



CHAPTER THREE

TAXES, TRADE AND TRESPASS: THE HIBERNO-NORSE CONTEXT OF THE DÁL CAIS EMPIRE IN *LEBOR NA CERT*

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The troika of Petrie, O'Donovan and O'Curry has often been celebrated as the rescue team of Irish antiquarianism, the men who set the investigation of Gaelic antiquity on a new, scientific and critical footing and whose enormous labours laid the groundwork for all subsequent work in the field.¹

While undoubtedly true on one level, Leerssen's choice of words is interesting. To identify the scholarship of these three men as antiquarianism seems strangely dismissive of the early nineteenth-century world in which they lived and worked. Given their interest in philology, concern for primary documents, the wide variety of sources they exploited and their concern for what might be termed the historical roots of ethnicity, one might well compare their work to the approach and interests of their contemporary, Leopold von Ranke, remembered as one of the founding fathers of modern history. The three men were employees of a British state which, at exactly the same period, was giving funds to the scholar Henry Petrie to produce the *Monumenta Historica Britannica* and was also setting up the Public Record Office.² The mere fact that this particular troika was working with Irish-language sources should not prevent us from evaluating their scholarship within the broad mainstream of European historiography. At the same time, it would be depressing to think that their nineteenth-century interests and concerns must remain the fundamental basis for our interpretation of the texts for eternity. Historians of the French Revolution still read and benefit

¹ Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, 102.

² <http://www.library.rochester.edu/robbins/rolls>: accessed 19/1/2013.



from the scholarship of the great Thomas Carlyle but they do not necessarily consider it the basis for their own work.

O'Donovan's edition of *Lebor na Cert*, published in Dublin by the Celtic Society in 1847, reflects his longstanding historical interest in the medieval kingdoms of Ireland.³ Though originally hired as a philologist to identify the etymology of local place-names, his Ordnance Survey letters frequently stray far from these parameters. On the 29th December 1837, for example, he was writing from Tullamore:

I send you an account of the extent and subdivisions of Ofalia which cost me much thought and serious investigation ... I am positively certain of the entire extent of Ofalia but I have not decided the exact limits of two of its seven cantreds ... The Geraldines of Kildare, shortly after their arrival, wrested from O'Conor that portion of Ofalia lying in the present County of Kildare and now called the Barony of Ophaly ... There were then two Offalys formed out of the ancient Principality of O'Conor Faly viz., the English Offaly in the Co. of Kildare, giving the title of Baron of Offaly to a branch of the Fitz-Geralds, and the Irish Offaly ... giving the Irish title of King of Offaly to O'Conor, the Senior representative of Rossa Failghe.⁴

As is well-known, *Lebor na Cert* provides considerable detail with regard to Irish kingdoms throughout the island and, indeed, O'Donovan's edition has been mined assiduously by later scholars such as Paul Walsh for details of local political geography.⁵ The materials making up the compilation are written in both prose and verse, and the bulk of the collection is concerned with material indicating the renders (*cisa*) made by subordinate kingdoms to their over-king and various gifts or stipends (*tíarastla*) proffered by the over-king to his aristocratic subordinates in return. O'Donovan's priorities in editing the text can be identified by classifying the footnotes he provided according to their frequency:

Identification of places;
Identification of families who had once ruled places;

³ O'Donovan (ed.), *Leabhar na g-Ceart or The Book of Rights*.

⁴ Herity (ed.), *Ordnance Survey Letters: Offaly*, 28-9.

⁵ Walsh, 'Meath in the Book of Rights'; 'Connacht in the Book of Rights'.

Etymologies and discussions of Irish words with citations from other sources;
 Corrections of previous translators;
 Interpretative remarks on specific lines in the poems being edited.

Remarkably, given the nature of the compilation, O'Donovan shows almost no interest in the material goods involved in the *Lebor na Cert* transactions. In the entire edition, there are a mere four footnotes dealing with renders. One of these is a definition of the Irish word *eineaclann* (*sic*), one deals with the immunity of a king's relatives from taxation, while one is a reference to the taxation of Uí Mhaine as edited and discussed in his *Tribes and Customs of Hy-Many*.⁶ Only one footnote deals with the political implications of the exactions described:

It will be observed that the kings of Connacht contrived to make the Ciarraidhe and other tribes, who had migrated from Munster, pay more than a rateable tribute for their territory. See the tribute paid by the Luighne the descendants of Cormac Gaileanga, son of Tadhg, son of Cian, son of Oilioll Olum, king of Munster, and by the Dealbhna, who were of the race of Cormac Cas, son of the same Oilioll.⁷

In contrast to O'Donovan, Myles Dillon in his 1962 edition of *Lebor na Cert* (*LC*) for the Irish Texts Society, does emphasise the existence of tribute and stipends but in the context of stressing the literary rather than the political nature of the compilation. His very first sentence underlines his scepticism: '*Lebor na Cert*, "the Book of Rights", purports to record the rights of the Irish kings, the king of Ireland, the provincial kings, and the tribal kings within each province'.⁸ Although he declares (p. ix) that one of his aims was 'to assess the value of the Book of Rights as an historical document', his identification of the late date of the text ('compiled after Brian Bóramha became king of Ireland' [p. x]) and the 'conflict of testimony' (p. x) with regard to both stipends and tributes, leads him rapidly to conclude: 'It is as though these poems were mere praise-poems without any pretension to recite true facts' and 'The Book of

⁶ (Dublin, 1843).

⁷ O'Donovan (ed.), *Leabhar na g-Ceart*, 103 n. g.

⁸ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, p. ix.

Rights ... wears rather the aspect of a work of fiction'.⁹ Since there are both earlier (Munster) and later O'Connor and O'Neill texts which discuss political renders and rights without being in agreement with *LC*, he concludes:

The Book of Rights fares no better by the test of plausibility ... It seems likely then that the main text is the work of a professional poet who drew up lists of stipends bestowed by the kings, and of tributes received by them, which were simply intended to flatter the kings and particularly to exalt the king of Cashel.¹⁰

As a phenomenon, however, Dillon accepts that stipends had a historical reality, quoting in support an annal entry for 1166 and *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh*:

The payment of a stipend was not so much an obligation upon the king as was the acceptance of it by his subject ... By accepting a stipend, the tribal king acknowledged the giver as his overlord. In practice, the provincial king probably gave what he wished, and the tribal king accepted what he got. Doubtless there was some agreement, but the duty lay rather upon the petty king to accept the stipend and to give hostages to his overlord.¹¹

On the nature of the stipends, precedence is given to texts other than *LC*:

The Old Irish documents on Cashel and the later O'Connor document give us some plausible data. The stipend was probably in cattle merely, without the scores of shields and swords and coats of mail; and the numbers of cattle were not so great as the Book of Rights proclaims. The service of the petty king may have been personal service at court, maintenance of the king and his retinue while he was on a royal circuit, and the supply of men in time of war. The lands of subject tribes were liable for a tribute in kind and in cattle, to judge from the evidence of Norman and Tudor sources.¹²

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. xi, xiii.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. xvii-xviii.

According to Dillon: ‘The chief importance of the Book of Rights lies in its witness for historical geography, and for the social system of Ireland in the eleventh century’. He draws attention to the frequent reference to slaves, some of whom were foreign ‘presumably acquired by purchase’.¹³ In addition:

Three words for ‘cloak’ occur, *brat*, *lenn*, and *matal*, which should perhaps be distinguished. I have preferred to render *scing* as ‘hide’, so as to cover various possible uses. In the lists of cattle *dam* and *mairt* are perhaps the live and the slaughtered animal respectively. Among the gifts there is frequent mention of the *lúirech* (< *lorica*), and the question arises as to whether and at what period any such armour was worn. *Fidchell* is rendered as ‘chess’ but we know only that it was a board-game.¹⁴

Dillon’s conclusion is that:

The Book of Rights is a compilation of ‘antiquarian learning’ like the Book of Invasions, the *Dindshenchas*, *Cóir Anmann*, and in literature like *Acallam na Senórach* ... I do not believe that the Book of Rights, or any part of it, derives from a Psalter of Cashel composed by Cormac mac Cuileannáin, nor even from a recension made in Brian’s lifetime. But I suggest that it owes its existence like the Book of Invasions and the *Dindshenchas* to the revival of learning in Ireland in the eleventh century.¹⁵

Both editors, therefore, have seen in our text evidence for political relationships between Irish kings but neither have used it as evidence for the historical transfer of goods. Secondly, while the names and regions were believed to be accurate, the exact period for which they are accurate is not identified in detail. O’Donovan argued for a tenth-century compilation which drew on an original fifth-century precursor linked to Benignus of Armagh,¹⁶ while Dillon (as noted above), opted for an eleventh-century date of compilation. For the remainder of this paper, I propose to accept Dillon’s dating,¹⁷ and to

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. xix.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xx.

¹⁶ O’Donovan (ed.), *Leabhar na g-Ceart*, p. viii.

¹⁷ See further Charles-Edwards (above pp. ZZ) and Murray (below pp. ZZ).

consider the evidence of *LC* in the context of eleventh-century Ireland and a mixed Hiberno-Scandinavian society operating in an 'Insular Viking zone'.¹⁸

In the earlier eleventh century, the great Scandinavian empire of the western Atlantic was that led by King Knútr (Cnut) who eventually became overlord of England, Denmark, at least parts of Norway and Scotland, *Witland* (perhaps in Estonia), Iceland, the Faeroes and possibly even Dublin. This vast complex of lands, and the sea-ways that linked them, were governed by an international group of *jarls* or earls, many of Scandinavian background, who controlled mercenarries, ships and territories. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, for example, describes the careers of Jarl Thorkell inn hávi, originally Danish but subsequently leader of East Anglia; Earl Eiríkr of Northumbria and his son Hákon, who ruled in Norway for part of his career; and Earl Úlfr operating largely in Scandinavia but brother-in-law to Earl Godwine.¹⁹ These men, in addition to ruling their particular districts, were also members of the king's personal household, rejoicing in the title of *húskarl* or *miles familiae regis*.²⁰ In an Irish context, their role evokes memories of Finn mac Cumaill: *Is e ropa thaisech teglaig 7 ropa cheand deorad 7 amhus 7 ceithirne archena la Cormac Find mac Cumaill*, 'Finn mac Cumaill was the leader of [the king] Cormac's retinues as well as the head of the exiles [*deoraid*], hired attendants [*amuis*], and all the soldiers [*ceitherna*] besides'.²¹

In Britain, such men were also responsible for gathering taxes – Florence of Worcester describes how, in 1041, Cnut's son, Harthacnut (Harðaknútr) sent *húskarles* throughout 'all the provinces of the kingdom' to collect the tax;²² but when two were killed in Worcester, both earls and *húskarles* were sent to kill, plunder and lay waste the lands of the individuals responsible. They might also be responsible for garrisons guarding strategic locations and they often appear as guarantors in the witness lists of royal charters. Nicholas Hooper has defined these men as motivated by personal ties of

¹⁸ Oram, *Lordship of Galloway*, pp. 9-44; Etchingham, 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles'.

¹⁹ Keynes, 'Cnut's Earls'.

²⁰ 'Translatio Sancti Ælfegi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi et Martyris' (edited and translated in Rumble, *Reign of Cnut*, 283-315, at 302-3).

²¹ Cited in Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw*, 241 n. 4.

²² Florence of Worcester, *Chronicon ex Chronicis*; quoted from Hooper, 'Military Developments in the Reign of Cnut', 92.



loyalty to the king, as well as by pay, and he contrasts their role with that of the *Lidsmenn* or 'fleet-men' who are invariably listed in association with their ships. The latter could be hired and fired at will and, if fired, they would depart seeking their fortune elsewhere. These latter were true mercenaries while acting on occasion as a standing army.²³

The extent to which the recruitment of such men represented a substantial innovation by Cnut is debatable. Richard Abels has written of late tenth-century Anglo-Saxon lords that:

The ealdormen of the late tenth century exercised delegated regalian powers over their extensive territories ... Byrhtnoth was more than an agent of the king to the nobility of Essex; he was, in a very real sense, their *cynehlaford*, the beneficiary of the oaths of loyalty that they had sworn to a distant king. Such ealdormen may have been recruited from cadet branches of the royal family but in the course of the tenth century they had developed territorial roots ... Because of his landed possessions and office, many Essex landowners undoubtedly sought Byrhtnoth as their lord and protector and together with the ealdorman's military household, such men would have naturally formed the core of Byrhtnoth's army.²⁴

Similarly, at the end of the eleventh century, Henry I made a treaty with Count Robert of Flanders in which the latter agreed to provide 1000 knights for service in England or Normandy or 500 knights for service in Maine. In return, Henry agreed to compensate them for their losses and maintain them *sicut mos est reddere familie sue*, 'as he was accustomed to do for members of his own military household'.²⁵ In this international context, then, it is worth noting that *LC* links the gifts to subordinates from their over-king directly to an active presence in the ruler's life. So, for example, the prose introduction to the section on the king of Ailech states:

At eat and so odra acus tuaristla ríg Ailig dia thuathaib 7 dia aicmib ar biathad 7 ar choimideacht. Dligid didiu ri Ailig fodesin in tan nach fa rí for Éirind leath-láim ríg Éirind ac ól 7

²³ Hooper, 'Military Developments in the Reign of Cnut', *passim*.

²⁴ Abels, *Lordship and Military Organisation*, 148.

²⁵ Prestwich, 'The Military Household', 8; see also Carr, 'Teulu and *Penteulu*' for discussion of Welsh parallels.





ac aenach 7 remimthús ríġ Éirind i coraib 7 i comairlib 7 impidib. Dlíġid ó ríġ Éirind caeca claideam 7 caeca sciath 7 caeca mogad 7 caeca errid 7 caeca each.

These are the payments and stipends from the king of Ailech to his tribes and kindreds for refection and escort (*coimideacht*). The king of Ailech, when he is not king of Ireland, is himself entitled to sit beside the king of Ireland at a drinking-bout and at an assembly (*óenach*) and to precede the king of Ireland at transactions, councils and petitions. He is entitled to fifty swords, fifty shields, fifty slaves, fifty suits of armour, and fifty horses.²⁶

Such relationships between military leaders in Ireland, involving payment (or at least transfer of goods), close proximity to an over-king and duties of military escort, are thus very comparable to the situations of the *húskarles* and the *milites familiae regis* of eleventh-century Britain under both its Scandanavian and Norman rulers. It is also worth noting that two Úa Briain kings, Conchobar and Cennétig, grandsons of the eleventh-century Donnchad Úa Briain (for whom a claim to be king of Ireland is entered on the Lorrha shrine of the Stowe Missal), were rulers in the north of Ireland and *rigdamna Érenn* from approximately 1068 to 1084.²⁷ These may, perhaps, be classed as Dál Cais examples of ‘cadet branches of the royal family’,²⁸ governing territories at some distance away from the royal court.

TAXES

The word *cáin* is defined in the *Dictionary of the Irish Language* as ‘law, regulation, rule; fine, tax, tribute’ and is commonly found in *LC*.²⁹ In his edition, O’Donovan translated it almost consistently ‘tribute’ with two instances where ‘rent’ is used instead.³⁰ Dillon used both ‘tax’ and ‘tribute’, utilising both words interchangeably as synonyms; he also translated it as ‘payment’, ‘rent’ and, on one

²⁶ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, ll. 950-5.

²⁷ Candon, ‘Telach Óc’, 41-2.

²⁸ See quote attributed to Abels above, n. 24.

²⁹ *DIL s.v. cáin*. The use of the term in the early medieval period has been discussed by Binchy, *Críth Gablach*, 79 and Charles-Edwards, *The Early Medieval Gaelic Lawyer, passim* (but esp 43-62); its significance in the later medieval period in Scotland is analysed in Broun, ‘Re-examining *Cáin* in Scotland in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries’. See further Charles-Edwards (above pp. ZZ).

³⁰ O’Donovan (ed.), *Leabhar na g-Ceart*, 28-9, 48-9, 58-9, 104-9, 124-5, 184-5, 220-1, 228-9.



occasion, ‘law’.³¹ Many readers might, however, view the English word ‘tax’ as indicative of a centralised system of government operating with some degree of administrative support in the form of an exchequer.³² Tribute, in contrast, is often seen as ‘a temporary little arrangement’ representing a submission (with whatever degree of reluctance) to *force majeure*, and thus indicative of a more primitive regime.

The opening words of *LC* indicates the importance of *cáin* as one of the key transactions being described in this particular text:

Incipit do Libur na Cert. Indister do chásaib 7 tuarustlaib Éirenn amal ro ordnaig Benén mac Sescnén, salmchétlaid Pádraic amal atfét Leabur Glindi Dá Lacha.

Do dligeadaib chirt Chaisil 7 dia chásaib 7 dia *chánaib* ind 7 ass andso sis 7 do thuarastalaib rí Muman 7 rí nÉrind archeana ó rí Caisil in tan da-fállna flaithis ind.

Here begins the Book of Rights. It tells of the rents and stipends of Ireland which Benén son of Sescnén, Patrick’s cantor, ordained, as related in the Book of Glendalough.

Here are the just dues of Cashel and its rents and *taxes* paid in and paid out, and the stipends of the kings of Munster, and the other kings of Ireland from the king of Cashel, when sovereignty reigns there.³³

The lack of contemporary documentation from eleventh-century Scandinavia makes it difficult to examine northern parallels to this statement but the renders of the people called Finnas (perhaps the Sami) in the Arctic regions of northern Norway are described in the Old English account of Ohthere’s voyage from the end of the ninth century:

Pæt gafol bið on deora fellum 7 on fugela feðerum 7 hwales bane 7 on þæm sciprapum þe beoð of hwæles hyde geworht 7 of seoles. Æghwilc gylt be hys gebyrdum: se byrdesta sceall gylðan fiftyne mearðes fell 7 fif hranes 7 an beran fel 7 tyn

³¹ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, pp. 2-3, 14-15, 20-3, 50-5, 64-5, 72-3, 82-3, 100-1, 112-13, 116-19. Not every instance of *cáin* in Dillon’s edition is found in O’Donovan’s text.

³² The origins of the English exchequer are thought to lie in the reign of Henry I in the early twelfth century; see Green, *The Government of England under Henry I*, 38-54.

³³ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, ll. 1-5 (my emphasis).



ambra feðra 7 berenne kyrtel oððe yterenne 7 twegen sciprapas; ægþer sy syxtig þelna lan; oþer sy of hwæles hyde geworht, oþer of sioles.

The tax consists of animals' skins and of birds' feathers and whale's bone and of those ship's ropes that are made from whale's [or walrus?] hide and from seal's. Each pays according to his rank [or lineage]; the highest in rank has to pay fifteen marten's skins and five reindeer's and one bear's skin and ten *ambers* of feathers and a bear- or otter-skin tunic and two ship's ropes; each must be sixty ells long; one must be made from whale's [or walrus?] hide, the other from sealskin.³⁴

Oththere was on his way south to Skirringssal in the Oslo fjord – where today one finds the site of Kaupang, a name which indicates clearly its function as a market. In his excavation of the site, Dagfinn Skre found both evidence of a market and of a large hall and, in his subsequent publication, he drew attention to a twelfth- / thirteenth-century account in *Ólafs saga ins Helga* which, in his view, illustrated what might have happened to Oththere's goods when he arrived at Kaupang:

I sviþjóðu var þat forn landziðr, meðan heiðni var þar, at höfuðblót skyldi vera at Upsölum at góí; skyldi þá blóta til friðar ok sigrs konungi sínum, ok skyldu menn þangat sækja um alt Svíaveldi, skyldi þar þá ok vera þing allra Svía; þar var ok þá markaðr ok kaupstefna ok stóð viku. En er kristni var i Sviþjóð, þá helzk þar þó lögðing ok markaðr.

Amongst the Swedes it was an ancient custom, throughout the heathen time, that the chief sacrifice took place in the month of Goe at Uppsala. At that time sacrifice was to be made for peace and victory to the king; and people came thither from all parts of Sweden; there would also be the *thing*-moot of the entire Swedish people; there was also a market there and meetings for buying, which continued for a week. But after Christianity was introduced into Sweden, a juridical *thing* and market were held there.³⁵

Skre's model, in which a market is held at a judicial assembly under royal supervision, provides interesting parallels to the statement in *LC* that *cána* were associated with Cashel. This is clearly identified

34 Bately and Englert (eds), *Oththere's Voyages*, 46.

35 Skre, *Kaupang in Skirringssal*, 446.



as the central royal site of the province of Munster in *LC*.³⁶ Similarly, the *LC* discussion of *cána* in Connacht relates to an assembly at Crúachain, the provincial centre and *óenach*-site of Connacht,³⁷ and seems very clearly linked to ownership of land:

Tri chaeca torc, is tarba,
a torachtain cach samna,
trí caeca brat cona mblad,
do rí Condacht is Cruachan.

Is don cháin chétna ro clos
can ainfir, can ainbflaithus,
trí caeca dam ar ló i lle
do fritháileam threbari.

Cé do-berat Luigne i lle
a cáin tar cend a tíre,
nochan iad Luigne is daer and,
acht in fér is a ferand.

A hundred and fifty boars, it is profit, to reach him every Samain, a hundred and fifty rich cloaks to the king of Connacht and Cruachain.

Of the same tribute (*cáin*), it is handed down, without injustice or oppression, a hundred and fifty oxen are brought hither one day to supply the husbandry.

Though the Luigne bring hither their tribute (*cáin*) for their land, it is not the Luigne who are subject to it but the grass and the land.³⁸

According to Ohtthere, each of the Finnas paid over goods according to his rank and lineage; the same principle of variability is visible in *LC* but in Ireland, at any rate, those of high rank appear to have paid least:

³⁶ Dillon, 'On the Date and Authorship of the Book of Rights', 239-40.

³⁷ See Meyer, *The Triads of Ireland*, 4-5 §35.

³⁸ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, ll. 730-41.



Fil trí ríga i Mumain móir
 a cáin do Chaisil ní cóir,
 rí Gabrán ná gabthar géill,
 rí Raithleand, rí Lacha Léin.

There are three kings in spacious Munster who pay no tribute (*cáin*) to Cashel, the king of Gabrán whose hostages are not taken, the king of Raithlenn and the king of Loch Léin.³⁹

The first of these is king of Osraige, a border kingdom which alternated in loyalties between Munster and Leinster. In the eleventh century, according to the Annals of Inisfallen, Donnchad mac Briain took hostages from the kingdom in 1026 and in 1049, while hostages were taken again in 1072. In 1037 and in 1042, in contrast, they were battling with the men of Leinster, implying that they were affiliated with Munster in those years. Raithlenn is located on both sides of the river Bandon, and the only relevant eleventh-century entry in the annals is entered under 1063 when Cathal, son of Donnchad, was killed as king of Raithlenn. It is not clear whether this man was the offspring of Donnchad mac Briain or was from a different family altogether. The king of Loch Léin was king of Killarney and was raided by Tairdelbach Úa Briain in 1064 while, in 1077, a Donnchad Úa Flainn was slain as king of Eoganacht Locha Léin by local rivals as he was coming from Úa Briain's house at Kincora.⁴⁰ It appears, therefore, as if it might well be not their rank as such but their alliance with the Úa Briain kings of Killaloe which meant that these three subordinate kings escaped paying taxes.

Such privileges may be paralleled in Norman England: Robert Bartlett has calculated that of the total figure of £24,500 audited at the Exchequer in 1130, approximately 40% derived from (agricultural) income generated by the royal demesne, 28% was the profit of justice and feudal over-lordship, and a mere 14% came from tax. English tax, like Irish *cáin*, was a royal exaction based on land-ownership and calculated on the pre-Norman unit of the hide which was conventionally equated with 120 acres. At the same time, exemptions amounting to over 40% of the potential total of taxable income were granted to royal favourites.⁴¹ Therefore, despite the scholarly tradition of distinguishing between the governmental structures of eleventh-century Britain and Ireland, there seems little

³⁹ Ibid., II. 295-8.

⁴⁰ Entries from AI *s.a.*

⁴¹ Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, 159, 165.



justification for such distinctions in practice. I would argue that this tendency is largely due to an inherited preference, derived in part from O'Donovan's nineteenth-century work, to use the word 'tribute' rather than 'tax' to translate *cáin* in *LC*. When we look at the specifics of what *cáin* entails, there seems little reason to postulate major differences in royal attitudes to taxation between the Úa Briain kings of the later eleventh century and their counterparts in Norman Britain.

Another word which occurs even more commonly in *LC* is *cís*, thought to be a borrowing from Latin *census*.⁴² A definition of what this word means in *LC* is provided in the text itself:

Císa Muman ar meadón beos and so do Chaisil 7 is cach bliadna do-bearar .i. smacht 7 biathad 7 turgnam 7 faesam. Now these are the local (internal) tributes of Munster to Cashel, and they are paid every year, i.e. fine and refection and provision and protection.⁴³

It must be said that the vast bulk of the references to *císa* in *LC* are to domestic animals, to meat carcasses and to cloth made into garments, rather than to abstract concepts such as *faesam* 'protection'. The one exception to this focus on farm products is the reference to *Seacht caeca do chaeraib iairn* 'Three hundred and fifty ingots of iron', given to the king of Connacht.⁴⁴ It seems logical to assume that the unique nature of this entry reflects the geological deposits in the specific region concerned.

It is not always easy to identify the exact distinction between *turgnam* 'provision' and *biathad* 'refection' in *LC*. The former word is used in the phrase *turgnom loma 7 leanda 7 uamai can tacha uaidib* 'provision by them of milk, ale and needlework in plenty'.⁴⁵ In another section, it refers to three hundred and fifty *lilica*, apparently the smaller cattle breeds probably used in dairy farming.⁴⁶ These goods are stated by our compiler to have been submitted at a

⁴² Vendryes et al. (eds), *Lexique étymologique de l'irlandais ancien*, C-107 s.v. *cís*. Cf. Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish*, §268; *DIL* s.v. *cís*.

⁴³ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, II. 311-12.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, I. 746; see also Appendix B, pp. 179-187 for summaries of tributes and stipends in *LC*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, I. 1346.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 728; for discussion of the etymology of the word, and its relevance to cattle breeds, see Murray, 'Lulgach: A Milch Cow'.



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longphort and a *tech*.⁴⁷ The word *turgnam* is also used of provisions for feasting in *Cóir Anmann*, and of the gathering of resources at an *ónach* in preparation for battle in the Middle Irish *Cath Bóinne*.⁴⁸ It seems clear, therefore, that the material goods provided from subordinates through the *cís* were intended for the personal use of the royal overlord in his capacity as both king and military commander.

TRADE

There are a number of instances where goods of foreign origin are specified in *LC* including *ór 7 indmas tar muir* ‘gold and wealth from beyond the sea’.⁴⁹ These are given by the provincial king of Leinster to Cashel. There are other, more specific citations:

ocht ngabra tar glasmuir ‘eight horses from over the sea’ (king of Déisi);
deich ngoill can Gaedelga ‘ten foreigners who know not Irish’ (king of Bruig Ríg, Co. Limerick);
cóic mogaid tar moing mara ‘five slaves from beyond the sea’ (king of Cenél nAeda);
seacht mná tar muir mór ‘seven women from over the great sea’ (king of Inis Eógain);
sé heich chaema tar crícha ‘six fine horses from abroad’ (king of Mag nÍtha);
secht n-eich a hAlbain ‘seven horses from Scotland’ (king of Ardgall);
cúic eich a longaib lána ‘five horses brought in well-laden ships’ (king of Coill in Ollaim [Caoille Fallamain]);
ocht scéith tar sál ‘eight shields from across the sea’ (king of Delbna).⁵⁰

Goods identified as from abroad go to kings from all provinces (bar Connacht), with three references occurring close together in a poem on Ailech and two in the successive verses in the poem on Tara. Only one involves man-made goods, the shields given to the king of Delbna. Instead, the bulk of references are to horses and slaves. We know from the Bayeux Tapestry that eleventh-century shipping carried horses across the Channel for the purposes of invasion; what *LC* makes clear is that there was also a transmarine equine trade into

⁴⁷ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, ll. 727, 286.

⁴⁸ Arbuthnot (ed.), *Cóir Anmann*, ii, 37 / 111 §133; O’Neill (ed.), ‘Cath Boinde’, 105.

⁴⁹ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, l. 249.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, ll. 445, 591, 997, 1013, 1017, 1436, 1459, 1462.



Ireland.⁵¹ This formed part of a very extensive system of exchange in horses: as Dillon's tables on stipends in Appendix B make clear, horses were by far the most common item listed as *túarastla*. The provincial kings of Connacht, Ulaid and Tara (otherwise Mide) are allocated a hundred horses by the leadership of Cashel; the Airgialla have sixty while the king of Ailech receives forty. The king of Ailech's local rival, the king of Tulach Óc, receives thirty in his own right as do the two kingdoms of Laigin Túathgabair and Laigin Desgabair, while Cenél Conaill receive twenty. Local kings, in contrast, normally receive ten horses although there are exceptional cases. In one poem, Dál Cais receive thirty (in Cashel 6), Tulach Óc receive fifty (Ailech 2) and Dál nAraide receive twenty, while Uí Chennselaig receive a hundred (Lagin 1). In the Tara poem, which Dillon believed to have an independent and perhaps later origin to *LC*,⁵² two hundred horses are given to the king of Thomond and to the king of Connacht, and forty to the king of Corco Baiscinn, while Uí Maine and Brega receive twenty each. It seems reasonable to deduce that the number of horses reflected the status of the individual kingdoms from the perspective of the overlord concerned.

Colour seems to have been valued in that these horses are described as *eich glasa*, *gabál-guirm* 'grey horses with dark legs', *eich donna* 'brown horses' and *gabra glana re gréin* 'horses shining in the sun'.⁵³ Their trappings appear to have been highly decorated as in *ocht n-eich co n-allaib argaid* 'eight horses with silver bridles' or *co srianaib do sean-arcad* 'with bridles of old silver', as well as *caeca each glésta co gnáth* 'fifty properly harnessed horses' and *deich n-eich arna nglés don graig* 'ten harnessed horses from the stud'.⁵⁴ Some were apparently used for racing: *gabra glantreasa* 'horses for racing', *eich luatha re lecon* 'horses that are fast away' while some were identified as *trén* 'strong', others as *cen tromdacht* 'speedy' and as *luatha fora ling* 'swift ... to mount'.⁵⁵ At least some appear to have been intended for military purposes for they are described as belonging to a *marc-shluag* 'cavalry', or are called *daigriata*

⁵¹ See also AU 1029.6 for reference to 'six score Welsh horses' (*.ui. xx. eich mBretnach*) offered as ransom by Amlaib son of Sitriuc, 'king of the foreigners' (*ri Gall*); Davies, 'Horses in the Mabinogion', 135-6. For a possible example of Scandinavian horses in Ireland, see Murphy, 'A Poem in Praise of Aodh Ua Foirréidh, Bishop of Armagh (1032-1056)', 151 §23.

⁵² Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, pp. xi-xii.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, ll. 1187, 1204 (and other examples at ll. 104, 570, 1318), 1297.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, ll. 1246-7, 1307, 79, 574.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, ll. 1303, 1454, 1138, 834, 847.



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'well-trained', as well as *eich bus triúin re togroim* 'horses for keen pursuit'.⁵⁶ As such they should be considered as part of the evidence for the increased militarisation of eleventh-century Irish kings and will be considered below under trespass.⁵⁷

It has long been known that there was an active trade in slaves to Ireland through Bristol. *Uita Wulfstani* mentions that it was an ancient custom there to buy English people for sale to Ireland:

Uideres et gemeres concathenatos funibus miserorum ordines et utriusque sexus adulescentes qui liberali forma, etate integra, barbaris miserationi essent, cotidie prostitui, cotidie uenditari. You could see and sigh over rows of wretches bound together with ropes, young people of both sexes whose beautiful appearance and youthful innocence might move barbarians to pity, daily exposed to prostitution, daily offered for sale.⁵⁸

This information is confirmed by Giraldus' account of the synod of Armagh in 1170 where the conquest was seen as punishment for the Irish 'because it had formerly been their habit to purchase Englishmen indiscriminately from merchants as well as from robbers and pirates, and to make slaves of them'.⁵⁹ In another, even more graphic satire written between 1015 and 1024, the poet Warner of Rouen tells of an Irishman and his wife, captured by Vikings and sold at Corbric (Corbridge in Northumberland). The enslaved man was urinated upon, stripped naked and, in what appears to have been a common form of degradation in Viking society, raped.⁶⁰ The merchants in this trade could be of high rank; Earl Godwine is recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as having traded enemies as slaves into Ireland and it has even been suggested that he kept a household reeve specifically to deal with Irish trade. Certainly, Ireland appears to have been sufficiently important in his

⁵⁶ Ibid., ll. 1000 and 1044, 1289, 1197.

⁵⁷ This period saw 'the increasing militarization of Irish society, the appearance of castles and bridges, naval fleets and cavalry units and of something akin to standing armies': Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200*, 274; see also Ó Corráin, 'Aspects of Early Irish History', 68-71.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Pelteret, *Slavery in Early Mediaeval England*, 77.

⁵⁹ Scott and Martin (eds), *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 70: *quod Anglos olim tam a mercatoribus quam predonibus atque piratis emere passim et in servitute redigere consueverant* (quoted by Holm, 'The Slave Trade of Dublin', 340).

⁶⁰ Pelteret, *Slavery in Early Mediaeval England*, 76; Holland, *Millennium*, 200; Sorenson, *The Unmanly Man*.



life that his half-Danish daughter, Edith, wife to Edward the Confessor, was taught to speak Irish fluently as a child and may even have retired to Ireland after her brother Harold died at Hastings.⁶¹

Paul Holm has drawn attention to other references in *LC* to the slave trade, highlighting descriptions of women such as ‘full-grown’, ‘swarthy’, ‘graceful’ and ‘valuable’ as well as the reference to eight women who have not been dishonoured.⁶² The use of the word ‘swarthy’ might suggest origins in the international slave markets of Córdoba and the Mediterranean just as the presence of those who were fair may suggest more northern origins. Since these women were listed among the high-status gifts given to leading subordinates, it seems unlikely that they were intended for drawing water and cooking meals; instead, it makes more sense to think of them as the Scandinavian equivalent to upper-class geisha girls or an Islamic harem. In contrast, the description of the male slaves uses terms such as ‘hard-working’, ‘willing’, ‘full-grown’ and ‘spirited’.⁶³ Holm suggests that these phrases indicate that ‘the slaves seem primarily to have been intended for the household as servants, concubines, mountebanks and drabants of the court’.⁶⁴ Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin has drawn attention to one possible example of such an individual in the *Banshenchus* where she suggests that the phrase *skirrdech banamus*, used of the mother of Gormlaith (wife of Brian Boru and ex-wife of the Norse king of Dublin), may be of mixed Norse / Irish origins meaning ‘the baptised female servant / slave’.⁶⁵

Apart from trade in slaves, horses and shields, the use of the Old Norse loan-word *scingi* indicates other objects of international origin being used in *LC* as *túarastla*. Ten *scingi* were given to the king of Ossory, the king of Leinster and the king of Duibhthrian (in Co. Down) – all in the eastern half of Ireland.⁶⁶ Though Dillon opted to translate *scing* as ‘hide’ (see above), it seems highly unlikely that Ireland was importing hides (in the sense of leather) from the Norse-speaking world. A far more likely context is provided by the

⁶¹ Mason, *The House of Godwine*, 34, 45, 178.

⁶² Holm, ‘The Slave Trade’, 339; See, for example, Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, pp. 32-3, 68-71, 82-3, 88-9, 106-7.

⁶³ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, pp. 70-1, 82-3, 88-9, 106-7.

⁶⁴ Holm, ‘The Slave Trade’, 339. For Irish kings taking slaves on a very large scale, presumably to supply a trade, see AU 1031.4.

⁶⁵ Ní Bhrolcháin, ‘Who was Gormlaith’s Mother? A Detective Story’.

⁶⁶ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, ll. 436, 1539, 1310.



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Icelandic *Gunnlaugs Saga Ormstungu* which ostensibly describes an early eleventh-century adventurer's visit to London and Dublin:

At that time King Aethelred the son of Edgar ruled England and was a good prince; he was spending that winter in London ... The king thanked him [Gunnlaug] for the poem and as a reward for it, he gave him a cloak of precious cloth lined with excellent fur – *bragarlaunum skarlatsskikkju, skinndregna inum beztum skinnum* – and with an embroidered border down to the hem. He also made him one of his *hirðmann* ...⁶⁷

In the Icelandic dictionary, *skinn* is translated 'skin', especially 'fur', while *laun* (in the plural) is rendered 'rewards' and *bragarlaunum* 'best rewards'.⁶⁸ A *hirð* is a king or earl's bodyguard, similar to a *húskarl*. Gunnlaug was a poet as well as a warrior, and, in the next phase of his adventures, he travelled to Dublin with merchants and composed a poem for King Sigtrygg:

The king thanked him for the poem and called his treasurer to him and said, 'How should I reward the poem? ... 'how would it be rewarded', asked the king, 'if I gave him a couple of *knorru* [merchant ships]?'

'That's too much my lord', answered the treasurer. 'As rewards for poems, other kings give valuable treasures, fine swords or gold bracelets (*Aðrir konungr gefa at bragarlaunum gripi góða, sverd góð eða gullhringa góða*).

The king gave him his own clothes made of new and precious cloth, an embroidered tunic, a cloak lined with precious furs and a gold bracelet weighing half a pound (*klaedi sín af nýju skarlati, kyrtil hlaðbúinn ok skikkju með ágaetum skinnum ok gullhring er stóð mork*). Gunnlaug thanked him gracefully ... He went from there to the Orkneys.⁶⁹

An international trade in furs is indicated by Princess Margaret of Scotland's gift to her brother Edgar of 'robes of marten skin and of grey fur and ermine' and by references in the Domesday Book to the importation of marten skins through Chester from Ireland.⁷⁰ An implication that Irish *scingi* were considered as high-status objects is

⁶⁷ Quirk, *Gunnlaugs Saga*, 15-16 §7.

⁶⁸ Cleasby, Vigfusson, Craigie, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 547 s.v. *skinn*; 375 s.v. *laun* II.

⁶⁹ Quirk, *Gunnlaugs Saga*, 19-20 §8.

⁷⁰ Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 174.



confirmed by the account in the Book of Leinster recension of the *Táin* in which a *drúth* disguised himself as Ailill by putting on his golden *imscing*:⁷¹

And sin ra ráidestar fir Hérend ri Tamun drúth étgud Ailill 7 a imscimm n-órda do gabáil immi.
Then the men of Ireland told Tamon the jester to put on Ailill's garments and his golden *imscing*.⁷²

Other *imscingi* appear to have been used as furs for bedding:

Tánic Cathal mac Finguine co mbuidnib 7 marcsbólóg f[h]er Muman, co ndessitar for colbadu 7 imscinge 7 imdadu.⁷³
Cathal mac Finguine came with soldiers and the horse-troop of the men of Munster, and they rested on the bed-rails and *imscingi* and bed-compartments.

Another reference to *scingi*, treated as a dental stem, links *scingi* to other garments in the Annals of Inisfallen:

Daronad isin bliadin so gním is mór tocrád do chlerchib Héren huli, .i. Inhis Faithlind do arcain do Mael Dúin mc. Domnaill Hu Donchada ocus hi rrabi inti d'inmas segulda ar comirge a némb 7 a clerech 7 a tempul cossecartha do brith dó lais. Ro theclaim ém ór 7 arget, scingeda 7 bruttu 7 matlu Iarmuman, cen nach remechad do Dia ná do dáinaib lais, acht nir léic trocari Dé dó dáine do marbad, nó aidme eclastacda *vel* libru do lomrad asin pharthus intamligthech.

There was committed in this year a deed which greatly vexed the clergy of all Ireland, namely the plundering of Inis Faithlinn by Mael Dúin son of Domnall Ua Donnchada, and the carrying off by him of all the worldly wealth therein, which was under the protection of its saints, clerics, and consecrated churches. He collected, indeed, the gold, silver, *furs*, mantles, and cloaks of Iarmumu, without any respect for God or man, but the mercy of God did not allow him to kill people or to strip this heavenly place of church furnishings or books.⁷⁴

⁷¹ *Imscing* is a compound of *scing*, frequently with the same meaning: see *DIL s.v. imscing* and Vendryes et al. (eds), *Lexique étymologique de l'Irlandais ancien*, S-45 s.v. *scing*.

⁷² O'Rahilly, *Táin Bó Cúalgne from the Book of Leinster*, ll. 2461-2. It must be noted, however, that O'Rahilly prefers to translate *imscing* as 'crown' here, a meaning also attested elsewhere (see *DIL s.v.*).

⁷³ Jackson (ed.), *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne*, ll. 577-9.

⁷⁴ *AI s.a.* 1180.2: *furs* (my italics), Mac Airt translates as 'trappings'.



The word *matal*, used here, has been identified (*DIL s.v.*) as an Old Norse loan-word from *möttull* ‘mantle’ which, according to the Icelandic dictionary, seems usually to have been of foreign cut and of costly foreign material.⁷⁵ The Old English equivalent, the *mentel* (< Latin *mantellum*), has been defined as a cloak worn by either sex and fastened with a pin.⁷⁶

The Irish *matal* is found frequently among the lists of *túarastla* in *LC* with *cét matal do mílid Boirchi* ‘a hundred mantles to the soldier of Boirche’ (Co. Down) and *fichi matal, maeth a lli* ‘twenty mantles of soft colour’ to the king of Dál nAraide.⁷⁷ Other kings get ten, eight, six, five or three, and all provinces are in receipt of them. In the case of the king of Leinster, his ten are classified as *rígmatail* ‘royal mantles’ while those of Cúalu are *órmatail* ‘gold embroidered mantles’, Uí Liatháin have *matail co n-ór* ‘mantles trimmed with gold’, and those of the Ciarraige of north Kerry, *matail co mbuindib d’ór* ‘mantles with fringes of gold’.⁷⁸ These descriptions may imply an origin for these items in Anglo-Saxon England which was particularly famed in the eleventh century for its gold embroidery and heavy adornment with gold-work and jewels.⁷⁹ Niamh Whitfield has highlighted the discovery of tablet-woven braids of silk and gold and silver thread from Viking Dublin, and has suggested that they were used to edge garments.⁸⁰ Given the link made with *scingeda* in the Annals of Inisfallen, it may also be reasonable to link the Irish *matal* back to the description of King Sitrygg’s gift to Gunnlaug: *skikkju með ágætum skinnnum*, ‘a cloak lined with precious furs’. It is worth noting, also, that the Norse saga identifies the English king Aethelred’s cloak as being made of precious cloth, linked to scarlet, and lined with fur. Such details find parallels in the later, fourteenth-century, Irish text, *Nósa Ua Maine*, which defines a *matal* as follows:

Na .x. matoil da mínsгарlóit óir in matal do réir dligid acht dergsgarlóit cona comfhat deas lochlondach ina leanmain cona stimaibh snithi solus-óir go comfad a cétbrollaigh d’ór 7 d’úasal-clochaib ar a úachtar.

⁷⁵ Cleasby, Vigfusson and Craigie, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 444 s.v. *möttull*.

⁷⁶ Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 336.

⁷⁷ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, ll. 102-3 (*mantles* [my italics] as editor translates as ‘cloaks’ on this occasion); l. 1285.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, ll. 1543, 1556, 446, 470.

⁷⁹ Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 175-83.

⁸⁰ Whitfield, ‘Dress and Accessories’, 9.





Ten mantles of fine red gold, each mantle according to the entitlement, except that they are of red-scarlet with an equal length of fine Norse material on its trailing piece with tracery of twisted bright gold with an equal length of a front-chest piece of gold and with fine stones on its upper part.⁸¹

Sitrygg's gifts show yet another parallel with *LC* with the reference (cited above) to the gift of a *gullhring er stóð mork* 'a gold bracelet weighing half a pound'. This may well be the equivalent of the Irish *fail* which occurs frequently in *LC*, with thirty such objects given as *túarastla* to the kings of Leinster, Tara and Ulaid, twenty to the king of Bearnas Conaill (in Co. Donegal), and lesser numbers of ten down to two to various kings located mostly, though not exclusively, in the eastern half of the island. In only one instance, when given as gifts from the king of Cashel to the king of Osraige, are they said to be of gold: *dá fálaig derg-óir*.⁸²

Hiberno-Norse arm-rings, especially those of silver and of the broad-band variety, are the most common objects found in Irish Viking hoards but these are normally dated from the mid-ninth to mid-tenth centuries. The classic eleventh-century arm-rings are normally seen as deriving from Scandinavian Scotland and being based on a Scandinavian unit of weight known as the *öre*. According to John Sheehan, however, these particular rings 'occur in conspicuously small numbers in Ireland', although the distribution does include a lost nineteenth-century hoard from the Clare side of the Shannon near Killaloe, as well as from Lough Sewdy in Co. Westmeath, and in a hoard near Raphoe in Co. Donegal. The National Museum collection also has a further eleven unprovenanced examples.⁸³ Plaited arm-rings (originating, perhaps, in southern Scandinavia) are known from the Isle of Man which was under the lordship of the later eleventh-century Uí Briain kings, while a gold arm-ring was found in Edenvale, Co. Clare, and a plaited gold neck-ring in Milltown Malbay in the same country.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Russell, '*Nósa Ua Maine*: "The Customs of the Uí Mhaine"', 550-1 §VI.53. The text is dated by Ni Mhaonaigh, '*Nósa Ua Maine*: Fact or Fiction?'

⁸² Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, I. 539.

⁸³ Sheehan, 'A Viking-Age Silver Hoard'. One should note that the dating of these rings is dependent on them being found in association with coins or other dateable objects, so it is impossible to be absolutely certain as to when individual types came in and out of use.

⁸⁴ Sheehan, 'Viking Age Silver and Gold from County Clare', 30-41; Hall, *Exploring the World of the Vikings*, 202; Batey and Graham-Campbell, *Vikings in Scotland*, 238; Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen'.





A late eleventh-century archdeacon in England, Herman of Bury St Edmunds, identified arm-rings as being classically southern Scandinavian: he describes a Dane ‘in a sheepskin garment reaching down to his feet’ who ‘wore bracelets on each arm in the Danish manner and had a gilded axe hanging from his shoulder’.⁸⁵ However, there are also Irish warriors who are described in the literature as being so attired. Niamh Whitfield has drawn attention to the description of Flann in *Tochmarc Becfhola: a dí láim lána dí fhailgib óir 7 arcait co a dí uillinn* ‘[h]is two arms were laden to the elbows with gold and silver bracelets’.⁸⁶ An even more dramatic instance comes from the text of *Mesca Ulad*:

‘at-chonnarc and fer corcarda cétlíath i carput cendphartech ás echraid uraird. Lend ilbrecc ingantach imbe co n-imdénam órshnáith. Fail óir dano cechtar a dá lám; fánni óir im cach mér da méraib. Airm co n-imdénam órda lais. Noí carptig remi 7 .ix. carptig ’na degaid 7 .ix. carptig cechtar a dá tháeb’.

‘Is urdnidi 7 is rígda in tuarascbáil’, ar Medb ...

‘Blad Briuga mac Fiachna a Temair na hArdda ...’.⁸⁷

‘I saw there a bright (?) man beginning to go grey in an ornate (?) chariot above very tall horses. A wondrous multi-speckled *lenn* around him ornamented with golden threads. A gold arm-ring moreover on each of his two arms; gold rings around each finger of his fingers. He had weapons ornamented with gold fittings. Nine chariots before him, nine behind and nine on each of his two sides’.

‘Dignified and regal the description’, said Medb ...

‘Blad Briuga son of Fiachnae from Tara of the height ...’.

In short, without going through the entire list of *túarastla* in *LC*, it is clear that many of the constituent items were the subject of international trade within what has been termed ‘the Insular Viking zone’ in the eleventh century. The list of foreign goods includes slaves routed through Bristol, horses through Scotland, *scingi* (possibly) from the Arctic, *matail* which apparently reflected the fashions of the Anglo-Danish courts of Cnut and Edith ‘Swan-neck’, and gold and silver arm-rings which could be given to Icelandic adventurers by King Sigtrygg Silkiskegg of Dublin or by a native

⁸⁵ Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 174.

⁸⁶ Bhreathnach, ‘A New Edition of *Tochmarc Becfhola*’, 73 / 78 §6; cf. Whitfield, ‘Dress and Accessories’, 31-3.

⁸⁷ Watson (ed.), *Mesca Ulad*, ll. 703-15 (my translation).





Irishman to an Ossory king. Much of what has been written about Irish trade in the eleventh century has focussed on the magnificent archaeological finds from Dublin and the other coastal settlements;⁸⁸ what *LC* makes clear is that the international goods brought in by merchants were highly prized by Irish aristocrats and served to oil the wheels of politics throughout the island.⁸⁹

TRESPASS

In his study of the weapons from the Dublin excavations, Andrew Halpin has concluded ‘that Dublin was well in touch with the mainstream of European military development’, and that ‘despite their distinctly mixed military record in Ireland, the Vikings and their Hiberno-Norse descendants had a profound effect on Irish military and political development’.⁹⁰ A vivid archaeological demonstration of this was the discovery by a diver on Smalls Reef, off the coast of Pembrokeshire, of a brass sword guard decorated in Irish version of the Scandinavian Urnes style and made *c.* 1100-1125. Richard Hall describes this as ‘all that survives from a ship, probably plying between Viking ports in Ireland and Wales’.⁹¹

LC makes clear its concern with military affairs as the following quotations illustrate:

- (i) Dliged didiu ó Gallaib Átha Cliath 7 ó deoradaib Éirind dula
lais i cend catha ar telgud a tír
It is due from Norse of Dublin and from the unfranchised of
all Ireland that they go with him into battle, after their lands
have been established (?);
- (ii) Dleagaid Laigin dula leó
i n-agaid Gall fri gach ngleó;
dia tistar chucu co fír
la ríG Caisil a cor díb
The Laigin are bound to go with them against the
Foreigners in every fight; if the invasion should come to the
Laigin, the king of Cashel must drive it off;

⁸⁸ Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland*, 118-34.

⁸⁹ See also discussion of ships as *túarastla* in Swift, ‘Royal Fleets in Viking Ireland’.

⁹⁰ Halpin, *Weapons and Warfare in Viking and Medieval Dublin*, 178-9. See further Charles-Edwards, ‘Irish Warfare before 1100’; Flanagan, ‘Irish and Anglo-Norman Warfare’.

⁹¹ Hall, *Exploring the World*, 210





- (iii) Tuarastla ríg Caisil do rígaib a thuath: a leathlám chéadus ... do ríg Dáil Chais, 7 tosach lais a crích anechtair 7 lorg iar cách

The stipends given by the king of Cashel to the kings of his tribes: first, a place by his side ... to the king of Dál Cais; and to lead with him an expedition into another territory and to return at the rear.⁹²

Túarastla were given out of due regard for ancestral practice and in respect of the nobility of the recipients but also, as clearly stated, with an eye to contemporary ability to provide manpower on the battlefield:

Dligead ocus fodail na tuarostal sin beós andso ó ríg Caisil do rígaib tuath 7 mór-thuath iar sochar a forba 7 a ceneóil, a feib dligid 7 dúchusa, 7 ar sochar grád 7 dílmaine, ar méit a nirt 7 a forlámais, ar línmairi a fechta 7 a slóigid, 7 ar soirbi 7 ar sobraidi 7 ar sindseri 7 comairim fíond 7 febsa.

This is the just duty and division of those stipends from the king of Cashel to the kings of tribes and territories according to the revenue of their land and kindred, by virtue of claim and heritage and according to the benefit of rank and nobility, according to the amount of their strength and suzerainty, the numbers of their foray and hosting, and according to convenience, moderation, seniority, and reckoning of estates and dignity.⁹³

In at least some cases, the provision of such manpower was not in return for *túarastla* but for pay (*lóg*) and those that were killed were to be compensated in a manner reminiscent of the promises of Henry I of England to his Flemish allies:⁹⁴

Hua Briúin 7 Síil Muireadaig 7 Huí Fíachra 7 Cenél nAeda saorthuatha indsin 7 comsaera fri ríg, 7 ní thiagat feacht na sluaiged acht ar crod, 7 ní thiagat i cath la ríg acht ara log, 7 dia mbertar 7 curo marbtar, dligid in rí a n-éric do ic ón ríg.

Ua Briúin and Síil Muireadaig and Uí Fíachrach and Cenél nAeda are free *tuatha* and of equal status with the king, and they go not on an expedition or a muster save for a payment of

⁹² Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, ll. 213-5, 251-4, 399-401.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, ll. 510-14 (my underlining).

⁹⁴ See above n. 25.



cattle, and they go not into battle with the king save for pay; and if any such are brought and they happen to be killed, their king is entitled to their eric from the king (of the province).⁹⁵

The military assistance which these men provide could vary – Uí Briuin, for example, are said to have contributed ships and crews ‘across the sea’ (*tar lear*), a particularly important constituent in the late eleventh-century Dál Cais armies.⁹⁶ On the other hand, the king of Ossory is said to receive horses for the use of himself and his troops when invading Leinster:

Inis tráth téid dia thig fén
dligid each is errid éim,
7 in lín do-théid soir
each is errid cach énfir.

When he goes to his own house, he is entitled to a horse and ready harness, and to a horse and harness for each man of those with whom he goes east.⁹⁷

With such emphasis on horses and calvary, it is probably not coincidental that it is in the eleventh-century version of *Togail Bruidne Da Dergae* in *Lebor na hUidre* that the loan-word *ritire* (< Old English *ridere*) first appears in Irish saga literature.⁹⁸

What an eleventh-century military *lóg* might have consisted of is not made explicit. Two Hiberno-Norse coins from the Dál Cais settlement at Béal Boru were dated by Michael Dolley to the eleventh century,⁹⁹ while a Cnut ‘short cross’ silver penny minted in London by the moneyer Eadwine, and with a dating range of AD 1029-35, has been found in the Abbey river in Limerick.¹⁰⁰ The international nature of Cnut’s administration has meant that his coinage, and imitations of his coinage, are particularly widespread in north-western Europe but it is noteworthy that coins of Cnut were struck in Dublin with Dublin mint mark (DYF) and moneyer

⁹⁵ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, ll. 686-9.

⁹⁶ Ibid., l. 772. See Candon, ‘Muirchertach Úa Briain: Politics and Naval Activity’; Swift, ‘Royal Fleets’, esp. 193-200.

⁹⁷ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, ll. 584-7.

⁹⁸ Mac Eoin, ‘The Interpolator H in *Lebor na Huidre*’, 41; Swift, ‘Celtic Beserkers and Feeble Steersmen’.

⁹⁹ O’Kelly, ‘Excavations at Béal Boru, Co. Clare’.

¹⁰⁰ My thanks to Brian Hodkinson of Limerick City Museum for this information.

FERENN as well as others with the Old Norse name Steinn.¹⁰¹ Dolley suggests that at least some of these Dublin coins post-dated the reign of Cnut himself; this may imply that they were intended for use outside England where royal coinage was withdrawn and re-minted on a relatively regular basis. Certainly, coin hoards from Limerick (one from Adare and the other without provenance) would lead one to conclude that coinage was available to the Dál Cais nobility of Thomond in the eleventh century.¹⁰²

In contrast to its treatment of *lóg*, *LC* also states that at least some foreigners were given land in exchange for submission of renders to the *cáin* levied by the king of Laigin:

For Gallaib céatamus tús na cána sa .i. seacht cét tinne, seacht cét torc, seacht cét molt, seacht cét dam, seacht cét bó, seacht cét brat, ó Gallaib inn sin.

Upon the Foreigners is charged the first part of this rent, seven hundred fitches, seven hundred boars, seven hundred wethers, seven hundred oxen, seven hundred cows, and seven hundred cloaks, that is from the Foreigners.

And in the corresponding verse:

Ní dleagar cís, comoll ngloin
ó Uib cróda Cendsealaig;
acht ó foirbfinib nach fand
chaithid a fēr 's a ferand.

No rent – a fair compact – is due from the valiant Uí Chennsealaig, but only from the sturdy stranger-families that use their grass and land.¹⁰³

Although military activity is not specified in this particular Leinster poem, it seems reasonable to link these statements to an earlier reference in the compilation that the *deoraid* of all Ireland must go with the king of Cashel into battle after their lands have been established.¹⁰⁴ Certainly, English charters provide us with evidence of riders receiving land in exchange for military duties ‘as riding men

¹⁰¹ Blackburn, ‘Hiberno-Norse and Irish Sea Imitations of Cnut’s *Quatrefoil* Type’, 3.

¹⁰² Dolley, *The Hiberno-Norse Coins in the British Museum*, 61, plate III; idem, ‘The Medieval Coin-hoards of Thomond’.

¹⁰³ Dillon (ed.), *Lebor na Cert*, ll. 1610-12, 1640-3.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, ll. 213-15.

should' (*quae at equites pertinent*).¹⁰⁵ In the more Scandinavianised north of England, Earl Siward, initially established at York as ruler of eastern Northumbria by Cnut in 1033, appears to have invaded Cumbria by *c.* AD 1040. As a result, lands in Allerdale were granted by one Cospatric, in association with the Earl, to a Thorfynn mac Thore and 'the men dwelling with Thorfynn' (*beo mann bydann mið Thorfynn*) with the same rights and freedom from *geld* or royal land-tax as either himself or any of his *wassenas* or retainers.¹⁰⁶ The Hiberno-Scandinavian Thorfynn mac Thore who settled in Cumbria seems thus to have been rather more fortunate than his Wexford counterparts.

CONCLUSIONS

Thomas Charles Edwards has illustrated the important role of agricultural renders in all early medieval kingdoms of Western Europe.¹⁰⁷ In this paper, however, I suggest that the traditional approach of viewing the provisions of *LC* as representing ancestral systems of government within Ireland owes much to O'Donovan's original nineteenth-century edition. My alternative interpretation proposes that the text reflects the specifics of Dál Cais over-lordship in the eleventh century. The nature of their dispersed empire, with territories and alliances stretching from the Shannon estuary to the Isle of Man, is typical of the new polities emerging in the North Atlantic as a direct result of the revolution in communications brought about by Scandinavian shipping. The taxation system described in *Lebor na Cert* seems to have been similar to that found in many western European societies, and our sources indicate that the Scandinavians would not have found it strange or unusual as it was closely comparable to the systems they used themselves in England. The terminology of traded goods involved in *túarastla* contains at least two Irish terms (*scing* and *matal*) derived from Old Norse, while a number of references are to goods brought from beyond the sea including foreign slaves who knew no Irish, and both fair and swarthy women. Arm-rings (*failig*) are mentioned which, at least in eleventh-century England, were seen as typical of Danish dress. The most common items given as *túarastla*, however, were horses, often with ornamented harnesses, which were sometimes imported from abroad. It is suggested here that the mention of such gifts reflects the increasing importance of cavalry in the military tactics and warfare

¹⁰⁵ Abels, *Lordship and Military Organisation*, 152-3.

¹⁰⁶ Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, 532.

¹⁰⁷ Charles-Edwards, 'Early Medieval Kingships'.

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of western Europe in the eleventh century. Thus, it is clear from *Lebor na Cert* that it was not just Dubliners who were well in touch with mainstream European developments, but that ambitious army commanders throughout Ireland were eager to follow the latest trends.

Such men, like their peers elsewhere, could be hired as mercenaries for pay or could be rewarded with lands by royal ordinance. Their leaders attended their overlords at feasts and assemblies as well as on the field of battle, and their women, like Edward the Confessor's queen Edith, could be half-English and half-Danish and yet be brought up as fluent Irish speakers. *Lebor na Cert* is a text dealing exclusively with political relationships between men, but perhaps one of the most vivid illustrations of the world it portrays is the eleventh-century gold headband found at Rathkeale, Co. Limerick, and paralleled in the excavations of Christchurch Place in Dublin as well as at Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, and Iona and Bute in Scotland.¹⁰⁸ A possible drawing of such a headband on Cnut's queen Ælfgu / Emma is found in British Library Stowe MS 944,¹⁰⁹ while a Gaelic literary reflex of this head-piece can be drawn from the description of a Scottish king's retinue going into exile into Ireland:

do-deachadar in l. ban: brat húaine co cortharaib argait; léne co n-dergindlead óir; deilgi óir lánecair co mbrechtrad (n)gem n-ildathach; muinci di ór forloiset[h]i; mind óir for(a) c(h)ind cach aí.

the fifty women came; each with a green cloak with fringes of silver, an under-tunic with red embroidery of gold, brooches of gold fully inlaid with a variety of many coloured jewels, and necklaces of refined gold. A headdress of gold was on the head of each one of them.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Ó Floinn, 'A Gold Band Found near Rathkeale, Co. Limerick'.

¹⁰⁹ Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 175; Owen-Crocker, *Dress*, 224; Whitfield, 'Early Irish Dress', 21-3.

¹¹⁰ Binchy (ed.), *Scéla Cano meic Gartnáin*, ll. 31-4 (my translation).