote to the king and his council, asking for custody of her late husband's lands during the minority of her son, Edmund.[228] In particular she requested custody of certain manors within the liberty of Trim and claimed her rights there.[229] She complained that the lands had suffered great damage while in the king's hand, inferring perhaps that they would be more secure in her custody.

On 28 January 1332 the king issued a writ to de Lucy (who had spent the period from 8 October 1331 to 16 January 1332 in Louth and Meath),[230] asking whether the liberty of Trim had been taken into the king's hand because of the failure of Simon de Geneville, as seneschal of Trim, to appear before the justiciar at Trim on 26 October 1331.[231] If that was the reason, then the liberty was to be restored; if seized for any other reason, the king was to be informed. The outcome was that in September 1332 the king ordered de Lucy to cause Joan 'to have full restitution of the liberty of Trym'.[232] This order was reissued three weeks later as de Lucy had been replaced by John D'Arcy as justiciar of Ireland before the first order

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[224]Nat. Archives, RC 8/16, pp 22, 26.

[225]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1330-4*, p. 213; *Cal. close rolls, 1330-3*, p. 403.

[226]*Cal. close rolls, 1330-3*, pp 489-90.

[227]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 317, p. 328, deed iv.

[228]Connolly, 'Irish material in the class of chancery warrants', at p. 148, referring to P.R.O., C 81/191/5599, C 81/191/5600.

[229]Sayles, *Documents on the affairs of Ireland*, pp 151-2, no. 172, referring to P.R.O., C 47/10/19/7/4.

[230]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 343.

[231]Connolly, 'List of Irish material in the class of chancery files (C. 260)', p. 8.

[232]*Cal. close rolls, 1330-3*, p. 459.

could be carried out.[233] In December 1332 Joan received the wardship of two-thirds of her son's lands, to hold until her heir came of age.[234]

Joan Mortimer's tenure as lady of Trim was not a very peaceful one, for the justiciar was continually trying to withdraw her rights and confiscate the liberty, despite the fact that Joan consistently had at least two attorneys in Ireland.[235] Geoffrey de Geneville had fought a long, and ultimately successful, battle to protect Trim's palatine status against the encroachment of the king's ministers. For his granddaughter, things were even more difficult. Roger Mortimer's ill-repute and the fact that his widow lived in England left Trim even more exposed than previously. Unfortunately for Joan, her tenure as lady of Trim also coincided with a period when the revenue received by the Irish government was particularly low.[236] In the following years the Dublin administration seized the highly valuable liberty from Joan on several occasions and on various pretexts. Every time, Joan acted expediently and on each occasion, she succeeded in having the Irish government's actions overturned at Westminster.[237]

In 1334 Joan complained that although she and her ancestors had held the liberty of Trim 'a tempore quo memoria non extitit', the escheator had seized some of her lands within this liberty.[238] Edward III ordered John D'Arcy, justiciar in Ireland, to look into this matter and to resolve the issue accordingly.

In 1336 the liberty of Trim was taken back into the king's hand by his ministers in Dublin, and on 2 May the king appointed as its *custos* Simon de Geneville,[239] who had remained as seneschal there since 1331.[240] Simon was to have all 'dignities, regalities and other things belonging thereto, during the king's pleasure, and to

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[233]*Cal. close rolls, 1330-3*, p. 503.
[234]*Cal. fine rolls, 1327-37*, p. 339.
[235]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1330-4*, pp 85, 248, 380; *1334-8*, pp 157, 220; *1338-40*, pp 460, 464; *1340-3*, p. 488; *1343-5*, p. 155; *1348-50*, p. 106; *1354-8*, p. 105.
[236]Richardson & Sayles, 'Irish Revenue, 1278-1384', pp 94-5, 100.
[237]Frame, *English Lordship in Ireland*, p. 73.
[238]Wood, 'The muniments', pp 347-9, deed xxxiv.
[239]*Cal. fine rolls, 1327-37*, p. 483; *P.R.I. rep. D.K. xlvii*, 43.
[240]Connolly, 'List of Irish material in the class of chancery files (recorda) (C. 260)', p. 8; *P.R.I. rep. D.K. xliv*, 22-3; Nat. Archives, RC 8/16, pp 19-20, 22; N.L.I., MS 761, ff 61-4.

answer for the issues and profits thereof to the king or others at his mandate'. Although the liberty of Trim remained in the king's hand, Joan was to receive the issues and profits thereof.[241] On 12 January 1337 the king ordered the return of the liberty of Trim to Joan Mortimer, but the orders were not carried out. The cause of this inaction seems to have been the passing of ordinances in 1336 by which Trim was not to be restored to Joan Mortimer without a royal serjeant-at-law being first sent from Ireland to England to inform the king of his rights.[242] Nonetheless, in August 1337 the king again ordered that the lands, liberty and issues thereof be returned to Joan without delay.[243] In the meantime, on 21 May 1337, the king had issued a writ to Simon de Geneville to desist from holding any pleas in the king's name in the liberty of Trim or from exercising any office there whatsoever.[244] Simon presented this writ to the exchequer when delivering his accounts for the liberty of Trim for the one year, two weeks and five days for which he had been its custodian (the £55 19s 6d issues and profits of the liberty of Trim for that period were paid to Joan). Joan's franchise was restored to her, but it was not long before it was once again annexed to the crown as a result of a new order by which the justiciar was directed to take into the king's hand all lands and liberties in Ireland which had been granted by Edward II, his justiciars or other ministers.[245] On each occasion that the liberty of Trim reverted to the crown, Simon de Geneville acted as its custodian, a role he occupied until at least November 1341.[246]

During this time Joan Mortimer was unrelenting in her efforts to have her lands and rights restored. Two writs were issued in April 1340, one to the justices of the bench and the other to the justiciar, requesting permission for Joan to exercise her rights in the liberty of Trim without interference.[247] In October 1341 the king again ordered the justiciar of Ireland to restore the liberty to Joan without delay, in

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[241]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1334-8*, p. 256.
[242]Sayles, *Documents on the affairs of Ireland*, pp 167-71, no. 192; Frame, *English Lordship in Ireland*, p. 119, referring to P.R.O., C 49/6/30.
[243]*Cal. close rolls, 1337-9*, p. 157; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1327-30*, p. 348.
[244]*P.R.I. rep. D.K. xlvii*, 43.
[245]*Cal. close rolls, 1341-3*, pp 292-3.
[246]*Cal. close rolls, 1337-9*, p. 360; *P.R.I. rep. D.K. xlvii*, 43, 55-7.
[247]Wood, 'The muniments', pp 350-1, deed xxxvi, and p. 331, deed xxxvii.

accordance with the decision made in August 1337, but this order does not seem to have been carried out.[248] Joan made a petition, which was put before Edward III and his council in England, showing that the liberty of Trim had been taken into the king's hand by his ministers in Ireland without reasonable cause.[249] The king adjudged the confiscation to be erroneous and unreasonable and, in 1342, he made a grant to Joan that her liberty should never again be taken into his hand without reasonable cause and warning.[250] Despite this grant, it is clear that the liberty of Trim remained in the king's hand until at least 18 May 1343, because on that day Edward III, having received a further petition from Joan, gave the order for the liberty to be restored to her.[251]

The liberty was not long in Joan's hand when a general *quo warranto* order was issued from Westminster in 1347. Joan failed to attend when summoned before the justiciary at Drogheda to explain by what authority she exercised certain liberties at her manor of Trim, and so, with complete disregard to the king's grant of 1342, the liberty was once again taken from her.[252] Joan petitioned the king to restore her estates, which had been wrongfully seized by the justiciar, Walter Bermingham.[253] She claimed that, contrary to the king's earlier grant, the treasurer and barons had taken the liberty into the king's hand before any cause had been adjudged in England. She also claimed that she had sustained grave damage by this wrongful taking of lands and sought compensation for her losses. Joan was an elderly lady by this time and, living in England, she must have felt it unreasonable that she was expected to appear before the justiciar of Ireland in Drogheda. In fact, she had not been to Ireland for thirty years and was 'of such age that she cannot go to Ireland without the greatest peril of her body'.[254]

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[248]*Cal. close rolls, 1341-3*, pp 292-3.
[249]Wood, 'The muniments', pp 333-4, deed xi; *Cal. fine rolls, 1337-47*, p. 290.
[250]Wood, 'The muniments', pp 333-4, deed xi; *Cal. fine rolls, 1337-47*, p. 290.
[251]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 47, no. 127.
[252]*Cal. close rolls, 1346-9*, pp 253-4.
[253]*Cal. close rolls, 1346-9*, pp 253-4, 311-12.
[254]*Cal. close rolls, 1346-9*, p. 314.

In April 1347 the king ordered the justiciar to restore to Joan her liberty of Trim, together with the issues and profits thereof.[255] The justiciar was also ordered by the king to explain why Joan's lands had been taken from her, and what role he had played in the whole affair. At the same time the king confirmed his earlier grant stating that the liberty of Trim should not be taken into his hand during Joan's lifetime without reasonable cause and warning. After four months the liberty of Trim had still not been restored to Joan and so, in August, the king reissued his order to the justiciar.[256] By February of the following year the justiciar had still 'not hitherto cared to do anything therein' and the order was sent again from Westminster.[257] In defending his decision not to restore Trim to Joan, the justiciar cited an agreement of 1336 by which Westminster was to send to Dublin formal notification of its grants, and the Irish government might then delay the implementation of any writs which it considered detrimental to royal authority, so that representations might be made in England, and that the king might have an opportunity to reconsider his decision.[258]

Also in 1347, Joan reiterated some of the rights and liberties to which she laid claim in her manor of Trim.[259] They included the cognisance of the pleas of rape, fire, forestall and treasure-trove, as well as the other pleas of the crown. She also claimed the right to appoint officers including a seneschal, chancellor, treasurer, justice of the assize court, and a justice to issue summonses and attachments and to carry out all other duties usually undertaken by a sheriff. Joan complained to the king that the justiciar of Ireland and the sheriff of Meath were issuing summonses and making attachments and other executions within the liberty of Trim and that this was outside their jurisdiction.[260] As a result of this complaint, the king ordered the justiciar to direct all writs relating to the liberty of Trim to Joan herself or to her seneschal, for them to deal with.

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[255]*Cal. close rolls, 1346-9*, pp 253-4.
[256]*Cal. close rolls, 1346-9*, pp 311-12.
[257]*Cal. close rolls, 1346-9*, p. 431.
[258]Frame, *English Lordship in Ireland*, p. 121, referring to P.R.O., C 260/58/24 and C 49/6/30.
[259]N.L.I., *Harris Collectanea*, MS 13: 'King's collectanea for ecclesiastical history of Ireland', f. 145.
[260]*Cal. close rolls, 1346-9*, p. 208.

A letter from the Dublin government, probably written in January 1348, told gleefully of the taking of the franchise of Trim, and went on to inform the English council that if support were given in this instance, there were many other liberties in Ireland that might be seized.[261] In the same month, Edward III held a parliament at Westminster to which, extraordinarily, he summoned the justiciar of Ireland and other Dublin ministers. At the parliament there was a discussion about the status of the liberty of Trim, which by the time of the parliament had already been restored to Joan.[262] She vehemently challenged the justiciar's decision to seize her franchise in the first place.[263] He defended his action by claiming that the franchise harboured evildoers whom Joan's ministers were unable or unwilling to punish.[264] The king's decision to overturn the Dublin government's ruling clearly irritated the latter immensely, and four years later the justiciar and council of Ireland were still protesting about the casual restoration by the English government of liberties that the Irish ministers had seized.[265]

From 1347 to 1350 land changed hands on several occasions between Joan and her grandson, Roger.[266] In 1347 Joan petitioned the king asking for permission to enfeoff Roger of several properties including the castle and manor of Trim.[267] In June of that year Joan received a licence to grant to Roger, for the term of his life, the castle, town and manor of Trim together with several other manors, lordships, lands, rents, knights' fees, advowsons of churches and liberties.[268] This licence was renewed, with a number of alterations, in April 1348. For his part of the deal, Roger was to pay to his grandmother 500 marks yearly at Trim. Roger, who was resident in England, nominated John de Stanton and James de Wattenhull as his

[261] Frame, *English Lordship in Ireland*, p. 120, referring to P.R.O., SC 1/42/57.
[262] Frame, *English Lordship in Ireland*, pp 289-90.
[263] Frame, *English Lordship in Ireland*, p. 73, referring to P.R.O., C 260/58/24, and *Rot. parl.*, ii, 223, no. 68.
[264] Frame, *English Lordship in Ireland*, pp 25-6, referring to P.R.O., C 260/58/24.
[265] *Cal. close rolls, 1349-54*, p. 461.
[266] Wood, 'The muniments', p. 330, deed xxxii [*Cal. pat. rolls, 1345-8*, p. 349]; p. 331, deed xl [*Cal. pat. rolls, 1348-50*, p. 49]; pp 353-5, deed xlvi [in full]; extended grant of the same in 1350, *Cal. pat. rolls, 1348-50*, pp 544-5. Not all of the exchanges were entirely legitimate and in 1350 the king granted a pardon to Joan and Roger for making exchanges without licence, see Wood, 'The muniments', pp 325, 330, deed xxx.
[267] Connolly, 'Irish material in the class of chancery warrants', p. 56.
[268] Wood, 'The muniments', p. 330, deed xxxii [*Cal. pat. rolls, 1345-8*, p. 349]; Connolly, 'Irish material in the class of chancery warrants', p. 156.

attorneys in Ireland.[269] De Stanton and de Wattenhull were also Roger's guardians, and de Stanton had previously acted as attorney for Joan in Ireland.[270] Soon after the fall and execution of his grandfather, Roger's father also died, leaving the young Mortimer to incur the punishment for his predecessor's wrongdoings. As he grew up, he was gradually restored the family estates and honours (he was also one of the original knights of the Garter). In August 1349 the king renewed and confirmed Edward III's 1330 charter and issued a mandate to the justiciar in Ireland to deliver to Roger all of the liberties mentioned in the said charter, and to permit him 'the full enjoyment thereof either by himself or by his ministers of the liberty of Trym'.[271] By 4 July 1350 Roger had surrendered back to his grandmother the castle, town and manor of Trim together with 'all the other liberties, lordships and lands which he had in the lordship of Trym or elsewhere in County Mede', in return for several estates belonging to Joan in England.[272] Just eleven days later, in what might be viewed as a suspicious deal, the transaction was reversed and the castle, town and manor of Trim were restored to Roger.[273] In 1351 Edward III made a similar grant to Roger as he had earlier made to Joan; that the liberty of Trim would not be taken into the king's hand without just cause, so long as Joan was still living.[274]

Roger Mortimer's tenure as lord of Trim (1355-60)

Joan died in 1355 and her grandson Roger, who had recently had the attainder of his grandfather annulled by parliament, succeeded to her inheritance. Within a few months Roger received a grant from the crown of all lands that had been seized as a result of the tenants' revolt in the 'Scotch war'.[275] It seems that Joan and Roger had already been receiving the issues of these lands as the grant includes a pardon for this. The 1355 document was merely a fresh grant of lands that Roger and Joan already held and its purpose was most likely to safeguard these lands against

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[269]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1348-50*, p. 422.
[270]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1348-50*, p. 379 [as guardians of Roger]; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1345-8*, p. 222 [as attorney for Joan].
[271]*Cal. chart. rolls, 1341-1417*, p. 109; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 422.
[272]*Cal. close rolls, 1349-54*, p. 241.
[273]*Cal. close rolls, 1349-54*, p. 262.
[274]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1350-8*, p. 178.
[275]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 331, deed xxxix; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1354-8*, p. 270.

claims or objections based on the attainder of Roger's grandfather. In July 1358 a further grant was made, restoring to the Mortimers more land that had been forfeited during the Bruce invasion.[276] This grant confirms that the land was to be held by Mortimer with royal jurisdiction, including advowsons of churches. It lists the names of the manors and lands within the liberty of Trim that had been forfeited and also the names of the chief rebels, among whom were Walter, Hugh, and Emery de Lacy, all of whom seem to have been descended from Robert, brother of Walter de Lacy (d. 1241).[277]

In December 1355 Roger complained that various felonies were being committed within the franchise of Meath, and that Simon Betagh, an officer of the liberty, had been killed along with many other Englishmen.[278] In the same month, the seneschal of Trim, Edmund Hakeluyt, had been captured and brought to Carbury where he was imprisoned and held to ransom.[279] The Dublin government apparently found it very difficult to procure Hakeluyt's release. Maurice FitzThomas was appointed to enquire into these various felonies in Meath and to punish the offenders.[280] It was possibly at this time that Mortimer enlisted the help of certain Irish troops to guard the tenants of the manor of Trim against 'the hostile incursions of the malefactors of Carbry and Offaly'.[281] Cornelius O'Brien, for instance, was at Trim *pro custodia tenentium Hibernicorum nostrorum ibidem.*

Edmund Mortimer's tenure as lord of Trim (1360-81)

Roger Mortimer died in France on 26 February 1360 and as his son and heir, Edmund, was still a minor his lands and liberties reverted temporarily to the king.[282] Again, the king's ministers were quick to act once the liberty of Trim was in royal hands. An order was immediately made for a new seal to be engraved for

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[276]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 330, deed xxxi; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1358-61*, pp 85-6.
[277]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 321.
[278]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 61, no. 69.
[279]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1354-8*, p. 321.
[280]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 330, deed xxxiii; *Cal. pat. rolls 1354-8*, p. 321
[281]Nat. Archives, RC 8/30, pp 25-6.
[282]*Calendar of inquisitions post mortem, Henry III-[15 Richard II]* (16 vols, P.R.O., London, 1904-74), xiii, 161; *Complete peerage*, viii, 445; *D.N.B.*, Mortimer, p. 119.

Trim, 'letters and writs touching that liberty to be sealed therewith'.[283] In April various ministers were appointed for the keeping of the Mortimer lands in Ireland.[284] At the same time, the office of constable of Trim Castle was granted to a cousin of Roger Mortimer, also called Roger, on the condition that the king's ministers should have in the castle 'suitable houses for their stay and for the keeping of the king's goods and things when necessary'.[285] This grant was renewed three years later.[286] James de Edleston was appointed as sergeant of the manor of Trim.[287]

It is clear that the revenue generated by the liberty of Trim was still high, and continued to attract great attention from the Dublin administration, whose ministers also retained an option of staying at Trim Castle. In 1360-1, the first year of the minority of Edmund Mortimer, the king's custodians gathered £364 from the liberty of Trim.[288] To put this figure into context, it is worth noting that the treasurer at Dublin received a total of £1,361 from Ireland for roughly the same period (8 June 1360 to 1 April 1361).[289] In the 1320s the revenue from Trim accounted for about 12% of the total annual receipts recorded by the Irish treasurer; by 1360 the figure had risen to 26%, indicating the increased importance of Trim to the exchequer at this time. In Trim in 1361 salaries were being paid to a seneschal, a chancellor, two chamberlains of the exchequer, two pleaders (*narratores*) and the constable of the castle.[290] The seneschal of Trim was paid the sum of 40 marks for 1360-1; the annual fee for a seneschal in Leinster seems to have been in the order of £100, although the Ulster seneschal received only £10.[291] In 1362 the liberty of Trim was still in the king's hand and, as part of the levies introduced 'in aid of the expenses of the war in Ireland', the next two

[283]*Cal. close rolls, 1360-4*, p. 41.
[284]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1358-61*, p. 456; *Cal. fine rolls, 1356-68*, p. 122.
[285]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1358-61*, p. 456.
[286]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1361-64*, p. 382.
[287]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, pp 517, 525.
[288]P.R.O., E 101/244/3.
[289]Richardson & Sayles, 'Irish Revenue, 1278-1384', p. 100.
[290]P.R.O., E 101/244/3.
[291]P.R.O., E 101/244/3; W. F. Nugent, 'Carlow in the middle ages' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, lxxxv (1955), pp 62-76, at p. 67; Altschul, *The Clares*, p. 288; *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 38, no. 56; p. 45, no. 56.

years' profits of the liberty and land of Trim were to be 'delivered to the king's clerk, receiver of moneys ordained for the expenses of the said war'.[292]

Trim remained in the king's hand until May 1368, when Edmund Mortimer was given possession of his estates and castles in Ireland, despite the fact that he was still under age.[293] Mortimer was now the greatest landowner in Ireland. Royal authority in Ireland was under increasing threat at this time and the premature grant to Mortimer was made on the condition that he provide men-at-arms and archers for the safe-keeping of Ireland against the Irish.

Edmund Mortimer was appointed king's lieutenant in October 1379, agreeing to hold that position for three years, from May 1380, for the colossal fee of 20,000 marks.[294] The terms of the appointment gave Mortimer far more independence than previous incumbents—he had complete control of Irish finances and no accountability to the English exchequer. Just half way through his term of office, however, Mortimer caught cold while crossing a river and died in the Dominican priory at Cork after Christmas in 1381, at a time when his heir, Roger, was still only seven years of age.[295]

Roger Mortimer's tenure as lord of Trim (1381-98)

Despite his minority, Roger Mortimer was appointed Lieutenant of Ireland on 24 January 1382.[296] His uncle, Sir Thomas Mortimer, acted as his deputy.[297] Roger's tenure as lord lieutenant was short-lived, however, and he was replaced in 1383 by Philip de Courtenay.[298] Because of Roger's minority, custody of his lands and estates was assumed by the crown, and Richard II had a new seal made up for the

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[292]*Cal. fine rolls, 1356-68*, p. 224.

[293]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1367-70*, p. 114.

[294]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1377-81*, p. 383; *Complete peerage*, viii, 447; Gilbert gives the year as 1380, see *Viceroys*, pp 244-5; *N.H.I.*, ix, 474.

[295]*D.N.B.*, Mortimer, p. 121; Marleburrough, *chronicle of Ireland*, p. 14; William Dugdale, *The baronage of England or an historical account of the lives and most memorable actions of our English nobility* (2 vols, London, 1675-6), i, 150.

[296]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 112, no. 87; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1381-5*, p. 88; Gilbert, *Viceroys*, pp 248-9; *N.H.I.*, ix, 474.

[297]*D.N.B.*, Mortimer, p. 145; Richardson & Sayles, *Parl. & councils med. Ire.*, i, 118; H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles (ed.), *The Irish parliament in the middle ages* (Philadelphia, 1952), p. 106; *N.H.I.*, ix, 474.

liberty of Meath [*sic*].[299] The seal was to follow the design of that of the liberty of Ulster, which had 'on one side a knight in arms and on the reverse the king's image on his throne, with a sceptre in his right hand'. The legend, *Sigillum Richardi Regis Angliae et Franciae Domini Hiberniae & Custodis libertatis Ultoniae*, was to be reproduced on the new seal, except that the word *Midiae* was to be substituted for *Ultoniae*.

On 6 March 1382, Richard II appointed John Reigne to the office of marshal of Trim Castle and the liberty of Meath[300] (the previous October, Edmund Mortimer had granted the office of constable of Trim Castle to Reigne for life).[301] The extraordinary importance of the young Roger Mortimer in England was underlined in 1385 when Richard II proclaimed him as heir presumptive to the throne.

For ten years the liberty of Trim was to remain in the hand of the king, but it appears that the liberty suffered increasingly from incursions by the local Irish. Roger Mortimer was allowed wardship of his lands in 1393, two years before he was due to come of age, allowing him to support his retinue.[302] On 8 September Mortimer's Irish lands and liberties were granted to him, and Richard II ordered the Dublin authorities not to 'intermeddle' with Mortimer's affairs.[303] The king also commanded his treasurer of Meath, Robert Eure, to deliver to Mortimer all rolls and records pertaining to his lands there, and the sheriff of Meath was to allow the seneschal of Trim 'to execute and return all manner of writs within the franchise of that liberty'. In the same year the English Privy Council granted

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[298]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1381-5*, p. 348; Gilbert, *Viceroys*, pp 250-1; *N.H.I.*, ix, 474.

[299]N.L.I., *Harris Collectanea*, MS. 17, f. 146; *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 117, no. 41, p. 130, no. 64; Gilbert, *Viceroys*, p. 250.

[300]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 112, nos 88-9.

[301]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 110, no. 36.

[302]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1391-6*, pp 284, 375; The Mortimer chronicler records that the guardians of Roger's estates had done a praiseworthy job and that 40,000 marks had been accumulated in the treasury, see G. A. Holmes, *The estates of the higher nobility in fourteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1957), p. 19 note 2; Anthony Tuck, 'Anglo-Irish relations 1382-1393' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxix (1970), sect. C, no. 2, pp 15-31, at p. 30; William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* ed. John Caley, Henry Ellis and Bulkeley Bandinel (6 vols, London, 1817-30; reprinted, 6 vols, 1846), vi, pt i, 354.

[303]N.L.I., *Harris Collectanea*, MS 13., ff 145-6.

Roger Mortimer £1,000 in consideration of the devastation of his Irish estates by the 'native rebels'.[304]

Richard II was planning an expedition to Ireland and for this he would require support. The Mortimer estates were the largest in Ireland and it was logical that the king would look to Roger Mortimer for financial assistance for his trip. It thus suited Richard that the young earl should be given livery of his lands prematurely, despite strong opposition to the proposal from a number of other earls.[305] In September 1394 Richard II became the first English king to visit Ireland since John in 1210. On his expedition the king was accompanied by the young Roger Mortimer. They made diplomatic negotiations throughout the country, receiving submissions from several of the Irish chieftains.[306]

At the time of the king's expedition to Ireland, Niall Óg O'Neill's eldest son, two of his nephews and four other un-named hostages had been held in Trim Castle for five years. This was clearly a major factor in inducing O'Neill to submit to Richard in 1395.[307] Niall Óg had himself been captured in 1390 but he had managed to negotiate his release in return for handing over his son, Felimy, as surety for his future good conduct.[308] O'Neill describes his son and the other hostages as suffering extreme misery from their gaolers at Trim Castle.[309] In a letter of 24 March 1395, 'to the most serene Prince his lord, Richard', O'Neill wrote 'I beseech you to deign to have Felimy brought from Trim Castle to you, and to entrust the other boy-hostages to worthy men, as it was agreed, otherwise all of them will die, since those in whose charge they are care little or nothing for their lives, even as they cared nothing for the lives of the dying who are and have been tortured with divers, dire, and dread torments; especially as I cannot trust my own people since they see me turning away from them to your Majesty, and the

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[304] *D.N.B.*, Mortimer, p. 145.
[305] J. Webb, 'A history of Richard II of England' in *Archaeologia*, xx (1824), pp 247-8.
[306] *Misc. Ir. Annals*, pp 152-3 (*Rawlinson B. 488*); J. A. Watt, 'John Colton, Justiciar of Ireland (1382) and Archbishop of Armagh (1383-1404)' in Lydon, *England and Ireland in the later middle ages*, pp 196-213, at pp 203-4.
[307] *Cal. pat. rolls, 1388-92*, pp 20, 91, 110, 134, 275, 300; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1399-1401*, pp 327, 330; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1401-5*, p. 183.
[308] Lydon, *England and Ireland in the later middle ages*, p. 203; Watt, 'John Colton', p. 203.

misery of prison consumes the living'.[310] O'Neill also wrote to the archbishop of Armagh, saying 'if it seem expedient to you please ordain that our hostages shall be brought soon into the care of our lord the king'.[311] In a second letter to Richard, O'Neill wrote 'consider too how I am deprived of my sons who were in the earl's custody, and grant me to have the solace of my son Felimy, even as my Lord Primate promised, also that the other hostages be placed in charge of friends in those parts, lest in your absence they perish as the others have perished.'[312] It seems as though the hostages were not released, as they were still held in Trim Castle as late as 1402.[313]

From the time of his visit to Ireland with Richard II, Roger Mortimer spent most of his time in Ireland. He was appointed king's lieutenant in about May of 1395 and held that position until January 1397, when he was replaced by his six-year-old son Edmund.[314] Edmund's tenure as lieutenant lasted just six months to July 1397 when his father took over the position once more, having been appointed on 24 April.[315] Roger remained in office until his death in 1398. So long as the lord of Trim held the office of justiciar, the liberty remained reasonably safe from the Dublin administration.

Edmund Mortimer's minority and tenure as lord of Trim (1398-1425)

Roger Mortimer died in battle on 10 June 1398, at which time his son and heir, Edmund, was only seven years of age.[316] The Mortimer lands reverted to the crown for the minority of the young heir. The death of the heir to the English throne at the hands of the Irish induced Richard II to undertake a second

[309]Edmund Curtis, *Richard II in Ireland, 1394-5* (Oxford, 1927), pp 37, 133-4, 213-4.
[310]Curtis, *Richard II in Ireland*, pp 133-4, 213-14.
[311]Curtis, *Richard II in Ireland*, pp 143-4, 221-3.
[312]Curtis, *Richard II in Ireland*, pp 134-6, 214-15.
[313]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1401-5*, p. 183.
[314]*N.H.I.*, ix, 475.
[315]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1396-9*, p. 118; Gilbert, *Viceroys*, p. 278.
[316]*D.N.B.*, Mortimer, p. 146; *The complete peerage*, viii, 449-50; Curtis, 'Janico Dartas', p. 189; sources differ on where exactly Roger Mortimer was killed, a number of commentators state that it was at Kells, see Dugdale, *Baronage*, i, 150 [the idea that he may have been slain at Kells may derive from the fact that his great-great-grandfather had had an encounter with Edward Bruce there eighty years earlier (see above)]; it is probable that he died at Kellistown, 8km southeast of Carlow town, see Anthony Tuck, 'Anglo-Irish relations 1382-1393' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxix (1970), sect. C, no. 2, pp 15-31, at p. 19; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 336; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1399-1401*, p. 468.

expedition to Ireland and, in 1399 he arrived with a significant store of crown jewels and royal treasure. The king's expedition to Ireland was cut short by the revolt in England of his cousin Henry Bolingbroke, heir to the duke of Lancaster. Before the king returned to England, however, he had his chamberlain deposit over £14,000 worth of gold in the custody of the duke of Surrey at Trim Castle.[317] At this time Surrey, who was the king's lieutenant and nephew, had the custody of the liberty of Trim and appears to have established his family there.[318] It was from this large sum at Trim that the duke and duchess authorised payments (mostly small) to settle a number of accounts, to pay their retinue and to cover household expenses.

When Richard II left Ireland on 13 August, he also left hostages, including Humphrey of Gloucester and the young son of Henry Bolingbroke, in Trim Castle.[319] In addition to the money and hostages deposited at Trim, the king left arms and Surrey's retinue, consisting of 2 bannerets, 14 knights, 134 esquires and 800 archers, under the command of Surrey's younger brother, Edmund of Kent.[320]

At this time events in England took a new twist and Richard II was captured and imprisoned by Henry Bolingbroke. Late in the month, two Lancastrians, John Waterton and Robert Hethcote, arrived in Trim with Richard's clerk, Richard Maudeleyn. It appears that the men had been sent to Ireland by Bolingbroke to investigate and seize as much as they could of whatever royal property could be located. The duchess of Surrey handed over to them in excess of £6,500 from what remained of the royal treasure in Trim, although she evidently withheld at least several hundred pounds.[321] It may also have been at about this time that Peter Bukton and Henry Dryhurste came to Trim, secured the release of Bolingbroke's

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[317]Dorothy Johnston, 'Richard II's departure from Ireland, July 1399' in *E. H. R.*, xcviii (1983), pp 785-805, at p. 797, referring to P.R.O., E 159/177/19; J. L. Gillespie, 'Richard II: king of battles?' in idem (ed.), *The age of Richard II* (Stroud, 1997), pp 139-64, at pp 157-8.

[318]Johnston, 'Richard II's departure', p. 797.

[319]Edmund Campion, 'A historie of Ireland' in Ware, *Anc. Ir. hist.*, i, 137.

[320]Johnston, 'Richard II's departure', p. 801; Gillespie, 'Richard II: king of battles?', p. 158, referring to P.R.O., E 403/562 (13 May).

[321]Johnston, 'Richard II's departure', p. 798, note 5.

son, and escorted him back to England. Bukton also received almost 920 marks from the cash reserve at Trim.[322]

In September Bolingbroke became king and the young (8-year-old) Edmund Mortimer, the primogenitary heir to the throne, was put under guard at Windsor. His claim was adroitly side-stepped and, while the new dynasty gradually established itself, it lay dormant for many years, although it never quite disappeared from the political consciousness of fifteenth-century England; and when, half a century later, mounting troubles at home and abroad began to raise doubts about Henry VI's fitness to rule, it was the Mortimer claim, now embodied by the House of York, that provided the alternative.

Within six months of his coronation, Henry IV had instigated a series of personnel changes at Trim, which was still in the king's hand. In April 1400 Richard Gille was appointed to the positions of park-keeper and sergeant of the betaghry of Trim, for as long as the liberty of Trim remained in the king's hand.[323] In the same month the Mortimer records in Trim Castle were committed to the custody of Thomas de Everdun.[324] De Everdun was also appointed to a general commission of enquiry into what lands and properties in Ireland belonged to Richard II and his supporters.[325]

On 30 May Henry IV granted to one of his esquires, Janico Dartas, the custody of the manor and liberty of Trim, which was at that time valued at £105 15s 9d.[326] From July 1400 Dartas was to receive £100 per year from 'the issues of the castle, manor and lordship of Trym in Ireland and the lands, rents, services and other possessions pertaining thereto so long as they remain in the king's hand'.[327] This grant was reissued in April 1401.[328] By his marriage to Joan Taafe, a member of a prominent Meath family, Janico Dartas, who first came to prominence in Ireland

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[322]Johnston, 'Richard II's departure', pp 798-9.
[323]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, pp 155b-156, no. 22.
[324]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 156, no. 33.
[325]Johnston, 'Richard II's departure', p. 800.
[326]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 171, no. 87.
[327]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1399-1401*, p. 475.
[328]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 162, no. 95.

in 1394, had become a tenant under Edmund Mortimer.[329] In addition to Trim, Dartas had the custody of certain other properties in Dublin, Kildare and elsewhere in Meath (including Ardbraccan, Ardmulchan, and the Priory of Fore).[330] Over the following few years further grants were made to Dartas, including 100 marks per annum for life from the fee farm of Drogheda, and £40 yearly, for life, from the fee farm of Dublin—grants which he held without prejudice to other offices held by him such as that of constable of Dublin Castle and that of provost of Bordeaux.[331]

In April 1402 Dartas petitioned the king, stating that great injury had been caused by the enemy in the manor and lordship of Trim and consequently their value had decreased.[332] Dartas also complained that several tenants of the manor and liberty of Trim had refused to pay their rents and, in February 1403, the king appointed Henry Wattenhull, Phelim Power and John White to collect moneys, with power to distrain.[333] From the hugely profitable years of the mid-fourteenth century, the profits yielded by the liberty of Trim had taken a sharp nose-dive. A further indication of the low revenue generated by Trim at the turn at the fifteenth century is the correspondence between Nicholas Barynton, who had been constable of Trim Castle since at least 1399, and the king.[334] In 1402 Barynton claimed that he was entitled to large fees on the acquittal or conviction of felons, and that since the castle had been in the king's hand, he had received no such fees.[335] In February, the king granted Barynton £10 per year, but as Trim was yielding very little revenue, the money was to come from the manor of Portlester.[336]

In April 1404 Dartas surrendered custody of Trim to the king, and received in lieu thereof a pension of £100 a year for life from the receipts of the castle, manor and

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[329]Edmund Curtis, 'Janico Dartas, Richard the Second's 'Gascon Squire': his career in Ireland, 1394-1426' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, lxiii (1933), pp 182-205, at p. 194.

[330]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 154b, no. 52, p. 180, no. 1, p. 220, no. 80; Curtis, 'Janico Dartas', *passim*.

[331]Curtis, 'Janico Dartas', p. 193; Sayles, *Select cases: Richard II*, vii, no. 18; Russell Library, Maynooth, MS O'Renehan, 3, R.b.1, p. 720.

[332]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 171, no. 87.

[333]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 167, no. 21, p. 176, no. 159.

[334]Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 54-5; N.L.I., MS 761, William Betham, Excerpts from Irish pipe rolls, Henry III - Edward III, ii, f. 271.

[335]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 162, no. 94.

lordship.[337] The Dartas pension was a great drain on the already beleaguered Trim receipts. A fragmentary statement of the Irish revenue that can be dated to *c*.1406 shows that only £17 remained to the king out of the annual income of the liberty of Trim.[338] Half a century earlier, the king had received more than twenty times this sum from Trim. Despite the drop in profits, in April 1413 Henry V confirmed the provision to Dartas of his annual pension and in 1423 Henry VI again assured Dartas of a yearly grant of £100.[339] A series of payments to Dartas are recorded from 1420 to 1424, at a time when he seems to have held the office of constable of Greencastle.[340] Dartas died in October 1426.[341]

In May 1423 Edmund Mortimer was appointed for nine years to the position of lord lieutenant, thus ensuring his liberty of Trim a measure of diplomatic immunity from the Dublin authorities.[342] Almost immediately Mortimer exercised his right to select a deputy and Edward Dauntsey, bishop of Meath, was duly appointed. Mortimer remained in England until at least February 1424, but he appears to have spent Christmas and New Year at Trim.[343] Later in January he was at Trim Castle to receive submissions from the leading chiefs of Ulster, some of whom he later imprisoned.[344] Mortimer was suffering from illness while at Trim Castle, and on 18 January he finally succumbed to plague.[345]

Richard, duke of York's tenure as lord of Trim (1425-60)

Edmund Mortimer died childless, and as his brother Roger had pre-deceased him, all of his estates and claims passed to Richard, duke of York, who was the son of Mortimer's late sister Anne, and her late husband Richard, earl of Cambridge (see FIG. 2.5, fold-out genealogy). Though the male line of the earls of March had

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[336] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 162, no. 94.

[337] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 162b, no. 95.

[338] Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 343, referring to Trinity College Cambridge MS O.8.13 (fragments of the account were bound in as flyleaves for another manuscript and are still partially legible).

[339] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 226b, no. 15.

[340] Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, pp 552, 553, 554; T. E. McNeill, *Carrickfergus Castle, County Antrim* (Northern Ireland Archaeological Monographs: 1, Belfast, 1981), p. 7.

[341] Curtis, 'Janico Dartas', pp 197, 205.

[342] *Cal. pat. rolls, 1422-9*, p. 96; Dugdale, *Baronage*, i, 151; *N.H.I.* ix, 476.

[343] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 235, no. 4; *A.U. s.a.* 1425; Dugdale, *Baronage*, i, 149.

[344] *A.U. s.a.* 1425; Lydon, *England and Ireland in the later middle ages*, pp 218-19.

become extinct, York was now recognised as earl of March and Ulster. A great-grandson of Edward III, York was only thirteen years of age when his uncle died, and was therefore ineligible to take over his inheritance. In any case, most of the Mortimer property in Ireland had by this stage passed into the hands of the 'Irish enemies' and 'English rebels'. The liberty of Trim was a notable exception. This liberty has sometimes been used to illustrate the contraction of the area in which law and order was maintained by the government and shows Gaelic Ireland, often in alliance with rebel English, gaining control of more and more territory. 'In the great days of the lordship of Meath, its capital Trim had been surrounded by a land of peace. But with the Gaelic revival the land of peace contracted and before very long Trim became a frontier town, its great castle one of the key border fortresses on the outskirts of the area which subsequently became the Pale'.[346]

Just a week after Mortimer's death, the king had already begun granting out certain properties and lands in Trim, as well as assigning officers to the newly vacated administrative positions.[347] Philip White, clerk, was made keeper of the treasury of books and records in the castle.[348] Thomas Broun was granted the custody of one dovecote and an area of pastureland known as the *Castell Orchard*, next to Trim Castle, so long as they were in the king's hand and the rent was paid.[349] On 5 December 1430, however, the king transferred custody of the dovecot, as well as various other tenements and lands in Trim, to Richard Talbot, archbishop of Dublin.[350] Talbot was also to receive the burgage rent from the town, as well as stallage and custom's duty, during York's minority.

When York came of age he was granted possession of his lands in Ireland. In February 1436, before he set sail for France, he received a grant that for the next ten years the liberty of Trim would not be taken into the king's hand without just cause, and without due notice.[351] Very little survives of the documentary evidence

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[345]Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 269; *Complete peerage*, viii, 453; *D.N.B.*, Mortimer, p. 125.
[346]Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland*, pp 173-4.
[347]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 235, no. 16.
[348]*Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 356.
[349]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 235, no. 16.
[350]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 250, no. 16.
[351]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1429-36*, p. 510.

relating to Trim for York's tenure as lord of Trim, and this perhaps reflects the fact that this was a period of continued decline and contraction.

On 9 December 1447, York was appointed king's lieutenant in Ireland, with almost royal authority. The appointment was renewed three times over the following decade.[352] At an earlier time, such an appointment would have been of crucial importance for the stability of Trim and its administration, but by the mid-fifteenth century the Dublin government was no longer so eager to confiscate what had become a profitless lordship. That the provisions of the earlier grants regarding jurisdiction within the liberty of Trim were maintained up to this time, however, is evidenced in 1447 when York ordered an assize of *novel disseisin* to be held *'coram seneschalo suo libertatis suae Midiae'*.[353] In 1450, at a parliament held in Drogheda, York constituted Sir Edmund de Mulso seneschal of the liberty of Meath.[354] The six-year ordinance also stated that all pleas arising in the said liberty were to be heard before the seneschal, as had been the case since 'time beyond memory'.

The already declining revenues in Meath must have been further weakened by political and social instability within the liberty—attacks by local Irish appear to have been frequent, and 'English rebels' often joined with the Irish in these attacks. In addition, in 1453-4 a dispute between James Butler, the fifth earl of Ormond, who had succeeded to the Butler estates on the death of his father in 1452, and Thomas FitzMaurice, grandnephew of the 5th earl of Kildare, concerning possession of the manors of Maynooth and Rathmore, was said to have 'caused more destruccioune in the said counte of Kildare and the liberty of Mith within shorte tyme now late passed, and dayly doth, then was done by Irish ennemys and English rebelles of long tyme befor, and is likely to be the fynall destruccioune of the said counte of Kildare and the liberty of Mith'.[355]

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[352]*N.H.I.* ix, 477.

[353]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 318.

[354]Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 78-9, referring to *Betham's collections*.

[355]Henry Ellis (ed.), *Original letters illustrative of English history* (11 vols, in 3 ser., London, 1824-6), 2nd ser., i, 117-22.

The end of the liberty: Trim in royal hands (1460-1541)

When York was killed at Wakefield on 30 December 1460 the lands and liberty of Trim passed into the hands of the crown who held it for the rest of the middle ages. The liberty appears to have been suppressed, but the government tried to compensate for this by arranging for the courts of the king's bench to meet within the former liberty.[356] These arrangements do not seem to have been a great success and in 1468 a statute was passed clearing the way for the appointment of a seneschal *pur la conseruacion de bone & pollitique reule del Counte de Mith*.[357] The intention of this appointment was probably to create a local officer with greater administrative and judicial powers than a royal sheriff, without re-establishing the entire liberty organisation and the expense that that would incur. However, this system also proved unsatisfactory and in 1472 the king ordered that the liberty was to be restored, 'with a seneschal and all other officers, as it was held in the time of his father [Richard, duke of York]'.[358] Sir Robert Bolde, lord of Ratoath, was granted the office of seneschal of the liberty of Meath, in consideration of his 'good and faithful service'.[359] He was to hold the position under the same terms as William Welles, lately deceased, had held it.

The restoration of the liberty in 1472 proved to be popular with the gentry of Meath but was opposed by the government and by the earl of Kildare.[360] In December of that year the government succeeded in having the liberty abolished on the grounds that its existence created an unnecessary drain on government coffers and provided scope for the extortion and oppression of the local community.[361] It was said that the seneschal, Edward Plunket (who must have replaced Bolde by this time), had abused his position and that complaints had been made against him 'as well by divers lords and gentlemen as by the mayors and sheriffs of the towns'. Plunket and the other officers of the liberty were

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[356]S. G. Ellis, 'The destruction of the liberties: some further evidence' in *I.H.R. Bull.*, liv (1981), pp 150-61, at p. 153. King's Bench spent Easter term of 1461 and a year from Hilary term of 1467, at least, in Trim.

[357]*Stat. Ire. 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 466-7; Betham, *Dignities*, i, 376.

[358]*Stat. Ire. 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 764-5.

[359]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 834-7.

[360]D. B. Quinn, 'Aristocratic autonomy, 1460-94' in *N.H.I.*, ii, 591-618, at p. 603.

[361]*Stat. Ire. 12-22 Edw. IV*, pp 2-9.

consequently discharged of their offices and James Flemyng, baron of Slane, was appointed sheriff of Meath 'to guard and defend the people of the said county from the extorsions [*sic*], oppressions, coigne and livery and robbery used in the same'. The king, however, wished to consider further the status of Meath and so, in March 1473, he had the act abolishing the liberty repealed.[362] Edward Plunket was reinstated as seneschal, with practically the same powers as he had held previously—with the exception that he was no longer licensed to hold courts within the liberty, unless the king ordered otherwise (under the great seal of England or his privy seal). Flemyng's titles to the shrievalty of Meath were pronounced null and void, while the duty of executing writs and mandates within the liberty was transferred to Plunket, by whose 'great labours and charges [...], the king's people in Meath were greatly preserved and defended'. Plunket was still seneschal in 1474, but later that year the position was granted to Sir Gilbert Debenham.[363]

The decision was made to abolish the liberty once more but it was subsequently revived in 1478, and in March of that year Lord Henry Grey was appointed seneschal and treasurer of 'the king's liberty of Meath' for life, 'with all fees, wards, marriages, reliefs, escheats, forfeitures, courts, leets, customs, liberties, franchises, authorities, regards, commodities and other emoluments'.[364] Grey was to have power to appoint and remove officers and ministers. The following November Grey summoned a parliament at Trim and it was there enacted that the liberty of Meath should be restored with all its ancient franchises.[365] The appointment of Grey as seneschal and treasurer was confirmed, and he was empowered to hold courts within the liberty and to mint silver coins at Trim Castle.

The following year it was found that 'a pretended liberty was used and had in Meath by Oliver Plunket, esquire, late seneschal of the said pretended liberty', and in December of that year the liberty was once more abolished, again on the king's

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[362] *Stat. Ire. 12-22 Edw. IV*, pp 94-7.
[363] *Stat. Ire. 12-22 Edw. IV*, p. liv; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1467-77*, p. 468.
[364] *Cal. pat. rolls, 1476-85*, pp 73-4.

orders, by act of Parliament.[366] It was also enacted that all royal writs previously issued to the said seneschal now be transferred for execution to Alexander Plunket, the newly appointed sheriff of Meath. Oliver Plunket had earlier been sheriff of Meath and, in 1476, 'the occupation and execution of the shrievalty of the said county [being] so burdensome and costly to the sheriff', was allowed to receive 20 marks from the issues and profits of the county.[367] It was found that a number of debtors within the county had 'deforced the said sheriff and his officers and raise hue and cry upon them and remove their goods'. It may have been in an attempt to deal with such financial and administrative difficulties that Oliver Plunket had established his 'pretended liberty' in Meath.

With the abolition of the liberty and its absorption into the county of Meath, the documentary records become fewer and more general. A great council was held at Trim on 12 September 1493 before Sir Robert Preston, Lord Gormanston, in order to discuss ways of ensuring that law and order were kept in the king's lands. As a result of this meeting, large sums of money were levied on delinquents' lands and hostages were taken and lodged in the castles of Dublin and Trim.[368]

The area in which the king could enforce authority had contracted considerably and even within that jurisdiction there were increasing difficulties in maintaining control. The first documentary evidence for the 'English Pale' dates from Poyning's Drogheda parliament of 1494. An act of that parliament stated that 'as the marches of four shires lie open and not fensible in fastness of ditches and castles, by which Irishmen do great hurt in preying the same: it is enacted that every inhabitant, earthtiller, and occupier in said marches, i.e. in the county of Dublin, from the water of Anliffy to the mountains of Kildare, from the water of Anliffy to Trim, and so forth to Meath and Uriel [....] do build and make a double ditch of six feet high above ground, at one side, or part which mireth [sic] next unto Irishmen, betwixt this and next Lammas [1 August], the said ditches to be

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[365]*Stat. Ire. 12-22 Edw. IV,* pp 666-71.
[366]*Stat. Ire. 12-22 Edw. IV,* pp 730-3.
[367]*Stat. Ire. 12-22 Edw. IV,* pp 258-61.
[368]D. B. Quinn, 'The bills and statutes of the Irish parliaments of Henry VII and Henry VIII' in *Anal. Hib.,* no. 10 (July 1941), pp 71-169, at pp 88-91.

kept up and repaired as long as they shall occupy said land, under pain of forty shillings'.[369]

It was also stated at that Drogheda parliament that the rolls, records and memoranda that had been kept in the treasury of Trim had lately been taken and embezzled, by 'diverse persons of malice prepensed'.[370] The treasury at Trim had been the repository of the records, rolls and inquisitions of the earldom of Ulster, the lordship of Connaught and the liberty of Trim, and an act was passed for the recovery of these files.[371] Of particular importance was the disappearance of documents that 'should entitle our Sovereign Lord', and although penalties were specified for withholding them, they do not seem to have been recovered. Consequently, it was enacted that the liberty of Trim should be annexed to the crown forever.[372]

While Trim was in the custody of the crown in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the income it provided by to the royal collectors fluctuated continually. The accounts of Irish revenue for 1485, for instance, show that by that year the manor of Trim returned only £25 per annum to the crown, after the yearly payment of 100s had been made to the archbishop of Armagh (for discussion of this annual payment, see CHAPTER THREE).[373] In the six months from 21 June to December 1495 Trim yielded £22 to the government.[374] Hattecliffe's estimates (made at the end of 1495) for Ireland for 1496 include projected receipts from the manor of Trim of £46.[375] Of the 13 manors listed, only Newcastle in Co. Dublin, at £57, was expected to yield more revenue than Trim. It

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[369] James Hardiman (ed.), 'The statute of Kilkenny, which was enacted there in the time of Lionel Duke of Clarence, in the xl[th] year of the reign of Edward III' in *Tracts relating to Ireland* (printed for the Irish Archaeological Society, Dublin, 1843), ii, 4, note.

[370] J. G. Butler (ed.), *The statutes at large passed in the parliaments held in Ireland... 1310-1800* (20 vols, Dublin, 1786-1801), i, 51-2; *Stat. Ire., Hen. VII & VIII*, 93.

[371] Herbert Wood, 'The public records of Ireland before and after 1922' in *R. Hist. Soc. Trans.*, fourth series, xiii (London, 1930), pp 17-49, at p. 21; *Cal. state papers, Ire., 1509-73*, p. 15, no. 76.

[372] *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 451.

[373] D. B. Quinn, 'Guide to English financial records for Irish history, 1461-1558, with illustrative extracts, 1461-1509' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 10 (July 1941), pp 1-69, at p. 22.

[374] Agnes Conway, *Henry VII's relations with Scotland and Ireland, 1485-1498* (New York, 1972), p. 172, note 5, referring to B.L., Royal MSS 18, C xiv, ff 133-9, 142-4.

[375] Conway, *Henry VII's relations with Scotland and Ireland*, p. 188.

appears from the accounts of William Darcy of Plattyn, receiver-general of Ireland, that the profits of the manor of Trim were £58 for the year 1502.[376] In 1534 annual profits from the manor of Trim had risen slightly to £58 1s 1d, but, while receipts from other manors continued to increase, by 1541 returns from Trim had fallen back to £32 18s 5d.[377]

In 1537 John Alen, master of the rolls, wrote to the king's commissioners in Ireland suggesting that Meath should be divided in half 'because the shyre of Meathe [is] soo large, that one shyre [sheriff] cannot well execute the Kinges process, I thinke it goode that the same be devideid into twoo shyres; one to be called the countye of Meathe, and thither the countye of Westmeathe, to be lymytid from Athboy westwarde'.[378] In 1541 an act was passed by which the county of Meath, effectively the largest of the late medieval counties, was divided into the shires of Meath and Westmeath.[379]

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[376]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 103.
[377]P.R.O., SC 11/934 (Crown lands: extents of the ancient demesnes of the king, 32 Henry VIII); A. S. K. Abraham, Patterns of landholding and architectural patronage in late medieval Meath: a regional study in the landholding classes, tower-houses and parish churches in Ireland, *c.*1300 - *c.*1540 (4 vols, unpublished Ph.D. thesis presented to the Queen's University of Belfast, June 1991), i, 230 (referring to referring to B.L., Royal MSS 18, C xiv, fol. 148), 233-4.
[378]*State papers, 1515-38*, ii, part III, 499.
[379]*State papers, 1515-38*, ii, part III (continued), p. 294.

FIG. 2.5 Genealogical table of the lords and ladies
of the liberty of Trim and the lordship of Meath,
1172-1547

PLEASE FOLD OUT

❖   **CHAPTER 3**

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LIBERTY AND TOWN OF TRIM, 1172-1541

Introduction

Having been granted the liberty of Meath and the right to appoint officers for its government, Hugh de Lacy selected Trim as the administrative centre of his new lordship. Trim Castle in particular became the hub of government, housing the chancery, exchequer and prison of the liberty as well as functioning as the repository for all documentary records and as a home for the lord of the liberty and his family (see also CHAPTER SIX).

Trim's role as *caput* of the entire liberty was central to the evolution of the town itself. In addition to the liberty administration, an urban government developed, with responsibility for, among other things, the upkeep of the town, the collection of taxes, accounting to the exchequer and keeping the peace. It is not entirely clear, however, to what extent the roles of these two administrative bodies overlapped, or to what level they cooperated. No single document gives a complete description of the make-up or functions of either 'government', but information from a series of grants, inquisitions and letters from the twelfth to the sixteenth century provides a general picture of the composition and role of both the liberty administration and the urban government.

Administration of the lordship and liberty

Meath was granted to Hugh de Lacy as a liberty, which has been defined as an area granted to a subject 'to whom the king delegated a portion of his royal prerogative (*jura regalia*)'.[1] The case of Meath was rarer still, however, as de Lacy was allowed complete jurisdiction and cognisance of all pleas, including arson, rape, treasure-trove and forestalling—pleas that were otherwise almost always reserved exclusively to the crown.[2] Under the conditions of the grant, the lord of Meath was entitled to appoint a chancellor, a treasurer and other officers to oversee the day-to-day government of his franchise. From this time, an administrative system developed at Trim that closely resembled that of central government, but on a smaller scale.

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[1] Wood, 'The muniments', p. 312.
[2] *Chart. privil. immun.*, pp 53-4; Wood, 'The muniments', pp 312-13, 328, deed ix; *Cal. chart. rolls, 1327-41*, pp 176-7.

Seneschal

Although the grant of 1172 does not detail what the 'other officers' were to be, one was undoubtedly a seneschal or steward. The seneschal (*seniscalus*, 'old servant') was the chief administrative officer of his lord, advising him, managing his estates and presiding over the liberty court. An important role of the seneschal was to account for the finances of his jurisdiction before the exchequer at Dublin. Meath definitely had a seneschal by 1210,[3] but there was almost certainly one there from the very beginning of de Lacy's tenure as head of the lordship. The right of the lord of Meath to appoint his own seneschal was recognised by the king's court at Salisbury in 1289.[4] The names of more than sixty-five seneschals of Meath are recorded in various sources for the period from *c.*1210 to 1478 (see APPENDIX ONE).

Deputy Seneschal

By the fifteenth century, the office of seneschal of Meath was regularly granted to a person who was unable to devote all of his time to the position. It was a sought-after ministry, but incumbents increasingly relied on deputies to carry out their functions. In 1450, for instance, the duke of York constituted Sir Edmund Mulso seneschal of Meath for life.[5] Mulso, who in the same year was granted permission to found a town called Mulsoescourt, in the lordship of Fercullen (the Powerscourt area of the Dublin/Wicklow border),[6] is an example of an appointee who had too many other duties and interests to dedicate all of his time to the administration of Meath. The six-year ordinance also stated that all pleas arising in the liberty were to be heard before the seneschal, as had been the case since 'time beyond memory'. There were to be four court sessions annually at Trim—each of fifteen days duration—and if the seneschal was absent, the sessions were to be discontinued. When he could not be present, Mulso was to appoint a deputy in his stead. When the ordinance was reviewed in 1457, parliament granted that the Trim court of sessions could be held before the duke himself in the absence of

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[3] *Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 20-1, 44-5.
[4] *Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92*, no. 525.
[5] *Stat. Ire., Hen. VI*, pp 176-7, 218-21; P. A. Johnson, *Duke Richard of York, 1411-1460* (Oxford, 1988), p. 235.
[6] *Stat. Ire. Henry VI*, pp 214-19.

Thomas FitzMorice, who had by then been appointed seneschal of the liberty. FitzMorice was also deputy lieutenant of Ireland and therefore was not always present in Trim to hold court.[7] The licence was extended each year until York's death in 1460.[8]

When, on 12 May 1472, Sir Robert Bolde, lord of Ratoath, was made seneschal of Meath, it was stated that he was to be paid 'out of the issues of the aforesaid liberty by the hands of the treasurer of the said liberty'.[9] Bolde was to be permitted 'to make a deputy from time to time, in his absence out of the said liberty.

Sheriff

In 1289 the court at Salisbury also found that the lord of Meath was entitled to have a sheriff.[10] Although the role of sheriff (*shire reeve*) usually pertained to the administration of the county (shire), it was not uncommon for one to be appointed by the lord of a liberty. While the sheriff of a liberty carried out many of the duties also carried out by the sheriff of a county, his main task within the liberty was to execute writs issued by the chancellor. On several occasions in the fourteenth century Meath had more than one sheriff while a number of subsheriffs are recorded in the fifteenth century (See APPENDIX TWO)

Chancellor and chancery

In a charter of April 1330 the king confirmed to the lords of Trim 'that they shall have and exercise at their castle of Trym all kind of jurisdiction and the cognisance of all pleas [...] and also have a chancery and an exchequer and their own seals therein'.[11] The chancery was the administrative centre for property grants, the drawing up of titles, deeds and agreements, and the repository for legal documents including charters, grants and writs.

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[7]*Stat. Ire., John-Hen. V*, pp 462-3.
[8]*Stat. Ire., Hen. VI*, pp 520-1, 576-9, 688-91.
[9]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 834-7.
[10]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92*, no. 525.
[11]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 328, deed ix; *Cal. chart. rolls, 1327-41*, p. 176; *Cal. close rolls, 1279-88*, pp 55-6; *Cal. fine rolls, 1272-1307*, p. 129; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, nos 1670, 1673; Michael Prestwich, *Edward I* (London, 1988), p. 539.

Although Roger le Blund is the earliest recorded chancellor of Trim (in 1299), it is unlikely that he was the first incumbent of that office.[12] By *c.*1308 the office of chancellor was occupied by Roger le Colount,[13] and in 1359 James de Wattenhull held the position,[14] having been treasurer of Trim in 1347.[15] De Wattenhull's duties as chancellor extended beyond the borders of the lordship itself and in August 1359 he was summoned, along with a number of other prelates, magnates, chief officers and knights, to a council at Dublin to discuss certain very urgent business concerning the king's peace in Leinster.[16] De Wattenhull was clearly a man of some ability and by 1366 he had been appointed to the office of baron of the Irish exchequer.[17]

A number of the various functions of the chancery at Trim are illustrated by the surviving documents. In May 1318, for instance, the chancery issued to Isolde Hacket a charter (which survives) granting to her certain properties within the liberty,[18] while on 27 June 1432 John Cauntewall, archdeacon of Ossory and sub-collector for the Apostolical See, was sworn into office in the chancery of Trim.[19] In 1460, when Richard, duke of York, was empowered to appoint auditors to verify certain accounts at the Trim exchequer, the appointments were to be made under the seal of the Trim chancery.[20]

Treasurer and exchequer

The centre of the financial administration of the lordship was the exchequer. In it, income was received and disbursed, accounts were kept and audited regularly by specially designated barons, extents were made, while the treasurer was responsible for paying the staff and officers and looking after the rolls, receipts, documents, records and books pertaining to the fiscal business of the lordship.

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[12]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303*, p. 293; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 185.

[13]*Gormanston reg.*, p. 169; *Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7*, p. 218.

[14]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 78b, no. 73; Betham, *Dignities*, i, 299.

[15]N.L.I., *Harris Collectanea*, MS 13., fol. 150.

[16]Richardson & Sayles, *Parl. & councils med. Ire.*, i, xii-xiii; Lynch, *Legal instit. Ire.*, pp 317-18.

[17]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, pp 520, 522.

[18]Wood, 'The muniments', pp 329, 336, deed xxi. By a quitclaim of Apr. 1328, Hacket released this land, see Wood, 'The muniments', pp 329, 336-7, deed xxii.

[19]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 256, no. 143.

[20]*Stat. Ire., Hen. VI*, pp 674-5.

Also attached to the exchequer was at least one chamberlain (a financial clerk), although in Trim in 1362 there were two chamberlains on the payroll.[21] Radulph le Curtys, who was seneschal during the period 1275-85,[22] is the first recorded treasurer of Meath and the names of ten others are known from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (see APPENDIX THREE). Dolley suggested that seven jettons or reckoning-counters (two English and five French) recovered during excavations at Trim Castle in the 1970s may have been used in the exchequer there.[23]

Escheator

The liberty of Trim also had its own escheator,[24] an office that developed in England in the thirteenth century. The escheator was responsible for feudal revenues, and was therefore concerned with property rights, births, marriages and deaths, wardships and *primer seisin*. When a tenant committed a felony or died without an heir, the escheator was entitled to repossess or escheat the tenant's fief. He would hold an inquisition *post mortem* on the death of a tenant and then act according to the findings of the inquiry, usually repossessing the deceased's lands for the lord's estate. The earliest known escheator for Meath was John de Gresden, who held that position in *c.*1394, while the latest was James Boyxe of Ballyvollen, escheator in *c.*1534 (see APPENDIX FOUR).

Coroner

An equally important member of the officialdom of the lordship was the coroner.[25] The office of coroner was created in England in 1194, modified in the 1220s and spread to Ireland during the thirteenth century.[26] The work of the coroner, or 'keeper of the pleas of the crown', entailed a number of responsibilities in the detection and prosecution of crime and the maintenance of

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[21]P.R.O., E 101/244/3.
[22]*Reg. St Thomas, Dublin*, p. 57; *Ir. Chartul Llanthony*, p. 130; *P. R. I. rep D. K. xxxvi, app.*, pp 33-4 [1275-6], 37 [1276-7], 44-5, 46-7; *Gormanston reg.*, p. 13; N.L.I., MS 760, ff 20-1, 25, 29, 36; N.L.I., *Harris Collectanea*, MS 13., fol. 150.
[23]Michael Dolley, 'Report on numismatic material' (Appendix III) in Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 193-7.
[24]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 315; *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 118b, no. 108.
[25]Wood, 'The muniments', p. 315.
[26]R. F. Hunnisett, *The medieval English Coroner* (Cambridge, 1961), passim; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 179.

royal rights. Among his duties were the investigation of sudden or suspicious deaths, including the examination of the corpse and the attachment of witnesses, the recording of 'appeals' (charges of felony prosecuted by individuals) and confessions, and several other administrative duties. John Herdman was coroner for Meath in 1424 and Walter Cusack held that position in 1450 (see APPENDIX FOUR).

Seals

The possession of a crown-approved seal was necessary to give authority to all writs and acts of a ministerial nature. For instance, writs issued by the chancellor were stamped with the official seal of the chancery.

On each occasion that the lordship of Meath reverted to the crown, the king had a new seal made. When the Mortimer estates were taken into Edward III's hand on the death of Roger Mortimer in 1360, for instance, an order was immediately made for a new seal to be engraved for Meath, 'and letters and writs touching that liberty to be sealed therewith'.[27] When the Mortimer lands came into crown hands due to the minority of the heir in 1381, Richard II had a new seal prepared for the lordship of Meath.[28] The seal was to follow the design of that of the liberty of Ulster, which had 'on one side a knight in arms and on the reverse the king's image on his throne, with a sceptre in his right hand'. The legend, *Sigillum Richardi Regis Angliae et Franciae Domini Hiberniae & Custodis libertatis Ultoniae*, was to be reproduced on the new seal, except that the word *Midiae* was to be substituted for *Ultoniae*.

Keeper/justice of the peace

Keepers of the peace were appointed within counties and lordships in Ireland from the 1270s.[29] Their function was primarily to assess those with responsibility for the defence of their jurisdiction and to ensure that these men were appropriately

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[27]*Cal. close rolls, 1360-4*, p. 41.
[28]N.L.I., *Harris Collectanea*, MS. 17, fol. 146; *Rot. pat. Hib.* p. 117, no. 41, p. 130, no. 64; Gilbert, *Viceroys*, p. 250.
[29]Robin Frame, 'Commissions of the peace, 1302-1461' in *Anal. Hib.* no. 35 (1992), pp 1-43; Connolly, *Medieval record sources*, p. 30.

equipped for the task. From the early fourteenth century their duties included the enforcement of the provisions of the 1285 statute of Winchester by which members of the population were to keep arms in proportion to their movable wealth and to 'engage in watch and ward' and the pursuit of evildoers—generally to assist in peace-keeping operations.[30] Frame summarised the role of a keeper of the peace in Ireland as 'part justice of the peace in embryo, part warden of the marches'.[31] Indeed, records regularly refer to keepers of the peace as 'justices'. Each barony usually had at least one keeper or justice, and the officials for a group of baronies were overseen by a supervisor, usually a senior member of a prominent family in the area.

Nicholas Taff was the first recorded justice of the liberty of Trim in *c*.1274,[32] but it was not until the middle of the fourteenth century that much emphasis appears to have been placed on the role of such officers. The second half of that century was a time when a particularly large number of keepers and supervisors were in operation in Meath, with families such as Nugent, Fleming, Tuyt, Pettit, Cruys and Nangle dominating the lists (see APPENDIX EIGHT). In fact, a surprisingly large number of families provided administrative officers in medieval Meath— particularly in the late fourteenth century. In the first quarter of the fifteenth century, when the office of keeper of the peace was still thriving, it is the Plunket and Preston families that come to the fore. It is also at this time that the bishops of Meath begin to serve as justices of the peace.

Many of the keepers of the peace in Meath also fulfilled other administrative duties within the lordship. For instance, Richard de Tuyt, who was a keeper of the peace in 1328-30, later became seneschal,[33] while John Hussey was a keeper of the peace in the barony of Deece in 1361 and 1371, and functioned as seneschal of Meath intermittently from 1354 to at least 1372.[34] Thomas Bacon was a justice of

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[30]*Stat. Ire., John-Hen. V*, 244-57; Frame, 'Commissions of the peace', p. 3.

[31]Frame, 'Commissions of the peace', p. 4.

[32]*Ir. Chartul Llanthony*, p. 176.

[33]Nat. Archives, RC 8/16, p. 55; Lydon, 'Survey of the memoranda rolls', p. 65.

[34]Nat. Archives, RC 8/29, p. 83, no. 335; G. O. Sayles, *Scripta diversa* (London, 1982), pp 118-19, note 106, referring to P.R.O., C 47/19/1/10; G. O. Sayles (ed.), *Documents on the affairs of Ireland*

Meath in 1407 and became escheator by 1425 and chief sergeant at about the same time.[35] John Herdman was coroner in 1424,[36] and keeper of the peace in 1432. This period appears to have been a time at which local families asserted themselves increasingly as the administrators of Meath, while there were still opportunities for newcomers such as Janico Dartas, the 'Gascon squire' and Sir John Shriggely from northwest England (see APPENDIX EIGHT and CHAPTER SIX).[37]

Salaries, wages and fees

A record survives of some of the fees paid to certain officers of the lordship of Meath in the time of Geoffrey de Geneville: the seneschal was to receive £20, two robes, two hoods and one saddle per year; the sheriff was paid 40s as his fee and a further 18s for his robe; while the treasurer also got 18s 'for robe' in addition to his £20 salary.[38]

Numbered among the officers of the liberty of Trim in 1308 were a seneschal, a sheriff, a chancellor, a treasurer and a clerk.[39] When detailing the conditions under which she held the liberty of Trim in 1347, Joan Mortimer claimed the right to appoint not only a seneschal, chancellor and treasurer, but also a justice of the assize court and a justice to issue summonses and attachments and to carry out all other duties usually undertaken by a sheriff.[40] At Trim in 1361 salaries were being paid to a seneschal, a chancellor, two chamberlains of the exchequer, two pleaders (*narratores*) and the constable of the castle (for a discussion of the constables of Trim Castle, see CHAPTER SIX).[41] One of the pleaders was Edmund de Barford who had previously been seneschal of Meath (see APPENDICES ONE and FOUR).[42] De Barford held pleas with the seneschal of Trim and received payment at 20

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before the king's council (Dublin, 1979), pp 284-5, no. 299; N.L.I., *Harris Collectanea*, MS 13., fol. 150; *Gormanston reg.*, p. 38.

[35]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 192-5.

[36]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 233, no. 8.

[37]Edmund Curtis, 'Janico Dartas, Richard the Second's 'Gascon Squire': his career in Ireland, 1394-1426' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, lxiii (1933), pp 182-205; Frame, 'Commissions of the peace', p. 5.

[38]*Gormanston reg.*, pp 10, 182.

[39]*Gormanston reg.*, p. 169; *Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7*, p. 218.

[40]N.L.I., *Harris Collectanea*, MS 13., 'King's collectanea', fol. 145.

[41]P.R.O., E 101/244/3.

[42]P.R.O., E 101/244/3.

marks a year. At about the same time (1362-6) the sergeant of the manor of Trim, James de Edleston, received wages of 1½d per day.[43]

Chief Sergeant of Meath

The office of 'chief sergeant' of Meath is referred to from early in the fourteenth century (see APPENDIX FIVE). One role of this officer seems to have been to appoint jurors to the court of the liberty. In 1315 Nicholas Bacon, chief sergeant of Meath, was charged 40s 'for false return, and 20s because he caused paupers and unfit persons to come to juries'.[44] In Bacon's defence in this matter, the difficulty of assembling a jury can be appreciated from an entry dating to 1286.[45] In that year a writ of right was brought in the court of Trim but, as the four knights summoned to elect twelve jurors could not find a single knight who was not of 'affinity or consanguinity to the parties', the assize had to be adjourned. The king sent a writ ordering that the case be heard before the justices at Dublin instead.

The principal duty of the chief sergeant, however, was to collect the rents due to the king within the bailiwick or lordship. The office appears to have been farmed out, i.e. the incumbent of the office collected all of the money due to the crown, but only paid over a pre-agreed sum to the exchequer, keeping the balance as his wage.

In 1342 Simon de Geneville was ordered to pay to the exchequer £9 6s 8d of the issues of the bailiwick and chief sergeancy of the liberty of Trim for the Michaelmas term of 1342.[46] At the same time he was charged £46 13s 4d for the preceding 2½ years, at a rate of £18 13s 4d per annum, and a further £28 in arrears. However, it was found that de Geneville had already settled the account of £9 6s 8d, and that on 26 July 1336 Edward III had granted the bailiwick of Trim

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[43] Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, pp 517, 525.
[44] *P.R.I. rep D.K. xxxix, app.*, pp 56-7
[45] *Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92*, pp 403-6, no. 891, pp 423-4, no. 962; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1293-1301*, p. 40, no. 85; Sayles, *Select cases: Richard II*, i, no. 28, pp 45-50.
[46] *P.R.I. rep D.K. xlvii, app.*, p. 55.

to Henry Dillon, Thomas fitz Richard and Philip de Weston.[47] In return for this, Dillon, FitzRichard and de Weston were to pay an annual sum of 24 pounds of silver to the exchequer (de Geneville had been paying less than £19). It was found that these men had settled their accounts up to 1342 and the request for de Geneville to settle was therefore dropped.

In 1323 Walter de la Pulle was proposed as chief sergeant of Meath during the minority of Matthew Bacon, but it is not clear whether he ever held office.[48] The office was subsequently held by John Bacon, but had he forfeited his post by May 1343 'for a false return in the seneschalry of the liberty of Trim'.[49] Consequently, the job was granted to Walter le Warde on 18 May for his good service in Brittany and elsewhere. Not long later, le Warde complained to the king that the justiciar in Dublin had restored Bacon to the office. The king ordered that this restoration be overturned and in February 1344 an order was made to deliver the office to le Warde.

In a further twist, in November 1353 the king issued an order to the justiciar in Ireland to 'deliver to Nicholas Bacoun the bailiwick of chief sergeancy of the county of Meath and of the liberty of Trym in Ireland if he finds that John Bacoun is dead... notwithstanding the commission of the bailiwick to Walter Warde'.[50] Nicholas was John Bacon's eldest son and heir and the king had ordered Warde to present himself at the chancery in London to 'show cause why the commission of the bailiwick to him should not be revoked'. Warde did not appear. Nicholas seems to have taken up the chief sergeancy, but by 1367 Walter le Warde was back in his old job. In July of that year, the king had further cause to contact the justices of the bench in Dublin concerning the sergeancy of Meath.[51] The king had 'learned that divers men [were] scheming to defraud as well the king of his right as the said Walter [le Warde] of the possession of those bailiwicks [Meath and

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[47]*P R.I. rep D.K. xlvii, app.*, pp 21, 47, 57.
[48]P.R.O., C 47/10/18/14.
[49]*Cal. close rolls, 1343-48*, p. 286; *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 420.
[50]*Cal. close rolls, 1349-54*, p. 569.
[51]*Cal. close rolls, 1364-68*, p. 391.

Dublin]'. By 1386 Thomas, son of Nicholas Bacon, had been appointed chief sergeant of Meath.[52]

In 1463/4 it was found that 'Thomas Bakon and his ancestors, from time whereof no memory runs to the contrary, were seised in their demesne as in fee, of the office of chief serjeant of the liberty of Meath'.[53] Accordingly, on Bacon's death, the office of chief sergeant had passed to his grandson, Thomas Bermyngham, who held the position until he 'was ousted thereout by colour of divers letters patent', and replaced by a certain William Hyndeley. When it was found that these letters were in error, Bermyngham was reinstated as chief sergeant. Thomas Bacon had been a justice of Meath in 1407 and escheator of the liberty of Trim in 1425,[54] and it would seem that Bacon, Bermyngham and Hyndeley monopolised the office of chief sergeant of Meath from about that time to *c.*1463. It was later found that on the death of Thomas Bermyngham, the office of chief sergeant had descended to his grandson, Patrick.[55]

In the sixteenth century, the position of chief sergeant of Meath was held almost exclusively by the constable of Trim Castle. On 1 March 1522 Sir John Wallop was granted the offices of constable of Trim Castle, and receiver and bailiff of the lordship of Trim, lately held by John Rocheford.[56] The grant was for 30 years, with a fee of £10 for the constableship, and the usual fees for the receivership, and Wallop was to render an account to the Exchequer in Dublin annually. It subsequently became apparent, however, that Wallop's grant, under the great seal of Ireland and witnessed by the earl of Surrey, had been issued without the king's authority and was consequently invalid. On 2 May 1524, therefore, Thomas Stephens was given a thirty-year grant of the offices of constable of Trim Castle and bailiff of the manor of Trim, 'lately held by John Rocheford'.[57] Stephens' remuneration was to be of the order of £10 Irish per year as constable, and 'the

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[52]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 127, no. 227.
[53]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 192-5.
[54]Frame, 'Commissions of the peace', p. 28; *Stat. Ire. 12-22 Edw. IV*, p. liv.
[55]Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, pp 354-5, no JI 55.
[56]*Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i, 1521-58, p. 7, no. 2 (27).
[57]*L. & P. Hen. VIII, 1524-6*, no. 390.

usual fees as bailiff'. He was to take up his new positions as soon as Wallop had surrendered office. The grant to Stephens was reissued on 2 March 1525.[58] Other constables of Trim Castle to hold the office of chief sergeant of Meath in the sixteenth century include Thomas Devenishe (from March 1551)[59] and Laurence Hammond (from December 1553).[60]

The Trim Betaghry and the Park of Trim

Betagh (*biatach*) tenure was a medieval system whereby a person held land from his lord in return for carrying out certain manual tasks, mostly agricultural work, on the demesne lands of the manor.[61] These tenants, or betaghs, were almost exclusively Gaelic Irish,[62] and had a status roughly equivalent to that of the villein in England. Although they were not exactly slaves, betaghs were unfree, had no property rights, and could be sold or given away with their property.[63] The work they did for their lord did not exempt them from land rent, and they normally paid the same amount as that paid by the other classes of tenant on the same manor.[64] Betaghs constituted a socially cohesive and distinctive section of society, albeit at the bottom of the social scale.

[58] *L. & P. Hen. VIII, 1524-6*, no. 1230.

[59] *Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 284, no. 162; *Ir. fiants, Hen. VIII-Eliz. I*, ii (1558-86), no. 721 (654), p. 163.

[60] *Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 310, no. 40; *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i, 1553-8, p. 296, no. 12 (8).

[61] Edmund Curtis, 'Rental of the manor of Lisronagh, 1333, and notes on 'betagh' tenure in medieval Ireland' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, xliii (Feb. 1936), sect. C, no. 3, pp 41-76, at pp 62-76; James Mills, 'Tenants and agriculture near Dublin in the fourteenth century' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, xxi (1890-1 [1892]), pp 54-63; Liam Price, 'The origin of the word *betagius*' in *Ériu*, xx (1966), pp 185-90; Gearóid Mac Niocaill, 'The origins of the betagh' in *Ir. Jurist*, new series, i (1966), pp 292-8; K. W. Nicholls, 'Anglo-French Ireland and after' in *Peritia*, i (1982), pp 370-403, at p. 378; G. J. Hand, 'The status of the native Irish in the lordship of Ireland, 1272-1331' in *Ir. Jurist*, new series, i (1966), pp 93-115, at pp 99-102.

[62] So much so that they were frequently referred to as simply *hibernici*, see *Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7*, pp 326-7; *Red Bk Kildare*, p. 123; Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ii, 1025; *Reg. Alen*, p. 139, no. 126b (317): or *nativi*, see *Ormond deeds, 1172-1350*, p. 9, no. 19; J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *Crede Mihi: the most ancient register book of the archbishops of Dublin before the Reformation* (Dublin, 1897), pp 53, 71; *Reg. St Thomas, Dublin*, pp 153, 181, 294, 355; *Reg. Alen*, pp 36, 237; Brendan Smith, *Colonisation and conquest in medieval Ireland: the English in Louth, 1170-1330* (Cambridge, 1999), pp 75-6.

[63] *Reg. Alen*, p. 139, no. 126b (317); Kevin Down, 'Colonial society and economy' in *N.H.I.*, ii, pp 439-91, at p. 457; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The organization of Anglo-Irish agriculture in the middle ages' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, lxxxi (1951), pp 1-13.

[64] Otway-Ruthven, 'Anglo-Irish agriculture', p. 9; Mills, 'Tenants & agriculture', p. 54; *Red Bk Kildare*, pp 99-101, 121-3; Smith, *Colonisation & conquest*, p. 79.

An essential feature of betagh tenure was the labour services performed by the tenant for his lord.[65] The exact details of these services varied but, generally, every tenant having a full plough-team (8 oxen) had to plough one acre of land for his lord at winter sowing and one acre at spring sowing; if he did not have a full plough team, he would join with his neighbours to do it. Each betagh was also expected to carry out three days of tilling in the summer and three days of reaping and gathering the lord's corn in the autumn, followed by four days carting the corn. Betaghs were not paid for this work, but the lord would provide a meal for the men and their horses. Other tasks sometimes carried out by betaghs included weeding, digging turf, transporting goods and delivering messages.[66] In some cases, a betagh was permitted to pay his lord instead of doing the work—6d instead of the winter or spring ploughing, for instance, 1½d instead of summer tilling, and 3d instead of autumn reaping and gathering.

In addition to toiling in the fields, a betagh could be required to render in kind to his lord in the form of animals or foul such as a hen or a goose (at Christmas or other feasts), or a hog (or money if the betagh owned less than five hogs). When a betagh died his best beast was to be given to the lord (if he had no beast, his best piece of cloth was to be given instead).

Betaghs seem to have settled in discreet communities, cultivating particular townlands within manors, and holding the land in common.[67] This land was sometimes referred to as a 'betagesland' or similar,[68] while the community was known as a *betaghry*.[69] There were betaghs in Meath at Rathwire, Clonard and Kells in 1212 (among the earliest known references to betaghs),[70] and three

[65] Curtis, 'notes on 'betagh' tenure', pp 67-8, 71-2; Otway-Ruthven, 'Anglo-Irish agriculture', pp 9, 12; Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland*, pp 85-6.
[66] Down, 'Colonial society & economy', p. 464; Otway-Ruthven, 'Anglo-Irish agriculture', p. 12.
[67] R. E. Glasscock, 'Land and people, c.1300' in *N.H.I.*, ii, pp 205-39, at p. 211; Otway-Ruthven, 'Anglo-Irish agriculture', p. 12.
[68] G. H. Orpen, 'The earldom of Ulster', part 5 [*recte* 6] in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, li (1921), pp 68-76, at p. 73.
[69] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 138, no. 38, pp 155b-156, no. 22, p. 237b, no. 83, p. 240b, no. 46, p. 246b, no. 28, p. 268, no. 66; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1399-1401*, p. 468; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1461-7*, p. 388; *Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 540-1; *Stat. Ire., 12-22 Edw. IV*, pp 158-61; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, pp 562, 568.
[70] *Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 20-1, 32-3, 44-5, 38-9.

townlands in the present county of Meath are called either betaghstown or betaghsland.[71]

At Trim, the betaghry seems to have been situated beside the forest of Trim. In 1297 the betaghs of Geoffrey de Geneville 'at Moygere, near the forest of Trym' are mentioned—they had sixty of their cattle taken by the king's sergeant for crown debts due from Geoffrey, but they resisted and even 'the women of the town and the whole country, and the shepherds, deforced the sergeant of the cattle'.[72] It appears that, in general, cattle were the main property of the betagh class,[73] and the fact that 173 cows were put into the forest of Trim in 1211-12 is probably a reflection of this.[74]

Responsibility for recording who had and had not carried out the requisite number of days' service and for ensuring that work was done efficiently fell to the 'sergeant of the betaghries'. In Trim, it seems that this position was held in conjunction with the office of park-keeper of the 'Park of Trim'. It is possible that the park of Trim was another name for the forest of Trim (or a part thereof), and the fact that the betagh community lived beside it may explain why the position of park-keeper was held almost exclusively by the sergeant of the betaghry. It is also interesting to note that betaghs were associated with lands called 'park' in several other locations in Ireland in the middle ages.[75]

On 19 August 1388 Richard II appointed Randolf Schaldeford to the offices of 'parker of the park of Trim' and 'sergeant of the Trim *betagherie*' [Schaldeford had been sheriff of Meath in 1366-7].[76] This is the earliest known appointment to either position at Trim. Similarly, almost all of Schaldeford's successors occupied simultaneously the office of park-keeper and that of sergeant of the Trim betaghry

[71]John Brady, 'Anglo-Norman Meath' in *Riocht na Midhe*, ii, no. 3 (1961), pp 38-45, at p. 43; *Extents Ir. mon. possessions*, p. 256.
[72]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303*, p. 146.
[73]Otway-Ruthven, 'Anglo-Irish agriculture', p. 10; *Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7*, pp 326-7; Mills, *Account roll of the Priory of the Holy Trinity*, pp 189-98; Smith, *Colonisation & conquest*, p. 79.
[74]*Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 36-7.
[75]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire.,1305-7*, pp 326-7; *Red Bk Kildare*, p. 123.
[76]Nat. Archives, RC 8/29, p. 137, no. 491; *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 138, no. 38.

(see APPENDIX SIX). On 5 April 1400, for instance, Henry IV appointed Richard Gille as park-keeper at Trim and sergeant of the betaghry there, for such time as the liberty of Trim remained in the king's hands.[77] In May of the following year Gille's appointment was renewed, with the customary wages, fees and profits.[78]

On 18 June 1425 Henry VI appointed Richard Lynham as park-keeper of the park of Trim and sergeant of the betaghry of the manor of Trim.[79] The following February the king confirmed that Lynham's fee was to be 1½d per day, paid annually.[80] Lynham must have been replaced by the end of 1427 because on 6 May 1428 the king issued an order that Walter Clerke, park-keeper and sergeant of the betaghry of Trim, be paid 21s, being an arrears payment of his fee which was 1½d per day.[81] A payment to Clerke was recorded for about this time.[82] Clerke had been replaced by September 1428 as Andrew Mathewe, park-keeper and sergeant of Trim, was paid £3 15s 9d wages (at 1½d per day) for the period from 11 September 1428 to 11 May 1430, in arrears.[83]

One of the duties of the park-keeper was to collect payments from those taking timber from the park. In 1461 Sir Thomas Plunket was permitted to cut and take 12 trees from the park of Trim without having to pay such fees as were usually payable to the 'officers, parker or serjeant' there. Six of the trees ('the low part and the high part') were to be used for the building of a tower at 'Corranford', and the other six were to fuel a limekiln there.[84]

Although the system of betagh tenure waned considerably in Ireland in the second half of the fifteenth century,[85] it was still in operation in Trim in the 1460s and 1470s. Davy Leynagh and John Omony were both chaplains and 'villeins to the

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[77]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, pp 155b-156, no. 22.
[78]*Cal. pat. rolls, Hen. IV, 1399-1401*, p. 468.
[79]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 237b, no. 83.
[80]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 240b, no. 46.
[81]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 246b, no. 28; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 562.
[82]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 562.
[83]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 568.
[84]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 6-7.
[85]Down, 'Colonial society & economy', p. 459.

duke of York' in the manor of Trim' in the 1460s,[86] and on 24 February 1462 the king appointed James Actoun, clerk, to the position of seneschal of the court of betaghries of Trim.[87]

Actoun's appointment as 'seneschal of the court of betaghries' is interesting. In general, betaghs' tenure was a matter for their lords' courts (rather than royal courts), while felonies and misdemeanours committed by betaghs were also usually dealt with in their lords' courts.[88] The implication of Actoun's appointment, however, is that there was a separate court for the betaghs at Trim. By extension, it may also be implied that the betagh community at Trim was large enough to warrant such a court, and this at a time when betagh tenure is thought to have been on the decrease in Ireland.

In 1464 Edmund Tankard's 'good service to the king's father and the king' was rewarded with the 'custody of the king's park of Trym, with the accustomed fees from the issues of the king's manor of Trym'.[89] Tankard, who had been the king's privy cook in England, was also granted the office of 'sergeant of 'le Betaghrie' of the king's manor of Trym'.[90] One of the latest references to betagh tenure in Ireland dates to 1472/3 when the grant to Tankard was ratified, approved and confirmed by parliament.[91]

Auditors

360 marks were collected annually from the 'freeholders, gavellers and graziers' of Meath towards the defence of the county. In 1459, certain receivers of this subsidy had failed to account for all of the money they had collected.[92] The following year York was empowered to appoint auditors, under the seal of his chancery at Trim, before whom the receivers were to come to render their

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[86]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 416-7.
[87]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 268, no. 66.
[88]A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The native Irish and English law in medieval Ireland', in *I.H.S.*, vii (Mar. 1950), pp 1-16, at p. 10.
[89]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1461-7*, p. 325.
[90]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1461-7*, p. 388; *Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 540-1.
[91]*Stat. Ire., 12-22 Edw. IV*, pp 158-61.
[92]*Stat. Ire., Hen. VI*, pp 674-5.

accounts at the Trim exchequer. Anyone failing to submit the full amount was to be incarcerated in Trim Castle, without the option of bail or mainprise, until such time as the money was paid. In 1467 it was found that there was nobody available to audit the account of the receivers, Edward Plunket, John Hore (Trim) and Richard White (Trim), and new auditors were to be appointed.[93]

Administrative records

In medieval Trim, as elsewhere in the middle ages, detailed written records were kept of all legal, financial and administrative business. Files were maintained on property transactions, court cases, inquisitions, summonses, fines, grants of rights and privileges, and the like, while charters, writs, deeds, letters, mandates, accounts and ledgers were also deposited in the exchequer and chancery.

As the repository for such a large amount of important documentation, it is not surprising that Trim Castle came in for an amount of unwanted attention. In 1294, for example, In Calbach Ó Conchobair is said to have broken into the castle and set fire to certain *recordas, rotulos, et rentalia comitatus* that were kept there.[94]

Nor was the Dublin government unaware of the significance of the material stored in Trim, and soon after the liberty was taken into the king's hand in 1322 a large coffer containing records, rolls and other memoranda concerning the liberty of Trim was taken from Trim Castle and brought to Dublin.[95] A special, lockable chest was purchased to hold the Trim rolls, which were deposited in the Dublin exchequer.[96] The records (including scripts, letters, charters, fines and muniments) were again transported to Dublin in 1331.[97]

It is not clear if these documents were returned to Trim, but whatever records were in the castle there in April 1400 were committed to the custody of Thomas

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[93] *Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 430-3.
[94] Butler, *The annals of Ireland by Thady Dowling*, p. 17.
[95] Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 299.
[96] Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 287.
[97] Nat. Archives, RC 8/16, pp 22, 26.

de Everdun, master of the rolls and acting lord chancellor of Ireland.[98] In *c.*1425 Philip White, clerk, was made keeper of the treasury of books and records in the castle.[99]

The duke of York granted to Nicholas Harpisfeld the offices of chancellor of green wax,[100] chief remembrancer of the exchequer and clerk of the rolls of chancery of Trim. In 1460 Harpisfeld was granted leave to travel to England for one year.[101] Harpisfeld had discharged his predecessors in the above offices.

At the Drogheda parliament of 1494-5 it was stated that the rolls, records and memoranda that had been kept in the treasury of Trim had lately been taken and embezzled, by 'diverse persons of malice prepensed'.[102] The treasury at Trim had been the repository of the records, rolls and inquisitions of the earldom of Ulster, the lordship of Connaught and the liberty of Meath, and an act was passed for the recovery of these files.[103] Of particular significance was the disappearance of documents that 'should entitle our sovereign lord', and although penalties were specified for withholding them, they do not seem to have been recovered. Consequently, it was enacted that the liberty and lordship of Trim should be annexed to the crown forever.[104]

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[98] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 156, no. 33.
[99] *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 356.
[100] Some of the deeds which survive from Trim have marginal entries such as *apud Trym sub viridi cera* [green wax] and *apud Trym sub cera alba* [white wax], see Wood, 'The muniments', pp 327, 332, 333, 334, 338.
[101] *Stat. Ire., Hen. VI*, pp 796-7.
[102] J. G. Butler (ed.), *The statutes at large passed in the parliaments held in Ireland... 1310-1800* (20 vols, Dublin, 1786-1801), i, 51-2; *Stat. Ire., Hen. VII & VIII*, p. 93; *Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, xiii-iv; cf. [J.T. Gilbert], *On the history, position and treatment of the public records of Ireland* (2nd ed., London, 1864), pp 47-9.
[103] Wood, 'The public records of Ireland before and after 1922', p. 21; *Cal. state papers, Ire., 1509-73*, p. 15, no. 76.
[104] *Cal. Carew MSS, Howth*, p. 451.

Administration of the town

Borough and burgesses

The earliest documentary indications of Trim's status as a borough date to the period that the lordship of Meath was in the king's hand during the minority of Walter de Lacy. In a letter written in November 1188 to the abbot of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, Pope Clement III refers to two burgages in Trim, one beside the castle, the other beside the church of St Mary.[105] These properties were granted to St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, by John of Rouen in or before 1188. One of the signatories to the charter was Radulf de Molendinis, *Prefectus de Trum*.[106]

A charter issued by Walter de Lacy for Trim towards the end of the twelfth century granted to his burgesses the *legem Bristoll'*.[107] In 1172 the burgesses of Dublin had been granted *omnibus libertatibus et liberis consuetudinibus quos homines de Bristow habent apud Bristow*,[108] and within 50 years grants according to the *lex Bristolli* had also been given to towns such as Drogheda, Rathmore, Swords, Kells (Co. Meath), Duleek and, in England, Bideford.[109] Although it would seem to make more sense, especially in the Irish context,[110] that *lex Bristolli* referred to the laws of Bristol in England, Bateson argued persuasively that the grants, including the Trim charter, were in fact made according to the law of Breteuil in France.[111] Despite some apparent reservations, Ballard accepted Bateson's argument.[112] Bateson showed how Ludlow in Shropshire had been granted the laws of Breteuil and maintained that Walter de Lacy, who was lord of Ludlow, had a similar charter drawn up for Drogheda and one for Trim.[113]

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[105]Sheehy, *Pontificia Hib.*, ii, 5, no. 18a.

[106]*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, i, 231.

[107]*Chart. privil. immun.*, p. 10; Mac Niocaill, *Na Buirgéisí*, i, 74-5, ii, 327, 481; Russell Library, Maynooth, MS O'Renehan, 3, R. B.1, p. 17; Nat. Archives, MS 2-504/9, no. 190, pp 159-60.

[108]Adolphus Ballard (ed.), *British borough charters 1042-1216* (Cambridge, 1913), p. 26.

[109]Ballard, *Charters 1042-1216*, pp 30-4.

[110]Dublin in particular had close associations with Bristol in the late twelfth century, see John Bradley, 'A tale of three cities: Bristol, Chester, Dublin and 'The Coming of the Normans' in H. B. Clare and J. R. S. Phillips (ed.), Festschrift for F. X. Martin (forthcoming); idem, 'Planned Anglo-Norman towns in Ireland', pp 421-2; Robert Bartlett, *The making of Europe: conquest, colonization and cultural change, 950-1350* (London, 1993), pp 170-1, 182-3.

[111]Mary Bateson, 'The laws of Breteuil' in *E.H.R.*, xv (1900), pp 73-90, 302-18, 496-523, 754-7; *E.H.R.*, xvi (1901), pp 92-110, 332-45.

[112]Adolphus Ballard, 'The law of Breteuil' in *E.H.R.*, xxx (1915), pp 646-58, at p. 648.

[113]Bateson, 'The laws of Breteuil', pp 311-13, 513-14.

Bateson also demonstrated how the de Lacy lands at Ludlow had originally been granted to them by William Fitz Osbern, a supporter of William, duke of Normandy, and grantee of Breteuil, France, in c.1060.[114]

Whatever the background to the grants, under the charter from Walter de Lacy, the rights of the Trim burgesses included freedom from tolls, the right of passage on the river, a grant of three acres of arable land with each burgage, and a fixed annual rent of twelve pence. Burgesses were permitted to take old wood from the floor of the forest of Trim for use as firewood, under the supervision of de Lacy's foresters. Such a permit was relatively common in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.[115] Similarly, there was nothing extraordinary in the fact that the Trim charter also permitted burgesses to have pasture for their animals in de Lacy's fallow and 'dead moors'.[116] The provisions in de Lacy's charter to the burgesses of Trim were attractive and would clearly have acted as an incentive to prospective settlers to come and live in the town.

In July 1194 Walter de Lacy also granted to his Drogheda burgesses free access along the Boyne as far as Trim.[117] This grant was particularly important for those involved in trade between the two towns as the river was the main transport route linking the port of Drogheda with the market town of Trim and de Lacy's castle.

A later charter confirmed to the burgesses of Trim a degree of diplomatic immunity whereby they were exempt from being 'taken, arrested, imprisoned or distreyned for any debt except [they] were thereof debtor or pledge'.[118] They were to be 'quit of murdrum' and exempt from being made sheriff, keeper of the peace, coroner, comptroller or bailiff.[119] They did not have to pay 'murage, pannage, pontage, passage, lastage and kayage and of all other customes and priveledges of merchandises, goods and things whatsoever within the king's dominions and

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[114]Bateson, 'The laws of Breteuil', pp 76, 313.
[115]Ballard, *Charters 1042-1216*, pp 52-7.
[116]Ballard, *Charters 1042-1216*, pp 58-63.
[117]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1338-40*, p. 525; Mac Niocaill, *Na Buirgéisí*, ii, 172.
[118]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, ff 18-19 (APPENDIX EIGHT, is a typeset copy of this MS).
[119]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, ff 21-2, 24.

territories as well within as without the liberty'.[120] In addition, the charter contained provisions for resolving issues arising from loans or debts between burgesses and an entitlement for the sons, daughters and widows of burgesses to marry without royal licence.[121]

Portreeve

Within a liberty, each town had its own administrative officers. The chief magistrate of the town was an elected portreeve who operated in conjunction with a council, a clerk and various other officers. The portreeve, who presided over the town court and collected revenues there, was an official of the lord of the town and was responsible to him (rather than to the townspeople).[122] His term of office was generally one year, he accounted for the town annually at the exchequer, and controlled the running of the town's internal affairs. He and his officers also made regulations relating to local administration, trade, sanitation, safety and defence. Writs and other official documents produced by the portreeve and his council were stamped and approved with the seal of the town.

The chief officer of Trim's urban administration is referred to variously as *prefectus* (e.g. 1188),[123] *prepositus* (e.g. *c.*1392),[124] *governor* (e.g. 1460)[125] and *portereve* (e.g. 1541)[126] in the medieval documents, but each of these titles equates to the more generally used term 'portreeve'. Information relating to the government of the town of Trim in the middle ages is sparse. There is a two hundred year gap, for instance, between the earliest known mention of the chief officer of the town in 1188 and the second reference to this position in 1392-3.[127] It is not until the fifteenth century that any details of the town's administration become apparent.

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[120]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, fol. 22.
[121]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, ff 19, 23-4, 27-8.
[122]Susan Reynolds, *An introduction to the history of English medieval towns* (Oxford, 1977), p. 95.
[123]*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin,* i, 231.
[124]*Proc. king's council, Ire., 1392-3,* p. 308.
[125]*Stat. Ire., Hen. VI,* pp 728-31.
[126]*Crown surveys 1540-41,* p. 57.
[127]*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin,* i, 231; *Proc. king's council, Ire., 1392-3,* p. 308.

In 1407 the portreeve and burgesses of Trim petitioned the king, giving details of the liberties, franchises, rights and customs to which they had been accustomed since time immemorial. On 12 March, as a result of this petition, and considering the role played by the town in resisting the Irish enemy, Henry IV granted to the portreeve and burgesses of Trim a charter confirming their rights and liberties.[128] Further murage charters in 1417 and 1422 confirmed the right of the portreeve of Trim to collect tolls for walling and paving the town.[129]

In 1430 Henry VI had a charter drawn up by which he recited and confirmed both Henry IV's 1407 charter and Walter de Lacy's grant of rights and privileges to the burgesses of the town of Trim.[130] An enrolment survives of the 1430 charter, in Latin with an English translation. This document was clearly once in the form of a scroll, but the stitching holding the consecutive sections of vellum together has been removed, and the individual folios have been gathered together in an eighteenth-century binding.

The provisions detailed in the charter were granted 'according to what the citizens of the Citty of Dublin and burgesses of the Towne of Bristoll have hitherto had and enjoyed'. The various paragraphs of the Trim charter give a useful overview of the how the town was run and of the functions and duties of the portreeve and his council. For instance, the charter recites the manner in which the portreeve of the town was to be elected and sworn in.[131] On 14 September every year the current portreeve (or his deputy) and the burgesses of the town (or a majority thereof) gathered together and elected one of their number to the office of portreeve. The portreeve-elect was then required to take an oath, 'the office of portreeve faithfully to officiate'. If he was not present at the time of the election, he was required to take the oath 'as soon as he came home', but certainly before St Michael's Day (29 September), on which day he was to take up office. The portreeve-elect was not permitted to take up office before this date unless the

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[128] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 185, no. 39.
[129] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 229, no. 99.
[130] Nat. Archives, MSS Co 1814; 2533 (2-504/9, no. 225, part 3), pp 291-320.
[131] Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, ff 4-11.

outgoing portreeve should die in the mean time. If the portreeve died in office or 'be attaint against our lord the king or the lord of the towne of Trym', an extraordinary election, in the manner outlined above, would take place.

If any portreeve-elect refused to take up office, the manner in which he was to be punished was clearly stipulated. The burgesses and commoners of the town were to destroy, lay waste to and make unprofitable all messuages, lands and tenements belonging to the portreeve-elect within the town. The portreeve-elect could avoid this punishment by paying a fine, 'according to the discretion of the burgesses'. In either case, the burgesses and outgoing portreeve were to gather together once more and elect another person as portreeve.

A number of the primary functions of the portreeve and his officials related to keeping the peace and the administration of justice. Among these duties were 'to punish and correct all those who made affrays, hue and cry and shodding of blood' and 'to take cognisance of, punish and correct all and singular rograters and forestallers of victuals and other things eatable coming to the said towne of Trym'.

That the portreeves themselves were not exempt from misdemeanours can be seen from a number of references of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century date. In 1453 Matthew English, sometime portreeve of Trim, and a number of other men who had previously held that office, were charged with misappropriating money meant to fund the walling and paving of the town.[132] Embezzling borough funds was not the only misdemeanour of which town officials in Trim were guilty. In the 1530s, an illicit trade in alcohol was carried out by at least four ex-portreeves—Patrick Martonell, James Bermyngham, John Kelly and John O'Fyaghan.[133] It is also recorded that O'Fyaghan was chosen as portreeve of Trim, 'despite the fact that he was an Irishman'.[134]

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[132]Peter Gale, *An inquiry into the ancient corporate system of Ireland and suggestions for its immediate restoration and general extension with an appendix containing numerous original documents* (London, 1834), pp 125-6.

[133]Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, pp 69-70, no HVIII 129/127.

[134]Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, pp 69-70, no HVIII 129/127.

Deputy portreeve

Once elected, certain circumstances allowed the portreeve to nominate a deputy from among the burgesses of the town to officiate in his absence. For instance, a deputy could be appointed if the portreeve 'should have any infirmity soe as he could not fittly officiate the aforesaid office' or if he 'should be in the king's service or in the service of the lord of the said towne of Trym or in his owne proper bussinesse or in the bussinesse of the said towne or his friends'. In the absence of the portreeve, the deputy was wont to assume all rights and powers normally enjoyed by the portreeve.

Town clerk, catchpoll and sergeants

To assist with the administration of the town, the portreeve and burgesses were permitted to appoint a town clerk whose duties included drawing up documents and keeping records. In addition, they were to appoint as many catchpolls and sergeants as necessary 'to execute all mandates as well of our lord the king as of the lord and portreeve of the said towne as well by word of mouth as in writing'. A catchpoll (or cacherel) was an officer or assistant, especially one who arrested debtors (from Norman French *cachepol* = *chacier* 'to chase' and *poul*, 'fowl').[135] His duties could also include 'field-work' such as distraining beasts, driving cattle, attaching criminals and making up juries. If any tallage or subsidy were imposed on the townspeople by the portreeve, this would be collected by the catchpoll. If anybody refused to cooperate in this regard he would be arrested and taken to prison where he would remain until he had paid a fine to the portreeve.

The portreeve and burgesses were empowered to remove any or all of these officers from their positions 'for reasonable cause' and to appoint others in their place.

Rents, taxes and collectors

A number of the roles of a municipal authority related to financial matters. It was responsible for collecting rent from burgage tenements, financial penalties

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[135]H. M. Cam, *The Hundred and the Hundred Rolls: an outline of local government in medieval England* (London 1930; new ed. 1963), pp 153, 156; *O.E.D.*

imposed by the courts, and tolls on goods being brought into the town for sale (see CHAPTER FOUR). When, in July 1400, Henry IV confirmed a murage charter earlier granted to Roger Mortimer for Trim, he transferred the licence to the portreeve.[136] Now with direct responsibility for tolls, the portreeve and his council elected a collector of customs and duties.[137]

The 'borough farm' or 'fee-farm' (Latin *firma burgi*) was a fixed lump sum from a town that had to be paid into the exchequer each year either by the sheriff of the county or by the town's own officials.[138] In 1212 the collectors of the fee farm of Trim rendered £60 for half a year (although such a large sum almost certainly included monies from further afield than just the town).[139] In any case, the profitability of Trim was to decrease considerably later in the middle ages.

Sometime before 1460 Richard duke of York granted to Robert Barnewall, lord of Trimblestown, a yearly rent out of the manor of Trim, and in 1462 parliament enacted that Barnewall could enter into the manor with power to distrain for the rent due to him.[140] The following year it was recited that Richard Nugent, baron of Delvin, held the manor of Trim by the service of £8 of royal service.[141] Davy Fleming, baron of Slane, also held land in the manor of Trim from the king, by knight service, until his death in 1471, when the lands passed to his son, Thomas.[142] Similarly, Christopher Plunket, lord of Killeen, held land of the manor of Trim until his death in 1471.[143]

In December of that year Roger Rochforte was granted for life the chief rents of the town of Trim, in appreciation of his 'good and laudable services'.[144] These

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[136]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 165b, no. 226.
[137]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 165b, no. 226.
[138]Susan Reynolds, *An introduction to the history of English medieval towns* (Oxford, 1977), p. 198.
[139]*Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 42-3.
[140]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 38-9.
[141]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 136-7.
[142]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 668-9.
[143]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 670-1.
[144]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 814-15.

rents are listed as 'alewight, sense, petty customs, and all our costs [cottages?] in the town, and one weir called Carrafin, parcel of the manor of Trim'.

In 1541 it was found that the portreeve and burgesses of Trim were entitled to the rents and petty customs of the town and that the annual fee farm was £4 '...*portereve et burgenses ville de Trym habent tolnetum mercati ibidem ac alias custumas et consuetudines infra eandem villam vocatus petye customes et reddunt annuatim de feodi firma £4*'.[145] Compared with the figures for the early thirteenth century, this is a stark illustration of how the fortunes of Trim had dwindled during the middle ages.

Courts

The town government was permitted to hold two courts to deal with breaches of law committed within the municipal boundaries.[146] The first was a hundred court, held fortnightly before the portreeve (or his deputy in his absence), with cognisance of all pleas except the four pleas of the crown (rape, burning, forestalling and treasure trove). The second court, also held before the portreeve (or his deputy in his absence), could be held on a daily basis and was to deal with personal pleas arising within the liberty, town or market. Money fines were not the only type imposed in the court at Trim—in 1281 for instance, a fine consisting of either one pair of white gloves or a penny yearly was levied.[147] Similarly, a court case in 1247 resulted in the payment of a pair of white gloves.[148]

Gaol and gaoler

Provisions were stipulated in the 1430 charter regarding the town gaol and gaoler.[149] There was to be a gaol in which 'to imprison and to keep safely in the same all and every persons for every cause or causes imprisoned and arrested by one able and honest man, gaoler of the said gaol'. The gaoler was to be elected

[145]*Crown surveys 1540-41*, p. 57.
[146]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, ff 13-14.
[147]*Cal. to Christchurch deeds*, pp 55-6, no. 114; McEnery & Refaussé, *Christ Church deeds*, pp 55-6, nos 114-5, 118.
[148]*Gormanston reg.*, p. 160.
[149]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, ff 14-15.

and appointed by the portreeve and was answerable to him. The portreeve had the power to remove the gaoler from his office and to appoint another in his place.

In 1537 John Alen, master of the rolls, wrote to the king's commissioners in Ireland that in order to secure the area from Irish rebels, the king's deputy ought to take up residence at Trim where the castle should be repaired for his use.[150] Alen suggested that Trim was the most convenient place from which law should be administered and at which 'the termes shulde be kept' and offenders answer the king's writs. In a subsequent letter, Alen proposed that the proceeds of certain fines could be used to 'amende the gaylle of Trym'.[151]

Public punishment

There was to be a whipping post, a pillory and a tumbrell[152] in the town and these were to be used, by the catchpoll and sergeants, to mete out punishment to criminals and debtors.[153] Sentence was handed down in court and torture was administered accordingly, unless the 'transgressors doe make reasonable fine with the said portreeve'. The whipping post and pillory would have been located at focal points within the town, convenient for the public demonstration that crime would not be tolerated. Indeed, in the sixteenth century one of the town's streets was called Pillory Street (see CHAPTER FIVE AND APPENDIX TEN).[154]

One of the statutes of the 1465 parliament at Trim gave permission to all men to kill and behead anyone they found robbing.[155] Any head so cut off in the county of Meath was to be brought to the portreeve of Trim and he would place the head on a spear and exhibit it at Trim Castle. The portreeve would testify to this under the common seal of the town, and would allow the 'beheader and his ayders' to levy money from every landowner in the barony where the said thief was taken. The practice of displaying severed heads was certainly not new to Trim. In 1452

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[150]*State papers, 1515-38*, ii, part III, 481.
[151]*State papers, 1515-38*, ii, part III, 501.
[152]A tumbrel was an open cart in which condemned persons were conveyed to their execution, from Old French, *tomberel, tomber,* to fall (*O.E.D.*).
[153]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, ff 26-7.
[154]*Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, ii, 1558-86, p. 228, no. 1714 (1400).
[155]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV,* pp 288-91.

Farrell Roe Óg was killed and beheaded at Croughool, to the west of Mullingar, by the son of the baron of Delvin and the grandsons of Pierce Dalton.[156] His head was carried to Trim for exhibition before being brought to Dublin.

Trim had long been a centre for executions. In 1175 'Manus O'Melaghlin, lord of East Meath, was hanged by the English, after they had acted treacherously towards him at Trim', where he had been held prisoner,[157] while the annals also record that in 1215 'Gillakevin O'Kelly of Bregia was taken prisoner in the monastery of St. Peter, Athlone, by the English, and afterwards hanged by them at Trim'.[158] Indeed, an area still known as Gallows Hill, in the townland of the Commons, c.700m to the west of Trim, may well have been the site of executions in the middle ages. Similarly, Gallow's Hill at Kilkenny was located 1km to the south of the city. The setting up of gallows on the approach to a town was a very public indicator that 'justice' was being done there.

Administrative records

As with the administration of the lordship, the government of the town gave rise to a large corpus of documentation. Unfortunately even less of this archive survives than of that of the lordship. It is likely that the most important documents relating to the administration of the town of Trim were gathered together in a roll or book. The Red Book of Trim (le ruge livre de Trym) is mentioned in 1485,[159] and this may be the 'Little Red Booke' mentioned, in a later hand, at the end of the enrolment of the Trim charter of 1430.[160] In June 1566 Laurence Hammond brought to the Queen's council in England an ancient book containing a recital of all the privileges and immunities sought by the corporation of Trim.[161] A request was made to the Elizabeth to confirm 'such lybertyes as the towne of Trymme within that our realme of Irelande doth presently hold by the graunte of certeyne of our progenytors, we haue caused our lerned consayle here to visit an auncyent

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[156]*A.F.M., s.a.* 1452; *Onomasticon Goedelicum*, p. 310.
[157]*A.F.M., s.a.* 1175; *Misc. Ir. Annals*, pp 60-1 (*Mac Carthaigh's Book*).
[158]*A.F.M., s.a.* 1215; *A. Clon., s.a.* 1215.
[159]*Stat. Ire., Ric. III-Hen. VIII,* pp 66-7.
[160]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, fol. 36.
[161]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 541, no. 4; D. B. Quinn, 'Additional Sidney State Papers' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 26 (1970), pp 89-102, at pp 96-7.

boke brought hither by this bearer Laurence Hamond concerning the same but not testyfyed vndre any Aucthorytye of seale, Vppon pervsing neuertheles of the sayd boke yt semeth that for any Matyre therin conteyned which may be here well considered of the sayd lybertyes may conveniently be confyrmed respectinge the state of this our realme of England'. Elizabeth accorded a renewal of these privileges and immunities, with the condition that the lord deputy of Ireland could suggest no objection.

The abovementioned ancient book may have been the 'Little Red Book of Trim', but unfortunately it does not survive and nothing else is known of it. It is tempting to think that this book may have been something like the anthological volumes of charters and documents that survive for medieval towns such as Kilkenny (*Liber primus Kilkenniensis*) and Waterford (*Liber antiquissimus*).[162]

Rent for the town, bridge and site of Trim

The site of the castle, bridge and town of Trim were held of the church for an annual rent. The earliest known documentary indication that Trim Castle was built church lands dates to sometime between 1191 and 1198 when a letter from Pope Celestine III states that the rent of the town of Trim belonged to the abbey and community of St Mary's, Trim.[163] When William le Petit, seneschal of Meath, paid £8 6s 8d rent in 1210-12, however, the money went to the archbishop of Armagh.[164] In 1258 an agreement was made by which Geoffrey and Matilda de Geneville handed over their claim to the advowson of the church of Trim to the bishop of Meath.[165] In return, the bishop granted that Geoffrey and Matilda be quit of 100s of the £10 rent which they paid annually to the bishop and his church for the town and bridge of Trim. It is not clear why the payments were now being made to the bishop of Meath, but in the fourteenth century, it was again to Armagh that rents were paid. It may be that separate payments were made to

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[162]Charles McNeill (ed.), *Liber primus Kilkenniensis* (Dublin, 1951); A. J. Otway-Ruthven, *Liber primus Kilkenniensis* (Kilkenny, 1961); J. C. Walton and Waterford Corporation, *The royal charters of Waterford* (Waterford, 1992).

[163]Sheehy, *Pontificia Hibernica*, i, 86-8, no. 30.

[164]*Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 22-3.

[165]McNeill, *Alen's Register*, p. 89, no. (12).

Meath and Armagh—Trim still owed 100s annually to the bishop of Meath in 1541.[166]

In 1362 Milo Sweteman, archbishop of Armagh, wrote to the king concerning rents for the site of Trim Castle.[167] Sweteman stated that the castle was held by him in right of the church of Armagh, and requested payment of rent and arrears thereof. Roger Mortimer had held the castle from the archbishops of Armagh for an annual rent of £8 16s 7¼d, but since Mortimer's death in 1360, the rent had not been paid. An inquisition before the king's lieutenant in Ireland affirmed the archbishop's claim and in December 1362 Edward III ordered the treasurer of Ireland to make a payment £17 13s 3d to the archbishop.[168] A further payment of £33 18s 4d was made in January 1365.[169] Sweteman acknowledged receipt of this part-payment for the site of Trim Castle from Walter de Dalby, treasurer of Ireland. This amount, again paid in arrears, was for the years 1362-5.[170] Rental payments for the site of Trim Castle were constantly in arrears during the time that the liberty was held by the king.[171]

In January 1419 Edmund Mortimer wrote to the treasurer and chamberlain of the exchequer of his liberty concerning payment of rent to the archbishops of Armagh.[172] Archbishop John Swayne had petitioned him, stating that the archbishops of Armagh had, since time immemorial, had an annual rent of £8 16s 7½d, payable on 1 May and 1 November, out of the manor of Trim, for the 'site of the castle and villa of Trim'. Mortimer, with the assent of his council and of Thomas Talbot, seneschal, commanded that arrears of the rent be paid to the archbishop and that in future it be paid at the proper terms.[173]

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[166]Mac Niocaill, *Crown surveys of lands 1540-41*, p. 57.

[167]Brendan Smith, *The register of Milo Sweteman, archbishop of Armagh, 1361-1380* (Dublin, 1996), pp 140-2, no. 142.

[168]Smith, *Sweteman*, pp 140-2, no. 142.

[169]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 517.

[170]Smith, *Sweteman*, p. 25, no. 19.

[171]Smith, *Sweteman*, pp 29-30, no. 25, pp 30-1, no. 26, 116-7, no. 118.

[172]H. J. Lawlor (ed.), 'A calendar of the Register of Archbishop Fleming' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, xxx (1912-13), sect. C, no. 5, pp 94-190, at p. 165, no. 260.

[173]Lawlor, 'the register of Archbishop Fleming', p. 165, no. 260.

In June 1425 archbishop Swayne complained that, despite various requests, payment had not been made for the rent of the site of the castle, bridge and town of Trim since November 1421.[174] While Trim was in the hand of the king the rent was to be paid on a half-yearly basis. Swayne stated that the treasurer of the liberty of Trim would not pay him the three years' outstanding rent and he asked for the matter to be resolved promptly. That very day, 20 June 1425, the king ordered payment to be made to Archbishop Swayne of £4 8s 3¾d, being one half year's rent.[175] The payment was made on 1 July.[176] On 18 November 1425 the king ordered payment of a further instalment of £4 8s 3¾d.[177]

Early in 1427 Henry VI enquired of the treasury the amount of arrears due to Armagh for the Trim rental.[178] The treasurer seems to have certified that £11 14s 11¼d was outstanding and he was subsequently directed to pay that amount. The money seems not to have been paid, however, because on 10 February 1428 the king, referring to Swayne's writ of 20 June 1425, ordered that a payment of £22 18¾d be made to the archbishop.[179] This sum amounted to 2½ years' rent, which had not been paid since November 1425. On 22 November 1428 a further payment of £8 16s 7½d, being one full year's rent, still in arrears, was ordered by the king.[180] Towards the end of 1428 Swayne was paid £30 18s in settlement of arrears [£22 1s 6½d was for 29 July 1425-26 January 1428], and in part payment for 1428.[181] In December 1428 Archbishop Swayne acknowledged receipt, from the treasurer of Ireland, of £8 16s 5¼d, as part payment of £8 16s 7½d in arrears for the terms of Philip and James and All Saints.[182]

In May 1443 the archbishop of Armagh acknowledged receipt of £8 16s 7½d from Richard, duke of York, for the rent of the site of the castle, town and bridge of

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[174]D. A. Chart (ed.), *The register of John Swayne, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland, 1418-1439* (Belfast, 1935), p. 39, no. 426.
[175]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 236, no. 80.
[176]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 554.
[177]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 240b, no. 58.
[178]Chart, *The register of John Swayne*, pp 39-40, no. 178.
[179]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 246-246b, no. 22.
[180]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 246b, no. 23.
[181]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 563.
[182]Chart, *The register of John Swayne*, p. 40, nos 183, 208.

Trim for the terms of Philip, James and All Saints.[183] Although this is the last known payment to Armagh, an inquisition of 1614 found that the archbishop of Armagh was seized, in right of his see, of one tenement and three acres of land, within the parish of Trim, and this land (at Crowpark) was still held by Armagh at the end of the nineteenth century.[184] The land is marked on some maps as 'Primates Land'. Interestingly, in the nineteenth century it was the bishop of Meath who still received rent from the crown for the manor of Trim.[185]

Trim as a venue used by central administration

Parliaments and councils

In addition to its own urban administration and the government of the lordship of Meath, Trim also functioned as a venue at which important meetings and councils of wider significance were held. The king's council met at Trim on at least three occasions in the 1440s alone,[186] while in the century from 1392 to 1493, parliament was held there on at least twelve occasions (see APPENDIX SEVEN). It is hard to know exactly where the parliament sat, but it may occasionally have been in the castle, which would have ample facilities to accommodate it (see CHAPTER SIX). It was held at least once in a chamber of the Franciscan friary,[187] and on three occasions in the church of the Dominican friary.[188] It is recorded that chairs, bars, benches and other necessary items were brought to Trim for various parliaments there.[189]

The facilities at Trim Castle were also capable of accommodating a large number of ministers and their files and documents. On 24 January 1386 Richard II issued a mandate to all his treasurers, barons, chamberlains, remembrancers, copyists and

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[183]Chart, *The register of John Swayne*, p. 40, no. 184.
[184]Philip Callary, 'History of Trim, as told in her ruins' in *I.E.R.*, ii (July to Dec. 1897), pp 442-9, 524-40, at pp 536-7.
[185]Callary, 'History of Trim', pp 536-7; Evans, *Trim: its ecclesiastical ruins*, p. 9, note; Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 71-2.
[186]Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, pp 371, 373; *Stat. Ire., Hen. VI*, pp 94-5.
[187]Otway-Ruthven, 'The arrest of Christopher Preston', p. 79.
[188]Coleman, *Dominican foundations*, p. 32.
[189]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, pp 579, 582.

marshals, requiring them to bring for inspection and examination to Trim Castle, all rolls, comptrolls, tallies, brevia, records and other memoranda.[190]

Justiciar's court or 'chief place'

In addition to the liberty and municipal courts that were held at Trim, the justiciar's court, which travelled around the country administering justice in the name of the king, would sometimes sit in the town (after Richard II's visit to Ireland in 1394-5, pleas are described as being held before the king (*coram rege*) even though the king himself was not physically present).[191] In general, the justiciar's court (sometimes known as the 'chief place')[192] dealt with cases brought in the king's name for offences 'against the king's crown and dignity and his peace', such as homicide, rape, arson, robbery, harbouring felons and highway robbery (the pleas of the crown). As all of these pleas were dealt with by the liberty court at Trim, however, and the justiciar's court only sat in the town when required to judge civil cases between private individuals or assizes (essentially civil actions relating to the possession of land). Nonetheless, the justiciar's court sat in Trim on at least 120 days between 1300 and 1376.[193]

For instance, John Wogan held court in Trim for the first week of December in 1306. One of the pleas of plaints before the justiciar on that occasion concerned a house in the town of Trim which was divided in two—one half was of the fief of the king and the other was lived in by Isabella, widow of William le Seneschal, and her daughter Mabilla.[194] Adam Payn and his wife were to recover Isabella's part of the house but Mabilla lay pregnant there. Mabilla was afraid that she would be evicted from the house so she sent her husband to ask Adam Payn not to move her. Mabilla's husband asked Adam to come into the house through a door in the other part of the building. Adam went to speak to Mabilla and to tell her that she should not fear being moved. When Isabella realised that Adam was in

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[190]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 130, no. 67.
[191]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7*, pp vii-xiv; Philomena Connolly, 'Pleas held before the chief governors of Ireland, 1308-76', in *Ir. jurist*, new series, xviii (1983), pp 101-31.
[192]Connolly, *Medieval record sources*, p. 24; *Stat. Ire., 12-22 Edw. IV*, pp 630-5.
[193]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7*, pp vii-xiv; Connolly, 'Pleas held before the chief governors'.
[194]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7*, pp 319-21.

the house she thought he had come to seize it and so she quickly locked the door with her key. Adam pulled the door towards him and broke it, but in doing so he also broke Isabella's finger. The jury determined that there was another door towards the liberty through which Adam could have gone out. Adam was committed to prison and Isabella was awarded damages.

On certain very rare occasions the justiciar's court was held in his absence, but in the presence of someone appointed in his stead. Such was the case in 1370 when James Pickering, the chief justice of the justiciar's court held pleas in Trim while the justiciar, William of Windsor, was campaigning in Carlow.[195] Pickering received an extra payment for his troubles. One of the reasons for the rarity of a deputy being appointed to hold court in the place of the justiciar was that 'the English pay no attention to the justices assigned to hold pleas as they would if he himself [the justiciar] were present'.[196] The sentiment of this statement was borne out on Pickering's trip to Trim in 1370, after which it was recorded that he received a bribe of ten marks from John Drake [a keeper of the peace in Meath, see APPENDIX EIGHT] to excuse him from being made a knight against his will, and ten marks from John Justice, for a respite from being hanged'.[197]

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[195]Connolly, 'Pleas held before the chief governors', pp 102-3.
[196]Richardson & Sayles, *Parl. & councils med. Ire.*, i, 20.
[197]Betham, *Dignities*, i, 309.

❖ **CHAPTER 4**

COMMERCE AND TRADE

The fair

On 3 September 1204 Walter de Lacy was granted permission to hold an annual fair at Trim, beginning on 21 February and lasting for eight days.[1] An idea of some of the goods that may have been traded at this fair can be obtained from a mandate issued in June 1244 by which Walter de Godarville, custodian of Trim Castle and seneschal of Meath, was ordered to have retained 'all the wines, hides, wool, cloth and iron which he can find at the fair of Trim, together with 500 crannocks of wheat and 500 crannocks of dry oats and to cause them to be conveyed to Drogheda' by 8 August, to be delivered to the Irish justiciar as supplies for the king's expedition to Gascony.[2]

Cereals clearly formed an important element of the merchandise traded at Trim in the thirteenth century and in 1299 certain burgesses from Drogheda bought £5 12s worth of wheat and corn from Thomas, son of William of Trim, and John de Puddingtoun, both of whom were purveyors at Trim.[3] Substantial sums of money are known to have changed hands at Trim fair, and in 1280 £57 10s 2d was collected for Stephen, bishop of Waterford, by one of his messengers.[4] The following year Thomas, chamberlain of the Dublin exchequer, was among those who attended Trim fair.[5]

In January 1290 Geoffrey de Geneville was granted a murage charter by which he was entitled to impose tax on a wide range of specified items brought into Trim for sale (see FIG. 4.1).[6] The list gives a useful overview of the merchandise traded at Trim, while a number of the individual entries throw light on other aspects of the town's trade arrangements. That the list refers not only to items sold at the February fair is indicated by the specification that the ¼d tax on lampreys was to be implemented on those sold *before Easter* only.

[1] *Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 229.
[2] *Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 2696; *Close rolls, 1242-7*, p. 197.
[3] *P.R.I. rep D.K. xxxviii, app.*, p. 50.
[4] Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 65.
[5] Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 65; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, nos 1834, 1835.
[6] *Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92*, no. 560.

Among the foodstuffs sold at Trim were salted meat, flour, corn, onions, garlic, cheese, butter and salt. One could purchase salmon, lamprey, herring and other sea-fish, while honey and wine were sold from hogshead barrels (52½ imperial gallons; the tax payable on a hogshead of honey was three times that due on one horse-load). Live animals such as cattle, horses, sheep, pigs and goats were traded, in addition to items of hardware including iron, lead, alum (used to dress skins),[7] copperas (a metal alloy), timber boards, horseshoes, and nails for roofing, cart-building and other purposes. There were brewing-cauldrons, millstones, charcoal, logs, ashes, tan, tallow, grease and woad, as well as 'other diverse and minute articles'.

Hides, which could be bought fresh, tanned or salted, included those of horse, cattle, lamb, goat, deer, hare, rabbit, cat, fox and squirrel, and cordovan was sold by the bale (cordovan, or cordwain, was a type of soft leather originally produced in Cordoba, Spain; it was used primarily to make shoes, gloves, boots, purses and pouches).[8] Wool was sold by the sack or as individual fleeces or fells (unshorn skins), and an important part of the trade at Trim seems to have involved cloth.

A tax on cloth is included in all early murage charters in Ireland and, although different types of cloth are specified in these charters (e.g. Waterford 1234 and Drogheda 1234),[9] the Trim document goes into the greatest detail. The tax varied depending on whether it was linen cloth, cloth of Ireland, *cendallo* (a thin silken cloth), cloth of silk without gold, cloth of silk with gold, samite (a rich silk tissue), diaper or baudekin (both of which were precious fabrics). It seems that ½d was charged on each horse-load of cloth brought to the town for sale, while a further ½d was payable upon the sale of each cloth. The tax on each truss of cloth brought by cart was 3d.

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[7] J. W. Waterer, *Spanish leather* (London, 1971), pp 20-1, 23, 25.
[8] Waterer, *Spanish leather*, pp 19-20.
[9] *Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 2133 (Waterford) and 2135 (Drogheda).

FIG. 4.1 List of goods for sale in Trim for which murage tax applied in 1290.
After: *Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-1292*, no. 560.

Each quarter of corn for sale	½d
Each horse, mare, ox and cow for sale	½d
Each hide of horse, mare, ox or cow; fresh, salted, or tanned	¼d
Each cart carrying salt meat	1½d
Every 5 pigs	½d
Every 10 gammons	½d
Each fresh salmon for sale	¼d
Each lamprey for sale before Easter	¼d
Every 10 sheep, goats or hogs for sale	1d
Every 10 fleeces	1d
Each 100 skins of unshorn sheep, goats, stags, hinds, bucks and does	1d
Each 100 skins of lambs, little goats, hares, rabbits, cats and squirrels	½d
Each cartload of salt for sale	1d
Each horse-load of salt for sale, by the week	¼d
Each horse-load of cloth for sale	½d
Each whole cloth sold	½d
Every one hundred of linen cloth, one hundred of cloth of Ireland sold	½d
Each cloth of silk with gold, silk tissue (samite), diaper and baudekin	½d
Each cloth of silver without gold, and each *cendallo* (a thin silken cloth) *afforciato* (pure)	¼d
Each cartload of sea-fish for sale	4d
Each horse-load of sea-fish for sale	½d
Each hogshead of wine sold	1½d
Each horse-load of cinders for sale	½d
Each horse-load of honey for sale	1d
Each hogshead of honey for sale	3d
Each sack of wool for sale	2d
Each truss of cloth conveyed by cart	3d
Each horse-load of cloth or of other diverse and minute articles for sale	½d
Each cartload of iron for sale	1d
Each cartload of lead for sale	2d
Each horse-load of tan for sale, by the week	½d
Of avoirdupois, to wit, the hundred	1d
Prisage of tallow and grease for sale	½d
Each quarter of woad	2d
Each hundred of alum and copperas	½d
Each 2,000 onions	¼d
Each horse-load of garlic for sale	½d
Each 1,000 herrings	¼d
Each 100 boards for sale	½d
Each millstone for sale	½d
Each quarter of salt	¼d
Each quarter of flour for sale	½d
Each weigh of cheese and butter for sale	½d
Each dozen horse-loads of coals for sale	½d
Each cartload of logs for sale, by the week	½d
Each horse-load of logs for sale, by the week	¼d
Each cauldron for brewing	½d
Each bale of cordovan for sale	3d
Each ship laden with logs for sale	½d
Each 1,000 nails for roofs of houses for sale	¼d
Each hundred horseshoes and cart nails	½d
Each 2,000 of all kinds of nails for sale, excepting nails for carts and roofs of houses	¼d
Each truss of any kind of merchandise exceeding the value 2s	¼d

The Trim murage charter of 1290, which was granted directly to Geoffrey de Geneville (rather than to the town itself), is clearly related to an important series of charters issued in the ten-year period from 1286 to 1295. Others in this group are Ardfert (1286), Kilkenny (1291), Waterford (1291), Fethard (1291), Dublin (1295), Drogheda in Louth (1295) and Castledermot (1295).

As with every other thirteenth-century murage charter for which provisions are known, taxes were imposed in Trim on wine, wool, and hides. In imposing tax on the sale of cloth, iron, salt, corn and fish, the Trim document was also in line with standard practice for the time. Some of the less usual goods to be taxed at Trim were mineral salts, fine leather and onions. Trim is the only town at which murage tax is known to have been charged on salted pig and carcasses of meat at this time.[10] It was also the first Irish charter to levy murage tax on horseshoes, nails, tan, and garlic, and only the second (after the Kilkenny charter of 1283) to impose a tax on millstones and cinders/ashes (which were probably used as fertiliser, although ash, as a source of alkali, was an important ingredient in both soap-manufacturing and glass-making).[11] The only categories that are noticeably absent from the Trim charter of 1290 are wax, spices and heavy woollen goods, although the reason for this is unclear.

In April 1308 a new murage and pavage charter was issued to Roger Mortimer for the town of Trim.[12] This seven year grant entitled Mortimer to impose a similar range of taxes as had been specified in 1290 (see FIG. 4.2). By and large, the 1308 list repeats the entries of the earlier document, although five changes were made. These alterations consist of two reductions in tax, one increase, the addition of one new levy and the omission of a single entry. In 1290 a tax of 1d was charged on every ten sheep, goats or hogs for sale at Trim, while in 1308 the tax was reduced to ¼d. Similarly, the tax charged on the sale of ten fleeces was halved in 1308 to

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[10]Avril Thomas, 'Financing town walls in medieval Ireland' in Colin Thomas (ed.), *Rural landscapes and communities: essays presented to Desmond McCourt* (Dublin, 1986), pp 65-91, at p. 71.
[11]John Schofield and Alan Vince, *Medieval Towns* (London, 1994), p. 106.
[12]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1307-13*, p. 70.

½d. On the other hand, the ½d prisage charged on the sale of tallow and grease in 1290 was doubled in 1308. A tax on fox-skins, not present in the 1290 list, was added in 1308, while the 1290 specification that a tax of ½d was to be levied on the sale of each horse-load of cloth or other 'diverse and minute articles' was not included in the later list.

Trim's murage charter of 1393 is one of a series of eight granted between 1358 and 1394, to Youghal (1358, 1374), Galway (1361), Thomastown (1374), Kilkenny (1375, 1381, 1394) and Trim.[13] The tolls and customs specified in the Trim charter are nearly the same as those granted in 1375 for the murage of Kilkenny.[14] The main difference is that in the Trim grant one penny was to be paid on every hawk or falcon and one halfpenny on every *tercel* (the male of the hawk, especially a peregrine or goshawk) or *tercellet*—in the Kilkenny grant there is no mention of these birds.

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[13]Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, ii, 106.
[14]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 165b, no. 226; *Chart. privil. immun.*, p. 89; N.L.I., *Harris Collectanea*, MS 13., ff 145-6.

FIG. 4.2 List of goods for sale in Trim for which murage and pavage tax applied in 1308.
After: *Cal. pat. rolls, 1307-1313*, p. 70.

Each quarter of corn	½d
Each horse, mare, ox and cow	½d
Each hide of horse, mare, ox and cow; fresh, salted, or tanned	¼d
Each cart laden with salt meat	1½d
Every 5 bacon-hogs (*baconibus*)	½d
Every 10 small hogs	½d
Each fresh salmon	¼d
Each lamprey sold before Easter	¼d
Every 10 sheep, goats or swine	¼d
Every 10 fleeces	½d
Each hundred (*centena*) of wool-fells, skins of goats, stags, hinds, bucks and does	1d
Each hundred of skins of lambs, kids, hares, rabbits, foxes, cats and squirrels	½d
Each cart-load of salt	1d
Each horse-load (*summagio*) of salt, per week	¼d
Each horse-load of cloth	½d
Each entire cloth	½d
Each hundred (*centena*) of linen web and Irish cloth	½d
Each cloth of silk with gold, of samite, diaper and baudekyn	½d
Each cloth of silver without gold, and each *cendallo* (a thin silken cloth) *afforciato* (pure)	¼d
Each cart-load of sea-fish	4d
Each horse-load of sea-fish	½d
Each tun of wine	1½d
Each horse-load of ashes	½d
Each horse-load of honey	1d
Each tun of honey	3d
Each sack of wool	2d
Each truss of cloth brought by cart	3d
Each cart-load of iron	1d
Each cart-load of lead	2d
Each horse-load of tan, per week	½d
On goods sold by weight (*de averio de pondere*), that is each hundred (*centena*)	1d
Each wey (*peisa*) of tallow and grease	1d
Each quarter of woad	2d
Each hundred (*centena*) of alum and copperas	½d
Each 2,000 (*de duobus miliaribus*) onions	¼d
Each horse-load of garlic	½d
Each 1,000 herrings	¼d
Each 100 (*centena*) boards	½d
Each millstone	½d
Each quarter of salt	¼d
Each quarter of flour	½d
Each wey (*peisa*) of cheese and butter	½d
Each 12 horse-loads of charcoal	½d
Each cart-load of brushwood, per week	½d
Each horse-load of brushwood, per week	¼d
Each brewing cauldron	½d
Each bale of cordovan	3d
Each ship laden with brushwood	½d
Each 1,000 roof nails (*clavorum ad cumulum domus*)	¼d
Each 100 (*centena*) horse-shoes and cart-clouts	½d
Each 2,000 nails of all kinds, except cart-clouts and roof nails	¼d
Each truss of any kind of wares exceeding in value 2s	¼d

Most goods were transported to Trim by horse or horse-and-cart, but the ½d tax payable on each 'ship load' of logs indicates that goods were also transported to Trim by boat along the Boyne. Indeed Walter de Lacy's 1194 charter to the burgesses of Drogheda states that they have the right to free passage on the Boyne from the sea to the bridge at Trim, and that weirs and all other obstacles were to be removed (*concessi eciam eis aquam de Boing deliberandem a mari usque ad pontem de Atrum ab omni obstaculo et impedimento goidi at stagni et piscature ut cum batellis et mercaturis suis ire valeant et redire*).[15] The charter was inspected and confirmed on 23 May 1340.[16]

In 1234 Walter de Lacy granted a charter to the abbots and monks of Furness in England, whereby they were allowed timber from the Forest of Trim for their buildings, and the right to transport it along the River Boyne from Trim to Drogheda.[17] In 1335-6, Richard de Derby and Adam de Brantyngham, clerks, were assigned to supervise and attest the purveyance of various victuals in Meath, Louth and the liberty of Trim and to arrest ships there for the king's use.[18] That these 'ships' were no more than medium-sized boats, however, is intimated by the fact that the tax payable on a ship-load of logs was the same as that due on each cartload, and only double that charged on each horse-load.

The shallow nature of certain stretches of the Boyne between Drogheda and Trim meant that larger boats could not navigate that section, despite the fact that a central channel was kept clear for the transportation of timber. In 1366 a jury found that, 'from the time of the arrival of the English, the king had a certain free passage in the river Boyne from the town of Drogheda to the bridge of Trim, usually called a *watersarde*, twenty-four feet in breadth from the bank on each side of the river, according to the discretion of twelve honest men, six from the neighbourhood of one side, and six of the other; that through that aperture, boats,

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[15]Mac Niocaill, *Na Buirgéisí*, ii, 172-3.
[16]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1338-40*, p. 525.
[17]*Gormanston reg.*, pp 8, 180; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1340-3*, p. 53.
[18]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 378.

called *corraghs*, with timber for building and *flotes*, had liberty to pass constantly free from Drogheda to the bridge of Trim'.[19] The *corragh* or coracle was a small boat of wickerwork covered with watertight material, while a *flote* or float was a type of open raft used for transporting goods. That the river was maintained as navigable in the fifteenth century is indicated by the fact that when, in 1435, John Prowdefote built a weir on the river at Prowdefoteston and this weir caused obstruction, it was appropriated and dismantled by the king's officers.[20]

By the fifteenth century an annual summer fair was held in June-July.[21] Although it was not unknown for a town to hold more than one fair each year,[22] it seems that the summer fair in Trim was instead of rather than in addition to the earlier one. Having a fair in February was very unusual in medieval Ireland, and with the granting of a fair in the summer months, Trim came into line with the majority of towns in the country.[23] Henry VI's 1430 charter to the portreeve and burgesses of the town of Trim confirmed the right of the town to hold a fair 'once a yeare continually from the hower of nine of the eve of the nativity of St John the Baptist [24 June] unto the ninth hower of the feast of the translation of St Thomas the Martyr [3 July]'.[24] The duration of the fair, at ten days, was also longer than that of the February fair—the vast majority of fairs in Ireland ran for eight days, and that had also been the length of the February fair in Trim.[25]

The fair was the responsibility of the portreeve and burgesses. A week or two before the opening of the fair, they would meet together and elect two of their number to act as 'barons of the fair' (see APPENDIX NINE). These barons would hold court during the fair and administer justice to anybody found to be in breach

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[19]*Cal. Carew MSS, v, Howth*, p. 451.
[20]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 261b, no. 9.
[21]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, ff 24-5; see APPENDIX NINE.
[22]Bradley, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas no. 10: Kilkenny*, p. 19.
[23]Karina Holton, 'From charters to carters: aspects of fairs and markets in medieval Leinster' in D. A. Cronin, Jim Gilligan and Karina Holton (ed.), *Irish fairs and markets: studies in local history* (Dublin, 2001), pp 18-44, at p. 20.
[24]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, ff 24-5.
[25]Holton, 'From charters to carters', p. 20.

of the law, and for the duration of the fair their authority was equivalent to that of the portreeve.

It was also the responsibility of the town administration to set the price of goods being sold at the fair—'the portreeve of the said towne of Trym or his deputy in his absence were wont to ordaine and proclaime all victuals to be sold in the said towne or coming thither to be sold at a certaine price and to convict those who against such ordinance and proclamaccion have done by amercements and fines as the case requires and according to the quantity of the fault'.[26]

The market

While a fair was one of the major occasions in a town's calendar, usually occurring only once a year and attracting participants from afar, the main event of each week was market day. Markets were typically one-day affairs (often Thursday), and the buyers and sellers were mainly local.[27] Like the fair, market day was a time for merchants and craftsmen to sell their wares, but more importantly it was a time for market-goers to purchase food for the week ahead, and to provision themselves with the necessities of daily life.

Although no market grant survives for Trim, one was almost certainly held in the town on a weekly basis throughout the middle ages. While the details of the murage charters to Trim indicate the range of goods sold at the fair, the taxes also applied to items being sold at the market (the annual revenue taken in from the weekly market would have been considerably more important than that collected during the fair).

Henry VI's 1430 charter to the portreeve and burgesses of Trim confirmed to them their right to hold 'an assize of bread and ale and the custody and assay of measures and weightes'. They were to punish any person found to be in breach of

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[26]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, fol. 26.
[27]Holton, 'From charters to carters', pp 20-1.

the regulations, and any fines collected were to go to the portreeve and burgesses 'in the ayde of the charge of the said towne'.[28]

One of the problems faced by the organisers of fairs and markets was forestalling. A forestaller was a person who bought goods cheaply before they reached the market in order to profit by reselling them later at a higher price. As no tax was paid on this type of trade, it was illegal and the authorities made every effort to stamp it out. The Trim charter of 1430 confirms that the town's administration were wont to identify and imprison any forestaller 'of victualls and other things eatable', and that the prisoners were to remain in gaol until such time as they had paid a fine to the portreeve.[29]

Ironically, despite their role in administering justice to those who did not conform to the town's trading laws, a number of Trim's portreeves were involved in an illicit trade in alcohol in the sixteenth century. It seems that it was illegal for a person holding a municipal office to sell wine or beer (and perhaps other goods too). Nonetheless, on 14 November 1538 it was found that John O'Fyaghan, portreeve of Trim, had sold one pottle (½ gallon) of rumney wine (an inferior sweet wine from southern Europe)[30] to Patrick Martonell and Patrick Brady and a gallon of beer to John Whit and David Edward and other unknown persons.[31] Patrick Martonell, himself a shopkeeper and ex-portreeve of the town, was also charged with selling a pottle of Gascon wine to John Moore and Robert White at Trim on 20 May 1537, and a gallon of beer to John Doyn, William Blake and some other unknown customers. Similarly, James Bermyngham, sometime portreeve of Trim, had sold a quart of rumney wine to John Oseghan, a merchant from Trim, in the town on 12 January 1536 and a gallon of beer to John Rely and John Whit, also of Trim. Further illicit trade had been carried out by John Kelly, another ex-

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[28]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, ff 15-16.
[29]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, fol. 17.
[30]P. W. Hammond, *Food and feast in medieval England* (Stroud, 1998), p. 60.
[31]Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, pp 69-70, no HVIII 129/127.

portreeve of Trim, on 10 January 1535, when he made a sale to James Bermyngham and John Whit.

The market place

The medieval market at Trim took place on Market Street (see FIG. 4.3), a relatively short but broad street which widens gradually towards the east end, almost certainly to facilitate the market stalls, livestock pens and crowds of people that would have been present on market- and fair-days. It is primarily a linear market place, similar to that found at Cashel and Kilkenny, but the broader end has similarities with the triangular market places of Fethard, Naas and Thurles. In some medieval towns burgage plots next to the market place were subdivided so as to allow access to the street to as many burgesses as possible. This may have been the case at Trim where plots adjacent to Market Street are narrower than those throughout the rest of the town.[32]

Although market crosses were a common feature of towns in the middle ages, very few survive in Ireland, and there is none at Trim.[33] That there was a street in Trim called Market-Cross Street, however, is recorded in the corporation book, although this may have been another name for Market Street.[34] Richard Butler knew an elderly man called McLoughlin who lived in Trim in the early nineteenth century and who, in 1820, could remember a pyramid of seven or eight flat steps and which was called 'the market cross' standing at the end of Market Street in front of the site of the Franciscan Friary.[35] It was usual for medieval market crosses to be set on a stepped pillar, such as the example at Athenry, Co. Galway—the only Irish medieval market cross to survive *in situ*[36]—or the cross known from Kilkenny.[37]

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[32]O'Keeffe, *Medieval Ireland*, pp 94-5.
[33]Bradley, 'Planned Anglo-Norman towns in Ireland', p. 440.
[34]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 293.
[35]Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 225-6.
[36]Bradley, *Walled towns in Ireland*, pp 21, 31; idem, 'Planned Anglo-Norman towns in Ireland', p. 440.

In 1561 the portreeve and burgesses of Trim acquired a 21-year lease from Queen Elizabeth of the toll of the market of Trim, the ground or soil of the market, and all shops and stalls there, for an annual rent of £4.[38] In June 1578 Henry Brande, portreeve of Trim, with the consent of the town's burgesses, surrendered the toll and market place back to the crown.[39] It seems that this was done in the expectation that the lease would then be renewed, and on 22 July a new 21-year lease was duly granted by the crown to the portreeve and burgesses of Trim.[40] By this grant they were to have 'the toll of the market of Tryme, and all customs of cattle and other merchandise coming to or going from the market, and the ground or soil of the market, and all shops and stalls there, with all profits appertaining', at the accustomed rent of £4. It was also ordered that 'they shall sufficiently pave with stones the market place'. Although this order may suggest that the market place was not previously paved, archaeologists monitoring pipe-laying in Trim in 1996 recorded a medieval cobbled street surface along almost the entire length of Market Street.[41] The cobbles, found in association with some sherds of medieval pottery, were uncovered at a depth of c. 1m below the present street level.

Stalls

In addition to the taxes on goods stipulated in the murage charters, traders had to pay stallage—a fee collected by the lord of the town from any person selling goods from a stall there. Little is known about the stalls in Trim, but in February 1386 Richard II granted to Egidio Predius, for good service, the custody of ten stalls there.[42] On 5 December 1430 Henry VI granted to Richard Talbot, archbishop of Dublin, the stallage due on all market-stalls at Trim.[43]

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[37] Facing frontispiece of *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, ii (1852-3).
[38] *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, ii, 1558-86, p. 44, no. 397 (318).
[39] *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, ii, 1558-86, p. 457, no. 3340 (6011).
[40] *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, ii, 1558-86, p. 463, no. 3376 (2656).
[41] Meenan, 'Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1996*, p. 89.
[42] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 126b, no. 179.
[43] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 250, no. 16.

Shops

As well as the stalls that would have been used on market and fair days, there were shops that were open on a more frequent basis. On 15 February 1403 Henry IV granted to Thomas de Everdon and Pho Poer custody of two vacant buildings that had been beautifully rebuilt [*sumptib' re-edificand'*] for use as shops.[44] Among the properties in Trim of which Peter Whyte was granted custody on 27 December 1405 were eight shops.[45] In 1558 Laurence Hammond was granted certain properties in Trim as well as a rental of 2s 3d each from two shops run by Robert Martynnell and Patrick Martynnell respectively.[46] The Martynells had each been renting a shop in Trim from at least 1541, at which time the rent was still 2s 3d.[47] [Although it may not be the case with the Trim references, it is worth noting that elsewhere in the middle ages the word 'shop' was sometimes used when referring to a workshop].[48]

FIG. 4.3 Market Street in the late nineteenth century.

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[44]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 174b, no. 97.
[45]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 181b, no. 44.
[46]*Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i, 1521-58 (1553-8), p. 322, no. 246 (219), ii, 1558-86, p. 9, no. 85 (264), p. 107, nos 922 (615) and 923 (620).
[47]*Crown surveys 1540-41*, pp 57-8.
[48]Schofield & Vince, *Medieval Towns*, p. 135.

Meat Market

The grant by Henry IV of two shops to de Everdon and Poer in 1403 specifies that one of the shops was next to Roger Fraunceys' site, beside the bridge, while outside the door of the other was the lane leading north to the meat-market.[49] This suggests that the meat-market was north of the Boyne, away from Market Street and the centre of the town's commercial activity. Having different markets for different goods was usually a characteristic of larger towns, but it was not uncommon for meat-markets and fish-markets to be set apart from the main market, even in smaller towns, due to the large amount of by-products and unpleasant odours produced by the butchers and mongers.[50]

Fish Market

That fish formed an important part of the trade at Trim can be seen from the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century murage charters, which specify that taxes were to be levied on fresh salmon, lamprey, herring and other sea-fish. In 1452 a convoy of English merchants, escorted by Lysagh FitzRoss and some local Irish, were transporting 'big packs of fish' from Athlone, the centre of the eel-fishery region, to Trim, Athboy and Dublin, when they were attacked and murdered by Fearghal Óg MagEochagáin, and 'no man living shall give account of the multitude of eels lost or left therein, wherefore that defeat was called *maidhm an esg* 'the defeat of the fish".[51]

As with the meat-market, it was not uncommon for the fish-market to be situated away from the centre of the town and the main market-place.[52] The survival of the name Fishamble Street at Trim up to the eighteenth century indicates that there was indeed a specific and separate street in the town where fish were sold.[53] Although the name is no longer used in the town, the location of Fishamble Street can be ascertained from an entry in the seventeenth-century corporation records,

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[49]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 174b, no. 97.
[50]Hammond, *Food & feast in medieval England*, p. 46.
[51]O'Donovan, 'The annals of Ireland 1443-68', pp 234-5.
[52]Hammond, *Food & feast in medieval England*, p. 46.
[53]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 293, 'from the Corporation Book, and inquisition'.

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which clearly identifies Fishamble Street as the lane leading from High Street to Talbot's Castle and the Yellow Steeple, parallel to the river.[54] This 'street' is now called Abbey Lane. The name *Fishamble* derives from the benches or tables (shambles) that were set up to sell goods (such as fish) from.[55]

Corn Market

The reference in the Corporation Records to a street named Corn Market Street suggests that the sale of corn was restricted to a certain area of the town.[56] Wheat, oats and corn seem to have been traded in large quantities, and it may be that they would have occupied too much space at the main market place. In 1244 the seneschal of Meath was ordered to have retained for the king 500 crannocks of wheat and 500 crannocks of dry oats,[57] while in 1310 the seneschal was commanded to take into the king's hand 'all corn for sale that he could find in his bailiwick, saving to each his reasonable sustenance, as well in haggards, granges and granaries, and keep it safe for the king's expedition and war in Scotland'.[58] The seneschal secured 454 crannocks of corn and 215 crannocks of oats.

Other crafts and trades

Milling

One of the primary uses to which the cereal grains (corn, wheat, oats) were put was bread-making. Indeed, flour is included as one of the items on which a murage toll was to be levied in Trim in the middle ages (see FIGS 4.1 and 4.2). Similarly, a tax of ½d was payable on the sale of each millstone. Grain was ground at water mills that harnessed the power of the river to turn grinding stones. A number of such mills are known to have operated in Trim.

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[54]N.L.I., MS 2992: the records of Trim Corporation, p. 161.
[55]Adrian Room, *The street names of England* (Stamford, 1992), p. 93.
[56]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 293, 'from the Corporation Book, and inquisition'.
[57]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 2696; *Close rolls, 1242-7*, p. 197.
[58]Nat. Archives, 2-448/1 KB 2/4, m. 97f, pp 576-8 (justiciary rolls 6 Edw. II).

On 13 June 1386 Robert Evere, later treasurer of Meath,[59] was granted custody of two mills, one in Ardmulchan and the other in Trim.[60] Evere was to pay £12 annually for as long as the mills remained in the king's hand. This is the first reference to a mill in Trim. It is known, however, that there was at least one other mill in the town. In 1422 John Staunton's salary as constable of Trim Castle was 20 marks per year which was charged on two mills in the town.[61] On 13 January 1428 James Cornewalshe, farmer, had custody of two mills and weirs in Trim, but he seems to have had difficulty in paying the rent.[62] Cornewalshe had ceased to hold the mills by 5 December 1430 when Henry VI granted them to Richard Talbot, archbishop of Dublin.[63]

By 1540 the roof of the church of the Cistercian Abbey at Bective had been 'thrown down and the timber so detached' used 'for the repairs of the King's mills at Tryme'.[64] In the same year it was recorded that the Franciscans of Trim had a watermill in the town,[65] while in 1544 Anthony Sentleger was granted 'two water mills, with their appurtenances, on the Boyne, by Trym, belonging to the late monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Trym'.[66]

A large, flat roughly oval stone (measuring $c.80$cm in maximum width, $c.1$m in maximum length and $c.25$cm in maximum thickness) was recently unearthed by workmen at the base of the curtain wall at Trim Castle, in what would originally have been the moat (see FIG. 4.4). The dome-shaped granite stone is perforated centrally by a hole 20cm in diameter. The hole is circumscribed by four concentric grooves. This appears to be a millstone.

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[59]N.L.I., *Harris Collectanea*, MS 13, ff 145-6.
[60]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 130b, no. 7.
[61]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 235, no. 15.
[62]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 247b, no. 50.
[63]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 250, no. 16.
[64]*Extents Ir. mon. possessions*, p. 267; Roger Stalley, *The Cistercian monasteries of Ireland: an account of the history, art and architecture of the White Monks in Ireland from 1142 to 1540* (London and New Haven, 1987), p. 227.
[65]*Extents Ir. mon. possessions*, p. 307.
[66]*Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i, 1521-58, p. 45, no. 392 (443).

FIG. 4.4 A granite millstone recently found at Trim.

Cloth trade

Both the mandate ordering Godarville to secure all the cloth he could find at the fair of Trim and the details given in the murage charters suggest that trade in cloth formed an important part of the commerce of the town. The charters also indicate that woad was sold at Trim. This plant was valuable to the cloth industry in the middle ages as it yielded a blue dye used to colour textiles.[67]

Cloth-merchants from abroad came to Trim to buy and sell their wares, and in 1257 three traders from Flanders, the centre of the cloth-making industry in Europe,[68] sold what must have been a considerable amount of cloth at Trim for £140.[69] When, on 15 September 1471, an inventory was made of all the goods

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[67]Marjorie Rowling, *Everyday life in medieval times* (Dorset Press edition, New York, 1987), p. 62; Schofield & Vince, *Medieval Towns*, p. 109.

[68]Rowling, *Everyday life in medieval times*, p. 62.

[69]N.L.I., *Harris Collectanea*, MS 1, 1155-1324, f. 220, ll 21-8; J. F. Lydon, 'Three exchequer documents from the reign of Henry III' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxv, Sect. C, no. 1 (1966), pp 18, 25;

owned in Ireland by Richard Boys, a merchant from Coventry, listed among the debts due to him was £10 owed by Matthew Russelde, of Trim, for cloth.[70]

A statute passed at the Trim parliament in August 1465 confirmed that it was unlawful for any merchant to sell or carry any cloth or dozens[71] of cloth from the towns of Chester, Coventry or Gloucester, or from the counties of Lancaster or York, unless each cloth measure at least fifteen yards in length and two yards in width.[72] Notwithstanding this law, in December 1466 Gilbert Walker of Yorkshire came to Dublin and sold 'ten dozen of courscloth of the county of York', each of which was a yard short, to John Whitchurche, a cloth-merchant from Trim.[73]

Henry VI's 1430 grant to the portreeve and burgesses of Trim indicates that the town's administration engaged in a degree of protectionism with regard to its cloth traders. One of the provisions of that charter confirmed that 'no fforraigner were wont to sell cloths in the said towne of Trym or liberty thereof to theire [the burgesses] hindrance without lycence of the portreeve for the time being or his deputy in his absence'.[74]

Tanners and shoemakers

Also traded at Trim was a range of hides and unshorn skins. On 23 January 1532 it was found that certain craftsmen from Trim had sold hides illegally.[75] John Finglas, a tanner, had sold six at 4s each to Gyllese O'Kynelan of Birgesend [perhaps Burgages end?] on 10 July 1531. On the same day Walter Tanner, also a tanner, had sold three hides to Cornelius (or Cannor) Schomaker of Trim, who had himself

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Charles McNeill, 'Harris: *Collectanea de rubus Hibernicis*' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 6 (Nov. 1934), p. 293.

[70]H. F. Berry (ed.), *Register of wills and inventories of the Diocese of Dublin in the time of Archbishops Tregury and Walton, 1457-83* (being the extra volume of the *R.S.A.I.* for 1896-1897), pp 8-9; Mary Clark and Raymond Refaussé (ed.), *Directory of historic Dublin guilds* (Dublin, 1993), p. 24.

[71]A dozen was a cloth fourteen yards in length and two yards in width.

[72]R.I.A. MS 24.H.17: Extracts (Ireland) from the memoranda rolls, 1383-1643, pp 79-81.

[73]Timothy O'Neill, *Merchants and mariners in medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1987), p. 75; R.I.A. MS 24.H.17: Extracts (Ireland) from the memoranda rolls, 1383-1643, pp 79-81.

[74]Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, fol. 19.

[75]Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, pp 34-5, no HVIII 63/99.

sold four. Finglas and Schomaker were in trouble again when they each sold further hides to John Kelly, a shoemaker from Trim, on 12 March 1533.[76] Kelly was found not to have imported bows as required by statute, although he had been able to import £20 worth of goods on the ship *Skout* of Liverpool on 9 June 1532.[77] In 1535 Walter Marten of Trim was fined for overcharging Kelly for six hides he had sold him on 10 March that year.[78] It was also found that Connor Shomaker of Trim operated as both a tanner and a shoemaker and that carrying out two trades in this manner was illegal.[79] In June 1543 a certain Connor Duff, of Trim, was also found to be working as both a shoemaker and a tanner.[80] It is likely that Cornelius Schomaker, Connor Shomaker and Connor Duff were all the same person and it may be that the confusion over his name was part of a cover-up to enable him to carry out two trades.

Leather off-cuts were found during two separate archaeological excavations on Mill Street in 1996 and 1999 respectively,[81] while a complete shoe was recovered during excavations on Haggard Street in 1999.[82] The off-cuts attest the presence of leatherworkers on Mill Street in the middle ages, and they are probably the result of shoe-making activity.

The sixteenth-century reference to Skinner's Street suggests the former presence of a skinner's premises on that street, but its location is not known.[83]

Wine trade

It is known from documentary sources that wine was traded at Trim from at least the thirteenth century, and a number of references survive to wine merchants operating in the town later in the middle ages. Although it is possible that some

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[76]Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, pp 38-9, no HVIII 68/101.
[77]Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, pp 38-9, no HVIII 68/101.
[78]Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, p. 39, no HVIII 69/102.
[79]Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, p. 39, no HVIII 69/102.
[80]Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, pp 102-3, no HVIII 170/141.
[81]Meenan, 'Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1996*, p. 89; Clare Mullins, 'Mill Street/High Street/Haggard Street, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, no. 720, pp 249-50.
[82]Clare Mullins, 'Haggard Street, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, no. 715, pp 246-7.

wine was produced locally, it is more likely that all of it was imported. While it is known that a low quality wine called *Rumney*, from the south of Europe, was being traded in the town in the sixteenth century (see above), most of the wine brought into Ireland in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was French.

In the thirteenth century, the focus of wine-producing in France was in the area around Bordeaux and wine was exported in large quantities in glazed jugs.[84] Local potters in the Saintonge region were quick to take advantage of the expanding trade, and sherds of their pottery are frequently recovered on medieval excavations in Ireland.[85] Three hundred sherds of Saintonge pottery were found during the 1970s excavations at Trim Castle[86] and, while final reports on other excavations in Trim are awaited, it appears that further sherds may have been present at several locations around the town including Loman Street, the site of the Franciscan friary, Abbey Lane, Haggard Street, the Maudlin cemetery and close to the site of the Watergate.[87] Although no sherds of Saintonge ware were recovered during the excavations at the library site on High Street, five sherds of pottery from the southwest of France were found (see p. 162 below).[88]

No record survives of any taverns in the town in the middle ages, but there is sufficient evidence to attest their existence. On 4 July 1441, for instance, the king

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[83] *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, iii, 1586-1603, p. 227, no. 5840 (4781).

[84] J. G. Hurst, 'Medieval pottery imported into Ireland' in Gearóid Mac Niocaill and P. F. Wallace (ed.), *Keimelia: studies in medieval archaeology and history in memory of Tom Delaney* (Galway, 1989), pp 229-53.

[85] Sites in Ireland which have yielded substantial quantities of Saintonge Ware include Ferns Castle, Co. Wexford (see P. D. Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Ferns Castle, Co. Wexford' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxxix (1979), sect. C, pp 217-45), Drogheda, Co. Louth (see Hurst, 'Medieval pottery imported into Ireland', pp 248-9) and Adare Castle, Co. Limerick (see P. D. Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Adare Castle, Co. Limerick' in *Cork Hist. Soc. Jn.*, lxxxv (1980), pp 1-6).

[86] Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 160-1.

[87] Meenan, 'Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1996*, p. 89; Dominic Delaney, 'Trim Courthouse, Castle Street, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1997*, no. 437, pp 145-6; Matthew Seaver, 'Abbey Lane, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1998*, no. 527, pp 167-8; Mullins, 'Haggard Street' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, pp 246-7; Finola O'Carroll, 'Maudlin/Commons, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, no. 719, pp 248-9; Avril Purcell, 'Trim Courthouse, Manorland, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, no. 721, pp 250-1; Rob Lynch, 'Townspark South, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, no. 722, p. 251.

issued an order for William Broun of Trim, vintner, to be released from prison where he was being held for causing harm to William Dowedall and Katherine Kelly.[89] The names Wine Street and Wynetavern Street, which survived into the sixteenth century, suggest that there may have been a concentration of public houses in one area of the town.[90] The 'Passtime Bush on Newhaggard Lane', mentioned in the post-medieval Corporation Records, may also be a reference to a tavern.[91] A bush or bunch of ivy was often used as a vintner's sign, and the name 'Passtime Bush' would be appropriate for a wine tavern.

Goldsmiths

In 1461 Sir Christopher Plunkett, of Dunsany, left by will 'to the church of Dunsany, a cope of gold, a chasuble of gold cloth, a chasuble of red satin, the cross and the two censers, and a chalice, which was with the goldsmith of Trim'.[92] It may be that this goldsmith was John Godewyn, 'goldsmyth, of Trim', who received a general pardon in August 1482.[93]

Other trades and crafts

Medieval craftsmen often derived their surname from their craft[94]—in Trim in the sixteenth century for instance, Walter Tanner was indeed a tanner, while Cornelius Schomaker operated as a cobbler.[95] Similarly, it is likely that the *Rogerus pistor de Trum* and *Nicholaus Caretarius de Trum*, recorded in the thirteenth-century Dublin Guild merchant roll were a baker and a cartwright respectively.[96] That timber boards and nails for cart-making were sold in Trim is clear from the early

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[88]Claire Walsh, 'An excavation at the library site, High St, Trim' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, viii, no.3 (1990-91), pp 41-66, at p. 50.

[89]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 262b, no. 28.

[90]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, ii, 276, no. 15; *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, ii, 1558-86, p. 228, no. 1714 (1400); iii, 1586-1603, p. 227, no. 5840 (4781).

[91]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 293, 'from the Corporation Book, and inquisition'.

[92]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 83; O'Neill, *Merchants & mariners*, p. 95; *Cal. Carew MSS, v, Howth*, pp 357-9.

[93]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1476-85*, p. 312.

[94]Schofield & Vince, *Medieval Towns*, pp 99-100.

[95]Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, pp 34-5, no HVIII 63/99.

[96]*Hist. & mun. doc. Ire.*, p. 33; Philomena Connolly and Geoffrey Martin (ed.), *The Dublin Guild Merchant Roll, c. 1190-1265* (First supplement to The Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin, Dublin, 1992), pp 15, 52.

murage charters (cart nails were taxed at forty times the rate of ordinary nails and twenty times the rate of roofing nails) and there is a mention of a cart shed in the town in 1545.[97]

Guilds and the guildhall

Medieval craftsmen and merchants were often organised into guilds. The guild was an institution established to uphold the privileges of its members, and to look after them. They usually had a guildhall, which was able to house large groups of people for feasts and other public events.[98] Henry VI's 1430 charter confirmed that the portreeve and burgesses of Trim 'were wont to have theire reasonable guildes as the burgesses of Bristoll were wont to have or better'.[99] Little is known about the guild or guilds that may have operated in medieval Trim, but in 1455 an inquisition was held before Sir Robert Barnewall in the guildhall of Trim.[100] It may be that this was the building referred to in 1570 (and again in 1593) as 'a great waste messuage uncovered called the Blackhall in the Fayer street'?[101] In 1596 Robert Draper, Thomas Givier and Robert Hamon were master and wardens of the guild of the Holy Cross in Trim.[102]

The numismatic evidence

One of the most useful forms of non-documentary evidence for trade is coinage. At least two hundred medieval coins and several trader's tokens are known from Trim. In the nineteenth century, many artefacts came to light during the sowing and lifting of potatoes in the spring and autumn. Dean Butler rewarded all those who brought to him the objects they discovered while digging in the town. In this way he accumulated a collection of over four hundred and thirty coins, including a complete series from Henry II to Victoria, all picked up at Trim.[103] After his death,

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[97] *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i, 1521-46/7, p. 53, no. 467 (265).
[98] Schofield & Vince, *Medieval Towns*, p. 133.
[99] Nat. Archives, MS Co 1814, fol. 19.
[100] *Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 416-17.
[101] *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, ii, 1558-86, p. 228, no. 1714 (1400); iii, 1586-1603, p. 227, no. 5840 (4781).
[102] Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, p. 332, no JI 21/88.
[103] Butler, 'A memoir of Richard Butler', p. 96; Conwell, 'A ramble round Trim' (1874), p. 417.

Butler's coins were presented to the Royal Irish Academy and, although no record seems to have been kept of most of them, they were probably merged into the Academy's collection.[104] Included among the coins in Butler's assemblage were twenty five dating to the reign of King John (1199-1216), eight from that of Henry III (1216-1272), fifteen of Edward I (1272-1307), sixty five of Edward IV (1461-1483), four of Richard III (1483-1485), thirty five of Henry VII (1485-1509) and twenty four of Henry VIII (1509-1547).

Butler also recorded that 'some Castile coins and several Anglo-Gallic coins of billon have been found in Trim',[105] as well as 'several small, unstamped pieces of billon, or rather of iron, they are of the size of a sixpence, but very thin, they may have been O'Reyle's money'.[106] An act was passed at the Trim parliament of 1447 banning the use of 'clipped money', especially that known as Orayllys money'.[107]

The assemblage of medieval coins recovered during the 1970s excavations at Trim Castle comprised one Irish coin, eleven English and one Scottish.[108] The Scottish coin was a silver penny of Alexander III, post-dating 1280. A number of these coins had already turned up in Butler's day and he suggested that they might have been brought to Trim by Bruce's army, although they are more likely to derive from trading contacts.[109]

That most of the coins from the 1970s excavations dated to the period from *c.*1280 to *c.*1360 led Michael Dolley to conclude that 'Trim was a place of considerable importance at this juncture'.[110] It would certainly suggest that the late thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth were a time of heightened trade in the town. This theory is supported by the presence in St Patrick's Church of a tomb,

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[104]Ellison, 'Richard Butler', p. 136.
[105]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 80.
[106]Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 76-8.
[107]*Stat. Ire., Hen. VI*, pp 90-1.
[108]Dolley, 'Report on numismatic material', pp 193-7.
[109]Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, p. 86.
[110]Dolley, 'Report on numismatic material', p. 193.

almost certainly that of a wealthy merchant and his wife, dated by Hunt to the first quarter of the fourteenth century.[111]

The ceramic evidence

The artefactual assemblage recovered during the archaeological excavations at Trim Castle in the 1970s was dominated by medieval pottery.[112] Over ninety thousand sherds dating from the twelfth to the fifteenth century were found, with at least eight hundred jugs and one hundred cooking vessels represented. Although most of the pottery was of Irish origin, several hundred sherds of English and French wares were also recovered. Most of the imported pottery can be identified as coming from either Ham Green near the port of Bristol, or Saintonge close to Bordeaux on the west coast of France. Both of these areas were important trading centres that did business with Anglo-Norman Ireland.[113]

Ham Green

Pottery from the prolific kilns at Ham Green near Bristol has been recovered on a large number of Irish medieval excavations.[114] In fact, it has been said that more sherds of Ham Green ware have been discovered in Ireland than in England.[115] Most of the sherds found in Ireland are of high quality glazed jugs. It was formerly thought that these were traded from Bristol during the second half of the thirteenth

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[111] John Hunt, *Irish Medieval figure sculpture, 1200-1600: a study of Irish tombs with notes on costumes and armour* (2 vols, Irish University Press, 1974), i (text and catalogue), no. 209, pp 35-7, 215-16. See CHAPTER SEVEN below.

[112] Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 156-75

[113] T. B. Barry, *The archaeology of medieval Ireland* (London, 1987), p. 57.

[114] See for example, P. D. Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at King John's Castle, Limerick' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxxx (1980), sect. C, pp 207-29; idem, 'Archaeological excavations at Ferns Castle', pp 217-45; P. F. Wallace, 'Anglo-Norman Dublin: continuity and change' in Ó Corráin, *Irish Antiquity*, pp 247-67; Audrey Gahan and Clare McCutcheon with M. F. Hurley and J. G. Hurst, 'Medieval pottery' in M. F. Hurley and O. M. B. Scully with S. W. J. McCutcheon, *Late Viking age and medieval Waterford: excavations 1986-1992* (Waterford, 1997), pp 285-336, at p. 286; *Excavations 1975-6*, p. 27; Barry, *Archaeol. Med. Ire.*, p. 97.

[115] Barry, *Archaeol. Med. Ire.*, p. 97.

century and into the fourteenth century, but a more recent analysis has shown that Ham Green ware was being produced as early as the twelfth century.[116]

Barton divided Ham Green wares into two distinct categories—Type A and Type B.[117] Almost one hundred sherds of Ham Green ware were recovered during the excavations at Trim Castle, all of which appear to be of Barton's Type B. A further twenty sherds of Ham Green ware were recovered during the excavations on High Street in 1987.[118] These comprised nineteen body sherds and a single fragment of the rim or handle of a vessel.

Saintonge

Pottery imported from Saintonge in France is found on Irish medieval excavations as frequently as is Ham Green ware.[119] Two main types of Saintonge pottery have been identified—Green-Glazed ware and Polychrome ware, the latter being far less common than the former and usually considered to date from the period between 1280 and 1310.[120] Although Saintonge pottery is most often viewed as a by-product of the wine trade, Wallace has pointed out that it was not only used for table ware and for the storage of wine and water but that floor- and roof-tiles, finials for chimneys, curfews and even candlesticks were also manufactured by the Saintonge potters and exported to Ireland.[121]

Three hundred sherds of Saintonge ware were found during the excavations at Trim Castle. Of these, twenty-five were of Polychrome ware and two hundred and seventy five were of Green-Glazed ware, mostly deriving from jugs (usually taller

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[116]M. W. Ponsford, 'Dendrochronological dates from Dundras Wharf, Bristol and the dating of Ham Green and other medieval pottery' in E. Lewis (ed.), *Customs and ceramics: essays presented to Kenneth Barton* (Wickham, 1991), pp 81-103.

[117]K. J. Barton, 'A medieval pottery kiln at Ham Green, Bristol' in *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, lxxxii (1963), pp 95-226, at pp 96-7.

[118]Walsh, 'An excavation at the library site', p. 49.

[119]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Ferns Castle', pp 217-45; Hurst, 'Medieval pottery imported into Ireland', pp 248-9; Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Adare Castle', pp 1-6.

[120]G. C. Dunning, 'The trade in medieval pottery around the North Sea' in J. G. Renaud (ed.) *Rotterdam Papers*, i (Rotterdam, 1968), pp 35-58, at p. 45; Barry, *Archaeol. Med. Ire.*, p. 98.

[121]Wallace, 'Anglo-Norman Dublin', pp 253-8.

and thinner than their English counterparts). These vessels, which were probably used for containing wine or water, are usually seen as a reflection of the wealth and social standing of those to whom they belonged and of those who used them. The jugs represented by the sherds found at Trim were of high quality and were at 'the luxury end of the market'.[122]

Other French and English wares

Several sherds of northwest French ware were also found at Trim Castle.[123] One sherd—part of a yellowish green glazed spout—was recovered from a context dated to the second half of the thirteenth century. Five body sherds of vessels from the southwest of France were found during the 1987 excavations on High Street,[124] while sherds from four different vessels of unprovenanced English wares were also recovered at that site. One of the vessels may have been manufactured in Oxfordshire in the thirteenth century.

Leinster wares

At the High Street site, a minimum of five externally-glazed, decorated vessels were represented by sherds including a spout, handle fragments and rim and body sherds.[125] Five sherds of unglazed Leinster Ware were also recovered. Four of the sherds were blackened by soot on the outside, indicating that they had derived from cooking pots.

Other Irish wares

Despite the presence of imported wares of French and English origin, more than ninety-eight percent of the pottery from the Trim Castle excavations was of Irish origin (compared with twenty percent at Cork City[126] and eleven percent at Waterford City).[127] A uniform group of sherds from the filling of the cellar of the

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[122]Barry, *Archaeol. Med. Ire.*, p. 98.
[123]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', p. 161.
[124]Walsh, 'An excavation at the library site, High St, Trim', p. 50.
[125]Walsh, 'An excavation at the library site, High St, Trim', p. 51.
[126]*Excavations 1975-6*, p. 27.
[127]Gahan 'Medieval pottery', p. 288.

west gatehouse was originally given the name 'Trim Ware',[128] but it has since been shown that this pottery was manufactured in Dublin, most likely in the twelfth century.[129] Almost all of the pieces are from glazed jugs, several of which were almost complete.

Pottery from other excavations and monitoring programmes, 1996-1999

Pre-development test-trenching took place in 1999 at a site close to the Maudlin Cemetery.[130] Although a complete report on the excavations is awaited, the summary report confirms that the medieval pottery recovered from the site consisted of local wares dating to the thirteenth century (including the slashed handle of a jug), Leinster cooking-ware and miscellaneous sherds of fourteenth- or fifteenth-century date. While a number of other archaeological excavations in the town have turned up medieval pottery, the interim reports so far published have not given any specific details about the pottery.[131]

Conclusions

The collection of pottery from Trim sheds useful light both on the town's medieval trading contacts and also the degree to which residents of the castle and town utilised Irish wares. The presence of Ham Green pottery at both Trim Castle and elsewhere in the town are evidence for contact, and probably trade, between Trim and Bristol in the twelfth century, while pottery from other parts of England indicate that trading contacts were not confined to the English western seaboard. Vessels from at least three different regions of France were represented, but the

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[128]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', p. 171.

[129]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 40-1.

[130]O'Carroll, 'Maudlin/Commons' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, pp 248-9.

[131]Meenan, 'Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1996*, p. 89; Delaney, 'Trim Courthouse' in Bennett, *Excavations 1997*, pp 145-6; Seaver, 'Abbey Lane' in Bennett, *Excavations 1998*, pp 167-8; Mullins, 'Haggard Street' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, pp 246-7; Mullins, 'Mill Street/High Street/Haggard Street, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, pp 249-50; Purcell, 'Trim Courthouse' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, pp 250-1; Lynch, 'Townspark South' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, p. 251; Archaeological Consultancy Services Limited, 'Report on archaeological monitoring of works at 23 Market Street [Bank of Ireland], Trim, Co. Meath' (unpublished report, 2001), pp 10-11; Avril Purcell, 'Archaeological excavation, Trim Courthouse, Trim, Co. Meath' (unpublished report for Margaret Gowen and Co. Ltd, 1999), pp 8, 9, 10, 12.

predominance of Saintonge ware attests strong links between Trim and the Poitou region, especially in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

❖ CHAPTER 5

THE TOPOGRAPHICAL LAYOUT OF MEDIEVAL TRIM

I - Town defences: walls and mural towers

Introduction

One of the main characteristics of medieval towns was their defences. A strong wall was a necessary feature to protect a town in times of attack and to provide its inhabitants with a sense of security. A well-fortified town could attract wealthy settlers and traders and provided a safe setting in which, for instance, parliaments could be held. The alleged strength of the walls at Trim was even used as a carrot to attract the establishment of a university there in 1584 (although the proposal was not successful).[1]

In addition to its defensive role, the wall served as a highly visible division between the town and the countryside. It was a physical expression of the legal separateness of the town, the civic identity of its inhabitants, and the power of the community. The importance of urban defences in this regard is epitomised by the representation on many town seals of strongly fortified walls and gates (witness Colchester, Shrewsbury and York in England,[2] and Arles, Marseilles and Montpellier in France).[3] Urban settlements in medieval art and on maps are similarly identified by curtain walls, towers and gates. Even in 1658 the cartographers working on the Down Survey for County Meath chose to represent Trim as a close-knit complex of fortifications straddling the river Boyne.[4]

Ingress to and egress from a fortified town was screened at mural gates. Access was usually denied to cripples, criminals, paupers and prostitutes, while merchants and traders were admitted upon payment of certain specified taxes, depending on what they were selling or buying. As collection points for tolls, gates represented for many incomers the first contact with town government, and

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[1] Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 290-2.
[2] Derek Keene, 'The medieval urban landscape, AD 900-1540' in Philip Waller (ed.), *The English urban landscape* (Oxford, 2000), pp 74-98, at p. 84.
[3] Yves Esquieu, *La ville au Moyen Age: l'exemple français* (Joué-lès-Tours, 2001), p. 8.
[4] N.L.I. Microfilm Pos. 7382 (a), MS 715 (Copy of Down Survey maps).

reminded them of the organisation and regulations they could expect to find within.

Town walls and gates, often visible from afar, symbolised the internal order of a town. Their construction was expensive and as such they embodied substantial collective effort and investment. In order to lessen the cost of erection and maintenance, a 'murage' charter was often issued to a town wishing to establish or maintain its defences. This document entitled the grantee(s) to collect tolls on goods being brought for sale to the town, which revenue was then to be expended on the town's fortifications (see CHAPTER FOUR). Despite their proliferation in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, murage grants raised a relatively small amount of money and the system of collection was open to abuse.[5]

As well as being expensive, the construction of enclosing stone walls was time-consuming. Indeed, Bradley has suggested that it took about one hundred years to build a circuit of walls 2.4km long at Kilkenny.[6] Early defences and the defences at smaller towns regularly took the form of ditches, earthen banks and timber palisades. The earliest fortifications at Drogheda, for example, consisted of earthen ramparts, and similar defences protected medieval Duleek (Co. Meath).[7] In some places, the image portrayed of massive stone fortifications may have been exaggerated. Reviewing the archaeological evidence, for instance, Esquieu has shown that the majority of fortified towns in France were not entirely surrounded by stone walls in the middle ages.[8] While some sections of the defences may have been built of cut stone, it was common for other parts of the town to be defended by a fosse and earthen bank surmounted by a timber palisade.

Trim is one of about twenty-eight towns in Ireland at which at least some fragments of the original circuit of medieval stone walls survive. Information on

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[5]Peter Gale, *An inquiry into the ancient corporate system of Ireland and suggestions for its immediate restoration and general extension with an appendix containing numerous original documents* (London, 1834), pp 125-6; John Bradley, 'The town wall of Kilkenny' in *Old Kilkenny Review*, i, no. 2 (1975), pp 85-103; no. 3 (1976), pp 209-19, at p. 94.
[6]Bradley, 'The town wall of Kilkenny', pp 93, 102.
[7]Bradley, *Walled towns in Ireland*, p. 16.
[8]Esquieu, *La ville au Moyen Age*, pp 33-46.

the course and development of the wall and the position of the gates at Trim derives from the documentary evidence of medieval murage grants and later antiquarian accounts, nineteenth-century maps and photographs, archaeological excavations, the alignment of property boundaries, toponymy, and on what survives of the town's defences.

The documentary evidence

The earliest known evidence for the walling of Trim dates to January 1290 when Geoffrey de Geneville was given a seven-year grant to impose customs on goods coming into Trim in aid of enclosing the town 'for the greater security of Ireland'.[9] Trim was the thirteenth town in Ireland to receive a murage charter. In April 1308 a new seven-year grant entitled Roger Mortimer to collect pavage and murage tax from traders at Trim, and when this grant ran out in 1316 a further seven-year licence was issued.[10] The proximity to Trim at this time of Edward Bruce and his army may have precipitated the granting of the latter charter.[11]

Three major murage grants within the space of twenty-six years may have provided Trim with a strong wall, but towards the end of the fourteenth century the town's defences were in need of repair. Attacks on the town by 'malicious rebels and enemies' forced Roger Mortimer to petition Richard II for support, and on 4 October 1393 the king granted Mortimer a twenty-year licence allowing his ministers to collect customs and duty on goods going into or out of Trim, Athboy, Skryne and Navan, and for a league around these towns.[12] The reason that tolls were to be collected also in Athboy, Skryne and Navan, was that Trim was a central town in which 'all the *fideles* of Meath congregated', including inhabitants of the other towns. The funds raised were to be expended on works to Trim's enclosing stone wall (*muro lapideo claudende*), as well as on repairing and

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[9]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1281-92*, p. 336; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92*, pp 277-8, no. 560.
[10]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1307-1313*, p. 70; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1313-1317*, p. 349.
[11]*Cal. Carew MSS, v, Howth*, p. 140; Smith, *Colonisation and conquest*; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, pp 228, 231; Olive Armstrong, *Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland* (London, 1923), p. 127.
[12]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 165b, no. 226; *Chart. privil. immun.*, p. 89; N.L.I., *Harris Collectanea*, MS 13., ff 145-6; *Mun. corp. Ire., rep., app. I*, p. 266.

amending the pavement, improving the town and repressing the neighbouring enemies and rebels.

The collection of tolls in one town towards the construction or maintenance of the walls of another became common from the end of the fourteenth century.[13] Tolls were being charged at Ardee in *c.*1376 for work at Castleroche, and in the fifteenth century maintenance of the walls of towns such as Thomastown (Co. Kilkenny), Fethard (Co. Tipperary) and Naas (Co. Kildare) was funded by tolls collected in other parts of the respective counties.[14]

On 16 July 1400 Henry IV confirmed the 1393 murage grant to Trim, but transferred the licence to the portreeve of the town and his council.[15] From 27 October 1401 John Whitsyde, who had been elected by the portreeve and council, was empowered to collect customs and duties in the town.[16] In 1407 the portreeve and burgesses petitioned the king, detailing the liberties, franchises, rights and customs to which they had been accustomed since 'time immemorial'. On 12 March of that year, as a result of this petition, and considering the role played by the town in resisting the 'Irish enemy', Henry IV granted a charter confirming the rights and liberties of the portreeve and burgesses, including the entitlement of the portreeve to collect duties such as murage, pontage, lastage, and quayage.[17]

Ten years later, on 27 May 1417, the portreeve was granted a twenty-year licence to impose taxes to be put towards the upkeep of the town's pavements and enclosing stone wall.[18] This licence was confirmed by Henry VI in December 1422.[19] By the time of this confirmation, Navan and Athboy (which had by then received its own murage charter)[20] were replaced as sources of revenue for Trim

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[13]Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, i, p. 113.
[14]Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, i, p. 113.
[15]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 165b, no. 226.
[16]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 165b, no. 226.
[17]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 185, no. 39.
[18]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 229, no. 99.
[19]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 229, no. 99.
[20]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, ii, pp 452-6, nos 63-4 (in fact Athboy may have been in receipt of a murage grant as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century—there is a reference to 'Adam de Bailif, collector of the murage of Athboy', in 1307-8, and an obscure mention of

by the smaller towns of Dunshaughlin, Dunboyne, Greenogue and Slane (all Co. Meath).[21]

The security of towns, especially those within the Pale, was a priority for the Irish parliament in the fifteenth century. Nonetheless, funds raised towards the maintenance of Trim's walls were not always used for the purpose they were intended. In 1453 for instance, Matthew English, sometime portreeve of Trim, was required to explain why eight marks of silver collected for the murage and pavage of the town and which had come into the portreeve's hands, had been expended 'for his own use', and not on the walling or paving of the town.[22] Several of English's predecessors in the office of portreeve of Trim were also tried for similar accounting irregularities (see CHAPTER THREE).

It is hardly surprising then that just ten years later the walls of Trim were found to be in need of further work. A review carried out in 1462 of the defences of Athboy, Fore, Kells, Naas, Navan and Trim concluded that funding for murage, pavage and pontage should continue to be made available to these towns so long as this was not prejudicial to Dublin, Drogheda, Ardee or Skryne.[23] It was thus enacted that the earlier grants made by Henry VI to Athboy, Fore, Kells, Naas, Navan and Trim should be 'ratified, approved and confirmed in all points', to avoid 'the utter annihilation of the said towns'.[24]

In March 1498 Gerald, earl of Kildare and deputy lieutenant of Ireland was ordered to summon a parliament at which a statute was to be passed 'for the cleansing of the towns in Ireland'.[25] As part of that statute, the portreeve of Trim was to cause the walls of the town 'to be made and ditched and the streets to be drained and paved according to the grants of customs'.

'murage Athboy' in 1314-15—see R.I.A. MS 12.D.12, pp 59, 119; Navan may also have been in receipt of a murage charter by 1422—it certainly had one before 1462, see *Mun. corp. Ire., rep., app. I*, p. 119.
[21] *Mun. corp. Ire., rep.*, p. 7.
[22] Gale, *An inquiry into the ancient corporate system of Ireland*, pp 125-6.
[23] *Mun. corp. Ire., rep., app. I*, p. 119.
[24] *Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 24-6.
[25] *Cal. pat. rolls, Hen. VII, 1494-1509*, p. 128.

In his 1584 description of the town, Bishop Robert Draper recorded that at that time Trim was 'well and strongly walled about'.[26] Whatever the accuracy of Draper's claim, by 1642 the town's fortifications 'had been allowed to fall into decay, for at this time the town was encompassed with a stone wall, so old and ruinous as to afford in some places entrance to horse, over heaps of rubbish that lay beside the wall'.[27] The text of the 1658 Down Survey makes no mention of the walls themselves, but record is made of two gates, one at the south of the town, called 'Dublyn Gate' and the other at the north, called 'Navin Gate'—the buildings were 'low, strong and decent'.[28] It is recorded in the town records for January 1667 that 'the condition of Navan-gate and Dublin-gate, and the walls about the mill, westward, [were] to be inspected; report to be made of their state, and the expense of repairing them'.[29] £3 was afterwards ordered for the repair of Navan-gate, otherwise known as 'Rogue's Castle'. In March 1682 it was ordered that 'the gates called Navan and Athboy gates, be repaired at the charge of the corporation', and overseers were appointed for this task.[30]

It is recorded in the town records for 21 January 1689 that 'the inhabitants of the corporation of Trim, doe put in their six days work, for repairing the walls on the south side of the corporation aforesaid, and that the said inhabitants be at the charge of lyme, where it is wanting, to make up the bridge, gate, and the drawbridge gate at the Castle; which charge is to be equally applotted: to be begun on Wednesday next, being the 23rd day of this instant, and done with all expedition. And that the back doors in the walls be forthwith made up with all expedition'.[31]

By the eighteenth century it seems that little effort was made to maintain the walls and gates of the town. In 1753 Richard Pococke toured parts of Meath and at Trim

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[26]Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 290-2.
[27]*The Irish Builder*, xxvii, no. 622 (15 November 1885), p. 306.
[28]Charles McNeill, 'Copies of Down Survey Maps in private keeping' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 8 (March, 1938), pp 419-27, at p. 426.
[29]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 143.
[30]N.L.I. (J.F. Ainsworth) report on private collections, 9 (microfilm 8370), report 263 (report on the proceedings of the corporation of Trim), p. 2173; Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 143.
[31]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 143.

he noted that 'there are remains of the walls and gates, one to the west of the street from Dangan [Dublin Gate], another still in repair called Athboy gate'.[32] On 15 May 1795 the artist and antiquarian Austin Cooper remarked on the 'very light structure and plainness of two of the gates which still remain'.[33] Little was written about the walls of Trim in the nineteenth century, but in 1861 Richard Butler recorded that the 'town wall may be traced across Porch fields where the Sheep Gate is, and by river where Water Gate is, and through town gardens'.[34] One gets the impression that by Butler's time large sections of the walls and the majority of the gates and mural towers had already disappeared.

The cartographic evidence

The 1658 Down Survey map of 'Trim parrish' shows little detail of the town itself but a cut-stone wall is clearly illustrated and a gate is shown on the north side.[35] Although none of the circuit is shown on the 1770 outline map of Trim, some of the property boundaries clearly follow the line of the town wall.[36] The most useful maps for a study of the walls of Trim all date to the 1830s, however, and these may all be the result of a single survey.

The Water Gate and sections of the 'old town wall' to the east and west of the town are shown on the map accompanying the 1835 report on Irish Municipal Corporations.[37] The first edition of Butler's *Trim Castle* (1835) also has a map of the town (18":1 mile), prepared by the Ordnance Survey, showing part of the wall on the east side of the town (including the Sheep Gate).[38]

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[32]John McVeigh (ed.), *Richard Pococke's Irish tours* (Dublin, 1995), p. 140.

[33]Liam Price (ed.), *An eighteenth-century antiquary: the sketches, notes and diaries of Austin Cooper (1759-1830)* (Dublin, 1942), p. 99; N.L.I., MS 773 (8), 'Trim, Duleek, etc.., 1783 [*sic*]: also de Lacy history [missing], copied from unpublished manuscripts', p. 6.

[34]Butler, *Trim* (1861), pp 133-4.

[35]N.L.I. Microfilm Pos. 7382 (a), MS 715 (Copy of Down Survey maps).

[36]N.L.I., 21 F. 70 (7, 8).

[37]*Mun. corp. Ire., rep., app. I.*

[38]Butler, *Trim* (1835), facing frontispiece.
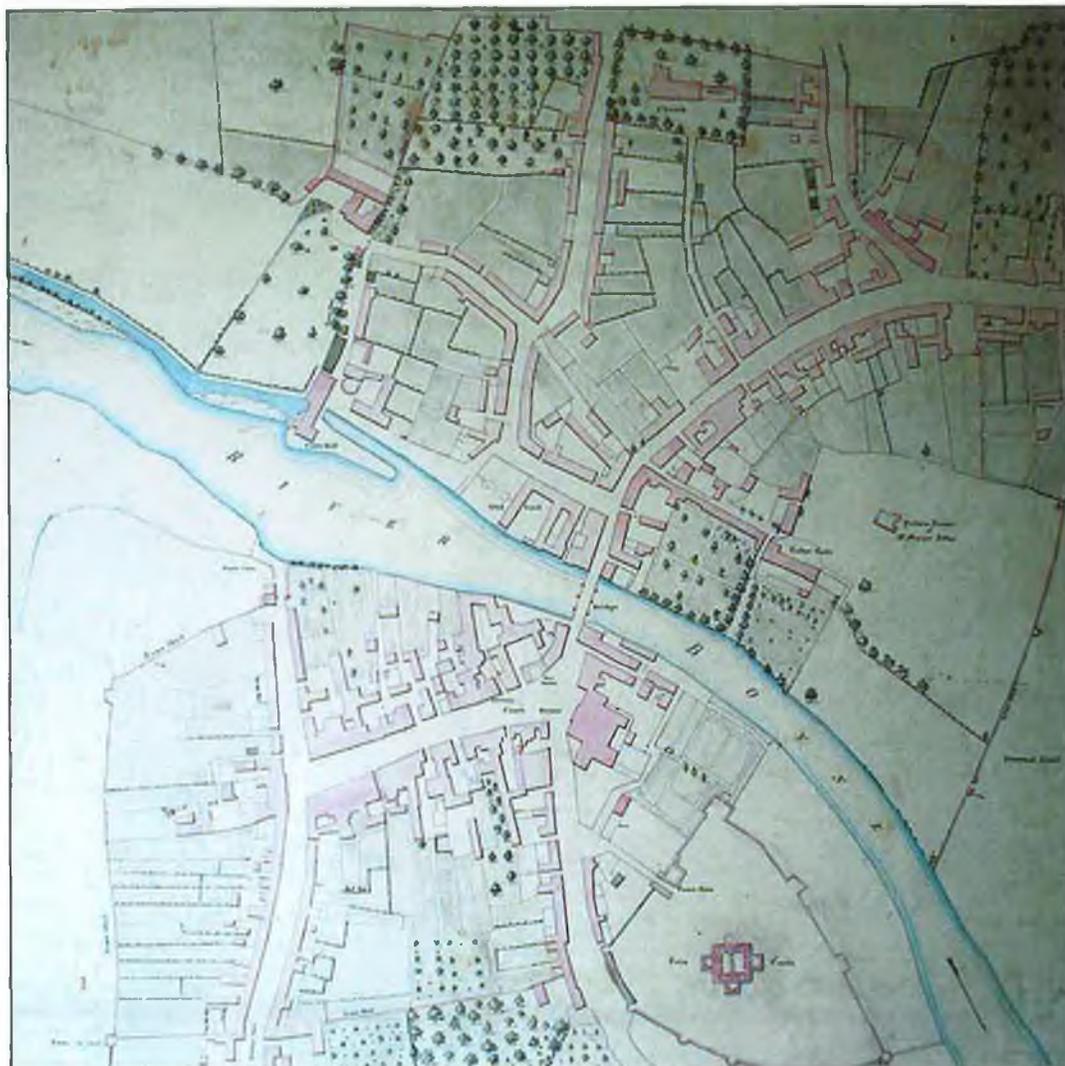
FIG. 5.1 Part of the 1836 5':1 mile Ordnance Survey map of Trim. From half way down the right side of the map the circuit of the town walls can be followed southwards to the river. A circular feature may represent the remains of a mural tower. The Sheep Gate is marked but not named. West of Trim Castle the wall runs to Dublin Gate (at the narrowest point on Emmet Street), continuing west to the square corner tower before running north for a further 215m. An angular bulge in the wall before it turns east attests the former presence of a mural tower. The wall then runs east-northeast to Water Gate. A narrow section of wall is shown running north-northeast from the back of the corn-mill—the wall widens behind the properties facing onto Loman Street. No other sections of the wall are shown on any other part of the map (including part 1).
Source: Nat. Archives, OS 140: Trim (part 2).

The 1836 five-inch-to-one-mile Ordnance Survey map of Trim (see FIG. 5.1), on which the better-known six-inch map was based, shows almost the entire circuit of the town walls, indicating that significant sections survived at that time on the east, south and west. Nothing of the north wall is shown however. The names of Athboy Gate, Navan Gate, the Sheep Gate, Dublin Gate and Water Gate are

clearly marked. It is primarily from this map that the course of Trim's medieval town walls has been identified (see FOLD-OUT PLAN, FIG. 5.24).

The toponymic evidence

The gates

Although most of the gates have now disappeared, the retention of their names is a useful indicator of their former location. The junction at the northwest of the town is called Athboy Gate; Watergate Street runs from the river to Market Street; while the street leading in the direction of Navan is called Navangate Street.

The Scunse/Sconce

Dean Butler recorded that there was an area in Trim, 'near the church', known as 'The Scunse'.[39] This name is almost certainly a variation of the word *sconce*, meaning 'a small fort or earthwork, usually defending a ford, pass or castle gate'.[40] Holinshed, writing in 1586, records that in Youghal (Co. Cork) Calverleigh 'made a sconce or a little bulworke, and by thate means saved the town'.[41] In Kilkenny, the names James's Sconce and Walkin's Sconce were in use in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,[42] and Hogan wrote that a passage or lane in the city, known simply as *The Sconce*, 'derived [its name], no doubt, from its proximity to the bastions and outworks of the fortification [town wall], and thus we have 'Walkin's Sconce' and James's Sconce'. These terms are now being gradually disused as the walls have been removed and forgotten'.[43] At Trim, the Scunse is likely to have been a lane close to the town wall, or a place where there was once a mural tower.

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[39]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 293, 'from the Corporation Book, and inquisition'.
[40]*O.E.D.*
[41]Raphaell Holinshed, *Chronicles* (ed. John Voyell, alias Hooker, *et al*, 1586), p. 178, col. 2, lines 13-16.
[42]John Bradley, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas no. 10: Kilkenny* (R.I.A., Dublin, 2000), pp 11-12.
[43]John Hogan, *Kilkenny: the ancient city of Ossory, the seat of its kings, the see of its bishops, and the site of its cathedral* (Kilkenny, 1884), p. 15, note 3.

The architectural remains

Walls

More survives of the town walls at Trim than is usually realised. A total of almost 1,000m (or half of the entire circuit) of foundation levels and lower courses can be traced above ground at different locations around the town, and sections as high as 2.5m remain in four locations. Unfortunately, most of what survives is too badly damaged to indicate any structural detail, and the rate and nature of current construction development threatens the vestiges increasingly (see FIGS 5.4 and 5.8).

Even where substantial sections of wall survive, evidence of repair and alteration is frequently visible and it is often difficult to establish, even roughly, the date at which the wall was mended, much less originally constructed. Nonetheless, certain observations can be made. The roughly hewn blocks used in the walls' construction are primarily of limestone, almost certainly from local quarries. The longest surviving section of wall runs south from close to the site of Navan Gate to the Sheep Gate and on towards the river (see FOLD-OUT PLAN, FIG. 5.24). In places, eight courses are present but, along much of this section, collapsed masonry lines both sides of the wall. The wall's surviving height here of 1-1.5m clearly does not reflect its original dimensions (the average height of curtain walls in Ireland has been estimated at between five and six metres),[44] but its average width of *c.*90cm is probably an accurate representation of the former thickness of the defences. A further 50m section of wall between Castle Street and Emmet Street reaches 3m in maximum height and averages 85cm in width (see FIGS 5.3 and 5.4), being wider at the base. These measurements are comparable with those for the thickness of the walls at Athenry ('just under 1m'),[45] Athlone (3' or 92cm)[46] and Youghal (2' or 62cm),[47] but somewhat small in comparison with those for the medieval walls of Dublin (1.2-2m) or Limerick (2-3m).[48]

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[44]Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, i, p. 59.

[45]Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, i, p. 58.

[46]Richard Langrishe, 'The walls of Athlone' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, xx (1890-1), pp 276-9, at p. 277.

[47]M. J. C. Buckley, 'The town walls of Youghal' in *Cork Hist. and Arch.Soc. Jn.*, ix (1900), pp 156-61, at p. 157.

[48]Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, i, pp 58-60.

Fig. 5.2 Section of east wall from southeast (September 1999).

Fig. 5.3 Section of south wall from southwest (February 2002).

Fig. 5.4 Section of (recently damaged) south wall from west (February 2002). The wall decreases in thickness from 95cm at the base to 72cm at the top. It is 2.8m tall.

Between Emmet Street and the southwest corner of the circuit a section of wall averaging 1m in height survives as a property boundary for *c*.30m. An unusual feature in the shape of a low arch can be seen *c*.2m east of the corner (see FIG. 5.5). It is possible that this is a relieving arch, but it may mark the site of an outlet allowing drains from the town to flow into the extra-mural fosse (the 'Water of Luppard' formerly flowed past here, see below). The arch is also next to the corner at which cartographic evidence demonstrates the former presence of a mural tower (see FIG. 5.15). The construction of the arch, using narrow rectangular blocks, is similar to that of both the Sheep Gate and Water Gate (see FIGS 5.5, 5.12, 5.18-19).

FIG. 5.5 The remains of a neatly built (but now blocked up) arch can be seen 2m east of the site of the southwest corner tower (February 2002).

Almost the entire length of the lower courses of the wall can be identified between the site of the southwest corner tower and the site of a second possible tower 215m further to the north. A build-up of earth and debris covers the wall in some places, and much of the stonework is concealed by ivy and other vegetation. The roots of the ivy and some trees have caused many stones to become dislodged, but in other areas the ivy may be holding the wall together. For centuries the town wall has served as a source of building stone and most of the neatly finished facing stones have been removed from its front (see FIG. 5.6). Even so, it is clear that the external façade of the wall was originally faced with larger, more regularly shaped stones than the side facing the town, and the outside of the wall

was finished with greater care than the inside. Where the facing stones remain *in situ*, the thickness of the wall reaches 1.2m.

FIG. 5.6 The external façade of the west wall, south of the Boyne (viewed from northwest). Most of the facing stones have been removed from this stretch of wall. The roots of ivy and other vegetation have abetted the deterioration, while the litter and casual abandonment of furniture and timber betrays a lack of public appreciation of the significance of the walls.

FIG. 5.7 The external façade of the west wall, south of the Boyne (viewed from northwest). The neat finish of the surviving facing stones, in regular courses, explains why so many were taken away for later building projects.

The properties that face onto Emmet Street each have a garden or yard stretching back to the town wall, just as they had in the middle ages. Recently, the wall has been breached in a number of locations to allow heavy machinery access to these

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gardens and yards, while the removal of trees in advance of property development has resulted in irreparable damage to at least one segment (see FIG. 5.8).

FIG. 5.8 Along the west side of the town, south of the Boyne, the removal of trees in advance of property development has resulted in irreparable damage to at least one segment of wall (February 2002).

200m north of the southwest corner of the circuit, the remains are present of an angular feature protruding 2m from the line of the wall. It is difficult to establish any details about this half-hexagon shaped structure, as it is entirely overgrown with grass, although some of the stonework protrudes through the vegetation. The feature is clearly marked on nineteenth-century maps and its apparent form and location suggest that it may have been a mural tower. It is sited at the highest point on this stretch of wall, with a commanding view of both the town and the surrounding countryside. It is slightly short of the next corner, from where the wall originally ran down a gentle slope to Water Gate. Although nothing of this section survives, the line of the medieval wall is preserved by a narrow twentieth-century concrete wall.

One of the finest sections of wall to survive at Trim is in the orchard of Crowpark House (see FIGS 5.9 and 5.10). For almost 80m the wall stands to 2.5m with the blocks on the external façade laid in regular courses. As at other places, the stonework on the town-facing side of the wall is less neatly finished while the

stones are smaller and less regular in shape and size. There is no evidence for an external ditch beside this stretch of wall.

FIG. 5.9 West façade of west wall, viewed from southwest. One of the finest surviving stretches of the town wall at Trim is in the grounds of Crowpark House. The style of block-work in this section suggests post-medieval reconstruction. This would tie in with seventeenth-century recommendations that repairs be carried out on the wall. Note the trees growing *on* the wall! (February 2002).

FIG. 5.10 Part of the 80m section of wall surviving in the grounds of Crowpark House. The large stones and style of block-work to the right suggest medieval construction. (February 2002).

That the stone defences at Trim were supplemented by an external fosse is indicated by the order in 1498 that the walls of the town 'be made and ditched', and the later reference to a drawbridge at Athboy Gate.[49] A fosse crossed by a drawbridge was a common feature of medieval town defences.[50] Traces of an external ditch at Trim can be seen abutting the wall to the south of the site of Navan Gate, and in front of the wall on the west side of the town. It is possible that water may have been fed into the fosse during the middle ages from a stream at the southwest of the town called the Water of Luppard (referred to in the Corporation Records).[51] Writing in 1854, Butler stated that a small stream ran alongside the town wall by the Dublin Gate.[52] Although the stream is now mainly culverted, a section of it is still visible at the southwest corner of the town walls (see FIG. 5.11). Water in the fosse would have run into the castle moat and from there into the Boyne. The culverted stream still empties into the river close to the southeast corner of the castle's curtain wall. The stream is known by some locals as the Leper River and is almost certainly that referred to earlier as the Water of Luppard. Its name suggests a connection with the hospital of St Mary Magdalene (see CHAPTER EIGHT).

FIG. 5.11 Close to the southwest corner of the walled circuit flows
a stream called the Water of Luppard. It may once have drained
into the fosse outside the town walls. (February 2002).

[49]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1494-1509*, p. 128; Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 293, 'from Corporation Book, and inquisition'.
[50]Bradley, 'The town wall of Kilkenny', p. 209; Richard Langrishe, 'The walls of Athlone' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, xx (1890-1), pp 276-9, at p. 279.
[51]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 293, 'from the Corporation Book, and inquisition'.
[52]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 2.

The Sheep Gate

The Sheep Gate, the only surviving gate at Trim, is a simple, rectangular gatehouse originally of two-storeys but now in ruinous condition (see FIGS 5.12 and 5.18). It is constructed of coursed limestone and the western edge of its northern façade is attached to the town wall. The gate is entered and exited through a 3.6m long east-west passage with a round-headed arch at each end, that at the east being slightly narrower (and now partially blocked up).

Running perpendicular from the south side of this passage is a second, barrel-vaulted passage entered through a lintelled door. The south end of this passage is now completely blocked up, but would have exited the gatehouse parallel to (and outside) the town wall and overlooking the Boyne. On the opposite (north) side of the main passage, a door (now blocked up) with a reconstructed lintel leads to the northeast angle of the gatehouse where a spiral stair once gave access to the floor above. The stair is lit by a single arrow loop in the north wall. Two putlog holes are present in the east façade of the gatehouse, four metres from ground level, one on each side of the entrance arch.

Putlog holes

East Elevation

Section looking north

Modern

West Elevation

Section looking south

The Sheep
Gate
(after Bradley 1984)

Rubble

Section Line

Ground Plan

0   5m
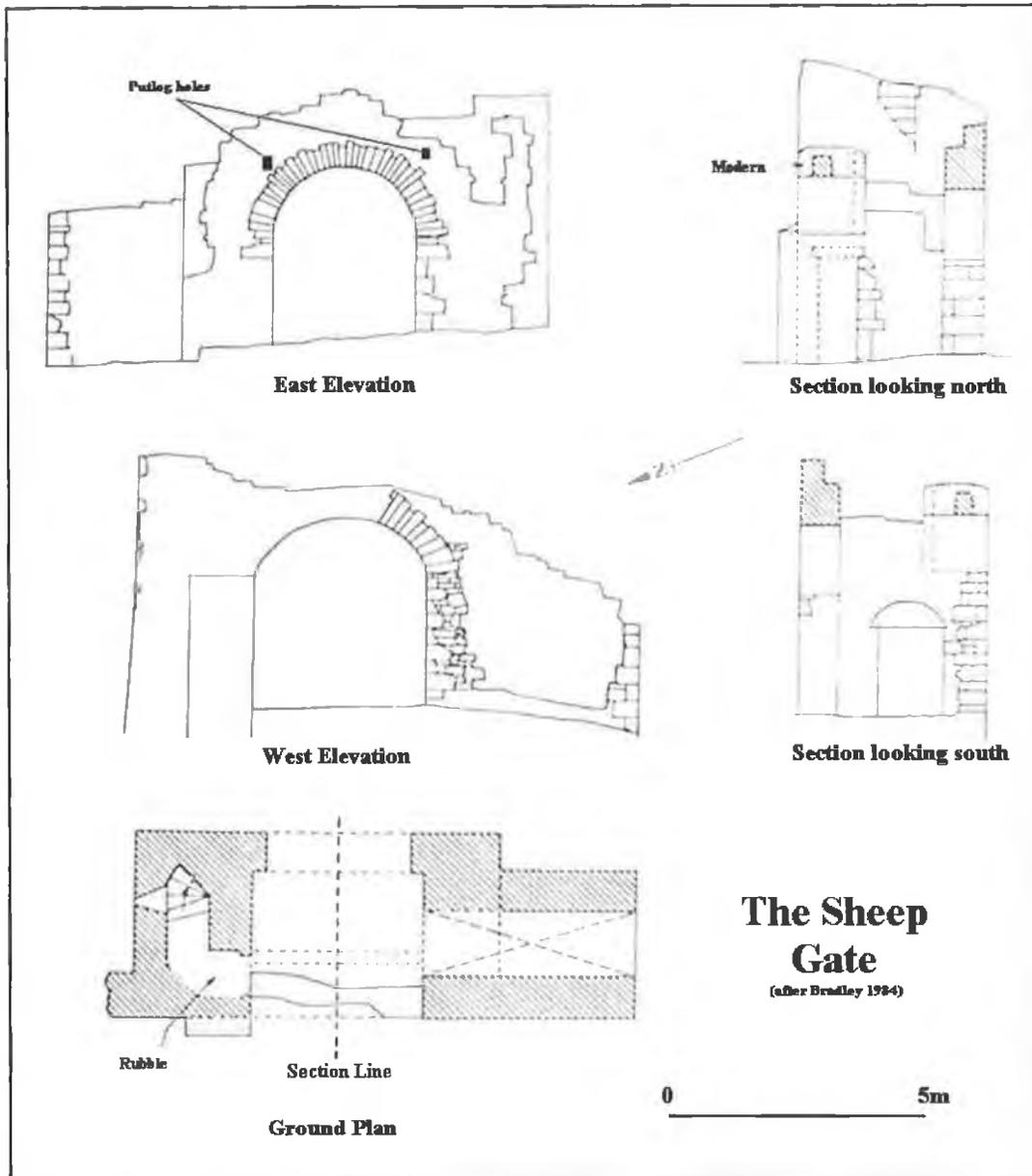
FIG. 5.12 Elevations and sections of the Sheep Gate. Based on: Bradley, Urban archaeol. surv.,
Meath, fig. 46.

The archaeological evidence

A number of archaeological excavations have taken place in the vicinity of the town walls at Trim. Unfortunately, most of these excavations have revealed little or no information about the walls or gates.[53] In 1996 Rosanne Meenan located the line of the town wall, running east-west, slightly further north than expected on Emmet Street (just outside Kiely's public house).[54] The wall was founded on bedrock and was 3m wide at the base.

Further excavations directed by Rob Lynch were carried out in 1999 close to the supposed site of Water Gate and the projected line of the town wall.[55] Medieval remains consisted primarily of what was interpreted as a series of dumped deposits, while a 60cm deep gully ran north-south for a distance of 1.6m. The east side of the gully was filled with medieval clays and it has been suggested that the feature functioned as a property- or plot-boundary in the middle ages. Several sherds of thirteenth-century pottery, including part of the base of a cooking vessel, were discovered *in situ* in the deposits. The proximity of these deposits to the projected line of the town wall indicates that they may have been dumped from the wall or from the Water Gate itself.

Excavations by Alan Hayden between Trim Castle and the site of Dublin Gate revealed the foundations and lowest courses of the town wall (see FIG. 5.13).[56] Prior to this, no trace of the wall was visible above ground level here, but excavations revealed that the wall survived to a height of almost 3m below the surface, and it was 1.75m thick. An offset, stepping back 20cm, was present on the north (interior) façade, 1.3m above subsoil level. The base of an external fosse was also uncovered; it measured up to 14m in width and was 1.5m deep. The ditch appeared to have been filled and then re-cut on a smaller scale.

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[53]Rosanne Meenan, 'Haggard Street, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1998*, no. 529, p. 168; Clare Mullins, 'Castle Street, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, no. 713, pp 245-6; Clare Mullins 'Kildalkey Road/Athboy Road/Haggard Street, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, no. 717, pp 247-8.
[54]Meenan, 'Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1996*, no. 315, p. 89.
[55]Lynch, 'Townspark South' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, p. 251.
[56]Alan Hayden, pers. comm.
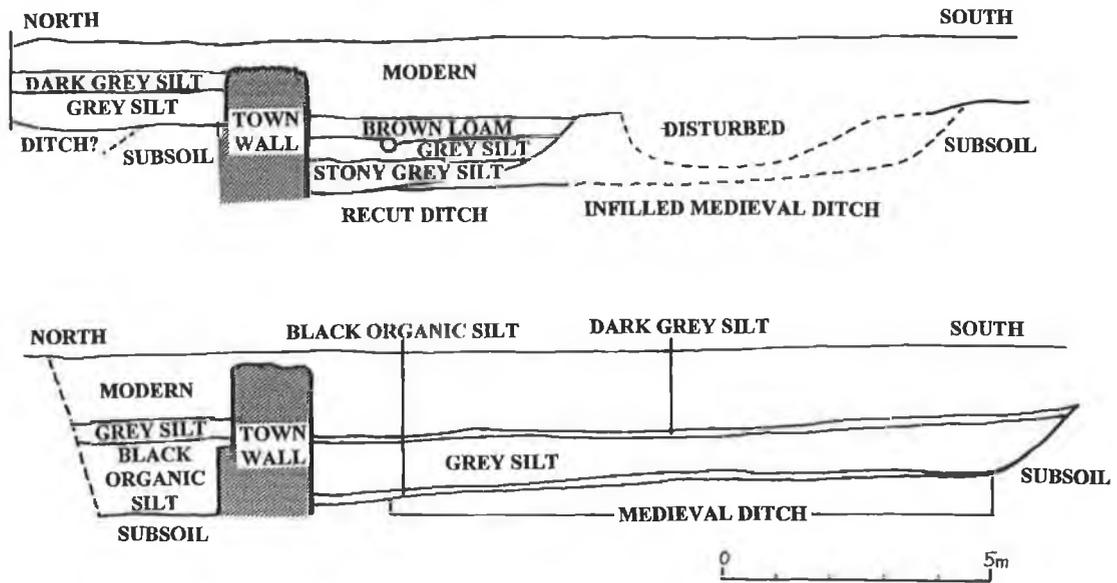
FIG. 5.13 Longitudinal sections of two test trenches excavated by Alan Hayden between Trim Castle and the site of Dublin Gate.

The proposed construction of a new road, town centre and housing development outside the walls to the west of the town will necessitate the archaeological investigation and surveying of a 200m section of the town's defences later this year (2002). Preliminary clearance work and preparations have recently commenced.

The line of the walls

Based on the above evidence it is possible to plot the course of the defences at Trim (see FOLD-OUT PLAN, FIG. 5.24). From its junction with the west side of the curtain wall of the castle, the town wall ran westwards to Dublin Gate on Emmet Street. Beyond this gate the wall continued west for a further 70m before turning northwards at the rear of the properties on the west side of Emmet Street. From here the wall ran north for 215m and then turned east-northeast towards Water Gate, 95m away.

On the north side of the river, the wall ran from a point opposite Water Gate for at least 280m in the direction of Athboy Gate. The nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps show the town wall stopping *c.*150m south of the site of Athboy Gate. It seems that the line of the walls in this part of the town was no longer traceable when the town was being surveyed in the nineteenth century. After that point, the alignment of property boundaries suggests that the wall originally either turned west and then north to the Kildalkey Road, or east to Loman Street and then north to Athboy Gate. It is also possible that, like one of the gates at Ardee, Athboy Gate was entirely separate from the town walls, controlling access to a suburban development.[57] On the OS maps the wall seems to take a right turn immediately south of the (old) rectory. It may then have crossed the street and continued along the northern boundary of the churchyard in an easterly direction (see green line on FOLD-OUT PLAN, FIG. 5.24). The fact that the area known as *the Scunse* was located 'near the church' suggests that the town wall at one time bordered the churchyard.[58] It is possible that the original wall ran next to the churchyard and that subsequent expansion of the town led to the construction of a new wall further to the north. Athboy Gate may have been built as part of this expansion.

The position of property boundaries indicates that the wall ran east from Athboy Gate, along the southern limit of the precinct of the Dominican friary, for *c.*200m before turning south to Navan Gate a further 280m away. It is almost 280m from

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[57]Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, ii, pp 4-6.
[58]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 293, 'from the Corporation Book, and inquisition'.

Navan Gate to the Sheep Gate and more than 200m of this stretch survives. South of the Sheep Gate the wall continued *c.*45m to the river.

Defences at the southeast of the town were formed by the curtain wall of Trim Castle (see FIG. 5.14). Such an arrangement was not unusual, and sections of castle wall doubled as town defences at Athenry, Carlingford, Carrickfergus, Kilkenny and Wexford.[59] At Trim, access to the castle from outside the town was through the Barbican Gate, and the 'Town Gate' to the west of the castle provided direct access from the castle to the town. The castle defences are discussed more fully in CHAPTER SIX. The nature of the defences between the southeast tower of the castle's curtain wall and the river is not known. It is possible, however, that the river was broad enough in the middle ages to make such defences unnecessary.

Although the northern section of the castle's curtain wall would have provided defence along part of the south bank of the Boyne, there is no evidence to suggest the presence of a wall anywhere else parallel to the river. Other towns with a sizeable riverine trade, such as Carrick-on-Suir and Kilkenny, did not have river walls either, and it is possible that such defences would have caused difficulties for river transport, cargo handlers and other traffic on the quays.[60]

As at Drogheda, the two walled areas at Trim are separated by the river Boyne, but unlike Drogheda, there is no evidence that Trim functioned as two separate towns in the middle ages. Nor is there any evidence for a defensive structure across the Boyne, although the suggestion has been made that a similar system to that which operated at Bandon in the seventeenth century may have been used at Trim.[61] Like river walls, however, such a system would have been inconvenient for river traffic.

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[59] Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, i, p. 63.
[60] Bradley, 'Planned Anglo-Norman towns in Ireland', p. 444.
[61] Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, i, p. 61, ii, pp 20-4.

FIG. 5.14 South curtain wall and Barbican Gate of Trim Castle, viewed from east (February 2002). Part of the town's defences was formed by these fortifications.

When complete, the medieval defences at Trim stretched for over 2km (including the *c.*200m section formed by the curtain wall of the castle). The area they enclosed was roughly rectangular, one third to the south of the river Boyne, and two thirds to the north. It is estimated that the combined walled areas, north and south of the river, enclosed an area of between twenty and twenty-three hectares, making it Ireland's eleventh largest walled town, similar in area to medieval Waterford and Wexford.[62]

Mural towers

Although no mural towers are present on what remains of the town walls, there is evidence for the former existence of at least one. A square tower with the legend 'tower in ruins' is clearly marked at the southwest corner of the circuit on the 1836 Ordnance Survey 5':1 mile map (see FIG. 5.15). Further to the north, on the same map, an angular outward bulge in the line of the wall may indicate the

[62]M.J. Moore, *Archaeological inventory of County Meath* (Dublin, 1987), p. 180, nos 1820-1; Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, i, pp 31, 39.

former presence of a second tower (see FIG. 5.16).[63] The lower levels of this feature are still recognisable on the ground although they are now completely concealed by vegetation.
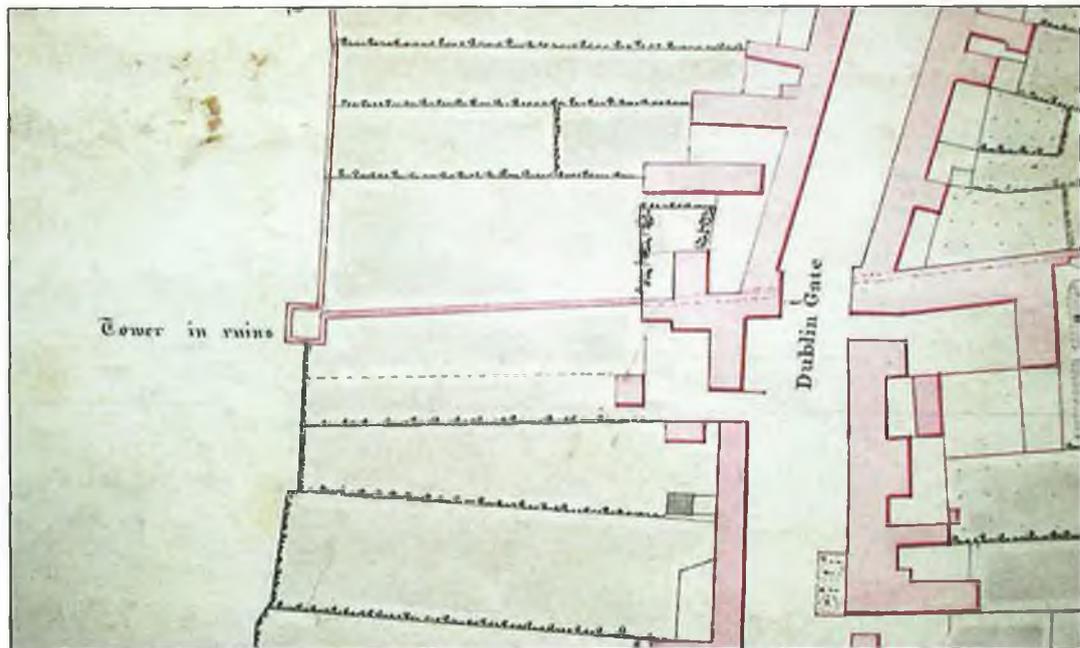
FIG. 5.15 Southwest corner of walled circuit from OS 1836 5':1 mile, showing ruined corner tower and street narrowing at site of Dublin Gate.
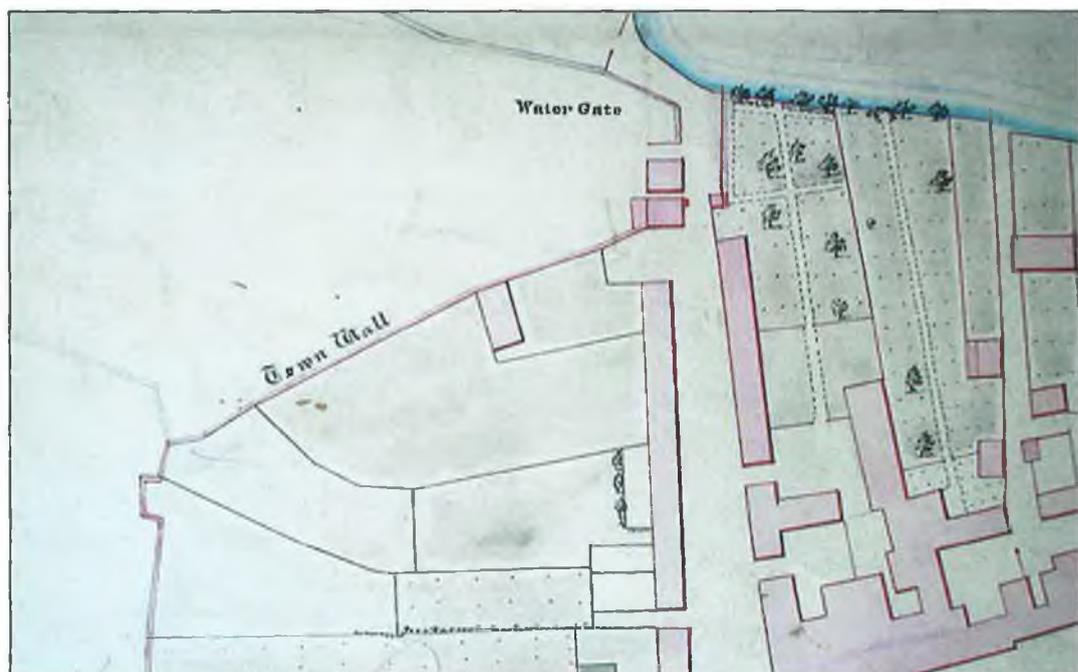
FIG. 5.16 Section of west wall and Water Gate from OS 1836 5':1 mile.

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[63]Bradley, Urban archaeol. surv., Meath, p. 163; Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, i, p. 196.

An unidentified circular feature marked on the east wall to the north of the Sheep Gate may also represent the remains of a round mural tower (see Fig. 5.17), although there is no evidence for any such structure now. If it were a tower, its shape and size as indicated by the map would suggest it was similar in form to the small circular towers at Athenry and Youghal.[64]
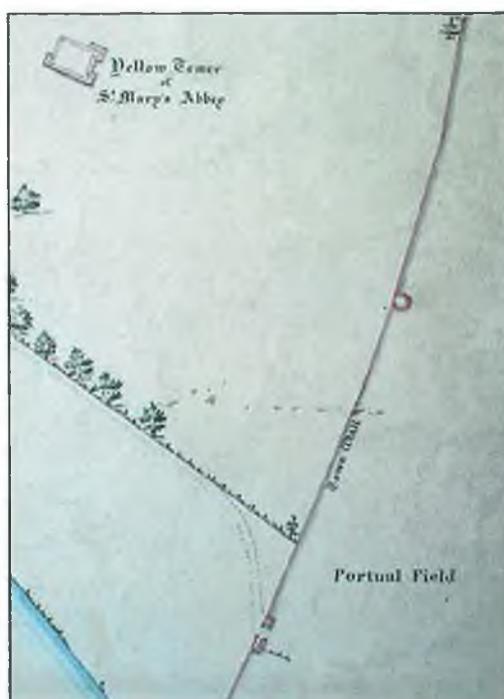
FIG. 5.17 Section of east wall north of the Sheep Gate from OS 1836 5':1 mile. It is not clear what the circular feature on the east face of the wall represents, but it may have been a tower. There is no evidence for any feature on the ground now.

Gates

There is evidence for five gates at Trim—Athboy Gate (northwest), Navan Gate (east), the Sheep Gate (east), Dublin Gate (south) and Water Gate (west). All five gates were still in existence, and some were kept in repair, in the late seventeenth century. Road-widening, the reuse of building stone and the decreasing need to defend the town meant that by the twentieth century all but the Sheep Gate had disappeared, although the site of each of the other gates is still known by the name

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[64]Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, i, figs 17, 20, p. 66; Buckley, 'The town walls of Youghal', pp 158-9 (illustrations).

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of the gate that once stood there. The Sheep Gate undoubtedly owes its survival to the fact that it was the only gate not on an important thoroughfare in the post-medieval period.

The location of the gates is important. Athboy Gate, as its name suggests, was sited on the road to Athboy, the closest medieval town to Trim (10km). It was not only Athboy traffic that came and went through Athboy Gate however, as two other roads converged with the Athboy Road just outside the gate. This meant that a single gate could serve more than one road. Travellers to and from Kildalkey, Ballivor, Kells and Dunderry would also have used Athboy Gate. Once inside the gate, the road bifurcated once more into Haggard Street and Scarlet Street. A similar arrangement existed at Navan Gate, outside which the Navan Road was joined by the road from Newtown Trim (the Lackanash Road). In the middle ages the main route to Dublin was via what are now Emmet Street, Patrick Street and Back Road—the present Dublin Road, skirting the grounds of Trim Castle, was not created until Castle Lane was widened and extended, breaking through the town wall, sometime after the eighteenth century. Roads from Kinnegad, Longwood, Rathmolyon, Summerhill, Scurlogstown, Bective and, of course, Dublin all converged outside the medieval Dublin Gate.

Athboy/Blaygh Gate

Situated at the northwest of the town, Athboy Gate was still in repair in 1753, and probably as late as 1796.[65] It was not unusual for a gate to have more than one name,[66] and it seems that Athboy Gate was sometimes known by an alternative name. On 20 July 1532 John Burnell granted to Martin Blake of Athboy some property next to Bl'aac'zhat [later referred to as *Bloratzhat*] in Trim for 38 years.[67] The property had reverted to the Burnell family by February 1616, when it was described as being 'near Blackgate', suggesting that the names *Bl'aac'zhat* and *Bloratzhat* were in fact corruptions of the name Blackgate.[68] A charter of James I, *c.*1610, granting certain properties to the corporation of Athboy,

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[65]McVeigh, *Richard Pococke's Irish tours*, p. 140; Price, *An eighteenth-century antiquary*, p. 99.
[66]Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, i, p. 90.
[67]Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, p. 380, no. JI 92/52.
[68]Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, p. 390, no. JI 108/57.

mentions 'the gate of Trim, called Blaygh-gate, within liberties of Trim'.[69] That there was also a street in Trim called Blagh Street is recorded in the corporation records for 1681.[70]

The name Blaygh Gate is also found at Kilmallock (Co. Limerick), and Thomas suggests a number of translations for this word, including (from Irish) green, plain, field, enclosure, yellow, and (from Old Norse *blae*) garment or sheet.[71] The Blaygh gate at Kilmallock is frequently referred to as the Blossom gate, however, and it would seem to imply that the word Blaygh is derived from the Irish word *Blath*, meaning flower.

At Trim, however, it is likely that the word Blaygh is a corruption of the word Black (as illustrated by the Burnell property references above), and that the use of the name Blaygh Gate as an alternative to Athboy Gate is due to the proximity of that structure to the Dominican (or Black) friary, situated just 100m to the east.

Navan Gate/Rogue's Castle

Nothing but the name survives at the site of Navan Gate, midway along the eastern stretch of the town wall. Orders were made for its repair in 1682 and it is likely that it remained standing well into the eighteenth century.[72] Navan Gate was sometimes referred to as Rogue's Castle—the use of the word *castle* suggests that it was a particularly strongly built structure, or that its fortifications were prominent.[73] The reason for the *Rogue* appellation is unclear, although it may relate to the well-known local rhyme, *Kells for brogues, Navan for rogues, and Trim for hanging the people*.

The Sheep/Porch Gate

Situated in a field along the eastern side of the town wall, this is the only surviving gate at Trim (see FIG. 5.18). The derivation of the name Sheep Gate is

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[69]*Mun. corp. Ire., rep., app. I*, p. 120.
[70]N.L.I. report on private collections, p. 2171.
[71]Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, ii, p. 134.
[72]N.L.I. report on private collections, p. 2173.
[73]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 293, 'from the Corporation Book, and inquisition'.

unclear—it may be that it was the gate through which sheep were brought into and out of the town, or the name may be a corruption of the word *cheap*, meaning 'trade' or 'merchandise', and which gives rise to names like Cheapside and Westcheap in London.[74] There is no record of the name Sheep Gate prior to the nineteenth century, however, and it seems that this gate was known by a different name in the middle ages.

The section of town wall on which the Sheep Gate stands formed the boundary between the precinct of the Augustinian priory and the land called the Porchfield (the wall is still the dividing line between two townlands). The field was called Porchfield from at least the fifteenth century,[75] and several fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sources also refer to the Porchgate (Porch gate/Portchgate/ Porchegate) in association with property beside the Augustinian priory.[76] It is thus likely that the Porch Gate and the Sheep Gate are one in the same. The derivation of the prefix *Porch-* may be the French word *porte*, meaning gate. The fact that the Porchfield is marked on a nineteenth-century map as Portual Field supports this argument (see FIG. 5.17). Harriet Butler referred to the fields here as the 'Porcha-fields', and locally they are known by some as the Porchy fields.[77]

The Porch Gate may have been the postern gate of the Augustinian friary, and it was certainly situated on a lane linking Trim with Newtown Trim. In 1477 the prior of St Peter's friary at Newtown Trim, was granted certain lands beside 'the road which goes from the Porch-gate of Trim to the Newtown aforesaid'.[78]

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[74]Adrian Room, *The street names of England* (Stamford, 1992), p. 89.
[75]*Stat. Ire., 12-22 Edw. IV*, pp 114-5; *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, iii, 1586-1603, p. 295, no. 6118 (4971), p. 331, no. 6267 (6109); Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, pp 204-5, no. Eliz66/46.
[76]*Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i, 1521-46/7; iii, 1586-1603, p. 331, no. 6267 (6109); *Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, ii, p. 517, no. 5; Griffith, *Calendar of inquisitions*, pp 204-5, no. Eliz66/46.
[77]Butler, 'A memoir of Richard Butler', p. 167.
[78]*Stat. Ire., 12-22 Edw. IV*, pp 472-3.

FIG. 5.18 The Sheep Gate, viewed from the east (August 1999).

Dublin Gate

Like Navan Gate, Dublin Gate was still in repair in 1753, and probably as late as 1796.[79] It was situated at the south of the town, and the 1836 OS map clearly shows the street narrowing to accommodate the gate (see FIG. 5.15). The gate referred to as South Gate in 1594 is probably Dublin Gate.[80]

Water Gate

Situated just south of the Boyne to the west of the town, Water Gate is shown as a rectangular structure on the 1830s maps (see FIG. 5.16). No roads approach the town at this location, however, and the function of Water Gate is not entirely clear. Its name (*Water Gate* is the most common name for a medieval town gate in Ireland)[81], its proximity to the river, and the fact that this is the widest section of the Boyne in the town, suggest that Water Gate controlled access to the town from boats and river traffic. This is also a deep stretch of river that would have served

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[79]McVeigh, *Richard Pococke's Irish tours*, p. 140; Price, *An eighteenth-century antiquary*, p. 99.
[80]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, ii, p. 276, no. 16.
[81]Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, ii, p. 89.

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well as a harbour area, although it is upstream of the shallows and access may have been difficult for larger boats.

FIG. 5.19 Water Gate in 1889, viewed from the south. The level of the Boyne is high (the bare trees on the ridge across the river suggest that the photograph was taken in winter). The gable end of the Corn Mill can be seen on the north bank—this building has also since been demolished. Source: *Ríocht na Midhe*, vol. vii, no. 3 (1984), p. 62.

A photograph taken in by Jane Shackleton 1889 indicates that the gate survived, at least in part, to the turn of the twentieth century (see FIG. 5.19).[82] The stonework in the arch of Water Gate is similar to that of the surviving Sheep Gate.

Bridge Gate

Thomas lists Bridge Gate as one of the gates at Trim after seemingly overlooking a comma in a reference that reads '... to make up the bridge, gate, and the drawbridge gate at the Castle...'.[83] There is no evidence for a Bridge gate at Trim.

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[82] *Riocht na Midhe*, vii, no. 3 (1984), p. 62.
[83] Thomas, *The walled towns of Ireland*, i, p. 196; Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 143.

II – Streets

Layout

Essentially, Trim consists of one large curving street (made up of Castle Street, Bridge Street, High Street and Navangate Street), off which, at regular intervals of *c.*100m, run Market Street, Mill Street, Church Lane and Haggard Street in a radial pattern (see FOLD-OUT PLAN, FIG. 5.24). The main network is completed by a series of north-south running thoroughfares: Loman [*sic*] Street to the north of the Boyne and Watergate Street and Emmet Street to the south.

This pattern is unusual. Trim is the only one of the fifty-six towns classified by Bradley that does not conform to any one of the three basic plan-types associated with Anglo-Norman towns in Ireland (i.e. linear, chequer and concentric).[84] Indeed, it could be said that the pattern at Trim is hybrid—some streets, including Market Street and Watergate Street, belong to the linear classification (the most common of the three), while others are clearly concentric. In addition, some streets, to the north of the river, are arranged in a triangle (High Street, Loman Street and Haggard Street).

The existing street pattern at Trim can be seen as a reflection of the various phases in the evolution of the town. The dominant curving pattern, from which most of the subsequent development stemmed, may follow the boundary of the early ecclesiastical settlement. The streets extending from the west and north of this curve represent later expansion, and the regular intervals at which they occur on this curve suggest that this was an organised development. South of the Boyne, the linear nature of Market Street (the widest street in the town) and the streets associated with it clearly represents an important phase of planned urban genesis. The most rigidly linear section of the town is extra-mural and probably represents a suburban expansion of medieval Trim in the area centred on what is today Emmet Street and running south to Patrick Street and Newhaggard Road.

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[84]Bradley, 'Planned Anglo-Norman towns in Ireland', pp 430, 434, 454; idem, Urban archaeol. surv., Meath, p. 157.

The archaeological evidence

Excavations

Archaeologists monitoring pipe-laying recorded a medieval cobbled street surface along almost the entire length of Market Street in 1996.[85] The cobbles were uncovered at a depth of between 1 and 1.1m below the present street level. There was also evidence at the east end of the street that the river Boyne had encroached as far south as Market Street in the middle ages, although this was not the case at the west end where the original ground level was slightly higher. At the east end of the street the cobbling sealed a riverine deposit; in other places the cobbling lay on top of boulder clay. The cobbles were overlain by a black organic deposit containing bone and some sherds of medieval pottery. At the west end of the street the cobbling faded out and instead a grey silt layer was present above the boulder clay. In some areas patches of re-deposited stones were scattered on the surface of the grey silt. At the western extremity of Market Street a north-south ditch was uncovered, the basal silt layer of which was 1.9m wide.

Trenches along Loman Street as it descends towards the junction with Mill Street revealed further evidence for encroachment by the Boyne, with black riverine deposits interspersed with organic deposits containing bone, leather off-cuts, and a small number of medieval potsherds.[86] Black riverine deposits were also uncovered at the north end of Watergate Street. There was no evidence for a gate in the town wall in this area.[87]

Archaeological excavations in High Street in 1987 uncovered a series of yard surfaces dating to the thirteenth century, with associated pits and structural features.[88] Artefacts from these levels included a small assemblage of medieval pottery (primarily Bristol wares and other English pottery), a small bone comb, a bone pin, and a fragment of a shale bracelet. 7m to the north of this area and roughly parallel to High Street a ditch was uncovered, measuring 3m in width and

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[85]Meenan, 'Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1996*, p. 89.
[86]Meenan, 'Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1996*, p. 89.
[87]Meenan, 'Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1996*, p. 89.
[88]Clare Walsh, 'High St., Trim, Townpark' in Bennett, *Excavations 1987*, no. 42, p. 24.

2.5m in depth.[89] The ditch had steeply sloping sides and a flat base and seemed to be of pre-thirteenth-century date.

A cobbled or metalled road surface was revealed along much of Mill Street, High Street and Haggard Street in 1999 during the excavation of trenches for the town water and sewage scheme.[90] This compact stony surface appeared as a relatively continuous layer, c.20cm deep (although in some places it was as thin as 10cm), and lay directly on top of the natural. In most areas it was c.20cm below the present street surface but in some places it was as much as 1.5m down. The cobbled surface was made up primarily of angular stones lying in a compact matrix of red/brown sandy clay with inclusions of animal bone and oyster shells. Where the cobbled surface occurred at a deeper level it was usually overlain by a silty, organic material and/or a clay/gravel. This was interpreted as representing a single episode of deliberate road heightening. Some sherds of medieval pottery were found in association with the cobbled surface. Occasionally a later episode of cobbling was evidenced closer to the modern road surface. The two layers of cobbles were separated by a 40cm thick layer of black, silty, organic material, and an orange/light brown clay, generally lying directly upon the lower cobbled surface. This sequence of layers mirrors that found in other parts of the town.

At the southern end of Haggard Street a complex series of archaeological features was uncovered.[91] A linear stone feature was interpreted as a section of kerbing. The cobbled surface in this area was somewhat denuded in places, but where best preserved it was evident that the stones had been tightly packed so as to achieve as smooth a surface as possible. Though generally angular in form, the exposed, upper part of the stones was noticeably more rounded and smoothed than the hidden sides. The cobbles were overlain by a 20-30cm-thick layer of black, silty, organic deposit that yielded medieval pottery and one almost complete medieval leather shoe, as well as several other pieces of leather.

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[89]Walsh, 'High St., Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1987*, p. 24.
[90]Mullins, 'Haggard Street' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, pp 246-7; Mullins, 'Mill Street/High Street/Haggard Street, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, pp 249-50.
[91]Mullins, 'Haggard Street' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, pp 246-7.

A mortared limestone wall was exposed resting directly on top of the earlier cobbled surface. The wall ran in an east-west direction, at right angles to the street. It was 1m wide and had a rubble core. The southern side of the wall had facing stones and there was evidence to suggest that the northern side would originally have been finished in a similar fashion, giving the wall a width of 1.3m. Only a single course of the wall survived and there was no evidence for any foundation trench. The wall had clearly gone out of use at the same time as the cobbled surface beneath it, as both were sealed by the same black organic layer.

Directly beneath the earlier cobbled surface on Haggard Street was a foundation layer of silty sand containing a large volume of bone and wood. This layer was as much as 30cm thick in some places but got gradually thinner towards the north. It seems that this material was deposited in order to create a level surface on which to build the cobbled street. A similar layer was evidenced on both Mill Street and High Street.[92]

Beneath the cobbled surface towards the south end of Haggard Street a 3m length of shallow gully was exposed running parallel to the street. The gully was cut into the natural and got gradually wider towards the north, before descending to form a deep pit. This gully was cut by a second gully running at right angles to the street; both gullies were sealed by the cobbled surface.

The remains of a masonry wall, surviving to two courses, were exposed beneath the silty/sand foundation layer. The wall was aligned north-south and again there was no evidence for any foundations. The wall rested upon a deeper cobbled surface, which was composed of small stones and averaged 10 cm in thickness. This cobbled surface, which lay directly upon the natural, was traced for over 15m at the south end of Haggard Street. Finds from the excavation included a crutch-headed stickpin, horseshoes and horseshoe nails, and a copper alloy chain.

[92]Mullins, 'Mill Street/High Street/Haggard Street, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, pp 249-50.

Test trenching associated with the Trim Sewerage Scheme was carried out in the vicinity of the supposed site of Athboy Gate in 1999. Although some remnants of a cobbled road surface were encountered, no evidence for the either the town wall or Athboy Gate was uncovered.[93]

Conclusions

The archaeological evidence demonstrates that at least some of the streets in Trim had cobbled surfaces in the middle ages (Market Street, Mill Street, High Street, Haggard Street). In some places the cobbles were laid on the natural ground level, but elsewhere the surface was prepared and levelled in advance (using domestic waste, animal bones, wood and clay). Evidence for kerbing and gullies or water channels was also uncovered. It appears that debris and organic material accumulated on the streets over time and that in some places deposits of stones were thrown down in an effort to improve the surface. Some areas were re-cobbled entirely. An order to pave the market place with stones was made in 1578 and this may tie in with some of the archaeological evidence (unfortunately, only summaries of the excavations have, as yet, been published).[94]

Evidence for the encroachment of the Boyne was revealed on Market Street, Loman Street and Watergate Street, demonstrating that flooding posed an important threat to the townspeople. The artefactual assemblage from these excavations comprises pottery, a fragment of a shale bracelet, a crutch-headed stickpin, a copper alloy chain, and objects of bone (including a small comb and a pin) and leather (including a shoe and several off-cuts). These items—mostly jewellery and dress accessories—are indicative of a typical medieval urban community, while the horseshoes and horseshoe nails almost certainly fell from the horses used to transport goods and people along the streets.

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[93] Clare Mullins, 'Kildalkey Road/Athboy Road/Haggard Street, Trim' in Bennett, *Excavations 1999*, no. 717: pp 247-8.
[94] *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, ii, 1558-86, p. 463, no. 3376 (2656).

III - The bridge

Introduction

Trim bridge has for many years been notable by its absence from the discussion of the town's medieval remains. It was completely overlooked by Butler, Conwell and Evans in the nineteenth century,[95] while more recently it was dismissed by the Urban Archaeology Survey as an eighteenth-century structure.[96] More remarkably still, the bridge was entirely ignored by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland,[97] and no file or report on it exists in the offices of Dúchas: The Heritage Service—it is not even included in the Record of Monuments and Places or the Sites and Monuments Record.

FIG. 5.20 The old bridge at Trim, viewed from downriver (east side)

As it stands, the narrow, four-arched bridge at Trim is essentially a medieval structure with some minor eighteenth-century alterations and pointing that appears to be of nineteenth-century date. It gives its name to Bridge Street and there are

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[95]Butler, *Trim* (1835, 1840, 1854, 1861); E.A. Conwell, *A ramble round Trim amongst its ruins and antiquities* (Dublin, 1878); John Evans, *Trim: its ecclesiastical ruins, its castle, etc., together with a collection of documents not hitherto published and notes of Trim and its environs for past two centuries* (Dublin, 1886).
[96]Bradley, Urban archaeol. surv., Meath, p. 158.
[97]M.J. Moore, *Archaeological inventory of County Meath* (Dublin, 1987), p. 182.

also references to Bridge Gate, Bridge Mill and the Bridgefoot, although none of these features or place-names survives today and their exact location is not known.[98] References to the bridge of Trim in the middle ages indicate that, as one would expect, there was only one bridge in the town at that time. The presence of another bridge, less than 2km downriver at Newtown Trim, ensured that a single crossing at Trim was sufficient.

The documentary evidence

The early importance of Trim was almost certainly linked to the development of the site as a crossing point on the Boyne. The earliest means of traversing the river here would have been via a ford, where for much of the year the water was shallow enough to allow people and animals to get from one side to the other with relative ease and in relative safety. In time, a bridge was constructed, but when and exactly where this took place are matters of conjecture. The earliest known documentary reference to a bridge at Trim dates to July 1194 when Walter de Lacy granted his burgesses of Drogheda the right of free passage on the Boyne from the sea to the bridge of Trim (*ad pontem de Atrum*).[99]

A.F.M. record that Trim was burned in 1203—*Cinandus Ath Truim agus an droichitt nua do loscad.*[100] Donovan translated this entry as 'Kells, Trim and Newbridge were burned', but O'Keeffe and Simington suggested that a more accurate rendering would be 'the entrance to Trim and the new bridge were burned'.[101] This alternative was proposed on the grounds that Kells (Co. Meath) was usually represented in the form *Cenannas Mor* by annalists and that *an droichitt nua* appears with lower case initial letters and therefore may not refer to the place-name Newbridge (Co. Kildare). It is hard to agree with O'Keeffe and Simington. Firstly, they assume that the entry in Irish in *A.F.M.* was transcribed accurately from the original—this is impossible to verify, particularly as the entry does not appear in any of the other sets of annals. Secondly, the Irish form of

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[98]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 293, 'from the Corporation Book, and inquisition'.
[99]Mac Niocaill, *Na Buirgéisí*, i, p. 172; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1338-40*, p. 525.
[100]*A.F.M., s.a.* 1203.
[101]Peter O'Keeffe and Tom Simington, *Irish stone bridges: history and heritage* (Dublin, 1991), p. 151.

Kells appears in a number of different forms in *A.F.M.*, including as *Cinandus* in an entry for 1258. Thirdly, the compilers of *A.F.M.* show no consistency in their employment of upper or lower case initial letters for the names of places (the 1203 entry is the only reference to *an droichitt nua* in *A.F.M.*, however, so it is not possible to make any comparisons). Until more evidence becomes available, it is preferable to retain Donovan's translation.

Trim Castle was built on lands belonging to the church, but in addition to the regular payments made by the lords of Trim (or the crown during periods when Trim was in royal hands) to the archbishops of Armagh for this land, the rental included a fee for the site of the bridge. That the rental specifically included money for the site of the bridge is recorded in a variety of contemporary financial records between 1258 and 1443,[102] and it was almost certainly covered by payments made both before and after this period.[103] This is the only known instance in Ireland of rental being imposed or paid for the site of a bridge.

On 25 November, 6 December and Christmas Day in 1330 a series of unusually violent storms and a great flood occurred, especially along the river Boyne.[104] Almost all of the bridges, both of wood and of stone (*tam lapidei quam lignei*), were carried away, mills were destroyed, and further damage was caused at Trim, particularly at the Franciscan friary, the site of which is adjacent to the bridge. It has long been accepted that the bridge at Trim, whatever form it may have taken, was destroyed during these winter storms of 1330 and that it was subsequently rebuilt or replaced in stone.

The bridge of Trim is mentioned in a pardon of August 1549,[105] but there is no reference to it again until the Civil Survey of the 1650s.[106] The bridge is shown

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[102]*Reg. Alen*, p. 89, no. (12); *Reg. Swayne*, p. 39, no. 426; *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 236, no. 80; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 554.
[103]*Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 22-3; Mac Niocaill, *Crown surveys of lands 1540-41*, p. 57.
[104]Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 116-7; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, p. 372; Camden, *Britannia*, p. 822; *Cal. Carew MSS*, v, *The Book of Howth*, p. 156; Fitzmaurice & Little, *Franciscan province Ire.*, p. 132.
[105]*Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i, 1521-58, part 2, 1546/7-53, p. 126, no. 357 (246).
[106]*Civil Survey*, v (Meath), p. 169.

clearly on the Down Survey map of Trim,[107] and Sir William Petty recorded that 'there is a faire stone bridge consisting of three or four large stone arches by which commege [commerce?] is communicated'.[108]

The architectural evidence

This bridge, which is founded on solid bedrock, consists of four pointed segmental masonry arches, each spanning $c.4.9m$ with a rise of $c.2.05m$, the same ratio as at Babes Bridge (near Donaghpatrick, Co. Meath). The piers are 2.45m thick and the bridge is 6.4m wide with solid parapets finished with copingstones. There is no evidence whatsoever for post-medieval widening in any arch or pier.

During the 1970s the Office of Public Works carried out programme of arterial drainage (the Boyne Drainage Scheme) which involved lowering the bed of the river at this point by $c.1.25m$ (see FIG. 5.21). The piers were left intact, perched on solid rock but, as with many other bridges affected by the scouring action of rivers, the footings of each pier were surrounded with a reinforced concrete skirt or 'pontoon', incorporating pointed cutwaters to assist the flow of floodwaters under the bridge.

The six original triangular cutwaters survive, three on each side of the bridge. The cutwater closest to the south bank on the downstream side extends up to the level of the pavement and may once have functioned as a pedestrian refuge, as at the bridge of Newtown Trim. The remaining five cutwaters reach a level just above the arch springings and continue in the form of long, tapering, semi-pyramidal, masonry cappings, 1.7m high, reaching to the level of the soffit of the keystone. This type of capping is found on many old bridges in Meath and sometimes elsewhere.[109]

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[107]Nat. Archives, Down Survey Maps, Meath, no. 8.
[108]Charles McNeill, 'Copies of the Down Survey maps in private keeping' in *Anal. Hib.* no. 8 (March, 1938), pp 419-27, at p. 424.
[109]O'Keeffe & Simington, *Irish stone bridges*, p. 152.
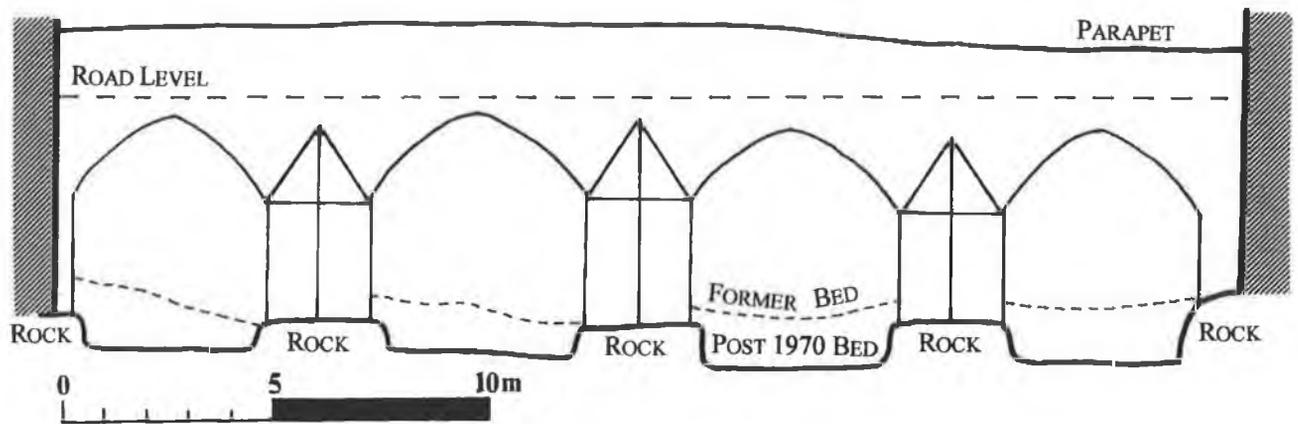
FIG. 5.21 Trim Bridge. West (upstream) elevation. Adapted from O'Keeffe & Simington, *Irish stone bridges*, p. 309, fig. 224.

The underside or intrados of the bridge arches are pointed segmental, of identical shape to the surviving arch of Babes Bridge. The arch rings are formed of roughly trimmed, rectangular stones varying in thickness from 7.5 to 15.5cm, and the keystones are no different from the ring stones. A second ring is faintly visible on all arches except the downstream arch on the south side. It is evident that this arch was rebuilt at some stage, and not very well, for it is still distorted and rounded at the keystone in a manner suggestive of the partial collapse of the shuttering. The springings are obscured by the cutwaters that are built into the piers up to that level indicating that this was all constructed as a unit. The spandrel masonry is roughly-coursed random rubble. The stonework in the sheeting of the arches is also good. The ribbon pointing is probably of nineteenth-century date, and the copingstones on the parapets are neatly shaped 46x38x10cm limestone flags.

Conclusions

Other examples of bridges in Ireland with pointed segmental arches are Babes Bridge, Thomond Old Bridge (Limerick), and those at Adare (Co. Limerick) and Slane (Co. Meath).[110] Bridges of this design had a number of advantages: a) they appear to have been easy to set out; b) the process of settling (which was inevitable when inadequate centring was used or when it was removed) did not unduly distort the visual appearance of the bridge or risk causing collapse as it

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[110]O'Keeffe & Simington, *Irish stone bridges*, pp 115-9 (Babes), 124-32 (Thomond), 153-6 (Slane), 159-61 (Adare).

would in the case of a semi-circular arch and c) the arches provided greater headroom for boats and, sometimes, greater width for flood discharge.

FIG. 5.22 *Old Baal's Bridge, Limerick* by W. H. Bartlett, *c.*1830. Source: O'Keeffe & Simington, *Irish stone bridges*, front cover of dust jacket.

Pointed segmental arches are a feature of late thirteenth and fourteenth-century architecture in Ireland, being associated particularly with bridge construction in the fourteenth century.[111] One of the closest parallels to the bridge at Trim was the old Baal's Bridge at Limerick. This bridge was rebuilt in 1831, but Barry records that it had four arches in about 1810,[112] and Bartlett's drawing of *c.*1830 shows the old, four-arched bridge very clearly (see FIG. 5.22).[113] A charter for the erection of Old Baal's Bridge appears to have been granted in 1340,[114] and O'Keeffe and Simington believe that it and Trim 'are obviously

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[111]H. G. Leask, *Irish castles and castellated houses* (Dundalk, 1973; reprinted 1995), p. 24; O'Keeffe & Simington, *Irish stone bridges*, pp 77, 89.

[112]J. G. Barry, 'Old Limerick bridges' in *Journal of the North Munster Archaeological Society*, i (1909), pp 7-13, at p. 11.

[113]O'Keeffe & Simington, *Irish stone bridges*, p. 150, fig. 52 [and, in colour, on front of dust jacket].

[114]O'Keeffe & Simington, *Irish stone bridges*, pp 149-51.

contemporaries'.[115] In fact, they go so far as to say that they 'may even have been erected by the same master masons in the period 1330-50'. Whatever about the latter assertion, the date would certainly fit in well with the evidence for rebuilding after the destruction of the bridge at Trim in 1330.

Bartlett's drawing of Baals Bridge shows that the arch to the extreme left was clearly of different form to the other three, just as it is at Trim. This arch at Baals did not traverse water but a quay or riverside path. Interestingly, at Trim, the south bank of the river now has a kink in it to allow the water to run under the south arch. Perhaps this arch, which, as noted above, is different in form to the other three, originally spanned a walkway or quay rather than a section of the river. It was possibly during a later attempt to alleviate flooding, or when the quay or walkway was no longer required, that the course of the river was altered slightly to allow water to flow under all four arches. It may also be significant that in the mid seventeenth century Petty described the bridge at Trim as one of 'three or four arches', as though the fourth arch was partly blocked or at least substantially different to the other three.[116]

If the pre-1330 bridge was of timber, it is hard to imagine that it was situated where the present bridge now stands, as the riverbed here is of solid rock (unless, of course, it was a timber-decked bridge with stone piers). The early ford is reputed to have been upriver from the present bridge (probably between it and where Watergate Bridge now stands) and it is possible that a timber bridge was constructed across or parallel to the ford.[117] Before the drainage operations on the river in the 1970s, this 'interpontal' stretch was the remarkably shallow and people were able to wade across the river in summertime. The remains of a slipway, by which cattle could reach the river drink, are still present on the north bank.

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[115]O'Keeffe & Simington, *Irish stone bridges*, pp 149-51, 152.
[116]McNeill, 'Copies of the Down Survey maps', p. 424.
[117]Conwell, *A ramble round Trim*, pp 1-2.

Whatever the case, it appears that the present bridge was constructed after an earlier one was destroyed by floods in 1330. On the basis of the architectural evidence (particularly the pointed segmental arches) and its similarity to Baal's Bridge, the bridge at Trim can be dated to the period between 1330 and 1350. With the exception of some minor repairs in the eighteenth century, pointing in the nineteenth century and the reinforcement of the piers in the 1970s, the structure of the bridge at Trim has changed little since it was erected in the mid fourteenth century. It is arguably the oldest unaltered bridge still in everyday use in Ireland.[118]

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[118]R.C. Cox and M.H. Gould, *Civil engineering heritage: Ireland* (London, 1998), pp 60-1.

IV - Burgage plots and property boundaries

It is a feature of most towns of medieval origin that contemporary property boundaries follow the lines of medieval divisions.[119] The initial plot pattern was a remarkably stable element of the town-plan, due, in part, to the logistical difficulties involved in altering established divisions, but especially to the legal attributes of burgages. Unfortunately, no specific records relating to the medieval burgages of Trim survive in documentary form, and the best source of information is the town-plan itself.

Throughout much of Trim, *intra-muros*, the present property divisions reflect the layout of the medieval burgages—the basic units of any medieval town-plan—in series along the streets (see FOLD-OUT PLAN, FIG. 5.24). In most areas, particularly off Emmet Street, High Street and Navangate Street, the present divisions suggest that long burgage plots were the standard form in medieval Trim. This may also have been the case in other areas of the town but the evidence has been distorted by the construction of new houses in Loman Street and the amalgamation of properties on Market Street. The long burgage plot is characteristic of Anglo-Norman towns in Ireland and is to be found at sites such as Arklow, Drogheda, Kilkenny, Navan, New Ross and Youghal.

The plots on the west of Emmet Street (*intra-muros*) run back to the town wall (which is laid out on a perfect north-south line), as do some of those on Loman Street, while the plots on the north side of Market Street run down to the riverbank. This allowed the burgesses access to the street at the front of their properties, and access to either the town wall or the river at the back. Many of the plots on the south side of High Street and Navangate Street run as far as a line that presumably delimited the precinct of St Mary's Augustinian priory. The plots to the north of the town appear to have been larger than those in the area around

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[119]T. R. Slater, 'The analysis of burgage patterns in medieval towns' in *Area: Journal of the Institute of British Geographers*, xiii, no. 1 (1981), pp 211-16; Conzen, *Alnwick*; idem, 'The plan analysis of an English city centre'; idem., 'The use of town plans in the study of urban history'.

Market Street, and this might be explained by a desire on the part of burgesses to have their houses, and especially their shops, close to the 'town-centre' and the market place.

PLOT WIDTH IN METRES

| 9·1 | 7·1 | 9·1 | 9·1 | 9·1 | 18·2 | | 9·1 | 7·1 | 10·4 | 9·1 | 7·1 | | 9·1 | | 6·5 | 9·1 | 7·1 | | 9·1 | | | | 7·1 | 7·1 | | 9·1 |

4·55   4·55   4·55   4·55   4·55 4·55   3·9
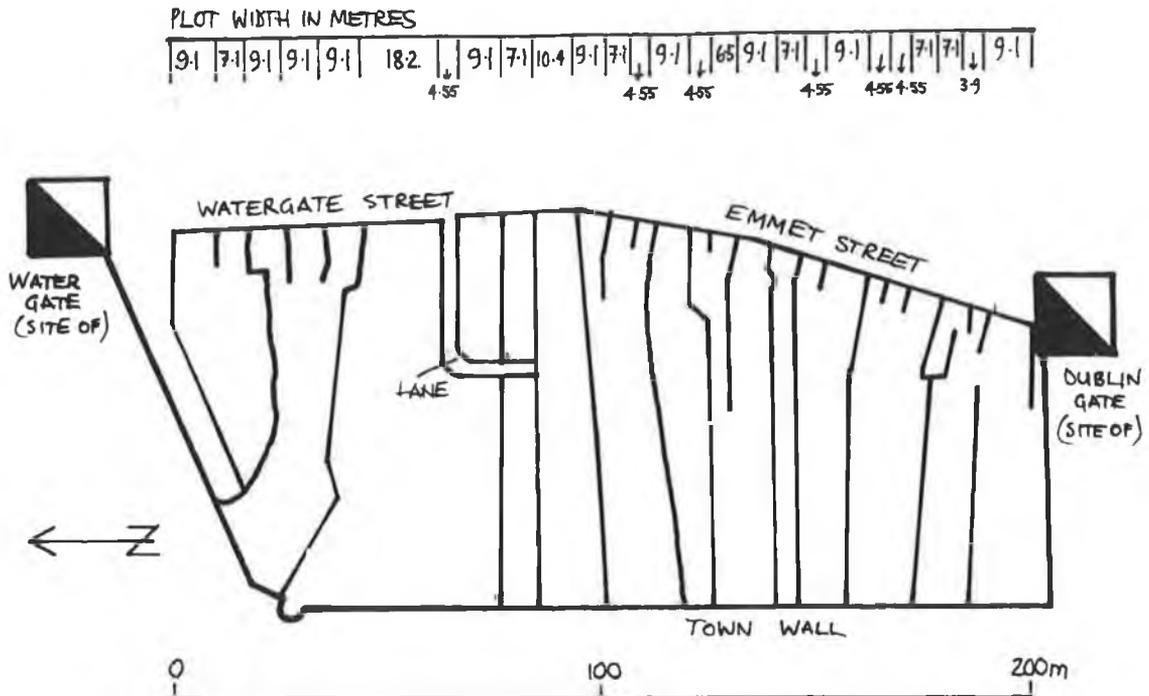
FIG. 5.23 Analysis of plot pattern, west side of Watergate Street and Emmet Street.

An analysis of the 25 properties on the west side of Watergate Street and Emmet Street, between the sites of Water Gate and Dublin Gate, reveals a high degree of regularity in the plot width (see FIG. 5.23). The layout of the properties appears to be based on a unit equivalent to 9.1m. The street-facing end of each of 10 of the plots (40%) is exactly 9.1m in width; 5 (20%) are half this width (4.55m); and 1 (4%) is double this width (18.2m). Of the rest, 6 (24%) are 7.1m in width, while the others measure 10.4m, 6.5m and 3.9m respectively. A lane between the 6th and 7th plots from the north is also 4.55m in width. This is a total of 199.9m and (remembering that 25 plots means 26 boundaries), if one allows 30cm for the 26th boundary, the total of 200.2m is exactly 22 times 9.1m. A similar pattern is repeated in other parts of the town.

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Conzen's analysis of the town-plan at Alnwick showed that almost 84% of the plots in the oldest part of the borough fitted a 'standard' burgage width of 8.5-9.8m or some fraction or multiple thereof, much like the case identified at Trim.[120] Conzen related this 'standard' measurement to the width of a two bay medieval building placed crossways on the plot. The statute perch measured 5.03m, but 'customary' (or local) perches are known to have varied from at least 3 to 7.3m.[121] It is possible that the unit used in the laying out of the plots at Trim was a customary perch equivalent to 4.55m.

[120]Conzen, *Alnwick*, pp 31-3.
[121]Slater, 'The analysis of burgage patterns', p. 212.

V - Suburban development

It has been suggested that the street pattern south of the town wall at Emmet Street, Patrick Street and Newhaggard Road indicates that this area was a suburban expansion in the middle ages (see above). This theory is further demonstrated by the presence of regular linear property boundaries, continuing the plot-pattern at the northern end of Emmet Street.

That there were suburbs in the sixteenth century in Trim is indicated by a reference in 1571 which mentions a messuage belonging to John Smith, 'with a close, outside the walls on the west', at least five messuages and gardens 'without the north gate', and a garden plot 'without the south gate'.[122] A further six messuages without the south gate are mentioned in 1593.[123] In 1599 there is a mention of a garden without the porchgate.[124] That many of these suburban messuages were ruinous indicates that they were probably old and that by this time the suburbs had contracted considerably. These references suggest that in the sixteenth century there were extra-mural houses to the north (1571), south (1571, 1593), east (1599) and west (1571) of the town.

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[122]*Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, ii, 1558-86, pp 228-9, no. 1714 (1400); iii, 1586-1603, p. 227, no. 5840 (4781).
[123]*Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, iii, 1586-1603, pp 227-8, no. 5840 (4781).
[124]*Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, iii, 1586-1603, p. 331, no. 6267 (6109).

VI – Other features[125]

Market place

The medieval market at Trim took place on Market Street, a relatively short but broad street which widens gradually towards the east end, almost certainly to facilitate the market stalls, livestock pens and crowds of people that would have been present on market- and fair-days (see CHAPTER FOUR).

Castle

Thirty-six towns in Ireland are associated with Anglo-Norman castles. At Trim, as at many other towns (such as Athenry, Carrickfergus, Dublin, Kilkenny and Limerick) the castle is situated at the periphery of the town (see CHAPTER SIX). Bradley remarks that it is unusual that there are no clear associations of castle and market place, considering the important role castles are thought to have played in the genesis of so many Anglo-Norman towns.[126] At Trim, however, the town gate of the castle leads down towards the market place. In most cases, where the castle was sited at an extremity of the town, the castle defences were linked to the town walls, as at Athenry, Kilkenny and Trim. The situation of the castle at an extremity was strategic—it was close to the town and people and yet still peripheral, while the necessarily massive defences of the castle doubled as defences for the town. The position of the castle in an angle of the town walls facilitated its protection—both against extramural attackers and from the townspeople themselves in the event of a rebellion.

Parish church

The medieval church of St Patrick was situated on the highest ground in the town, 250m north of the river (see CHAPTER SEVEN). The medieval remains on the site include a tower, two walls of the chancel and a collection of funerary monuments. The site is a potential candidate for the location of the pre-Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical settlement.

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[125]These features are each dealt with in greater detail in other chapters.
[126]Bradley, 'Planned Anglo-Norman towns in Ireland', p. 444.

Other churches

In a letter of 26 February 1196 from Pope Celestine III to the abbess of the monastery of St Mary, Clonard, there is a mention of the church of St Brigid of Trim.[127] No such church is known to have existed in Trim and it is likely to have been at Kilbride, 6km to the northwest of the town.[128] There is a mention of a convent of nuns at Trim, but Gwynn and Hadcock suggest that this may also have been at Kilbride.[129]

Archbishop Ussher writes of a church at Trim that in 1632 retained the name 'the Greek Church', or according to a visitation book 'the Greek School'.[130] Although the derivation of this name is unclear, there is still a field to the east of Trim called the Greek Park.

Religious houses

Three religious orders were present in Trim in the middle ages (see CHAPTER EIGHT). The Augustinians established a house on high ground on the north bank of the Boyne in the middle of the twelfth century and remained there until the dissolution in 1541. A Dominican priory was founded by Geoffrey de Geneville in 1263 outside the town walls to the north. The Franciscans were located on the south bank of the river next to the castle.

A house of the Carmelite friars is listed for Trim by Rinuccini, in the 1640s,[131] while in 1690, Alemand also recorded that there was a Carmelite friary in Trim, and he may have derived his information from Rinuccini.[132] No such friary existed in Trim in the middle ages.

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[127]Sheehy, *Pontificia Hib.*, i, p. 84, no. 29; Dugdale, ii, p. 1043.
[128]Gwynn & Hadcock, *Med. relig. houses*, p. 318.
[129]Gwynn & Hadcock, *Med. relig. houses*, p. 407.
[130]Conwell, 'A ramble round Trim' (1872-3), p. 388.
[131]Stanislaus Kavanagh and N. B. White (ed.), *Commentarius Rinuccinianus de sedis Apostolicae legatione ad foederatos Hiberniae Catholicos per annos 1645-1649* (Dublin, 1949), p. 299.
[132]L. A. Alemand, *Histoire monastique d'Irlande* (Paris, 1690), p. 406.

Frankhouse

Among the properties held by David Walsh in 1540-1 was a 'frankhowse' in Trim, for which he paid 6s 8d.[133] Prior to the dissolution the frankhouse (literally a house that 'facilitated the coming and going of a person') was almost certainly a guesthouse operated by one of the religious orders in the town. Walsh also rented a garden in Trim in 1540-1 and both it and the frankhouse were owned by the Hospitallers of Kilmainham.[134] In 1578 this building was described as 'a void messuage in Trym called the Franke house', and it was leased to Walter Hopp, constable of Mullingar Castle, for 21 years, along with a frank house in Mullingar and one in Naas.[135] In November 1589 Anne Thickpeny was granted 'a messuage in Tryme called the Frankhouse' to hold forever for a fee of 4s.[136] The 1589 grant states that the frankhouse was parcel of the possessions of the late hospital of St John of Jerusalem in Ireland. The location of the frankhouse is not known.

Fortified townhouses

The remains of two fortified townhouses of probable fifteenth-century date survive in Trim (see CHAPTER NINE). Talbot's Castle consists of two sections—one essentially medieval and the other essentially modern with some medieval features. Close to the site of St Mary's Augustinian priory, parts of Talbot's Castle may once have formed part of the monastic complex. Immediately to the north of Talbot's Castle is Nangle's Castle, but this building is completely neglected and has a galvanised roof allowing it to function as a farm-shed. No documentary evidence survives for either of these structures.

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[133] *Extents Ir. mon. possessions*, pp 115, 120.

[134] *Extents Ir. mon. possessions*, pp 115, 120; C. Litton Falkiner, 'The Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in Ireland' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, xxvi (1906-7), pp 275-317, at p. 292.

[135] *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, ii, 1558-86, p. 454, no. 3323 (2654), p. 464, no. 3380 (3004).

[136] *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, iii, 1586-1603, p. 91, no. 5373 (4304).
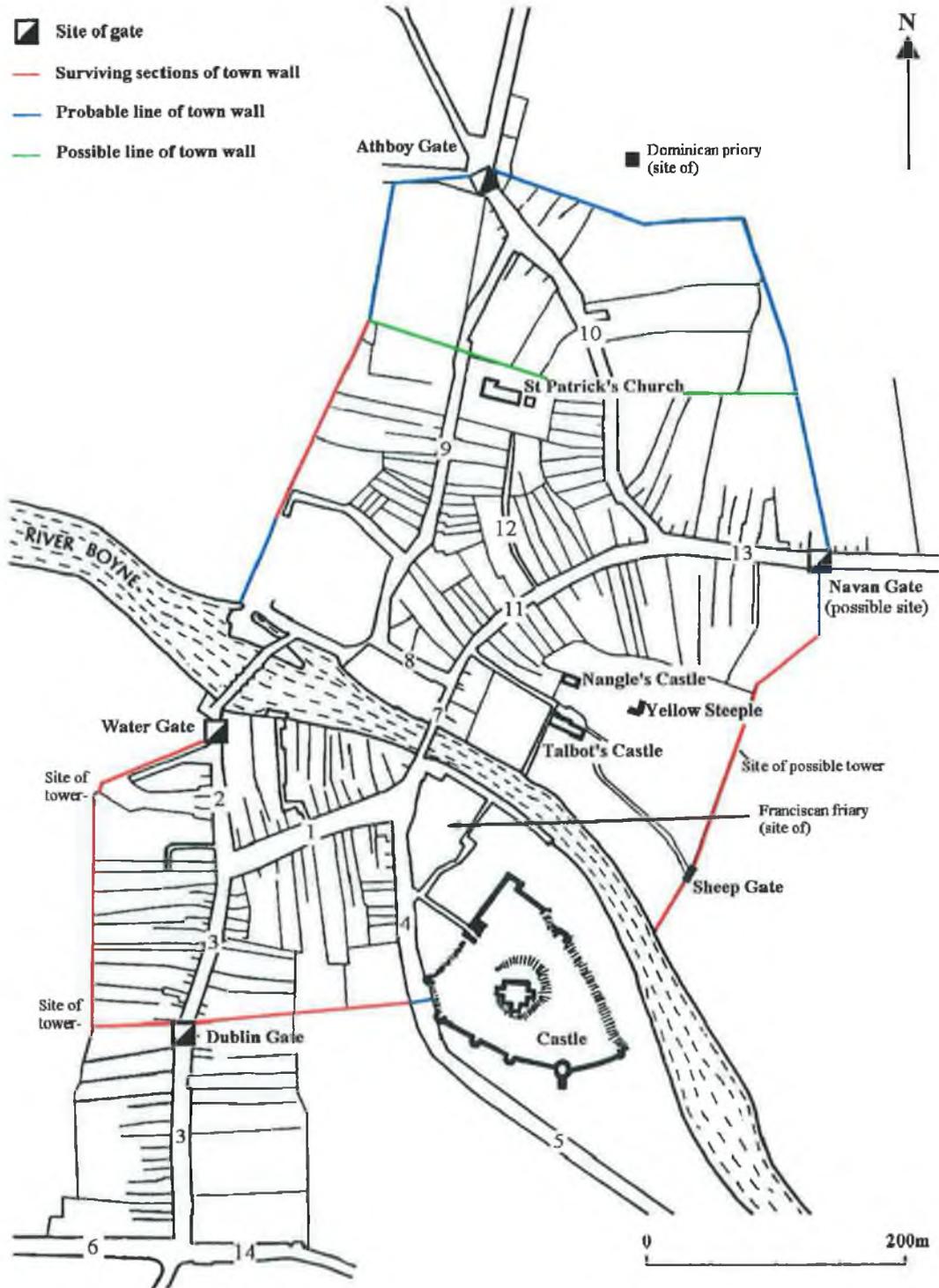
Key to streets

1 Market Street	6 Newhaggard Road	11 High Street
2 Watergate Street	7 Bridge Street	12 Church Lane
3 Emmet Street	8 Mill Street	13 Navangate Street
4 Castle Street	9 Loman Street	14 Patrick Street
5 Dublin Road	10 Haggard Street	

FIG. 5.24 Plan of Trim showing line of town walls, medieval remains, streets and property boundaries. Adapted from Bradley, Urban archaeol. surv., Meath, fig. 46.

❖ **CHAPTER 6**

TRIM CASTLE

The documentary evidence

The castle

What we know about the earliest Anglo-Norman fortification at Trim comes almost exclusively from the document that Orpen entitled *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* when he published it in 1892.[1] In this Norman-French epic poem, it is recounted that 'Hugh de Lacy fortified a house [*meisun*] at Trim and threw a trench [*fosse*] around it, and then enclosed it with a stockade [*hireson*]. Within the house he then placed brave knights of great worth; then he entrusted the castle [*castel*] to Hugh Tyrrel'. The text goes on to relate that when Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, king of Connaught, heard that de Lacy had built a castle, he was enraged and planned to attack the new fortification. News of Ua Conchobhair's approaching army reached Hugh Tyrrell who immediately dispatched a mounted messenger to Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare (Strongbow) for aid. When the earl heard of the impending attack, he summoned his men and set out for Trim. When they arrived, Tyrrell had abandoned the castle at Trim and Ua Conchobhair's men had destroyed it. Before returning to Dublin, Strongbow and his men gave chase to the retreating Ua Conchobhair, slaying a number of the rearguard when they caught up with them. Subsequently, it is said that 'Hugh Tyrrell went to Trim and re-fortified his fortress; after that he guarded it with great honour until the arrival of his lord'.

A second, near-contemporary, reference to the early fortification at Trim appears in *Expugnatio Hibernica*, which also records the destruction of the castle and its subsequent repair. Although they agree that Trim Castle was destroyed and rebuilt, these two early sources disagree about who was responsible for the repairs— Giraldus Cambrensis believed it to be Raymond le Gros.[2] The annals known as *Mac Carthaigh's Book* record the building of a castle at Trim in 1176, and this may be a reference to the completion of the Tyrrell/Le Gros reconstruction work.[3]

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[1]Orpen, *The song*, ll 3222-3341.
[2]Scott and Martin, *Expugnatio*, p. 141.
[3]*Misc. Ir. Annals*, pp 60-1 (*Mac Carthaigh's Book*).

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The earliest known documentary indication that Trim Castle was built on land owned by the church dates to sometime between 1191 and 1198 when a letter from Pope Celestine III states that the rent of the town of Trim belonged to the abbey and community of St Mary's, Trim.[4] Trim Castle was not unique in this regard, as Kildare, Roscommon, and Roscrea were also built on church lands.[5]

Trim was seized into the King John's hand when he came to Ireland in 1210 and so the bishop of Meath was granted £16 worth of land in Meath instead of the £20 rent he used to receive annually from Walter de Lacy.[6] In July, John stayed *apud pratum subtus Trim* for two days.[7] It appears that the king did not stay in the castle itself, and his writs are dated from this nearby meadow, where he seems to have held his court. It is known that works were being carried out at the castle at about this time and it is possible that there was nowhere available for the king and his retinue to stay. The accounts for Trim for the period from 23 August 1210 to 18 October 1212 were presented to the exchequer by William Trom, accountant of Trim, and they record considerable sums of money being spent on Trim Castle in these years.[8] Although there have been difficulties with the translation of parts of these accounts, it seems that 22s was made available 'for a great horse which is for the works at Trim Castle, that is to say, for strengthening the tower'.[9] A total of £66 14s 10d was allocated 'for the works at Trim Castle', including payment for

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[4]Sheehy, *Pontificia Hib.*, i, p 86-8, no. 30. According to Evans, 'the bishops of Meath received rent from the Crown for the manor of Trim down till [*sic*] the same period (1869) [Disestablishment], see Evans, *Trim: its ecclesiastical ruins*, p. 9, note; Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 71-2.

[5]Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, pp 132-3, 132, note 29.

[6]*Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 22-3.

[7]T. D. Hardy, *A description of the patent rolls in the Tower of London; to which is added an itinerary of King John, with prefatory observations* (London, 1835) [no page numbers given]; Orpen, *Normans*, ii, 247-9; G. H. Orpen, 'Athlone Castle: its early history, with notes on some neighbouring castles' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, xxxvii (1907), pp 257-76, 260-1.

[8]*Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 14-15, 24-5, 34-7, 44-5.

[9]*Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 14-15; Quinn, 'Index and corrigenda', p. 35, corrects the earlier translation 'And 22s for a large cable which is for work at Trim, that is to say, for demolishing the tower' to 'for a great horse which is for the works at Trim, that is to say, for strengthening the tower'; the correction to the earlier text had been made by H. G. Richardson 'Norman Ireland in 1212' in *I.H.S.*, iii, no. 10 (September, 1942), pp 144-58, at p. 156, from whence Quinn copies the correction.

'193 horses and as many men for one day at the fortification of the castle'.[10] 31 coombs[11] [of grain?] were given to the carpenters who built the granary and other things in the stack-yard.[12] New granaries were also built at this time at Carrickfergus Castle, and at another unnamed fortification.[13] It is also recorded that the allowance for the running of Trim Castle was 6s per day.[14] All of this expenditure was made during the time that the castle and lands of Trim were in King John's hand, and it is likely that the king had given the orders for the strengthening of the fortifications.

In a mandate of July 1215, John commanded Thomas FitzAdam that Trim Castle be returned to Walter de Lacy, once the latter had settled an outstanding fine.[15] It seems that the castle was indeed restored to de Lacy, although the fine appears to have remained unsettled. At Easter in 1224, by an agreement between Henry III and de Lacy, Trim Castle was once again forfeited, this time as a result of 'transgressions of his [Walter's] men of Meath in harbouring Hugh de Lascy [sic][16] in Ireland, pillaging and burning the king's land, killing and holding his men to ransom'.[17] Henry was to hold the castle for two years, during which time de Lacy was to return to Ireland to pursue those men who had transgressed against the king. De Lacy was to be permitted access to Trim Castle during this time, and also to have refuge there for his men. Confirmation of this agreement came in March 1224 when a mandate was issued to the justiciar declaring that 'Walter de Lacy is to have the hall [aulam], houses [domos], and chambers [cameras] in the castle of

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[10]*Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 24-5, 36-7, 44-5.
[11]A dry measure of 32 gallons or four bushels.
[12]*Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 34-5.
[13]*Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 54-5, 58-9.
[14]*Pipe roll Ire. 1211-12*, pp 44-5.
[15]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 612; Wood gives 1220 for the year of this mandate, but it is not clear where this information derives from, see Wood, 'The muniments', p. 313—Otway-Ruthven agrees that the mandate was issued in 1215, see 'The partition of the de Verdun lands', p. 414.
[16]This was Hugh de Lacy II, younger brother of Walter.
[17]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1180; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 314; Smith, '*Annales de Monte Fernandi*', s.a. 1224; Flower, 'Manuscripts of Irish interest', p. 331; Camden, *Britannia*, p. 799.

Trum [*sic*], in which he and his retinue may dwell while he is fighting the enemies of the king and himself'.[18]

A number of writers have signalled 1220 as the year in which Trim Castle was built and this has caused some confusion.[19] The earliest known source for this misinformation is the late sixteenth-century compilation known as the *Book of Howth*, in which it is recounted that in 1220 the 'castle[s] of Bedford and Trime in Ireland was [*sic*] builded'.[20] This confused entry clearly derives from an earlier record, referring to the siege of 1224 (see below), in which it is recorded that in 1224 '*castrum de Bedford obsessum est, et castrum de Trim in Hibernia*'—the author of the *Book of Howth*, despite already (mistakenly) noting the siege of Trim under 1220,[21] appears to have mistranslated the word *obsessum* [*obsideo*, to besiege].[22] Writing in the 1590s, Meredith Hanmer recorded that in 1220 'all Meath was wonderfully afflicted and wasted by reason of the private quarrels and civil wars between William, earl Marshall and Hugh de Lacy. Trim was besieged and brought to a lamentable plight'.[23] Hanmer goes on to say that 'when the rage and furie of those garboiles was somewhat mitigated and appeased, after the shedding of much blod, the same yeere to prevent afterclaps, and subsequent calamities, the Castle of Trim was builded'. Hanmer is clearly referring to the events of 1224, and interweaving them with the equally confused 1220 reference from the *Book of Howth* (one of his most-used sources).[24] It would seem, then, that the attribution of the construction of Trim Castle to the year 1220 (also

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[18]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1176; *Rot. litt. claus. 1204-24*, p. 591.

[19]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 19; Orpen, *Normans*, i, 75, 249.

[20]*Cal. Carew MSS*, v, *Howth*, p. 123.

[21]*Cal. Carew MSS*, v, *Howth*, p. 120.

[22]Camden, *Britannia*, p. 799. This reference also appears in the Kilkenny Chronicle in the Cotton MS. Vespasian B. XI, see Flower, 'Manuscripts of Irish interest', p. 331. See also *Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 1202, 1203, 1205; *Royal Letters*, nos 831, 833; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 314; Smith, '*Annales de Monte Fernandi*', *s.a.* 1224; Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 28-9.

[23]Ware, *Anc. Ir. hist.* (Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*), p. 377.

[24]Ware, *Anc. Ir. hist.* (Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*), pp 31, 80, 83, 88, 89, 90, 103, 303, 335, 368, 400.

recorded in the late eighteenth-century 'Dublin' *Annals of Inisfallen*),[25] derives from an erroneous entry in the sixteenth-century *Book of Howth*.

The siege referred to by both the *Book of Howth* and Meredith Hanmer occurred in 1224. In the summer of that year, William Marshall the younger, earl of Pembroke and recently appointed Justiciar of Ireland, rode to Trim Castle.[26] He found it occupied by certain unauthorised knights and others. Aided by Walter de Lacy, and a number of local reinforcements, Marshall laid siege to the castle. He sent his cousin, Sir William le Gros, together with twenty armed knights and twenty armed soldiers to relieve Carrickfergus Castle, which was being besieged by Hugh de Lacy II. After a period of six to seven weeks, Trim Castle surrendered on 11 August. During the siege Marshall had expended upwards of £16 a day, not including sundry expenses and the pay of foot soldiers.[27] Marshall sent a long report to the king detailing the successful siege.[28]

On 15 May 1225 Walter de Lacy paid a fine of 3,000 marks for the return of his lands, but Trim, Drogheda and other castles were not yet restored to him (possibly because the sum paid was not the full amount of the original fine).[29] Between 1225 and 1226 the castle was placed in the custody of Marshall,[30] but it seems that de Lacy managed to secure its restoration soon after that. In March 1228 the king commanded the justiciar to receive from Walter de Lacy a fine that was outstanding since the time of King John.[31] If de Lacy did not pay the fine, the justiciar was to take Trim Castle into the king's hand, in addition to fifty marcates of land belonging to de Lacy in Ireland.

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[25]T.C.D., MS 1281; Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin, 'The Dublin Annals of Inisfallen' in Séamus Pender (ed.), *Féilscríbhinn Torna* (Cork, 1947), pp 183-202;

[26]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 1202, 1203, 1205; *Royal Letters*, nos 831, 833; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, 314; Smith, '*Annales de Monte Fernandi*', *s.a.* 1224; Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 28-9; Camden, *Britannia*, p. 799; Flower, 'Manuscripts of Irish interest', p. 331; Ware, *Anc. Ir. hist.* (Hanmer, *Chronicle of Ireland*), p. 377; *Cal. Carew MSS*, v, *Howth*, p. 120.

[27]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1203.

[28]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 1203-5.

[29]*D.N.B.*, Lacy, p. 391.

[30]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1231; *Royal Letters*, no. 824.

[31]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 1575.

After the death of Walter de Lacy in 1241, Trim was held by a series of custodians before passing to Walter's granddaughter Matilda, and her husband Peter de Geneve. On 5 March 1241 the king issued a mandate to a certain Simon de Tybosop, ordering him to hand over custody of Trim Castle to Walter de Godarville, a royal envoy in Ireland,[32] who was to answer for the accounts of the castle at the Dublin Exchequer.[33] From 1244, by which time he was also seneschal of Meath,[34] de Godarville was to receive an annual fee of forty marks [or alternatively forty marcates of land][35] from Matilda and Peter for as long as the castle was in his custody.[36] On 25 March 1246 a mandate was issued to de Godarville ordering him to deliver Trim Castle to John FitzGeoffrey, justiciar of Ireland, whom the king had appointed its custodian.[37] A mandate issued by the king to the justiciar on 26 March 1249 indicates that a certain William Badleu had recently been custodian of the castle.[38]

Peter de Geneve died in 1249 and by 1252 Matilda had married Geoffrey de Geneville. In 1254 Henry III ordered FitzGeoffrey, the justiciar, to restore Trim Castle, and the moiety of forty marks belonging to it to de Geneville as the right and inheritance of his wife.[39] The 1254 grant was made at Bordeaux under the king's small seal, but when a similar grant was signed at Windsor in 1257, it was under the great seal.[40] One of the conditions of the grant was that de Geneville surrender Trim Castle to Henry III whenever the king requested it.

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[32]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1232-47*, pp 247, 263.

[33]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 2429, 2451, 2507; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1232-47*, p. 246.

[34]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 2696, 2618; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1232-47*, p. 429; *Close rolls, 1242-7*, p. 197.

[35]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 2699; *Close rolls, 1242-7*, p. 186.

[36]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 2662, 2699.

[37]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 2817; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1232-47*, p. 476.

[38]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, no. 2984.

[39]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, nos 391, 402; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1247-58*, p. 325; Wood. 'The muniments', p. 328, no. i.

[40]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1247-58*, p. 544; the grant seems to have been renewed at Shrewsbury under the great seal in September 1267, *Cal. pat. rolls, 1266-72*, p. 109; Wood. 'The muniments', p. 328, no. ii.

The first documented constable of Trim Castle in the fourteenth century was Henry Kempe who took up the position no later than 1 April 1322. His annual fee was £20 but payment was so far in arrears that in February 1327 he claimed 100 marks, being his salary for three years and four months (1 April 1322 to 1 August 1325).[41] Kempe was also allocated £4 11s to pay John and Maurice McCoghan, and Geoffrey O'Reilly (at 1d per day each), hostages being held in the castle prison (from 1 April 1322 to 1 April 1323).[42]

In January 1326 Edward II enquired of John D'Arcy, Justiciar of Ireland, if William de Athy would be a 'fit and sufficient enough' person to be entrusted with the keeping of Trim Castle.[43] John de Athy, kinsman of the said William and constable of Carrickfergus Castle,[44] had petitioned the king to grant this office to William who had 'sustained in the king's service great damages and losses'.[45] The petition seems to have come to nothing, however, and D'Arcy himself took up the position of constable of Trim Castle in August 1326.[46] In that year he received £30 to cover his own wages as constable (at 1s per day), and also to pay a doorkeeper, a gaoler (at 2d per day each), two hostages of Meiler MacGeoghegan (at 1d per day each, for the period from 1 August 1325 to 15 August 1326), and a watchman (at 1d per day, from 1 August 1325 to 18 August 1326 inclusive).[47] In January 1327 D'Arcy was paid a further £6 11s, being his fee for the period from 16 August to 24 December 1326.[48] He was also paid £2 14s 7d for the wages of a gaoler (at 2d per day) and for the wages of three hostages (at 1d per day) in custody in the gaol during the same period.[49] The following April D'Arcy received a further £4 11s for the term from 25 December 1326 to the following 25 March.[50]

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[41] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 36, no. 81; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 320.

[42] Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 321.

[43] *Cal. fine rolls, 1319-27*, p. 373.

[44] Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, pp 314, 324.

[45] *Cal. fine rolls, 1319-27*, p. 373.

[46] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 34b, no. 21, p. 36, no. 81; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, pp 314, 320; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 314, [erroneously?] gives the name as John de Athy.

[47] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 34b, no. 21; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 314.

[48] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 35b, no. 69; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 320.

[49] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 35b, no. 70; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 321.

[50] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 36b, no. 98; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 324.

For the same period he received £1 17s 11d for the wages of one gaoler and three hostages.[51] His personal fee for 26 March to 30 April amounted to £1 16s,[52] and he received £1 4s to cover the wages of one gaoler (at 2d per day), three hostages (at 1½d per day—a 50% increase on the rate paid to hostages less than one year earlier) and two archers (at 1½d per day) staying in the castle garrison (*municio*), by order of the king's council in Ireland.[53]

Some restoration work was carried out at the castle while D'Arcy was its constable, and in November 1326 Adam Payn and William Seneschall, of Trim, claimed £20 for the repair of the 'great hall' and the other houses, and some other works.[54] They were subsequently paid £7 in part payment of £20 for repairs of the 'great tower' and £4 for their trouble, outlay and expenses.[55] It may be that the references to the 'great hall' and the 'great tower' refer to the same building.

By 1329 the constableship of Trim Castle had been taken up by William Blount,[56] but after the reunification of the 'eastern' and 'western' purparties of Meath in 1330 the office of constable was granted to Milo de Verdon, who held that position until at least 1343.[57]

By 1350 Richard FitzRalph, archbishop of Armagh, had secured the right of the church of Armagh to the site of Trim Castle, for which he collected an annual rental of 14 marks.[58] Not long before that, Richard Sidegrave had had custody of the site of the Castle of Trim as part of temporalities of the bishop of Meath.[59]

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[51]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 325.
[52]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 325.
[53]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 36b, nos 102-3; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 326.
[54]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 35b, no. 57.
[55]*P.R.I. rep D.K. liv*, pp 44-5.
[56]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 564.
[57]Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 32-3; *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 45b, no. 78.
[58]Walsh, *Fitzralph*, p. 244, note 18; *Cal. papal letters, 1342-62*, p. 398; the 14 marks rental possibly included money for some other properties in Trim.
[59]N.L.I., MS 761, ff 268-9. Butler also extracted this information from the Pipe Rolls, see Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 72.

In 1360, the office of constable of Trim Castle, which was once more in the king's hand, was granted to a cousin of Roger Mortimer, also called Roger, on the condition that the king's ministers should have in the castle 'suitable houses for their stay and for the keeping of the king's goods and things when necessary'.[60] The grant was renewed three years later.[61] By 1361 Roger Euyas had been made constable, with a fee that had not increased from the time Henry Kempe had held that office almost forty years earlier.[62] Euyas was paid £5 for the term from 12 May to 12 August 1361, and a further £5 for 12 August to 12 November. A further payment was made to Euyas in 1364, but this must have been considerably in arrears as Roger Berde had taken up the office of constable at least one year before that.[63] Berde had travelled to Ireland on the king's service in the company of Lionel of Clarence in August 1361,[64] and had been made constable of Limerick Castle the following month.[65] In March 1363 the constableship of Limerick was granted to John de Beverle,[66] but by this time Berde had already taken up his position in Trim.

Berde was paid £4 10d for the wages of two watchmen at 1d per day each (from 1 November 1361 to 28 February 1363).[67] He was also paid for the wages of McMorthe [Art MacMurrough, king of Leinster] (27 February to 25 June 1362) and Donaldus Regnalgh [Donall Reagh, MacMurrough's Tanaiste] (27 February to 12 May 1362), prisoners of the king in his custody, at 6d per day, and £1 6s 8d for various provisions for the prisoners.[68]

In May 1363, however, an enquiry was set up to investigate Berde and 'any extortions, oppressions, falsities, damages, grievances against the king and his

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[60]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1358-61*, p. 456.
[61]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1361-4*, p. 382.
[62]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 511; Richardson & Sayles, *Admin. Ire.*, pp 266-7.
[63]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 513; Richardson & Sayles, *Admin. Ire.*, pp 268-9; *Cal. pat. rolls, Ed. III, 1361-4*, p. 368.
[64]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1361-4*, p. 45.
[65]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 511.
[66]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1361-4*, p. 348.
[67]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 513.
[68]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 513; Richardson & Sayles, *Admin. Ire.*, p. 264.

people, perpetrated by him'.[69] In particular, the commission was to look into the death of Art MacMurrough and Donall Reagh, who had died in Trim Castle while in Berde's custody. The annals record that 'Art MacMurrough, king of Leinster, and Donall Reagh, heir apparent to the throne of Leinster, were treacherously made prisoners by the son of the king of England [Lionel]. They afterwards died in prison'.[70] It is not known what the findings of the enquiry were.

In 1362 Milo Sweteman, Archbishop of Armagh, wrote to the king concerning rents for the site of Trim Castle.[71] Sweteman stated that the castle was held by him in right of the church of Armagh, and requested payment for rent and arrears thereof. Roger Mortimer had held the castle from the Archbishops of Armagh for an annual rent of £8 16s 7¼d,[72] but since Mortimer's death in 1360 the rent had not been paid. An inquisition before the king's lieutenant in Ireland affirmed the Archbishop's claim and in December 1362 Edward III ordered the treasurer of Ireland to make a payment £17 13s 3d (two years' rent) to the archbishop.[73] A further payment of £33 18s 4d (rent for slightly more than three years and ten months) was made in January 1365.[74] Archbishop Sweteman acknowledged receipt of this part payment 'for the site of Trim Castle' from Walter de Dalby, treasurer of Ireland. This amount, again paid in arrears, was for the years 1362-5.[75] Rental payments for the site of the castle of Trim were constantly in arrears during this period.[76]

During the 1360s the castles of Carlow, Athlone, Dublin, Ballymahon (Co. Longford) and Trim were re-fortified.[77] In July 1366 a royal clerk named John

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[69]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1361-4*, p. 368.

[70]*A.F.M., s.a.* 1361.

[71]Smith, *reg. Sweteman*, pp 140-2, no. 142.

[72]It is more likely that the annual rent was £8 16s 7½d, as many payments of fractions or multiples of this amount are recorded.

[73]Smith, *reg. Sweteman*, pp 140-2, no. 142.

[74]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 517.

[75]Smith, *reg. Sweteman*, p. 25, no. 19.

[76]Smith, *reg. Sweteman*, pp 29-30, no. 25, pp 30-1, no. 26.

[77]Edmund Curtis, 'The viceroyalty of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, in Ireland, 1361-1367' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, xlviii (1918), pp 65-73, at p. 68; Nat. Archives, RC 8/29, pp 235-40, no. 630.

Scrope was paid 79s 3d by the Dublin Exchequer 'which the said clerk spent both in the wages of carpenters and certain roof-tilers for the kitchen of the castle of Trim, and timber and slate for the same place which was ruinous and might have been lost for want of a roof, and boards and iron for a saw and a file for planks for the [draw?]-bridge of the said castle, and for other necessities being sawed in the same place, and for 'spikings' [*spykynggys*] and large nails for the said buildings and repair works, along with the wages of the man employed in the same works from 25 November [1364] to 26 January following.[78]

In June 1367, Edward III ordered the custodians of Trim Castle to 'rebuild the tower beyond the west gate of the castle of Trim, as well as the chamber beyond the gaol connected to that same tower there, and also the chambers of the red hall beneath the said castle which are joined to the tower called Magdalen Tower in that castle, and the chambers joined to this same tower, including walls, wooden planks, iron, lead and all other necessary roofing'.[79] As with the earlier building and repair work, John Scrope was again in charge of the works. Scrope had been king's keeper of the works and stores in Dublin Castle throughout the 1350s and 60s,[80] and by 1366 had been made chamberlain of the Dublin exchequer.[81]

In 1369 custody of Trim Castle was given to Richard fitz Richard de Burgh, and the following year he received 6 marks for guarding it.[82] The earliest known reference to a chapel in the castle dates to June 1375, when Thomas Ripperis was confirmed as 'chaplain of the chantry in the chapel of the castle of Trym in Ireland and warden of the house of St Mary Magdalen pertaining to the said chantry'.[83] On 18 September 1431 Henry VI granted to Thomas Clement, chaplain, custody of the

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[78]Nat. Archives, RC 8/29, pp 238-9, no. 630.
[79]Nat. Archives, RC 8/29, pp 500-1, no. 508.
[80]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, pp 479, 491, 497, 505, 512, 531.
[81]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, pp 521, 522, 523, 524, 525.
[82]Sheelagh Harbison, 'William of Windsor, the Court Party and the administration of Ireland' in Lydon, *England and Ireland in the later middle ages*, pp 153-74, at p. 158, referring to P.R.O., E 101/245/3 m. 205.
[83]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1376-7*, p. 116.

leper hospital of St Mary Magdalen, beside Trim, together with the chantry of the chapel within the castle of Trim.[84]

On 1 October 1381 Edmund Mortimer granted the office of constable of Trim Castle to his esquire John Reigne, for life.[85] Edmund died in December 1381 and, because of his son Roger's minority, on 6 March 1382, Richard II appointed Reigne to the office of Marshall of Trim Castle, and of the liberty of Meath.[86] In August 1388 Reigne, still constable of Trim Castle, was given permission to receive the full profits of the castle during his absence.[87]

On 13 May 1398 Mortimer granted the office of constable of Trim Castle to Nicholas Barynton, for life, with effect from 1 January 1399.[88] Barynton was to enjoy 'all accustomed profits and commodities, as Thomas Norreys had, provided that he support all charges'. Due to the premature death of Roger Mortimer later in 1398, however, and the minority of Edmund, his son and heir, the Mortimer estates, including Trim Castle, had reverted to the crown by the time Barynton was due to take up office. Nonetheless, on 6 November 1399, Barynton's position as constable of Trim Castle was confirmed.[89]

As a result of Edmund Mortimer's minority, custody of the lordship of Trim had been granted by Henry IV to one of his esquires, Janico Dartas, on 30 May 1400.[90] Dartas was to be paid £100 per year from 'the issues of the Castle, Manor and Lordship of Trym', which at this time were worth less than £106 annually.[91] In April 1402 Dartas petitioned the king, stating that great injury had been caused by

[84] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 255, no. 119.
[85] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 110, no. 36.
[86] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 112, nos 88-9.
[87] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 137b, nos 233-4.
[88] *Cal. pat. rolls, 1399-1401*, p. 180.
[89] *Cal. pat. rolls, 1399-1401*, p. 180.
[90] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 171, no. 87.
[91] *Cal. pat. rolls, 1399-1401*, p. 475.

the enemy in the manor and lordship of Trim and consequently their value had decreased further.[92]

Dartas complained that the castle required no small sum for its upkeep but had yielded no profits. It had been badly damaged and was in need of great repair. Indeed, at the beginning of May 1402 the Privy Council in England stated that the castle was about to collapse—*il est en point de cheier a la terre*—and called the king's attention to it, advising him to order that repairs be carried out.[93] The king granted that Dartas should not be charged with the repair of the castle, and a charter was issued pardoning him for its 'waste and destruction'.[94] At about the same time, Nicholas Barynton, constable of the castle, claimed that he was entitled to large fees on the acquittal or conviction of felons, and that since the castle had been in the king's hands, he had received no such fees.[95] In February, Henry IV granted Barynton £10 per year from the manor of Portlester.[96] Despite the alleged dilapidation of Trim Castle at this time, it was in sufficient repair for Thomas of Lancaster, lord lieutenant of Ireland (and son of King Henry IV), to hold court there in June 1403.[97]

In April 1404 Dartas surrendered the custody of the castle, manor and lordship of Trim, and received, in lieu thereof, a pension of £100 a year for life from the receipts of the castle, manor and lordship of Trim.[98] Confirmation of this agreement was made by Henry V in April 1413 and again by Henry VI in 1423.[99] A series of part payments of a £100 annual grant to Dartas are recorded from 1420 to 1424.[100] Dartas died in October 1426.[101]

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[92]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 171, no. 87.
[93]Sir Harris Nicolas (ed.), *Proceedings and ordinances of the Privy Council of England* [1386-1542] (7 vols, Rec. Comm. [London], 1834-7), i, 182.
[94]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 168, no. 108.
[95]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 162, no. 94.
[96]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 162, no. 94.
[97]*Alen's Reg.*, pp 234-5.
[98]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 162b, no. 95.
[99]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 226b, no. 15.
[100]Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, pp 552, 553, 554.
[101]Curtis, 'Janico Dartas' pp 197, 205.

In January 1419 Edmund Mortimer wrote to the treasurer and chamberlain of the exchequer of his liberty of Meath concerning payment of rent to the Archbishops of Armagh.[102] Archbishop Swayne had petitioned him, stating that the Archbishops of Armagh had been entitled, since time immemorial, to an annual rent of £8 16s 7½d for the site of the castle and town of Trim, payable in two instalments, on 1 May and 1 November. Mortimer, with the assent of Thomas Talbot, seneschal of the liberty of Meath, and of his council in the same, commanded that arrears of the rent be paid to the archbishop and that in future it be paid at the proper terms.[103]

Edmund Mortimer died of plague at Trim in January 1425,[104] and all of his estates passed to his nephew, Richard, duke of York. The duke of York was only thirteen years old, however, and was therefore ineligible to take over his inheritance. Once again, Trim was seized by the crown. Within a week of Mortimer's death, on the security of Hugh Clooke and Philip Colyer of Trim, Henry VI granted to Thomas Broun the custody of one dovecote and an area of pasture known as the *Castell Orchard*, next to Trim Castle, so long as they were in the king's hand and the rent was paid as agreed.[105]

In March the king confirmed to John Staunton his position as constable of Trim Castle,[106] an appointment that had been made by Mortimer in 1422.[107] Staunton's salary was 20 marks per year, which was charged on two mills in the town. On 5 December 1430 custody of these mills, as well as various other lands and properties in Meath, was granted by the king to Richard Talbot, archbishop of Dublin and justiciar of Ireland.[108] Among the other lands and properties granted to Talbot, who had met with his council in the justiciar's chamber in Trim Castle in December 1413,[109] were the gardens of Trim Castle and a dovecote there

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[102] *Reg. Fleming*, p. 165, no. 260.
[103] *Reg. Fleming*, p. 165, no. 260.
[104] *A.U., s.a.* 1425.
[105] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 235, no. 16.
[106] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 235, no. 15.
[107] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 229, no. 100; N.L.I., MS 761, f. 302.
[108] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 250, no. 16.
[109] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 224b, no. 16.

(presumably the same dovecote and *Castell Orchard* as had been granted to Broun in 1425).

On 20 June 1425 John Swayne, Archbishop of Armagh, complained that, despite various requests, payment had not been made for the rent of the site of the castle, bridge and town of Trim since November 1421.[110] Swayne stated that the treasurer of the liberty of Trim would not pay him the three years' outstanding rent, and he asked for the matter to be resolved promptly. That very day, 20 June 1425, the king ordered payment to be made to Archbishop Swayne of £4 8s 3¾d, being one half year's rent for the site of the castle, town and bridge of Trim (in arrears for the term of Ss Philip and James 1425).[111] On 18 November 1425 the king ordered a further payment of £4 8s 3¾d to be made to the Archbishop.[112]

Early in 1427 Henry VI enquired of the treasury the amount of arrears due to the Archbishops of Armagh for the Trim rental.[113] The treasurer seems to have certified that £11 14s 11¼d was outstanding and he was directed to pay that amount. It appears that this debt was not cleared, however, and on 10 February 1428 the king, referring to Swayne's writ of 20 June 1425, ordered that a payment of £22 18¾d (being rental for the period from 29 July 1425 to 26 January 1428) be made to the Archbishop.[114] This sum amounted to 2½ years' rent, which seems not to have been paid since November 1425. On 22 November 1428 a further payment of £8 16s 7½d, being one full year's rent, still in arrears, was ordered by the king.[115] The following month Archbishop Swayne acknowledged receipt, from the treasurer of Ireland, of £8 16s 5¼d, as part payment of £8 16s 7½d in arrears for the terms of Ss Philip and James and All Saints.[116] Little record survives of the financial transactions concerning the rental until May 1443 when the Archbishop of Armagh acknowledged receipt of £8 16s 7½d from the duke of York, 'for the rent

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[110] *Reg. Swayne*, p. 39, no. 426.
[111] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 236, no. 80; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 554.
[112] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 240b, no. 58.
[113] *Reg. Swayne*, pp 39-40, no. 178.
[114] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 246-246b, no. 22; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, p. 563.
[115] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 246b, no. 23.

of the site of the castle, town and bridge of Trim' for the terms of Ss Philip and James and All Saints.[117]

It seems that a descendant of Janico Dartas had custody of Trim Castle by 1450, when he held it of Richard, duke of York by knights' service.[118] The duke of York was killed in 1460 and his lands and estates passed to the crown. On 24 February 1462 the king appointed William Collyngborn, esquire, to the office of clerk of the works of Trim Castle.[119] It is not clear what functions this position entailed, but it may have concerned repair work or structural alterations. Alternatively, the position may have related to the mint, which was in operation at the castle from about 1460 (see below).

One of the statutes of the 1465 parliament held at Trim gave permission to all men to kill and behead anyone they found robbing.[120] Any head so cut off in the county of Meath was to be brought to the portreeve of the town and he would place the head on a spear 'upon the Castle of Trym'. The portreeve would testify to this under the common seal of the town, and would allow the 'beheader and his ayders' to levy money from every landowner in the barony where the said thief was taken. The practice of displaying severed heads was not new to Trim—in 1452 Farrell Roe Óg was killed and beheaded at Croughool, to the west of Mullingar, by the son of the Baron of Delvin and the grandsons of Pierce Dalton.[121] His head was carried to Trim for exhibition before being brought to Dublin.

In consideration of good services to the king, Robert Rochford was appointed to the office of constable of Trim Castle in October 1470 with an annual salary of £8 of silver as well as 'all other fees, wages and emoluments customary to that

[116]*Reg. Swayne*, p. 40, nos 183, 208.
[117]*Reg. Swayne*, p. 40, no. 184.
[118]*Stat. Ire., Hen. VI*, pp 194-5, 200-1.
[119]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 268, no. 66.
[120]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 288-91.
[121]*A.F.M., s.a.* 1452; *Onomasticon Goedelicum*, p. 310.

office'.[122] As security for his salary, Rochford was granted 160 acres (with appurtenances) close to the town of Trim, including lands in *Steeplestown*, *Berneyscloynes*, *the Sheriff's field* and *Leyyton*. The following year, having conducted himself 'so well and so faithfully' as constable, Rochford had his appointment extended for the term of his life. He was still in office in 1485 when he received £10 as his fee.[123]

During Poyning's 1494-5 parliament at Drogheda Trim was listed, next after Dublin, as one of the seven 'chief castles of the land'.[124] One of the acts of the parliament specified that the constables of certain castles, including Trim, were to be 'born in the realm of England'.[125] On 23 August 1495 John Broun was appointed constable of Trim Castle with an annual fee of ten marks,[126] but in August 1497 Henry VII granted the position to Hamenet Boydell, 'depositor of the king's chamber'.[127]

On 1 March 1522 Sir John Wallop was granted the offices of constable of Trim Castle, and receiver and bailiff of the lordship of Trim, lately held by a certain John Rocheford. The grant was for 30 years, with a fee of £10 for the constableship, and the usual fees for the receivership, and Wallop was to render an account to the Exchequer in Dublin annually.[128]

It later became apparent, however, that Wallop's grant, under the great seal of Ireland and witnessed by the earl of Surrey, was issued without the king's authority and was consequently invalid. On 2 May 1524, therefore, Thomas Stephens was

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[122] *Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 812-13.

[123] Quinn, *Guide finan. rec.*, p. 22.

[124] *Stat. Ire.*, i, 51.

[125] *Stat. Ire.*, i, 51; J. D. Mackie, *The earlier Tudors, 1485-1558* (Oxford, 1952; reprinted 1972), p. 130. Carol Gleeson suggests that raids by Irish and Scots on Carlingford Castle may have influenced the authorities to pass this law, see 'Carlingford' in Anngret Simms and J.H. Andrews (ed.) *More Irish country towns* (Dublin, 1995), pp 32-43, at p. 36.

[126] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 271, no. 5; James Gairdner (ed.), *Letters and papers illustrative of the reigns of Richard III and Henry VII* (2 vols, London, 1861-3), i, 303-4.

[127] *Cal. pat. rolls, 1494-1509*, p. 105.

[128] *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i (1521-58), part i (1521-46/7), p. 7, no. 2 (27).

given a thirty-year grant of the offices of constable of Trim Castle and bailiff of the manor of Trim, 'lately held by John Rocheford'.[129] Stephens' remuneration was to be of the order of ten Irish pounds per year as constable, and the usual fees as bailiff. He was to take up his new positions as soon as Wallop had surrendered office. The grant to Stephens was reissued on 2 March 1525.[130]

Pardons were issued to Stephens in December 1532 and in 1541.[131] On the latter occasion Richard Stanley, under-gaoler of Trim Castle, was also pardoned.[132] Stephens still held the constableship of Trim Castle (in addition to that of Wicklow) in 1544 when he was once again issued with a pardon.[133]

In December 1534 Sir John Alen, master of the rolls, warned that lord Offaly ('Silken' Thomas Fitzgerald) was preparing to burn Trim, Navan, Athboy, Naas, Kildare and other towns, and Alen advised that the Englishmen in each of these towns should garrison themselves, ensuring they had lodgings and a sufficient supply of food.[134] Indeed, after he had rebelled and recaptured Kildare Castle in 1534, lord Offaly marched to Trim and it was later reported that he took the castle there in two hours.[135] On 5 January, however, 700 men were sent to recover the castle and, according to Sir William Skeffington, 'Thomas Fitz Gerald, like a cowardly boy and traitor, was driven to fly at spurs, and lost divers of his men and horses',[136] though not before he slew several of his attackers and made off with two or three pieces of ordnance.[137] A reinforced crown garrison of 500 men was placed in Trim Castle by mid-January and by mid-March it was reported that 'in

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[129]*L. & P. Hen. VIII, 1524-6*, no. 390.
[130]*L. & P. Hen. VIII, 1524-6*, no. 1230.
[131]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 8, no. 47.
[132]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 82, no. 8; *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i (1521-58), part i (1521-46/7), p. 32, no. 268 (342).
[133]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 106, no. 8; *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i (1521-58), part i (1521-46/7), p. 48, no. 420 (365).
[134]*L. & P. Hen. VIII, 1534*, p. 586, no. 1573; *S.P. Hen. VIII*, ii, part 3, p. 221.
[135]*L. & P. Hen. VIII, 1534*, p. 586, no. 1573, p. 587, no. 1574; *L. & P. Hen. VIII, 1535*, p. 175, no. 449.
[136]*Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, pp 62-3; *S.P. Hen. VIII*, ii, part 3, p. 232.
[137]*L. & P. Hen. VIII, 1535*, p. 175, no. 449.

ther abode ther, [they] have done right good explootes and acceptable service in noyeing the traytour and his folowers'.[138]

In 1537 Alen wrote to the king's commissioners in Ireland, stating that in order to secure the area from Irish rebels, the king's deputy ought to take up residence at Trim, 'where it shalbe requysit that the castell ther be suffyciently repayred; and the tymbre, and stonys of the monasteris of Seint Peter [Priory of Ss Peter and Paul, Newtown Trim?], the Bettye [Hospital of St John the Baptist, Newtown Trim?], and, if nede be, of the Blackfryers ther, be drawen thyther for the same purpose, and also that 4 or 500 greate okes be fellid in Offally [...], and caryed the next somer towardes the byldeing of the said castell'.[139]

In the same letter Alen suggested that Trim was the most convenient place from which law should be administered and at which 'the termes shulde be kept' and offenders answer the king's writs. A similar suggestion had been made in 1535,[140] and in a subsequent letter, Alen proposed that the proceeds of certain fines could be used to 'amende the gaylle of Trym'.[141] The master of the rolls clearly envisaged quite a large programme of restoration at Trim Castle, but it is unlikely that such extensive work was carried out at this period.

In an indenture made with Henry VIII in August 1524 Gerald, earl of Kildare had agreed to expend some of the rents and revenues from the king's possessions in Ireland on annual reparations at the castle and within the manor of Trim,[142] but considering the destruction caused at Trim in 1534-5, an enquiry was made in 1539 into the state of the castles of Dublin, Carlow and Trim.[143] In December 1540 the king's council in Ireland recommended that Trim Castle 'be repaired as the fittest residence for the Deputy and that they think the country will bear £100 or £200 of

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[138]*S.P. Hen. VIII*, ii, part 3, pp 224-5, 234; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, p. 63; *L. & P. Hen. VIII, 1535*, p. 87, no. 222, p. 152, no. 382, p. 175, no. 449.

[139]*S.P. Hen. VIII*, ii, part 3, p. 481; *L. & P. Hen. VIII, 1537*, p. 260, no. 729.4.5.

[140]*L. & P. Hen. VIII, 1535*, p. 169, no. 515; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, p. 85, no. 70.

[141]*S.P. Hen. VIII*, ii, part 3, p. 501; *L. & P. Hen. VIII, 1537*, p. 458, no. 1308.

[142]*S.P. Hen. VIII*, ii, part 3, p. 117; *L. & P. Hen. VIII, 1524-6*, no. 558.

the cost'.[144] The following March the order was made for Trim Castle to be repaired.[145] Having been advised that repairs were 'moche necessary', and that 'the countrey is soo desirous of the same, as they offre to beare a large portion of theire oune towardes it', Henry VIII allocated £200 sterling for works on 'the fortifications of the dongeon, the gates, and the walles only'.[146] The work was to be carried out with 'such forsight, provision, and oversight in the doing, as that which shalbe doon maye be substancially doon, and yet the money to be extended as farre, by husbandrye, as your [the lord deputy] wisedomes can advance the same'.

At this time there were 22 cottages in the town of Trim, and each of the cottagers was obliged to provide labour service towards the repair of the castle of Trim whenever called.[147] Cottagers from other parts of the manor were also required to carry out work on the castle when requested.[148]

By 1550 the constableship of Trim Castle had passed to Peter Leyns, who was issued a pardon in April of that year for the escape of Gilledawn O'Rushe.[149] In March of the following year Thomas Devenishe was granted the offices of constable of Trim Castle and receiver and bailiff of the lordship of Trim, to hold during pleasure, with an annual fee of £10 Irish, as well as all other perquisites and emoluments as had been enjoyed by Sir John Wallop or any other previous incumbent of those offices.[150]

The fees and emoluments were the same in December 1553 when Laurence Hammond was granted the offices of constable and bailiff, to hold during

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[143]*Cal. state papers Ire., 1509-73*, p. 51, no. 45.
[144]*L. & P. Hen. VIII, Sept. 1540-Dec. 1541*, pp 166-7, no. 367.
[145]*Cal. state papers Ire., 1509-73*, p. 57, no. 6.
[146]*S.P. Hen. VIII*, ii, part 3, p. 296; *L. & P. Hen. VIII, Sept. 1540-Dec. 1541*, p. 316, no. 656.
[147]*Crown surveys 1540-41*, pp 57.
[148]*Crown surveys 1540-41*, pp 59.
[149]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 201, no. 34; *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i (1521-58), part ii (1546/7-53), p. 137, no. 462 (500).
[150]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 284, no. 162; *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i (1521-58), part ii (1546/7-53), p. 163, no. 721 (654).

pleasure.[151] In May 1556 the grant to Hammond was issued again, but this time the grant was 'to hold for life'.[152] Hammond was still constable in 1558 and in January of that year he and Henry Browne and Edmund Jordan, under-gaolers in Trim Castle, were pardoned for the escape of certain prisoners.[153]

In September 1558 Hammond was one of those charged by the guardian of the convent of the friars minor of the observance of Trim of withholding certain possessions of the convent without title.[154] In the same year Hammond was granted a lot of property in Trim including lands, 22 cottages, rent from fields and shops, and the castle (custom days for repairing the castle and petty customs of Trim were reserved).[155] In June 1565 Queen Elizabeth ordered Sir Henry Sidney to renew for 21 years Hammond's lease of the manors of Trim and Moyglare, when the current lease expired.[156] In April 1570 the Queen authorised that the lease be renewed, on expiry, for a further 31 years.[157] In June of the same year Hammond brought to the Queen's Council in England an ancient book containing a recital of all the privileges and immunities sought by the corporation of Trim.[158] The Queen accorded a renewal of these privileges and immunities, with the condition that the lord Deputy of Ireland could suggest no objection.

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[151]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 310, no. 40; *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i (1521-58), part iii (1553-8), p. 296, no. 12 (8).
[152]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 343, no. 23; *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i (1521-58), part iii (1553-8), p. 305, no. 106 (40).
[153]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 366, no. 30, p. 367, no. 37; *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i (1521-58), part iii (1553-8), p. 315, no. 189 (156).
[154]*Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i (1521-58), part iii (1553-8), p. 321, no. 241 (271).
[155]*Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i (1521-58), part iii (1553-8), p. 322, no. 246 (219).
[156]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 495, no. 21.
[157]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 539, no. 10.
[158]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 541, no. 4.

The gaol

The documentary sources clearly show that Trim Castle was an important centre for the incarceration of felons, traitors and debtors, for the torture and execution of criminals and for the detention of hostages (see APPENDIX THIRTEEN). As early as 1176, 'Manus O'Melaghlin, lord of East Meath, was hanged by the English, after they had acted treacherously towards him at Trim'.[159] Unfortunately, it is not recorded whether this punishment took place at the castle or elsewhere in the town. Similarly, when in 1215 'Gillakevin O'Kelly of Bregia, was taken prisoner in the monastery of St. Peter, Athlone, by the English, and afterwards hanged by them at Trim', it is not clear where exactly the execution was carried out.[160] The gaol at Trim Castle was certainly functioning by the end of the thirteenth century, however, and between 1286 and 1295 a certain Nicholas Bacon spent a number of years detained there.[161]

Richard Pichard (1306), William le Waleys (1325) and Richard Tuyt (1343) all served time imprisoned at Trim Castle during the first half of the fourteenth century,[162] and in 1377 McIerlagh Gedy, a notorious felon who had committed various robberies and burnings in Meath, Leinster and Fingal, was captured and taken to prison at Trim where he was later hanged.[163]

One of the problems regularly encountered by the gaolers at Trim and elsewhere was that of escape. In 1300, for instance, having been recaptured after their escape from Dublin Castle, Gilbert Brown and Clement O'Hampsery were committed by the chief justice to 'the king 's prison in the castle of Trim'.[164] Not long afterwards, however, Brown and O'Hampsery escaped from Trim as well and, when they

[159]*A.F.M., s.a.* 1175; *Misc. Ir. Annals, s.a.* 1176 (*Mac Carthaigh's Book*).

[160]*A.F.M., s.a.* 1215; *A. Clon., s.a.* 1215.

[161]*Cal. doc. Ire., 1285-92,* nos 265, 342, 386, 457, 476, 821; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1293-1301,* nos 125, 208; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1292-1301,* p. 135; Hand, *Eng. law in Ire.,* p. 125; G.O. Sayles (ed.), *Documents on the affairs of Ireland before the king's council* (Dublin, 1979), pp 37-9, no. 51, from Ancient Petition, no. 2389.

[162]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1305-7,* p. 308; *Rot. pat. Hib.,* p. 30b, no. 26, p. 45b, no. 78.

[163]*Rot. pat. Hib.,* p. 100, no. 22.

[164]*Cal. justic. rolls Ire., 1295-1303,* p. 308; R.I.A., MS 12.D.12, Edw. I-Edw. II, pp 22, 35.

could not be found, Anselm Coterel, seneschal of Trim, was called to court in Dublin to explain. Unfortunately, the findings of the court were not recorded.

Escapes such as these were not uncommon at Trim, and in March 1386 a number of prisoners got away,[165] while in 1400 all of those detained there (over thirty felons and hostages) managed to flee.[166] In 1430, Edmund Balf, a murderer from Athboy, escaped,[167] and it was perhaps during an attempted escape that in 1468 Sir John Haddesore murdered the gaoler and his pregnant wife.[168] As late as January 1558 the constable of Trim Castle was pardoned for the escape of certain prisoners,[169] and not long after that £5 16s 6d was spent on new bolts for the gaol.[170]

Prisoners seem to have managed to escape despite the presence of guards and lookouts. Among the staff employed to run the prison at Trim Castle in the fourteenth century were a constable, a gaoler, a doorkeeper and a watchman.[171] By the first half of the sixteenth century there was also an under-gaoler,[172] and by 1558 a second had been appointed.[173] Perhaps one of the reasons so many succeeded in escaping was the fact that the prison was located (at least in the mid fourteenth century) at the castle gate.[174]

In addition to minor offenders and local criminals, a number of 'high-profile' prisoners were also detained in Trim Castle. In 1362, for instance, 'Art

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[165]*Cal. Carew MSS*, v, *Howth*, p. 353.

[166]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1399-1401*, p. 289.

[167]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 249b, no. 5.

[168]Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 88-90, referring to Betham's collections.

[169]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 366, no. 30, p. 367, no. 37; *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i (1521-58), part iii (1553-8), p. 315, no. 189 (156).

[170]C.L. Kingsford (ed.), *Report on the manuscripts of lord de l'Isle and Dudley preserved at Penshurst Place* (2 vols, H.M.C., London, 1925-34), i, 367.

[171]*Cal. fine rolls, 1319-27*, p. 373; *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 35b, no. 70, p. 36b, nos 102-3; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, pp 321, 325, 326, 513.

[172]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 82, no. 8; *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i (1521-58), part i (1521-46/7), p. 32, no. 268 (342).

[173]*Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, i, 366, no. 30, p. 367, no. 37; *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, i (1521-58), part iii (1553-8), p. 315, no. 189 (156).

[174]Nat. Archives, RC.8/29, pp 500-1, no. 508; see above, p. 12.

MacMurrough, king of Leinster, and Donall Reagh, heir apparent to the throne of Leinster, were treacherously made prisoners by the son of the king of England [Lionel, duke of Clarence]. They afterwards died in prison [in Trim]'.[175] Among the hostages being kept in Trim in the 1390s were Niall Óg O'Neill's eldest son, two of his nephews and four other un-named O'Neill hostages.[176] In 1393 Robert Barnewall and Thomas Plunkett were placed in custody in Trim Castle as a result of their failure to settle accounts,[177] and in 1418 the earl of Kildare, Sir Christopher Preston and John Bellew were among the detainees in the castle gaol.[178] In 1485, twenty-eight 'riotously disposed gentlemen' of the counties of Louth and Meath were requested by parliament to 'surrender their bodies in the king's castle of Trim [...] and remain there without bail or mainprise to answer to all complaints and defaults which shall be alleged against them'.[179]

The treatment of some prisoners at Trim was harsh. After Easter in 1318, for instance, John de Lacy was brought for trial to Trim Castle, where he was sentenced to be 'strait dieted [starved], and so he died in prison'.[180] In 1382, Murtough, son of Mahon Moinmoy O'Brien, also died in prison,[181] and on 10 October 1423 the constable of Trim Castle was ordered to bring to Dublin a certain James Young, detained by him in irons, and 'in great hardship', for three-quarters of a year.[182]

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[175] *A.F.M.*, *s.a.* 1361; Connolly, *Irish exchequer payments*, pp 511, 513; Richardson & Sayles, *Admin. Ire.*, p. 264.

[176] *Cal. pat. rolls, 1399-1401*, pp 327, 330; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1401-5*, p. 183; *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 151, no. 19; *Proc. king's council, Ire. 1392-3*, pp 191, 262-3; Charles McNeill, 'Lord Chancellor Gerrard's notes on his report on Ireland, 1577-8' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 2 (1931), pp 93-291, at p. 214.

[177] *Proc. king's council, Ire., 1392-3*, pp 206-7.

[178] Ware, *Anc. Ir. hist.* (Marleburrough, *Chronicle of Ireland*), p. 27; Otway-Ruthven, 'The background to the arrest of Sir Christopher Preston', p. 74, referring to P.R.O., E 163/7/12; *Cal. close rolls, 1413-19*, p. 472.

[179] *Stat. Ire., Ric. III-Hen. VIII*, pp 54-5; S. G. Ellis, 'Parliaments and Great Councils, 1483-99: addenda and corrigenda' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 29 (1980), pp 96-111, at p. 102.

[180] *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, pp cxxxi, 358; *Cal. Carew MSS*, v, *Howth*, p. 143; Butler, *Jacobi Grace*, pp 92-3; a similar sentence was handed down to Sir Robert de Coulrath, custodian of Greencastle, in 1315, see *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, ii, pp cxxxi, 345.

[181] *A.F.M.*, *s.a.* 1382.

[182] *Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 234b, no. 37.

In addition to the punishment meted out on them, prisoners were at risk from disease, and in 1383 Art Magennis, lord of Iveagh in Ulster, died 'of plague' in Trim Castle.[183] In 1447 Felim O'Reilly, heir to the lordship of Breifny, was invited by John Talbot, lord Furnival, to Trim, 'which at this time was suffering from a great plague'. Furnival had O'Reilly thrown into prison where he too died of the plague.[184] In the same year, at least two sons of Sir Robert Savage, having been captured by John Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, also died in prison at Trim Castle.[185]

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[183]*A.F.M.*, *s.a.* 1383; *A. Clon. s.a.* 1383.
[184]*A.F.M., s.a.* 1447; O'Donovan, 'The annals of Ireland 1443-68', p. 219; Gilbert, *Viceroys*, pp 349-50; *Stat. Ire. Hen. VI,* p. 107.
[185]O'Donovan, 'The annals of Ireland 1443-68', p. 219; Katharine Simms, 'The king's friend: O'Neill, the crown and the Earldom of Ulster' in Lydon, *England and Ireland in the later middle ages*, pp 214-36, at p. 221.

The mint

One of Ireland's earliest recorded mints was in operation in Trim Castle from at least 1460.[186] An act of parliament in that year enacted that three types of coin were to be minted in Ireland. The first, to be known as an 'Ireland', was to weigh one eighth of an ounce Troy weight, and to have a lion on one side and a crown on the other, and would be worth the equivalent of one penny sterling. The word 'Ireland' was to be struck around the side of the lion. The second coin, to be known as a 'Patrick', was to weigh one obulus [a halfpenny] of Troy weight, and to have on one side a demy crown with the word 'Patrick' struck around it, and on the other side a cross.[187] A Patrick was to be worth one eighth of a penny sterling. The third coin, a groat, was to be equivalent in weight to three pence sterling, but would be worth four. The groat was to have impressed on one side a crown and on the other a cross, around which was to be struck the name of the place in which the coin was minted. Parliament enacted that these coins were to be minted in the castles of Dublin and Trim and that Richard, duke of York, was to appoint wardens and comptrollers of the mints. The duke of York was also to assign and appoint 'such persons as ought to strike the said coin, who shall be styled coiners of Dublin and Trim'.

The duke of York died before making any appointments, and it was Henry VI who, on 1 February 1461, appointed Germyn Lynche, of London, 'goldsmyth', as 'warden and master worker of the king's moneys and coins in Dyvelin [Dublin] castle and Trym castle.[188] This appointment was confirmed on 6 August.[189] Just three months later, Edward IV appointed Christopher Fox to the office of

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[186]*Stat. Ire., Hen. VI*, pp 664-7; Michael Dolley, 'Coinage to 1534: the sign of the times' in *N.H.I.*, i, 823-4.

[187]Butler, *Trim* (1854), pp 83-4, notes that one of these Patricks was 'found in Trim, two years ago, in good preservation; it bears on one side a bishop's head, in three-quarter face, with a mitre, and the word Patricius round it, written from right to left; on the other side a cross, between two stars and two spur rowels, with the word Salvator. Several varieties of this coin are now known'. Butler's evidence goes against what Ellis says. S. G. Ellis, 'The struggle for control of the Irish mint: 1460-1506' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxxviii (1978), sect. C, no. 2, pp 17-36, 21, notes that 'no silver half-farthings have survived, so it seems likely that none were minted'

[188]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1452-61*, pp 643-4.

[189]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1461-7*, p. 40.

comptroller of the mints of the castles of Dublin and Trim, and Fox was sworn into office on that day.[190]

In October 1470 William Grampe and Thomas Barby (merchant) were granted for life the office of Master of the Coinage of the king's money in the castles of Dublin and Trim and in Drogheda.[191] The following December Patrick Keyn, a goldsmith from Dublin, was granted the offices of supervisor and under-master of the mints at Dublin, Trim and Drogheda. On 20 August 1474 Richard Heron, a London merchant, was granted the office of 'master and worker of the king's mints and coinage within the cities, towns or castles of Dublin, Drodrath [Drogheda], Trym, Waterford, Cork and Lymryk'.[192]

In November 1478 a parliament that was held in Trim, before Henry, lord Grey, enacted that Henry, 'by himself or his officer or officers from henceforth may strike, make, forge and coin all manner of the king's silver coins, in Trim Castle, according to the fineness and the tenor of the statutes in this behalf ordained and made'.[193] This is the last documentary evidence surviving for the mint in Trim in the middle ages.

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[190]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 268, nos 23-4. Butler says that 'in 1830, there was dug up in a garden behind a house in Scarlet-street, a gold seal ring, engraved with the arms of the Foxes, of Foxhall, in the county of Longford—a sceptre in bend between two crowns, with a winged sceptre for the crest— it is now in the possession of Captain Barry Fox, of Anaghmore. It is possible that this money-maker, Christopher Fox, might have had a gold ring', see Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 83.

[191]*Stat. Ire., 1-12 Edw. IV*, pp 842-5.

[192]*Cal. pat. rolls, 1467-77*, p. 468.

[193]*Stat. Ire. 12-22 Edw. IV*, pp 670-1.
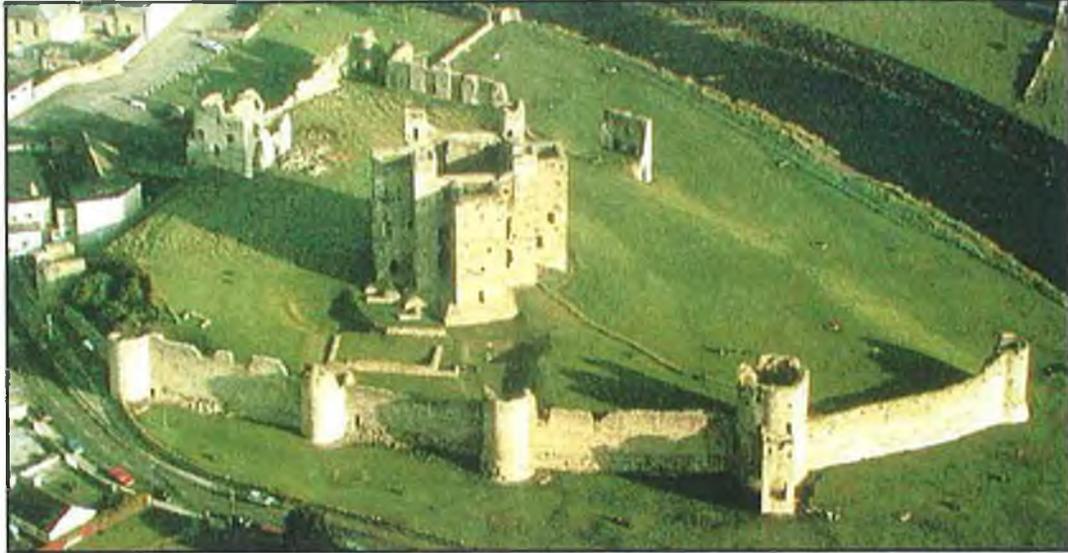
FIG. 6.1 Aerial view of Trim Castle from south, after 1971-4 excavations. Source: Benedict Kiely, *The Aerofilms book of Ireland from the air* (London, 1985), p. 107.

The archaeological and architectural evidence

Situated at the southeast corner of the town, Trim Castle is the most extensive and best documented of the town's medieval buildings. It is strategically sited on a limestone outcrop on the south bank of the Boyne, and is one of the oldest Anglo-Norman fortresses in Ireland. Among the upstanding remains on the site are the centrally placed keep with three side towers, extensive stretches of curtain wall with eight mural towers, and two gatehouses. Almost two thirds of the entire area enclosed by the curtain wall has been archaeologically excavated; *c*.2,000 sq. m in 1971-4 and *c*.6,000 sq. m in 1995-8.[194] In addition to uncovering further information about the visible vestiges, the excavations revealed the remains of several previously unrecorded structures and features. A comprehensive architectural survey of the entire site has added a further dimension to an understanding of the development of the castle. What follows is a synthesis of the archaeological and architectural evidence.[195]

[194]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle'; Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8.*

[195]The pre-Anglo-Norman phase of occupation is not dealt with here.

FIG. 6.2 Aerial view of Trim Castle from west, before 1971-4 excavations. The mound surrounding the base of the keep was interpreted by some as evidence for a pre-keep motte. Source: Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', plate I.

The first Anglo-Norman fortification

For many years it was thought that the earliest Anglo-Norman fortification at Trim was a motte.[196] Evidence for this was both circumstantial (most of the de Lacy fortifications in Meath were of this type), documentary (the lines dealing with Trim in *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* were interpreted as describing a motte), and topographical (prior to excavation, the build-up of earth around the base of the masonry keep gave the impression that it was constructed on top of a mound—a collapsed motte (see FIG. 6.2)).[197]

[196]Orpen, *Normans*, i, 338-41; Edmund Curtis, *A history of medieval Ireland from 1086 to 1513* (London, 1938), p. 86; idem, *A history of mediaeval Ireland from 1110 to 1513* (Dublin and Cork, n.d.), p. 74; H. G. Leask, 'The castle of Trim, Co. Meath' in *The Irish Sword*, v (1961-2), pp 94-7; H. G. Leask, *Irish castles and castellated houses* (Dundalk, 1951; reprinted 1995), pp 31-2; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, pp 55, 108; T. E. McNeill, 'Trim Castle, Co. Meath; the first three generations' in *Archaeological Journal*, cxlvii (1990), pp 308-36, at p. 310.

[197]B. J. Graham, 'The mottes of the Norman liberty of Meath' in Harman Murtagh (ed.), *Irish midland studies: essays in commemoration of N. W. English* (Athlone, 1980), pp 39-56; idem, 'Medieval settlements in County Meath' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, v, no. 4 (1974), pp 40-59; idem, 'The evolution of the settlement pattern of Anglo-Norman Eastmeath' in R. H. Buchanan, R. A. Butlin and D. McCourt (ed.), *Fields, farms and settlement in Europe* (Belfast, 1976), pp 38-47; Orpen, *The song*, ll 3222-3341.
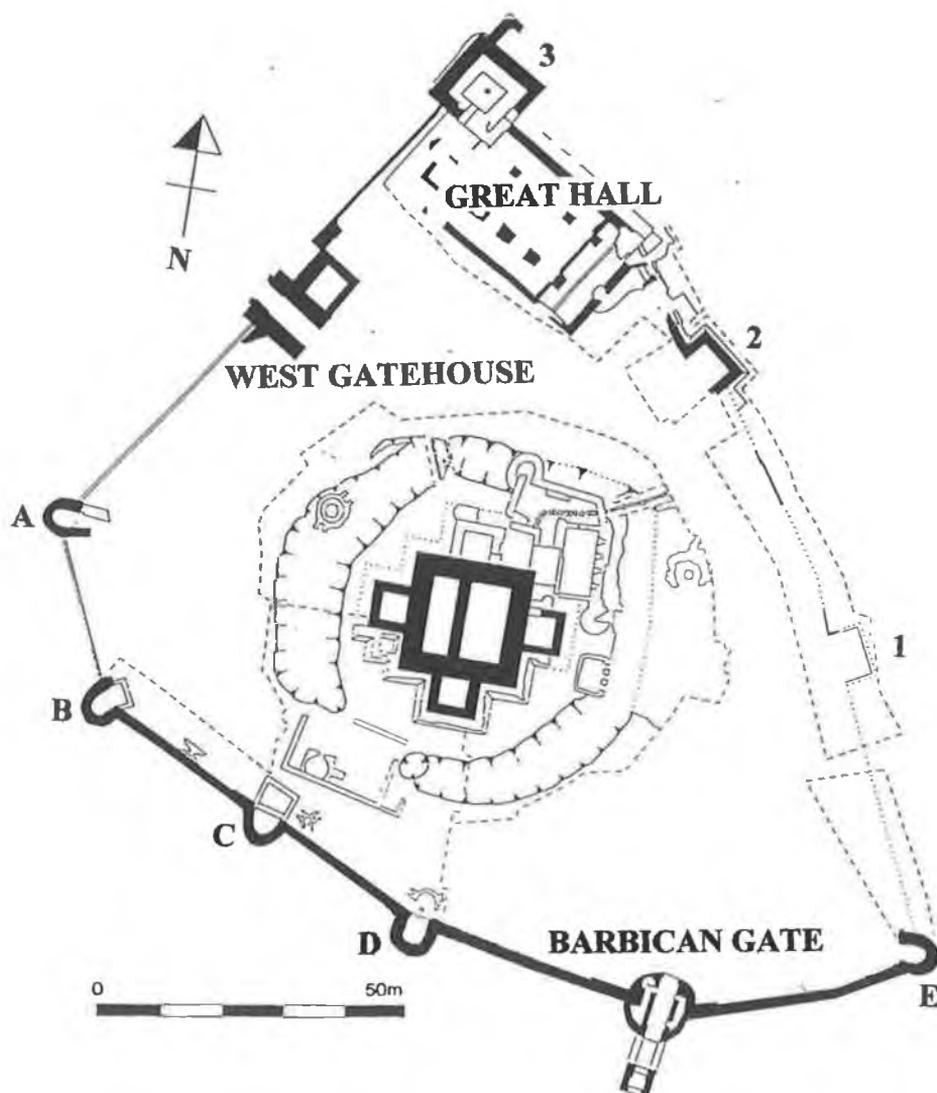
Fig. 6.3 Plan of site showing excavated areas. Source: Sweetman, 'The development of Trim Castle in the light of recent research', p. 224, fig. 1.

When the first series of archaeological excavations were carried out at the castle, it was found that what had appeared to be a mound at the base of the keep was in fact a stone plinth buried beneath an accumulation of clay.[198] The plinth, or *talus*, had been added to the keep at a later date (see below), and had subsequently been hidden by the gradual build-up of natural deposits and vegetation. The collapse of one of the towers had also resulted in the further build-up of a mound of material at the base of the keep on the north side. Reassessing the evidence available in 1987, Barry suggested that the description of the early defences at Trim in *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* might in fact refer to a ringwork castle (a type of

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[198]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 132, 185, plates IIIb, IVb, VIIIa.
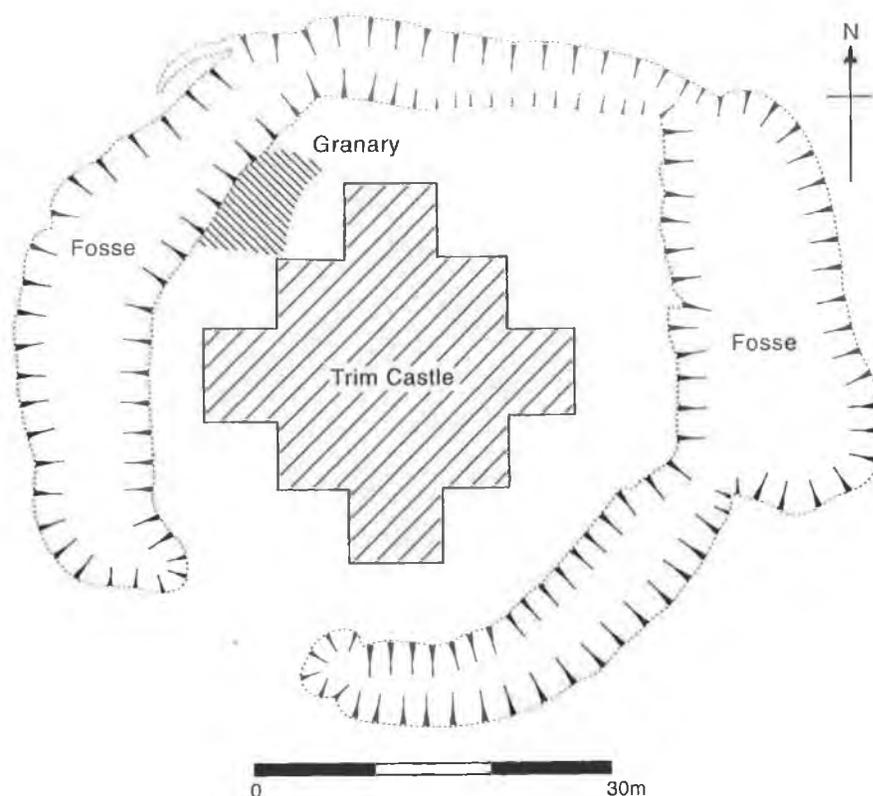
FIG. 6.4 Plan of ringwork ditch. Source: Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, p. 5, fig. 1.

earthwork fortification enclosed by a defensive ditch).[199] Although this theory was not accepted unanimously,[200] subsequent excavations at the castle have shown it to be correct.[201] Broadly speaking, the ringwork stage of Trim Castle can be divided into two phases.

Ringwork: phase 1

Ditch

The penannular ditch surrounding the keep at Trim Castle encloses a roughly circular area ranging in diameter from 45 to 50m (see FIG. 6.4). It is mostly cut into boulder clay, but in places it cuts through bedrock. At its southeast side there is a *c.*20m wide entrance gap, consisting of a section that was never dug. Remains

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[199]T. B. Barry, 'Anglo-Norman ringwork castles: some evidence' in Terence Reeves-Smith and Fred Hamond (ed.), *Landscape archaeology in Ireland* (BAR, no. 116, Oxford, 1983), pp 295-314, at pp 300-3; idem, *The archaeology of medieval Ireland* (London, 1987; reprinted 1994), pp 46-8.

[200]McNeill, 'Trim Castle, Co. Meath; the first three generations', p. 310.

[201]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 57-78.

of a building, referred to as 'Structure B' by the excavator, were uncovered in the gap,[202] but a reassessment of this building has demonstrated it to be of seventeenth-century date.[203] Sweetman excavated the terminals of the ditch, while Hayden excavated the rest.[204]

The ditch follows a roughly circular line around the later keep except at the northeast corner where there is a right angle, perhaps due to the presence of a large outcrop of bedrock which the ditch skirts. The form of the ditch was largely obliterated at the east side due to later quarrying. In general, the steep-sided ditch varied in depth from 1.6-2.5m, but at the north side it was later re-cut to a greater depth (see below). The width of the ditch ranged from 6 to 10.5m while its profile varied from U- to V-shape.

Wall at base of ditch

The remains of a wall were present at the base of the ditch at the northwest side. It was partly dry-stone and partly clay-bonded, varied from 90 to 120cm in width, and survived to a maximum height of 75cm. The construction of this wall took place before any silt or debris built up in the bottom of the ditch, so it was probably built as soon as the ditch was complete. Its original purpose is unclear.

Deposits in ditch

Elsewhere, deposits of silt and soil lay in the base of the ditch, while patches of small stones and coarse gravel were clearly derived from the erosion of its sides and top edge. The silt deposits abutting the wall contained sherds of locally produced pottery as well as some Ham Green ware, and were sealed by a layer containing thirteenth-century Saintonge polychrome ware. It was the excavator's opinion that these later deposits were the result of deliberate backfilling and that

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[202]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 133-5.
[203]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 44-6.
[204]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 135-40; Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 57-8.

they were thrown down at a much later date than the earlier, natural accumulations.[205]

Palisade 1

A 10.5m length of palisade was represented by three postholes, spaced *c*.4.6m apart, along the inner edge of the ditch at the northwest. It was suggested that the holes would have held the frontal posts of the palisade, while five other holes were interpreted as evidence for rear bracing posts and supports for an inner wall-walk.[206] No timbers survived, but the posts appear to have been square in section, ranging from 30 to 40cm across. Packing stones were used to support the posts. The postholes were filled with charcoal-stained soil and burnt grain, indicating that the structure had been destroyed by fire.

Building inside palisade—the 'granary'

The remains of a building inside the palisade were represented by four postholes, three of which also had supporting posts, while slot trenches extended from two posts.[207] The posts would have been similar in size and shape to those of the palisade. The walls may have been footed on sill-beams set in the slot trenches. The east side of the building was cut away by later activity, but it appears that the remains represent a square building, *c*.10.5x10.5m—an extra central support was indicated by a posthole 5m from the middle of the west wall. As with the palisade, the postholes of this structure were filled with charcoal-stained soil and burnt grain, indicating that the building had been burnt down.

The layer of burnt grain and brown clay was up to 15cm thick in the vicinity of the building, but became thinner further away, although it also spread across much of the area to the north of the keep, with patches to the south, and was revealed beneath the west and south towers of the keep. The grain consisted mainly of oats, but wheat and barley were also present. A sample returned a radiocarbon date of

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[205]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 57-8.
[206]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 63-4.
[207]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 58-9.

1167-1216AD. The greater thickness of the grain layer within the structure led the excavator to interpret this structure as a granary.

Features beneath west tower of keep

Beneath the west tower of the keep were two postholes sealed by the burnt grain layer.[208] One of the holes had been cut by the foundation trench of the tower but the second survived to a depth of 80cm. It was sub-rectangular, measuring 70 by 120cm, and was filled with packing stones and clay. The upper part of the hole contained a fragment of timber and some charcoal. The post would have been *c.*40cm in diameter, making it similar in size to those from the granary and the palisade. A layer of stony clay and thick limestone flags appear to have formed part of a floor.

Hearth outside north side of ditch

A round-based hearth was present outside the north side of ditch. It was lined with angular stones while two stones were set on edge at its perimeter. The basal stones were covered by lenses of ash totalling 8cm in thickness, within which were several sherds from a single pot of local manufacture. The ash was covered by a second layer of flat stones upon which a further sequence of ash layers accumulated. An area of metalling and a shallow gully (30cm wide by 14cm deep) were also present in close proximity to the hearth. All of these features were overlain by deposits of charcoal-flecked silt and burnt grain—part of the extensive burnt grain layer.

Internal features to the south of the keep

A stone footing, consisting of angular stones and boulders up to 60cm across, was delimited on its east side by a dry stone face, two courses in height (35cm). At its northern limit, the wall turned to the west and disappeared beneath the later plinth. At its south end it was truncated, as was a flat-based gully that ran parallel to it. The gully measured a maximum of 1.5m in width and 40cm in depth and its sides

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[208]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 59-60.

curved gently at an angle of *c.*45°. The fill of the gully was a homogenous fine silt containing sherds of Ham Green ware and an arrowhead. The in-filled gully was sealed by stones that had collapsed from the stone footing. The footing itself may represent the base of a building and was compared by the excavator to 'Structure J' (see below).[209] Both buildings appear to have been aligned east-west.

Several spreads of stones were uncovered in the vicinity of the footing and an unlined hearth was excavated to the east of the gully. The hearth initially had a kerb of six stake-holes and lay in a shallow hollow. It was sealed by a layer of charcoal and ash. Further to the north lay a short length of collapsed and carbonised post-and-wattle fencing. The surviving posts measured 4cm in diameter and the wattles were 1.5cm thick. These features were sealed by a layer of carbonised silt and burnt grain.

Pre-keep features in the vicinity of the west gatehouse
A 22cm thick layer of silty loam overlying the subsoil in the area around the gatehouse yielded a horseshoe, several iron nails and a piece of iron slag. The loam was covered by a layer of scattered water-rolled stones.

The remains of a dry-stone structure included an area of stone flooring and a wall footing with external stone paving on its south side. The floor consisted of flat stone slabs, two courses thick in places, some of which were heat-cracked. The floor was straight-edged on the south side where a shallow trench, 1m in width, extended on an east-west line. Set in the centre of this trench, the stone footing was 40cm wide and consisted of up to three courses of flat slabs. The sides of the trench were filled with brown silt, charcoal flecks and stones. The floor was covered by a 3cm thick layer of wood charcoal. An area of rough paving, reaching 2.6m in width, was present to the south of the stone footing. All of these features were sealed by a layer of stony yellow clay containing charcoal and burnt clay. The excavator suggested that this material derived from the demolition of the

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[209]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 59; Sweetman, 'Archaeological

structure.[210] The stone footing was probably originally surmounted by a timber wall, and the position of this building beside the later gatehouse suggest that its function might also have been defensive—perhaps it guarded the main entrance to the site?

Although distance from the structures associated with the ringwork makes it impossible to relate these features firmly to that period of activity, they certainly appear to date to the earliest Anglo-Norman occupation of the site and the fact that they too were burnt down suggests that they are contemporary.

Ringwork: phase 2

After the destruction of the palisade and granary a new palisade was erected, and this survived to a much greater extent than its predecessor. The stone footing of a timber-framed building was uncovered inside the area defined by the palisade.

Palisade 2

Evidence for a 35m stretch of palisade was uncovered to the northwest of the keep. The postholes cut through the burnt deposits associated with the earlier phase of ringwork-associated activity. It appears that the phase 2 palisade consisted of a frontal slot-trench (*c.*60cm in width and *c.*50cm in depth) holding small upright posts, with a line of larger posts, *c.*3-4m apart, supporting the main 'fence'. A third line of posts provided extra reinforcement.

Dry-stone footing

Inside the palisade at the northwest corner of the keep were the remains of a dry-stone footing measuring up to 50cm in width. It survived for 5.2m on a north-south line, but both ends were truncated by later activity. This feature was interpreted as the west wall of a structure that extended beneath the later keep and plinth.[211] Its alignment follows that of the earlier granary and is the same as that of

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excavations at Trim Castle', pp 131-3.
[210]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 61-2.
[211]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 64.

the keep itself. Several pits and stone spreads as well as a small, unlined hearth were contemporary with the stone footing in this area.

'Structure J'

During the excavations in the 1970s, Sweetman uncovered the remains of a rectangular stone building stratified beneath the lowest levels of the Anglo-Norman masonry castle.[212] The excavator labelled this building 'Structure J', and that name has been retained here. Three walls survived to a height of two courses, but the fourth wall seems to have been completely destroyed during the construction of the castle. The inside of the foundation course, which was set immediately above undisturbed boulder clay, was faced with smallish upright flagstones, a characteristic that is not present on any of the later structures on the

site. The inside of the building was packed with an earthen floor, lying directly on top of the boulder clay. It seems as though the earth, which was a mixture of humus and subsoil, was brought in from outside to raise the floor level.

FIG. 6.5 'Structure J' is stratified beneath the plinth. Source: Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', plate IIIb.

Since the building of the earliest phase of the keep is thought to have taken place in *c.*1175, it appears that the rectangular structure was built, and had most likely gone out of use, prior to that date.[213] A silver bracteate (a coin struck on one side only of a thin piece of metal) of eleventh- or twelfth-century date was found on the

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[212]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 131-3, 185.

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wall of the structure.[214] While no other datable artefacts were recovered from the structure, the excavator concluded that it pre-dated Anglo-Norman activity on the site. He also suggested that the rectangular shape and the building method employed in the construction of this building indicated that its function was ecclesiastical—perhaps it was a small church or oratory.[215] The fact that the castle was built on lands belonging to the church substantiates this view, and the east-west orientation of the pre-castle structure fits the standard pattern of early medieval church buildings in Ireland.[216]

On the other hand, in his review of the findings of the 1970s excavations, Hayden pointed out that all of the buildings within the ringwork had an east-west orientation, and that the ditch around the keep that was thought to have cut the 'ecclesiastical' building may in fact have pre-dated that structure.[217] Hayden also argued that the 'prepared brown clay floor' described by Sweetman was later than previously thought and that it might in fact be the same burnt grain and brown clay layer uncovered elsewhere during the 1990s excavations. In conclusion, Hayden surmised that the structure was not pre-Anglo-Norman and that it is more likely to have been associated with the second phase of the ring-work. He also suggested that its location to one side of the gap in the ditch might indicate that if fulfilled a defensive role.

'Structure L'

A sub-rectangular structure, measuring 6x8m, was excavated by Sweetman and referred to by him as 'Structure L'.[218] It consisted of postholes, wall trenches, pits and a hearth, and contained deposits yielding Ham Green pottery, a bronze pin and

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[213]Tom Condit, 'Rings of truth at Trim Castle' in *Arch. Ire.*, x, no. 3 (Autumn 1996), pp 30-3; P. D. Sweetman, 'The development of Trim Castle in the light of recent research' in *Château Gaillard: études de castellologie médiévale*, xviii (Caen, 1998), pp 224-30.

[214]Michael Dolley, 'Report on numismatic material' (Appendix III) in Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 193-7, at p. 193; see also Wilfred Seaby, *Sylloge of coins of the British Isles, 32, Ulster Museum: Belfast, part ii: Hiberno-Norse coins* (London, 1984), no. 399; William O'Sullivan, *The earliest Irish coinage* (Dublin, 1969).

[215]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', p. 132.

[216]Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 132.

[217]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 44, 47.

an iron arrowhead (see FIG. 6.6). The excavator dated Structure L to the mid thirteenth century but a reassessment based on information from later excavations and the re-dating of Ham Green ware to the twelfth century suggest that this structure and associated features are in fact contemporary with the ringwork.[219]

'Structure M'

The feature referred to as 'Structure M' by Sweetman was interpreted by him as scaffolding for work on the upper part of the keep after the plinth had been built.[220] A reassessment, based on a reconsideration of the stratigraphy, further excavation and the re-dating of Ham Green pottery, suggests that 'Structure M' was in fact a component of the ringwork phase of the castle.[221] It also seems probable that the charcoal recovered from the fills of postholes in 'Structure M' derives from the widespread layer of burning identified by Hayden. Structure M may have formed part of the ringwork palisade.

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[218]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 140-3.

[219]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 48-9; M. W. Ponsford, 'Dendrochronological dates from Dundras Wharf, Bristol and the dating of Ham Green and other medieval pottery' in E. Lewis (ed.), *Customs and ceramics: essays presented to Kenneth Barton* (Wickham, 1991), pp 81-103.

[220]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 143-5.

[221]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 48-9.
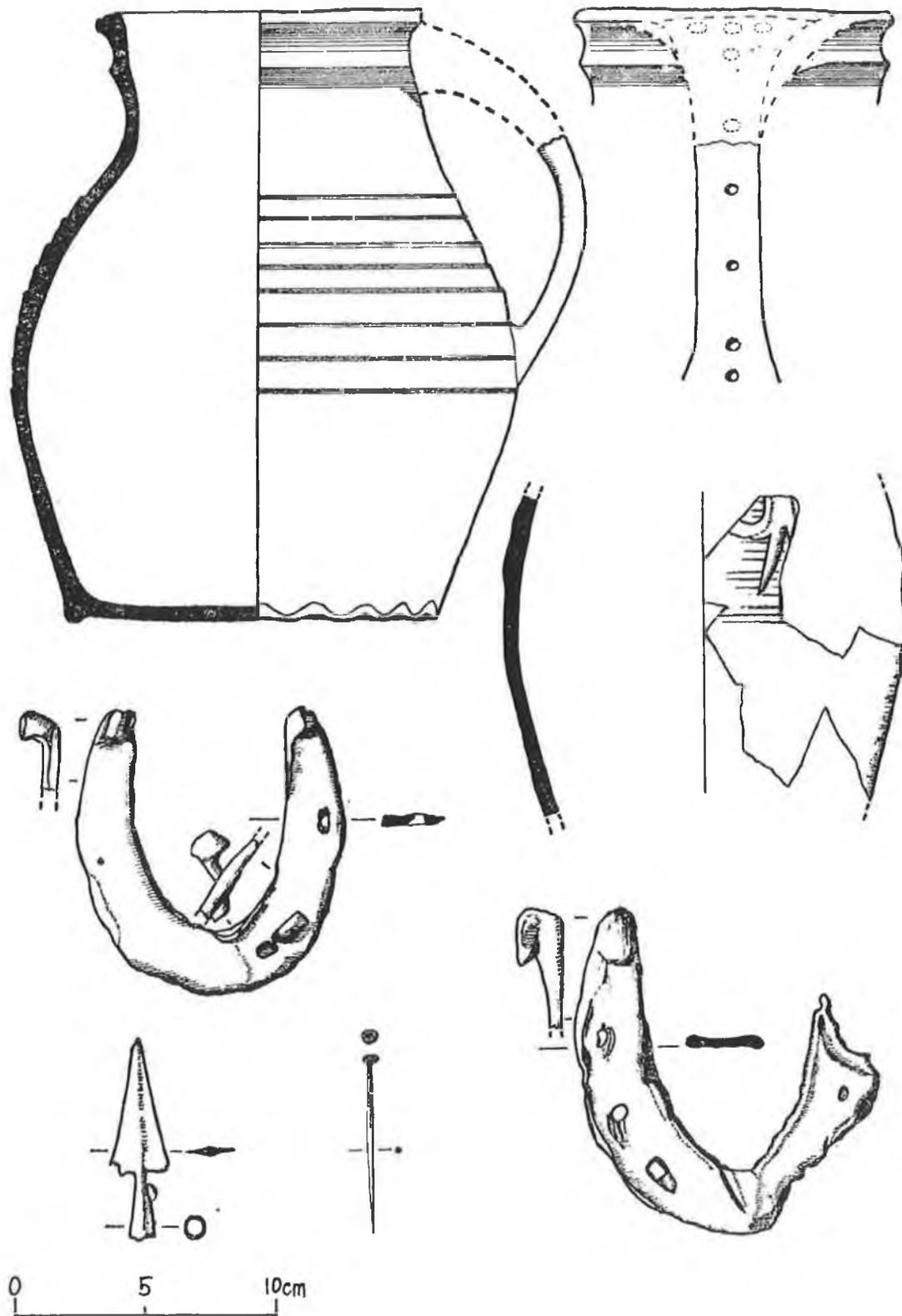
FIG. 6.6 Artefacts recovered from features associated with the ringwork include a Ham Green jug, iron arrowheads and horseshoes. Source: Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', figs 14.1, 15.3, 23.2, 23.6, 23.14, 24.2.

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FIG. 6.7 View of keep from east.

The masonry keep

The isolated stone keep is sited on top of a gently sloping hill almost centrally within the bawn, and within the enclosure of the earlier ringwork. It is square in plan with a smaller square tower projecting centrally from each side, except on the north where the tower is now missing. The twenty-sided keep was constructed on bedrock and a large section of its base has a battered plinth which excavation has shown to be an addition of the thirteenth century.[222] The walls of the keep average 3.75m in thickness and stand to a maximum height of 21m. The main part of the keep is three-storied but the projecting towers have a fourth floor.

The masonry consists primarily of coursed limestone with sandstone quoins and jambs, particularly in the lower portion. There is a clear break in the masonry about half way up and a closer examination of the stonework and building techniques reveals at least three main phases of construction, as well as evidence

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[222]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', p. 131.

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for a number of other repairs and alterations. Analysis of tree-rings from timber recovered from the walls of the keep has demonstrated that the three main phases took place in *c*.1175, the 1190s, and the first years of the thirteenth century respectively.[223] Further information relating to the construction and development of the keep was revealed during recent excavations.[224] The evidence is discussed below, beginning with the north tower and continuing in an anti-clockwise direction before treating of the main body of the keep.

FIG. 6.8 View of North Tower

North tower

The scars of the collapsed north tower provide a useful sectional view (see FIG. 6.8). Access to the ground floor, which had a vaulted ceiling, was by means of a

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[223]Condit, 'Rings of truth at Trim Castle', pp 30-3.
[224]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, passim.

stepped mural passage in the east wall of the tower from the first floor of the main body of the keep. The first floor of the tower was connected to the main body of the keep by a broader passage. On this floor of the tower are the remains of a recess with a surround of red sandstone. There was no direct access from the second floor to the main body of the keep, but it was linked via a mural passage.

Only the north half of the ground beneath this tower was excavated to subsoil as a well preserved post-medieval cobbled floor in its south half was not removed. Prior to excavation, almost nothing of the bases of the north, east and west walls of this tower were visible. A 30cm deep marking out trench was revealed in subsoil within the tower. The semicircular trench, which had a diameter of 4.4m, was cut by the foundation trenches of the tower walls. Two sherds of pottery (one of Irish manufacture) were recovered from the fill of the trenches.

This tower was the only one to have its ground floor roofed with a stone vault and a line of four postholes (up to 70cm in diameter) at the base of the tower were interpreted by the excavator as the remains of supports for the timber centring of this vault.[225] As the high and rocky ground in the vicinity of the keep is unsuitable for the insertion of a well, it has been suggested that the north tower was used for water storage.[226] A stone-lined drain extends from the southwest of the north tower (see below), and when the forework was altered in the fourteenth century, a small building or 'washhouse' was added to the east side of the north tower (see below). Its floor was of flagstones carefully laid to provide a slope down to the northeast corner of the building. An opening equipped with an iron grille led through the wall of the building and from it a large stone-lined drain ran outwards to the curtain wall. These are the only drains leading from the keep. A series of rainwater channels lead from the main block of the keep into the south wall of the north tower at first floor level. The remains of a pipe are also visible behind a row of closely spaced holes at second floor level in the south wall of the tower.[227]

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[225]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 82.
[226]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 91-2; Kevin O'Brien, pers. comm.
[227]Kevin O'Brien, pers. comm.

These features suggest that water was channelled to the north tower from the rest of the keep. It is possible that a cistern was present at first floor level in the north tower, its weight necessitating the vault. The cistern could not have taken up all of the first floor, however, as a wall cupboard or aumbry with sandstone jambs and shelf slots is present in the south wall at this level. It is more likely that the cistern(s) were located on the second and/or third floors, which are featureless and were not accessible directly from the keep.

The excavator suggested that the demolition of this tower might have been a deliberate act to cut off the supply of water to the entire keep,[228] but it is also possible that the use of this tower over a long period as a store for water weakened the structure and pre-empted its eventual collapse, dated on archaeological evidence to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.[229]

East tower: ground floor
The ground floor of the east tower is filled with clay and rubble up to first floor level. It seems that there were never any windows or loops in the ground floor and, prior to excavation, it appeared that the tower might have always been filled to this level. Limited excavation revealed offsets on the north and south walls, however, and their function was almost certainly to support timber wall plates for the first floor.[230] This discovery also suggests that the tower originally had an unlit ground floor room or cellar beneath it.

East tower: first floor/entrance to keep
The south face of the first floor contains the main entrance to the keep. Parts of the sandstone roll-mouldings of this round-headed doorway survive, as well as the drawbar socket. Two enlarged windows are present, one in the south and one in the east wall. Access to the body of the keep is through a passage in which the surrounds and drawbar sockets of two further doors survive. The inner door has a

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[228]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 92.
[229]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 82.
[230]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 82-3.

rebate decorated with heavy three-quarter roll, similar to those on the window arches at first floor level in the main body of the keep.

East tower: second floor/chapel

A spiral stair in the east wall of the hall gives access to a narrow passage leading to a tall chamber on the second floor of the east tower. This room functioned as a chapel and an inserted piscina in the east wall has two round-arched recesses, each with a shallow stone-cut basin (see FIG. 6.9). A channel in each basin allowed the water to drain into the wall behind. The chapel was not part of the original building; the

FIG. 6.9 Piscina on first floor of East Tower

piscina and the east window, with an altar beneath, were added during a later building phase.[231] The roll-moulding surround of the triple light east window survives, and the south window may have been similar in form. Extra height in this chamber was achieved by lowering the floor and heightening the ceiling, while wall scars indicate the location of the earlier lean-to roof. The window in the north wall was originally narrow, but was later enlarged to give access to the gallery overlooking the entrance to the keep. Two rows of corbels in the east wall of the main body of the keep at this level are visible from the exterior and they almost certainly supported the gallery.

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[231]Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, p. 82.

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East tower: third floor

The south window in the chamber on this floor was remodelled as a fireplace. As in the north wall of the south tower on this floor, a blocked loop in the west wall of the east tower once lit the now blocked mural passage.

South tower: ground floor

Excavations in the south tower revealed that the foundation trenches of the walls cut through deposits associated with the earlier ringwork. The trenches were much wider than those uncovered in the west and north towers and left only a small area at the centre of the tower undisturbed. The lack of floor supports in the walls of the tower indicated that initially it was intended for the ground floor to have a solid floor.

Primary occupation deposits survived above the construction level of the south tower. These were the only early occupation deposits uncovered in the keep. Layers of charcoal fragments up to 3cm in thickness were overlain by a more extensive and thicker layer of organic debris. This contained marine shell, animal bones, sherds of Ham Green ware and several copper alloy and iron objects. Two lines of postholes driven into the backfill of the foundation trenches suggested the former existence of an unidentified structure at the base of the tower. Three blocked arrow loops are present, and this floor is accessed by a flight of stone steps descending from the hall in the main body of the keep (see FIG. 6.10). Access was controlled by a door locked by a drawbar operated from the top of the stairs.

South tower: first floor

The chamber on this floor is accessed from the main body of the keep through a linking passage broken through from the south wall of the hall. A similar passage is present in the other towers of the keep, but this one is noticeably longer than the others (see FIG. 6.13). The stairs down to the ground floor of the tower also begin in this passage. Where it reaches the first floor chamber, the passage widens and

the curving space in which the door would have opened and closed is clearly visible (see FIG. 6.11). An aumbry in the east wall of the first floor chamber may have served as a cupboard or document store (see FIG. 6.12). Three windows light this chamber, the one in the east wall being above the aumbry.

FIGS 6.10-12 South Tower: steps leading down to ground floor; doorway on first floor (from interior); window and aumbry in east wall of first floor

South tower: second floor

This chamber on the second floor of this tower is also reached via a passage from the hall in the main body of the keep, but a second entrance has been broken through the south window recess of the west chamber. The chamber has two windows, the one in the south wall being set off-centre to the east. There is a window in the west wall but not in the east.

South tower: third floor

Two of the windows in this chamber were enlarged, but the one in the south wall remains as a narrow loop. The enlarged embrasure in the east wall was altered to accommodate the outlet of a mural latrine. A loop (now blocked) in the north wall would have lit the mural passage before the south tower was heightened to this level. Traces of a lean-to roof and the corbels and rainwater outlet of the original roof are also present.

West tower: ground floor

Excavations showed that the foundations of the west wall of the main body of the keep, which cut through the burnt deposits associated with the ringwork, were built before the foundations of the three outer walls of the west tower.[232] This construction sequence applies to the foundations only, as the walls of the tower and the main wall of the keep are keyed into each other above this level. A semicircular marking out trench was revealed at the base of the tower, but no medieval occupation deposits or floors survived. Soils containing modern material directly overlay the upcast from the foundation trenches and the tower appears to have been cleared out in recent times. Access to the ground floor of this tower is by means of stairs down into its northeast corner from the main body of the keep. A door at the top of the stairs could be bolted from the outside.

West tower: first floor

The first floor of this tower is reached through a linking passage and steps down from the main body of the keep. Access was controlled at the top of the steps by a door whose drawbar was controlled from outside. Three arrow embrasures each probably had a straight loop originally, but two of them were replaced in the sixteenth century with small, chamfered and mullioned windows. The south opening remains as an arrow loop. There is a latrine within the south wall.

West tower: second floor

The chamber on this floor is accessed directly through a passage from the spiral stairs in the southwest corner of the main body of the keep. This chamber appears to have been remodelled as a withdrawing room or bedchamber. A narrow loop in the west wall was replaced by a twin-light ogee-headed window, while the north window was remodelled as a fireplace. Within the south wall, a mural garderobe (also accessed from the passage) was replaced by a latrine and washroom, the door to which appears to have been blocked in the fifteenth century.

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[232]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 81-2.

TRIM

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Entrance

Chapel
above

15m
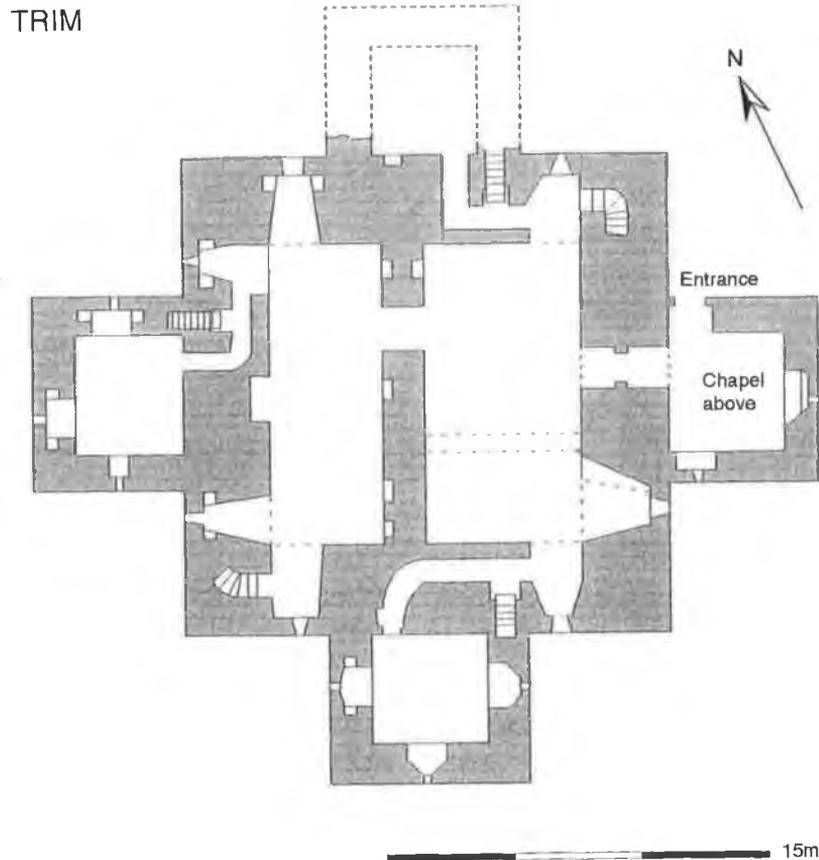
FIG. 6.13 Plan of first floor of keep. Source: O'Keeffe, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 37, fig. 11.

West tower: third floor

The chamber on this floor is also accessed via a passage from the spiral stairs in the southwest corner of the keep. The chamber is furnished with a fireplace in the southwest corner. Two of the loops here are the original, unglazed, shuttered openings, while the window in the west wall was rebuilt in sandstone to form a simple, twin-light glazed ope.

Main body of keep: first floor

The first and second floors of the keep are sub-divided by a thick north-south spine wall into a narrow chamber to the west and a larger hall to the east. This wall is not bonded to the main walls and is not an original feature. Excavations revealed offsets for supporting suspended timber floors at first floor level in both rooms.[233]

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[233]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 81.

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Hall

The main entrance to the keep, through the east tower, leads into the hall. This room has large, round-arched windows at the east end of the north and south walls from which mural passages lead into the north (missing) and south towers. The earliest phase of the keep was no higher than this and one of the sandstone springers for the roof supports is present in the east wall. A hole in the east wall and two in the spine wall indicate the former location of three other springers, while the gable line of the original roof is evident in the north and south walls. Steps up through the east window give access to where once there were hoardings. This massive embrasure was remodelled in the seventeenth century to form a cannon position (see FIG. 6.16).

FIGS 6.14-16 Hall in keep: north (left), south (centre) and east windows, first floor level

A rectangular stone pillar measuring 54x118cm was uncovered in this hall. Its west side lies partly beneath the secondary spine wall, which was built against and over it (see below). The centre of the pillar is the exact centre of the keep. It therefore seems likely that the pillar was originally 108cm in width if it was also symmetrical on an east-west basis. The pillar is built of quite different masonry to the spine wall, being composed of thin, flat, rectangular slabs neatly positioned on their broadest side. It had a flat top, level with the first floor offsets on the walls of the keep.

The roof of the main body of the keep was originally a twin-gabled structure with a central north-south valley, and the scars of the roof-ends are visible on the internal faces of the north and south walls. These scars demonstrate that the roof over the hall was wider than that over the chamber and that the hall was originally larger in width. This is not reflected in the position of the pillar uncovered in the hall. This pillar lies at the exact centre of the keep and could not have been used to support the roof indicated by the scars on the walls. Its function is unclear.

Chamber

A well-preserved (and now repaired) stepped embrasure survives in the south end of the west wall of the chamber, and originally gave access to the west walls of the keep. Centrally placed in the same wall is a fireplace with a circular chimney. The base of the fireplace projects *c*.1m from the wall. The upper part of the fireplace is keyed into the wall, but not its base, and while it is clearly part of the first phase of construction of the keep, it appears to be a secondary insertion. This chamber also has large, round-arched, internally splayed windows in the north, south and east walls. A lintelled mural passage leads to the west tower. Four rectangular aumbries are present in the east (spine) wall of the chamber.

Spine wall

The spine wall that currently divides the ground and first floors of the keep is a secondary feature. Like the earlier pillar, it is also located so that the valley of the early roof is not centrally set on it; the valley would lie well to the west of the centre of the wall. This suggests that the wall is not related to the roof represented by the roof scars. No evidence survives of the nature of the wall that originally divided the keep and supported the centre of the early roof.

Two vertical slots are evident in the west side of the spine wall, close to its south end. The slots are 1.5m apart and extend up to the level of the first floor. The slots, measuring 30-40cm^2, were constructed by building the wall around three sides of two large timbers. The mortar lining the inner faces of the slots clearly

shows the impression of large squared timbers. The timbers must have been entirely hidden inside the lower, wider part of the wall but above the wall offset, the uppermost 2.2m would have been visible in the west face of the wall. The original function of these slots is not known, but a third slot on the east side of the spine wall and a row of holes on its west clearly functioned as supports for floor joists (albeit at an unusual level). Four relieving arches are present at the top of first floor level.

FIG. 6.17 Part of spine wall and features on hall (east) side
of keep viewed from southwest.

Main body of keep: second floor: hall

A stairway rising from the chapel gives access to the hall section of the second floor of the body of the keep—a floor that was built in the second phase of construction in the roof space of the keep. It is lit by a large window in the south wall and has a doorway to an external gallery (or defensive hoarding) to the north. There is no fireplace. A deep horizontal chase in the east wall marks the former position of a water pipe.

Main body of keep: second floor: chamber

A doorway in the spine wall gave access to the chamber. In the vaulting over the large south window embrasure the fragments of the passage linking the south and west towers can be seen—when the windows were enlarged (in the thirteenth

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century) this passage was blocked up, and only the door in the spine wall allowed access between the two sides of the keep. The scars of the earlier roof are clearly visible in the north and south walls (see Fig. 6.18). Wall footings for a timber floor are also present.

FIG. 6.18 Second floor of chamber viewed from south.

Main body of keep: third floor

Unlike the first and second floors, the third floor of the keep is not now subdivided. A nineteenth-century illustration, however, shows this floor partitioned by an internal wall—a third level of the thick spine wall (see FIG. 6.19). The drawing also shows two pointed stone arches spanning the eastern (hall) side, and these appear to have served as roof supports. Butler recorded the

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FIG. 6.19 Nineteenth-century drawing showing third floor of keep divided and arches spanning third floor of hall. Source: *Dub. Penny Jn.*, ii, no. 44 (1833), p. 253.

collapse of these arches in 1820.[234] It appeared that they had been put up after the castle was finished, as the plaster was fresh on the place from which one of them sprang. No physical evidence survives of the spine wall at this level because, as on the lower floors, it was not bonded to the main walls of the keep and when it and the arches collapsed, it left no trace. It is possible that the third floor of the keep was subdivided with a spine wall around the time that the hall in the north angle of the curtain walls was constructed, which event would have negated the need for a large hall in the keep itself (see below).

Entry to the third floor was from a wooden gallery along the west wall, and a short balcony running from the north stairs. The dressed red-sandstone surround of a large fireplace survives in the south wall. When the walls of the body of the keep were being raised, they were constructed as vaulted mural passages that, in association with galleries through the fine windows, allowed full circulation of the third floor of the keep. Each corner was strengthened by the inclusion of a squinch. The four towers were raised (to their present height) after this phase of expansion.

Main body of keep: fourth floor—the cap-houses

Each corner of the keep is surmounted by a cap-house. The southwest and northeast cap-house each covers a spiral stairway; the southeast functioned as a garderobe chamber and the northwest is a simple chamber.

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[234]Butler, *Trim* (1854), p. 32.
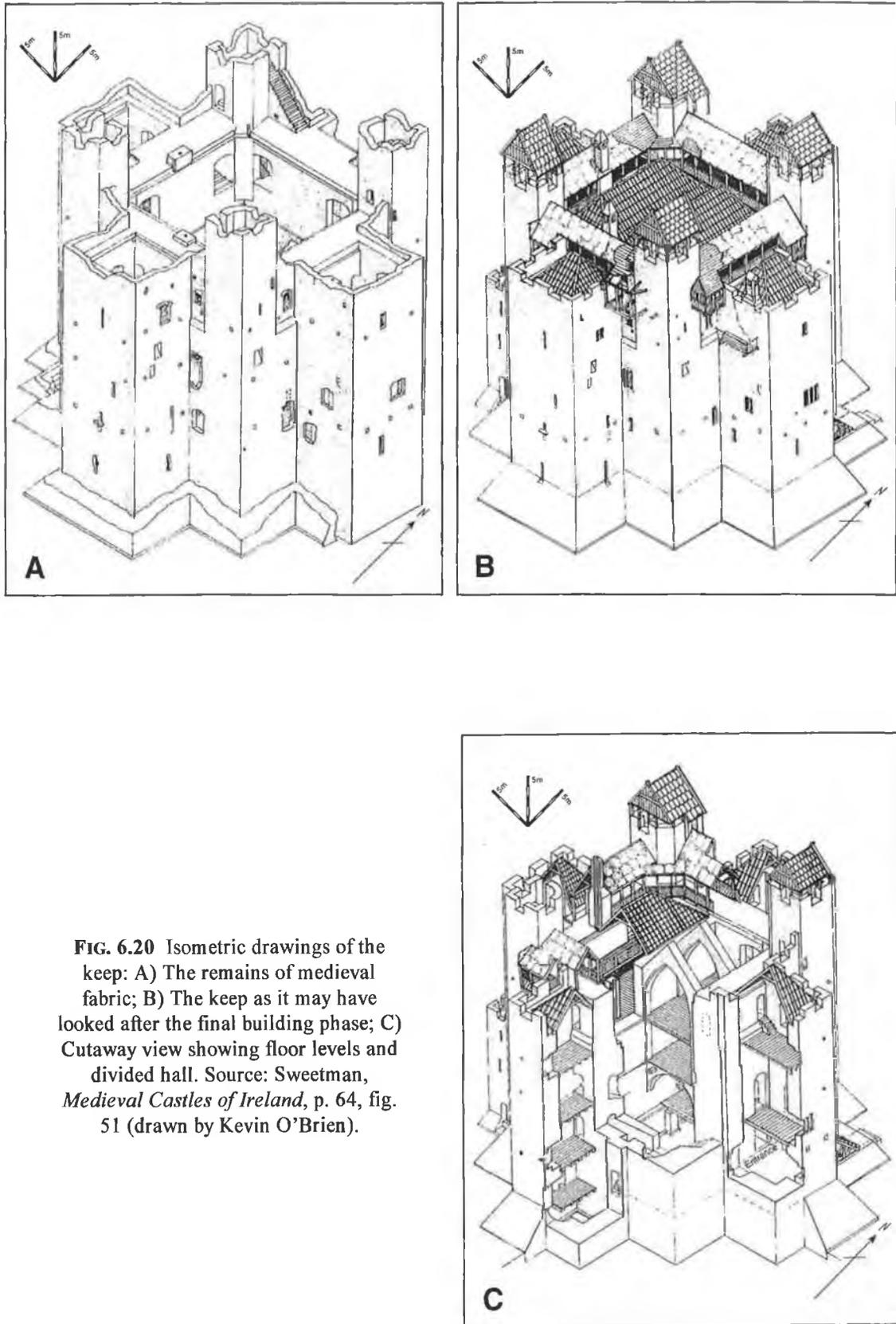
FIG. 6.20 Isometric drawings of the keep: A) The remains of medieval fabric; B) The keep as it may have looked after the final building phase; C) Cutaway view showing floor levels and divided hall. Source: Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, p. 64, fig. 51 (drawn by Kevin O'Brien).

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Garderobe tower at southwest corner of keep

Sweetman revealed the footings of a tower enclosing the garderobe outlets from the chambers on the first and second floors of the west tower.[235] Doors, now blocked up, were punched through the existing window opes in the south wall of this tower. The position of the upper walls of the garderobe/washhouse tower is indicated by scars on the wall of the keep. An exact date for the garderobe tower is not known, but it certainly pre-dates the erection of the plinth, which respects its line (see below).

Foundations

The foundations of the keep and its towers, where they were revealed, did not always run exactly on the regular line of the building itself. In places the wall of the castle actually overshot its foundations by as much as 30cm. The inaccuracy in the laying of the foundations is in sharp contrast to the high degree of accuracy evidenced in the laying out of the walls themselves. The walls are aligned perfectly north-south/east-west, but the foundations are slightly off-line.

Roof tiles

A large number of concave roof tiles (over two tonnes in weight), each with a small nib at one end, were uncovered during the 1990s excavations.[236] Some were also uncovered during the earlier excavation.[237] A few fragments of these tiles were found in the deposits associated with the construction of the keep itself while the majority derived from deposits dating from the thirteenth century onwards. Similar tiles were also used to block holes in the first phase of the keep when the second phase was begun in the 1190s, suggesting that the first phase of the keep had been roofed with these tiles. The absence of slate in deposits predating the fourteenth century also suggests that the earliest phases of the keep were roofed with tiles.

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[235]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', p. 145
[236]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 90-1.
[237]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 176-7.
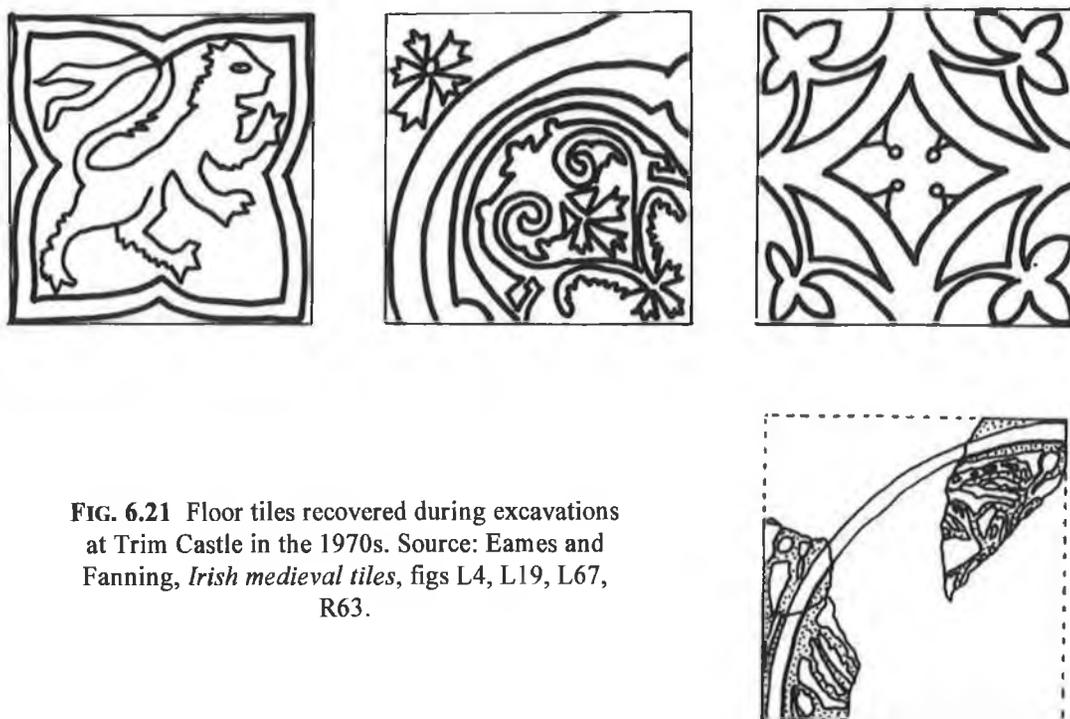
FIG. 6.21 Floor tiles recovered during excavations at Trim Castle in the 1970s. Source: Eames and Fanning, *Irish medieval tiles*, figs L4, L19, L67, R63.

Floor tiles

Ten pieces of medieval floor tiles were recovered during the 1970s excavations at Trim Castle (see FIG. 6.21).[238] All pieces are from line-impressed tiles and can be dated to the second half of the fourteenth or first half of the fifteenth century. Unfortunately, all of the pieces came from undatable contexts.

New entrance across re-cut ditch

While the gap in the ditch may have provided access to the ringwork castle, it was not used once the masonry keep had been erected. The doorway of the keep is at the northeast of the building—almost diametrically opposed to the gap in the ditch. Indeed, the construction of the keep partly blocked the gap and a new crossing point was constructed to the north. Here, an 18m length of the old ditch was re-cut with a deeper, narrower and straighter profile. This steep-sided ditch was 4m deep with a V-shaped profile. The crossing point was located roughly in the centre of the re-cut section. A stone structure with two pieces of masonry, 3m apart,

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[238]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', p. 176; E. S. Eames and Thomas Fanning, *Irish medieval tiles: decorated medieval paving tiles in Ireland with an inventory of sites and designs and a visual index* (Dublin, 1988), pp 74, 119 (fig. L4), 120 (L19), 124 (L67), 132 (R63).

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projecting over the ditch was interpreted as a support for one end of a timber bridge or drawbridge.[239] The side of the ditch where the supports for the other end of the bridge would have been was truncated by the construction of the secondary forework. To the northwest, the crossing over the ditch joined a roadway leading to the west gatehouse (see below).

Roadway

The 2m wide roadway was raised above the surrounding ground and was constructed of several layers of material. A bedding of stony clay contained chips of burnt and unburned limestone (3-4cm diameter), probably derived from the nearby limekiln (see below). Lenses of crushed shale and fine gravel were interspersed through the limestone. These deposits measured approximately 4-5cm in thickness in the middle of the road but rose up as low mounds, 20-30cm in height, towards the edges. Larger stones (up to 10cm across) formed lateral ridges at the edges of the road. A deposit of partly oxidised clay containing charcoal flecks overlay the central area. It may also derive from the limekiln. It was sealed by a compacted layer of dark grey gravely clay which filled the hollow between the lateral ridges. This surface was very hard and level, and was covered by a thick layer of mortar. It is possible that stone paving could have been set on this mortar to form the primary surface of the road, but no evidence for this was revealed.

Further thin layers of clay containing chips of burnt and unburned limestone, small fragments of shale and gravel indicated a resurfacing of the road. The south side of this phase of the roadway was marked by a line of large flat stones. The roadway was sealed by deposits of late thirteenth-century date. The bridge and road are contemporary with the first phase of the keep. They were the only crossing point on the ditch that would have given ready access to the keep. The bridge continued in use until the forework with its new causeway was constructed in the later thirteenth or early fourteenth century (see below).

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[239]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 85.

Forebuilding

A further element of this thirteenth-century building phase was the construction of a drawbridge feature to the north of the east tower in the area below the entrance. This 'forebuilding' consisted of a stone-built pit, differing from the normal drawbridge pit in that it rose above ground level to the height of the doorjamb of the entranceway.[240] Once inside the fosse one could not gain access to the keep unless the drawbridge was lowered, from corbels, onto the pit.

The forebuilding that survives was largely rebuilt in the fourteenth century, but excavations indicated that the lower part of structure preserves some of the original forebuilding within it.[241] It appears that original forebuilding was roughly the same size and shape as its successor.

Plinth

A sloping stone plinth was added to the exterior of the keep. Excavations by Sweetman demonstrated that it survived well at the southwest side of the keep.[242] In the more recently excavated areas the plinth survives well at the southeast side of the castle only.[243] From the southeast corner of the east tower in an anti-clockwise direction to the west side of the castle it has largely been robbed out. Short sections of the plinth are extant in the base of the robber trench at the northwest side of the north tower.

The plinth consists of roughly built foundations surmounted by a finely constructed sloping top. The irregular stone foundations, built in a trench *c*.1.5m in depth, are wider than the plinth itself by as much as 70cm in places, and it is clear that the foundation level was never intended to be visible.

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[240]Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, p. 65.
[241]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 83-4.
[242]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 132, 185, 187.
[243]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 86-7.

The plinth varies from 2 to 2.2m in width and slopes towards the keep at an angle of *c*.57-8°. It survives to a maximum height of 2.2m. It was constructed with a rubble core retained by regular courses of stones, laid at an angle. The facing stones, which are uniform in size, have flat, dressed outer surfaces. The external quoins of the sloping portion are of diagonally dressed limestone blocks almost semi-pyramidal in shape. The finished masonry is among the finest found anywhere in the castle. No attempt was made to key the plinth into the walls of the keep.

While an absolute date for the construction of the plinth is not determinable, a

FIG. 6.22 The corner stones of the plinth.

relative one is. The foundation trenches for the plinth cut through material cast up from the excavation of the foundation trenches of the keep. They also abut the west wall of the earlier forebuilding at the north side of the keep. This part of the forebuilding is overlain by the layers of clay and domestic refuse that filled the ditch sometime in or after the later thirteenth century. Consequently, the plinth must have been added sometime between the later twelfth and later thirteenth century.

Kitchens

Excavations demonstrated that ash and food refuse were dumped into the ditch from its inner side at the west and northwest sides of the keep between the later thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.[244] The types of bird and fish bone in the refuse indicate that these were the remains of meals consumed by wealthy individuals. No evidence for kitchens dating to this phase was uncovered outside the keep, and

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[244]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 92.

it has been suggested that the room at ground floor level in the north tower, with its north-facing aspect and stone-vaulted roof, would have made an ideal storage area for foodstuffs needing a cool environment.[245]

Limekiln

A limekiln was revealed in the ditch at the northwest side.[246] The west side of the ditch was partly quarried to accommodate the kiln, which consisted of a central cone-shaped bowl with two opposed flues opening off its north and south sides. The whole structure measured some 7.5m in length by 7-8m in width and stood to a maximum height of 2.5m. The bowl was lined with dry-stone walling of roughly squared limestone blocks showing extensive evidence for burning. The kiln was covered by a mound of compacted soil and stones and its mouth and flues contained deposits of lime, charcoal and ash. Fragments of charred timber indicate that this was a wood-fired kiln.

Deposits of angular pieces of limestone around the kiln and those used in the construction of the roadway leading from the ditch to the west gatehouse appear to be waste products from the kiln. They are probably the remains of larger stones that did not fully burn up in the kiln and were consequently discarded. Evidence suggests that the kiln functioned between the end of the ringwork phase of the castle and the later thirteenth century. It was backfilled at the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century and the fill contained late thirteenth-century coins and sherds of Saintonge polychrome ware. This limekiln is the only medieval example visible in Ireland and is one of a small number found in this country. It is likely that it was the source of at least some of the lime used in the building of the keep and the curtain walls.

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[245]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 92.

Curtain walls and towers

The keep at Trim is enclosed by a curtain wall within a roughly triangular area of slightly more than one hectare. The wall survives almost completely intact on the south and northwest, and fragments remain on the east side. When complete, it had a circuit of about 450m. The naturally elevated site was scarped back to bedrock all the way round and the curtain wall and mural towers were built against the freshly exposed rock-face. This meant that the ground level immediately inside the wall was significantly higher than that outside—there is still an average difference of 5m. This type of construction had several advantages; from the exterior the wall appeared to be much taller than it actually was, while it was almost impossible to undermine since it was founded on and backed by solid rock. In some places, especially between towers B and D, the stratified bedrock is visible at the base of the wall where the fronting stones have fallen (or been taken) away.

Externally, the wall averages 8m in height, and it has an average thickness of 1.8m. The original height may have been higher, but no crenellations survive. It has a slight base-batter all the way round, but this is most prominent on the northwest face (although much of it seems to have been robbed from here). Internally, the wall is broken by square embrasures and long, straight arrow-loops. Much of the stone used in the building of the wall must have derived from the quarrying of the large rock-cut moat that surrounded it.

Sweetman excavated a number of the towers on the west side of the castle and his labels (A-E) are retained here.[247] The towers of the east curtain are earlier than those on the west, however, so extending this nomenclature to these towers would be misleading. Consequently, the towers on the east curtain wall, excavated by Hayden, are referred to by the numbers he allocated to them (1-3).[248] The towers

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[246]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 95-7.
[247]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 147-52.
[248]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 98-104.

and walls are described below in an anti-clockwise direction beginning at the southeast corner of the site.

East curtain wall and mural towers

Prior to excavation there were no visible remains of the curtain wall between tower E and tower 2. Scars visible on both towers, however, indicate that they were once linked by a wall. Excavation revealed a ridge consisting primarily of a 3.6m depth of rubble built up against a steep bedrock cliff. The rubble was composed mainly of masonry from the collapsed wall. The exposed bedrock cliff measured 3.6m in height. The wall scars on towers E and 2 indicate that the wall itself was built on top of the bedrock cliff and that the cliff face was disguised by a sloping, mortared stone glacis or batter. The latter was little more than a skin of masonry fronting the cliff. The wall scars also indicate that the wall measured *c.*1.85m in thickness at its base.

Tower 1

Tower 1 is roughly midway between towers E and 2, on the low-lying ground at the base of the cliff. Hayden's excavations demonstrated that the L-shaped length of walling was the only surviving part of a rectangular mural tower whose walls had been robbed out.[249] The scale and orientation of the robber trenches indicate that this tower was originally the same size as tower 2.

Tower 2

This tower, which is built around a projecting tongue of bedrock, stands to a maximum height of 12.7m—the base batter accounting for 2.7m. Its north wall is largely

FIG. 6.23 Tower 2 viewed from southeast

[249]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 99.

complete while its east and west walls, except for their lowest floor, remain only as stumps on the ends of the north wall. Nothing remains of its south (rear) wall, which may have been of timber. Externally, excluding the batter, the tower measures a maximum of 6.4 by 9.3m, while the batter varies up to 70cm in thickness. The base of the walls is *c*.1.7m thick; they have vertical external faces narrowing to 1.4-1.5m at the top due to an internal offset.

The southeast corner of the tower was re-faced in modern times and a fragment of a window jamb with bar holes for glazing was reused as a replacement quoin stone. The basement of tower 2, measuring 3.5m in height internally, lies below the level of the top of the cliff to the southwest and above the level of the river to the northeast. An embrasure in each of the three walls each has a simple, rectangular, splayed and flat-based arrow loop. These were later blocked with stone before the basement was filled in.

The ground floor, measuring 3.4m in height internally, is level with the top of the cliff behind the tower. It has four embrasures (two in the north wall and one in each of the other two walls) with simple arrow loops like the ones in the basement. The floor was supported on four large joists whose north ends were set in sockets in the north wall. It is not known how the south ends were supported. The two outer joists were also supported centrally by corbels in the sidewalls.

FIG. 6.24 Tower 2 viewed from southwest

The first floor had three embrasures, one in each wall, but those in the east and west walls are evidenced only by small portions of their north sides. The embrasure in the north wall has curved sides with a segmental rear arch and a straight-sided, flat-headed,

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single light of 40cm in width. The lower part of the window jambs are missing and only the stumps of the window seats survive.

Just south of tower 2 the base batter of the curtain survives. Here it lies 2.5m further out from the cliff than the rest of its line. It runs on this line for 3.3m before turning back to the line of the rest of the surviving batter. The step is likely to be a reflection of irregularities in the bedrock. The cliff extends further outwards at this point and the batter may have been built simply skirting around it. It is possible, however, that it may indicate the presence of a small latrine tower on the south side of tower 2 but there is no other evidence of this. Kevin O'Brien has drawn a reconstruction of how this area might have looked (see FIG. 6.25).
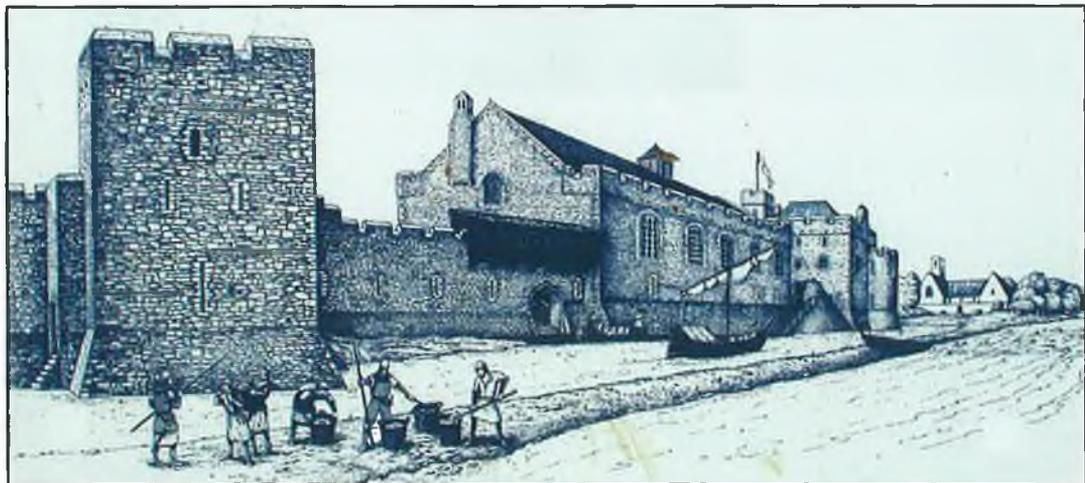
FIG. 6.25 Suggested reconstruction of Tower 2, Great Hall and Solar, viewed from northeast (Kevin O'Brien).

Curtain wall between Towers 2 and 3

The curtain wall extended 15.5m northwest of tower 2, in an almost straight line. Here the bedrock strata dip steeply downwards to the northeast. In order to foot the batter on this slope, a ledge was carved into the bedrock on the north side of tower 2, where an 8m length of wall and/or base batter survives. A gateway was cut through the wall in the later thirteenth or early fourteenth century when the hall and its undercroft were built (see below). The wall turned outwards from the tower for a length of just under 4m before turning back to continue parallel to the

cliff. There may have been an embrasure opening towards tower 2 and echoing that in the northwest side of that tower. It would have provided flanking fire along the length of wall to its southeast. Only the rear of this part of the wall is extant. It is visible as a line of faced masonry within the end wall of the later great hall. The external angle of the corner of the curtain was also later altered and cut away when a secondary entrance was created in the northeast corner of the undercroft. The base of the corner of the wall survives as mortared rubble set on the bedrock.

The wall then continued in a straight line for a length of *c*.31m to tower 3. Here the wall was not built against a cliff, as the latter seems to have turned sharply inwards. This is the only completely freestanding length of curtain wall on the site. The external base batter is at least 3m in height, but the ground outside the wall was not excavated here. The original curtain wall stood to a height of between 2.5 and 3m above the batter. The wall above this was entirely rebuilt when the hall was erected. Five blocked embrasures originally pierced the wall. Their blocked loops are visible on the external façade of the wall and their internal reveals were exposed in trenches excavated on the south side of the wall. The vaults covering them were removed and their interiors walled up when the great hall was built. The embrasures measured at least 2m in height and 1.7 to 1.8m in width. They were rectangular in plan with simple splayed arrow loops.

Tower 3: 'The Magdalen Tower'

Excavation revealed the presence of a larger tower beneath the present structure at the north corner of the site.[250] Unlike towers 1 and 2 it had four walls and was freestanding, although the base of its inner wall abutted the corner of the bedrock shelf. The tower underwent major renovations at a later stage (see below), but its original basement and first floor survive. A description of works carried out at the castle in 1367 indicates that this tower was known as the Magdalen Tower,[251] perhaps due to its position facing the Augustinian Abbey of St Mary across the river.

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[250]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 102-4.

Externally, the tower measures *c*.13.4m north-south by *c*.13.7m east-west, excluding the external base batter, which has been removed on the southeast side. The walls of the tower vary in thickness; the more vulnerable north and west walls, which extended outside the curtain wall, measure 4.7 and 4.55m in thickness respectively, excluding external batter and internal footings. The east wall is 4.1m thick and the south wall is 3.6m. The walls are approximately 1m thicker than the walls of the main block of the keep and *c*.1m thicker than the thickest keep walls recorded in Ireland.[252]

The basement originally had a suspended wooden floor with a void varying from 1-1.2m in depth below it. Beneath the wooden floor, the ground was a relatively smooth surface of mortared stone, sloping downwards gradually towards the northeast. At present, water gathering in the tower seeps out through this northeast corner and this may always have been the case. The space beneath the suspended wooden floor ensured that the floor remained dry even if water gathered below it.

Projecting internal footings on the tower walls indicate the position of timber wall-plates for supporting the floor joists. The underside of the floor joists would have been 3m above the floor below. There was a small recess or aumbry, roofed with flat lintels, measuring 88cm wide by 56cm deep by 72cm high in the centre of the northwest wall.

The basement was lit by a narrow window in the southeast wall. It measured 80cm in width on its interior face and was at least 1.85m tall. It narrowed towards the external face of the wall and its base also rose and opened obliquely southwards through the wall. The external base and sides of the window were not extant. It opened inside the curtain wall south of the tower and did not weaken the tower defences. It had reused, dressed sandstone blocks and hammer-dressed limestone blocks in its jambs, suggesting that it was rebuilt.

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[251]Nat. Archives, RC 8/29, pp 500-1, no. 508.
[252]McNeill, 'The great towers of early Irish castles', p. 113.

The doorway measures 1.1m in width and leads to a short passage curving to the southeast. The north side of this passage may also be rebuilt as its wall is uncharacteristically composed of small stones, contrasting with the fine masonry of the rest of the basement. There is a fork in the passage; one fork leads to a set of stone stairs curving to the southeast then running straight up to two arrow loops, and beyond to the ground floor, while the second fork is a steeply-stepped slope leading northeastwards to the loop in the centre of the northeast wall. An entrance was broken through the tower wall at this point in recent times and nothing remains of the original looped embrasure. The stairway leading up to the ground floor survives for a length of 3.5m and measures a maximum of 98cm in width. Its upper end was truncated by the later rebuilding of the tower.

The interior of the basement of the tower, excluding projecting footings, measures 4.9 by 5.10m. Its diagonals are c.7m (a multiple of 70cm, the unit used in the laying out of the main block of the keep). Diagonals between the external corners of the tower are 18.9 and 19.35m—the former is also an exact multiple of 70cm.

The original entrance to tower 3 lay in the southwest wall at ground floor level. Its base was 1m higher than the bedrock outside and may have been approached by an external wooden stair. The doorway was blocked at a later stage and its jambs do not survive. None of the north side of the entrance passage survives, but a bar-hole to secure the door remains on the south side. Some polished floor-stones were also revealed. The passage appears to have originally led straight into the interior of the tower with a side passage opening southwards. The latter ran in a straight line to the corner of the tower where a spiral staircase led to the floor above. This passage was also partly blocked at a later stage but its original sides are clearly visible as joints in the masonry. The passage measured 1.7m in length and 1m in width. The spiral staircase lay at the south corner of the tower, and had a radius of c.1.1m. One dressed brown sandstone newel survived *in situ* and others were found in the rubble filling of the tower. The treads of the steps were of limestone and parts of three survived.

None of the original internal face of the wall of the tower survives at first floor level due to later rebuilding, and the offset to hold the timber floor survives only in places. There appear to have been eight arrow loops in this floor originally but, due to the later narrowing and re-facing of the interior of the tower wall, only some survive and these are only visible on the exterior face. Externally, the surviving loops measure 2.14m in maximum height, with at least 70cm of the base plunging. The former existence of a second floor is evidenced by the presence of scars at the northwest corner of the hall, but no features belonging to this floor survive.

West curtain wall

Excavation exposed all but the south end of the internal face of the west curtain wall to foundation level between tower 3 and the west gatehouse. As in other places, the wall was built upon the bedrock cliff and had a steeply sloping external base-batter or glacis cloaking the cliff face. The bedrock rises gradually between tower 3 and the west gatehouse. The projecting footing uncovered on the inner face of the curtain wall rises in a series of steps echoing the rise in the cliff. A narrow foundation trench, *c.*30cm in width, was apparent along the inner face of the wall. In this area the wall has a narrow offset on its interior face at the level of the base of the lower embrasures in the wall.

The west curtain wall was altered on at least one occasion. Where the wall joins tower 3 there is a scar on the basal part of the tower suggesting that the base of the curtain was originally wider on the interior and was later cut back and re-faced. The upper part of the west curtain, complete with gun-loops, is also the result of reconstruction. There is a vertical joint where the upper part of the west wall abuts tower 3, while the lower part of the wall is keyed into the tower. The joint is at the level of the parapet of the curtain wall. Three large putlog holes pierce the wall at the level of the base of the parapet and would originally have held a projecting wooden hoarding, as was the case in the south curtain wall and on the keep. The small, low, narrow loops in the merlons of the wall are gun-loops very like those

inserted into the blocked windows of the later hall and the west gatehouse, suggesting that the present merlons are also late in date.

The curtain has four embrasures at internal ground level. Three are original and one (the second from the north end) is a modern fake, consisting of a recently built loop sitting on the loose rubble fill of a breach in the wall. It is unlikely that this breach was originally a loop as it interrupts the regular spacing of the other three embrasures. The south embrasure was blocked and reused as a garderobe chute. These three loops are roughly evenly spaced, being 7-8m apart.

West Gatehouse

Situated centrally on the northwest stretch of curtain wall, this gatehouse of two storeys over a basement provided access from the castle to the town and vice-versa. The structure comprises two contemporary components; a rectangular building (the gate-tower) accommodating the entranceway, and an additional, almost square building (the 'guardroom') to the north of the entrance passage. The gate-tower measures approximately 11.5m east-west by 10m north-south, while the guardroom measures *c*.8.5 by 8m. The gate-tower, which survives to a height of almost 16m, is centrally pierced at ground floor level by the passage (like the

FIG. 6.26 West gatehouse viewed from south.

example at Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly). The ground-floor plan of the tower is rectangular, but the floor above is octagonal.
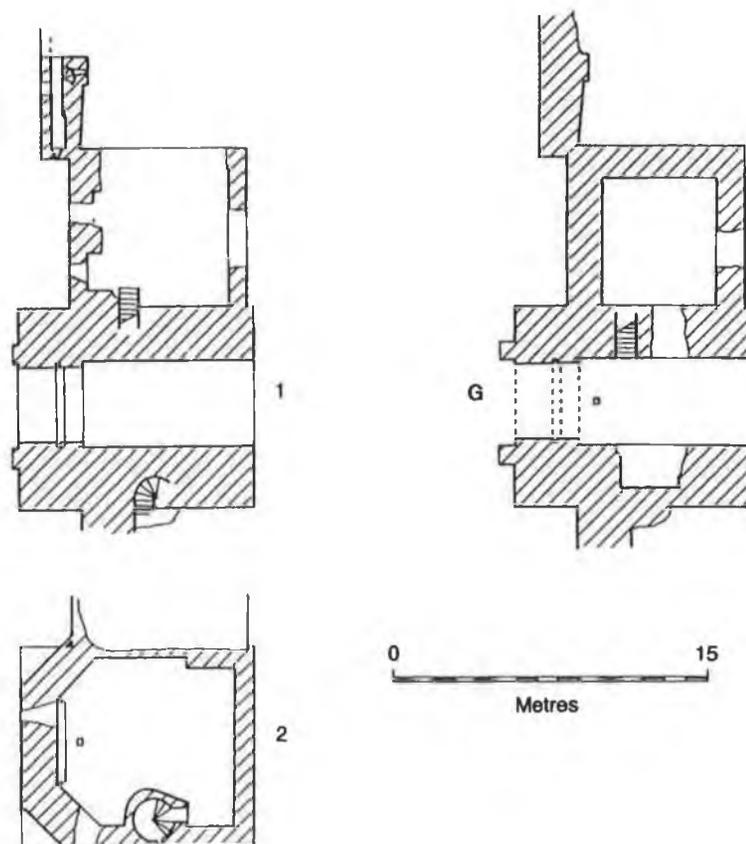
FIG. 6.27 Plans of west gatehouse. Source: McNeill, 'Trim Castle, Co. Meath; the first three generations', p. 326, fig. 9.

The floors of the two constituent parts of the gatehouse are at different heights, and the only access between them links the ground floor of the passage and the first floor of the guardroom. The second floor of the gate-tower is reached via an extramural stair on the south face of the gateway and the third floor via a spiral stair leading up from the east side of the second floor. Neither the gate-tower nor the guardroom seems to allow communication with the wall-walks on the adjacent curtain wall.

The gate-tower stands on top of a natural cliff, which was probably made steeper and revetted by a high, battered wall overlooking the ditch outside the castle. The front entrance is round headed with externally recessed, brown sandstone jambs. The gate was probably further guarded by some form of barbican, and a bridge formerly spanned the ditch outside the walls, as indicated by the wall scars on either side of the doorway on the outer face. The area where the bridge rested has

been filled with masonry but there is a clear vertical joint marking the end of the sloping ramp that approaches it from the west. A limited excavation here revealed that the ramp was composed of neatly constructed dry-stone masonry.[253]

Portcullis slots survive inside the doorway. The outer face of the portcullis was originally guarded by a murder-hole (later blocked from above) in the arch over the entrance, while the windlass and pulleys used to lower and raise the portcullis would have been housed in the floor above. Two large gates opening inwards stood inside the portcullis; their internal sides guarded by a murder-hole in the high barrel vault that roofs the inner passageway. This passageway rises through the first floor level of the building. A straight flight of steps leads from the north side of the inner passage to the first floor of the guardroom. There is a small guard chamber in the thickness of the wall on the south side of the inner passage. An extra-mural stair leads from outside the south side of the gatehouse to the first floor.

Several phases of construction can be identified in the gatehouse. The murder-hole protecting the outside of the portcullis is blocked by the octagonal front wall of the first floor. The bases of four arrow loops with plunging bases survive at first floor level on the front face of the gate-tower. The upper parts have been truncated by the building of the octagonal first floor, and loops visible on the exterior faces are not apparent, even as joints in the masonry, on the interior faces of some walls. The upper octagonal front of the gate-tower is clearly a later addition or alteration.

Two embrasures have been inserted at first floor level in the west face of the guardroom. The remains of the bases of two plunging arrow loops are vaguely discernible at the bottom of each of these holes externally. Four arrow loops at the west corners of the third floor of the gate-tower are also completely blocked with masonry and are not visible even as vertical joints on the interior of the tower. This demonstrates that the third floor was also altered, apparently at a tertiary phase. A

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[253]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 105.

small squinch is present on the west front of the gatehouse in the angle between the junction of the tower and the guardroom. McNeill suggested that it might have been a latrine outlet.[254] If it was then it must have led from a garderobe on the third floor. The chute of the latter was blocked by the rebuilding of the third floor.

A number of arrow loops have been remodelled as musket loops, and the hole at third floor level in the west front may also have been broken out for use as a musket loop. These features almost certainly date to the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

Hayden suggested that four main periods of building are represented:[255] 1) An initial phase that consisted of the rectangular gate-tower and the guardroom, both defended by loops with plunging bases. The buildings of this phase survive to the base of first floor level only. 2) A second phase consisting of the rebuilding of the gate-tower from first floor upwards, with a new west front of semi-octagonal shape. The rebuilt west front wall blocked the murder-hole protecting the outer face of the portcullis and truncated the arrow loops of the primary structure. 3) A third phase, consisting of the rebuilding of at least the interior of the third floor of the gate-tower. 4) A final phase when musket loops were inserted.

The gatehouse was described briefly by McNeill, who noted the similarity of its octagonal second floor to the south tower at Carlingford (Co. Louth), and saw both as a nostalgic repetition of earlier features found at the de Lacy's seat at Ludlow.[256] He suggested a construction date of c.1200 for the Trim structure.

Construction levels of west gatehouse

Excavations uncovered the foundation trench for the footings of the south side of the gatehouse. The trench cut through the remains of a roadway. Only the three

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[254]McNeill, 'Trim Castle, Co. Meath; the first three generations', p. 328.
[255]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 106.
[256]McNeill, 'The great towers of early Irish castles', p. 103; idem, *Castles in Ireland: feudal power in a Gaelic world* (London, 1997), p. 43.

lowest steps of the stairway leading to the doorway at first floor level at the south side of the tower were fully extant. The base of the stairs was flush with the east wall of the tower and was built at the same time as the gatehouse. Several layers of gravel and chippings were spread around the base of the tower to raise the ground level. The uppermost surface of these deposits was metalled for a distance of up to 8m to the south. The roadway running up to and through the gatehouse was surfaced with a very hard and compacted layer of dark grey clay and small pebbles.

Guardroom: basement

The basement and the vault over the first floor of the guardroom were excavated by Sweetman.[257] The basement has a flagstone floor. This was covered by a 50cm layer of dark soil containing sherds of late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century pottery. Above this, the chamber was filled almost to ground level with rubble, clay and some occupation debris, which appears to be of later fourteenth-century date. This chamber would may well have functioned as a prison, as the only access to it must have been through a trap door in its roof.

Guardroom: first-floor

The ground floor has a barrel-vaulted roof. Consequently, the floor above it was originally barrel shaped. The spaces close to the walls here were filled to form a level surface, which was subsequently covered by a roughly cobbled floor. The same technique was used to create a level floor over the barrel-vaulted gateway. Here, the fill contained coins, pottery and glass of late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century date.

Tower to north of west gatehouse and guardroom

The small tower that abuts the guardroom to the north is also of multi-period construction and it too contains loops blocked by later walling and changes in floor levels. It projects outwards from the curtain to almost the same extent as the gate-tower itself. It measures approximately 5m north-south by 2.5m east-west. Part of

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[257]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 147-8.

its south end is contemporary with the gatehouse. A clear vertical joint is visible on the east side of the structure showing the later part added to its north side. A second vertical joint is visible on its north face demonstrating that the later part also abutted the inner side of the original curtain wall.

Two blocked loops are visible on its west face, one at ground floor level (originally the first floor) and one in the south wall at present first floor level. The ground floor was clearly blocked up and the first floor level lowered at a secondary stage. At ground floor level, it appears that there was originally a large embrasure with a loop with plunging base opening from its west side. The embrasure was accessed from ground level to the east side of the tower, but is half a floor higher than the next loop to the north in the curtain wall due to the rise in the ground level as it extended southwards. The first floor level of the tower originally had an embrasure similar to that on the ground floor, but with one loop with a plunging base opening to the south and another to the west. The embrasure would have been accessed from the wall-walk on the curtain wall from the north side, which must have been stepped upwards to a greater height where it meets the small tower.

The ground floor embrasure was later completely filled with masonry. A new first floor was created half a floor lower than the original first floor. The original first floor loop was blocked and two new wider windows (only one of which survives completely) were opened in the west wall of the first floor room, which was, in effect, a passageway. The passageway leads to a small garderobe chamber at its south end. The roof of the garderobe chamber is slightly higher than the roof of the passage. The remains of the garderobe chute are extant in the south wall of the chamber, as are parts of the supports for the garderobe seat. A spiral staircase was built at the northeast corner of the structure leading from the first floor passageway to the new parapet level. Little of the parapet level survives.

West curtain wall southwest of west gatehouse

Only a short length of the curtain wall to the south of the gatehouse was visible prior to excavation. The base of a further 8.3m was uncovered by excavation, in addition to sections of the foundation trench.[258] Little of the wall survives above the level of the footing, having collapsed or been replaced by a dry-stone revetment in modern times.

Tower A

This tower is located at the westernmost limit of the site, and appears to be within the area originally enclosed by the town walls. It is open-backed with one straight loop in the south wall and one in the west wall at first floor level. The absence of loops and embrasures at the lowest level of the tower suggests that it was partly backfilled on completion. The fill consisted of hard-packed, re-deposited boulder clay and contained no archaeological finds.[259] Above this, a 1m thick layer of loose, dark clay contained a small amount of late thirteenth-century pottery and a penny of Edward I dating to *c.*1282.

Curtain wall between Towers A and B

The entire stretch of curtain wall between these two towers is a modern reconstruction. Early Ordnance Survey maps appear to show buildings between these towers, and a sketch dated 16 September 1859 clearly illustrates a row of cottages where the wall now stands (see FIG. 6.28). It is likely that the original curtain wall had previously collapsed or been robbed out. It was probably at this point that the town wall met the curtain wall and the removal of the former to accommodate the new Dublin Road almost certainly weakened the latter.

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[258]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 108.

FIG. 6.28 Drawing of 'Street in Trim', dated 16 September 1859, showing cottages between towers A and B on curtain wall (private collection).

Tower B

This tower is also open-backed and is of two storeys, each having two straight

FIG. 6.29 Tower B, sallyport and section of curtain wall, viewed from southwest. Note bedrock behind robbed out base-batter.

loops within almost square embrasures. The loops are positioned to the northwest and southeast respectively, and each is very close to the curtain wall. The base-batter of this tower is now almost entirely buried beneath the pavement. Excavation

[259]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 148-9.

revealed that the tower was back-filled in the seventeenth century, probably for use as a gun platform.[260] Immediately east of this tower, at the base of the curtain wall, is a sallyport, but it is now almost completely buried and only the upper portion of the gate and passage can be seen (see FIG. 6.29).

Curtain wall between Towers B and C

A horizontal line of seven square putlog holes *c*.3m above ground level between these towers indicates the former presence of scaffolding. Much of the base-batter in this section of curtain wall has been robbed out and the stratified bedrock once hidden behind it is now clearly visible.

Tower C

Tower C is similar to tower B (see FIG. 6.30). It has a sallyport with steps down to the moat from a gate, and a thirteenth-century blocking wall. It was divided into two floors, each having two straight arrow-loops close to the curtain wall. Like tower B, this tower was back-filled in the seventeenth century.[261]

Sallyport

At the back of the east wall of tower C and inside the line of the thirteenth-century blocking wall, a mural staircase leads down to a sallyport. There are ten steps leading to a landing floored with flagstones. On the south side of the landing a doorway with a segmental arch gives access to a further six steps that lead to the moat (see FIG. 6.30).

FIG. 6.30 Tower C and sallyport, viewed from south.

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[260]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', p. 149.
[261]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 149-50.

Curtain wall between Towers C and D

The base-batter in this section is 1m lower than that between towers B and C, perhaps reflecting the dipping line of the bedrock, which now protrudes where the base-batter has been quarried.

Tower D

Tower D is also open-backed and has a thirteenth-century blocking wall similar to that in tower C but unlike the other towers, it has three floors. There are two straight loops within embrasures on the ground floor and two on the first floor. A mural stair rises from the ground floor and originally led to the wall-walk of the curtain wall but it is now blocked by modern masonry. This tower was also back-filled in the seventeenth century.[262]

FIGS 6.31-2 Tower D, viewed from southwest; Corbels to east of Tower D.

Curtain wall between Tower D and Barbican Gate

Much of the base batter has been quarried out in this section of wall. Close to tower D three corbels protrude at the base of a gap at the top of the curtain wall (see FIG. 6.32). These are the only corbels in the curtain wall and, while their

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[262]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', p. 152.

original function is unclear, they suggest the former presence of some form of structure over the moat. The date of their insertion is also allusive.

The Barbican Gate

At the most southerly point of the curtain wall, the Barbican Gate consists of a round tower with a narrow passageway spanning the moat leading to the rectangular barbican on the south side. The tower has three floors but is lacking its wall-walk parapet levels; the barbican itself, also of three floors, is complete.

FIG. 6.33 Barbican Gate viewed from southeast.

The tower is entered from the north through a pointed arch leading into a barrel-vaulted passage, but most of the vault has collapsed. The passage is a narrow rectangle with a mural passage on the east and west, each giving access to two straight loops. The portcullis groove, of red sandstone, is at the south end of the passage in a pointed arch. A series of parallel 'murder holes' pierce the roof of the passage approaching the portcullis.

A spiral stair in the western mural passage leads to the upper floors. The first floor has an irregular hexagonal plan and from here the portcullis and drawbridge were operated by windlass. A mural passage in the west wall with two straight loops leads onto the curtain wall. A broken door in the east wall leads to the curtain wall on that side, and immediately to the north of it is a lintelled fireplace. Also on the east, a mural passage leads onto the wall-walk of the link wall between the tower and barbican. There is one arrow embrasure in the north wall, and two in the east, all of which had straight loops. A second door has been broken through one of the

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arrow loops in the east wall, presumably to give access to hoarding on the curtain wall (see FIG. 6.33).

The remains of a second fireplace and a latrine chamber are present on the second floor. A well-preserved round-arched window looks out to the southeast while a hole to the northeast suggests the former presence of a second such window. The upper level of the tower is surmounted by battlements, reached from the turret that capped the stairwell.

The tower is linked to the barbican by two straight walls, 2.5m apart. These are arched at ground level (each arch forms almost a complete circular opening, with only the bottom part flat) in order to span the moat. The space was crossed originally by means of a drawbridge. The marks of plank centring are visible on the underside of the arches and two putlog holes remain at the base of each side of each arch where the supporting timber framework would have been attached. The east arch is angled northwards in line with the curve of the moat.

Holes in the east and west walls indicate that the axle-socket or pivot of the drawbridge was set off-centre of the crown of the supporting arches. The bridge may have been operated from a gallery above it. Although the walls of the first floor of the passage are keyed into those of the barbican, those of the second floor are not, suggesting that the second floor of the passage was built after the barbican had been completed. A row of smaller putlog holes in each of the first floor walls of the passage indicate the presence of scaffolding, while rows of larger holes lower down may have supported hoarding. Two straight loops are present at first floor level in the west wall and one in the east.

The ground floor of the barbican is a simple rectangular chamber with a doorway giving access to the moat. Originally, there would have been a trapdoor above this chamber. At first floor level, four large holes mark the former presence of door hinges, and a recess in each of the east and west wall would have allowed the
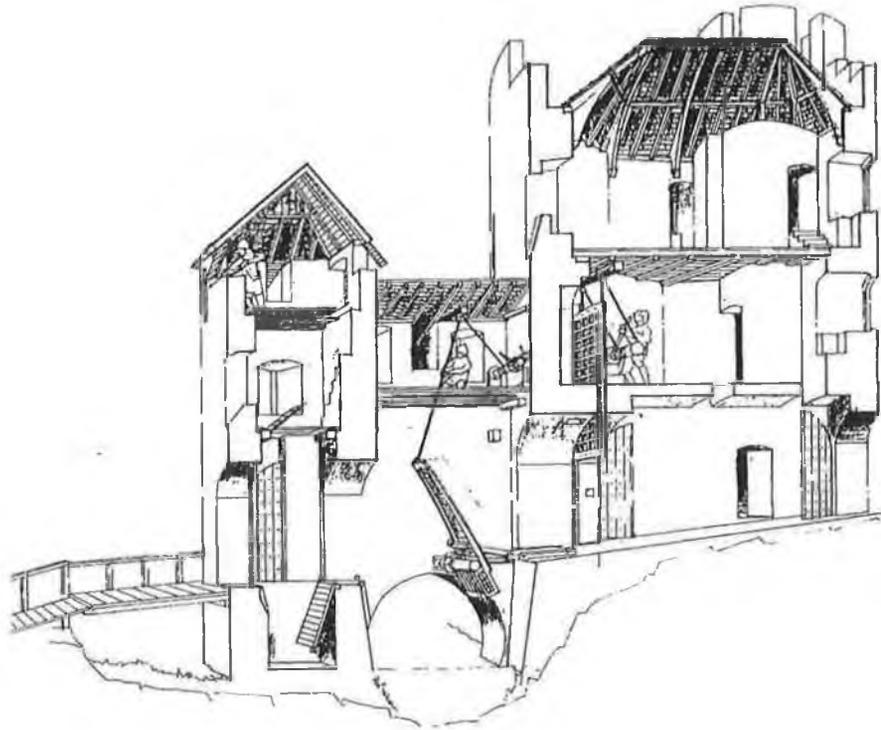
FIG. 6.34 Suggested reconstruction of a section through the Barbican Gate, from east.
Source: Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, p. 44, fig. 31 (Kevin O'Brien).

double doors to fit flush against the walls when open. A 1.5m continuation of the recess on the east wall demonstrates that the doors were bolted closed by a large timber drawbar attached to the east door and that this too would have fitted flush into the recess when the doors were open. The arch exiting the barbican to the south is some 2.5m above ground level and there must originally have been a (wooden) ramp here.

The first floor of the barbican is a small rectangular chamber with a straight-looped arrow embrasure in the south wall and a shorter straight loop in both the east and west walls. A lintelled door in the north wall leads to the wall-walk level of the link-wall connecting the tower with the barbican. The second floor was the wall-walk level and has four angle loops and four crenels.

300

SECTION LINE

GROUND FLOOR

SECTION LINE

BLOCKING

FIRST FLOOR

N

SECTION LINE

**SECOND FLOOR**

SECTION
LOOKING EAST

0   10   20m
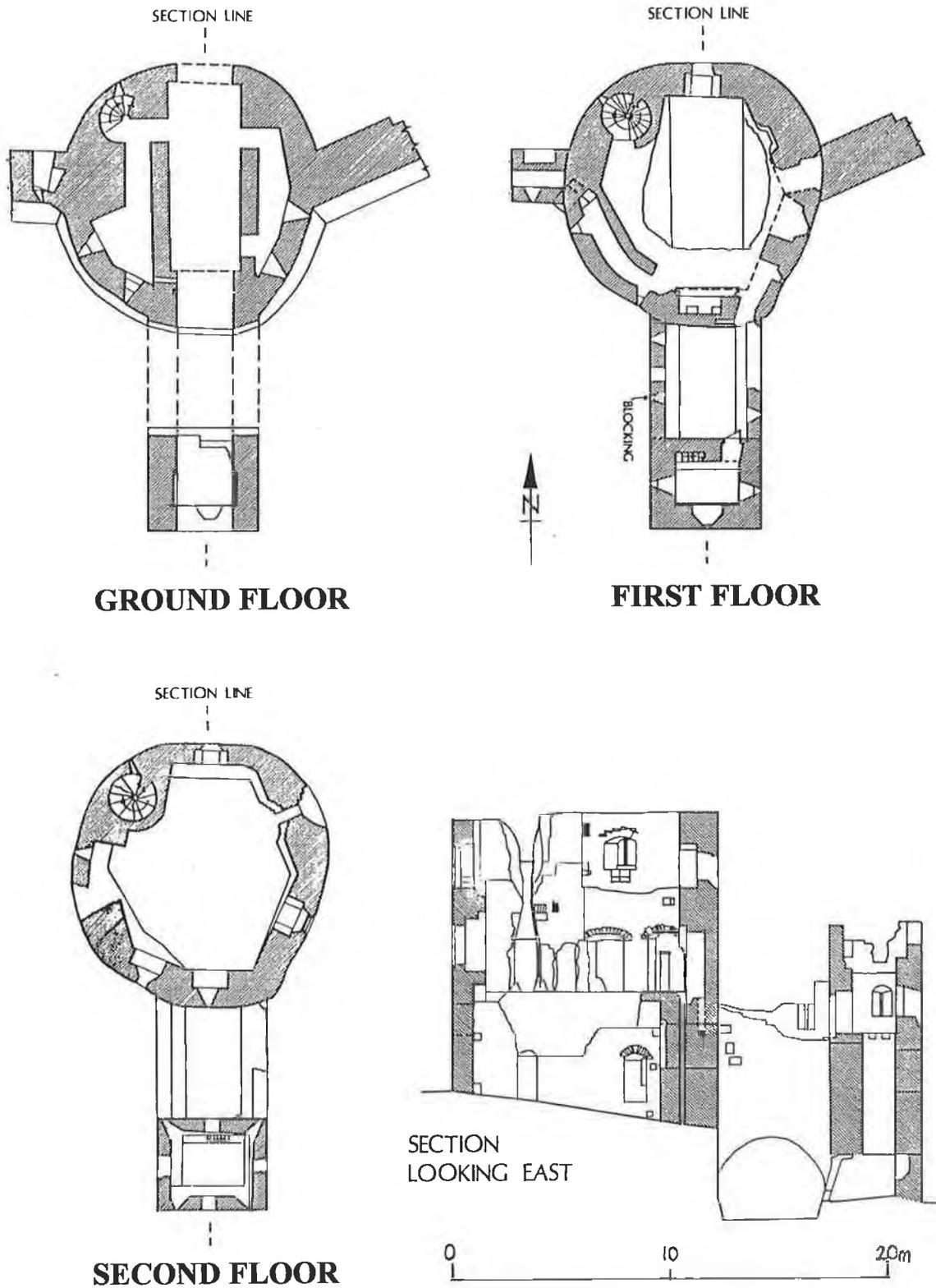
FIG. 6.35 Plans and section of Barbican Gate. Source: Bradley, Urban archaeol. surv., Meath,
fig. 47.

Although he did not excavate it, Hayden drew attention to a number of previously unnoticed architectural features on either side of the Barbican Gate.[263] Two blocked embrasures and a number of blocked opes and holes for hoarding at different levels are present in the curtain wall on either side of the tower which could have important chronological implications for the discussion of the defences in this area. The curtain wall is also thicker than elsewhere for a length of about 3.5m immediately east and west of this tower. Each of the thicker sections includes part of a blocked embrasure with an arrow loop with a plunging base. The internal sides of the embrasures are partly visible as joints on the inner faces of the wall. The embrasures are completely blocked with masonry. In contrast, the other loops in this stretch of the curtain wall and those in tower E do not have plunging bases while those in the west gatehouse do.

Two blocked rectangular opes, set off-centre and above two large holes for timber hoarding, are visible on either side of each of the blocked loops, on the external face of the wall. The holes lie at a lower level than those of the curtain wall east of the gatehouse. The blocked opes and the greater thickness of the wall adjacent to the gatehouse suggest that the gatehouse and opes were built first and that at a later stage the curtain extending outwards from the gatehouse was built, both narrower and at a higher level than initially intended. It is also possible that the Barbican Gate is an insertion, perhaps built to replace an earlier, less well-defended entrance.

[263]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 108-9.

Curtain wall between Barbican Gate and Tower E

This is the best preserved section of curtain wall at Trim. The stonework is neatly coursed and the base batter reaches 2m above ground level. There are three arrow loops, one of which is blocked. A line of putlog holes above the base batter indicates the former presence of scaffolding while a row of larger holes closer to the top of the wall almost

FIG. 6.36 Barbican Gate, curtain wall and Tower E, viewed from east.

certainly represents the position of supports for timber hoarding. The internal wall-walk also survives well here. The height of the wall appears to have increased in steps approaching tower E.

Tower E

Situated at the easternmost angle on the curtain wall, tower E is open-backed and has three floors. The lower two floors each has three embrasures with straight loops. The upper part of the tower is plain with the exception of a ring of equally spaced rectangular putlog holes, the function of which was presumably to support timber hoarding.
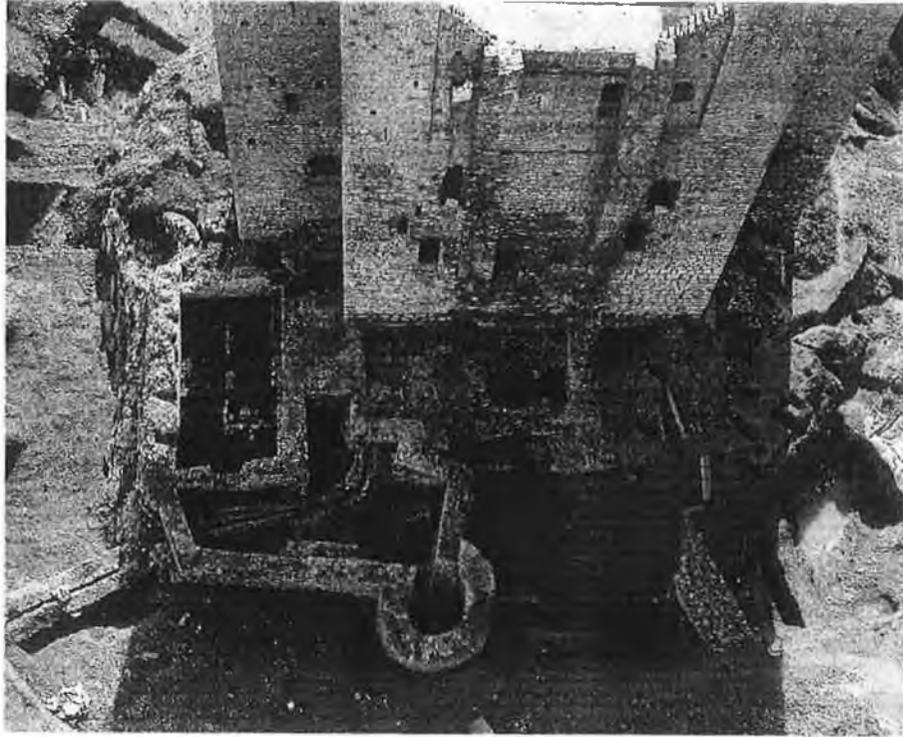
Fig. 6.37 Aerial view of north side of keep during excavations (1995). Note causeway (bottom right), foundations of North Tower, forework and 'stables' (left). Source: Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, p. 45, fig. 32.

EVIDENCE FOR EARLY FOURTEENTH-CENTURY ACTIVITY

Quarry

At the east side of the keep, the backfilled ditch was cut by a quarry (*c*.35m in length (north-south) by 11m in width), late in the thirteenth or early in the fourteenth century.[264] It appears that the quarry was rapidly backfilled with stone fragments (probably waste by-products from the quarrying and stonecutting processes) and a well was constructed in it. It is possible that this quarry was the source of building stone for the secondary forework and/or the new hall constructed in the northwest angle of the curtain walls at about this time (see below).

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[264]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 116, 129.

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Secondary forework

It was also at this time (the early fourteenth century) that a new forebuilding was erected to replace the later twelfth-century structure.[265] The ditch in this area was only partly backfilled. Parts of the earlier forework were retained as footings for the new structure, which consisted of a roughly square area ($c.17.5m^2$) defended by a cylindrical tower at its northwest corner and another at the southeast (see FIG. 6.37). It had a gateway in its west wall, approached by a stone causeway over the ditch. The causeway consisted of two walls retaining a rubble core.

The forework formed a small inner ward, like those found at Adare (Co. Limerick) and Colchester (Essex).[266] The central rectangular block with its circular corner towers is similar in design to the thirteenth-century keeps of Ferns Castle (Co. Wexford) and Lea Castle (Co. Laois). Numismatic evidence from the secondary forework at Trim indicates a date of construction somewhere in the period 1302-30.[267]

Stables

Within the forework, excavations revealed the remains of a rectangular stone structure ($c.11x5m$), interpreted by the excavator as stables. The building, which is contemporary with the forework, is entered through a 1.7m wide north doorway with jambs of dressed limestone and (reused) sandstone. The east wall is pierced by four slit opes with internal embrasures, but only the bases survive. The building was divided by an L-shaped stone footing that almost certainly supported a timber wall. The smaller area was subdivided by a series of regularly spaced posts into four cubicles each measuring 1-1.2m in width and 2m in length. While the excavator believed that this structure served as stables, Sweetman suggested that it was used as a waiting area for visitors before entering the keep.[268]

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[265]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 116-18, 129-30.
[266]Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, p. 68 (Adare); D. F. Renn, *Norman castles in Britain* (London, 1968; reprint 1973), pp 151-4.
[267]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 129-30.
[268]Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, p. 69.

Great Hall

Excavations revealed the remains of a large three-aisled hall in the northwest angle of the curtain walls. The original curtain wall here was rebuilt to form the

northeast wall of the hall. Alterations to the curtain wall included the blocking up of embrasures and the removal of the vaults above them (they rose higher than the proposed

FIG. 6.38 Excavated remains of Great Hall, solar and undercroft, viewed from southeast.

floor level of the new building). The wall was heightened to 9.7m above a battered base of 3m. Five twin-light windows in splayed embrasures overlooked the river. Very little of the brown sandstone tracery survives *in situ*, but some fragments were recovered from later deposits nearby. A small section of the original dressed and moulded sandstone window seat is preserved in the central window. The southwest wall of the hall almost certainly had a similar row of windows but no trace of these remains.

The southwest and northwest walls survive to a maximum height of one course above their footing, but even this has been robbed out in places. The southeast wall appears to have been completely freestanding, and its footing was some 2m wide. The maximum dimensions of the hall were 17x28.5m, giving it a total floor area of 484.5 sq. m. The hall was larger than that at any other castle in Ireland and is comparable in size only with the largest halls built in the most important castles in England.[269] In 1367, when it was repaired, the hall is referred to as the 'red hall beneath the castle', possibly because of the colour of its walls.[270]

[269] J. R. Kenyon, *Medieval fortifications* (Leicester and London, 1990), p. 111; N. W. Alcock, and R. J. Buckley, 'Leicester Castle: the Great Hall' in *Medieval Archaeology*, xxxi (1987), pp 73-9.
[270] Nat. Archives, RC 8/29, pp 500-1, no. 508.

Beneath the southeast end of the hall are the remains of a storage chamber or undercroft with a vaulted roof (see FIG. 6.39). It appears that the wicker-centred vaulting is a later insertion, however, as it blocks the original east doorway into the undercroft. A centrally placed rectangular setting (60x100cm) of mortared stone on the floor almost certainly attests the former presence of a pillar to support the earlier roof.

FIG. 6.39 Undercroft, viewed from south, after excavation.

The undercroft appears to have had two entrances originally. A doorway in the southwest end was 1.4m wide, 2.4m high and had a splayed interior. Evidence for a stairway leading up to, through and beyond this doorway consists of a sloping trench—the steps are no longer in position. The second entrance was centrally placed in the southeast wall but was later blocked. A bolthole in the southwest jamb of this door indicates that it could be locked from within, using a timber crossbeam. This doorway gave access to a rock-cut passageway, parallel to the southeast wall of the undercroft, leading to the river via a gate in the curtain wall.

The steeply sloping passageway is up to 2.4m in width and 2.2m in depth. An internally splayed entrance through the curtain wall measures 1.85m in width, while its north jamb has evidence for two boltholes. Outside the doorway archaeologists revealed the remains of a flat, stone platform overlying bedrock.[271]

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[271]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 122.

The undercroft would have provided a convenient storage place for foodstuffs. Its riverside location and the passage leading to the water's edge suggest that much of the produce stored here would have arrived by boat.

Once the building of the undercroft and the external walls of the hall was complete, the interior of the hall and the area to its southwest and northwest were raised and levelled by the deposition of stone chippings, mud, silt and refuse. Two parallel rows of four stone pillars divided the hall lengthways into a central area and two parallel side aisles. The footings of the pillars survive and the basal course of one is also intact. The alignment of the pillars and windows was such that each window lit the bay between two pillars.

The hall was later divided into two rooms by a low stone wall built above the undercroft. The narrow wall appears to have supported a timber partition that would have separated the last 6m of the hall from the rest of the structure. The floor of the larger room was supported on offsets on the walls and pillars, but the nature of the floor in the smaller building is unclear. Although this dividing feature appears to be of fourteenth- or fifteenth-century date, it is likely to have replaced an earlier partition. Deposits outside this end of the hall contained domestic refuse, organic material and animal bones, while deposits in other areas around the hall did not. It has been suggested that the smaller chamber served as a kitchen to supply food to the larger room. The kitchen operating within the keep at this time (and evidenced by the domestic waste in the ditch around the keep—see above) may have served for everyday use, while that attached to the hall may have provided food for larger gatherings in that part of the castle complex. At Adare Castle, the kitchens were also attached to the east end of the aisled hall.[272]

No deposits derived from occupation were discovered within the hall, and no dating evidence was found. Some pottery and a decorated glass vessel of later thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century date were recovered from a layer overlying

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[272]Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, p. 67.

the stone chippings, mud, silt and refuse deposits. None of the remaining architectural fragments is closely datable, but no features are consistent with a date prior to *c*.1300.

Alterations to Tower 3: the creation of a solar

Alterations in the northwest angle of the curtain walls involved major changes to tower 3. The south entrance to its ground floor was blocked and a new doorway was created on this level giving access, via a stairs, to the basement. A tunnel leading to the basement was also constructed, and it contained a 1.6m wide cobbled ramp with mortared sidewalls. The new entrance to the basement had brown sandstone jambs, only the lowest course of which survives. Inside the entrance, eleven steps lead through a vaulted passage in the wall to the interior of the tower. The roof and side of the passage were rendered with white mortar.

FIG. 6.40 Interior of solar (Tower 3), viewed from south. Note inserted octagonal pillar in basement.

The space within the tower was increased to 9.4x8.4m by quarrying and re-facing the interior of the walls. Old embrasures were blocked and replaced by a new loop in each of the three external walls. Both the north stairs, which had led to the basement, and the access passage to the spiral staircase, were also blocked. A new doorway gave access from the spiral stairs to the ground floor. It appears that there

was also a door from this stairway to the hall. Two round-backed fireplaces were inserted into the tower—one in each of the ground and first floors.

The surviving second floor features of tower 3 all belong to this phase. The embrasures have internally splayed rectangular plunging loops, and part of a limestone window seat survives beside the embrasure in the northeast wall. A stairs gave access to the parapet level, while access to the wall-walk of the curtain wall was also gained through a passage in the west corner of the tower. The floor at this level was carried on offsets on the northwest and northeast walls and on corbels on the southeast wall.

D-shaped tower adjoining solar
A D-shaped tower added to the northeast face of tower 3 was entered through a doorway that was an enlargement of an earlier arrow loop. Little of this smaller tower remained above ground level prior to excavation. It was found that the structure was rectangular, measuring 5.2m in length by 4.2m in width externally and 3.8x1.2m internally. The base of the tower abutted the base batter of tower 3, while the upper floors were keyed into the masonry of the adjoining structure. The doorway linking the towers is 82cm wide and has brown sandstone jambs; it is now blocked with modern masonry. The passage beyond the doorway was cut through an earlier embrasure. A scar on the interior of the north wall of the smaller tower suggests the former presence of a narrow dividing wall. The south room had a vaulted stone roof and an arrow loop in its north wall. The floor was supported by an offset on the north wall.

The second floor of this smaller tower was divided by a spine wall. The floor was supported by offsets. A single small splayed loop and a rectangular window were present in the north wall. The window was later blocked when a fireplace was inserted in the north angle of the tower.

Although no evidence for it survived, the only possible entrance to the ground floor of tower 3 from the outside would have been through the hall. The 'chambers of the red hall beneath the castle, which are joined to the tower called Magdalen Tower' are mentioned in the reference of 1367 and it is likely that the alterations to tower 3 were carried out before this date.[273]

EVIDENCE FOR LATER FOURTEENTH- AND FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ACTIVITY

Excavations revealed that the main construction developments at Trim Castle in this period consisted of alterations to the forework, alterations to the hall and the erection of buildings at its southeast end, and the construction of two buildings inside the curtain wall to the south of the west gatehouse. Evidence was also uncovered for occupation in the north and south towers of the keep at this time and for the use of the basement of tower 3. It is clear that earlier suggestions that the castle was abandoned in the fourteenth-century are incorrect.[274]

Ditch fills

As the fill of the ditch around the keep settled, more material was dumped into it. In the northwest section of the ditch, these deposits consisted primarily of domestic waste with some later fourteenth- and fifteenth-century coins and tokens, attesting the occupation of the keep at this time.[275] Similar deposits were recovered from the terminals of the ditch during the earlier excavations.[276]

Reconstruction of the forebuilding

The early forebuilding was rebuilt as a large rectangular block measuring 6m north-south by 4.5m east-west and abutting the northeast corner of the keep. Only the solid base of the structure survives. The construction of the new building necessitated the partial demolition and rebuilding of the southwest corner of the

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[273]Nat. Archives, RC 8/29, pp 500-1, no. 508.
[274]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', p. 188
[275]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 115, 129.
[276]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 137-8, 140.

stables inside the forework. The interior layout of the stables was rearranged slightly, increasing the area of each of the 'stalls'. It appears that the function of this structure remained the same, however.[277]

Projecting stones on the north side of the forebuilding evidence the former position of the entrance. Although the sidewalls do not survive, scars in the floor suggest that they were thick. Access from this ground floor to the first floor entrance of the keep must have been by means of a stairs, but no evidence for this survives.

'Washhouse' and drain

A small building was constructed between the new forebuilding and the north tower of the keep. Its floor, of closely-set flat stone slabs, sloped gradually down to the northeast corner where it dropped at a steeper angle to a drain.[278] The rusted stumps of bars in holes at the mouth of the drain suggested that it was originally covered by an iron grille. A section of the forework was rebuilt to allow the drain exit through it. Outside the forework, the drain, which was $c.40cm^2$, ran for 18m in the direction of the river. It had a stone-flagged base, dry-stone sides and large, flat stone caps.

The sloping stone-flagged floor of the building and the presence of a substantial drain, as well as the proximity to the north (possible cistern) tower of the keep suggest that this structure was a washhouse or a centre for some light industrial activity.

Well or cistern

The well in the earlier quarry was excavated to a depth of 7.8m when work was halted for safety reasons.[279] It was round to oval in plan and was lined with rectangular blocks of limestone, laid in a continuous spiral. A rectangular aumbry at a depth of 6.9m measured 80cm in depth, 50cm in width and 1.8m in height.

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[277]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 118-19, 130.
[278]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 143-4.
[279]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 144-5.

Paving stones surrounding the wellhead sloped away from it to a stone channel that led to a covered stone drain. The drain, which measured *c*.25x30cm internally, ran for at least 10m in the direction of the river. It appears that this well did not reach the water table, but that water would have soaked into it from the backfilled quarry in which it was constructed. As such, it may be more appropriately termed a cistern.

Later deposits in south tower of keep

Deposits of re-deposited subsoil containing a late fifteenth-century coin and a fragment of dressed stone sealed the postholes for the earlier timber floor supports.[280] The subsoil appears to have functioned as a floor as it was overlain by lenses of ash and organic deposits. The presence of a small, unlined hearth, *c*.75cm across, at the southeast corner suggests that the floors above were no longer extant at this time.

Later deposits in north tower of keep

A rough metalled surface, covered with burnt silts and ash and a large central deposit of mortar overlay the construction level of this tower.[281] The central area of burning which underlay the mortar appears to have been a small hearth, and the layers associated with it seem to represent a phase of casual rather than formal occupation.

Drain from north tower of keep

A finely built stone drain extended northwest from this tower to the edge of the ditch, a distance of 7.4m.[282] It measured 23x26cm internally, but its roof did not survive. No evidence was recovered on which the drain could be dated.

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[280]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 147.

[281]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 147-8.

[282]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 148.

Extension of hall range: alterations to undercroft and passageway

The new undercroft was aligned with its long axis on a northeast-southwest line.[283] It measured 5.6-5.85m in width and 17m in length internally. Its sides were 1.4m in height from the floor to the springing of the new wicker-centred vault. The vaulted roof provided a larger open area and did away with the need for a central pillar. The undercroft was also re-floored at this time. The old entrance was blocked and a new one was created in the southeast corner. A breach 3m in width was made in the sidewall and a doorway was inserted here. The doorway was 1.6m wide and the remainder of the breach was rebuilt with mortared stone. Rebuilding work at the northeast corner of the undercroft and hall almost certainly enabled goods to be hoisted up to the undercroft directly from the riverside. The passageway leading to the river was backfilled with stone chippings and lumps of mortar. No dating evidence for these renovations was found, although they may date to the rebuilding work documented for 1367.[284]

Extension of hall range: ancillary building and small hall

A small building to the south of the hall was evidenced by the presence of foundation trenches and the lines of robbed out walls. The excavator suggested that it was built at the same time as the undercroft was being renovated and that it may have served as an ancillary building to the hall.[285]

This building was replaced by a second, much larger structure of which equally little survived. The basement of tower 2 was backfilled to accommodate the new building, which was set on a pillar-and-arch footing. The northeast wall of the building appears to have been formed of the curtain wall, and the interior of the structure was divided into a central area and two side aisles by two rows of three pillars. From the few remaining features, it appears that the building measured 12m in width by 14.5 in length. No occupation material was recovered, and it was

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[283]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 149-50.
[284]Nat. Archives, RC 8/29, pp 500-1, no. 508.
[285]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 151-2.

suggested that the building might have had a suspended floor.[286] The building is referred to by the excavator as the 'smaller hall'.

'Mint'

The 'smaller hall' was demolished and replaced by a freestanding building. The walls of this building were also extensively robbed out in later centuries. The remaining trenches were visible enough to identify the layout of the structure in all but the northeast side, where the removal of the curtain wall had caused large-scale collapse. The building originally measured *c.*6.5x8.5m internally.

Unlike the earlier structures in this area, this building did not have a suspended floor at ground level and several phases of flooring and occupation deposits survived.[287] The primary occupation level was represented by a keyhole-shaped kiln, several pits, postholes and a cooking pot. Large amounts of ash and charcoal were associated with the kiln and the remains of a casting pit were present nearby. A patch of copper alloy was recovered adjacent to the casting pit.

A secondary phase of activity in this building saw the insertion of a cobbled floor. A quern stone was reused in the flooring and the whole floor was covered in deposits of ash, charcoal and oxidised clay. In a third phase, a structure held on five large posts was built close to the south wall of the building. A 20cm deep slot linked the three central posts. The central area of the building was re-floored with cobbles, and this was sealed by further deposits of ash, oxidised clay and brown loam.

The final phase of occupation in this building was represented by rougher flooring and deposits containing roof-slates, stones, mortar and cinders. The excavator believed that the rough nature of the floor and the presence of roof-slates

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[286]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 151-2.
[287]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 152-7.

demonstrated that occupation at this level was intermittent, and that the building was in a semi-derelict or roofless state.[288]

The establishment of a mint at Trim Castle in 1460-1 is well documented.[289] Tower 2 is referred to locally as 'The Mint' and, while no conclusive evidence was revealed, the excavations showed that the building might indeed have functioned as such.

Two buildings to south of west gatehouse

The remains of two buildings were uncovered south of the west gatehouse.[290] The earlier structure is rectangular and measures 5.6m in width by 9.3m in length externally, but much of the stonework was plundered in the seventeenth century. The walls are of roughly

FIG. 6.41 Excavated remains of rectangular structure to south of west gatehouse, viewed from southeast.

coursed, mortar-bonded masonry, which appears to have been rendered on both faces. The remains of a 1.15m wide doorway are present in the east wall. The doorway was approached from the north by a metalled pathway along the east side of the building. This doorway was later blocked and a new doorway was created at the north end on this side. Two drains were inserted into the building at this stage. The drains converged to the north and descended below floor level into a larger stone-capped drain. Outside the building this drain was truncated by later activity. Occupation deposits contained sherds of fourteenth- to sixteenth-century local wares. The walls of the second building were almost entirely robbed out. It was

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[288]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 155.
[289]*Stat. Ire., Hen. VI*, pp 664-7; Michael Dolley, 'Coinage to 1534: the sign of the times' in *New Hist. Ire.*, ii, 823-4.
[290]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 158-62.

EVIDENCE FOR SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ACTIVITY (TOWER 3)

An octagonal stone column was inserted in the centre of the basement of tower 3 (see FIG. 6.40). The column is clearly derived from another building, and no other comparable stonework exists in the castle. The embrasures in the east side of the tower were also broken out at this time. These works may have been undertaken to facilitate the insertion of cannons, and the pillar may have served to reinforce the floor. Fragments of fine sandstone mouldings matching extant stonework in the cathedral at Newtown Trim were also uncovered in the excavations at the castle, as were two pieces from a cloister arcade.[291]

The large windows of the great hall were broken out and filled with masonry, leaving three small rectangular musket loops where each window once was. Similar sized opes were created in the upper part of the west curtain wall and in the west gatehouse where earlier arrow loops were blocked to create the small opes. Although it is not possible to date these alterations, it is likely that they were created for the use of firearms and could be part of sixteenth-century repairs.

SUMMARY AND GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The first Anglo-Norman fortification: the ringwork

The archaeological evidence for the ringwork phase of the fortifications at Trim Castle can be neatly related to the documentary record. The ringwork (including the ditch, palisade 1, the granary and associated features, and perhaps the structure beside the later west gatehouse) was first erected in 1172 but was destroyed and burnt by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair the following winter (1172-3).[292] In the subsequent rebuilding of 1173 the ditch was reused but a new palisade was erected. A timber-framed structure with a stone footing was constructed along with a series of other features. The annals known as *Mac Carthaigh's Book* record the building of a castle at Trim in 1176 and this may be a reference to the

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[290]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 158-62.
[291]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 165.
[292]Orpen, *The song*, ll 3222-3341; Scott and Martin, *Expugnatio*, p. 141.

completion of the first phase of the masonry keep.[293] A timber from the earliest phase of this stone structure returned a dendrochronological date of 1175±9 and it is likely that this year marked the end of the ringwork phase of Trim Castle.[294]

FIGS 6.42-3 Putlog hole and timber (in situ) in keep; sample of timber removed for dendrochronological analysis. Source: Condit, 'Rings of truth at Trim Castle', pp 30, 32.

The artefactual assemblage from the ringwork phase of activity is dominated by Ham Green pottery (although some local wares are also present), horseshoes, horseshoe nails, horse harness pendants and arrowheads. The discovery of a granary and the evidence for oats, wheat and barley also suggest the presence of horses. The evidence from outside the main area of the ringwork indicates that pre-keep Anglo-Norman activity was not confined to within the ringwork itself. Indeed, if the building beside the later west gatehouse is accepted as an earlier gatehouse, then the ringwork itself was simply the core of the early Anglo-Norman site.

The presence of a ringwork beneath the keep at Trim is not unique. A number of castles have yielded evidence for a ringwork fortification pre-dating the stone castle—Adare (Co. Limerick), Carlow, Clonmacnoise (Co. Offaly) and Ferns (Co. Wexford) are among them.[295] Adare Castle in particular provides a parallel for the ringwork at Trim, while Hayden's investigations at Maynooth Castle (Co. Kildare) have revealed the presence there of a pre-keep ringwork beneath the masonry

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[293] *Misc. Ir. Annals, s.a.* 1176 (*Mac Carthaigh's Book*).

[294] Condit, 'Rings of truth at Trim Castle', pp 30-3.

[295] Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, pp 4-6; idem, 'Archaeological excavations at Ferns Castle, Co. Wexford' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxxix, Sect. C (1979), pp 217-45; K. D. O'Conor, 'The origins of Carlow Castle' in *Arch. Ire.*, xi, no. 3 (Autumn 1997), pp 13-16.

structure.[296] Recent excavations at Kilkenny Castle have also uncovered portion of a large enclosing fosse underneath the west wing of the existing building,[297] and work at Limerick Castle has exposed a stone-revetted earthen bank with a wide fosse under part of the remains of the stone castle.

The masonry keep

In plan, the keep at Trim is most unusual. Keeps bearing the greatest similarity to it are those at Warkworth Castle (Northumberland),[298] Castle Rushen (Isle of Man),[299] and Orford Castle (Suffolk).[300] The keep at Warkworth, which may have been built *c*.1200, is square with a semi-octagonal projection in the middle of each side. Similar projecting towers are present at Castle Rushen, but these appear to be later additions. Henry II's cylindrical keep at Orford may be dated to the 1170s and has three projecting towers. Despite the similarities, however, no other structure is truly comparable to the keep at Trim and its design and construction must be viewed as unique.

It is widely agreed that the weakest point of a stone building is its corners, and it is hard to explain the choice at Trim of a plan with twenty right-angled corners. The unusual design has been described by Stalley as more an exercise in geometry than a strictly defensive undertaking.[301] Work by Kevin O'Brien has further developed this idea and shown that the walls, windows and doorways were all laid out following a strict geometric plan.[302]

The arcs and lines used to layout the keep would have been marked out on the ground using measuring ropes in the same manner as recorded at the Abbey of

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[296] Alan Hayden, pers. comm.
[297] Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, pp 5-6.
[298] Forde-Johnston, *Great medieval castles of Britain*, pp 185-8; Platt, *The castle in medieval England and Wales*, p. 131, fig. 122.
[299] Renn, *Norman castles in Britain*, pp 278, 305.
[300] Platt, *The castle in medieval England and Wales*, pp 35-8.
[301] Roger Stalley, 'The Anglo-Norman keep at Trim: its architectural implications' in *Arch. Ire.*, vi, no. 4 (Winter 1992), pp 16-19.
[302] Kevin O'Brien, pers. comm.

Cluny.[303] Excavations at Trim uncovered part of the shallow marking-out trench under the north tower of the keep. This semi-circular trench appears to be a unique survival—its diameter of 4.4m is exactly twice the length of the medieval *cana* or cane, a measurement recorded in the account of the rebuilding of Saphet Castle in Israel in the mid thirteenth century[304] (although significant regional variations existed in the length of a *cana*).[305] The use of this measurement has also been recognised in the north curtain tower at Trim and at King John's Tower, in Roscrea Castle.[306] In addition, many of the measurements for the keep at Trim Castle, like that at Maynooth, are multiples of 70cm.[307]

The keep contained all of the rooms necessary for the administration of the lordship—the chancery, the exchequer and the treasury—while it also housed a chapel and chaplain's quarters, a hall and possibly a prison and garrison. In addition, in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, it served as the primary domestic quarters of the lord and his inner household. A study of the internal arrangements of the keep reveals how the two essential roles of the building—as an administrative headquarters and a private residence—were carried out simultaneously but independently. The private quarters and the administrative facilities were kept entirely separate—even the hall on the third floor was made accessible to the public without endangering the defences of the castle or invading the privacy of the residents. A spiral stairs in the northeast angle of the main body of the keep, close to the entrance, leads to the hall on the top floor and provides access to the chapel and administrative chambers. A wooden gallery running right around the inner face of the hall allowed access to all parts of the castle at third floor level, but not elsewhere.

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[303]Wolfgang Braunfels, *Monasteries of western Europe* (Princeton, 1972), p. 59.
[304]Hugh Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 195.
[305]R. E. Zupko, *Italian weights and measures from the middle ages to the nineteenth century* (Philadelphia, 1981), pp 61-8; idem, *French weights and measures before the Revolution: a dictionary of provincial and local units* (Bloomington and London, 1978), pp 33-5; Horace Doursther, *Dictionnaire universel des poids et mesures anciens et modernes, contenant des tables des monnaies de tous les pays* (Amsterdam, 1965), pp 78, 82-5.
[306]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 88.

In the southwest angle of the keep a second spiral stairs gives access to the west and south side towers and the second-floor main chambers. Unlike the north and east towers, accessed via the 'public' stairs, the west and south towers have fireplaces and high-pitched roofs, suggesting their role as residential quarters. These private rooms were not easily accessible from the east side of the building where the entrance and public rooms were located.

The subdivision of the third floor hall appears to have taken place in the thirteenth century, almost certainly at the same time as the Great Hall was constructed. This was also the time at which some of the residential functions of the castle were transferred to the solar and ancillary buildings in the northwest angle of the curtain walls.

Roof-tiles

From its first phase, the keep at Trim appears to have been roofed with tiles. The form of these tiles is unparalleled elsewhere in Ireland or Britain. Some were probably imported, while others could be local copies. They are most closely paralleled by the 'monk' and 'nun' tiles used to roof castles and churches in Denmark and north Germany from the twelfth to sixteenth centuries.[308]

Plinth

It is possible that the plinth was added to the keep very soon after it had been built, when the battered curtain walls were constructed, probably in the 1170s or 1180s, making the appearance of the base of the keep uniform with the newly built curtain defences. McNeill suggested that the 1210-11 reference to a large horse/cable sent to help demolish or strengthen the tower at Trim could actually refer to the construction of the plinth.[309] While this is certainly possible it might also relate to other works on the keep.

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[307]Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, p. 70; Kevin O'Brien, pers. comm.

[308]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 90-1.

[309]T. E. McNeill, 'The great towers of early Irish castles' in Marjorie Chibnall (ed.), *Anglo-Norman studies XII: proceedings of the Battle Conference, 1989* (Woodbridge, 1990), pp 99-117, at p. 108.

The primary function of the plinth was to deny attackers access to the base of the wall of the keep. Battered plinths were added to walls in other castles, as around the gatehouse of Carlingford Castle (Co. Louth) and at the keep of Dunamase Castle (Co. Laois). When the inner gatehouse of de Lacy's caput at Ludlow was converted into a keep, a battered stone plinth was also added to its north side in about 1180AD.[310] Hayden has suggested that this provided the inspiration for the plinth at Trim.[311]

The filling of the ditch and limekiln (1280-1320)

The ceramic artefacts contained in the primary silting of the ditch consisted solely of sherds of Ham Green ware, while the deposits immediately overlying this silt contained later thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century pottery and coins. The stratigraphy indicates that the ditch was kept clean until the later thirteenth century when deliberate backfilling began. It appears that most of the ditch was filled with re-deposited boulder clay, but that a section to the northwest of the keep was kept open as a dump for refuse from the keep. The deposits of domestic waste included ash and organic material containing mammal, bird and fish bones, pottery (including Saintonge Polychrome ware), objects of well-preserved fine metalwork, and a number of English tokens and coins, all minted in the period 1280-1320. These deposits were dumped into the ditch from its inner side and must have originated in the keep, most likely in the kitchen(s). An analysis of the (1990s) bone assemblage suggests that the occupiers of the keep enjoyed a rich diet.[312]

These deposits are clearly related to the material excavated by Sweetman at the terminals of the ditch.[313] There, the deposits contained charcoal and ash flecks and a number of animal bones (ox, sheep (or goat), pig, deer, bird and fish were represented). Sherds of late thirteenth-century Irish glazed jugs, a cooking pot and

[310]W. H. St John Hope, 'The castle of Ludlow' in *Archaeologia*, lxi (1908), pp 257-328 at p. 316.
[311]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 94.
[312]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 92.
[313]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 135-6, 138-40.

a green-glazed Saintonge jug were also recovered, as well as a coin of Alexander III of Scotland [1249-86].[314]

Curtain walls and towers

The curtain wall appears to have been built in two phases; the towers (1-3) on the north and east (riverside sections) are square in plan, whereas those on the south and west (A-E) are semicircular or D-shaped. Although some sherds of Ham Green ware were recovered from the backfill of the construction trench of tower 2 and deposits beneath the west gatehouse, the excavations did not provide enough clear evidence to date any of these mural structures.[315] The dating is therefore dependent on the comparison of the forms and layout of the towers and walls.

Open-gorged rectangular towers do not seem to have been used or do not survive at other Irish castles, except for those at Carlingford which are of early thirteenth century date.[316] They are present at several early castles in Britain, however, including Dover (Kent; 1180s) and Framlingham (Suffolk; 1190s).[317]

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[314]Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle', pp 136-7.

[315]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, p. 110.

[316]Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, pp 47-9; McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 43.

[317]Colin Platt, *The castle in medieval England and Wales* (London, 1982; new ed. 1995), p. 46 (Dover); James Forde-Johnston, *Great medieval castles of Britain* (London, 1979), pp 16-19 (Dover), 21 (Framlimgham).

FIG. 6.44 Octagonal tower at Augustinian priory, Inistioge (Co. Kilkenny).

Octagonal towers, like the rebuilt upper stories of the west gatehouse at Trim, appear in many castles at widely differing dates. Due to its historical connections, the most obvious parallels for the Trim tower are those in the de Lacy castles at Ludlow and Carlingford, which McNeill dates to *c*.1200.[318] Another example of similar form survives in the Augustinian priory in Inistioge (Co. Kilkenny), possibly also of early thirteenth-century date.[319]

The round, open-gorged towers on the west curtain wall would normally be indicative of a date no earlier than the very end of the twelfth or very beginning of the thirteenth century. Knight and McNeill have discussed the parallels for the south gatehouse, concluding that it is closest in style to examples in Poitou,

[317]Colin Platt, *The castle in medieval England and Wales* (London, 1982; new ed. 1995), p. 46 (Dover); James Forde-Johnston, *Great medieval castles of Britain* (London, 1979), pp 16-19 (Dover), 21 (Framlimgham).
[318]McNeill, 'The great towers of early Irish castles', p. 103; idem, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 43.
[319]H. G. Leask, *Irish churches and monastic buildings, III: medieval gothic: the last phases* (Dundalk, 1971), p. 52.

France, which were built in the very early part of the thirteenth century.[320] They also note that it should certainly predate the 1220s when twin towered gates were in vogue.

While these sets of dates for the two areas of the curtain defences are close, a slight gap is evident. The rectangular towers have parallels with structures ranging from the 1180s to *c*.1200 while the round towers are best paralleled shortly after 1200. The first two phases of the building of the keep coincide with periods that the castle was held by the de Lacys. Hayden suggested that the earlier phase of the curtains was begun by Hugh de Lacy in the second half of the 1170s or 1180s but was not completed before his death, and that Walter completed the enclosure early in the thirteenth century.[321]

Great Hall

A date towards the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century has been suggested for the construction of the hall.[322] The subdivision of the main hall in the keep itself possibly took place after the construction of the Great Hall—the functions of the earlier hall could now be carried out in the new building and the alterations could be made in the keep. These developments appear to be part of the deliberate separation of the public and private functions of the castle. It is possible that the hall is the building referred to in 1326 when £20 was ordered for the repair of the great hall, houses and other works in the castle,[323] while a reference of 1367 suggests that the hall was substantially renovated at this time.[324]

McNeill noted that a typical trait of many later thirteenth-century castles in Ireland was the building of a hall 'normally free-standing or connected only to a curtain,

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[320]Jeremy Knight, 'The road to Harlech: aspects of some early Welsh castles' in J. R. Kenyon and Richard Avent (ed.), *Castles in Wales and the Marches: essays in honour of D. J. Cathcart-King* (Cardiff, 1987), pp 75-88, at pp 78-9; McNeill, 'Trim Castle, Co. Meath; the first three generations', pp 333-5.
[321]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 112-13.
[322]Hayden, *Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8*, pp 121-3.
[323]*Rot. pat. Hib.*, p. 35b, no. 57.
[324]Nat. Archives, RC 8/29, pp 500-1, no. 508.

not set in a range of buildings'.[325] The re-use of part of the curtain walls in the construction of a hall, which clearly saved on expenditure, is paralleled at a number of sites including Adare (Co. Limerick) and Castleroche (Co. Louth).[326]

Adjacent to the Great Hall, the enlarged and renovated tower 3 comprised a suite of rooms attached only to the hall itself and would have provided a convenient solar for the lord and his family. It was equipped with new fireplaces and the smaller adjoining tower probably contained garderobes projecting out over the moat or river.

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[325]McNeill, *Castles in Ireland*, p. 145.
[326]Sweetman, *Medieval Castles of Ireland*, pp 67-8 (Adare), 108 (Castleroche).