The Irish Church, its reform and the English invasion. By Donnchadh Ó Corráin. (Trinity Medieval Ireland Series, 2.) Pp. viii + 148. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017. £30. 978 1 84682 667 2

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Donnchadh Ó Corráin, late professor of University College Cork, offers in this monograph a fascinating assessment of medieval Irish ecclesiastical history in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Erudite and copiously footnoted, Ó Corráin offers a window into the Gregorian reform movement in Ireland from its origins until Henry II's invasion in 1169. Scholars have long relied on highly critical continental sources such as Bernard of Clairvaux's hagiographical *Life of Malachy* as the basis for our understanding of Irish ecclesiastical life during this period. While these sources essentially describe the Irish as barbaric heathens, Ó Corráin offers a corrective to this narrative by providing contextualisation within traditional Irish ecclesial and secular society, within the indigenous Irish reform movement and its continental influences and, finally, in the machinations of Canterbury and an expansionist Henry II.

The author begins his study with an examination of traditional Irish ecclesiastical organisation. Influenced by the Gregorian reform movement so prevalent on the continent, Irish reformers viewed traditional Irish church organisation as 'decadent and eccentric'. More importantly, this is the picture that they painted in Europe, to contacts such as Bernard and contemporary popes. Principal charges included the practice of divorce and remarriage, exchange of wives and a failure to observe the Church's (new) prohibitions against incest. Papal letters from as early as 1073 note these rumours, but within a century they were considered fact. Ireland's reputation was therefore brought into disrepute and these charges were later the justification used for 'aggression, expropriation, colonization and religious repression' (p. 43). Concurrently, Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury (1070–89), laid claim to jurisdictional authority over Ireland rooted in a 'partial reading' of the Venerable Bede and the Augustinian mission. Although Ireland may seem to have been isolated from continental trends, an established and widespread Irish monastic network as well as a steady stream of pilgrims ensured that this was not at all the case.

What Irish support existed for Canterbury's claims evaporated after 1096. Thereafter, the indigenous reform movement gained traction with four important reforming synods held between 1101 and 1152. These synods progressed from a dogmatic to a practical reform agenda, emphasising moral standards and reflecting contemporary episcopal hierarchical organisation on the continent. As Ó Corráin charges, this reform agenda sought 'nothing less than the overthrow, from within, of the traditional Irish Church' (p. 71). Ireland was divided into two provinces, Armagh in the north and Cashel in the south, each with twelve suffragan dioceses. The claims of Canterbury were 'quietly thwarted'.

Ó Corráin devotes a chapter to St Malachy of Armagh, perhaps the most important figure of the indigenous Irish reform movement (at least according to Bernard's widely read *vita*). It was Malachy who devoted himself to the realisation of a 'national synod' demanding the *pallia* for Irish archbishops, which was finally held in May 1148. He also introduced many new monastic orders (especially

Cistercian) to Ireland, intending to supplant the indigenous monastics. In 1152 the high point of the indigenous and independent reform movement in the Irish Church occurred at the Synod of Kells. It was here that the papal legate John Paparo (on a second effort, circumventing a hostile England) arrived and conferred the *pallia* on, now, four Irish archbishops.

The author concludes his study with a discussion of events leading to Henry II's invasion of Ireland in 1169. Following the confirmation of Irish autonomy at Kells, missions soon arrived in Rome, in 1155, from both Canterbury and London. John of Salisbury, representing Canterbury, claimed that he had secured a papal privilege for Henry's invasion 'for the good of religion'. A further fourteen years, however, would pass before the arrival of the English army, in 1169. Henry II would himself not arrive for a further two years, bringing his 'out of control' forces to heel and conducting what seemed a royal progress from Waterford to Dublin. Most Irish petty kings came to pay homage, but this did not prevent Henry from granting their lands to English knights.

Although Henry was still under interdict by the pope for the murder of Thomas Beckett, most Irish bishops – conscious of papal sanction of the invasion – still answered his summons to a synod in Cashel. Once there, the Irish bishops even accepted complete conformity with the English Church, including swearing fealty to the king. Church affairs were now royal policy and a matter of royal patronage. Henry soon made his peace with Pope Alexander III, who wrote to the Irish bishops and praised Henry, while again condemning Irish vices. Why did the Irish bishops concede so readily to Henry, a man excommunicated and no friend of the Church. Was it simple naivety? Loyalty to the pope? A hope to weather the storm? Hoping for the furtherance of reform? Personal gain? Although it is ultimately unclear, Ó Corráin condemns their betrayal and naivety vehemently.

Ó Corráin is ultimately unsympathetic to the indigenous reform movement in Ireland. The effect of Gregorian reform in Ireland was a 'shallow superstructure' on the pre-reform Church that was ultimately simply a further financial burden on local communities. Confiscating ecclesiastical resources for new diocesan bishops ultimately condemned the traditional monastic schools of literature, history, law, Holy Scripture and theology to a rapid decline. Many of the abuses that reformers opposed – such as clerical marriage and hereditary clergy – were reestablished by the later thirteenth century. The irony is that by weakening traditional ecclesial structures and creating new dioceses, the reform movement actually increased royal influence and interference in Ireland, where lay investiture was previously rather a non-issue. The author reaches this conclusion rather cynically, but understandably. Ó Corráin further muses that lower clergy and laity likely nodded to the new order and continued as best as they could.

This volume is densely packed and paints a vivid picture of ecclesiastical Ireland between, roughly, the tenth and twelfth centuries. True, there are a few typos here and there and a map would have been helpful for more obscure locations. One would have liked to have known more about the circumstances surrounding Diarmait Mac Murchada's appeal for English aid – the trigger for the invasion. But these are ultimately quibbles and one must presume that Ó Corráin would

have expanded on this point and the later reform movement had he been able to complete his intended larger work. Ultimately, this is clearly an able piece of scholarship that significantly shifts our received understanding of the Gregorian reform agenda within the Irish context.

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Die Urkunden der Deutschen Könige und Kaiser. Neunzehnter Band. Erster Teil. Die Urkunden Alfons' von Kastilien. Edited by Ingo Schwab and Alfred Gawlik. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata Regum et Imperatorum Germaniae, Tomus XIX, Pars 1, Alfonsi Castiliensis Diplomata.) Pp. xlviii + 279 incl. 8 colour ills. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016. €80. 978 3 447 10088 5

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Ingo Schwab's handsome edition of the material bearing on Alfonso x of Castile's campaign to establish a claim through his Hohenstaufen mother to succeed Frederick II as Holy Roman Emperor has been almost twice as long in the making as the campaign itself took to implode. Launched in 1255, by 1273 when the pope delivered his *coup de grâce*, dispersing the string of Ghibelline sympathisers in Provence and North Italy, the alternative 'much greater and better empire', which the ruler of Granada had meanwhile been dangling before Alfonso, had disappeared from view and the learned but not terribly sensible king was well on his way to losing Castile itself to his son and heir. Good as it is to have the documentation of the matter reproduced in best MGH style, there is little here to provide students of the period with cause for surprise. Indeed it is remarkable how rarely the editor is able to improve upon at least his German predecessors' work: witness, for example, his text of Alfonso's agreement with the commune of Marseilles in 1256 when placed alongside Scheffer-Boichorst's account of the matter published in 1888. And up to a point much the same goes for the work of Spanish scholars from Mondéjar to Ballesteros and beyond. Particularly welcome will be the fine plates of material in non-Spanish collections and the exemplary *Namenregister* of more than a hundred pages. Sad to say, what is lacking in this volume on the Castilian monarch is anything specifically Castilian, the inevitable consequence, it might be thought, of the fourteenth-century loss of the Castilian royal archive. But this neglects the possibility of relevant material awaiting discovery in Iberia's Kew (as it might have been). Where once protected by termagants trained to turn researchers approaching the place to stone, the archive of Toledo cathedral is now administered by custodians who are models of their kind. On another level, the authors' introductory essay, which cites too little published in the last ten years, might have found room for M. González Jiménez and M. A. Carmona Ruiz's *Documentación e itinerario de Alfonso X el Sabio* (2012), for (dare one suggest as much?) *The Mozarabic cardinal* (2004; F. J. Hernández and this reviewer's study of Alfonso's *chargé d'affaires impériales* for much of this time) and, above all, for reference to the fundamental doctoral thesis of Maria Klein on his chancery functionaries during these years, *La*