# Contents

- **List of maps**  
  page viii
- **List of tables**  
  ix
- **List of figures**  
  xi
- **Acknowledgements**  
  xii
- **Abbreviations**  
  xiii
- **A note on pronunciation**  
  xvi
- **A note on the Chronicle of Ireland**  
  xix

---

**Introduction**  
1

1 **Ireland in the seventh century: a tour**  
   (i) The lands of the southern Uí Néill  
   (ii) The lands of the Connachta  
   (iii) The north-east  
2 **Irish society c. 700: i. Communities**  
   (i) Free and unfree, noble and commoner  
   (ii) Communities  
      (a) Kinship  
      (b) Gens  
      (c) Neighbours  
      (d) Táith  
      (e) The household (muinter)  
      (f) The retinue, the warband and the company of boys (déis, fian  
         and macrad)  
      (g) Fosterage  
      (h) Church and monastery  
3 **Irish society c. 700: ii. Social distinctions and moral values**  
   (i) The problem of incommensurable status  
   (ii) The hierarchies of status  
   (iii) Honour and moral values
## Contents

4 Ireland and Rome
   (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 ogam inscriptions in Ireland and the beginnings of literacy
       172
   (v) The Latin culture of Ireland and Britain before 600
       176

5 Conversion to Christianity
   (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
   (i) Bishops and monastic parochiae
       241
   (ii) Scholars, bishops and abbots
       264
   (iii) Bishops, scribes, scholars and the túath
       271

7 Columba, Iona and Lindisfarne
   (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
   (i) Time, power and the calendar
       391
   (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
    (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
        438

11 The origins and rise of the Uí Néill
    441

12 The kingship of Tara
    (i) Perceptions of Tara
        469
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Ta ra and Tailtin</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Ta ra and the kingship of Ireland</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Druimm Cete, the Uí Néill and Oraige</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) The partiality of Baile Chuain</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi) Non-Uí Néill kings of Tara</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vii) The annals and the king-lists</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(viii) Variations in the power of the king of Tara</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ix) The Airgíalla and the Uí Néill</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(x) The kingship of Tara in the laws</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 The powers of kings 522

(i) The fiscal resources of kings 525
(ii) Free peoples and ‘base-client peoples’ 530
(iii) Frithf·olad Muman 534
(iv) Fortuatha, ‘external peoples’ 546
(v) The ñeánck 556
(vi) The úin 559
(vii) The power of the Uí Néill in the eighth century 569

14 Conclusion 586

Appendix: Genealogies and king-lists 600
Glossary: Irish and Latin 630
Bibliography 633
Index 671