

**Thomas Fitzanthony's Borough:
Medieval Thomastown in Irish History,
1171-1555**

Marilyn Silverman

In the year 1295, King Edward I "ordered that all goods belonging to subjects of the King of France should be seized and sold". A man named Richard le Marshall then "sold 30 dickers of hides, the property of...[a]...merchant of Flanders, which he had in his cellar at Thomastown for £10".¹ As far as we know, this is the earliest commercial transaction which is recorded for Thomastown, County Kilkenny. The existence of such commerce, however, is not surprising. The town of Thomastown had been founded after the Norman conquest as both a military stronghold and a trading depot in a far-flung mercantile network. Having received its foundation charter in around the year 1200, the town has persisted until the present day. What facts, though, can be gleaned about its earliest years and how do these fit into the course of Irish history?

Conquest, Landscape and Trade: The Place of Thomastown, 1200-1307

The majority of urban foundations [in Ireland] took place within the first century after the initial invasion of the island, as the Normans advanced rapidly from their initial strong points of Dublin, Wexford and Waterford. Settlement proper began after the treaty of Windsor, signed in 1175 ... Under the terms of the treaty, Dublin, Meath, Leinster and Waterford, as far west as Dungarvan, were reserved to the Normans. These were the first areas to be colonised.²

The evolution of settlements then followed distinct stages. The preliminary stage was when the Crown gave large areas of land to principal tenants. For example, all of Leinster was granted to the Earl of Pembroke, known as Strongbow, by Henry II in 1171. Then, sections of the grant area were assigned to smaller sub-tenants. This stage was accompanied by "the construction

of military strongholds; in the early period of the conquest, at least, these were generally motte-and-bailey castles". At that point, "Norman settlers began arriving and ... settlements began to grow up around the motte castles and manorial churches". The next stage was when a sub-tenant received a royal grant to hold a weekly market and yearly fair at his settlement. Then came the final stage: the granting "of a charter which conferred borough status".³

This evolutionary process had two important implications. Because the hierarchical system of land grants (from Crown to main tenant to sub-tenants) pre-dated the founding of settlements, political needs exercised powerful control over the location of settlements and their subsequent development. In addition, although a settlement received a foundation charter and even borough status, it was not necessarily a "town" with so-called urban functions. In fact, most Norman settlements, and many medieval boroughs, began as, and remained, only "small, agriculturally-orientated manorial village[s]".⁴

The greater part of the area around Inistioge, Kilmacow and Thomastown, in south Leinster, was granted by William Earl Marshall (who had married Strongbow's daughter and heir)⁵ to a follower named Thomas Fitzanthonny whom he had made, in 1211, seneschal of Leinster.⁶ Somewhat before this date – the exact date is unknown – Fitzanthonny founded and granted a borough charter to the town of "Grenan".⁷ Soon after, the town became known as "Thomas Fitzanthonny's town" or Thomastown.⁸

The charter charged Thomastown's burgesses or residents a fixed rent of 12d. a year and gave them their own court, the right to common pasture in Fitzanthonny's woods and access to Fitzanthonny's mills for grinding their corn.⁹ These particular privileges, known as the Law of Breteuil, were typical for all borough charters.¹⁰ However, the Thomastown charter also allowed the burgesses to set up merchants' guilds and to prevent outside merchants from selling in the town for more than 40 days without a licence.¹¹ That the formation of guilds was permitted along with a trade monopoly are indications that Thomastown was one of "the more important towns"¹² and that it had urban functions which distinguished it from mere villages.

This conclusion can also be arrived at by looking at what is known about this early period. A very substantial church was built in Thomastown in the early thirteenth century, just after Fitzanthonny gave his charter to the town. Its chancel measured 47 feet by 27; and its nave, exclusive of the two side aisles, measured 96 feet by 24. It also had a tower at the south-west corner and a detached chapel south of the chancel.¹³ Thomastown also was on a main route linking England and Dublin, the centre of the Norman incursion into Ireland. For example, when King John went to Dublin in 1210, he travelled from Milford Haven, landing at Crook on the Suir, several miles below Waterford. "On the eighth day after his arrival he was at Dublin, having travelled by [New] Ross, Thomastown, Kilkenny and Naas".¹⁴

The Justices of the High Court also held sessions in Thomastown – at least in the years 1286, 1289 and 1300.¹⁵ In 1307, 215 Thomastown burgesses paid their shilling in tax,¹⁶ thus suggesting that there was then a burgess population around 1,000. There also were two mills in the town in that year. One of the mills made an annual profit of £6 – a high sum for that time. The town's oven was also highly valued, at 10 shillings a year.¹⁷ Finally, in 1305, "the community of Thomastown" was fined 100 shillings for "trespasses". Details were not given but the surnames of those who pledged payment (de Pikeston, Sweteman, de Cadewelly, le Salter, le Webbe, Somery and Warderop¹⁸) point clearly to the Norman basis of the town and its inhabitants: not an Irish surname amongst them.

What accounted for Thomastown's size, importance, urban functions and ethnic make-up? It has been noted by geographers that urban boroughs initially were associated "with locations which possessed strategic value" but that, soon after their founding, other factors became key. These included "the distribution of river crossings, navigable rivers, and pre-Norman monastic sites". This was because rivers provided a means of transport in the heavily wooded environment whilst the control of fording places allowed the Normans to dominate inland movements. Monastic sites also attracted the Normans because these were the only compact settlements in rural areas. In any case, monasteries were generally located along

navigable rivers.¹⁹ Thus, within the limits fixed by both the system of land grants and of military necessity, manorial or urban settlements were founded according to the logic imposed by inland river systems. Where did Thomas Fitzanthon's borough fit in all this?

In around 1160, five decades before Fitzanthon became seneschal of Leinster, the Cistercian Order founded its third abbey in Ireland.²⁰ This was Jerpoint Abbey, built alongside the Little Arrigle river where it flowed into the river Nore about two miles from the site of present-day Thomastown. Soon after, the Abbey was sufficiently prosperous to found a daughter house, in Killenny, on the river Barrow.²¹ Thomas Fitzanthon thus located his town down river from an established and thriving monastic settlement.²² However, the main reason for his choice was the river Nore.

The general economic functions performed by all boroughs irrespective of size were principally associated with agriculture, for within Ireland, Norman settlers developed a semi-commercial system of agriculture, exporting animal products and even foodstuffs to England. The inland boroughs acted as the centres of trade and exchange and as the collecting points for agricultural produce, which was then moved to the ports of the south and east coast for shipment. The typical goods which were exchanged in the borough market were corn, cattle and hides, fish, cloth, metals and foodstuffs. *Many of these markets could only have operated at the local scale but those boroughs which were sited on route ways, particularly the navigable rivers, acted as regional collecting centres through which agricultural products for export were shipped to the coast and imported English manufactured goods were distributed to the smaller local markets.* Mills were found in most boroughs, processing local agricultural produce for local consumption, but in some of the larger boroughs agricultural products were processed for export.²³

Fitzanthon's manorial settlement was located on the navigable river Nore which, in its flow southwards, united with the rivers Barrow and, then, the Suir. The three rivers

together then flowed into the Waterford estuary and out to the sea. The most important urban settlements in Norman Ireland were the port towns. This was because "Ireland was a colony to be settled and exploited", and the "ports provided the links, both with England and with Europe, through which this could be achieved".²⁴ Thus, although Irish medieval ports were of varying importance, the ports of New Ross and Waterford, down river from Fitzanthon's town, were key. According to customs returns between 1276 and 1333, they handled over 50 per cent of Irish external trade,²⁵ serving "most of the interior of south-east Ireland". Indeed, after Dublin, New Ross was the largest medieval town in Ireland with a burgess population of about 2,530.²⁶

Twelve miles north of Fitzanthon's borough, on the same river Nore, was Kilkenny city. Incorporated in the year 1211, it was the largest inland town in medieval Ireland: in 1307 it had a population of between 1,600 and 1,700 burgesses.²⁷ Until the early nineteenth century, Thomas Fitzanthon's borough was Kilkenny city's outlet to the sea because Thomastown lay at the head of navigation on the river Nore. Fitzanthon's town was, therefore, the port for the largest inland town and a key depot in an important network of inland and international trading relations. Thomastown's size, importance, urban functions and ethnic make-up were the result of its location, both in the physical landscape and in a regional and international system of trade.

In 1305, the executors of Richard Le Marshall, who had traded out of Thomastown, sued his agent "for the proceeds of 40 crannocks of kiln-dried wheat, two hundreds of Irish cloth, two fallings and five pigs" which Le Marshall had given to the agent at Thomastown and which the agent had sold in Bayonne (France) without remitting the profits to Le Marshall. The "agent claimed that he was a partner in the deal and admitted owing £8, but the court found that he was merely an agent and owed £14".²⁸ One of the auditors for Le Marshall's estate was Giles Pikeston who also was one of those who pledged the 100 shillings for the "community of Thomastown" in that same year. In contrast, Adam de Parys, the agent, was "guarded until he find security" to pay the £14 "because he is a stranger".²⁹ Thomastown's merchants had thus developed a

strong notion of being "local", enjoying the privileges which this entailed.

In general then, Thomastown's initial importance in the medieval period was the result of how its location and physical landscape intersected with history³⁰ – a history created out of the interests of an expanding English state, a feudal land tenure system and the expansion of international trading networks.

The Hierarchy of Political Domination: Local Continuity and Political Disruption, 1300-1391

It had been noted that "Norman territorial expansion and borough development" peaked around 1250. Thereafter, the political "situation remained fairly static, the Normans controlling about two-thirds of the island". However, in the second half of the thirteenth century, the colony began to decline, both economically and in terms of the strength of the central lordship/Crown. This decline was both signalled and exacerbated by an "Irish resurgence". In 1315, Edward Bruce invaded.³¹ Prior to his defeat in 1318, many boroughs were looted and burned; after his defeat, "increasing lawlessness" signalled "the decline of the colony as a whole and of the boroughs".

An index of this general economic and political decline was the "catastrophic" decrease of customs revenues between 1276 and 1333. This exacerbated "the problem of defence, made particularly acute by the Gaelic revival and the increased activity of the rebel English".³² All this was made worse by quarrels and factionalism amongst the Anglo-Irish elite,³³ by absenteeism amongst lower-level landlords "who failed to maintain and guard their lands",³⁴ by the "hibernicisation" of many who remained,³⁵ by government corruption,³⁶ by poor harvests and by plague.³⁷ Events in the Thomastown area indeed reflected this decline and the disruption in the hierarchy of political domination.

An early sign was in the mid-thirteenth century with the fragmentation of feudal tenures and the growth of complex factional disputes within the locally-based, Anglo-Norman landed class. This was generated by an inheritance system which gave certain rights to all heirs, including wives and

daughters. Thus, when the Marshall interest ended with the death of the last male in 1245,

the great fief of Leinster was ... divisible among the five daughters of the elder Earl William Marshall or their representatives ... By May 1247, when the partition was effected, only the eldest was alive. ... Of the shares of the deceased daughters, one became divisible among seven co-heiresses, and another among three co-heiresses, so that the primary division into fifths became in two cases subject to a further subdivision.

The "disruptive forces" unleashed by such subdivision were exacerbated by the "extravagant provision" which was "made for the widow of the preceding feudal lord. One third of his lands of inheritance was normally assigned to her as dower". In "Leinster, there were no fewer than three widows to be provided for".³⁸

In all this, it is unclear who actually received the borough and countryside of Thomastown at the division of Leinster in 1247.³⁹ However, by 1307, when there were 215 burgesses in Thomastown, the town and surrounding hinterland had become part of the estate of Joan, Countess of Gloucester. When the last Earl of Gloucester was slain in 1314, he left his three sisters as his heirs. One was married to Hugh Despenser and received, amongst other areas, Kilkenny castle. Another, married to Hugh d'Audley, was assigned the boroughs of Kilkenny, Thomastown and Newtown-Jerpoint. In 1328, however, Despenser "coveted the earldom of Gloucester and had intrigued against his parceners, Hugh d'Audley and Roger d'Armoury, husbands of the other Gloucester heiresses who were therefore his bitter enemies". It also was probable that "some of the odium which attached to Despenser adhered to his seneschal". As a result, the main freeholders in the county, the Butler family, were highly antagonistic to him. As a result of such feuds which "divided the magnates", it is not surprising that "attempts were made by the Irish in Leinster to recover the province".⁴⁰

The disruption in the colonial economy and in the hierarchy of political domination were reflected in local Thomastown events. In 1305, "divers malefactors and disturbers of the King's peace" were reported to be "wandering

... between Thomastown and Rospont [New Ross], and elsewhere ... from day to day committing depredations and other damages". The Sheriff was ordered "to inquire by the oaths of good and lawful men of his bailiwick ... the malefactors and disturbers of the King's peace and the witting receivers of them". Indeed, one of the Sheriff's inquisitions was taken in nearby Jerpoint.⁴¹

Other incidents of violence in and around Thomastown were also recorded in the early fourteenth century. Such disruptions came from several sources: from banditry, elite factionalism and the Irish. In 1311, three men (one a "doctor") "who remain at Thomastown" stole 177 sheep. The "said malefactors have withdrawn and are of ill-fame. Therefore let them be outlawed". They had no moveable property or land which could be appropriated.⁴² In 1316, the landowning burgesses of the manors adjacent to Thomastown borough, John de Dene of Grenan and Patrick Archdekin of Dangan, were slain (for reasons and by persons unknown) whilst, in 1330, the lord (Thomas de Dene) of Grenan Castle was wounded and captured by the Irish. He subsequently died of his wounds.⁴³ The following year, 24 townsmen from Thomastown and nearby Jerpoint borough were killed in a foray caused by elite factional conflicts at the time. Probably as result, Thomastown's inhabitants received a charter to build walls around the town.⁴⁴ In addition, four burgesses from Thomastown

appeared before the treasurer in Dublin and explained that all those who had been responsible for the collection of the murage tax had been killed while conserving the peace (no doubt in the 1331 affray). They petitioned that because of this and the unbearable losses which the community had sustained in the past times through the disturbances of the peace in those parts that they might be permitted to pay a fine rather than attempt to render an account of the murage tax. Their petition was granted and a fine of £4 imposed.⁴⁵

Despite the disruptions and the violence, however, it is important to recognise that the same data also show that Thomastown borough, with its trading function and at least

some of its merchants, simply carried on. Thus, the Sheriff was able to collect inquisitions; there were "lawful men"; someone had 177 sheep; walls were built; the treasurer collected taxes; and the town's burgesses travelled to Dublin and were able to raise funds to pay a fine, collectively, as representatives of a still-functioning borough. Trade too continued. Indeed, disruption was sometimes good for local business. In 1324, four Thomastown merchants (including a Robert Sweteman) were paid £143.11.2 "from the Irish Exchequer for the purchase and dispatch of provisions for the King's army".⁴⁶

Along with trade, local commercial enterprises persisted. In 1305, Robert Sweteman had been amongst those who had pledged 100 shillings for the Thomastown community.⁴⁷ In 1324, he was still in business. Seven years later, a Gilbert Sweteman was one of the four Thomastown burgesses who petitioned the treasurer for tax relief.

In 1300 too, there was "a highway leading from Grenan".⁴⁸ In 1308, a mill in the town was valued at four marks,⁴⁹ and a water mill mentioned at Jerpoint in that same year⁵⁰ was still operating over the years 1332 to 1337.⁵¹ In 1318, Thomastown was reported as having a "market street"⁵² whilst, for at least the 1335 to 1351 period, the prior of Inistioge was reported as paying £2 for "having the King's Charter to hold a weekly market for corn on Wednesday in Inistioge".⁵³ In 1346, too, a royal charter was given to "the Provost, bailiffs and honest men of Thomastown" which allowed them "to charge customs tolls on all merchandise coming to the town for a space of four years". The money was "for the repair and construction of the bridge of the said town".⁵⁴ It is not known if there was an earlier bridge or if Thomastown had merely provided a suitable fording place. What is important, however, is that the new bridge over the Nore remained the only bridge between Thomastown and New Ross for several hundred years.

This picture of Thomastown's continuity and persistence, in the context of political disruption and economic decline, is also apparent from deeds relating to property sales which have survived from the fourteenth century. They concerned both agricultural lands and urban lands; and they involved leases as well as sales.⁵⁵ Then, in 1374, presumably as a reflection of both the borough's importance and the uncertain times,

another royal charter was granted for building walls around the town. To pay for this, the charter authorised a toll on all goods coming into or passing through the town for a period of 20 years.⁵⁶ A "charter of murrage" in that same year also included a toll of a ha'penny on every 100 tiles sold in the town.⁵⁷ The town of Jerpoint too, in 1376, received a royal charter to repair its bridge across the Nore and a tower and gate on the southern end of the bridge. To do this, it was allowed to charge a toll on all goods carried over the bridge for a ten-year period.⁵⁸

Clearly, several related features were relevant at the time. Walls were being built to protect the trading towns and their traders; bridges were being built to facilitate such trade even though they may have lessened the security of such towns; and trade itself was generating sufficient funds to build both the bridges and walls. Some of these features, such as the 1346 and 1376 charters, were connected to the policies of Edward III who, in 1360, had intervened in Ireland with a "massive military and financial investment ... which had as its object the restoration of order and, if possible, the recovery of lost lands". Moreover, "the king not only hoped to make Ireland pay her own way again, but he hoped to recoup his investment by drawing on a surplus revenue". However, "such hopes were wholly unrealistic".⁵⁹ Indeed, that the Crown, that is, the central authority, was on the defensive was

clearly shown by the Statutes of Kilkenny of 1366, which were intended to maintain English law and customs in the more loyal area, and in which reference is made to the effects of native Irish traders on the decline of some of the older "colony" towns, with consequent (but ineffective) regulations prohibiting trade with the Irish.⁶⁰

This dual quality of the period – disruption of the central authority alongside the persistence and even occasional improvement of local life and the wider trading network – sometimes had ironic and unintended results. One of the Kilkenny Statutes stated "that no monk of the Irish race should be accepted in an Abbey within the English Pale. Jerpoint had to be reminded of this, and in 1387 the Abbot Thomas, himself an Irishman, had to pay 40s. to obtain the rights of English

citizenship". In addition, because their incomes decreased "owing to the continual war between the English and the Irish, to robberies, and to other misfortunes", the monks at Jerpoint Abbey "were unable to maintain hospitality or bear other burdens laid upon them".⁶¹ However, in response to their economic problems, the Bishop of Ossory granted additional lands to the Abbey.⁶²

Trade continued. During the period 1388-1391, surviving exchequer records show that receipts were being remitted regularly from Dublin, Kilkenny and Wexford. However, "there was still nothing like enough money even to enable the Irish government to pay its officials regularly". Nevertheless, "the English government ... continued to lay out large sums of money on Ireland throughout the second half of the fourteenth century" – "on armies ... and on the great expedition led by Richard II in the last years of the century".⁶³

Regional Domination, Commerce and the Town, 1391-1470

"Richard II decided to come in person to Ireland and solve the Irish problem once and for all".⁶⁴ Thomastown was garrisoned, along with several other centres in Leinster, in October 1394 as part of his "pacification policy". Indeed, Richard himself "lodged at Jerpoint ... awaiting the arrival of our ... uncle", the Duke of Gloucester from Waterford.⁶⁵

Richard's policy, as of April 1395, was to protect Leinster by "wards" – with small bodies of men strategically placed to defend a particular area and to spearhead aggressive raids. The town of Thomastown was a centre of such a ward. However, the central authority's resources were in fact being over-extended. This can be deduced from the fact that "the strength of garrisons fluctuated ... with men removed from one ward frequently being added to the strength of another". Moreover, "between 1395 and 1396, the wards which were depleted were the more distant southerly defences". Indeed, in July 1396, the Thomastown garrison was "significantly reduced".⁶⁶

The failure of Richard's warding policy and, by implication, the financial and military resources of the Crown, were accompanied by another important development. This

was a "shift in the centre of power" from the Crown and from Dublin to so-called great lordships in particular regions. Ireland, "left more or less to [its] devices" after Richard, thus saw the emergence of great regional magnates and the gradual growth of regionally-based power centres. In this way, "a new equilibrium was being achieved"⁶⁷ as lords, such as the earl of Ormond, were "organising their own communities to be as self-sufficient and autonomous as possible" while, at the same time, expanding the scope of their rights in these territories.⁶⁸

For example, in 1391, Ormond had bought Kilkenny castle and the Despenser (Gloucester) lands.⁶⁹ This "made the [Butler] family the chief magnates of the county and its effectual lords".⁷⁰ Thus, although "Kilkenny was in theory an ordinary county subject to the Dublin administration", whereas Tipperary "was an Ormond liberty", the earl was forceful enough to be able to claim "liberty rights in Kilkenny as well" during the fifteenth century.⁷¹

The Ormond political order thus grew, with Thomastown within it.⁷² In 1413, the extent of "royal service" due to the Lord of Gowran barony (i.e. Ormond) from various areas in and around Thomastown borough was published.⁷³ Rents, too, were paid to Ormond;⁷⁴ and lands were "quit-claimed" or surrendered by local elites either to Ormond or to other members of the Butler family who occupied lower rungs of the Ormond hierarchy.⁷⁵ However, land also was transferred amongst local husbandmen at the time,⁷⁶ pointing yet again to the fact that Fitzanthony's town carried on, despite difficulties. In 1450, "the people of Thomastown complained that they had spent the greater part of their substance on the repairs to the wall". Because of this, they "received another Royal Charter granting them immunity from taxes for ten years".⁷⁷ At Jerpoint in 1442, "the cloisters, dormitory, bell-tower and other offices [were] in need of much repair", but penitents who visited the Abbey and gave alms for its conservation and repair could receive divine remuneration in perpetuity.⁷⁸

From within Thomastown's walls, too, trade continued, even as the colonising, royal lordship was replaced by a regionally-based power. However, this new pattern of domination not only permitted locally-based but internationally-linked, commerce to continue, it also allowed

commercial wealth to be accumulated by those trading out of the urban centres which were situated along these continuing and extensive trading networks. For the evidence suggests that a good deal of wealth was being generated locally at the time. Indeed, it has been noted that this "mercantile economy, based principally on the ports of the south and east of Ireland" and dating from the thirteenth century, only peaked in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The resulting "urban prosperity" was "reflected in the substantial town houses of the merchants in places like ... Waterford and Wexford".⁷⁹ It was also reflected in Thomastown, where the town walls were made stronger and several "fortified town houses" were built along the quay in the mid-fifteenth century by merchants who clearly could afford such expenditures. These houses had "a dual purpose of helping to protect the business of the merchant on the one hand, and serving in the overall defence of the town on the other". They provided a storehouse for goods, served as a venue for conducting business and commanded the access over Thomastown's bridge. They reflected the wealth and prestige of the merchants who built them.⁸⁰

This wealth continued to be generated and accumulated along the Thomastown-New Ross/Waterford trade route. For example, various borough charters guarded the prerogatives of local merchants and their enterprises. In 1428, "ordinances were made concerning the sale of foods by Waterford merchants ... in Carrick, Clonmel and Thomastown".⁸¹ Wealth also moved along this route and it sometimes was brought into Thomastown by outsiders. In 1473, Richard Archdekin, landlord of Dangan manor, leased to a Waterford merchant (Richard Northman), "one water mill ... and a castle near it, two gardens, one meadow and one pond ... which mill lies in the burgage of Thomastown" for a term of 24 years at 13s. 4d. per annum "provided the said Richard Northman shall possess it freely for the first four years paying nothing therefor". Northman and his heirs were also to "keep the mill and castle stiff, strang and staunch" at their own cost "unless it is burned by the King's enemies or rebels as many are in these times". In addition, Archdekin gave Northman and his heirs "all the wood and stones they can find in their woods and lands for the building and repair of the said mill and castle". Northman and

heirs also had to "bind themselves and all their tenants to grind all their corn at said mill". The deed was sealed by the "personal seals of [the] reeves of Thomastown" because Northman's personal seal was "unknown to many".⁸²

At the same time that trade and investment moved along the trading network, there also was continuity amongst at least one merchant family. In 1443, a Sweteman (Nicholas) was around to demise "a messuage in the borough of Thomastown, forever", to the local vicar. Moreover, whilst the central lordship withdrew and the Ormond domination intensified, the manors of Dangan and Grenan retained, as their local lords, descendants of families which dated from the early Norman period. In 1247, William de Dene had been "among the tenants by military service of Richard, Earl of Gloucester". Stephen Ercedekne had married one of the daughters of Thomas Fitzanthony.⁸³ Now named Den(e) and Archdekin, their descendants held the manors of Grenan and Dangan respectively. They were to do so, from within the Ormond hegemony, until the Cromwellian conquest in the mid-seventeenth century.⁸⁴ To do so, they accepted the lordship of the house of Ormond. So, for example, in 1462, John Dene of Thomastown quit-claimed to Theobald, son of James Butler, half the lordship of Kilcrone, near Thomastown.⁸⁵ Similarly, Edmund Archdekin, granted to Piers, Earl of Ossory [Ormond] "for ever all his lands, tenements, rents and services in the town of Killerne", also near Thomastown.⁸⁶

Thus, when seen from Thomas Fitzanthony's borough during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the changing character of political domination – apparent in the disruption and withdrawal of the Crown, the factionalism amongst elites, the Gaelic resurgence and a new, regionally-based (Ormond) ascendancy – was accompanied by a continuing international trading and local marketing function for the town, by a persistence of local landlord families, by an accumulation of wealth amongst at least some merchant families, by outside investors entering the town, and by a more complex infrastructure of bridges, walls and fortified houses. Fitzanthony's borough, founded as an inland, Norman trading depot and military stronghold on the navigable river Nore, had continued in that role through the political dislocations which

had ensued.

The Prosperity of the Town, the Wealth of the Merchants: 1470-1555

"Interference by the Dublin administration in the affairs of county Kilkenny" was "both fitful and of little effect during the fifteenth century and the area was administered by the Ormonds along with their liberty of Tipperary". As a result, "in large parts of the south and east a distinctively English manorial economy" with manorial and village communities survived through most of the century.⁸⁷ In this relatively stable agrarian context, "the major towns of Ireland in the late Middle Ages" continued to be "those which operated successfully both as ports and as market centres for large hinterlands". Simultaneously, their "isolation ... from both London and Dublin gave them a high degree of autonomy". Thus, Waterford, "with a very large hinterland, access to which was afforded by the rivers Suir, Nore and Barrow",⁸⁸ was "the second-largest and second-wealthiest city of Ireland in the early sixteenth century".⁸⁹ Kilkenny city too retained its position: "no other inland town in Ireland ... approximated ... [its] size or importance". With walls and large castle, Kilkenny city had "developed as a major trading town and centre of manufacturing and processing".⁹⁰ According to Kilkenny Corporation records, kept between 1352 and 1537, the town contained an extensive array of occupational groups and officials – secular, religious and military. Yet, "control of the town was very much the prerogative of a small number of merchant families, whose names appear with great frequency on the lists of sovereigns and council members".⁹¹

Thomastown, situated between Waterford and Kilkenny at the head of inland navigation on the Nore, also prospered, with its own merchant families linked to the wider trading networks. Between 1501 and 1519, for example, inquisitions were taken at Inistioge as to the practice of "prisage". Waterford citizens had been accustomed to take two barrels of wine from every ship sailing to Ross (one for the use of the city, the other for the Earl of Ormond) until they were "lately deprived of this right by the sovereign and burgesses of New Ross".⁹² Of the four "prominent gentlemen" who gave evidence on this matter, two were merchants from Thomastown:

Nicholas White and David Dobbyn.⁹³ In 1531, yet another Thomastown "merchant", Philip Cursay, was sufficiently prominent to be the attorney for the transfer of Archdekin lands to the Earl of Ormond.⁹⁴ Earlier, in 1513, yet another Thomastown merchant, Thomas Fossard, had leased the fishing rights in nearby Ballylinch townland, across the Nore from Jerpoint Abbey. The rent was a cask of salmon, "but if so much fish was not caught he was to pay 20s. a year instead".⁹⁵ Indeed, fishing in the locality was important, probably for trade and even export.⁹⁶ In 1537,

the Grand Jury of the County Kilkenny, who included William Lockman and James White of Thomastown, complained of the number of fishing weirs erected in the River Nore from bank to bank to the detriment of the boat trade. The boatmen between Inistioge and Thomastown were also accused of having raised their charges from 8d. per boat to 1s. ...; also of extracting wine from the casks and filling them with water.⁹⁷

In that same year, the Jury also complained that the Abbot of Jerpoint built a fishing weir which impeded boat traffic and that the Abbot, along with others, was "charging his tenants with 'coyne and livery' ", that is, with free quarters for armed men and their dependants. It was a practice objected to by merchants as well as by agricultural tenants.⁹⁸

Thomastown's merchants then, were members of county grand juries; they were involved in securing exports and trade goods; they were active in managing local property and that segment of the trade route which passed through their locality. They were also sufficiently powerful to take on the Abbot and others of his standing; and their interests were sometimes coterminous with farmers but not necessarily with so-called boatmen.

Meanwhile, the manorial economy which had persisted through most of the fifteenth century began to decay as "the small manorial freeholders disappear[ed], their lands passing either to their lords or to the nearby gentry families".⁹⁹ Feudal-like relations in property conveyancing also disappeared, as rentals became fixed for finite terms, as rents became payable solely in cash, and a feudal dues/services no longer formed part of the exchange. Until around 1532 in the Thomastown area,

both small-holders and middle-level lords continued to convey to Ormond as overlord such items as a manor, arable, a fishery, etc.¹⁰⁰ However, from about 1502 and especially after 1555, an increasing number of leases in the Thomastown area were made from Ormond to various tenants for fixed terms and rents.¹⁰¹ These assignments involved not only land but also urban tenements, mills and fishing rights and they were given to various kinds of non-agricultural tenants: a Thomastown merchant (David Dobbyn), a gentleman, the earl's serjeant and a carpenter.¹⁰²

Seemingly then, the diversity of Thomastown's urban economy persisted through the transition, with its merchants, artisans, millers, farmers, fishers and boatmen. So too had there been continuity in landholding amongst the upper class in Thomastown's hinterland after the mid-thirteenth century – both during this transition as well as during the disruptions which had preceded it. The Archdekins (in Dangan) and the Dens (in Grenan) remained as landlords, as did an Edward Watoun of Newtown-Jerpoint. In 1527, Watoun pleaded at Dublin, that certain of his charters had been "consumed in a fire". Witnesses spoke about how his ancestor had been enfeofed and how the successors had been "in peaceful possession" of certain rents which had been listed "before the reeve of Jerpoint" in the 38th year of Edward III (i.e. 1365). The rents included 25s. paid annually by the burgesses of Newtown-Jerpoint as well as a third part of the profits of their court. From another messuage and 80 acres in Newtown-Jerpoint came additional, unspecified rents whilst two other carucates of land returned 4 marks a year.¹⁰³ Another section returned 10 shillings in annual rent whilst 120 acres in a further townland was worth 1s. per acre and a third of its court receipts. Finally, at least three individuals paid 3s. 4d., 3s. 4d. and 12d. per annum for their burgages.¹⁰⁴

The Watoun estate, which had originated from at least 1365, had thus survived intact until 1527, despite major transformations. Over that period, Ormond power, and an international trading network, had provided Thomastown with the resources which enabled urban prosperity, the accumulation of merchant wealth, a persistence of landed families, and a continuation of its local division of labour with

its associated occupational complexity and class differences.

Notes

1. Pilsworth n.d. and 1953:8, citing Sweetman 1875-6, vol. 1293-1301:109. According to Pilsworth, a "dicker" of hides was 10 hides.
2. Graham 1977:30.
3. Graham 1977:31-32.
4. Graham 1977:31, 29.
5. Otway-Ruthven 1968:77.
6. Fitzanthy was seneschal of Leinster until 1224 (Orpen 1920, iii: 49-50). In the interim, he added to his early positions as lord of Grenan manor and as seneschal under William Earl Marshall. Presumably with the help of the earl, Fitzanthy was granted the custody of the counties of Waterford and Cork (for a rent of 250 marks) and the lands of the Fitz Maurice family in Kerry (for a fine of 600 marks). However, after a series of dealings in tenures and tax evasions, he was "reprimanded" by the Regency in 1223 and "deprived" of Waterford and Cork. He died in about 1229, in debt, leaving five daughters as co-heiresses (Orpen 1920, iii:130-6).
7. Although the grant of such a charter was normally a royal prerogative ..., in medieval Ireland, the right to create a borough ... was often exercised by sub-tenants of the Crown" (Butlin 1977:29).
8. Pilsworth 1951:35. The name for Thomastown in Gaelic/Irish was Baile Mhic Anndain, derived from Fitzanthy rather than Thomas. In the 1295-1303 Calendar of Justiciary Rolls (Mills 1905:563), Thomastown was variously written as "Thomasestoun", "Thomasiston" or as "Villa Thome". The name "Grenan" became the name of a manor and its castle (and later, a townland) directly across the river Nore from Thomastown borough.
9. Pilsworth 1953:8.
10. Graham 1977:29-30.
11. Pilsworth 1953:8 and *Report from Commissioners on Municipal Corporations in Ireland*, H.C. 1835, xxviii:573.
12. In addition to the privileges set down by the Law of Breteuil, "several of the more important towns ... were granted the same privileges as the port of Bristol, which included the rights to form merchant guilds and to have trade monopolies" (Graham 1977:30).
13. Pilsworth 1953:33. Pilsworth added: "Leask writes: 'Large parish churches of the thirteenth century, like those of Gowran and Thomastown, were of rare occurrence in Ireland, and were confined to towns controlled by the Anglo-Normans'. *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings*, Vol II, p 117".
14. Bagwell 1885, i:59.
15. "The pleas heard before the justiciar ranged over all kinds of offences, civil and criminal". The court also "reviewed proceedings of inferior courts, while its proceedings were in turn liable to review in the King's court in England". However, "only a few plea rolls of Edward's reign have survived, and of these only those pleas held by the chief justiciar in the period 1295 to 1307 have been published" (Orpen 1920, iv:49-50). Pilsworth (1953:8) mentioned a sitting of the chief justiciar in Thomastown in 1286. There also was a sitting in 1289 when "the expenses of the justices for their court held at Thomastown in June 1289 amount to £4.2s.11d." (Pilsworth n.d., citing Sweetman 1875-76). During the 1295 to 1307 period, the court also sat at Thomastown in July 1300 (Mills 1905:353).
16. Pilsworth 1951:36.
17. Pilsworth 1953:9.
18. Mills 1914:473.
19. Graham 1977:34, 37. Graham analysed medieval settlement patterns in County Meath (north Leinster) to ascertain the "several variables", beyond military ones, which "exerted significant influences upon the location of Norman settlements".
20. Mellifont Abbey had been founded in 1142 and Baltinglass Abbey in approximately 1148 (Moody et al. 1982).
21. Carrigan 1905, vol. iv:284.
22. A settlement, the "once important town of Jerpoint", had been founded on the bank of the Little Arrigle river, opposite the Abbey, in about 1200 "probably by Griffin Fitz William, one of the early Norman followers of Strongbow and a brother to Raymond le Gros who obtained as his lordship Knocktopher, Oldtown and Newtown" (Pilsworth 1953:53). Of these, Knocktopher also was a borough (Graham 1977:53). In *The Calendars of Justiciary Rolls* for the 1295-1307 period, this town was known as Nueva Villa-Jeripont or Gerepont (Mills 1905/1914). It later was anglicised to Newtown-Jerpoint.
23. Italics mine. Graham 1977:38-9.
24. Graham 1977:39.
25. Orpen found that between 1257 (when the records began) and 1292, the port of New Ross paid the most customs dues (Orpen 1920, iv:276-7). Cork, Drogheda and Dublin comprised a second and intermediate group of ports. They controlled 42 percent of Irish overseas trade. Youghal, Galway, Limerick and Wexford, as well as the ports of Ulster and Kerry, accounted for less than eight per cent of total trade (Graham 1977:40-1).
26. Graham 1977:41-2, 45. These population estimates were based on the rents paid by burgesses and, therefore, were estimates of only the burgess population. Burgesses, however, were not the only residents of a borough. Intermittent records show the presence of "cottagers", "free cottagers" and "gavallers". However, because their proportion of the total population varied from borough to borough, analysts cannot accurately estimate population numbers for any particular place (Graham 1977:44-45).
27. Graham 1977:33, 46.
28. Pilsworth 1953:8. According to Pilsworth, a "fallyng" was an overcoat.
29. Mills 1914:157-9.
30. Graham 1977:49.
31. This was an effort of the Scots to carry their wars with England into Ireland (Dolley 1972:178).
32. Lydon 1973:63-4.
33. Graham 1977:49-50. Irish historians have marked a change by describing the "Anglo-Normans" resident in Ireland as the Anglo-Irish.
34. Lydon 1973:58.

35. Butlin 1977:64.
36. Lydon 1973:65-68.
37. Butlin 1977:62. Orpen listed famine in 1316-7; cattle murain in 1321, 1324, 1325; smallpox in 1327; influenza in 1328; and a shortage of corn in 1328, 1330 and 1331 (1920, iv:212).
38. Orpen 1920, iii:75-6.
39. At that division, the son of the deceased third daughter of the Earl Marshall, Isabel, who had been the wife of the now-deceased Earl of Gloucester, received his mother's share which included Kilkenny borough, Jerpoint borough and the townland of Grenan. By 1307, "the burgesses of a fifth part of the vill of Thomastown held their burgages of Joan, Countess of Gloucester". As to why it had been divided into fifths, Orpen speculated that Thomastown itself had been included as part of greater Jerpoint and therefore assigned as dower to Matilda, widow of a brother of William Earl Marshall. After Matilda's death in 1252, it had been "divided into fifths" (Orpen 1920, iii:77, 93). Joe Doyle (personal communication, 1992) speculated that the fifths were because Fitzanthonny had five daughters/heiresses.
40. Orpen 1920, vols. iii:91, 95-6 and iv:223, 226.
41. Mills 1914:471.
42. Pilsworth n.d., citing *The Calendar of Justiciary Rolls of Ireland, 1308-1314*:174.
43. Pilsworth 1953:10 and Pilsworth n.d.:53, quoting from *Annals of Brother John Clynne, 1315-1348* published as J. Clyn and T. Dowling, *The Annals of Ireland*, edited by R. Butler, Dublin, 1849.
44. Pilsworth 1953:10. The political details of the factionalism amongst the Anglo-Normans, the role of the Irish, the interests of the Crown, and the immediate events leading to – and the persons involved in – the attack on the "communities of Thomastown and Jerpoint" are described in Frame 1982:202-209.
45. Pilsworth 1953:10, citing "a deed hitherto unpublished in the MSS Collection of the Rev. James Graves".
46. Pilsworth n.d., citing the *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, vol. 24:22 which in turn was an extract from the *Great Roll of the Irish Exchequer* (later called *Exchequer Accounts*), P.R.O. London.
47. Mills 1914:473.
48. Curtis 1932-43, vol. i, no.350.
49. Pilsworth n.d., citing the *Calendar of Justiciary Rolls of Ireland, 1308-1314*:111-2.
50. Curtis 1932-43, vol. i, no.411.
51. Pilsworth n.d., citing the *Reports of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records in Ireland* (D.K.P.R.I.) 44:38 and 59.
52. A "messuage" located on "the market street" was conveyed (Curtis 1932-43, i, no.536).
53. Pilsworth n.d., citing the *Reports of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records in Ireland* (D.K.P.R.I.) 45:28.
54. Pilsworth 1853:11, citing Tresham, *Rotulorum Patentium et Clausorum Cancellarie Hibernie Calendarium* 1828:533. Also, *Reports from Commissioners on Municipal Corporations in Ireland*, H.C. 1835,

- xxviii:573.
55. Pilsworth (1953:11) cited three examples; two were from *The Calendar of Ormond Deeds*. *The Calendar* also contains several others. In 1300, 4.5 acres "in the field called the eight acres" about two miles north of Thomastown (in Ballyroe townland) were conveyed. A witness was the "son of a smith" (Curtis, vol. i, no.350). In 1318, a Thomastown messuage was "released" (Curtis, vol. i, no.536; cited by Pilsworth 1953:11). In 1343, 10 acres of "arable land in ... the tenement of Thomastown" were conveyed by the attorney for the Earl of Gloucester "to John Brod of Thomastown" for 20 years at an annual rent of five shillings (Curtis, vol. i, no.758; cited by Pilsworth 1953:11). In 1375, a "notarial deed" stated that the "daughter of David Dobbyn, wife of Thomas Halseley ... never challenged, nor did anyone in her name, any right in a moiety of 40 acres of arable land, three of meadow, two of moor, four of gardens, one of orchard". She also gave "all her right and claim in the same" to three men, one of whom was John Evesham of Thomastown (Curtis, vol. ii, no.207).
56. Pilsworth 1953:10. In another publication (1951:36), Pilsworth dated this charter in 1375. In *Report from the Commissioners on Municipal Corporations in Ireland* (H.C. 1835, xxviii:573), it is dated 1374.
57. Pilsworth n.d., citing Tresham, *Rotulorum Patentium et Clausorum Cancellarie Hibernie Calendarium* 1828:98 and *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society* vol. I:87.
58. Pilsworth 1953:54, citing Tresham, *Rotulorum Patentium et Clausorum Cancellarie Hibernie Calendarium* 1828:91.
59. Lydon 1973:85, 86, 87.
60. Butlin 1977:64. The Statutes were concerned to control and to prevent social relations between the Anglo-Normans and the Irish. Marriage, fosterage and concubinage were forbidden as were use of the Irish language and mode of dress, the acceptance of Irish men into English religious houses, etc. The Statutes were also concerned with law and order, the rights of the church and the conduct of royal officials (Lydon 1973:94-5).
61. Pilsworth 1951:47.
62. According to Pilsworth, the Abbey was granted the rectory of Blavilstown in 1374. "Some time previously the earl of Ormond had granted them the rectory of the Rower, and later on, another earl of Ormond made a grant of lands at Treadingstown near Bennettsbridge" (1953:46).
63. Lydon 1973:105, 87.
64. Lydon 1973:109.
65. Pilsworth n.d., citing the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. 37:279 and 290 (1924-7).
66. Johnston 1981:176-177.
67. Lydon 1973:143, 124.
68. This occurred "sometimes through the issuing of ordinances (such as the famous ones of the white earl of Ormond), sometimes by means of treaties, indentures or pacts with subservient 'clans' or 'nations'. ...Rights were won or enforced through war as well. ...But all the evidence goes to show that punitive expeditions were mainly old-

- fashioned cattle raids, involving little loss of life" (Lydon 1973:143).
69. Curtis 1932-43, vol. ii, nos.287 and 297.
 70. Edmund Butler, justiciar during the 1315 to 1318 period, died in 1321, leaving as heir, a minor, James (Orpen 1920, iv:213). James was created Earl of Ormond in 1328 (Orpen 1920, iv:225). The second earl "made Knocktopher his chief seat; the third earl resided at Gowran until he purchased Kilkenny Castle and the Despenser part of the Gloucester inheritance between 1391 and 1393. ...These purchases made the family the chief magnates of the county and its effectual lords. They always retained their personal demesnes in Kilkenny while the only other personal demesne, Carrick-on-Suir, was in the same administrative region. While Kilkenny remained officially a royal county, the Ormonds treated it in the same manner as their palatinate in Tipperary. ...Though the earls became absentees, they still retained their control over Kilkenny even to the appointment of the town clerk" (Neely 1990:107-8).
 71. Indeed, "statutes issued by the 'White Earl' in 1434 declared that the counties of Kilkenny and Tipperary 'should be one country under one rule or under one lordship' and provided for the government of Tipperary, Kilkenny, and their crosses as a single unit" (Quinn and Nicholls 1976:8).
 72. This, of course, did not preclude intra-familial feuding (see Neely 1990, for example). Yet, from 1515 until 1688, the Ormonds' "fortune and power" - with Kilkenny city and county "as the fertile core" - was expanding (Neely 1990:107).
 73. Curtis 1932-43, vol. ii, no.424.
 74. In the years 1432, 1434, 1444, 1464, 1472, rents were remitted from the Thomastown area to Ormond (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iii, nos. 95; 119; 160; 219 and 238).
 75. In 1443, Nicholas, son of John Sweteman, granted a messuage in the borough of Thomastown to the vicar of Thomastown. The vicar in turn granted the messuage to James, Earl of Ormond (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iii, no. 155). In 1457, Lawrence, the son of William Arland of Thomastown, granted to Edmund, "son of Richard Botiller" [Butler], a series of tenements near Thomastown and Kilkenny city (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iii, no. 198). In 1462, John Dene of Thomastown quit-claimed to Theobald, son of James Butler, half the lordship of an area near Thomastown (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iii, no. 212).
 76. In an indenture dated 1402, John Houlyng of Denyngbeg "demised and farm-let" to Patrick, son of Walter Coterell, a section of land near Thomastown for a term of 40 years. The rent for the first eight was 6s. 8d.; thereafter, it was to be 20s. (Curtis 1932-43, vol. ii, no. 367).
 77. Pilsworth 1953:11. Also, *Report from the Commissioners on Municipal Corporations in Ireland*, H.C. 1835, xxviii:573. Several other towns, but none in Kilkenny, were provided with funds for walling by the "great council of 1449" (Otway-Ruthven 1968:381).
 78. Pilsworth n.d., citing the *Calendar of Papal Registers*, vol. viii:248.
 79. Butlin 1977:65.
 80. One such fortified townhouse was called, in 1700, Sweteman's castle. It was "one of at least four fortified houses that were located along the Quay in Thomastown" (Murtagh 1982).
 81. Pilsworth n.d., citing C.S.P. 1509-1603:685.
 82. Cited in Pilsworth 1953:11; also in Curtis 1932-43, vol. iii:238.
 83. Orpen 1920, iii:94, 97.
 84. This, according to Pilsworth, "proves that conditions were more or less tolerable" (1953:11).
 85. Curtis 1932-43, vol. iii, no.212.
 86. This occurred in 1531 (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iv, no.176).
 87. Nicholls 1972:19.
 88. Butlin 1977:64, 66.
 89. Out of Waterford went "export[s] of cloth and skins ... to England and the Continent, and many of Ireland's imports were distributed from" there. Waterford was also "in an important fishing area. ...The prosperity of the merchants of Waterford was thought by the citizens of some of the east coast port towns ... to derive from privileges granted to Waterford ... by Henry VIII in the form of fee farms, customs and poundages, which enabled the merchants to charge very low custom rates to foreign merchants who, therefore, it was claimed, tended to patronise Waterford". In turn, it was possible that "the privileges enjoyed by Waterford were considered, by its citizens, to be no more than just reward for their consistent loyalty to the English crown throughout the late Middle Ages" (Butlin 1977:66 and 69).
 90. Butlin 1977:75 and 74.
 91. Butlin 1977:75.
 92. This dispute over the prisage of wine claimed by Waterford "throughout the estuary of the three rivers" (the Nore, Barrow and Suir rivers) began in 1413 and continued until 1519 (Quinn and Nicholls 1976:8n).
 93. Curtis 1932-43, vol. iii, no. 301.
 94. Curtis 1932-43, vol. iv, no.176. The Archdekins were the lords of Dangan manor, adjacent to Thomastown borough.
 95. Pilsworth 1953:48.
 96. Clarke noted that most Irish exports came out of the pastoral economy (hides, store cattle, barrelled beef, tallow, butter) except for timber and fish. However, "as an export activity, fishing was largely centred on the ports of the south coast, to such an extent, indeed, that they were even used at times as exit ports for Derry salmon" (1976:177-81). Presumably, if Derry's salmon made it to Waterford for export, so too did Thomastown's.
 97. Pilsworth 1953:12.
 98. Pilsworth 1953:49 and Pilsworth n.d., citing *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society* XI:155. Empey discussed the increasing use of coign at the time and how "the practice simply got out of hand: not only was it used by the earl's [Ormond's] kinsmen, but also by ever petty lord in the county, [including] the major ecclesiastical lords. By the beginning of the sixteenth century the system of coign had been extended to include the billeting of masons, builders, carpenters, horse, horse boys, and even hounds. The presentments of the grand juries in 1537 summoned to give evidence about these practices leaves us in no doubt as to how universally oppressive they were" (Empey 1990:94).
 99. Nicholls 1972:19-20.
 100. In 1515, "the manor of Ryston alias Bremeston in Ogenty" (Thomastown) was granted to Ormond (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iv, no.28). In 1524, a John

- Mannyn appointed an attorney "to place" Ormond "in seisin of all his messuages, lands" in Newhouse near Thomastown (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iv, no.114). Two years later, two husbandmen (Philip Avery and David Edward) each granted to Ormond all their messuages, lands, etc. in Kilbline "forever" (Curtis 1932-42, vol. iv, no.121). In 1531, a John Troy "covenant[ed] that whenever he shall recover possession of the Lordship of certain lands including Ballyduff then he shall make such estate and surety of two parts of all land recovered to said earl". In return, the earl was "to maintain and preserve and keep said John from all indemnity", etc. John was "bound to said Earl in £40" (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iv, no. 171). Also in 1531, a John Walshe of Gowran granted to Ormond (known at the time as Ossory) various acres and messuages in several parishes (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iv, no.172) and Edmund Archdekin of the Thomastown landlord family granted to Ormond/Ossory "all his lands" etc. "in the town of Killerne" ("a quarter of the whole town and a quarter of a fishery de fosse") as well as some property in Galway. Philip Cursay, the Thomastown merchant, was one of the two attorneys "for giving possession" (Curtis 1832-43, vol. iv, no.176). The following year, Ossory/Ormond was granted seven acres of arable land in Kilfane by a David Shortall (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iv, no.182).
101. Prior to 1502, there were three fixed-term leases in the Thomastown area. None involved Ormond and only one involved farmland. In 1343, the Earl of Gloucester granted John Brod of Thomastown, ten acres "in the tenement of Thomastown" for 20 years at 5s. per year (Curtis 1932-43, i, no.758). In 1402, a John Hculyn demised and farm-let an unspecified amount of land for 40 years at 6s. 8d. for the first eight years and at 20s. thereafter (Curtis 1932-43, ii, no.367). In 1473, Richard Archdekin leased the water mill to Northman, the Waterford merchant, for 20 years at 13s. 4d. per year (Curtis 1932-43, iii, no.238).
102. In only one of these conveyances, a very early one, did remnants of feudal dues remain. In 1502, merchant David Dobbyn leased a tenement and garden in Thomastown from Ormond for 49 years at "2/- of good and usual money" payable half yearly "with services to the chief lord" (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iv, no.67). In contrast, the later conveyances contained no reference to such "services". All rents were solely in cash. In 1556, Ormond leased to Oliver Grace, a landed gentleman of Legan near Thomastown borough, the "water mill of Geryponde [Jerpoint] ... with the water course, mill pond, weir, fishing" for 21 years at £6 per year. Grace was "to build up said mill, now in decay, with lime, stone, slate and timber at his own cost" (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iii, no.238). This lease contrasts with the more feudal-like, Archdekin rental to Northman in 1473 whereby the latter had to build and repair the mill but with the wood and stones provided by Archdekin and, in return, Northman and his tenants had to grind their corn at the mill. In 1580, John Cuffe, the earl's serjeant, leased two townlands (Dysart and Pleberstown) about two miles south of the borough, for 21 years at £10 per year. This most likely was agricultural land (Curtis 1932-43, vol. v, no.333). In 1582, Philip Maher, a Thomastown carpenter, leased from Ormond a mill "with all the meases, lands, customs, suits, wood-leave and carriages belonging to same" for 16 years at four marks per year (Curtis 1932-43, vol. v,

- no.354).
103. "By the end of the fifteenth century the fiscal unit was the carucate or 'ploughland' of 120 acres of arable land, excluding all 'rivers, meadows, mores, pastures and hylls and wodds'" (MacCurtain 1972:95).
104. Curtis 1932-43, vol. ii, no.433.

References

- Bagwell, Richard (1885; reprinted 1968). *Ireland Under the Tudors*, 3 vols. London: Holland Press.
- British Parliamentary Paper (1885). *Report from the Commissioners on Municipal Corporations in Ireland*, H.C. 1835, xxviii:573.
- Butlin, R.A. (1977). *The Development of the Irish Town*. London: Croom Helm.
- Carrigan, W. (1905). *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, Vol. IV.
- Clarke, Aidan (1976). "The Irish Economy, 1600-60". In T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol III): Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Curtis, Edmund (ed.) (1932-43). *Calendar of Ormond Deeds 1172-1350*, 6 volumes.
- Dolley, Michael (1972). *Anglo-Norman Ireland*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Empey, C.A. (1990). "County Kilkenny in the Anglo-Norman period". In William Nolan & Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: History and Society*. Dublin: Geography Publications.
- Frame, Robin (1982). *English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-1361*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Graham, B.J. (1977). "The Towns of Medieval Ireland". In R.A. Butlin (ed.), *The Development of the Irish Town*. London: Croom Helm.
- Johnston, Dorothy (1981). "The Interim Years: Richard II and Ireland, 1395-1399". In James Lydon (ed.), *England and Ireland in the Later Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven*. Black Rock, County Dublin: Irish Academic Press.
- Lydon, James (1973). *Ireland in the Later Middle Ages*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- MacCurtain, Margaret (1972). *Tudor and Stuart Ireland*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Mills, James (ed.) (1905 & 1914). *Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls on the Proceedings in the Court of the Justiciar of Ireland Preserved in the Public Record Office of Ireland*, xxiii-xxxi (Part 1) and xxxiii-xxxv (Part 2), *Years of Edward I*. Dublin.
- Moody, T.W., F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.) (1982). *A New History of Ireland (Vol VII): A Chronology of Irish History to 1976*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Murtagh, Ben (1982). *The Fortified Town Houses of the English Pale in the Later Middle Ages*. MA Thesis, Department of Archaeology, University College, Dublin.
- Neely, William (1990). "The Ormond Butlers of County Kilkenny". In William Nolan & Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: History and Society*. Dublin: Geography Publications.
- Nicholls, Kenneth (1972). *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland in the Middle Ages*.

- Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Orpen, Goddard Henry (1920). *Ireland under the Normans, 1216-1333* (Vols. III and IV). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Otway-Ruthven, A.J. (1968). *A History of Medieval Ireland*. London: Ernest Benn.
- Pilsworth, W.J. (n.d.). Unpublished Notebooks. Private Archives, Thomastown.
- Pilsworth, W.J. (1951). "Thomastown Corporation", *Old Kilkenny Review* 4:35-43.
- Pilsworth, W.J. (1953). *Historical Thomastown and District*, 1st edition. Kilkenny: Kilkenny Archaeological Society.
- Quinn, D.B. & K.W. Nicholls (1976). "Ireland in 1534". In T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol III): Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691*. Oxford: Clarendon.