This is the first fully documented history of Ireland and the Irish between the fourth and ninth centuries AD, from Saint Patrick to the Vikings – the earliest period for which historical records are available.

It opens with the Irish raids and settlements in Britain, and the conversion of Ireland to Christianity. It ends as Viking attacks on Ireland accelerated in the second quarter of the ninth century. The book takes account of the Irish both at home and abroad, including the Irish in northern Britain, in England and on the continent. Two principal thematic strands are the connection between the early Irish Church and its neighbours, and the rise of the Uí Néill and the kingship of Tara.

EARLY CHRISTIAN IRELAND

T. M. CHARLES-EDWARDS
Contents

List of maps \hspace{1cm} page viii
List of tables \hspace{1cm} ix
List of figures \hspace{1cm} xi
Acknowledgements \hspace{1cm} xii
Abbreviations \hspace{1cm} xiii
A note on pronunciation \hspace{1cm} xvi
A note on the Chronicle of Ireland \hspace{1cm} xix

Introduction \hspace{1cm} 1

1 Ireland in the seventh century: a tour \hspace{1cm} 8
   (i) The lands of the southern Úi Neill \hspace{1cm} 15
   (ii) The lands of the Connachta \hspace{1cm} 36
   (iii) The north-east \hspace{1cm} 54

2 Irish society c. 700: I. Communities \hspace{1cm} 68
   (i) Free and unfree, noble and commoner \hspace{1cm} 68
   (ii) Communities \hspace{1cm} 80
      (a) Kinship \hspace{1cm} 81
      (b) Gens \hspace{1cm} 96
      (c) Neighbours \hspace{1cm} 100
      (d) Táith \hspace{1cm} 102
      (e) The household (muinter) \hspace{1cm} 106
      (f) The retinue, the warband and the company of boys (déis, fían
         and macrad) \hspace{1cm} 112
      (g) Fosterage \hspace{1cm} 115
      (h) Church and monastery \hspace{1cm} 117

3 Irish society c. 700: II. Social distinctions and moral values \hspace{1cm} 124
   (i) The problem of incommensurable status \hspace{1cm} 124
   (ii) The hierarchies of status \hspace{1cm} 129
   (iii) Honour and moral values \hspace{1cm} 136
Contents

4 Ireland and Rome 145
   (i) From the Late Iron Age to Early Christian Ireland 145
   (ii) Irish settlements in Britain 153
   (iii) Language and identity in western Britain 163
   (iv) The ogham inscriptions in Ireland and the beginnings of literacy 172
   (v) The Latin culture of Ireland and Britain before 600 176

5 Conversion to Christianity 182
   (i) The evidence 183
   (ii) Conversion and culture 185
   (iii) Palladius 202
   (iv) Patrick 214
   (v) The development of the mission 233

6 The organisation of the early Irish Church 241
   (i) Bishops and monastic parochiae 241
   (ii) Scholars, bishops and abbots 264
   (iii) Bishops, scribes, scholars and the tuth 279

7 Columba, Iona and Lindisfarne 282
   (i) The sources 283
   (ii) Columba’s education 290
   (iii) The foundation of Iona 293
   (iv) Columba and the Picts 299
   (v) Iona and the English 308
   (vi) Insular art 326

8 Columbanus and his disciples 344

9 The Paschal controversy 381
   (i) Time, power and the calendar 392
   (ii) Exegesis 396
   (iii) The development of the controversy 405
   (iv) The seriousness of the issues 411

10 The primatial claims of Armagh, Kildare and Canterbury 416
   (i) Bishops, metropolitans and archbishops 416
   (ii) The Collectio Canonum Hibernensis and the Book of the Angel 422
   (iii) Kildare and the Romani 428
   (iv) The claims of Wilfrid and Theodore 429
   (v) The dating of the Irish texts relevant to the issue of an Irish archbishopric 431

11 The origins and rise of the Uí Néill 441

12 The kingship of Tara 460
   (i) Perceptions of Tara 460
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>Tara and Tailtin</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii)</td>
<td>Tara and the kingship of Ireland</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv)</td>
<td>Druimn Cete, the Uí Néill and Osraige</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v)</td>
<td>The partiality of Baile Chuinn</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi)</td>
<td>Non-Uí Néill kings of Tara</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vii)</td>
<td>The annals and the king-lists</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(viii)</td>
<td>Variations in the power of the king of Tara</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ix)</td>
<td>The Airgíalla and the Uí Néill</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(x)</td>
<td>The kingship of Tara in the laws</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The powers of kings</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>The fiscal resources of kings</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>Free peoples and ‘base-client peoples’</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii)</td>
<td>Frithf·olad Muman</td>
<td>534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv)</td>
<td>Fortúatha, ‘external peoples’</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v)</td>
<td>The Óenach</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi)</td>
<td>The cín</td>
<td>559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vii)</td>
<td>The power of the Uí Néill in the eighth century</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>586</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix: Genealogies and king-lists | 600 |
Glossary: Irish and Latin | 630 |
Bibliography | 653 |
Index | 671 |
Maps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>The kingdoms of the southern Ui Néill</th>
<th>page 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Brega</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mide and Tethbæ</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Peoples and kingdoms of Connaught</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sites in Connaught</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The north-west</td>
<td>52–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The north-east</td>
<td>56–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Three zones of Roman influence in Ireland</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Leinster peoples and kingdoms</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sites in Leinster</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Irish in Britain</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The northern frontier of Leinster</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Munster peoples and kingdoms</td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sites in Munster</td>
<td>533</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables

2.1 Northern and southern clientship compared

3.1 Críth Gablach on lay status

3.2 Uraicecht na Ríar and Uraicecht Becc on poets and the laity

3.3 Uraicecht Becc on kings, nobles and churchmen

4.1 Columbanus’ education

5.1 Associates of St Patrick

6.1 Offices and places

6.2 Scribae and sapientes in the Annals of Ulster up to 911

6.3 Scribae and sapientes: AU figures compared with inclusive figures

6.4 Titles and places

6.5 Churches in Brega associated with bishops and scribes, 690–900

6.6 Kingdoms and churches in Brega

6.7 The incidence of patronymics in ecclesiastical obits in AU 701–50

6.8 Plurality of ecclesiastical titles in AU 801–50

6.9 The incidence of patronymics 801–50

9.1 The chronology of feasts in the Synoptic Gospels

9.2 The Celtic reconstruction

9.3 Cummian’s reconstruction

9.4 Bede’s exegesis

9.5 The Victorian and Dionysiac cycles compared

10.1 Justinian and the ranks of bishop

11.1 Leinster king-list

11.2 Kings of Tara

12.1 The Tara king-lists to 695

12.2 Kings of Tara omitted by Baile Chuinn

12.3 An emended version of the Middle Irish king-list, 560–642

12.4 The feuds of the Úi Néill, 600–37
List of tables

12.5  The opposing sides at Mag Rath  497
12.6  The opposing sides at Áth Goan  499
12.7  An amended version of the Middle Irish king-list to 846  502
12.8  Chronicle of Ireland 590–650  504
13.1  Regional kings in Munster  540
Figures

1.1 Development of the Patrician texts  page 13
1.2 Síl Fergus Cáecháin  25
1.3 Patrick’s fictional kindred  32
1.4 Uí Ailella bishops  44
1.5 Uí Amolngada and Uí Íachrach Múaid/Muirse  50
1.6 Brón of Caísil Irroí  51
1.7 Dál Saili  62
2.1 Kinship and fosterage  83
2.2 Descendants  84
2.3 Ancestor-focus and ego-focus  85
2.4 Collateral inheritance  88
2.5 The problem of resharng  89
2.6 Alternation and father–son succession to the kingdom of Tara  91
2.7 The ancestresses of Muiredach  94
4.1 The ogam alphabet  165
4.2 ‘(The memorial) of Votporix’ (ogam inscription)  167
7.1 Dál Riata to c. 630  297
8.1 The Merovingian kings  354
11.1 Cenél Conaill and the abbots of Iona  442
11.2 Patrick and the sons of Niall  445
11.3 Early Leinster  456
12.1 Cenél Conaill and Baile Chaiann  486
12.2 The feuds of the Southern Uí Néill  508
12.3 The Airgialla, the Connachta and the Uí Néill  515
12.4 The Mugdorna  516
13.1 The principal Éoganachta  537
Acknowledgements

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### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AASS</td>
<td><em>Acta Sanctorum</em> (Bollandists)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td><em>Analecta Bollandiana</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAR</td>
<td>British Archaeological Reports (Oxford)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bede, HE</td>
<td>Bede, <em>Historia Ecclesiastica</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BN, n etc.</td>
<td><em>Bretha Nemed</em> texts numbered, ed. and tr. L. Breatnach, <em>Uraicecht na Riar</em> (Dublin, 1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCM</td>
<td>Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievales (Turnhout, 1971–)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCGS</td>
<td>Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca (Turnhout)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSL</td>
<td>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnhout, 1954–)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGH i</td>
<td><em>Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae</em>, i, ed. M. A. O’Brien (Dublin, 1962)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGSH</td>
<td><em>Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae</em>, ed. P. Ó Riain (Dublin, 1983)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of abbreviations

SRG Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum

SRM Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum.


PRIA Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy

BC Revue Celtique

SC Sources Chrétiennes (Paris)

Tírechán, Collectanea Tírechán, Collectanea, in The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh, ed. and tr. L. Bieler with F. Kelly Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, 10 (Dublin, 1979)

UJA Ulster Journal of Archaeology

VT Vita Tripartita Sancti Patricii, ed. K. Mulchrone, Bethu Phátraic: The Tripartite Life of Patrick (Dublin, 1939)

ZCP Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie
A note on pronunciation

There is no room here for a full discussion of the pronunciation of early Irish names, but some important points can be covered. (For further guidance, see P. Russell, An Introduction to the Celtic Languages, London, 1995, pp. 223–7.)

Normally, Irish words were stressed on the first syllable. Towards the end of the period covered by this book this initial stress caused vowels in other syllables to be reduced to the ‘murmur vowel’ (as in the second syllable of English father). This did not, however, affect long vowels, normally denoted in Old Irish by an acute accent (a long a is thus á). The main difficulty, however, is with the consonants. Most consonants have two values, mainly depending on whether they are initial or not. So, for example, deorad ‘foreigner, alien’ has two ds, one initial, the other final. The initial d is pronounced as d, but the final one as ð (th as in ‘thc’). Similarly, an initial m is pronounced as an m, but a non-initial one (unless doubled) is a v. A different duality is found with c and t: when non-initial they were pronounced g and d. These principles of early Irish spelling can be illustrated by a name which recurs frequently in this book, Adomnán, and by two words, tét, ‘(harp-)string’, and éc, ‘death’. These were pronounced approximately:

aðóvnān, with the stress marked on the initial a. (For the pronunciation of the a see the end of this note.)

Later the o in the second syllable was reduced to a murmur vowel, represented by an upside-down e. Hence:

aðóvnān

The other two were:

tēd, ég (tēd was pronounced approximately as in northern English ‘made’)

It may be noted, first, that the short o in the first syllable of Adomnán or Cathal was normally pronounced further back in the mouth than a
A note on pronunciation

standard English a (to get an approximately correct pronunciation shorten the long a in ‘father’) and, secondly, an s before an e or an i may well have been pronounced as a š: hence Caisel = Cashel.

Another difficulty with consonants is that, as in Russian, they may be either ‘palatal’ or ‘neutral’ (‘slender’ or ‘broad’). This complication will largely be ignored here for simplicity’s sake; where it is shown, this will be by a superscript i, which indicates that the adjacent consonant is pronounced in the way it would naturally sound before an i or y. Thus English ‘key’ has a palatal k, while ‘cap’ does not. The use of the accent over a diphthong, such as aí (approximately English ‘aye’), is to distinguish it from a followed by the ‘glide vowel’ signifying that the adjacent consonant is palatal.

In the following suggested pronunciations of some common early Irish names x stands for the ch in loch; γ stands for its voiced counterpart, as in German Tage; θ stands for the th in ‘thin’, to be distinguished from θ standing for the th in ‘the’; all the names are pronounced with the stress on the first syllable:

Áed          aid (approximately to rhyme with ‘hythe’)
Áedán or Aidán  aídán (but anglicised as Aidan), where ã rhymes with Khan
Báetán         baidán
Brega          breγa
Cathal         caθal  (later th came to be pronounced k, and this pronunciation is common)
Colmán         colmán
Congal         congαl
Domnall        dornαll
Donnchad       ðornxαð
Éogan          eγαn (but later, in Middle Irish, Óogan changed to Óogan, and later still the E was dropped and the γ came to be pronounced ι; hence this name is commonly pronounced oυαν, to rhyme with ‘low un’)
Flaithbertach  flaθvαrtax
Loegaire       loiγare
Mide           miðe (anglicised as Meath = miθ)
Muirchertach  murxαrtax
Muirchú       muriχu
Murchad        muriχαð
A note on pronunciation

Óengus  oinγ̓us
Suibne  suvne (the later pronunciation is anglicised as Sweeney)
Tadg  taðg (often pronounced ‘taig’)

In the names of kindreds (including royal dynasties), it is customary to use a relatively modern pronunciation for Úi ‘descendants’:

Úi Néill  🌨 nɛl̝(the l̝ is ‘slender’ or ‘palatal’)
Úi causes the following letter to have its ‘internal’ value:
Úi Dúnlainge  崧  dúnlaŋe
Úi elides a following F and changes S to h (this is shown by a superscript dot):
Úi Fæcláin  .VarCharáil̝á̄n̝.
A note on the Chronicle of Ireland

The ‘Chronicle of Ireland’ is a handy term for the parent-text lying behind the extant annals up to AD 911, in very much the same way as one Alfredian text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle lies behind extant copies. It is believed that up to c. 740 this single source was written on Iona; from then until 911 it was continued at a monastery in the Irish midlands, probably in Brega. From 911 the text represented by the main hand of the Annals of Ulster was continued at Armagh until the break in the text in the twelfth century, but other annals derive from a continuation written at Clonmacnois. Hence, for the period before 911, if the Annals of Ulster agree with any of the Clonmacnois group of annals, one can be reasonably certain that the entry in question derives from the Chronicle of Ireland. However, it is very likely for other reasons that many other entries, now preserved only in one branch of the tradition, also go back to the Chronicle of Ireland.