

# Emerging from the Mist: Ireland and Man in the Eleventh Century

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The famous king of Leinster, Diarmait mac Máel na mBó, on his death in 1072, was acclaimed by an Irish annalist as *rí Innsi Gaill* (king of the isles of the foreigners). These were the islands between Britain and Ireland which had been settled by or made subject to the Vikings, who were the original *Gaill* of the title. At a later period the term may have been limited to the outer Hebrides, but in the period under discussion here, it clearly refers to any of the Irish Sea islands north of and including Man, periodically subjected to the control of Gaelic or Scandinavian rulers. As such, it is synonymous with the *Sudreyiar* of Norse usage. Such an all-embracing term, however, applied to so many islands in such a fractious region, is likely to have been an exaggeration if used to describe the sphere of direct authority of any one man; frequently, it may have meant no more than that an individual ruled one of the larger islands, Man or Islay or Lewis or Skye, and *sought* to rule the others. In the eleventh century, because of the Isle of Man's close connexion with the affairs of the Viking town of Dublin in particular, the title *rí Innsi Gaill* seems in most instances to refer to the ruler of Man and would-be ruler of the other islands.<sup>1</sup>

There is a near total silence by Irish writers about the affairs of Man and the Isles for the first two-thirds of the eleventh century. This makes it very difficult to chart the progress of Irish involvement in the region or, for that matter, to say with any degree of certainty whether the ruling Viking (or Ostman) dynasty of Dublin held sway there. It is interesting, though, that we have a good deal of information about the contacts of the Dublin Ostmen with the east-Ulster kingdom of Ulaid (modern Counties Antrim and Down). This is the Irish territory that lies closest to the Isle of Man and the intrusion of Dubliners into its affairs is probably due to the latter's Manx links (s.aa. 1000 (AI); 1001 (AFM); 1022 (AFM; ATig); 1038 (AFM; ATig); 1045 (AFM; ATig; AI; AClon). The first hard evidence, though, only comes in 1052 when Diarmait mac Máel na mBó expelled the reigning king of Dublin, an Ostman with the rather Irish-looking name of Echmarcach mac Ragnaill, who thereupon went '*tar muir* (over the sea)' (AU; CS; AFM s.a.1052). Even then we cannot be sure that he fled to Man because when Echmarcach died in 1065 the Irish chronicler Marianus Scotus called

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<sup>1</sup> I have discussed the relationship at length in *Ériu*, (1992), and what follows is a summary of the evidence.

him king of 'na Renn (the Rhinns [of Galloway])' (Anderson 1922, I, 592; Byrne 1982).<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it does look as though he took initial refuge in Man. After Diarmait mac Máel na mBó seized Dublin he appointed his own son Murchad (ancestor of the famous MacMurrough family) to rule the city.<sup>3</sup> But in 1061 the Irish annals record that Murchad invaded the Isle of Man, took tribute (*cáin*) from it, and defeated mac Ragnaill, presumably Echmarcach (AFM; ATig s.a.1061). The taking of *cáin* was 'a definitive right of kingship' (Simms 1985). Although it could be exercised by an overking without displacing an existing subject ruler, the fact that Echmarcach shortly turns up as king only in the Rhinns of Galloway suggests that he fled there after 1061. The events of 1061 are a most revealing glimpse, the first clear insight we get into the way in which Irishmen were enveloped in the politics of the Irish Sea as a result of their assertion of authority over the Ostmen.

In a way that no previous Irish king had attempted, Diarmait mac Mael na mBó's son Murchad was able to maintain his rule over Dublin for many years, and presumably over Man for the best part of a decade until his death in 1070 (Ó Corrain 1972). At his death, his father resumed control over Dublin (and, one assumes, Man). When Diarmait himself was killed in battle in 1072, it was at the head of an army made up not just of Leinstermen but of Ostmen, many hundreds of whom were slain (AFM s.a.1072). This assumption of his son's place is the justification for one annalist's application to him of the title *rí Laigen & Gall* (AU s.a.1072). But, as we have seen, another set, the annals of 'Tigernach', includes among his subjects not only the Gaill of Dublin but also those of *Innsi Gall*; if we accept that the jewel in the crown of the latter is the Isle of Man, overlordship of which his son Murchad had established in 1061, the obituarist cannot be said to be taking too great a liberty.

After Diarmait's death his former ally, the Munster king Toirrdelbach ua Briain (O'Brien), intent upon enforcing his claim to the high-kingship of Ireland, led an expedition to Dublin. There, the Ostmen granted to him what Diarmait mac Mael na mBó had forcibly snatched exactly twenty years earlier, the kingship of Dublin (AI s.a.1072).<sup>4</sup> This was an extraordinary development, the start of a half-century of intrusion by the Uí Briain royal house of Munster into the affairs of Dublin. Hand in hand with that went a thirst for adventure in the Isles. The Leinstermen had been kings of Dublin for nearly a decade before we hear of any involvement in the Irish Sea islands; but, remarkably, the Munstermen turn up in Man within a year of their annexation of Dublin. In 1073 two members of the Uí Briain - either brothers or first-cousins of Toirrdelbach were killed in the Isle of Man along with a certain Sitriuc son of Olaf (AU; cf. ALCé s.a.1073). The circumstances of their deaths are unclear. Who Sitriuc was, who exactly the two Uí Briain were, whether or not they had the backing of Toirrdelbach ua Briain, is all open to conjecture. But it can hardly be doubted that their presence in Man a year after Toirrdelbach seized Dublin was part and parcel of Munster's attempt to control the city and its insular possessions.

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<sup>2</sup>Marianus knew what he was talking about because he entered the monastery of Mag Bile (Moville) in the Ards peninsula directly across the channel from the Rhinns of Galloway in the very year of Echmarcach's expulsion (Kenney 1929).

<sup>3</sup>AFM s.a. 1059 calls him '*tigherna Gall* (lord of the foreigners)'. See Ó Corrain (1971)

<sup>4</sup>'*co tucsat Gaill rige Atha Cliath dó*'.

The early stages of that struggle are largely hidden from us, but we know that in 1075 Toirrdelbach decided to do as Diarmait mac Mael na mBó had, and he installed his own son Muirchertach as king of Dublin; it seems too that another of Toirrdelbach's sons, Diarmait, had begun to act as governor of the other main Ostman city of Waterford, from where he led a raid on Wales in 1080 (AI s.a.1075, 1080).<sup>5</sup> But the advances the Munstermen had made in dominating Dublin's affairs suffered considerably when a succession dispute broke out after the death of Toirrdelbach ua Briain in 1086. Muirchertach attempted to seize the kingship of all Munster and had Diarmait banished. The latter then seems to have gained control of the entire Ostman fleet.<sup>6</sup> The sons of another brother, Tadc, also played a part in undermining their uncle (AFM s.a.1091). According to the contemporary text on the famous women of Ireland known as the *Banshenchas*, Tadc was married to a daughter of the former Ostman king of Dublin, Echmarcach mac Ragnaill.<sup>7</sup> A year after Toirrdelbach ua Briain's death, the Annals of Ulster report that there was 'a sea expedition by the sons of mac Ragnaill and by the son of the king of Ulaid into Man, and in it fell the sons of mac Ragnaill'. Clearly, in the confusion of the Munster succession race, the Meic Ragnaill had re-emerged to threaten Man. They were probably backed by the sons of Tadc Ua Briain, one of whom was killed in Man in 1096 (AFM s.a.1096), another of whom, as we shall see, was later to make himself king of the Isles. Since Muirchertach was at this point still hoping to make good his claim to be king of Dublin - and with that went an effort to wield authority in Man - this alliance of his enemies appears to have been an attempt to undermine it.

The instability produced by the Munster squabbles meant that Dublin came within the sights of others. It is important to bear in mind that we are not dealing merely with Irishmen who were brought to contemplate expansion into the Isles by virtue of their success in annexing Dublin. The reverse also happens; men come to power in the Isles for whom it is a natural next step to seek to add Dublin to their domain: the pretensions of the ruling Ostman élite within the city's walls, and the claims of Irish kings to overlordship of its citizens, were cast aside, so that the Dubliners embraced the overtures of a sea-lord from Man, or the Scottish isles, or Scandinavia. The first of these was Godred Crovan.

In spite of his success in implanting a dynasty that ruled over the kingdom of Man and the Isles, whole and in part, for nearly two hundred years, very little is known about the origins of Godred Crovan or about the way in which he managed to do so.<sup>8</sup> One set of Irish annals calls him Gofraidh mac mic Araitl (ATig s.a.1091), which most probably means that he was a son or nephew of the Ivar Haraldsson (Ímar mac Araitl,

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<sup>5</sup>AI s.a. 1075, 1080; we still have a letter from the people of Waterford to Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury, circa 1095-6, which is co-signed by 'Dermeth Dux':(Ussher 1632).

<sup>6</sup>AI s.a 1087 reports that Diarmait led a naval force 'on a circuit' and plundered Cloyne in County Cork. But the other Irish annals report the following encounter for the same year: 'Great slaughter of the foreigners of Dublin, Waterford, and Wexford by the Uí Echach Muman on the day they intended to plunder Cork' (AU; AFM). They may both be describing different episodes on the same naval expedition along the Cork coast led by Diarmait Ua Briain.

<sup>7</sup>He had by her three sons, Donnchad, Domnall and Amlaíb, and a daughter, Bé Binn (*Revue Celtique*, 48 (1931), 196).

<sup>8</sup>The Manx chronicle claims that he was '*filius Haraldis nigri de ysland*' (CrMi fol. 32v.). This presumably refers to Iceland (if it is not a misreading of the contemporary English spelling for Ireland, a suggestion I owe to Dr Alex Woolf), but if so we know nothing of this part of his life.

d. 1054) who ruled as king in Dublin from 1038 to 1046, and who in turn was probably a nephew of the famous King Sitric Silkenbeard.<sup>9</sup> He therefore had good credentials. He seems to have made a career for himself as a mercenary and allegedly fought at Stamford Bridge (CrMi fol 32v).<sup>10</sup> From there he fled to Man, but nothing further is heard of him for some thirteen years or so until he eventually conquered the island for himself, about 1079, with the help of men from the other islands in the region. It is only in 1091 that Godred (or Gofraid) makes his first appearance in Dublin. The annals of 'Tigernach' have simply, in an entry recounting the events of this year, '*Gofraid mac mic Arailt rí Átha Cliath* (Gofraid son of the son of Harald king of Dublin)', which seems to mean that he assumed the kingship of the city at that date. If the Manx chronicle is to be believed, Gofraid 'subdued Dublin and a great part of Leinster (*subiugauit sibi dubliniam & magnam partem laynestir*)' (CrMi fol. 33r.), patently an exaggeration, but it may record a tradition that he had gained control not merely over the city of Dublin but over the full extent of its hinterland, *Fine Gall* (north County Dublin), with, possibly, suzerainty over some neighbouring territories.

Gofraid Móránach lasted only a few years in Dublin. The Annals of Inisfallen say of 1094 that there was 'Great warfare in [this] year between Ua Briain and the northern half of Ireland, and Gofraid, king of Dublin'. This seems to be a significant statement: it marks Gofraid out as a man apart. He was not simply one of the small fry making up the host of Muirchertach Ua Briain's enemies: the partisan Munster chronicle reveals the perception of those in the latter province that its king faced a war on two fronts, a land army made up of many of the kings of the north of Ireland (led by his chief opponent, the Ulster king Domnall Mac Lochlainn of Cenél nÉógain) and a battle-hardened naval force from the Irish Sea region allied to them (under Gofraid). In the struggle, Muirchertach's forces expelled Gofraid from Dublin (AFM s.a. 1094; cf AU; ACIn; AI.). He died in Islay in the following year (CrMi fol. 33v.), which may suggest that Ua Briain was able to oust him from Man as well. In his obit, Gofraid is called by the annals compiled by the Four Masters '*tighearna Gall Átha Cliath & na nInnsedh* (lord of the foreigners of Dublin and of the Isles)'. The Inisfallen analyst also calls him *rig Átha Cliath & Inse Gall* (king of Dublin and of the Isles). This is a title granted, as noted above, to Diarmait mac Máel na mBó in one set of annals, but, as far as I am aware, no other person ever bore it. That is not to say that no other person ever exercised kingship simultaneously in both Dublin and the Isles; many of those whom the Irish annals classify simply as '*rí Gall* (king of the foreigners)' clearly did. But its use in both these late eleventh-century cases may be by way of emphasis. In the case of Diarmait, the analyst appears to be stressing his achievement in extending his authority into the Isles. As for Gofraid, it was this Islesman's accession to power in Dublin that was the important point.

<sup>9</sup>Sitric had a brother Harald (d. 999): AU. Godred's Irish background probably accounts also for his soubriquet (in the Manx chronicle) 'Crovan', which appears Gaelic, though in Irish sources he is referred to as Móránach'. The late Brian Ó Cúív is the only scholar to attempt to explain the connexion, if any, between the two (*méaránach* from *méar*, 'a finger', *crovan* from *crobh-bhán*, 'of the white hand'): 'A poem in praise of Ragnall, king of Man', *Éigse*, 8 (1957), 283-301. See also Broderick (1980).

<sup>10</sup>It is just possible that he formed part of an Irish contingent there, if Adam of Bremen is right (which may be doubted) in saying that a *rex Hiberniae* was killed in the battle: M.G.H. Scriptores, VII, 356; (Anderson 1922, II, 16, n. 4.)

Dramatic developments followed Gofraid's death. It was apparently at this point that all the noblemen of the Isles sent an embassy to Muirchertach Ua Briain, 'requesting that he send some worthy man of royal stock to act as regent until Olaf, son of Gofraid, came of age'; he willingly agreed, and sent a certain Domnall son of Tadc (CrMi fol.33v).<sup>11</sup> This is a development of some importance. That the king of Munster or any other Irish king should have a role in the provision of a king of the Isles is all but unique. It may be partly the consequence of Muirchertach's stature abroad; it is more likely to have arisen from a position of authority in the region which he had lately attained.<sup>12</sup> Domnall son of Tadc was Muirchertach's nephew and his decision to send him to the Isles sits ill with what we know of the earlier opposition which the sons of Tadc had shown to Muirchertach. Furthermore, the Irish annals have no mention of these developments.<sup>13</sup> But the claim has one important piece of corroboration: an Amlaíb (Olaf) son of Tadc was killed in Man in the following year (AFM s.a. 1096). This is Domnall's brother,<sup>14</sup> and his death in conflict on the Isle of Man surely reflects the brothers' efforts to gain control of the island. In any case, whatever the circumstances of Domnall's elevation to kingship in the Isles, what matters is not so much *when* he ruled there (and whether he had Muirchertach's approval) as that he did so at all. It was a remarkable episode - the culmination of a period of rapid intensification of Irish dominance in the region - and boded ill for those for whom such a development would be unwelcome. That was a surprisingly large body of opinion which included the kings of England and Scotland, the Uí Briain's opponents within Ireland, and the would-be suzerain of the Isles, the king of Norway.

It was possibly this Irish intrusion into the region that brought King Magnus Barelegs of Norway west in 1098. Several sources of Irish, Scandinavian, Welsh, Manx and Anglo-Norman origin are in agreement in citing his activities as an act of aggression against Ireland.<sup>15</sup> His first western expedition was in 1098 during which he took into his hands the Orkneys and that part of the northern Scottish mainland which the earls of Orkney were used to controlling, the Western Isles (which the new Scots king, Edgar, happily ceded to him, having little or no authority there in any case), and Man. If forcing its inhabitants to provide timber for his encastellation process is any guide, he may also have exercised suzerainty over Galloway. He may too have received the submission of Gwynedd.<sup>16</sup> It was, on paper, a sizeable achievement, but there is no hard evidence of contact with Ireland on this occasion. In fact, if we were dependent on Irish sources alone we would not know that Magnus's first expedition ever took place. The only whiff of involvement is preserved in a record of conflict in 1098

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<sup>11</sup>*Dompnaldum filium Tadc'.*

<sup>12</sup>When the bishop of Dublin, Donnus Ua hAingliu, died towards the end of 1095, his successor, Samuel, was chosen by 'Muriardach, king of Ireland', along with the clergy and people (Rule 1884).

<sup>13</sup>AI, in fact, has Domnall son of Tadc seizing the kingship of the Isles in 1111.

<sup>14</sup>See note 7 above.

<sup>15</sup>There is an authoritative analysis of the subject in Power 1986.

<sup>16</sup>The Manx chronicle says that 'he sailed to Anglesey ... and subjected the island to his rule'; Norse sources relate that after defeating the Normans in Anglesey he went on to possess the whole island, 'the most southerly place where former kings of Norway had owned dominion' (The *Heimshringla* Magnus Barelegs's Saga, quoted in Anderson, 1922, II, 112). On his second expedition, Welsh sources have it, Gruffudd ap Cynan, prince of Gwynedd, provided timber for his castles (Jones 1952); for the possible practice of rendering timber as tribute, see Flanagan (1989).

between the Ulaid and 'three of the ships of the foreigners of the Isles',<sup>17</sup> in which the entire crews, a little over 120 men, were killed.<sup>18</sup>

Only on the second expedition in 1102 do Irish sources have a good deal to report of his actions. This time he seems to have come to deal specifically with the Irish. His arrival certainly frightened them. It is noticeable that the annalists see Magnus as a threat to every side in Ireland.<sup>19</sup> The Welsh *Brut* histories have Magnus 'hoisting his sails against the men of Scotland' obviously mistranslating the *Scottos* (= Irish) of the Latin original (Jones 1952, 25).<sup>20</sup> Orderic Vitalis says that Magnus 'planned an attack on the Irish (*Irenses*) and prepared a fleet of sixty ships to sail against them'.<sup>21</sup> His envoys, the Manx chronicle reports, told him of Ireland's beauty and fertility, and 'when Magnus heard this he thought of nothing other than to subjugate the whole of Ireland to his sway' (CrMi fol.36r). The Annals of Ulster bluntly state that in 1102 Magnus came to the Isle of Man with a great fleet and made 'a year's peace' with the Irish. This in itself is indicative of enmity, as these peaces were diplomatic devices developed to provide a breathing-space for a country where warfare was sometimes close to endemic. But implicit in the annalist's remark that he came to Man and thereupon made peace with the Irish is that arriving in Man put Magnus into an Irish context. The Four Masters add that this truce was agreed after 'the men of Ireland made a hosting to Dublin to oppose Magnus (*Sloighedh fer Éreand co hÁth Cliath i naghaidh Maghnusa*)' which is a strong hint that he had actually taken the city.<sup>22</sup> That the Irish compromised with him in reaching peaceful terms suggests an acknowledgement of his position there. This is precisely what Magnus Barelegs's Saga claims for him: 'King Magnus proceeded with his host to Ireland, and plundered there. Then King Muirchertach (*Myrjartak*) came to join him, and they won much of the land - Dublin and Dublinshire' (Anderson 1922, II, 127).

It is probably incorrect to see Magnus and Muirchertach as allied from the start. The effect, and presumably the original intention, of Magnus's assertion of overlordship in the Irish Sea was to circumscribe Munster's sphere of influence. From Ua Briain's point of view, the threat to Dublin was more worrying still. Furthermore, the collision course with Ua Briain upon which Magnus had entered made him the natural bedfellow of the northern king Domnall Mac Lochlainn, Muirchertach's rival for the high-kingship, with whom he was at war. But the 'year's peace' negotiated at Dublin in 1102 probably

<sup>17</sup>*tri longa do longaibh Gall na nInnsi*: AU; AFM s.a. 1098.

<sup>18</sup>This may have been in response to what Norse sources describe as having happened during Magnus's voyage south in that year: in sailing southwards by Kintyre, he 'plundered on both boards - up in Scotland, and out in Ireland. He accomplished there many great deeds in both kingdoms'. So says the *Fagrskinna*, a version of the kings' sagas, compiled in Norway in the 1220s (Clover 1982); I have again used the translation by Anderson 1922, II, 109, n. 2.

<sup>19</sup>Magnus and the Gaill of Lochlainn came, they tell us, to invade Ireland (*'tangattar diondradh Éreann*': AFM); he came to take Ireland (*'do thiachtain do ghabhail Éreann*': CS; AFM); he intended to besiege Ireland (*'fer ro triall forbais for Erin*': ATig).

<sup>20</sup>*Brut y Tywysogyon*, 25 and note.

<sup>21</sup>Later he tells us that 'the noble-minded king prepared an expedition against the Irish and approached the Irish coast with his fleet' (Chibnall 1969 - 80)

<sup>22</sup>The author of the *Annales Cambriae* (p. 35) thought so, because he believed that Magnus was eventually killed in Dublin (ed. J. Williams (London, 1860). Verses are extant which are ascribed to Magnus, referring to his Irish lover (we know that he fathered at least one son by her, Harold Gilli, who eventually succeeded him) and which say that his heart is in Dublin (Power 1986, 117, n. 1).

changed the situation and removed the threat for Ua Briain. The Four Masters claim that Ua Briain then 'gave his daughter to Sichraídh, son of Magnus, and gave him many jewels and gifts'. It is a story confirmed by Magnus Barelegs's Saga (Anderson 1922, II, 116 - 7). This marriage-alliance copperfastened Munster's Irish Sea interests. Magnus was about to withdraw to Norway but left his infant son, now Muirchertach's son-in-law, as king of the Isles: there can be little doubt as to who the real power in the region would then be. Furthermore, Ua Briain now had an ally in Magnus rather than a rival. And the latter's saga has it that after Muirchertach agreed to Magnus's taking of Dublin and Fine Gall, the Norse king spent the winter of 1102-3 with the king of Munster: 'and when spring came, the two kings with their army went west to Ulster (*Uladstir*); and they had there many battles, and won the land' (Anderson, 1922, II, 128). However, the king of Norway was killed by the men of Ulaid near the east coast of Ulster in obscure circumstances in 1103 and was buried, the Manx chronicle has it, near the church of St Patrick at Down (Power 1986, 127 - 9). His son Sigurd on hearing the news cast aside his child-bride and returned to Norway. Thus ended the period of direct Norwegian rule over the Irish Sea islands. None of their kings visited the region again for over a hundred and fifty years, though their claim to overlordship remained intact and was acknowledged to a greater or lesser extent thereafter (Johnsen 1969).

With Magnus out of the way Dublin seems to have continued to play host to the still dominant Uí Briain, and we may suppose that his death resurrected hopes of securing the Munstermen's hegemony over the Irish Sea region. In this, the prime movers were the sons of Muirchertach's brother Tadc. We hear that Domnall mac Taidc was fettered or imprisoned (*do cuibhreach*) by his uncle Muirchertach in 1107, but immediately released: critically, the deed was done in Dublin, which confirms their continued interest and presence in the area (AFM s.a. 1107). When, therefore, in 1111 Domnall mac Taidc assumed (or re-assumed) the kingship of the Isles by force (*ar égein*), we may take it that he did so against his uncle's wishes (AI s.a. 1111). But perhaps the most interesting part of the annalist's brief account is the information that Domnall 'went into the north of Ireland (*do dul ... i tuascert Hérend*)' to seize the kingdom of the Isles. Why should his invasion be initiated from there? Dublin would be the natural launching pad for any attempt to take the Isles by an individual who controlled it. It looks as if Muirchertach in taking Domnall captive in the city in 1107 put an end to his authority there. He later launched an invasion of the Isles four years on with the backing, one assumes, of Muirchertach's northern opponents. It can hardly be a surprise, therefore, to find that Muirchertach went on an expedition to Dublin in 1111, remaining there from Michaelmas (29 September) to Christmas of that year. This is most assuredly connected with his nephew's annexation of the Isles. For Muirchertach to spend a three-month period in the city must mean that he took recent developments very seriously. It must also mean that Dublin was an effective base from which not merely to monitor events but to respond. We can envisage him trying to choke off any naval or victualling assistance the Dubliners may have contemplated giving Domnall, or overseeing armed expeditions to the Isles to counter his actions. It indicates the firmness of Ua Briain's grasp on Dublin's resources, and how much the Ostmen's own independence of action had declined since the days when it had a thriving dynasty of its own at the helm: with the king of Munster in residence there for a quarter of a year, it is almost beginning to look like a home from home for Irish princes.

If Domnall mac Taidc 'forcibly' seized the kingdom of the Isles, he must have faced internal opposition there too. Olaf, Gofraid MÉRánach's son, died as king of the Isles in 1152, after a reign of forty years, according to the Manx chronicle. If the latter is accurate, he became king almost immediately after Domnall made his bid for power. Quite possibly Olaf was foisted on the Islesmen by a patron anxious to put paid to Irish interference there. But by whom? The Manx chronicle may again supply the answer: it says that Olaf was conducted to the Isles, by its chief men, from the court of Henry I of England, where he had presumably been raised since infancy (CrMi fol.35r).<sup>23</sup> If this is true (and we have no confirmation of it from elsewhere), it may have important implications. At some stage a decision was made to send Gofraid MÉRánach's youngest son to the Anglo-Norman court. He was presumably not a ward of court in the sense that that carries of a feudal relationship existing between England and the Isles, but his presence there may represent moves to establish a closer bond. If so, if Olaf was Henry I's protégé, the English king must have been opposed to the attempt of the Uí Briain to exert dominance over the Irish Sea islands.

Muirchertach Ua Briain fell from power when stricken by severe illness in 1114 and Domnall mac Taidc was enticed home from the Isles by the prospects of bigger fish in Munster. The personal nature of Muirchertach's dominance over Dublin was such that with his demise Munster's authority there began to melt away almost immediately. I have argued elsewhere that Henry I was more than aware of Muirchertach's potential to put a spoke in his own wheel, at least as far as his plans for Wales were concerned (Duffy 1999, 98 - 113), and one imagines that the same was true with regard to the Irish Sea region as a whole: securing the succession of his protégé Olaf to Man was one way of keeping the Irish out. And so it transpired. From this point onwards, direct Irish influence on Man was clearly on the wane. The Norse, the Scots, and the English competed with each other for control, and ultimately the latter won out.

## Bibliography

### Abbreviations

- AI *The annals of Inisfallen*, ed. S. MacAirt (Dublin, 1951).  
 AFM *The annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*, ed. J O'Donovan, 7 vols (Dublin 1851).  
 AICé *The annals of Loch Cé*, ed. W. M. Hennessy (London, 1871).  
 ATig *The annals of Tigernach*, ed. W. Stokes, 2 vols (Felinfach, 1993).  
 AClo *The annals of Clonmacnoise*, ed. D. Murphy (Dublin, 1892).  
 CS *Chronicon Scotorum*, ed. W. M. Hennessy, (London, 1866).  
 CrMi *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, ed. G. Broderick (Belfast, 1979).

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<sup>23</sup> *'miserunt principes insularum propter olauum filium godredi crouan ... qui tunc temporis degebat in curia henrici regis anglie filii willelmi, & adduxerunt eum'*.

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