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Settlement clusters at parish churches in Ireland, c. 1200-1600 AD.

Richard Gray

Volume 1 of 1

This thesis has been submitted to the National University of Ireland Galway, for the degree of PhD in the Department of Archaeology, School of Geography and Archaeology.

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Department of Archaeology
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April 2016
This thesis is dedicated to the memory of our son Andrew
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Abbreviations

A Clon  Annals of Clonmacnoise (ed. D. Murphy)
A Conn  Annals of Connacht (ed. and trans. A. M. Greeman)
A FM    Annals of Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters (ed. and trans. J. O’Donovan)
A I     Annals of Inisfallen (ed. and trans. S. MacAirt)
A LC    Annals of Loch Cé (ed. and trans. W. M. Hennessy)
B SD    Books of Survey and Distribution and Survey
C DI    H.S. Sweetman (ed.), Calendar of documents relating to Ireland (5 vols.) (London, 1875-1886)
C JR    Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls of Ireland (eds. Griffith, M. C., Langman, A. E. and Woods, H. 1952)
C PR    Calendar of entries in the Papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland
C UCAP  Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photography
D IL    Dictionary of Irish Language
D SM    Digital Surface Model
D TM    Digital Terrain Model
G PS    Global Positioning System
O PW    Office of Public Works
O S     Ordnance Survey
R MP    Record of Monuments and Places
R PAS   Remote Piloted Aerial Survey
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Abstract

This thesis investigates the archaeology and cultural history of small settlements that occur at parish churches in English- and Gaelic- dominated lordships of Ireland, c. 1200-1600 AD, in order to propose their origins and role and to determine how major change and different cultural traditions affected their form in the landscape.

The principal aims are to find out why clustered settlement occurs at parish churches, to investigate the plan and layout of those settlements, to establish a social and cultural context for them and to identify nuances in their form. As an approach to this research, the Anglo-Norman county of Kilkenny and later Butler lordship of Ormond and the Gaelic Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren constitute key case studies.

Within those lordships, six sites were selected. In Kilkenny, Newtown Jerpoint and Tullagerin were chosen for investigation. In the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren, Oughtmama, Noughaval, Carran and Killeany are explored.

The case studies are primarily archaeological investigations of the upstanding features of the settlement clusters, their place in the wider landscape, combined with records of the sites in native chronicles, Crown administrative records and ecclesiastical sources.

Parish churches were high-status buildings, preforming an important spiritual and social role, but the settlements that occur around them were very different and their role depended on the circumstances of their origin. Colonial boroughs like Newtown Jerpoint had an altogether different role from that of the clustered settlements around parish churches in the Burren. The former were planned settlements, influenced by English prototypes, while the latter were, arguably, the homes of Gaelic erenagh families who had hereditary obligations as church officials and provided local leadership.

However, this research has established that there was hybridity among parish-church settlements too, as seen at Tullagerin in Anglo-Norman lordship Ormond, just as there was diversity in the roles of the Burren settlements, which were specialised as pilgrimage and market centres.
Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis investigates aspects of the archaeology and cultural history of small settlements that occur at parish churches in colonial and Gaelic Ireland, c. 1200-1600 AD in order to propose their origins and role, and to determine how major change and different cultural traditions affected their form in the landscape.

1.2 Aim and objectives

The principal aim is to find out why clustered settlement occurs at parish churches in the lordships of Ireland, focusing on the Burren and Anglo-Norman county of Kilkenny and later lordship of Ormond as key case studies. The leading objectives are to investigate the plan and layout of the buildings, to establish a social and cultural context for them and to identify nuances that reflected in the appearance of the settlement clusters in Anglo-Norman and Gaelic dominated lordships in the later medieval and early modern period.

1.3 Scope and content

The core of this thesis in based on two regional case studies. While there was cultural fluidity in the period, the colonial lordship in central County Kilkenny, in the heart of the Anglo-Norman colony was predominantly culturally Anglo-Irish and the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren remained mainly culturally Gaelic. Within the regions, six sites were selected, two in the Butler lordship, Newtown Jerpoint and Tullaherin and four, Oughtmama, Noughaval, Carran and Killeany in the Ó Lochlainn lordship. The case studies are primarily archaeological investigations of the upstanding features of the settlement clusters, combined with records of the sites in native sources and Crown administrative records. The fabric of the medieval parish churches concerned have previously been investigated, however, this thesis is the first comprehensive study of the standing archaeology and cultural history of these settlement clusters. The theoretical approach has been to explore the settlement clusters as places in the context of their landscape settings.
Central Kilkenny was colonised from the 1190s, shortly after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169. Two settlements, the small borough of Newtown Jerpoint and the episcopal manor of Tullaherin, are investigated in part 1 of the thesis. The Anglo-Normans succeeded in populating the lordship by the introduction of new settlement forms, and the borough of Newtown Jerpoint was one of the new, small boroughs that they established. New English or Welsh immigrants populated the borough and the layout of the borough, the position of the new parish church, the streetscape and the regular layout of tofts reflects an English feudal culture.

Tullaherin was an important monastery and monastic school before 1169, with churchlands occupied by a coarb, the successor of the founding saint, and an erenagh, the hereditary steward of the ecclesiastical estate. The churchlands were quickly absorbed into the feudal world of the Anglo-Normans as an episcopal manor. The descendants of these ecclesiastical families continued to live on their lands, but as tenants of the bishop, who held the manor as a tenant-in-chief of the king. However, rather than a complete break with the past, cultural hybridity is evident.

The arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland in 1169 was a defining moment in Irish history and, in part 1, the contrasting settlement evidence at Newtown Jerpoint and Tullaherin reveals some aspects of how the newcomers populated the new colony, by establishing new settlement forms that adapted existing ecclesiastical settlement foci.

The majority of settlement clusters at parish churches investigated in the lordship of Burren had their origins as early medieval monastic foundations. The process of reforms of the Irish church during the course of the twelfth century had a significant impact on hereditary ecclesiastical families, coarbs and erenaghs. The aims of the reformers were to increase episcopal control, establish a parochial system, funded by a system of tithes and the introduction of new Continental-style religious houses. The reaction to these pivotal events is expressed by changes to the standing fabric of some churches. Some churches were extended, enlarged, and developed as new parish churches and at other sites, new parish churches were built. Evidence is presented in this thesis that erenaghs and their families continued to occupy the sites in Burren throughout the later medieval period and well into the early modern period. Upstanding archaeological evidence suggests that the settlement clusters were organic developments over a long period. However, erenaghs were not a
homogenous group, and their role varied as some settlements developed distinctive specialties.

1.4 Structure
Chapter 2 discusses the sources used in the research. Chapter 3 deals with theoretical perspectives on clustered settlements and villages in Britain and Ireland and provides an insight on the development of the theoretical framework that influenced this work. There are inherent challenges and problems in tackling these settlement clusters in the field, one of the notable challenges is to determine a date range for them without excavation, and the methodology employed to conduct the research is described in this chapter.

Chapter 4 is on the origin and development on rural settlement in Ireland. This chapter provide an insight on the historical background to settlement clustering in pre-Norman Ireland, then how settlement clustering developed in Anglo-Norman lordships and how Gaelic people settled in territories outside colonial control.

The body of the work is organised in two parts. Part 1 incorporates chapters 5 and 6 presents and interprets two case studies in the Anglo-Norman county of Kilkenny and later Butler lordship of Ormond. Chapter 5 presents the study of the colonial borough of Newtown Jerpoint. The borough was one of the new settlement types introduced to Ireland by the Anglo-Normans and shortly after their arrival, the borough of Newtown Jerpoint was formed. The founders of the borough were not constrained by an older settlement and were free to establish a planned, regular, settlement that reflected a settlement culture that was well established in England. Chapter 6 deals with the parish church-centred episcopal manor and settlement at Tullaherin. Before the arrival of the colonists Tullaherin was an important monastery and shortly after, the monastic church emerged as the parish-church centre of an episcopal manor, held by the bishop of Ossory as tenant-in-chief of the king with the churchlands of the monastery forming the core of the manor.

The archaeological and historical evidence presented suggests that the tenants on the episcopal manor were the descendants of hereditary ecclesiastical families. This thesis proposes that rather than being absorbed into the feudal world of the colonists,
Chapter 1

Introduction

cultural hybridity is suggested as some Gaelic practices, relating to the occupation of churchlands endured, and colonial culture were layered onto the landscape.

Part 2, which incorporates chapters 7, 8 and 9, is a study of four settlement clusters at parish churches in the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren. In chapter 7, the settlement cluster at Oughtmama is presented, which like Tullaherin, was the site of an important early medieval monastery. The community endured the reforms of the Irish Church in the twelfth century and emerged as the parish-church centre of an erenagh settlement. The shape of the later medieval settlement respected the geography of its earlier origins and elements with symbolic meaning were preserved.

Chapter 8 deals with Noughaval, a rare example of a late medieval market centre in Gaelic Ireland. Settlement evidence suggests that the market occurred on churchlands adjoining the parish church and settlement cluster. The evidence is presented that the erenaghs had a significant role in the control of market activity and may also have been local merchants.

In chapter 9, the two settlement clusters at Carran and Killeany parish churches are compared and contrasted. Carran was the largest parish in the diocese of Kilfenora, while Killeany was among the smallest. The parish of Carran had a large number of subsidiary chapels and an inordinately large number of penitential stations. The evidence is presented that the settlement at the parish church was central to pilgrimage activity and the role of the erenagh was to provide guesting and hospitality for pilgrims. Settlement at Carran continued until the eighteenth or nineteenth century, while Killeany was abandoned early, and settlement shifted to better lands in the parish.

The principal findings of the thesis are brought together in a discussion in chapter 10 and the conclusions are presented in chapter 11.
Chapter 2 - Sources

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to set out and to provide, where relevant, a critique of the sources used in this thesis. The range of sources includes primary historical material, namely written sources such as the Irish chronicles and ecclesiastical and English administrative records; and visual sources such as cartographic and aerial photographic images and maps. The cartographic sources used include parish and barony of the Down Survey of Ireland, first-edition six-inch OS maps, Satellite images by Google Earth and Bing maps and other aerial photography include kite balloon, RPAS and images produced by LiDAR, were available. Primary archaeological sources were used including the RMP and excavation reports.

A number of secondary sources were particularly useful and influential in this work. Publications on English and Gaelic Irish medieval settlement research that helped frame this research are summarised. O’Conor (1998) compiled the most recent synthesis of Anglo-Norman medieval village settlement in Ireland and while there have been some excavations there have been no further academic synthesis. Corlett and Potterton (2009) published excavations that occurred in first decade of this century, which reveal aspects of medieval settlement in an edited volume. The lack of academic study on Anglo-Norman settlement Ireland is in contrast to the growth in research on rural settlement in areas of Ireland that remained under the control of Gaelic lords. O’Conor (1998) and the work of published by Edwards, Edwards and FitzPatrick (2001) provided the impetus for academic study on medieval settlement in Gaelic areas of Ireland, an area that had been previously been neglected.

In England, medieval village settlement research commenced in the 1950s and is more developed than in Ireland. The literature by British scholars has been used as comparative context for this research. The research programme of the deserted medieval village of Wharram Percy was the earliest and most comprehensive study of any archaeological site in Europe and publications by Beresford and Hurst (1990), Bell et. al. (1987) and the final volume on Wharram Percy edited book by Wrathmell (2012) were the most helpful in this research. Books by Taylor (1983), Roberts
Chapter 2

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(2008; 1996; 1987) form the basis for an understanding of the origins, development and morphology of English medieval settlement and Morris (1983; 1989) are important on the background of the church buildings in the medieval landscape. Edited volumes by Christie and Stamper (2012) and Gardiner and Rippon (2007) provide an up-to-date background on the development of British medieval settlement research in the more recent past.

2.1 Primary Written Sources

The Irish chronicles are one of the most important sources for the historical background to church sites, in particular for regions of Ireland that remained under the control of the Gaelic lords in the period 1200 to 1600 AD. The chronicles consulted for this research include the Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters (AFM), the Annals of Connacht (A Conn) the Annals of Ulster (AU) the Annals of Innisfallen (AI) and the Annals of Loch Cé (ALC). The AFM were compiled c. 1636 from earlier annals (Cunningham 2007, 1-18) while A Conn, AU, AI and ALC were produced in the later medieval period from older sources. Events in Connacht and Munster are covered to a larger extent than other areas, although the Munster annals have little information after the early fourteenth century (Simms 2009, 19). The chronicles contain a chronology of events, which vary in length from a single note to longer and more detailed narratives (MacNiocaill 1975, 21-37). They record the deaths of prominent secular and ecclesiastical leaders, wars, battles, raids, disease of animals and people and exceptional weather conditions under the year of occurrence. They are not in narrative form, and no attempt is made at continuity from year to year or from one entry to another within the list of events for any one year (MacNiocaill 1975, 13; Simms, 2009, 20).

The native resources for the period must be used with caution as they sometimes contain bias. They were compiled by religious scribes, who were subject to religious bias and outside pressures, such as the honour of the Irish nation or the Church (Simms 2009, 19-21). The chronicles are limited in respect of individual parish church settlements as they are rarely mentioned. However, the chronicles made a useful contribution to this thesis, particularly for the lordship of Burren. Accounts of battles and succession disputes provide insights on the lordship and the fragmentation of the parish of Carran in the later medieval period (9.2.1). Accounts
Chapter 2

Sources

of raids provide commentary on the topography of the lordship, routeways within the lordship and external links to the territory. References to monasteries in Ossory during the early medieval period were also helpful in determining their importance before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans (6.3).

An important source for this thesis is the Calendar of entries in the papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland (CPR), which contain contemporary, or near contemporary, copies of bulls, letters, and similar documents addressed to nobles and senior clerics. The correspondence includes commissions to legates and nuncios, orders concerning ecclesiastical appointments, monastic endowments, dispensations and a vast amount of miscellaneous matter (CPR, i, i). They record the establishment of papal commissions to enquire into complaints of irregularities concerning the appointment of incumbent priests within parishes. As the documents contain information at parish level, and as this thesis is concerned with activities at this level of society, they are a very valuable source. The names of petitioner, usually a cleric, and those against whom the complaint is made are recorded, which helped in proposing the identity of ecclesiastical families and assists in an attempt to populate the settlements at the parish churches particularly Oughtmama (7.7) and Noughaval (8.7). The limitation of the CPR is that they do not attempt to record the outcome of the enquiries, rather they are concerned with the appointment of commissions to investigate complaints. The names of clerics concerned are recorded in contemporary form and while some attempt has been made to edit them, unfortunately many remain unidentified.

A papal bull of Pope Nicholas IV, issued in 1291, directed the collection and payment to the king of a tax based on one tenth of the ecclesiastical profits in the kingdom of England, Scotland Wales and Ireland. The Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland (CDI) records a number of documents relating to the tax. The Bull, directing collection of the tax is contained in (CDI, iii, 391-2) and the detail of the valuation on which the tax was based is also recorded (ibid., v, 202-323). The tax, referred to as the ecclesiastical taxation list, is the earliest recorded valuation of parish revenues and a valuable source in determining aspects of the parish not otherwise available. Tithes were one of the most important sources of parish revenue, they were mainly a personal payment levied on individuals rather than calculated on
areas (Morris 1989, 23). The tax, is listed for the diocese of Kilfenora (CDI, v, 298-9). However, there are some problems with the record for the diocese. It is not as detailed as other dioceses, which indicate the division of the benefice between the vicar and the rector. Nearly 60% of the parishes share a valuation of 26s 8d or 23s 4d, which suggests that some parishes were grouped together and the combined benefice divided equally between them (9.9). A further problem is that the parish of Oughtmama is not included, and the reason for its omission is unclear (7.3.1). Nonetheless, the CDI are a valuable source for the parishes of Carran, Noughaval and Killeaney but because of the problems with them, outlined above, they are treated with great caution.

The valuations for the parishes in the diocese of Ossory are not recorded in the CDI. However, a copy of the valuation for that diocese is recorded in the Red Book of Ossory, Liber Rubrus Dioecis Ossoriensis. The book contains transcripts of documents relating to that diocese and other matters relating to the government of Ireland from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries (National Library of Ireland).¹ The book dates from the episcopate of Bishop Richard de Ledred (1317-60) (Green 1952, 504). A digital copy of the book is in the library of the Representative Church Body, Dublin. The original manuscript, is written in Latin and places named are difficult to interpret, however, Hogan (1884, 340-4) and Carrigan (1905, iv, 363-71) each copied the ecclesiastical taxation lists, interpreted and identified the modern parishes named in the document.

The valuation of the parish revenue has been used in this study as an indicator of the size of the tithe-paying population of the parishes and the extent of economic activity (Morris 1989, 23). A second taxation for the diocese of Ossory, dated c. 1320, is also contained in the Red Book of Ossory. The two valuations (1302-6 and 1320), either side of the Scottish wars (1315-8) are an important source in an assessment of the economic impact of the disturbance on communities in the parishes of Newtown Jerpoint and Tullaherin. The ecclesiastical taxation lists were of particular value for Tullaherin in identifying some unique features of the episcopal manor and its role in the provision for diocesan dignitaries.

¹ http://sources.nli.ie/Record/MS_UR_065742 [Accessed 13/7/2016]
Knights’ fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny (13th to 15th century), edited by Eric St. John Brooks (1950), provides details of the several purparties after the death of the last Earl Marshal in 1247. This forms a framework for the later history of the lands in the three counties and a good deal of the grants and families associated with them back to the time of Strongbow (HGR 1951, 286-7).

The six volumes of the Calendar of Ormond Deeds, edited by Edmund Curtis, cover the period 1172 to 1603 and provide a collection of royal commissions, letters patent, grants and feudal charters of the Butlers and others (Curtis 1932, i, v). Brooks and Curtis provide a valuable insight into the process of subinfeudation and the development of property and legal rights in the Anglo-Norman lordship. They were a useful source for this thesis for proposing a date for the foundation of Newtown Jerpoint and an insight into the dispute between Bishop Felix and Theobald Fitz Walter and land transaction between secular elites and clergy.

Generally, Gaelic lords did not maintain conventional documented administrative or financial records, particularly for the high medieval period (Simms 2009, 9). Typically, Gaelic records were in the form of rights and dues set out in poems and prose texts. Aside from brief references to Burren and Corcomroe in the fourteenth-century O’Brien rental, there are no other administrative records of Gaelic origin for the Ó Lochlainn lordship. Colonial records were generally secular in nature and are therefore of limited use for the episcopal manor of Tullaherin. Inquisitions post mortem and manorial extents are normally available from the late thirteenth onwards. They contain the names of tenants, their status, the lands they held and the rent and services they owed for them (O’Conor 1998, 43). While sometimes useful contextual sources in medieval settlement studies, they have little direct value in attempting to understand the form or layout of Anglo-Norman settlements. A number of fourteenth-century inquisitions for Newtown Jerpoint have survived, as well as a very detailed extent of May 1289, SC. II/794, edited by Dryburgh and Smith (2005, 258-63). The surviving archaeological evidence at Newtown Jerpoint is particularly well preserved and the value of that particular inquisition, in this thesis, is that it provides a useful comparative context for the archaeological and historical evidence at the site. The inquisition also gives the names of burgesses, thus providing a basis to explore the ethnicity of the burgesses and their role in the borough community.
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The so-called census of 1659 is a valuable source for identifying population patterns in mid-seventeenth century Ireland. The great value of the document is that it was the earliest attempt to record the number of people in each townland, the titulados\(^2\) and distinguishes between people, which are described as English Scottish and Irish. It also records numbers of the principal Irish names for each barony (Smyth 1988, 55-6).

In some aspects the document is flawed, it is not a complete record of the population, its prime function was probably as an abstract for the poll tax of 1660. Records for the counties of Cavan, Galway, Mayo, Tyrone and Wicklow have been lost. The records of only three baronies in Co. Meath have survived and four baronies for Co. Cork are missing. It only lists adults over 15 over the age of age. Smyth (ibid.) suggests as a working hypothesis a multiplier of 2.5 as most appropriate to extrapolate the total population in a particular area. The use of the census to deduce ethnicity is not simple. Ideas of Englishness and Irishness in the seventeenth century were complex. The census makes no distinction between the descendants of the Anglo-Normans who were considered ‘Old English’ (Ellis 1998, 284-6) and new settlers, English by birth, who had arrived in Ireland in increasing numbers from the early seventeenth century and were referred to as ‘New English’ (Edwards 2003, 27).

It is Smyth’s view (2006, 216) that ‘there is little doubt that old English were categorised as Irish’ as the classification appears to be primarily concerned with distinguishing the new settler population from the older inhabitants, rather than whether they were of Irish or of Old English descent.

While there are many problems associated with the census, some can be circumvented by avoiding absolute totals (Smyth 1988, 56). The hypothesis proposed by Smyth of a multiplier of 2.5 appears arbitrary and is only used as a guide in this thesis. Its value is assisting in a comparative analysis for the population of the townlands in the parishes of Tullaherin (6.7), Oughtmama (7.8), Noughaval (8.3) and Killeany (9.9) and ascribing ethnicity in the parishes of Tullaherin (6.7) and Oughtmama (8.6) is approached with caution.

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\(^2\) Defined by Smyth (1988, 56) as ‘persons holding either titles of honour such as lords, knights, esquires and gentlemen’
**Historical Maps**

Historical maps were used extensively in this research. The earliest detailed maps of the case study regions are of seventeenth-century date. Suppression of the rebellion in Ireland, by Cromwell (c. 1641), was followed by the confiscation of more than 2.5 million acres of land and the need for a major mapping programme (Reeves-Smyth 1983, 122). William Petty was commissioned to map all church, crown and forfeited lands in Ireland. The resulting Down Survey of Ireland was a major breakthrough in accurate cartography. The maps were drawn on a parish basis and record territorial boundaries and townland names. A terrier accompanied the maps giving details of land quality, use and ownership with details of settlements, castles, churches and mills (Smyth 2006, 174). The maps were lost through fires in 1711 and 1922, however, some copies of the parish maps have escaped destruction. Petty compiled barony maps, Petty’s Atlas of Ireland, *Hiberiae Delineatio*, based on the original parish maps, many of which have endured (Reeves-Smyth 1983, 122). The only parish map, available for the sites investigated is the map for the parish of Tullaherin. The barony maps for Newtown Jerpoint and Burren have also survived. The early maps can provide reasonably accurate evidence of features of archaeological interest, which have since been wiped from the landscape. The map for Tullaherin made a valuable contribution to an understanding of the distribution of castles and churches within the townlands of the parish. The benefit of the barony maps for the Ó Lochlainn lordship and Newtown Jerpoint is more limited, but the parish churches at Oughtmama, Noughaval and Carran are depicted on the map confirming their continued use in the seventeenth century.

The six-inch Ordnance Survey (OS) maps followed the first ever large-scale survey of Ireland between 1829 and 1842. The surveyors were primarily concerned with recording townland boundaries, roads and houses, rather than individual field boundaries, which were added sometime later. The sheer density of field walls and archaeological sites in the Burren region had to be rationalised and therefore the depiction of historical settlement features are indicative rather than actual. The first-edition six-inch OS maps provide a valuable record of the pre-famine landscape, lakes, bogs, topographical and infrastructural features that existed in the nineteenth century and which since may have disappeared from the landscape as a result of land
clearance or improvement. Subsequent editions of the six-inch OS maps and the 25-inch maps, compiled between 1887 and 1913, reveal changes in the landscape since the mid-nineteenth century. In some cases, earthworks and house platforms have been cleared since the mid nineteenth century and the only records of their existence are those on the first-edition six-inch maps. The first-edition six-inch maps made a valuable contribution to the investigation of the houses at Newtown Jerpoint, as clearance was recorded in the later nineteenth (Graves 1868, 14) and the only evidence of position of wall-footings of buildings is the record on the first-edition six-inch map. The relationship of the houses and the tofts at Newtown Jerpoint is contrasted to Tullaherin to explore cultural influences in the layout of the settlements (6.10).

Maps and atlases, compiled in the course of the eighteenth century, are less detailed and consequently are of limited value, however the Map of the kingdom of Ireland, by John Rocque (1790) was useful as Oughtmama, Noughaval and Carran were depicted, indicating their survival as places in that century (7.8). A detailed map, The Burren, a map of the uplands of north-west Clare Éire, by Tim Robinson (1977) recorded features not otherwise available, such as commons, which was particularly important in interpreting local topographical features at the parish church at Carran (9.7).

Photographic Sources

Since their foundation in 2005, Google Earth and Bing Maps have produced high quality satellite images that are constantly updated and improved. These images are a great benefit in this research. Bing Maps are especially valuable as features can be displayed at an oblique angle, providing a better depth perception. They were used in the methodology at the early stages of the project (3.7) especially as an aid to identifying sites and features. Satellite images were used to inform the strategy for field survey. In addition, features that are not visible on the ground at some sites were identified on Google Earth and Bing satellite images. The images are also useful in providing a view of the relationship of features to each other. Like conventional aerial photography, satellite images cannot be used in isolation, however, when used in conjunction with other survey techniques they can make a considerably contribution to recording and interpretation of the archaeology of sites.
Photographic coverage obtained through kite-balloon photography and other remote sensing technologies, including Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) and Remote piloted aircraft system (RPAS) were used as sources for fieldwork in this thesis and are discussed below (3.7). The advantage of LiDAR is the capacity to allow the removal of vegetation layers and provide a terrain model, or ‘bare earth’ model (Corns, 2007, 134-5). The obvious difficulty in the use of LiDAR is the lack of availability of LiDAR datasets. In the future as the number of LiDAR surveys increase, datasets will become more readily available. Digital surface models based on LiDAR surveys were available for two sites investigated in this thesis, Newtown Jerpoint and Oughtmama. The models revealed features at the sites that were not apparent on the ground. Their value for this thesis was in helping to identify chronological indicators for the establishment at Newtown Jerpoint and the buildings at Oughtmama. LiDAR datasets were not available for Tullaherin, Noughaval, Carran and Killeany and a RPAS survey was commissioned for these sites. The digital surface models produced by RPAS are not as detailed as those produced by LiDAR, as vegetation cannot be removed and where features are obstructed by trees their interpretation is problematic. However, digital surface models assisted in identifying features, their relationship to each other and other features in the landscape. Digital modeling records a three-dimensional image of what is actually on the ground and is less open to misinterpretation. However, like any remote sensing technology it cannot be used as an end in itself, but was used in this thesis in combination with detailed ground survey to record and interpret the archaeological features of the settlement remains at parish churches.

Archaeological Databases and Reports

The online RMP of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland and the Excavations database compiled by Isabell Bennett and published by Wordwell were consulted during the desk-based phase of this research.

The RMP

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), is a statutory list of all known archaeological monuments in the Republic of Ireland, provided for in the National
Monuments Acts. The RMP consists of a county-by-county set of OS maps on which monuments are marked by a circle, accompanied by a book, which specifies the type of monuments. Files relating to each monument are contained in the archive of the National Monuments Service, Dublin (National Monument Service)\(^3\). An interactive map and search facility provides access to records of the Archaeology Survey stored in its national database. Deserted medieval settlements, recorded for Co. Kilkenny, include sites with visible archaeological remains, while other historically attested sites are recorded, however, there is no upstanding archaeological evidence and the precise location is unknown. O’Conor (1998, 47-8) has pointed to the lack of earthworks at historically attested manorial centres and proposes that totally flat fields, with no evidence of earthworks between many mottes and medieval churches many be the site of nucleated villages. It is probable, therefore, that there are many more deserted medieval settlement than those recorded in the RMP.

The RMP was an important aid in the selection of sites to be investigated for this thesis. It enabled an initial overview of known recorded sites and monuments found in association with the parish churches that are the concern of this thesis. As fieldwork developed, the RMP was also a beneficial tool in identifying other features in the wider parish landscape, such as holy wells, penitential stations and native enclosed settlements, which assisted in contextualising the parish church-centred settlements.

**Excavation reports**

Published and unpublished reports for the excavations of house sites at two case study sites were consulted. Ní Ghabhláin (1990) preliminary report of the house site at Noughaval, Co. Clare (excavation.ie)\(^4\) and an unpublished, detailed interim report (ibid, 1992) in the archive files of the National Monument Service were consulted. The preliminary report by Foley (1973) \(^5\) (excavations.ie) and a detailed account of the excavation at a medieval settlement in Jerpoint Church townland, published in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* were examined. The excavation of a house

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\(^3\) [http://www.archaeology.ie/](http://www.archaeology.ie/) [Accessed 14/7/2016]


site at Noughaval was undertaken as part of a research project into ecclesiastical settlement within the diocese of Kilfenora. It was hoped to establish the chronological relationship of the settlement surrounding the graveyard to the medieval church and market place (Ní Ghabhláin 1990). The house dates to the seventeenth century and although there are tentative suggestions of an earlier occupation layer, no structure was identified in this occupation level (Ní Ghabhláin 1992) and the excavation sheds little light on the later medieval phase occupation.

The medieval settlement at Jerpoint Church is in the same parish as the borough of Newtown Jerpoint, which is located c. 300m east. It appears that the earliest house at the settlement is of early thirteenth-century date (O’Conor 1998, 50). The second house is more problematic. It was a very substantial mortared two-storied building and it has been suggested that it may have been a barn, grange or manor house (Barry 1987, 76; Foley 1989, 125; O’Conor 1998, 50-1). Few medieval houses have been excavated in Ireland. The Jerpoint Church excavation stands out as important to our understanding of medieval houses.

### 2.2.1 Secondary Written Sources

The aim of this section is to discuss the range of sources consulted to fill out my understanding of approaches to recording and interpreting medieval village settlements in Ireland to date and how that works and compares with findings and outputs of British counterparts. British sources reflect a sustained programme of academic research, focused on medieval settlement that began in the 1950s and endures to the present day. The sources for settlement in Ireland reveal that little academic research has focused on the topic and it is only in the last decade or so that progress has been achieved.

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6 More recently, medieval houses have been excavated including, those at Piperstown, Co Louth (Barry 2000), Bourchier’s castle, Co. Limerick (Cleary 1982; 1983), Attyflin, Co. Limerick (Eogan 2009), Tulikane, Co. Meath (Baker 2009), Cookstown, Co. Meath (Clutterbuck 2009), Killegland, Co. Meath (Frazer 2009) and Moneycross Upper, Co. Wexford (Schweitzer 2009).
Scholarship on British Churches and Medieval Settlement

In England, Beresford and Hurst (1990, 13) described the commencement of the excavation of the deserted medieval village at Wharram Percy in 1950 as ‘just about the time when medieval archaeology was first emerging as a serious study’. Before then, the only interest in farms and domestic buildings of a village was the recovery of a ground plan of the latest phase just before its abandonment and desertion (ibid.). The four decades of investigation of Wharram Percy (1950-90) culminated in the publication by Beresford and Hurst (1990) of Wharram Percy, Deserted Medieval Village. The book is more a general text and is poorly referenced and its value is therefore limited, however, its contribution as a source for this thesis is the understanding of medieval settlements, the plan and layout of the village, the date of construction, development and desertion (ibid., 69).

The parish church of St. Martin at Wharram Percy was excavated in the early 1970s and the final report was published in 1987 (Bell, et. al. 1987), Wharram: a study of settlement on the Yorkshire Wolds, vol. iii. Wharram Percy the church of St Martin. The excavation was of particular interest to this research because it focussed on the church of St Martin revealing that it had multiple phases and, although not quite as complex as St Martin’s, some of the churches studied in this thesis show changes to their building fabric through time indicating longevity of use. The Wharram Percy excavations revealed the complex history of St Martin. Its origin as a timber church in the tenth century was followed by a small two-celled Saxon stone church and its replacement by a large church in the middle of the twelfth century, which was extended later that century. Further expansion in the thirteenth century, and a final phase of expansion in the fourteenth century was followed by a subsequent phase that marked the contraction of the church. The excavators considered that twelve phases could be proposed (Bell et. al 1987, 189). The church was surveyed by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments in the late 1950s and six phases of construction were identified (ibid.). The excavations revealed that some medieval churches in England have a long history that cannot be revealed by survey alone. It is only through excavation that the full complexity of the buildings can be recognised and analysed.
The final volume of thirteen published on the Wharram Percy project (2012) edited by Wrathmell, *A history of Wharram Percy and its neighbours* is an attempt to chart the history of Wharram Percy from late prehistory to the sixteenth century (Wrathmell 2012, xii). The book is in four parts. The first part summarises the excavation programme, the methodologies adopted, the results of earthwork and geophysical surveys since the end of excavations. In part 1, the chapter by Oswald on ‘A new earthwork survey of Wharram Percy’, was relevant and useful as his work drew attention to the varying sizes of the tofts in the settlement and the consistency of the position of houses on their plots. This research was relevant in my analysis of the layout of the settlement at Newtown Jerpoint (10.4). Part 2 of this book, presents the evidence for farms and fields in later prehistory and the Roman era, part 3 presents, and debates the evidence of settlement from the middle Saxon period. My research is centred on settlement in Ireland in the period 1200 to 1600 and therefore parts 2 and 3 were not particularly relevant in the Irish context. Part 4 outlines the history of the lordship from the twelfth century onwards. The Chapters by Everson and Stoker (2012a, 208-20) ‘Why at Wharram? The foundation of the nucleated settlement’, (2012b, 262-77) ‘Who at Whar­ram? Development of the nucleated settlement in the 12th century’ were of value, as the authors tentatively suggest the possibility that changes in the fabric of church buildings were not necessarily affected by seigneurial action. This proposal influenced an analogy with the role of erenaghs at Tullaherin, Carran and Noughaval.

Since the 1980s, the study of medieval village settlement continued to engage the attention of geographers, historians and archaeologists and new publications emerged. Christopher Taylor (1983) published *Villages and farmsteads, a history of rural settlement in England*. Taylor’s work was focused on the morphology of settlement and was concerned with the general aspect of rural settlement from an historical and locational aspect rather than the individual buildings. While the book covered the topic of settlement from its prehistoric beginnings to modern times it was not focused specifically on the later medieval period, Taylor nonetheless devotes three chapters to settlement in the medieval period. The plans of villages were difficult to understand as the scale was small and in one case, the plans of four villages were on a single page. The benefit of Taylor’s book to this thesis is his work
on the processes that cause nucleation to occur. The first cause, steady growth from a single place, possibly a pre-existing routeway or crossroads, encouraged me to ascertain the nature of the relationships between settlement clusters at parish churches and routeways both in the Burren (10.4) and at Newtown Jerpoint (5.2) in the medieval county of Kilkenny. Taylor’s second cause was agglomeration, the third, the collapse of a dispersed settlement pattern into a nucleated village were of some use, but the final process, deliberate planning or the laying out of a village at a single point in time, was particularly useful. The process of deliberate planning as defined by Taylor was very influential in the theoretical approach to this thesis (3.3) and an understanding of the settlement features at Newtown Jerpoint (5.5).

Roberts, an historical geographer, relies primarily on the landscape, documents and maps rather than archaeological evidence as a source for his research and his book (1996), *Landscapes of settlement: prehistory to the present*, takes a more global view of rural settlements and ranges from examples in Africa, the Near East, America, Asia, Europe as well as England, Scotland and Wales. Roberts’s 1987 book was more useful in the context of this thesis as he concentrated on explaining village morphology, typology and classification. However, the focus is on landscape, documents and maps, rather than archaeological evidence. The contribution of Roberts work to this thesis is in his analysis of planned settlements, especially in England, and how it assisted comparative analysis between planned settlements in England and the borough of Newtown Jerpoint (5.5).

In his later book Roberts (2008) *Landscape, documents and maps: villages in Northern England and beyond, AD 900-1250*, expands on his ideas on planned settlement in relation to medieval rural settlements. This book discusses settlement in the North of England, but is mainly focused on Co. Durham where c. 80% of villages are based on regular or partly regular plans.

The most important section of Roberts’ 2008 book for this thesis is his discussion on the origin of planned and replanned settlements as a consequence of rampaging armies that devastated the landscape, such as the 'harrying of the north' in 1067-70. Some planned villages were almost certainly created after the Norman Conquest, however, there are suggestions that significant numbers of planned settlements
existed, at least in County Durham, before 1066. In that county, early charters suggest that in the tenth century the church gradually recovered lands from Danish landowners and this was followed by standard tenures, rents and services that provided a new solidity as a protection against future devastation. Roberts proposes that in Co. Durham the planning of smaller peripheral settlements continued thereafter and was not complete until the mid-twelfth century.

The parish church, as the focus of the settlement clusters, is central to the research conducted for this thesis. The value of church architecture to the understanding of community life has been long recognised in British research. Works, such as Cox and Ford’s (1943), *The parish churches of England*, Platt’s (1981) *The parish churches of medieval England*, Ryder, Gwilliam et. al. (1993) *Medieval churches of West Yorkshire* and Fawcett’s (2002), *Scottish medieval churches: architecture and furnishings*, were important for this research. They range in content from empirical architectural description, organisation of space and function, to the use of church architecture and changes in the fabric of the church. The benefits are that they provide insights into communities whose daily lives were largely centered on their local churches.

Morris, (1989) *Churches in the landscape* is an essential guide to the architecture and development of the medieval English church. The title of the book implies that greater analysis of the place of the church in the landscape. However, the church in the wider landscape is under developed in his work. Nonetheless, Morris’ work explores the medieval church as a component in the village and, to some extent, it is linked as a ‘place’ in the wider landscape (Morris 1989, 2). Morris uses sculpture and place-names as well as archaeology and documentary sources in an attempt to plot the dimensions of pre-Conquest ecclesiastical growth and this multi-disciplinary approach was useful in interpreting the evidence from the parish church settlements investigated in this thesis. Morris drew attention to the geographical shape of the English parish and the common tendency for parish boundaries to mirror secular landholdings that in turn were generally defined by a combination of man-made and natural features (Morris 1989, 238). These features of parish formation in England were established before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland and were reflected in the shape of the parishes they established after their arrival (Hennessey
1985, 62-5) and Morris’s work provides an understanding of the processes that led to parish formation in England and Ireland.

In the last decade, medieval settlement research in Britain has continued to develop and more recent publications on medieval settlement include, edited volumes by Christie and Stamper (2012), *Medieval rural settlement, Britain and Ireland, AD 800-1600*, and Gardiner and Rippon (2007), *Medieval landscapes: landscape history after Hoskins*. Influential publications also include Jones and Page’s (2006) *Medieval villages in an English landscape*, Dyer and Jones (2010) *Deserted villages revisited*. These publications reflect a more nuanced approach to medieval rural settlement studies that has become more focused on regional landscape studies. The approach to this thesis has been influenced by the development of regional case studies in Britain and the emphasis on a multi-disciplinary approach to settlement research including; archaeology, history, historical geography, landscape history, place name analysis, and vernacular and church architecture.

Bowden (1999) *Unravelling the landscape: an inquisitive approach to archaeology*, is a most helpful guide to perception and an inquisitive approach to archaeological sites and landscape (ibid., 15). The book is an account of the survey practice adopted by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England in the last decade of the twentieth century. There have been substantial developments in the intervening period, such as the availability of satellite imagery, photogrammetry, remote sensing and digital terrain modelling through the medium of LiDAR and RPAS. The book is limited as these technologies were not available at the time of publication. However, the chapter on ‘Analytical earthwork survey – measurement’ (ibid., 43-72) was of great value to the methodology adopted for fieldwork in this thesis, especially for reconnaissance, observation, measurement and depiction of the sites surveyed.

**Scholarship on Anglo-Norman Village Settlements in Ireland**

In Ireland medieval settlement research lagged behind Britain. The position in the late 1960s was best summarised by Glasscock (1971, 280), ‘We have to face the fact that we still do not know the nature of settlement in Ireland between 1100 and the
Chapter 2

Tudor plantation’. Research in this area has been hampered by under-use of available documentary sources and particularly, insufficient archaeological enquiry.

In his seminal work Glasscock (1970) laid the foundation for medieval settlement studies in Ireland with, ‘Moated sites, and deserted boroughs and villages: two neglected aspects of Anglo-Norman settlement in Ireland’, and (ibid.1971) ‘The study of deserted medieval settlements in Ireland’. Glasscock compiled a gazetteer of deserted towns, rural-boroughs and nucleated settlements in Ireland. The work was limited because it focussed on Anglo-Norman sites and excluded settlements in those large regions of Ireland that remained under the control of Gaelic lords. However, at the time Glasscock compiled his gazetteer there was no methodology for locating Gaelic sites and perhaps no consciousness of the possibility that they were there to be found. The gazetteer was nonetheless useful in assisting the identification of sites for investigation in the central Kilkenny region for this thesis.

O’Conor (1998, 41) and others (Graham 1997, 65; Otway-Ruthven 1968, 108) identify major gaps in the historiography in the early phases of the Anglo-Norman ‘invasion’, and it is not until 1270 to 1300 that reliable documents are available. The lack of documentary sources is accompanied by limited archaeological evidence for Anglo-Norman settlement in the east of Ireland, whereas before the 1980s only a handful of sites were excavated. Barry (1987, 72-81) published The archaeology of medieval Ireland and summarised the four medieval nucleated settlements that had been excavated by the time of publication. They were Caherguillamore, Co. Limerick (Ó Ríordáin and Hunt 1942, 37-63) excavated in 1940, Leighmore, Co. Tipperary, in 1945 (Leask and MacAlister 1945-8, 1-14), Jerpoint Church, Co. Kilkenny, in 1973 (Foley 1989, 71-126) and Bourchier’s Castle, Co. Limerick (Cleary 1982, 77-106; 1983, 51-80) that was published in the early 1980s. Since then Barry (2000, 113-35) published ‘Excavation at Piperstown deserted medieval village Co. Louth, 1987’. The settlement was occupied continuously from the high medieval period into the post-mediteval period. Unfortunately, our understanding of the Piperstown settlement is limited as just one of the four houses identified was excavated (ibid.).
O’Conor’s (1998), *The archaeology of medieval rural settlement in Ireland* includes a chapter on ‘English peasant settlement on Anglo-Norman manors’ (ibid., 41-71). O’Conor drew attention to the scarcity of archaeological evidence for medieval settlements at known manorial centres. Castlemore, Co Carlow is cited by O’Conor (1998, 47) as an example of a site with no evidence of the earthworks of a deserted medieval settlement visible above ground. The only visible surface remains today are the motte castle and a graveyard with a historically attested church and a totally flat field exists between the motte and the graveyard. However, an inquisition of 1307 reveals that there were 80 burgesses and 29 cottars. This position is similar to the overwhelming majority of Anglo-Norman manors in eastern Ireland (ibid.).

O’Conor’s book was one of the foundations for this thesis and in particular his approach to Anglo-Norman peasant settlement at manorial villages and rural boroughs. The work was limited in the range of material examined, however, because at the time of publication only five such villages had been subject to any archaeological investigation and only seven houses had been excavated, many small-scale rescue in nature. This underlines how little archaeology had contributed to the debate on the nature of Anglo-Norman settlement in Ireland by the late 1990s. The book was particularly useful in identifying potential sites in the Anglo-Norman lordship and the importance of the church as the focus of Anglo-Norman village and rural borough settlements. O’Conor’s discussion on the early decline of some villages and the reasons for their desertion was useful in a comparative analysis of Newtown Jerpoint and Tullaherin.

In 2009 excavations of rural medieval settlements that had occurred in the period 2000 to 2007 were published in Corlett and Potterton (eds.) *Rural settlement in medieval Ireland: in the light of recent archaeological excavations* (2009). However, the majority of those excavations were small-scale rescue excavations, ahead of development, rather than focused on specific research questions.

In that collection, Eogan’s (2009, 67-77), ‘A bethagh settlement at Attyflin, Co. Limerick’, raises interesting questions about the nature of this settlement although the remains of a house were not discovered. The artefacts included an Anglo-Norman type of ring-brooch and a stickpin of Irish type, which suggest that both Anglo-
Norman and native dress fashions were represented. The pottery was dominated by tableware with smaller amounts of cooking ware. This is in contrast to typical Anglo-Norman sites, where cooking ware dominated the pottery assemblage. Wood, leather and metal vessels were more usual for consumption and preparation of food in pre-Anglo-Norman Ireland. It is suggested and that Irish manorial tenants occupied the site and acculturation is proposed as they adopted Anglo-Norman dress styles and customs while retaining some elements of Irish culture. The recovery of a coin suggests that the inhabitants participated in a market economy and were probably free tenants above the level of bethagh (Eogan 2009, 67-77). Eogan’s excavation revealed a new interaction between the two social political and linguistic groups in the period (ibid.), but it was a relatively small-scale rescue excavation. It was very useful to this thesis, as it revealed aspects of acculturation and hybridity, which is also apparent at Tullaherin (6.10).

In Corlett and Potterton (eds.) 2009, *Rural settlement in medieval Ireland*, some of the contributions illustrate the extent of diversity in house type and settlement forms away from manorial centres. Baker (2009, 1-17) ‘Tullkane, Co. Meath: a medieval rural settlement’, considered that the settlement was neither a manorial centre nor a moated site. It was most likely the home of English immigrants. Clutterbuck (2009, 27-47) ‘Cookstown, Co. Meath: a medieval settlement’ suggests that the medieval rural settlement consisted of a house, garden and forge. The insubstantial structure and material remains probably place the inhabitants below the rank of free tenants and the forge was probably the main function at the site (ibid.).

A structure was excavated at Killegland, by Frazer (2009, 109-23), ‘A medieval farmstead at Killegland, Ashbourn, Co. Meath’. The walls of the structure appear to have been built of clay on non-earthfast drystone foundations over a metaled surface. The site was also located some distance from the manorial centre and was probably occupied by Anglo-Norman free-tenants (ibid.).

In the same volume an isolated farmstead was investigated by Schweitzer (2009, 175-88), ‘A medieval farmstead at Moneycross Upper, Co. Wexford’. The excavated house was defined by enclosing slot trenches. There were no surviving floor surfaces or other internal features and the excavator suggests that the house may have been an
Anglo-Norman cob-built long house, with an internal partition, a byre at one end and a living area at the other (ibid., 182-4).

The parish churches at Tullaherin and Newtown Jerpoint have previously been investigated. Articles published by Manning (1998a), ‘Some notes on the early history and archaeology of Tullaherin’, and Murtagh (1997), ‘The medieval parish church and graveyard of St. Nicholas, Newtown Jerpoint’, provide reports of the archaeological survey and detailed analysis of the standing fabric of these parish churches. Changes in the fabric of these churches, noted in these articles, are used in this thesis as the basis for an analysis of the community’s response to major events, such as the reforms of the Irish Church in the twelfth century and Henrician reforms of the sixteenth century.

The works of C. A. Empey, including (1985) ‘The Anglo-Norman Diocese of Ossory’ (1990), ‘County Kilkenny in the Anglo-Norman period’ and (1984), ‘The sacred and the secular: the Augustinian priory of Kells in Ossory, 1193-1541’, were of particular interest to this thesis. As a historian, Empey’s principal area of research is the history of the medieval secular church. His work sheds little light on the shape and form of the settlements at parish churches. However, his understanding of the episcopal organisation of the medieval diocese of Ossory is unrivalled and his publications were a valuable source for my research on the episcopal manor of Tullaherin (6.4).

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century histories of Ossory provide detailed historical background to the territory. The works include volumes by Hogan (1884), *Kilkenny: the ancient city of Ossory, the seat of its kings, the see of its bishop and the site of its cathedral*, and Healy (1893), *History and antiquities of Kilkenny, (city and county)*. The most influential are the four volumes by Carrigan, (1905), *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*. These books may be considered out of date, however, they works made a valuable contribution to this theses as the most comprehensive, detailed histories of the territory, down to parish level. Carrigan’s work (1905, iv, 363-91) records the ecclesiastical taxation lists for the diocese of Ossory from the Red Book of Ossory and his identification of the modern names of the parishes mentioned in the lists were a great assistance in this research. Carrigan
also recorded the earthworks of medieval settlements that were visible in his own time, which have since been cleared as a result of intensive agricultural activity, development, roadworks and quarrying. His descriptions are a valuable contribution to understanding features that are no longer visible.

**Scholarship on Gaelic Settlement**

The earliest reference to settlement below the elite level is by the historian, Kenneth Nicholls (1987, 339-404) in his chapter ‘Gaelic Society and economy’ in A. Cosgrave (ed.) *A New History of Ireland, vol. II Medieval Ireland, 1169-1534*. Nicholls commented on later medieval church-centred settlement nucleations at Armagh, Rosscarbery, Clonfert and Clogher. He further noted settlement clusters at tower-houses at Lifford, Co. Donegal and Longford O’ Madden Co. Galway. However, archaeological study of medieval settlement in those regions of Ireland that remained in the control of Gaelic lords did not commence until the late 1990s.

O’Conor (1998) *The archaeology of medieval rural settlement in Ireland* drew attention to this neglected aspect of medieval settlement research, presented reasons for the lack of progress and suggested strategies for future research. In 2001 Duffy, Edwards and FitzPatrick, published *Gaelic Ireland, c. 1250-1650: Land, Lordship and settlement*, and highlighted the lack of academic attention to Gaelic medieval settlement by historical geographers, historians and archaeologists. Since then academic research on aspects of Gaelic settlement and society have been published by, Breen, Comber and Hull, Donnelly, Finan, FitzPatrick, Horning, O’Conor, Naessens, Ni Ghabhláin and O’Keefe.

O’Conor (1998, 73-107) devoted the largest chapter in *The archaeology of medieval rural settlement in Ireland*, to ‘Settlement and society in medieval Gaelic Ireland’. The chapter is mainly focused on Gaelic high-status sites, castles, crannogs, moated sites, cashels and tower-houses. O’Conor also identified two types of Gaelic peasant houses, creat houses and more substantial houses with roofs supported by cruck beams.

Duffy, Edwards and FitzPatrick, (2001) published *Gaelic Ireland*, with a significant archaeological content on settlement, in that period. This book addressed questions of Irish medieval Gaelic past and provided a comprehensive overview of our
understanding of Gaelic society at the beginning of this century. Part three of the book, ‘Settlement studies: the architectural and archaeological record’ (ibid., 271-435) focuses on the physical remains of settlement. Chapters by Loeber (ibid., 271-314), ‘An architectural history of Gaelic castles and settlements’, Donnelly (ibid., 315-28) on ‘Tower-houses and late medieval secular settlement in County Limerick’, and O’Conor (ibid., 329-45) on ‘The morphology of lordly sites in north Connacht’, places emphasis on settlements of the elites in medieval Gaelic society and little below that level of society. There is one exception however, Audrey Horning’s (ibid., 375-96), ‘”Dwelling houses in the old Irish barbarous manner”: archaeological for Gaelic architecture in an Ulster plantation village’, demonstrates architectural continuity from the early medieval period through the medieval period in the form of the settlement using post and wattle in house construction. In other settlement-based essays in the volume, FitzPatrick (2001, 369-70), ‘Assembly and inauguration places of the Burkes in late medieval Connacht’, highlights an extensive cluster of buildings and enclosures constituting a village centred on Dunkellin castle and church just south of the assembly place of the Clanrickard Burkes in south Co. Galway. Breen’s chapter (ibid., 418-36) on ‘The maritime cultural landscape in medieval Gaelic Ireland’, suggests that coastal communities were far more stable with a larger degree of permanence than has been previously considered.

_The Gaelic lordship of the O’Sullivan Beare_ (2005) by Breen was the first major single-volume archaeological landscape study of a Gaelic lordship. Unfortunately, the maps used in the book are small in scale and difficult to comprehend. The most interesting aspect of Breen’s book, from the perspective of this thesis, are his findings in relation to permanent house clusters at fishing communities and this aspect of his research on Beara was most influential on my research on settlement clusters at parish churches.

Recent investigations by FitzPatrick (2009) on ‘Native enclosed settlement and the problem of the Irish “ringfort”’ and by Comber and Hull, (2010) on ‘Excavations at Caherconnell cashel, the Burren, Co. Clare: implications for cashel chronology and Gaelic settlement’, provide conclusive evidence that some _cathair and mothair_ sites in north Co. Clare continued in use in the later medieval period. This research was of
great value in demonstrating that Gaelic society continued to settle at long-established sites, which was a feature of settlements at parish churches.

A recent contribution to the field of settlement in Gaelic society is T. Finan’s (2010) *Medieval lough Cé: history archaeology and landscape*. The book draws on a number of disciplines, with a substantial archaeological input. The Rock of Lough Cé was the chiefry seat of the MacDiarmata, lords of Moylurg in the later medieval period. The book is mainly concerned with the Rock as a lordly centre, however, chapter 1, ‘The Rock of Lough Cé, Co. Roscommon’ (O’Conor et. al 2010, 15-40) presents and discusses the first survey of this important site. The authors drew attention to the pier that connected the island fortress to a dry-land moated site, possibly a residence of the lord, with a hall and associated agricultural and administrative buildings. The authors see the association of island fortress, pier and moated site as a strong hint of a nearby market, which, according to the Irish chronicles, was founded by Cormac MacDiarmata in the year 1231 (ibid., 30-1). The authors further suggest that possibly some form of nucleated village-type settlement with trading functions existed somewhere in the vicinity. This research demonstrates that markets did occur in Gaelic regions and diversity is evident as the market at Lough Cé appears to have been associated with a lordly centre whereas at Noughaval it was centred on the parish church (8.6).

For the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren, Frost (1893), *The history and topography of the county of Clare*, contains contemporary artwork and description of the antiquities within each parish. Like the nineteenth and early twentieth century histories of the Ossory, Frost’s book on Co. Clare is the most comprehensive and detailed background to the county at parish level and was an invaluable source for the historical background to the parishes in the Ó Lochlainn lordship.

The medieval parish church in Ireland, from an archaeological and historical perspective, is a vital element in this thesis and the edited volume by FitzPatrick and Gillespie (2006), *The Parish in medieval and early modern Ireland: community, territory and building* was a foundation for the research. Chapters by Duffy on ‘The shape of the parish’, FitzPatrick on ‘The material world of the parish’, Bermingham on ‘Priests’ residences in later medieval Ireland’, and Nugent, on ‘The dynamics of
parish formation in high medieval Clare’, were the most influential chapters and vital to understanding the roles and functions of the medieval parish in Ireland. Sinéad Ní Ghabhláin’s chapter in that volume, ‘Late twelfth-century church construction: evidence of parish formation?’ and her (1995) unpublished PhD, ‘Church, parish and polity: the medieval diocese of Kilfenora, Ireland’, were of crucial importance. Her descriptions and analyses of the building phases of churches in the diocese of Kilfenora were a starting point for understanding the chronology and building fabric of the Burren parish churches. Ní Ghabhláín (1995, 369-86) was also the first to draw attention to the possibility of nucleated settlement in the diocese of Kilfenora.

As the research developed, it emerged that an understanding of ecclesiastical families, erenachs and coarbs was pivotal Gaelic ecclesiastical society. Much of our understanding of the role of these ecclesiastical families in Gaelic society comes from historical sources, the Irish chronicles, rentals and seventeenth-century inquisitions. An insight into their roles at parish level was vital to understanding how settlements functioned in the later medieval period. Articles by Seymour (1932-4), ‘The coarb in the medieval Irish church (circa 1200-1550)’, Simms (1978) ‘Guesting and feasting in Gaelic Ireland’, Jefferies (1999), ‘Erenaghs in pre-plantation Ulster: an early seventeenth-century account’, Ó Scea (2012), ‘Erenachs and erenachship and church landholdings in Gaelic Fermanagh, 1270-1609’, Simms (1995) ‘Frontiers in the Irish church – regional and cultural’, in Barry, et. al. (eds.), Colony and Frontier in Medieval Ireland; Essays presented to J. F. Lydon, were essential in developing that understanding. The sources on ecclesiastical families are primarily based on a limited number of primary sources. The publications were written by historians and there has been no archaeological investigation on the settlements of erenaghs and coarbs, before this research.

The majority of papers in Corlett and Potterton (eds.) Rural settlement in Ireland in medieval Ireland: in the light of recent archaeological excavations (2009) were based on excavations in areas of Anglo-Norman dominance and occurred as a consequence of development. However, an exception was a paper based on academic research on a site in the core of the Gaelic lordship of the O’Conors. The paper, by McNeary and Shanahan, (2009, 125-37) ‘Carns townland, Co. Roscommon:
excavations by the Medieval Rural Settlement Project in 2006’ was very important to my thesis, as it highlighted settlement features around a church.

**Conclusion**

The review of the sources demonstrates the gaps that exist in our understanding of English and Irish medieval settlement. Since the 1950s English academic settlement scholarship has continued to focus on the medieval village and research has developed and deepened. In Ireland, virtually no progress had been made in our understanding of Anglo-Norman rural settlement before the 1990s and O’Conor (1998) highlighted and analysed the reasons for the lack of focused research. Since then progress has been achieved, however, the majority of excavations have been small scale and development led, rather than targeted academic research. Since the late 1990s progress has been made in scholarship on Gaelic settlement, due to the work of O’Conor, FitzPatrick, Comber and Hull, Breen, Donnelly, Horning and others, but research has been more focused on elite settlement rather than the homes of those below that level of society.

The most influential English literature, concerns the origin and development of research on medieval settlements that commenced with the deserted medieval village of Wharram Percy, such as the publications on the project by Beresford and Hurst, Bell *et al.* and the final volume by Wrathmell. The most useful aspect of British scholarship for this thesis on planned settlements were Taylor (1983) and Roberts (1987; 1996; 2008). The settlement model was well developed in England in the centuries before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland and undoubtedly influenced the form and layout of settlements that they introduced (5.5; 10.2).

However, as the central focus of this research is settlement clusters at parish churches, therefore British literature on churches is particularly important. The book by Morris (1989) on the origin and development of English churches and their place in the English landscape was most important. English medieval settlement research has developed in the last decades and most useful books are the edited volumes by Christie and Stamper (2012) and Gardiner and Rippon (2007) as they reflect how British scholars have adopted a regional landscape approach in their research.
In Ireland, progress has been made in the last fifteen years or so about medieval settlement in areas under the control of Anglo-Norman lords and our new understanding comes from excavations that occurred during that period. However, the majority of medieval settlement sites that have been excavated were small scale in nature and driven by development rather than academic research and as yet, a programme of research investigation has not occurred. However, the most useful paper for this research is by Eogan (2009, 67-77), ‘A bethagh settlement at Attyflin, Co. Limerick’. The excavation of this settlement revealed aspects of acculturation at a Gaelic settlement on an Anglo-Norman manor medieval settlement and an aspect of how people of Gaelic stock adapted to Anglo-Norman / English colonisation in the later medieval period. This paper is important in the interpretation of the settlement at Tullaherin in this thesis where Gaelic adaptation and hybridity is proposed.

Possibly the area of greatest advance in the understanding of medieval settlement in Ireland has been in that part of Ireland that remained under the control of the Gaelic elite throughout the later medieval period. As a result of focused academic research we certainly know more about Gaelic settlement and society than fifteen years ago. Publications focused on Gaelic settlement by O’Conor (1998), chapters in Duffy, Edwards and FitzPatrick, (2001) Breen, (2005; 2001), Comber and Hull (2010) and FitzPatrick (2009) which were focused on settlement were an inspiration for this thesis. The edited volume by FitzPatrick and Gillespie (2006) that focused on the medieval parish and the publications by Ní Ghabhláin (2006; 1996) and her unpublished PhD thesis on medieval churches in the diocese of Kilfenora were the building blocks for this research.
Chapter 3 – Theory and methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents theoretical perspectives on settlement clustering towards a conceptual framework for this thesis. It also describes the methodology used to record and interpret clustered settlement at parish churches in the lordships of Ireland. The chapter includes a necessary summary of how theoretical approaches to medieval settlement archaeology have evolved and developed in Britain and Ireland since the 1950s. Archaeologists of the medieval period were initially reluctant to embrace ‘new archaeology’ when it emerged in the 1960s and early 1970s. They generally demonstrated a remarkable resistance to change and ‘the great mass of medieval archaeologists’ remained what Gerrard (2003, 218-9) described as ‘theoretically inert’. However, Gardiner et. al. (2012, 6) point out, that ‘medieval settlement and landscape studies have not lacked a theoretical position, it is not as much to the fore as in pre-historic archaeology’. Developments in landscape archaeology in Britain and Ireland, the church as a place in the wider landscape, recognition of site prestige and attachment to place have influenced and shaped the theoretical approach of this thesis (Morris 1989; FitzPatrick 2006; Gardiner 2012). The landscape setting of settlement clusters focused on the parish church, their place in the townland, parish and in the wider landscape of the lordships has framed the theoretical perspective of this thesis (Morris 1989; Everson and Stocker 2012).

The methodology for the thesis included the identification of six settlement clusters at parish churches in two culturally contrasting regions, two in the Anglo-Norman county of Kilkenny and later Butler lordship of Ormond and four in the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren. Walkover survey of the selected settlement was followed by recording and analyses of houses, buildings, enclosed fields and other features at the sites, the identification of chronological indicators and their usefulness in establishing a sequence for buildings and determining the possibility of some of the structures being houses of the later medieval period. Remote sensing, LiDar and RPAS technology were used as sources to layer up the profile of each site. I problematize the challenges presented by the field evidence and explain how I inferred chronology from remains at sites (3.7).
3.2 Development of theory in British medieval settlement research

The evolution of the British theoretical approach to medieval settlement research is well illustrated by theoretical development at the deserted medieval village of Wharram Percy. The East Yorkshire deserted village was identified, as a site worthy of investigation in 1950 and there followed a research investigation, by Beresford and Hurst, which lasted for the following four decades. In the early years of the project, the objectives were limited to the excavations of peasant houses and establishing dates for their construction and desertion. At the time, there was a lack of theoretical framework for the excavations and presentation of the findings. However, processualism clearly influenced research by the late 1970s. By then, data sheets and flow-charts were used, indicating that a more ‘processual’ and ‘systemic approach’ was being adopted (Gerrard 2003, 172-3). In the early years of the 1980s, archaeologists were influenced by widely differing approaches, labelled ‘post-processual’ or ‘interpretative’, which included structuralism, feminism, gender studies, neo-Marxism and phenomenology. By the late 1980s ‘theoretical explicit’ articles promoting post-processual ideas began to appear. These influences on scholarship were described by Gerrard (2003, 219-20) as, the influence of prehistoric archaeologists who had for some years embraced new developments in theoretical developments, the influence of American historical archaeologists, other archaeologists from European countries and the general widespread rejection of positivism by other disciplines.

By the end of the 1980s, the theoretical approach in England had developed and the focus changed to wider landscape studies. The change in approach is seen at Wharram Percy when, in the final decade, research widened and deepened and extended beyond the manor. More questions were asked of the cultural and historic processes in the wider landscape at local and regional levels (Gerrard 2003, 172-3). An approach for future research suggested by Gardiner et al. (2012, 7) is to ‘identify and characterise the range of medieval expression in the landscape, to highlight the value and significance of exploring the variety of medieval rural forms and to consider connections and differences between regions’.
3.3 How settlement clustering and the village work, in theory

In parallel with the Wharram Percy research project, theories were generated in relation to how medieval villages functioned and settlement nucleation worked. Taylor (1983) defined different village forms, the result of steady growth from a single place, agglomeration, collapse of a dispersed settlement pattern into a nucleated village and deliberate planning (ibid., 131-4). Roberts (1987, 20) provided a further important building block in the understanding of the theory of how medieval settlements worked. Roberts described space within a village as public, communal and private and the distinctions, while not watertight, are fundamental to the understanding of villages. The approach adopted by Roberts (1987, 2) was to explain village plans and ‘how the varied parts of the village, farmsteads, cottages, great houses, churches, property divides, open greens, roads and footpaths fit together and interrelate’. The approach concentrated on explaining village morphology, typology and classification through plans and therefore there was little attention to village buildings or communities. Roberts (1987, 4) identified questions to be asked of a village in order to understand the forces present in their making, such as their site, situation, form and function. ‘Form’ is defined as the shape of the village, and the classification of village plans, as agglomeration of houses or regular lay out indicating planning. ‘Site’ is the buildings, farmhouses, cottages and houses, manor house and churches which sit on the site. The group of villages in a region constitute a pattern, and the relationship that each village has to surrounding settlements and the environment, is described as ‘situation’ (Roberts 1987, 5).

Some regions in Britain are dominated by nucleation while in other regions dispersed farmsteads prevailed, yet these are not standard universal terms and may depend on local circumstances. A small cluster of three farmsteads may legitimately be called a nucleation if it occurred in an area dominated by dispersed settlements. If farmsteads drifted apart then the ‘hailing distance’ measurement, usually 150m, should apply determining if there was nucleation or if the farmstead was peripheral. Roberts (1987, 8) explores the concept of nucleation and its application for settlement clustering and dispersed farmsteads. He concluded that a cluster of farmsteads 200m apart but sharing an arable field in the centre of the arrangement was nucleated, whereas three farmsteads 100m apart but operating separately would not necessarily...
be nucleated. The settlement clusters investigated in this thesis were located within a compact area, focused on the parish church and are therefore said to be nucleated.

### 3.4 The place of the parish church in clustered settlements

Morris’s work (1989), presents a theoretical approach to the church and village as a place in the landscape. This work was very influential in shaping the theoretical framework of this thesis. Before Morris (1989), research on churches had been purely empirical and was concerned with the architectural detail and furnishings of individual buildings. However, Morris adopted an approach that considered the church as a ‘place’ and a component in the landscape, linking the parish church to the village or settlement (Morris 1989, 2). Morris provided an analysis of church settings in the landscape and raised questions of the archaeology of ritual, burial, liturgy, use of space (Gerrard 2003, 189).

The idea of the ‘parish church’ within a parish, as a defined territory, with its own church, priest and tithe-paying congregation was not crystallised in England until the twelfth century. However, several church buildings were already in existence and were old by that time, some had their origins in the seventh century (Morris 1989, 235-7). A system of minsters or mother churches providing pastoral care probably emerged in Anglo-Saxon Britain from the end of the seventh century (Hall 2000, 1-3). The boundaries of parish territories existed in Britain in all their main essentials before 1200, however, they may have been set out in the tenth century, and were well advanced by 1000. Parish formation in England commenced in the decades following the Conquest, when there was a spate of church building and rebuilding and by the thirteenth century almost all of the medieval churches were established (Morris 1989, 149).

A number of factors determined the choice of site for the parish church. Those included terrain, susceptibility to flooding, the suitability of the ground for building, population distribution, and convenience for members of its congregation and, most importantly, tenure. Many planned villages contain churches, which appear to have to have been incorporated within the village from the outset. However, closer examination discloses that either a great many planned villages of regular form had no church, or the church was at the edge of or peripheral to the village. Morris drew
attention to a survey of 92 medieval villages in Somerset that indicated that more than 70% of the villages surveyed had churches that were fully removed or slightly apart from the principal centre of population and deduced that ‘these figures are neither exceptional nor particular to Somerset’ (Morris 1989, 239-42). These conclusions framed the analysis of the shape of the Anglo-Norman borough of Newtown Jerpoint (5.4) and the place of the parish church of St. Nicholas within the settlement.

3.5 Theoretical perspectives in Ireland

In Ireland some medieval archaeologists embraced new theoretical approaches, O’Keeffe (2001, 69-88) while acknowledging the need for the collection and processing of empirical data, proposed that deeper levels of enquiry are possible when informed by contemporary theory in humanities, such as phenomenology, gender and ethnicity. O’Keeffe (2000, 103) expressed a view that some archaeologists considered ‘a theoretical perspective as an indulgence at a time when much information remains to be collected and many research questions remain to be resolved.’. O’Keeffe’s paper on medieval settlement presents a theoretical perspective rather than an empirical view and questions the meaning of the terms ‘dispersed’ and ‘nucleation’ in medieval settlement studies. Dispersed and nucleation are synonymous with ‘isolated’ and ‘cluttered’ and suggests that dispersed farmsteads standing alone are isolated, and that nucleated villages are cluttered. The terms refer to the condition of the settlements rather than the processes of settlement-formation. We judge relative dispersion and nucleation according to our own perception of space and settlement density and in using these terms, in describing settlement, we must synchronise with how the people of those landscapes perceived their spatial interrelationships in the medieval period. We should seek to characterise the paradigm in terms of opposites. Binary opposites such as dark/light, outside/outside, private/public sacred/profane, male/female, and raw/cooked have a value in social theorising about settlement, precisely because they are oppositions of which we have a day-to-day awareness (O’Keeffe 2000, 104). Polarisation is contingent on scale: there can be no absolute state of dispersal, and nucleation, as there is no right scale with which to make the analysis. Nucleation and dispersal might not always be the appropriate opposites of each other, either in the context of
settlement in general or of medieval European settlement in particular (ibid.). If we perceive a natural trajectory of rural settlement evolution, we are likely to perceive the progression being from dispersion to nucleation, not the reverse. O’Keeffe (ibid.) notes the perception of nucleated settlements and their associated landscapes as evolving from simple to complex as a more developed or sophisticated form of settlement than dispersion, as probably post medieval rather than medieval. Evidence of deliberate planning, with rows of regular house plots, facing straight streets is evident at many medieval settlements in England, particularly the northeast (Taylor 1983, 132-4). Newtown Jerpoint (5.5) is the only site investigated in this thesis where there is evidence of deliberate planning. Tullaherin, a colonial episcopal manor in Kilkenny was possibly as densely populated as Newtown Jerpoint and, like Oughtmama (7.5), Noughaval (8.8), Carran and Killeany (9.7; 9.11) there is no evidence of deliberate planning, rather the settlements were agglomerations or possibly accretions over time. The sites investigated in the Ó Lochlainn lordship, with the possible exception of Carran, had their origins as early medieval ecclesiastical foundations and Oughtmama and Tullaherin were important monasteries. Clustered settlements are known in Gaelic society, particularly at high-status buildings, such as tower-houses (4.6). The driver for house grouping at parish churches was undoubtedly the pedigree of the site, specifically its association with a founder saint and the maintenance of a cult of that saint and attachment to place through time was the impetus for erenagh settlements agglomerating in their vicinities. FitzPatrick (2004; 2006) has shown that pedigree of place was a cultural imperative of Gaelic society and clearly demonstrated in relation to the places that they held their assemblies and the monuments around which settlements clustered.

3.6 The landscape theoretical framework for this thesis

There are many gaps in our understanding of settlement in later medieval Ireland, below the elite level. This is particularly so in areas that continued under the control of Gaelic lords. O’Keeffe (2004b, 2) considers that ‘our knowledge deficit is largely a consequence of the relatively low visibility of much of that archaeological evidence’ and there is little unequivocal evidence other than churches and castles of occupation in this period. However, this statement reveals a very narrow view as he completely overlooks research on other settlement features of the Gaelic landscape,
such as assembly and inauguration sites, learned family settlements including schools, as well as hunting grounds used by Gaelic lords, hills, fords etc. (FitzPatrick, 2001; 2004; 2009; 2012; 2015; FitzPatrick, Hennessey, 2008). Research has developed on the continued use of crannogs and adaption of moated sites in the later medieval period by Gaelic elite as residences and centres of landed estates and in some cases lordships (O’Conor 1998, 73-107; Finan and O’Conor 2002, 72-87; Brady and O’Conor 2005, 125-36; O’Conor et. al. 2010, 15-40). These studies demonstrate how archaeology has advanced in the last few decades. Theoretical approaches encourage detailed examination of existing hypotheses, theories and acceptances and subject them to critical examination. This encourages the production of alternative or radical theories and allows researchers to look for meaning in the past. It encourages a deeper examination of ideas of power, hierarchy, space, women, children, sexuality and landscape and allows movement away from official views of the past (Breen 2005, 18-9).

The approach in this thesis is to combine the traditional collection of data to record and present the settlement clusters at the sites in a structured uniform manner and the process of engagement with the data, interpreting and developing a range of understanding about the settlements as cultural components in the wider later medieval landscape.

The interpretation of the ordering of space in the colonial borough was influenced by the work of Taylor (1983) and Roberts (1987) and the position of the church within the borough was influenced by Morris’s (1989) work on the position of churches in the English landscape. In this thesis, a landscape approach is adopted to understand the origin, development and decline of the borough of Newtown Jerpoint. The decision to locate the borough at a strategically important crossing point on the River Nore may have been determined by defensive considerations. However, its location on a routeway between the medieval towns of Knocktopher and Thomastown was certainly a vital consideration in the locational choice and initial success of the borough (5.2). The new routeway, bypassing the borough, may have been a factor in its decline. The Little Arrigle River, a tributary of the Nore, was an important boundary between the borough and the Cistercian abbey of Jerpoint. The borough was in the parish of Jerpoint Church and the barony of Knocktopher, while Jerpoint
Abbey was in the parish of the same name and the barony of Gowran. The Little Arrigle River formed the boundary between the parishes and baronies. The separation of the borough suggests that it was independent from the abbey (5.8). Its proximity to the abbey was clearly a commercial advantage for Newtown Jerpoint, possibly a consideration in its location but the borough was possibly vulnerable, due to its dependence on the abbey and the dissolution of the abbey coincided with a period of decline for the borough.

Tullaherin was an important monastery, with a monastic school before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans (Ó Carragáin 2010, 110; Manning 1998a, 19-30). Erenaghs, as hereditary stewards of churchlands and their kin farmed its ecclesiastical estates. Shortly after the arrival of the colonists, the monastic church was enlarged and it emerged as the parish church of an episcopal manor. When the church was enlarged, some elements of the early medieval architectural package were retained (Ó Carragáin 2010, 298). This indicates that there was a strong attachment to the ‘place’, because it had a distinctive meaning and values for the people (Tilley 1994, 19). Landscape features in the parish suggest cultural hybridity. Acculturation, the maintenance of traditions and hybridity are elements in the colonial process (Horning 2013, 6-7). Place-names of townlands suggest continuity of Gaelic traditions, while other townlands have English place-names layered on to the landscape. Place-names are of such vital significance because they act to transform the physical and geographical into something that is historically and socially experienced (Tilley 1994, 18-9). Townlands in the parish of Tullaherin that have Gaelic place-names also have the earthworks of native enclosed settlements, whereas there is none in townlands with English place-names.

The parish of Oughtmama is separated from Abbey parish by a routeway, Corcar Na Cléireach (Corker Pass), ‘The Monks Pass’. This routeway is the approach to the Ó Lochlainn lordship from the northeast and forms the boundary with the MacWilliam Uachtar, (Burke) lordship of Clanrickard to the east. This important boundary was of major significance as existential space between places and regions (Tilley 1994, 17). The routeway also formed the boundary between the lands of Oughtmama parish from the Cistercian parish of Abbey. Place-names of the townlands in Abbey parish, Abbey East and Abbey West and the name of one of the hills in the parish, Abbey
Hill, all suggest that they were part of the estate associated with the Cistercian abbey of St. Mary’s, Corcomroe (7.2.1). The church lands of Abbey and Oughtmama originally formed a single unit, indicated by detached townlands in Oughtmama parish (7.2.1), and these extensive churchlands formed a buffer between the Ó Briain, over-kings of Thomond and the Ó Conchobhair, over-kings of Connacht in the twelfth century. The location of Oughtmama on this important boundary indicates that it had a far more distinctive meaning and value (Tilley 1994, 15).

To the north of the settlement cluster at Oughtmama there is an area of rich, fertile land, and to the south, there is an area of karst uplands, with the parish church and settlement located on the interface between the two zones. The location of the settlement between upland and lowland areas illustrates the value of diversity in a mixed farming, arable and pastoral economy. The uplands of Burren are dominated by thin dark, free-draining organic soil that is well suited to winter grazing, whereas the rich fertile soils of the valley are eminently suitable for tillage and year-round grazing (Dunford 2002, 39). The importance of agricultural diversity to the monastic community is emphasised in the layout of the monastic settlement of Oughtmama, as both soil types are enclosed within the monastic vallum (7.3).

Noughaval was a medieval market centre and its place in the landscape suggests that ease of access was a factor in ensuring its long-term success. The market was the focal point in the parish and was well connected to other places within the lordship by a network of routeways and tracks (8.2). Noughaval is located close to the boundary of the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren and the Ó Conchobhair lordship of Corcomroe and is situated on an old routeway close to the boundary. The diocesan centre of Kilfenora lays 3.6km to the southeast. Noughaval adjoined a major north to south routeway through the interior of Burren to the broad valleys of Turlough and natural harbour at Ballyvaughan to the north (Gosling 1991, 124). The strategic importance of Noughaval in the landscape is illustrated by its mention in the Irish chronicles (AFM vi, 2103), when in 1599, Aodh Ó Domhnaill and his followers plundered Thomond and proceeded homeward with their spoils, ‘passing by Nuachongbhaill’ (Noughaval). This reference demonstrates that Noughaval was known as a place in the landscape and an important landmark on the routeway.
The parish church and settlement cluster at Carran was located in the townland of Poulacarran, near the south-west boundary of the medieval parish. The parish church and settlement adjoined one of the principal natural north to south routeways through the Burren uplands that would have been an important artery of communication in the later medieval period and probably had its origins in prehistory (Gosling 1991, 125-6). Carran was the largest parish in Burren and extended 15km east from the church parish and within the extensive landscape of the parish, there were five subsidiary chapels. The parish contains an extraordinarily high number of penitential stations clustered around some of the subsidiary chapels, which suggests they may have been saintly cult centres and the focus for pilgrimage. Connectivity and access were vital for markets and pilgrimage sites to have endured through time and Noughaval and Carran were well connected to places within the lordship and beyond.

The conceptual framework for this thesis is landscape archaeology and place making. The landscape setting of settlement clusters, focused on the parish church, their place in the townland, parish and the wider landscape of the lordship has shaped the theoretical approach adopted for the thesis. Long established early medieval monastic churches, at Oughtmama, Noughaval, Killeany and Tullaherin were churches that were enlarged and adapted as they emerged as parish churches. There may have been an earlier church at Carran, but there is no evidence of it. The only church that was certainly built from scratch in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century was the parish church at Newtown Jerpoint. Parish churches were maintained throughout the later medieval period and all were modernised in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. The pedigree of the sites, recognised throughout this long period is indicated by the retention of symbolic important architectural features suggesting an enduring attachment to place and maintain the link to the past was a cultural imperative for Gaelic polity. Successive generations of ecclesiastical families continued to settle at parish churches and living close to the parish church was an essential social and cultural value.

3.7 Methodology

Two study regions were selected for this thesis because they had two different cultural identities as polities of Gaelic and Anglo-Norman ruling families. The Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren, in modern Co. Clare, was selected as an area, because
it was never actively colonised and remained culturally Gaelic, but was not without external cultural influences throughout the later medieval and into the early modern period. The Ó Lochlainn lordship was a relatively small compact political lordship within the equally compact diocese of Kilfenora. The second region was the central region Co. Kilkenny that was colonised from the 1190s onward by the Anglo-Normans shortly after their arrival. While the medieval county of Kilkenny lost some of its northern territory to the MacGiolapadraigs in the early sixteenth century and further losses in the formation of Queen’s County c. 1600, the central region remained geographically and culturally relatively stable throughout the period 1200-1600.

A variety of desk-based resources were employed to identify and compile a short-list of possible case study sites in the two regions. Some settlement clusters associated with medieval parish churches were identified by reference to monuments listed in the RMP. Other sites were identified, utilising the first-edition six-inch OS map, CUCAP and other aerial photographic resources, including Google Earth and Bing Maps, satellite images.

The short-listed sites were visited and a preliminary assessment was made of their potential to respond to the central research question of this thesis. The priority was to identify evidence of settlement clusters at parish churches rather than churches that were not been parochial centres. In the Ó Lochlainn lordship, the final selection included house clusters at Oughtmama, parish church, which is the site of an important early medieval monastery, Carran, geographically the largest medieval parish in the diocese of Kilfenora, Killeaney the smallest, and Noughaval, a late medieval / early modern market centre with possible early origins. A site was considered in the adjoining Clanrickard lordship, at Dunkellin, Co. Galway, however, while there were interesting earthworks, the church was not a parish centre and the site was not pursued.

In central Kilkenny, the sites selected were the small Anglo-Norman borough of Newtown Jerpoint and the episcopal manor at Tullaherin, which, was an early medieval monastery. Again, a short-list was compiled and the sites were visited. Other sites visited included Fiddown and Grangefertagh but were judged unsuitable. The monuments listed in the RMP for Fiddown included, a deserted medieval
settlement, motte castle, tower-house and a church. However, there was insufficient
evidence of the deserted settlement or the tower-house and the church was of
seventeenth century date. Grangefertagh was a grange of the Augustinian Canons,
Kilkenny.

Some sites have been the subject of earlier research; Sinéad Ní Ghabhláin (1995)
conducted a survey of medieval churches in the diocese of Kilfenora, and created
plans of earthworks at Oughtmama (ibid., 380-5) and Noughaval (ibid., 374-80). Ní
Ghabhláin also excavated a house at Noughaval in 1990 (ibid. 1992). The focus of Ní
Ghabhláin’s research was ‘Church, Parish and Polity: The medieval diocese of
Kilfenora,’ and was primarily a study the organisation of the Christian church within
an Irish chiefdom during the medieval period and the relationship of institution to the
power structure of the chiefdom. There was little detailed analysis offered for the two
settlement clusters recorded. The main conclusions were that some nucleated
settlements developed around churches and control of churchlands by ecclesiastical
families ensured that lords could not build castles close to parish churches. Claire
Foley excavated a small medieval settlement c. 300m west of the borough at
Newtown Jerpoint in 1973. The preliminary report of the excavation (excavation.ie)
and a detailed account of the excavation was published (Foley 1989, 71-126) were
examined.

Richard Moran (1996) carried out a survey and published a plan of the earthworks at
Tullaherin. Oxford Archaeology (2007) completed a major survey of the site at
Newtown Jerpoint in 2003 on behalf of the then landowner Mr. Joseph Teesdale, and
the Heritage Council. The purpose of the plan was to locate the house drawn on the
first-edition six-inch OS map and to map the other surviving features on the site
(Oxford Archaeology 2007, 133). The plan of the site was created by mapping the
contours of the archaeological features using a Leica roving GPS unit and base
station consisting of a computer set up in Belmore House (ibid.). The survey data
was exported from the base station and processed by AutoCad software. The
Heritage Council (2007) published the resulting high-resolution plan. The plans of
the earthworks were reviewed for this thesis and while the plans for Oughtmama,
Noughaval and Tullaherin required updating, the plan of Newtown Jerpoint was
found to be accurate.
Before survey, all landowners were identified and interviewed. The purpose of the interviews was threefold. The first was to obtain permission to enter their lands and conduct the survey, second to establish if any changes had occurred in living memory that materially affected the site. The final purpose was to record local folklore, traditions or other information, such as disturbance resulting from animal burial, crop-marks, or other features visible in certain weather conditions that affected the site and are not recorded on maps or other sources. In some cases, neighbours and other members of the local communities were interviewed.

Prior to field survey a pro-forma data record sheet was compiled in order to ensure consistency in approach to recording the features of the sites. The record sheet was designed to include, the date of survey, description of location, topography, aspect, proximity and relationship to other sites. Description of morphology, orientation, dimensions, sketches and preliminary interpretation of features was also included. The data record sheet also included the RMP number and description of features that had been previously recorded.

A detailed walkover survey was carried out at each site, the wall-footings of buildings were identified, their dimensions recorded in the data record sheet. A detailed photographic record of the wall-footings was compiled using a hand held Canon ES 350D, single lens reflex digital camera. Where no plans existed, detailed plans were produced with a Nikon DTM 322 total station or Global Positioning System (GPS) technology, using a Trimble hand held GPS device.

The survey was extended outward to the fields beyond the sites, on a field-by-field basis, until there was no further evidence of cultural features associated with the settlement. Field survey included other features in the landscape with relevance to parish church settlement, such as holy wells, subsidiary chapels and penitential stations.

It became apparent that not all features visible on aerial photographs or satellite images were identifiable on the ground, and some features identified by field survey were not visible on aerial images and therefore, it was evident that more detailed topographical surveys were required to clarify these features. It was also evident that in the absence of detailed excavation, establishing that the wall-footings were the
remains of houses, or that they were built and occupied in the later medieval period was problematic.

The approach used to investigate the possible period of origin of the buildings in the settlement clusters was to investigate the chronology of the field walls, enclosures and banks that have relationships to the wall-footings of the buildings. By establishing a sequence for the enclosures, it was possible to suggest, broadly, the period when the buildings were constructed. Some field walls, enclosures and banks have a relationship to the foundation courses of buildings. The wall-footings of some buildings cut banks, field walls and enclosures, while field walls truncated other wall-footings. The wall-footings that cut banks obviously post-date the banks and provide a rough terminus post quem for the buildings while those truncated were of later construction, constituting a terminus ante quem. The field walls and banks and their relationship to the earthworks are of critical importance in determining the dating sequence of the possible buildings. Therefore, survey was extended to include enclosures, banks and field walls. A photographic record was made and field notes were taken of their construction. Attempts were then made to reconstruct the medieval landscape by peeling back the later cultural layer to identify relict features and to establish their relationship to each other and to the buildings.

The respective parish churches were the focus of the settlement clusters in this thesis. Therefore, changes in the fabric of the churches were examined and recorded to identify social change, continuity and responses to major events in the period 1200-1600, such as the reforms of the Irish Church in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and during the Henrician Reformation and the Protestant reformation of the sixteenth century. The internal space of the church buildings was explored for evidence of population density. Sculptural and architectural detail in the fabric of the churches, and funerary monuments in their interiors were examined as potential indicators of cultural hybridity, the status of the community and possible patronage of the church.

The need for a digital terrain model was identified and the availability of LiDAR (Light Detecting and Ranging) images for the case study sites was investigated. LiDAR, a remote sensing technology, using airborne laser scanning, has the ability to collect thousands of surface measurements per second with a high level of accuracy.
Airborne LiDAR technology produces high-resolution topographic surveys. At Newtown Jerpoint a LiDAR survey had been completed by The Discovery Programme on behalf of The Heritage Council, and the point model, the initial product of the LiDar survey, was processed to provide a digital terrain model, or ‘bare earth’ model of the land surface. The ground resolution of points for the Discovery Programme was 10cm. (c. 90 points per m$^2$) (Corns, 2007, 134-5). A LiDAR data set was obtained from OSI for the site at Oughtmama. The point interval for the data set was 0.5m. (c. 9 points per m$^2$). The raw data was processed in NUI Galway, in Arc Map 10, GIS software, and a high-resolution digital terrain model was produced. The model helped to reveal previously unidentified features and assisted in broadly suggesting an age range for the buildings at their respective sites. Newtown Jerpoint and Oughtmama are the only sites for which LiDAR data was available.

An experiment was undertaken with kite balloon aerial photography, at Oughtmama, in order to record the extensive wall-footings at the site. A Skyhook Helikite, a combination of a kite and helium balloon with a 1.6 cubic metre capacity, and a Ricoh GR Digital camera was borrowed from the Discovery Programme for this process; however, several difficulties were encountered. Weather conditions needed to be perfect, as even in moderate wind conditions the balloon proved difficult to control and vulnerable to damage during assembly. Balloon photography is particularly effective in recording buildings, or features with a marked differentiation between the feature and its background, however, the lack of textural contrast between earthworks and their background made them difficult to identify and record. Best results are obtained by images taken at an oblique angle in perfect light conditions but planning to arrange photography to coincide with suitable weather conditions proved problematic. Some sites were unsuitable due to the danger of overhanging electrical and other service cables, while at other sites features were obstructed by tree and vegetation. In view of the difficulties, this method of investigation and recording was abandoned early in the field-based research in favour of using a Remotely Piloted Aerial System (RPAS), an unmanned aircraft, controlled by a pilot on the ground with an integrated high-resolution camera. The technology used was a Phantom Vision FC 200 craft with integrated camera. It was applied to
Tullaherin, Oughtmama, Noughaval, Carran and Killeany. The high-resolution images obtained were processed using Global Mapper 15 software to produce a Digital Surface Model (DSM). RPAS proved a more satisfactory methodology for recording and analysing the earthworks than the kite balloon system. There is greater control over the flight path of the drone and it is less weather sensitive. A trial was conducted at the Tullaherin site and when this proved satisfactory, the methodology was extended to the sites in the Burren.
Chapter 4 - Origin and development of settlement clustering in Ireland, c. 1200-1600 AD.

4.1. Introduction

The aim of the chapter is to provide background to settlement clustering in Ireland in the period 1200 to 1600 AD. The twelfth century was a time of great change in Ireland that saw the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169 and the process of Church reform that accelerated during that century. The processes of colonisation and church reform were to change Ireland forever. However, settlement clustering in Ireland did not commence in the twelfth century, there is evidence for settlement clustering at secular and ecclesiastical centres in the preceding centuries (Nicholls 1987, 399-404).

The twelfth century saw major change across Europe (Davies 1996, 383-468), the feudal system had matured slowly and the reforms of the church saw the establishment of a hierarchal structure with bishops firmly in control of fixed territorial dioceses, with parishes supported by tithe paying parishioners and the arrival and development of new religious orders, especially the Cistercians. Changes that were underway in Ireland during the first half of the twelfth century, culminated in 1151 with the Synod of Kells that established a European-style diocesan network (Martin 1987a, 58). The sub-infeudation of the Anglo-Norman lordship saw the establishment of the manor, nucleated village, borough and rural borough. The manor was usually coextensive with earlier Gaelic territorial units and formed the basis of new parishes that they introduced. The Anglo-Normans were not a homogenous group and there were regional variations in the character of their settlements (Graham 1997, 68-70).

Gaps remain in our understanding of the processes of Anglo-Norman colonisation (Frame 2012, xv) and a clear understanding of how they settled in their new territories, however, identifying settlements in the Gaelic world is equally challenging. The parish, in Ireland, emerged at the end of the twelfth, or the beginning of the thirteenth century, but parish formation was incomplete in some
remote Gaelic areas even by the beginning of the fourteenth century (Nugent 2006, 186-95).

4.2. Settlement clustering in pre-Norman Ireland

Society in pre-Norman Ireland was predominantly rural and pastoral, but not exclusively so. Settlement clustering occurred around secular *ráth* and *caiseal* and at ecclesiastical sites. The settlement pattern of the early medieval period left a significant footprint on the Irish landscape. A wide swathe of society occupied these sites, which contained domestic structures and farm buildings (Stout 1997, 11-52). Their inhabitants ranged from kings, to *boaire*, large farmers and *ocaire*, small farmers (Kerr and McCormick 2004, 57). The enclosing elements of these settlements were of stone, *caiseal / cathair cashels*, or earthen ditches and banks, surmounted by palisades, fences or hedges, *ráth*. The remains of these enclosures represent the most numerous field monuments in the Irish landscape with over 47,000 found throughout Ireland (Stout and Stout 2011, 44). The distribution of enclosed settlements suggests a rural agricultural society with a pastoral economy based on animal husbandry. Cattle, sheep and pig bone dominate the faunal remains of the period and from the age of the slaughter of cattle, it is evident that dairy production dominated, with meat a by-product (McCormick 1983, 253-59). The pattern of enclosed settlements in the early medieval period indicates that they are clustered in townland units, and Stout (1997, 124-5) suggests that clusters were within the view of five neighbouring enclosures. The inter-relationship of the enclosed settlements highlights the hierarchical nature of Irish society at the time. It is apparent that the settlements of the highest grade of land-holding freemen, *bóaire* (Kelly 1988, 304), are clustered on the dwellings of nobles, *aire* (Kelly 1988, 302). Stout (1997, 124-6) illustrates that there are also clusters of native enclosed settlement focused on royal settlements. Clustering undoubtedly had a mutual advantage; particularly for defence as clustering facilitated a speedy assembly of forces. In an analysis of early medieval settlement in Co. Fermanagh, Kerr and McCormick (2004, 65-6) clearly demonstrate that there was a significant grouping between sites of the same type, however they may have had different functions.
Lynn (1994) and Stout (1997) argue that the majority of these settlements were constructed and used in the second half of the first millennium. However, continued use and adaptation of native enclosed settlements during the later medieval and early modern period is suggested from excavation findings, much of which comes from Co. Down and Antrim (O’Conor 1998, 89). Some sites that were taken over by Anglo-Norman colonists were reused for the construction of motte castles. Fieldwork in other areas in the east of the country provides hints that the incomers were attracted to enclosed settlements as sites for the construction of mottes and some were occupied by Gaelic polity until they were reused by the Anglo-Normans. It is therefore probable that areas in Gaelic control, not affected by the turmoil of invasion, continued to use native enclosed settlements during the later medieval period (O’Conor 1998, 90). Two ringforts were excavated by Rynne in the 1960s, ‘Thady’s Fort’ and Garrynamona Co. Clare. Rynne interpreted the enclosure and rectangular house site at Thady’s Fort as c. 1600 in date and Garrynamona, provided evidence of occupation in the seventeenth century (O’Conor 1998, 90-1).

In Meath, a greater number of native enclosed settlements are in marginal areas, where Gaelic people continued to settle, compared to areas of prolonged and intensive colonial settlement and this settlement pattern is repeated in Louth and Wexford (O’Conor 1998, 91-2).

Maps of Richard Bartlett (Hayes-McCoy 1964) in the early seventeenth century, illustrate that enclosed settlements in Ulster were occupied in the early seventeenth century, including Tullahogue, Co. Tyrone. A map-picture of the site depicts a settlement with two houses enclosed by a bank and ditch.

Recent investigations of the Burren cathair tradition of north Co. Clare by FitzPatrick (2009) and Comber and Hull (2010) clearly demonstrate that native enclosed settlements were in use by minor elites during the later medieval period. FitzPatrick’s work (2009, 289) in the Burren region of north Co. Clare presents clear evidence of late-medieval and early modern activity at cathair and mothair sites. The range of buildings contained within the garth of these enclosures suggests that they were not just simple ‘farmsteads’. The finds at Caherconnell (Comber and Hull 2010, 156-7) reveal a more complex range of activities and a wide range of craft production, from
bone production, woodworking, iron smelting or smithing. There is also an indication of non-ferrous or precious metalworking at the site. This suggests that there was a complex society with a range of skills living in clusters around the caher.

Some clustering and urbanisation occurred at major ecclesiastical sites, such as Clonfert, Clogher, Kildare, Clonard, Armagh, Kells and Rosscarbery (Nicholls, 1987, 399-403). The inhabitants of house agglomerations at these sites were undoubtedly non-agriculturalists and worked as craft manufacturers, market-traders and as providers of hospitality at these centres that attracted large numbers of pilgrims. There is not universal agreement among scholars as to the origin and function of settlement at these sites. Were they monastic urban centres, or proto-towns? Doherty (1985, 45-71) argues that Armagh, Downpatrick, Kildare and Clonmacnoise began to function as urban centres in the ninth century. Others feel that monasteries may have been involved in local trade and limited manufacturing, however, they were not ‘proto urban or any sort of town’ (Valante, 1998, 18). The arguments on both sides are summarised by Etchingham (2011, 22-53) who concludes that the evidence suggests ‘both minimal urbanisation and minimal trend towards urbanisation in late pre-Norman church centres such as Glendalough’.

Bradley (1994, 42-50) argues convincingly, that the plan of the monastic sites and evidences from the sources for Clonmacnoise, Armagh and the layout of Kells and Tuam indicates that the practice of nucleation focused on ecclesiastical centres was established many centuries before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland.

4.3 Settlement clustering and Anglo-Norman society

When the Anglo-Normans came to Ireland, in 1169, they introduced major change in the areas they dominated. They brought new settlement forms, a new culture, new languages, English and French, new architectural tradition and a new social and economic order called feudalism (Graham 1997, 60). Small bands of Anglo-Normans led by Richard de Clare, Strongbow, came from south Wales between 1169 and 1170 and gained immediate military success (Frame 2012, 1-7). They came initially as mercenaries and adventurers to support Dermot MacMurrough, king of Leinster in his battles against his Irish rivals. King Henry II intervened in Irish affairs and arrived at Waterford in 1171 with an army of some 500 knights and 3,000 – 4,000 archers (Otway-Ruthven 1968, 49). The Anglo-Norman barons did homage to
Henry, as did most of the Irish kings, with the exception of the Ulstermen and the possibly Rory Ó Conchobhair. At the synod at Cashel in 1172, the Irish bishops swore an oath of fealty to Henry. Decrees were issued, condemning marriage customs, the practice by Irish kings of exacting hospitality from churches and most importantly, requiring the payment of tithes to the parish church (Otway-Ruthven 1968, 47-48), an initiative which firmly progressed the development of parish formation.

The initial conquest was reasonably rapid through the thirteenth century and reached its maximum before the decline of English power traditionally attributed to the invasion of Edward Bruce (1315-8) (Frame 2012, 128-53). However, at its maximum extent it was an incomplete conquest. The Anglo-Normans were restricted from complete domination by terrain difficulty, Irish resistance, a lack of resources, their own feuds, family misfortunes and on occasion the dis-favour of the king. However, colonial advance meant that no part of the country was unaffected by their activities. Even in areas where the Anglo-Normans failed to obtain control, Gaelic leaders were affected by their proximity (Frame 2012, 22).

By the end of the twelfth century, the new colonists dominated Leinster, Meath, south Longford, the northwest of Co. Offaly, Ulster east of the Bann and most of Munster. However, their primary task was military in nature, rather than the establishment of agricultural settlements, and the early phase of Anglo-Norman occupation was concerned with the defence of their new lands and control of the countryside (Otway-Ruthven 1965, 75). They constructed strong points, usually a castle and peopled their lands with military tenants to defend the territory (Otway-Ruthven, 1968, 108-9). From the outset, there was a scarcity of labour, both English and Irish. One of the terms of the Treaty of Windsor in 1175, underlines this problem, which stated that fugitives were to return to the lands of the Anglo-Normans, and if any refused to return, Ó Conchobhair was to force them to do so on request (Otway-Ruthven 1968, 56).

It is unclear when the ‘village moment’ occurred during the course of Anglo-Norman colonisation. It is likely that granting of major feudal fiefs was completed early, however, the parcelling out of smaller land grants, the knight’s fees, upon which the
territory of the manor and parish were based, was commenced later. It was not until
the new territories were conquered, the sub-infeudation of the large feudal grants and
lands parcelled out into knights’ fees was accomplished, that the task of establishing
nucleated settlements could commence (Hennessey 1985, 61).

To the Anglo-Normans, the parish and the manor were elements of a familiar
territorial organisational structure. Parish formation and manor delimitation were
central to Anglo-Norman colonisation strategy (Nugent 2006, 188) and once
introduced, they were to change not only the Church, but also the lives of ordinary
people (Hennessey 1985, 60).

The knights’ fee was the usual feudal fief, on which the manor was based, and
formed the framework for the parish (Hennessey 1985, 60-70). Otway-Ruthven
(1968, 119) remarked ‘nothing is clearer than the identification of the manor and the
parish’. In many cases, these territories were laid out along the lines of the pre-
existing territorial frameworks. Hennessey (1985, 63) cites examples where the term
*túath* was used to define the grant of a knights’ fee in Tipperary. Many parish
churches were located at pre-existing ecclesiastical sites, practical response to the
problem of providing a church and a centre for pastoral care (FitzPatrick 2006, 70).

The evidence from manorial extents and *inquisitions post-mortem* shows that in
Leinster there were sizable numbers of peasants of mainly English origins with some
Welsh and Flemings, side by side with tenants of Gaelic Irish stock (O’Conor 1998,
41; Glasscock 1987, 213-21; Otway-Ruthven 1965, 77-83). The perception up to the
1970s was that the Anglo-Normans brought the manor and the typical nucleated
village of the English midland to Ireland, which consisted of a ‘church, frequently
juxtaposition with a timber castle, usually a motte, the centre of the lords demesne
farm, surrounded by many peasant houses filled with mainly English-speaking
settlers’ (O’Conor 1998, 44). However, the settlement model of the lowland English
manor does not hold entirely true for the Anglo-Norman manor in Ireland. There
were fundamental differences, because in Ireland, Irish tenants called *betaghs* lived
in house clusters on the manors, but in townlands away from the English-style
nucleated village (ibid.).
4.4.1 Regional variations

Unlike England, there was much greater regional variation. From the outset of Anglo-Norman colonisations, the newcomers were clearly not a homogeneous group; rather Anglo-Norman Ireland was a patchwork of lordship. There were differences in the agricultural economy of the colonial lordships that reflected in variations in the character of colonial settlements (Graham 1997, 69-70).

**Leinster**

Kilkenny was initially part of the lordship of Leinster (5.3; 6.4) and Anglo-Normans settlement in the lordship reflected an economy based on intensive agriculture with arable farming at its core (Otway-Ruthven 1968, 57-60). They introduced the manor, which was usually coextensive with the parish and based on pre-existing Gaelic Irish territorial units (Graham 1997, 66-7). The home of the lord and the parish church formed the nucleus of the manor, around which the village developed (O’Conor 1998, 44). William Marshal married Isabel de Clare, Strongbow’s surviving heiress, in 1189 (Crouch 1990, 88) and it was probably at this time that most of the manors in Leinster were established. Marshal developed the economic potential of the lordship and established the deep-water port of New Ross (Crouch 1990, 66-80). By the end of the first quarter of the thirteenth century, the lordship produced large quantities of grain, much of which was exported through New Ross and the manor lay at the heart of this economic success. By the mid-thirteenth century, they were populated by a large corpus of tenants of English, Welsh or Flemish descent (O’Conor 1998, 41; Graham 1997, 74; Otway-Ruthven 1968, 113).

**Thomond**

Anglo-Norman expansion did not result in complete domination of the island (Frame 2012, 31) and while they made occasional raids into Thomond (North Munster) in the 1180s, it was not until the 1230s that they made serious encroachments. It was not until 1276, when Thomas de Clare was granted Thomond (Frame 2012, 46), that English style settlements were established, centred on the castle at Bunratty, however, the de Clare presence in Thomond ended in 1318 with their defeat at the battle of Dysert O’Dea (ibid., 137). Throughout the later medieval period the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren and the Ó Conchobhair lordship of Corcu Modhruadh
were never actively colonised. Nonetheless, all parts of the country were affected by Anglo-Norman activities even where they failed to obtain a firm grip, the lordships of Gaelic leaders were altered by their proximity (ibid., 31). The twelfth-century reforms of the Irish Church had a greater impact on the communities of Burren, with the establishment of the diocese of Kilfenora, after the synod of Kells (1152) and the arrival of the Cistercians at Corcomroe in 1194-5 (Stalley 1987, 243-4) (7.2.2).

4.5. Problems identifying later medieval settlements

Glasscock, (1970, 168-75) highlighted the difficulty in identifying deserted medieval settlements in the Irish landscape. We know from historical sources that substantial settlements existed, however, the upstanding evidence does not reflect the scale of the original settlement. Our knowledge-deficit is described by O’Keeffe (2004b) ‘as largely a consequence of the relatively low visibility of much of the archaeological evidence’. Very few certain conclusions can be drawn on the nature of houses, and settlements in later medieval Ireland, based on the limited number of excavated buildings (Gardiner 2011, 720). In England, deserted medieval villages are marked by earthworks representing the tofts and crofts, hollow-ways and the footings of deserted houses (O’Conor 1998, 44). In other sites in England, there are the visible remains of an isolated church and perhaps the earthworks of a motte but there are no historical records of a settlement. There must have been communities, retainers for the castle and parishioners for the church, but evidence for their dwellings is absent. In Ireland, we know, from documents, that there were manors with sizable communities, but there are no physical remains of dwellings. Castlemore, Co. Carlow in 1307 had 79 burgages and 29 cottagers (Glasscock 1970, 171; O’Conor 1998, 47) while Carrick on Slaney, in Co. Wexford had 112 burgages. Both settlements had communities well in excess of 100 and yet there is no hint of dwellings in the surrounding flat fields (Glasscock 1970, 171).

In Britain, in excess of 3,000 deserted medieval villages have been identified (Beresford and Hurst 1990, 15; O’Conor 1998, 44), while in the Republic of Ireland to date 325 sites have been recorded in the RMP. The densest concentration of deserted villages are found in the counties of Kildare, Laois, Offaly, Tipperary and
Kilkenny, which includes Newtown Jerpoint (5.2) and Tullaherin (6.2)⁷ (Archaeology.ie). The question is, why are there so relatively few remains of deserted villages visible at manorial centres in Ireland? At the majority of the Anglo-Norman manors in the east of Ireland there are flat fields between the motte and church (O’Conor 1998, 47). A possible answer is that settlement at manorial centres was more short lived than in England. Villages that were deserted at an early stage in England, have also left very little evidence above ground (ibid.). Some villages and rural boroughs in Leinster were deserted prior to c. 1400, some possibly earlier. The combined effects of the Bruce wars, decease, famine and a shift to a pastoral economy from the beginning of the thirteenth century contributed to the decline and desertion of many Anglo-Norman settlements. Many settlements may have survived less than a century, and would have left very little evidence for their existence. The scarcity of earthworks means that little is known of the shape of these settlements during the later medieval period (O’Conor 1998, 47-8).

4.6 Emergence of the parish and church-centred settlement clusters in Gaelic territories

Research into the association of settlement with parish churches is not as advanced in Ireland as in England (FitzPatrick 2006, 62), and the task of understanding their exact association with churches in areas that continued under the control of Gaelic and Gaelicised lords is problematic. Nicholls argues that parish formation in Gaelic dioceses did not occur, with some exceptions, until the middle of the thirteenth century (Nicholls 1971, 69). However Ní Ghabhláin (2006, 156) demonstrates that in the final quarter of the twelfth century and during the early decades of the thirteenth century there was a remarkable programme of church building in the diocese of Kilfenora. This programme saw the building of the cathedral church at Kilfenora and the Cistercian abbey at Corcomroe and the arrival of the Augustinians to Kilshanny. During this period, the monastic church at Oughtmama was rebuilt (7.4.1). Nine of the thirteen extant parish churches in that diocese date to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. The physical evidence presented by this unprecedented church-building programme, demonstrates that parish formation in Kilfenora, and possibly elsewhere in Gaelic regions, occurred earlier than proposed by Nicholls. The vast

⁷ (http://www.archaeology.ie [accessed 1 December 2012])
majority of parish churches in Gaelic Ireland were located at sites of early medieval foundations. The use of existing churches by Anglo-Normans may have been determined as a convenient response to particular problems and it appears to have been a cultural imperative for Gaelic lords (FitzPatrick 2006, 70-1).

In the past, there was a perception that ‘medieval Gaelic society was so unstable and impermanent that it is futile exercise to seek their settlements’ (Duffy et al. 2001, 57). This view has been challenged and we now know that settlement clusters did occur in Gaelic Ireland. The great metropolitan sees of Armagh and Tuam continued as significant urban centres in the Gaelic tradition. The Anglo-Norman borough of Sligo continued under a Gaelic secular lord after the contraction of Anglo-Irish authority in the fourteenth century (Nicholls 2003, 16). Markets developed in the Gaelic lordship of the Ó Raghallaigh of east Breifne. In 1433, the parliament of the lordship of Ireland complained that towns of Meath were losing trade to the markets at Cavan and Granard and the town of Cavan grew up in the sixteenth century, possibly influenced by the trading relationship of the MacBradys with the Pale (Parker, 1995, 45-6).

The church was a powerful nucleating force for house agglomerations in Kilkenny. When discussing the seventeenth-century Gaelic core in Tipperary, Smith (1988, 69) demonstrates that ‘this region which had never experienced a deep integration into a feudalised European economy, it is striking how sacred places – parish or diocesan centres, monasteries, nunneries or abbeys - acted as the gathering points for peoples and settlements’. The cathedral centres of Armagh and Clonmacnoise were among the major ecclesiastical sites that were the focus of settlement clustering many centuries before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans (Bradley 1994, 42-50).

Ní Ghabhláin noted several house clusters at church sites in the Burren, Co. Clare. Those at Carran and Templeline contained a small number of associated house sites. Aerial photographs and fieldwork by her at Noughaval (8.8.1) and Oughtmama (7.5) revealed a number of house sites associated with the parish church (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 373-81).

Settlement clusters are also known to have existed in the late medieval period at Gaelic strongholds. They are recorded at Lifford, Co. Donegal, an O’Donnell centre
and Longford Co. Galway, an O Madden centre (Nicholls 2003, 141). Tower-houses were common in Ireland from the fifteenth century and some replaced the earlier structures as chief places, or *ceann ait*. Halls and other buildings were often located within the garth of bawns of some tower-houses or in the area immediately outside them. These buildings were possibly of wattle and daub (Nicholls 2003, 142).

Breen (2005, 89-90) demonstrates that settlement clustering occurred at some tower-houses in the Gaelic, O’Sullivan lordship of Beara in west Cork. A sixteenth-century map of Bantry and Beara illustrates a dense cluster of hut sites north of the tower-house at Dunboy, immediately outside the bawn wall. Clustered settlements are also illustrated at other-tower-houses, and adjacent to church sites in this lordship. Groups of hut sites around a single storied gabled house and groups of hut-sites unassociated with a central gabled house. A cluster of well-built houses of stone construction, at Canalough, a small sheltered inlet on the south-western coast of the Beara peninsula, were possibly roofed, using cruck beam construction, suggestion that they were permanent communities associated with coastal fishing (Breen 2005, 94-6). Captain Cuellar, an Armada survivor, in his account of 1588, also suggests there were coastal fishing villages near Streedagh, Co. Sligo (Duffy, *et al.* 2001, 58).

Nicholls (1983) edited the account of a lawsuit between Charles O Doyne and his brother Thady, regarding the estate in the barony of Tinnahinch in Co. Laois. The inquisition sets out the rents, exactions and land ownership of a ‘Gaelic Irish territory which had remained practically free from outside interference’ (ibid., x). The O Doyne manuscript provides an understanding of the settlement pattern at a Gaelic lordship. The exactions and rent included large quantities of cereals, products of tillage and products of a pastoral economy including meat, milk and butter (ibid., xii). The buildings described at Castlebrake, Co. Laois included; a hall, kitchen, brew-house, bake house and houses within the bawn. Other houses located on the north and west side of the bawn (ibid., 40). The manuscript defines the southern extent of the field to the north of the castle as ‘reached to the town greene’ (ibid.). The O Doyne manuscript clearly shows that there was a nucleated settlement in and around the castle with a village green and the ruins of a later medieval church c. 120 m. to the north of the castle (Sweetman *et. al* 1995, 75).
4.7 Conclusions

Clustering was a feature of settlement in Ireland in the centuries before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans. Native enclosed settlements formed groups, with a relationship to each other and, according to Stout (1997, 124-6), formed clusters around the residences of elites. Major ecclesiastical sites were also foci for settlement for the provision of guesting and hospitality for pilgrims, non-agricultural specialist craft workers, traders and merchants. The tradition of nucleation focused on ecclesiastical centres was therefore established many centuries before the Anglo-Norman colonisation.

The Anglo-Normans made irreversible change to Ireland. They brought new cultural practices, language, architectural tradition, a new social and economic order and new settlement forms, to the areas they colonised. The pace of Church reform accelerated, they established parishes, which were normally coterminous with their manor and with the parish church usually located at the site of an earlier religious foundation. They were not, however, a homogeneous group and settlement varied in regions in response to local conditions and economic opportunities available. The new settlements they brought included the manorial village, boroughs and rural borough.

The Anglo-Norman conquest was incomplete and large areas of the island remained in the control of Gaelic elites. In those regions, the parish emerged, as an ecclesiastical administrative denomination, in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century and the parish church was invariably located at an early monastic site. Communities continued to inhabit native enclosed settlements, and clusters at tower-houses, coastal fishing villages and at parish churches, as will be demonstrated in this thesis.
Part 1 - The Anglo-Norman county of Kilkenny and later Butler lordship of Ormond

Introduction

In part 1 of this thesis, the archaeology and cultural history of two parish church-centred settlements in the Anglo-Norman county of Kilkenny and later lordship of Ormond is presented and contrasted. The area of central Kilkenny was selected as an area of relative stability from the beginning of the process of sub-infeudation, marked by arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169 and throughout the period to 1600 A.D. This area of colonial cultural stability is in contrast to the Ó Lochoill lordship of Burren, which is discussed in part 2, which while clearly influenced by the outside world did not experience colonisation and remained a Gaelic polity in the period.

As an approach for part 1, two study parish church-centred settlements, in the heart of the colony, were selected for comparative analysis. There are distinctions in the layout of the settlements and the functions of their respective communities. The form
of the settlements are compared and contrasted to identify cultural influences in their layout.

The role and cultural outlook of the community at the new colonial borough of Newtown Jerpoint, in the parish of Jerpointchurch, are explored in chapter 5 and the episcopal manor of Tullaherin is examined in chapter 6

**Political change**

The settlements of Newtown Jerpoint and Tullaherin are located in the modern county of Kilkenny and the pre-Anglo-Norman kingdom of Ossory. This part of central Kilkenny was included in the liberty of Leinster, granted by King Henry II to Richard de Clare, Strongbow, in 1172. After his death, in 1176, his two surviving heirs were minors and therefore the lordship of Leinster was taken into the hands of the king. In 1189, William Marshal married Isabell de Clare, Strongbow’s surviving daughter and became lord of Leinster. He established the new centre of the lordship at Kilkenny. During this period, Kilkenny was an integral part of the lordship of Leinster. The county was shired in the early years of the thirteenth century, as we hear of a sheriff of the county between 1202 and 1204 (Empey 1990, 82). This position pertained until the partition of the great lordship of Leinster between the Marshal heiresses in 1247 (Orpen 2005, 305-18).

When William Marshal died in 1219, he was succeeded in turn by his five sons, each of whom died without an heir. The last of William Marshal’s sons Anselm died in 1245 and the extinction of the male Marshal line led to partition of Leinster among the five daughters of William Marshal. Some of the most important families in England were involved (Orpen 2005, 305-18). Most, but not all, of the Kilkenny lands passed to Isabel, the third daughter, who married, (1217) Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester and Hertford and Richard Earl of Cornwall, the king’s brother (1231). As she, was deceased at the time of the partition her share was given to her son Richard Earl of Gloucester and Hertford (ibid., 325).

The breakup of Leinster did not introduce any structural change. The institutions replicated central government but instead of being answerable to the administration of Leinster, the new regime was focused on the county (Empey 1990, 82).
Nonetheless, the breakup of Leinster was to cause irreparable damage to the lordship, due mainly to absenteeism, as the main interests of the earl of Gloucester and Hertford, and his descendants, lay in England and none resided in Ireland (Lydon 1987, 168-9).

The last of the de Clares, Gilbert, 8th earl of Gloucester and 7th earl of Hertford, was slain at Bannockburn (1314). His heirs were his three sisters and his lands in Kilkenny was divided among them (Orpen 2005, 327). Like the de Clares, the sisters were absentee lords and in reality, local Anglo-Norman gentry governed their lands in Ireland (Empey 1990, 84). By the end of the fourteenth century the absentee lords, who were receiving little from their troubled lordship, were willing to sell off their purparty. The sale of their interest in Kilkenny, including Kilkenny castle, to the Butlers, who were earls of Ormond since 1328 was completed in 1391 (Frame 2013, 138). In the late thirteenth century, the Butler centre was at Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, but they were important landholders in Leinster since Theobald Fitz Walter was granted the cantred of Gowran along with Tullow and Arklow c. 1190. However, from the beginning of the fourteenth century, they steadily expanded their lands in Co. Kilkenny and before the acquisition of 1391 they had become the dominant force in the county. After 1391, the locus of comital power shifted to Kilkenny and Nenagh had become a frontier fortress (Empey 1990, 87-8).

The geographical shape of medieval county Kilkenny is very different from the modern county. The area was originally largely coextensive with the diocese of Ossory and both the internal land divisions and eternal boundaries were altered in the course of the later medieval period (Empey 1990, 75). The cantreds of Clandonagh, Clarmallagh and Upperwoods, were lost to Kilkenny for the creation of Queen’s County in the sixteenth century (Empey 1971, 128). Internally the modern baronies bear little resemblance to the medieval cantreds even though the share the same name (ibid.). While central Co. Kilkenny was relatively stable, the northern territory, upper Ossory was often under pressure from its Irish neighbours. Gaelic lords such as the MacGiolapadraigs and O’ Brennans were neither displaced nor Normanised and large territories were lost to the lordship. By 1515, the MacGiolapadraigs overran the northernmost part of the lordship and it remained an autonomous Gaelic lordship until it was re-shired in 1600, as part of Queens County (Edwards 2003, 18).
The Butler earls of Ormond maintained many cultural links with England, but also adapted aspects of Gaelic culture. Many earls were absent from their estates for considerable periods of time (ibid., 82) and were sometimes embroiled in English affairs, for example the fifth, sixth and seventh earls of Ormond served on the Lancastrian side in the War of the Roses (1453-85) (ibid., 86). The main line of the Butlers continued to practice Anglo-Irish primogeniture from the foundation of the earldom in 1328, with only one succession dispute (1515) recorded in the period to 1600 and the cadet branches of the line all experienced uninterrupted male descents up to 1640 (ibid., 79-80).

While there are examples of the Butlers maintaining English culture, the position was not to endure without interruption. When Thomas Butler, the seventh earl, died in London (1515), Piers Butler, who was from the Gaelicised Pottlerath branch of the family, succeeded him (Edwards 2003, 13). This illustrates that cultural identity was not fixed and there was greater fluidity than would be imagined in the course of the fifteenth century. By that time, many Anglo-Irish families in Ormond had become increasingly gaelicised, such as the Graces who were patrons of Gaelic scribes and adopted Gaelic pseudonyms (ibid., 17). At least, some cadet branches of the Butler line adopted aspects of Gaelic culture. Members of the O’Doran law school were brehons to Viscount Mountgarret and to the MacGiollapadraigs of Upper Ossory. It is most likely that the main line of the Butlers also employed brehons, when appropriate.

The Butlers retained cultural aspect of their Anglo-Normans ancestors, while also adapting some Gaelic traditions. However, the degree to which any particular culture dominated varied from time to time, and fluidity and adaption is evident and rather than describing the lordship as Anglicised or Gaelicised, it is best described as Anglo-Irish. The first decades of the fourteenth century saw the creation of new earldoms, Kildare in 1316, Louth 1319, and Desmond 1329 as well as Ormond 1328. This new generation of Irish born aristocrats were to replace the absentee lords of the earlier generation and were described by Frame (2012, 137-8) as ‘the English of Ireland’. 

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The geography of Ormond

Kilkenny lay almost at the centre of southern Leinster and its central position was possibly its greatest asset. Standing almost equidistant between Dublin and Cork, it was a useful midpoint between Leinster and Munster (Edwards 2003, 11). The greatest part of the lordship contained good agricultural land. The county can be divided into three physiographic regions. The rich flexible lowland core, or champion lands, which lay to the north of the lordship, and those immediately surrounding the medieval town of Kilkenny and west to the Barrow valley. There are some equally superb lands stretching south across to Knocktopher to the Blackwater river. The core area is flanked by extensive regions of medium quality soils. These areas included the southern half of the barony of Gowran that is capable of sustaining commercialised agricultural economy (Smyth 1990, 129-30).

The central area is relatively flat, ranging in height from 60m to 120m. The region in the northern zone of the lordship contained some upland areas, the Castlecomer Plateau, at a height ranging from c. 120m to 240m, with hills c. 313m in height. There is a range of hills, the Walsh Mountains, (311m OD), near the western boundary, with the highest mountains in the lordship, Brandon Hills, near the eastern boundary (ibid.).

The pre-eminence of the medieval town of Kilkenny as the county town has never been challenged since its foundation in the twelfth century (Bradley 1990, 63-4). Two rivers, the Nore and the Barrow run from north to south through the lordship, and as riverine routeways, they connected the interior of the lordship to the deep-water port of New Ross, founded by William Marshal in the first decade of the thirteenth century. The success of the port of New Ross testifies to the economic success of the lordship, as it overshadowed Wexford and outpaced the royal port of Waterford (Martin 1987b, 151).

Kilkenny was unrivalled as an urban centre and served as the capital of the northern zone of the county, while New Ross and Carrick on Suir dominated the southern third. The middle, rich countryside supported a cluster of smaller medieval towns, including, Callen, Kells, Gowran, Thomastown, and Knocktopher, with Inistioge and Graignamanagh that Smyth suggests (1990, 130), ‘benefiting from and acting as a
springboard for external and internal trade along the tidal reaches of the Nore and Barrow’.

The borough of Newtown Jerpoint was one of the small medieval towns, in the central zone of the lordship. It was well located, on the banks of the River Nore and controlled a bridge crossing the Nore on the main routeway connecting the medieval towns of Knocktopher and Thomastown.

The episcopal manor of Tullaherin was located c. 3.5km west of the Nore and c. 8km east of the Barrow with easy access to the diocesan centre at the medieval town of Kilkenny and the deep-water port of New Ross.
Chapter 5 Newtown Jerpoint – a colonial borough

Figure 2: Map of Co. Kilkenny with Newtown Jerpoint indicated

5.1 Introduction to the borough of Newtown Jerpoint

The aim of this chapter is to define the character of the borough settlement at Newtown Jerpoint. The settlement of Newtown Jerpoint is in the modern county of Kilkenny and the pre-Anglo-Norman kingdom of Ossory. It emerged as a borough at the parish church-centre soon after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169 and the process of subinfeudation in the 1190s. The borough is situated in the heartland of colonial Ireland and was small in comparison to other urban centres in central Kilkenny. The distinction between a rural village and a borough is blurred and as pointed out by Roberts (1987, 38-9) in relation to English medieval settlements, small towns and villages are morphologically identical, and it is only where documentation is available that status can be clarified. Contemporary records refer to the Newtown Jerpoint, as a town, such as the charter granting the tithes of the ‘new town’ (5.4). However, while there was a church, a bridge and a market place, there are no other town indicators, which Bradley (1985, 35) lists as town walls, castle, cathedral, religious house, hospital, area of specialist technological activity, quays,
large school, administrative building or suburbs. Bradley (ibid.) considers that three of these indicators are necessary to properly define a town and Newtown Jerpoint falls outside this definition. The borough would probably more correctly be described as a rural borough. The archaeological and documentary evidence is examined to assess how the settlement developed and evolved in response to the major events of the period.

Glasscock (1970, 170) drew attention to Newtown Jerpoint as being ‘an extremely important site for future large scale excavation.’ Barry (1987, 76-81) rightly commented on the availability of surviving documents that provide extensive information on the site. In 2003 Oxford Archaeology (2007, 133) conducted an extensive field survey and assessment of the documentary sources for the borough, as part of the Heritage Council Conservation Plan for the site (2007). Newtown Jerpoint is the only site investigated in this thesis for which there are extensive archaeological remains together with surviving documentary sources. The intention in this chapter is to explore the standing remains and documentary sources to investigate the evidence for cultural influences on a new settlement.

The colonial economy was primarily based on agriculture and village communities were engaged in farming (Graham 2009, 154). Newtown Jerpoint was different to the usual agricultural village, it had control of a crossing on the River Nore, with a mill, a market and a close physical connection to the important Cistercian abbey of Jerpoint. The Henrician reforms of the sixteenth century and the dissolution of the Cistercian abbey of Jerpoint may have been the catalyst for the decline of Newtown Jerpoint, however, other factors that may also have contributed to the failure of the settlement are explored to determine their influences in the decline and abandonment of the borough.

5.2 The borough and its topographical setting
The settlement of Newtown Jerpoint is located in the parish of Jerpoint Church, in the modern barony of Knocktopher, which is almost coextensive with the medieval barony of the same name (Empey 1971, 129-31). The site of the settlement is on the southern bank of the River Nore and the western bank of its tributary, the Little Arrigle River. The borough is c. 1km west of the modern regional road, the R448, which connects the towns of Thomastown, 2km to the northeast and Knocktopher,
5.5km to the south. During the later medieval period, both towns were important centres, and an earlier routeway passed through Newtown Jerpoint that contained a bridge over the River Nore and was an impetus for the development of the borough.

Figure 3: Bing satellite image of Newtown on south bank of River Nore

Newtown Jerpoint is in a belt of rich agricultural land, part of the flexible lowland core of the colonial economy and is still reflected in the modern landscape with a high level of tillage in the countryside surrounding the settlement (Smyth 1990, 129). However, the settlement itself is located in an area of thin soil in what is designated a ‘disadvantaged area’ (pers. comm. landowner\(^8\)). The site is currently in permanent pasture and used for sheep grazing. Light grazing has benefited the site and is a factor in the high level of preservation of the earthworks. The Cistercian foundation of Jerpoint Abbey lays at a distance of c. 300m to the southeast of the borough. The abbey and the borough are separated by the Little Arrigle River, which constitutes a major boundary. It is a baronial and parochial boundary between the barony of Knocktopher, with the parish of Newtown Church containing the borough, and the barony of Gowran, containing the parish of Jerpoint Abbey and the Cistercian abbey. At the time of the sub-infeudation of Leinster each barony had a different overlord.

5.3 The emergence of the borough

The standing remains of Newtown Jerpoint, covering an area of c. 0.5km\(^2\), consists of the remains of the parish church and graveyard, the hollow-ways of streets and laneways, the earthworks of burgage tofts and crofts and also two mills and a tower.

\(^8\) Joe O’Connell
There are historic references to a bridge across the Nore, however, its exact location is unknown.

The precise date for the foundation of Newtown Jerpoint, ‘Nova Villa Jerpointe’ is unclear, however, Barry (1987, 76) considers that it was founded c. 1200. The first feoffee of the cantred of Knocktopher was probably Griffin Fitz William, a brother of Raymond le Gros, however, it certainly occurred before the death of his son, Gilbert Fitz Griffin, in 1203/4 Brooks (1950, 249-50), which suggests the foundation was before that date. The only suggestion of an earlier settlement is the townland place name ‘Old Town’ which lays c. 2.5 km east of Newtown Jerpoint, but there is no evidence of settlement in this townland. The borough was undoubtedly a new creation by the colonists and as such they were not constrained by a pre-existing settlement. The town developed on the strategically important shallows, where the Little Arrigle joins the Nore, and there may have been an earlier crossing point before the town was established.

The internal ordering of space and features was what Roberts (1987, 24) described as ‘so coherently regular as to imply planning’, which suggest that it was laid out in a relatively short period of time. The conscious decision to establish a planned settlement is a well-recognised feature in the English rural landscape. There are many examples in the northeast of England with rows of almost exactly regular house plots facing a straight street which date from soon after 1070, following the destruction known as the ‘Harrying of the North’ by William the Conquer (Taylor 1983, 133-4). The village, with houses arranged along a single street was a cultural concept well known to the Anglo-Normans in the twelfth-century (Taylor 1983, 131) and therefore the colonists easily transferred the idea of a planned settlement to Ireland.

5.4 The parish church of St. Nicholas and its setting

The parish church of St. Nicholas is located in the east end of the graveyard, which is mostly enclosed by a drystone wall enclosing an area of irregular plan. The graveyard enclosure (c. 90m E-W; 45 N-S) has been altered since the first-edition six-inch OS map (1839) and the surrounding earthworks suggest that it may have been larger and more regular in shape. The graveyard contains a number of simple
low uninscribed stone burial markers some post-medieval gravestones including a raised table tomb.

Figure 4: South door of St. Nicholas parish church, Newtown Jerpoint

Some are tilted, collapsed and cracked in two and a slab, or table for an altar tomb, with an effigy carved in low relief of a cleric in full priestly vestments. The effigy is popularly associated with St Nicholas of Myra and is shown on the first-edition six-inch OS map. However, Hunt (1974, 198) considers it more likely to date from the early fourteenth century and the effigy to be that of a parish priest of Jerpoint. In the south-west corner of the graveyard there lays a sub-rectangular enclosure of mortared masonry containing the Hunt family memorials, which date from 1771 to 1975. The Hunts were

Figure 5: Base of thirteenth-century font (Oxford Archaeology 2007, reproduced with permission from the Heritage Council)
landowners from the eighteenth century until 1993 (Oxford Archaeology 2007, 35). The graveyard also contains the base of a thirteenth-century font (fig. 5).

The stone base is an elaborate square slab with indentations for a central drum, with a drain hole and four detached corner shafts for a font (Oxford Archaeology 2007, 82). According to Murtagh (1997, 126) the bowl of the baptismal font is in storage in Jerpoint Abbey. A baptismal font along with a fenced graveyard, were key symbols of parochial status (FitzPatrick 2006, 63). The remains of what may have been a market cross (fig. 6) are also located in the graveyard. The remains consist of the base and lower part of the shaft, the head is missing (Carrigan 1905, vi, 301).

Figure 6: Cross base and steam (Oxford Archaeology 2007, reproduced with permission from the Heritage Council)

Figure 7: Plan of St. Nicholas parish church (Murtagh 1997)
The base consists of a large circular block, with a central socket, and the lower part of the chamfered shaft on a square base that has an incised quatrefoil (fig.6), which suggests a possible thirteenth-century date (Murtagh, 1997, 126-7). It is probable that the graveyard was not the original location of the market cross, it was probably moved from the market place for safe keeping (ibid.).

The church is bicameral in plan and now stands to eaves height with no remains of a roof or other fittings. The wall fabric consists of randomly coursed limestone, mudstone and slate (Oxford Archaeology 2007, 79-80). The earliest phase consisted of a broad nave (int. dims c. 8.53m x 17.06m) and chancel (int. dims c. 10.97m x 6.09m), separated by a pointed Gothic arch (ibid.). The total internal space is 212.33m². There are two semi-pointed arched entrances to the nave, in the north and south walls. They have chamfered jambs that carry the remains of hood mouldings. The west wall has a single lancet window set high in the gable and the east gable window is a twin lancet. The north wall has a trefoil-headed window with an ogival arch on the exterior. There is ashlar dressing on the doors and windows that are indicative of a twelfth- or thirteenth-century date. The precise dating of the church is problematic. The initial phase of the church is considered by Leask (1960, iii, 183-4) to be diagnostically dated to the early decades of the thirteenth century. and the use of lancets, suggests that Leask is correct in ascribing this date to its construction.

Figure 8: Interior of St. Nicholas with rood gallery and crossing tower
In the fifteenth century, what Leask (ibid.) describes as ‘a unique feature’ was added (fig. 8). A groin-vaulted rood gallery was inserted west of the chancel arch, which would have provided a rood loft or possibly a singing gallery and most importantly in order to display a rood cross. It has three bays with octagonal pillars, partly obscured by two later walls (ibid.). These walls formed the supports for a now partially destroyed crossing tower, with three storeys of living accommodation for the priest. There is a bell-cote on the top of the east wall. The details of the upper floors are partially obscured by ivy and only the north and east walls survive to full height. The tower clearly post-dates the gallery. A mural stairs reached the gallery level, which forms the lowest room of the tower (ibid). A later stage occurred when two large buttresses were erected, externally, to support the north-west corner of the church. The date of their construction is unknown. A fine horizontal grave slab in the southeast corner of the chancel, inscribed ‘Here lie the body of William Den, gentleman, of (the New) Town of Jerpoint, who died October 23rd, 1623 and Alice Den, his wife, who died Oct, 9th 1623’ (Carrigan 1905, iv, 300).

The church of St. Nicholas was smaller than other urban parish churches in Ossory, such as the unusually large parish churches at Thomastown and Gowran, which had aisled naves. Large parish churches, were rarely seen in Ireland. It is worth noting that Thomastown and Gowran date from c. 1275 and are later than the church of St. Nicholas (Leask 1960, ii, 116-7). With an internal space of c. 212.33m², the parish church of St. Nicholas was sufficiently large to serve a substantial congregation, suggesting that the borough was a thriving settlement from when the parish church was constructed in the early thirteenth century.

The tithes of the parish of St. Nicholas were among the grants made by William Marshal, earl of Pembroke, to The Prior of St. John the Evangelist, Kilkenny, in 1211 (Carrigan 1905, iv, 301). The order was established in Kilkenny before 1202, as they had been granted a charter by Bishop Felix Ó Dulany, who died in that year. The charter granted the tithes, of the ‘church of the new town’⁹ (Carrigan 1905, iii, 248-9). From this reference, it is reasonable to propose that the parish church was built around 1211 and the borough was established and populated prior to that date with

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⁹ Ecclesiam de Nova Villa
Figure 9: Plan of Newtown Jerpoint (Oxford Archaeology 2007, reproduced with permission from the Heritage Council)
sufficient labour and financial resource to undertake the construction of the parish church.

In effect, the prior was the rector of the parish and a vicar was appointed to provide pastoral care at local level. Cross and Livingstone (1997, 1372) defined the rector as the ‘person entitled to the whole of the tithes of the parish. Where the tithes were impropriated to a monastery or other spiritual house the clergyman in the parish was merely the rector’s vicar (substitute) or curate’. The vicar lived in the parish and probably resided in the parish church throughout the later medieval period but, certainly from the fifteenth century when the residential tower was constructed at the east end of the nave (Bermingham 2006, 178-80).

![Figure 10: Plan of Newtown Jerpoint, graveyard, church and streetscape indicated (after Oxford Archaeology 2007, reproduced with permission from the Heritage Council).](image)

The borough was laid out within a relatively short period. There is some evidence of planning, although there is some evidence of phasing (5.6). When it was laid out, the
decision-makers were free to determine the precise location of the parish church within the settlement. While within the borough, it was located at the western fringe of the settlement. The peripheral situation of the church was noted by Oxford Archaeology (2007, 42) (figs. 9-10). Together with what they considered the somewhat irregular layout of the settlement, they raised the question of how much of the ‘new town’ was laid out at the time of its foundation and how much grew organically, or may even have existed before the erection of the borough. There is, however, no evidence of any pre-existing settlement and it is clear that the foundation of both borough and its parish church were well underway in the first decade of the thirteenth century.

In the context of European urban development and fringe-belt theory (Maretto 2009, 76-7), which recognises two basic polarities-landmarks, inner ones with civil characteristics and external ones with major external landmarks, churches, as specialist external polarities-landmarks, are generally situated on the inside of a fringe-belt. It is therefore not unusual that the parish church was located inside the boundary, or fringe-belt of the borough. According to Morris (1989, 239-40), in all parts of England there are parish churches which stand apart from the settlements they served. A survey of 92 medieval villages conducted by Ann Ellison (1983, 1-136) in south-east Somerset indicated that more than 70% of the villages surveyed had churches which were fully removed or slightly apart from the principal centre of population. Morris (1989, 241-2) concluded that; ‘these figures are neither exceptional nor particular to Somerset’

At Wharram Percy, the deserted medieval village in the East Yorkshire Wolds that has been the subject of intensive investigation over a 40-year period from 1950, the parish church of St Martin (Beresford and Hurst 1990, 49) lay at southern end of the main street, again at the fringe-belt of the settlement (fig.11). Other examples are Aller, Somerset (fig.12) where the church is at a distance from the main settlement (Morris 1989, 242) and Marston Trussell), Northamptonshire (fig. 13), where the church is at the eastern periphery of the settlement (Morris 1989, 273).

The selection of the site of a parish church was determined by factors that included, the suitability of terrain and distribution of population (Morris 1989, 239-40).
Figure 11: Plan of Wharram Percy deserted medieval village (Beresford and Hurst 1990, 49)

Figure 12: Plan of Aller, Somerset (Morris 1998, 242)

Figure 13: Plan of Marston Trussell, Northamptonshire (Morris 1989, 273)
The site selected was eminently suitably, it was elevated, level, free from flooding, sufficient depth of soil for burials and space for expansion in the graveyard, and it also had sufficient load-bearing qualities to support the Gothic building. However, the decision to locate the parish church on the particular site may also have been influenced by the position of the church within settlements in the English medieval landscape, a feature that was well known to the colonists.

5.5 The plan and layout of the settlement

The parish church and the market place as public spaces, were focal points of the settlement and the streets and laneways (fig.10) helped bind the settlement together (Roberts 1987, 33). There are two principal streets running through Newtown Jerpoint. The main street, referred to as ‘Long Street’ in the rentals of 1595 and 1614\(^{10}\), passes from southwest to northeast (fig 10) and a second street, referred to as East-West Street runs from east to west and converges with Long Street to form a sub-rectangular space that was traditionally called ‘the market place.’ Graves (1868, 12) recorded a local nineteenth-century tradition of a very substantial ash tree at the market place and ‘that people scraping its bark found nails and spikes therein, by which notices and proclamations had been affixed to it in olden times’. As stated (5.4), the lower section and base of a possible market cross lays in the graveyard and may have been moved, from its original location at the market place (Carrigan 1905, iii, 301). Long Street continues in the direction of the bridge site, however, little remains of the street as it approaches the site of the bridge. East-West Street leads from the north side of the church to the market place. A lane leads from the market place to a mill, on the west bank of the Little Arrigle and a second lane, or path, leads north from East-West Street in the direction of crofts on the banks of the Nore. As Newtown Jerpoint lay on the routeway connecting the important medieval towns of Knocktopher and Thomastown and the streets may have followed an existing routeway to a crossing point on the River Nore before the settlement was established.

There are some indications that the streets were not laid out at in a single phase. The layout of Long Street is relatively straight while East-West Street is less regular and

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\(^{10}\) Referred to in The Heritage Council 2007, 85 ‘Ormond Deeds VI (89) and ‘Rentals of Ormond properties in Cos Kilkenny, Carlow, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford, Kildare and Dublin. (1574-1658) NLI, MS 2506 (Bound volume of 229 folios), cited by Oxford Archaeology 2007, 127-8
crooked in layout. The shape of the streets suggests distinctions in the planning process and they were not laid out contemporaneously. It is possible that East-West Street was an initial phase in the layout of the borough. The crooked shape of the street possibly respected an earlier routeway to a natural crossing point on the River Nore. The initial stage of the settlement occurred when house plots were laid out on the long established routeway, however, it is unclear if they were laid out in the single phase or if they developed organically over a period. The relatively straight layout of Long Street suggests planning and a more regular layout that represents a different planning process.

Phasing is also suggested in the shape of the tofts and crofts, particularly those on the north side of East to West Street. The LiDAR image (Heritage Council 2007, 19) (figs.18-9) suggests that the boundaries of the enclosures have a distinctive curve. This curve, an aratral curve, sometimes occurs as a reversed ‘S’, or sometimes as a single bow. It is considered to have occurred as a consequence of the medieval ploughman beginning the turn of his cumbrous plough team before he reached the headland at the end of the field (Atkin 1995, 19). This suggests that there may possibly have been an open field system before the tofts and crofts were laid out.

An essential point of a planned settlement is that it implies either seigneurial intervention or co-operative action (Morris 1989, 245). While co-operative action is likely in the context of settlement reorganisation in England following warfare, it suggests that there was an existing population capable of co-operative action. In Newtown Jerpoint, the settlement was new and therefore the planned settlement implies seigneurial intervention. As stated (5.3), the town was probably founded by Griffin Fitz Williams, or his son Gilbert Fitz Griffin (Brooks 1950, 249-50). Their main centre was Knocktopher and they do not appear to have lived at Newtown Jerpoint, as there is no evidence of a motte or other castle at the settlement dating from the high medieval period.

In 1973, Claire Foley (1989) carried out a rescue excavation, for the OPW, of a medieval settlement located c. 300m to the east of Newtown Jerpoint (fig. 14). The site was on an artificial alluvial platform beside the River Nore and had been bulldozed before excavation, with no archaeological record before bulldozing...
commenced. The excavation revealed two well-defined superimposed rectangular structures, a later substantial stone structure and an indication of other less substantial structures (fig. 15).

The earliest structure (structure 1) was a rectangular house (int. c. 10m E-W; 5.4m N-S), the long wall may have been considerably longer. The cob-walled house was built on low stone wall-footings. There was probably a byre at the eastern end of the house, indicated by feed pens and a tethering post. A timber-framed lean-to structure was attached to the north end of structure 1. The house was later rebuilt, again cob-wall built on stone wall-footings. The house was then abandoned for a period. During the next phase a substantial mortared stone building (structure 2) of a least two storeys, was constructed over the western end of structure 1. This building measured 9m x 6.5m, with walls 1m thick and the evidence for the substantial nature of this building is suggested by the presence of a supporting stone arch across the centre of the ground floor. The function of this building is unclear. The excavator (Foley 1989, 125) considered that it may have been a barn. It has also been suggested that it may have been a grange or a manor house (Barry 1987, 76; O’Conor 1998, 49-51). To the south of the mud platform, two shallow trenches, possibly the evidence of a timber-framed structure, (structure 3) laid on horizontal sill-beams. The internal width of the

Figure 14: First-edition six-inch OS map with excavated house, parish church and abbey indicated
building measured c. 5m, north to south and the precise length is unknown, but was at least 10m. The stratigraphical relationship between this structure and the rest of the site is unclear (Foley 1989, 81-91).

Figure 15: General site plan of Jerpoint Church excavation (Foley 1987, 73)
Foley (1989, 73-125) dated the occupation of this site to between the mid-to late-thirteenth century, or possibly the early fourteenth century. However, O’Conor (1998, 50) has suggested that the site may date from ‘some stage of the early thirteenth century’ on the basis of the re-dating of Ham Green ware, found in both phases of structure 1. This structure is clearly a peasant longhouse, based on its layout and the range of finds, apparently of English descent or origin (O’Conor 1998, 50). Access to the byre was by a doorway from the main room of the house, which is not a usual feature of the Irish long house tradition (Evans 1957, 42) rather; it is a more typical of English medieval houses (Beresford and Hurst 1990, 36-8).

It seems that the earliest phase of structure 1 was a peasant long house dating from the early thirteenth century, occupied by either English or Welsh immigrants, or their descendants. While the house dates from the foundation of the borough and c. 300m west of the borough was in close proximity to it. It was possibly the western edge of the settlement, as suggested by O’Conor (1998, 51) and may have been connected to the borough by East-West Street, which loses definition west of the parish church. However, the excavated site was clearly outside the fringe-belt of the borough and the evidence is problematic.

Some aspects of the excavated site suggest that the inhabitants were of relatively high status. The pottery assemblage included large quantities of local ware, with some imported pottery., including Ham Green Saintonge and Merida (Foley 1989, 125). The associated buildings and their large size, in comparison to those in the borough (Oxford Archaeology 2007, 43-4) sets the excavated settlement apart. It is possible that the house was the earliest phase in the borough (O’Conor 1998, 51) and was built before the layout of the borough was determined. There is no evidence that the borough expanded west of the parish church and no new fringe-belt was created (Maretto 2009 76-7). The number of burgage plots listed in the 1289 extent (Dryburgh and Smith 2005, 258-63) equates to the earthworks of plots that can be identified at the site (Oxford Archaeology (2007, 44). The interpretation of the site remains uncertain and the relationship of the excavated site to the borough remains one of the unanswered questions at Newtown Jerpoint that can only be answered by largescale excavation.
The ruins of a tower was noted in the first and subsequent editions of the six-inch OS map (fig 16). The tower is recorded in the database of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (KK028-062004) as a ‘building’. Little evidence of it has survived. The building, located on the north side of East-West Street (fig. 16), has a battered base, it is rectangular in plan (4 x 5m) and the north and west walls have survived to first floor level. It is possibly located within a rectangular bawn (Oxford Archaeology, 2007, 88). The building is possibly a small, urban tower house, of two or three stories in height, similar to the fourteenth-century example at nearby Thomastown (Bradley and Murtagh 2003, 194-216). Little is known about the tower, as there are no references to it in the sources.

5.6 Cultural influences in the layout of the settlement

As discussed (5.4) the parish church, and graveyard, the market place, mill and bridge were significant features and urban indicators, and the streets and laneways bound the settlement. The tofts at Newtown Jerpoint were laid out in rows on either side of Long Street and East-West Street and the layout of the settlement suggests that the settlement was laid out within a relatively short period. The deliberate laying out a settlement was unknown in Ireland outside the Hiberno-Norse urban centres. In Ireland before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, settlements tended to be dispersed, or focused on ecclesiastical sites (Nicholls 2003, 139-42). These appeared to develop
organically over time, rather than as a result of conscious plan. Deliberate planning, or the internal ordering of space that was so regular as to imply planning.

Regular planned settlement is a well-recognised feature in the English rural landscape and there is some evidence to suggest that many, if not the majority, of existing villages were laid out in the late eleventh or twelfth centuries (Morris 1989, 244-5). The entire county of Northamptonshire has been subjected to detailed study by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, in the 1980s and Taylor (1983, 133-4) estimated that at least 23 per cent of all the existing villages had planned origins. Deliberately planned villages are familiar in the English landscape, however many are associated with emparking and industrial schemes, and date from the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. Research by Roberts (1972, 33-56), Sheppard (1976, 3-20) and Allerston (1970, 95-109) in the north-east of England has shown, that the process of medieval lords of the manor selecting suitable sites and then laying out villages in which their followers could settle, could and did occur. Many villages in Northumberland, Durham and North Yorkshire are so regular in their layout that a planned origin seems to be the only explanation. These villages consist of rows of almost exactly regular house plots facing a straight street, or geometrically shaped green. The catalyst for this development is the devastation in northern England, first by Scandinavian raids along the coast in 1066 and then by William the Conqueror’s Harrying of the North in 1069-70. There can be little doubt that a very large proportion of the existing villages in the northern part of England were planned as new settlement in the late eleventh, or early twelfth centuries. In other parts of England where nucleated villages are also the normal forms of rural settlement there is no clear event, such as The Harrying of the North or the late Danish raids, which might have led to the establishment of planned villages. There were numerous occasions in other regions of England that were embroiled in conflict in the twelfth century. The civil war between Stephen and Matilda (1136-54) was one such occasion, when settlements in the vicinity of strongholds were laid waste in order to deprive their defenders of sustenance (Morris 1989, 245). Most regular villages lie on the estates of major landlords. They appear to have been established on both new and previously inhabited sites. The lords attracted them, as free tenants from other areas, and these villages were established partly for purely commercial
reasons. A further motivation was that local survivors of the destruction were grouped into new villages (Taylor 1983, 133-8). Morris (1989, 245) considers the decision to reorganise to have ‘been prompted by the consequences of warfare, the demands of feudalism, a desire to restructure an estate in pursuit of greater efficiency, or it may simply have been a matter of fashion’.

At Newtown Jerpoint, the majority of plots are arranged with their short ends facing the street, with the tofts or gardens extended to the rear. According to Roberts (1987, 56) the normal length of a toft in the north of England, and probably elsewhere, falls within the range of 50m to 150m, that is the plot extends back for this distance from the line of the street frontage. The seven tofts on east side of Long Street are from c. 60m to 80m in length, and are well within the range of classic English tofts. The length of these tofts is similar to those (79m-84m) revealed by recent geophysical survey at the deserted medieval settlement at the Bigod manor of Castlemore, Co. Carlow (Brady 2016, 52). The five tofts on the north side of East-West Street at Newtown Jerpoint are more or less within that range, while the eleven tofts on the west side of Long Street and the south side of East-West Street are smaller. The precise dimensions of the tofts is problematic. The plots are not well defined around the market place, the on the east side of Long Street and the south side of East-West Street they are placed back to back and the rear boundaries are unclear.

Low banks and ditches surrounding their perimeters define the house plots, and the only surviving indications of the houses are piles of stones, where the walls collapsed (Oxford Archaeology 2007, 90). The wall-footings of stone built houses, or timber framed houses on dwarf walls, which lie within the plots, are very disturbed. The area was used as potato plots in the nineteenth-century by the surrounding population in return for removing the foundations and piling the stones into cairn-like heaps (Graves 1868, 14) and the only visible remains of the houses are the clearance cairns which remain from the eighteenth century. However, the wall-footings of the houses, recorded on the first-edition six-inch OS map (1839) reveal that in general the houses were laid-out to the front and occupied the full width of the plot (fig. 17). An objective of the detailed survey by Oxford Archaeology (2007, 133) was to locate the house plots drawn on the first-edition six-inch OS map (fig.10). The position of the houses on their plots is particularly clear on Long Street and the north side of East-
West Street, while those on the south side of East-West Street are more obscure. The ordering of space in the borough, the position of the church and graveyard, the layout of the settlement, the regular layout of the tofts and their relation to the street, the position of the houses on the plots, all suggest that the settlement was laid out to a regular plan.

The tofts are smaller than those in England but not what Roberts (1987, 24) describes as ‘highly irregular suggesting haphazard or unplanned growth

5.7 Who lived at Newtown Jerpoint?

There is a very detailed inquisition, dated May 1289, (PRO, S. C. 11,794) about the extent of Richard de Clare, the 5th earl of Gloucester’s purparty, following the death of his widow, Maud (Dryburgh and Smith 2005, 258-63). The inquisition provides information on the burgesses of Newtown Jerpoint, their land holdings and their feudal obligations at that moment in time. The inquisition clearly illustrates that the settlement was a classic feudal borough, laid out to a plan, inspired by ‘the custom of Breteuil’, which granted certain privileges, and placed obligations on the burgesses (Bateson 1901, 94). This feudal concept that originated in Normandy was brought to Ireland by the Anglo-Normans. Under the custom, burgesses enjoyed

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11 The share of an estate that is apportioned upon the division of an estate, from Old French
special urban privileges, a low fixed annual rent of twelve pence for a burgage plot containing six acres

Figure 18: LiDAR image of earthworks at Newtown Jerpoint (This survey was commissioned in 2007 by the Heritage Council and the Discovery Programme and was carried out by BKS Ltd.)

Figure 19: LiDAR image of Newtown Jerpoint with features indicated. This survey was commissioned in 2007 by the Heritage Council and the Discovery Programme and was carried out by BKS Ltd.
The inquisition revealed that there were 24 burgesses and 22 and a half burgage plots each held for twelve pence per annum (Dryburgh and Smith 2005, 258). Each burgess held six acres of land and owed suit at court and at the mill. Many burgage plots had been sub-divided, others were enlarged, yet despite these changes, the overall burgage structure reflected the custom of Breteuil.

The incumbent priests portion of the tithes is listed in the ecclesiastical taxation list of 1306. The total value of the tithes of the parish were £18 and the vicar’s portion was valued at £4 13s 4d (Carrigan 1905 iv, 364). The vicar was not listed among the burgesses, nor was he listed among the jurors of the inquisition. ‘The vicar of Geriponte’ is included with those who held a carucate of land. His holding was ‘an acre of land paying 4d yearly’ that may have been attached to his office (Dryburgh and Smith 2005, 258-63).

Two others named in the inquisition may have been priests, ‘John the clerk’ and ‘Thomas Fitz John the clerk’, the name ‘clerk’ suggests they were priests. ‘John the clerk’ was listed among the jurors of the inquisition, yet he was not recorded as a burgess. He held land from other burgesses ‘for a circlet of flowers’ and ‘for a garland of flowers’. He also held a carucate of land ‘24 acres in Roslegan paying 8s. per year’. John the clerk’s total holding amounted to 34 acres. Thomas Fitz John the clerk held a messuage and three acres, for an annual render of 6d, with ‘suit of the court and mill’ (ibid.). It is clear that he was a burgess. It is unclear who the two clerics were. They may have been attached to the nearby Cistercian Abbey of Jerpoint. The inquisition makes no reference to the abbey, but the Calendar of Justiciary Rolls, (Griffith et. al 1952), (CJR)12 records, for the year 1311 states that Walter Been was charged with ‘burning a house of the abbot of Geripont at the new town of Geripont. The jurors say that he is guilty. Therefore let him be hanged.’ (CJR, i, 220-1) This event makes clear that in 1311 the abbot had a house in the town.

The inquisition of 1289 provides the surnames of the burgesses and illustrates some details of the pattern of settlement in the borough. Scholars (Otway-Ruthven 1965, 77-83; Frame 2012 1981, 83-6; Graham 1997, 60-5; O’Conor 1998, 41-3) have pointed to the influx of English-speaking immigrants to Ireland from the early thirteenth century. Otway-Ruthven (1965, 75-84) used surname evidence to argue that many, if not the majority of tenants of manors and rural boroughs in the east and

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12 Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls Ireland I to VII of Edward II/
south of Ireland were the descendants of English-speaking settlers. The majority of burgesses at Newtown Jerpoint had English or Welsh surnames, such as Wyn the miller, William Crekel and Richard Fitz Roger. While there is no doubt that the overwhelming majority of the burgbers had English-sounding names, it is therefore tempting to assume that they were of English or Welsh descent. Care is needed in assigning their ethnicity, as the Irish who resided among the English were required to take English surnames (Otway-Ruthven 1965, 77). Nonetheless, it is difficult to identify any Irish names listed among the burgurers and it is reasonable to propose that the majority of the burgurers, with surnames such as Fitz Walter, Longesprey and Fitz Arnold were of English or Welsh descent.

5.8 The impact of the Henrician reforms on Newtown Jerpoint

The Reformation, instigated in the reign of Henry VIII was a pivotal event in Irish history and had a devastating impact on the Cistercan community of Jerpoint Abbey. Despite their close proximity the relationship between borough and abbey was ambiguous. The tithes of St. Nicholas were granted to the prior of St. John (5.4), who was responsible for the provision of the pastoral care of the borough. It is evident that the Cistercians had some property in the borough, but there was no formal connection. However, the borough would have benefited from its proximity to the abbey and as service providers, would have benefited from trade generated by visitors to the abbey.

The abbey was desolved by surrender of Oliver Grace, the last abbot on 18 March 1540 and was leased to James Earl of Ormond for an annual rent of £88.13s.4d. (White 1943, 184). The abbey was probably in decline prior to its dissolution. An extent of 7 January 1541 reveals that the abbey was in bad state of repair, ‘the roof of the chancel was thrown down before the dissolution and the nave has from time immemorial been the parish church. The other buildings, cloister, dormitory and other buildings from the cloister to the orchards can be thrown down; the timber, stones, and tiles of these are worth for sale £10’ (White 1943, 181). The reference to the nave of the abbey as ‘the parish church’ refers to the parish of Jerpoint and not Jerpoint Church.
Barry (1987, 77-8) links the establishment and success of the borough of Newtown Jerpoint to its proximity to the Cistercian abbey, and its decline commenced with the suppression of the abbey in 1541. The tithes of St. Nicholas were appropriated to the priory of St. John, which was dissolved by surrender of the last prior Richard Cantwell, 19 March 1540. The tithes were let to Walter Cowlye for £30 (White 1943, 180) and subsequently they were granted to Kilkenny Corporation (Leslie 1933, 363). The extent made on 4 January 1541 listed the tithes of Newtown Jerpoint among the possessions of the priory of St. John the Evangelist. It is clear that the tithes were never in the possession of Jerpoint Abbey. Yet the abbot had a house that was burned there in 1311. The abbey also had among its possession at the time of its dissolution ‘a burgage with 5 gardens, 4s.8d. and another burgage called Marshalls corte, 6s.8d. now detained by the earl of Ormond’ (White 1943, 183). It is probable that Jerpoint Abbey had no pastoral involvement with the borough, but the abbot had some property there.

Besides its proximity to the abbey a further factor in the success of Newtown Jerpoint was its control of the bridge over the River Nore. In 1372, the king granted to the provost and community of the town of Jerpoint; ‘for the aid and repair of the bridge on the River Nore […] for maintenance and improvement of a tower and gate on the south end of the bridge.’ The grant lists items that were subject to a toll that was to last for ten years to finance the works (Calendar of Irish Chancery letters 1244—1509, Patent Roll 49, Edward III) ¹³. As the grant was to repair the bridge, it obviously existed before that date and the community had control over the important crossing. The location of the borough, on the routeway between Thomastown and Knocktopher was also a major factor in its early success; however, a new bridge over the Nore established a direct routeway between Thomastown and Knocktopher, bypassing Newtown Jerpoint. The new routeway would have had a serious impact on the community and constituted a major factor in its decline. The larger and competing towns of Thomastown and Knocktopher endured, while Newtown Jerpoint was marginalised, it went into decline, shrank and was ultimately

¹³ Circle, Calendar of Irish Chancery letters c. 1244 -1509
abandoned. Decline is evident by 1659 as an adult population of 29, two of whom were English, was recorded in the ‘so-called’ census (Pender 1939, 422). The census for the barony of Knocktopher records the population in a number of individual townlands, but not the parishes in which the townlands are located. The townland is recorded as ‘Jerpoint’ and not ‘Newtown Jerpoint’ and we cannot conclude with certainty that the entry refers to the borough of Newtown Jerpoint, nonetheless it is a reasonable assumption that ‘Jerpoint’ referred to in the census is Newtown Jerpoint.

The list of the Earl of Ormond’s tenants in 1595-6 includes six tenants of Long Street. The surnames indicate that three tenants had Irish surnames Ó Bruaideadha, Ó Dúill and Ó Briain. The other three surnames; Walsh, Nyen and Forstall, imply the descendants of the earlier immigrants. Two other tenants are named, but their precise locale is not recorded. Fitz David was described as a ‘tenant of Purcell’s house at Jerpoint’ and the other tenant is recorded as ‘Waton, tenant of the manor of Jerpond and Rosbolte’ (Curtis 1943, vi, 85-9). The reduced number of tenants in comparison to those of the inquisition of 1289 could indicate that the process of population decline and shrinkage of the settlement was well underway by the end of the sixteenth century.

The borough appears to have been finally deserted in the course of the seventeenth century following a period of slow decline (Barry 1987, 80-1). The parish church remained in use and by 1622 it was reported that ‘the church and chancel is well repayred, Walter Barry is vicar thereof and serveth the Cure himself’ (Leslie 1933, 279). The church probably ceased for Protestant worship during the eighteenth century and was only used for burial (Murtagh 1997, 125).

Some details of the houses at Newtown Jerpoint may be deduced from a number of objects presented to a meeting of The Historical and Archaeologycay Association of Ireland, by the secretary, Rev. James Graves, in January 1868. The objects presented included; a red ceramic floor tile, nine inches square, a fragment of a globular wine glass bottle and some old window glass. The objects were discovered in an exploration of the foundations of one of the dwelling-houses at the site by the landowner Edward Hunt. Graves also exhibited, on behalf of Mr. Hunt, a door key, found near the site of the house site in the course of sand extraction, two years
previously. Hunt accompanied by Graves subsequently ‘cleared out the ground floor of one of the houses’ and revealed a large room, probably a kitchen, with a large fireplace, and two small adjoining rooms. The partitions dividing the internal space were of cob plastered with mortar and ‘the floor of the rooms were of clay; but nearly the entire of the kitchen floor was tiled over with large thick, red tiles’ one of which was presented to the committee. The fragment of a bottle and the window glass were found amongst the cleared out rubbish together with a small heap of coal - Castlecomer anthracite - was found near the fireplace (Graves 1868, 11-4).

The evidence of the globular wine bottle, the window glass and the Castlecomer anthracite suggests that the house dated from the late seventeenth century or possibly to the early eighteenth century. Without detailed descriptions, it is not possible to obtain secure dates for the artefacts and they may represent late phase of occupation (Barry 1987, 79) at a time when the settlement had shrunk to a small hamlet.

5.9 Conclusions

Griffin Fitz William or his son Gilbert Fitz Griffin established the borough at Newtown Jerpoint in the early thirteenth century (Brooks 1950, 249). There are no indications of an earlier settlement at the site and the founders were not constrained by the geography of an existing settlement. The earthworks of the deserted medieval settlement at Newtown Jerpoint are among the best preserved in the country and its potential to increase the understanding of medieval settlement in Ireland has been recognised since the early 1970s (Glasscock 1970, 170). However, many questions about its origins, development and decline remain unanswered. The evidence suggests that the area to the north of an older routeway was ploughed before crofts and tofts developed facing the routeway and banks created by medieval ploughing were used as boundaries to delimit the area of the crofts and tofts. At a later stage, Long Street was laid out and the tofts established on either side of the street.

Anglo-Norman agricultural activity may have occurred at the site before the borough was established. The aratal curves suggests that an open field system extended from an existing routeway to the banks of the River Nore. It can be further suggested that the earliest phase of the small settlement excavated by Foley (1989, 71-126) was an early pioneering settlement and early settlers may have laid out the open field
system, c. 300m to the east. As more people arrived, a secondary population centre developed, laid out on East-West Street and a third phase was the planned regular lay out of Long Street with its tofts. The tithes of, what was described in the charter of 1211 as ‘the church of the new town’ (Carrigan 1905, iii, 248-9) suggests that the borough was well established by that time and as the parish church was reasonably large, the congregation it served was also reasonably large. While there are indications of phases, it can be deduced that they occurred over a relatively short period.

The decision to position the church at the edge of the settlement appears deliberate and reflects the position of many churches in English medieval settlements. This is a feature of church location at other boroughs established by the Anglo-Normans. The position of churches at peripheral urban location is evident at nearby Thomastown, and Clonmel and Carrick-on-Suir in Co. Tipperary where parish churches were located close to the town walls.

The streetscape, Long Street and East-West Street converging at the market place, the long narrow burgage plots and the position houses on the tofts provide some indications of planned regular settlements that appeared in England in the course of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. The layout of the borough, the urban privileges and obligations as revealed in the inquisition of 1289 and the feudal organisation of a borough was well known to the founders and the English-speaking burgesses and resulted in the relative ease with which these settlement forms were introduced to colonial Ireland.

The early success of the borough could be partially attributed to its location on the routeway between Knocktopher and Thomastown, and control of the bridge over the Nore. However, a new routeway directly connecting Knocktopher to Thomastown, bypassing Newtown Jerpoint and isolation undoubtedly contributed to its decline. It appears that decline was gradual and it commenced at least at the time of the dissolution of Jerpoint abbey in 1540. This did not appear to have an immediate impact on the borough, however, it seems to have been the catalyst for a process of slow, gradual decline. While Newtown Jerpoint was undoubtedly a busy place, with
a market, mill and bridge at its zenith, but it may have remained relatively small, and failure to achieve critical mass may have contributed to its decline and desertion.

The hypothesis for the origin and early development of the borough can only be tested by excavation. However, further research, through geophysical survey, could possibly reveal the extent of the settlement, to the west of East-West Street, in the direction of the settlement excavated by Foley, to establish if the settlement extended in that direction. In addition, the area of crofts along the northern bank of the River Nore could be explored for evidence of house on these crofts.
Chapter 6 Tullaherin – a parish church centred episcopal manor and settlement

6.1 Introduction

The aim of chapter 6 is to define and interpret the character of the settlement at Tullaherin parish church. Tullaherin is located in the heart of the Anglo-Norman colony in a zone of rich agricultural land in central Kilkenny. On the eve of the Anglo-Norman arrival, Tullaherin was an important monastery, monastic school with extensive churchlands under the stewardship of an erenagh. Shortly after that event, Tullaherin was rapidly absorbed into the new feudal world of the colonists and emerged as the parish church of an episcopal manor.

The episcopal manor was coextensive with the parish and was variously referred to as Tullaherin, Bishopslough and Ballynaboley (Empey 1985, 18). However, Manning (1998a, 24) demonstrates that Tullaherin was the most important ecclesiastical site in the manor. A document in the Ormond Deeds (Curtis 1932, i, 10-1) refers to lands that were returned to the bishop of Ossory by Theobald Fitz Walter before his death in 1205 specifically names Tulach [Tullaherin] and Bolyflandrensis [Ballynaboley now in the parish of Tullaherin].
The main function of the episcopal manor was to provide a prebendary for diocesan dignitaries. Diocesan elites resided at St. Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny (Empey 1985, 16) and a vicar was appointed to provide pastoral care in the parish. However, the impact of change on Tullaherin and the effect on settlement development in an essentially Gaelic erenagh family settlement implies some kind of hybridity.

The fabric of the parish church and round tower reveal its long biography and significant pedigree. Many changes in the architecture indicate that the church served a substantial parish community, with the resources to fund the many phases in its construction. Documentary sources, such as the ecclesiastical taxation list of 1306 and other ecclesiastical valuations and assessments are explored and discussed to identify the community’s response to the shift from hereditary stewardship of church lands to the feudal world of the newcomers. Grave slabs in the interior of the church reveal cultural diversity and acculturation as new forms of sculpture were absorbed and adapted by the community of the parish. Place-name evidence is also used to identify colonising activities and colonial footprints in the landscape. The names of some townlands in the parish are purely Gaelic in form and may have been early medieval in origin, however, English place-names are also layered onto the landscape.

Seventeenth-century sources are explored to assess the impact on the parish community of the Henrician reforms of the sixteenth century. The so called ‘census’ of 1659 (Pender 1939, 416) reveals that the townland containing the parish church was the focus of a large population and was possibly a borough with a market centre. The Reformation did not appear to have the same devastating impact on the community at Tullaherin as other communities, such as Newtown Jerpoint. Nonetheless, the community was changed as a consequence of the Henrician reforms. Seventeenth-century maps and inquisitions are examined for evidence of changes and this thesis proposes that a process of alienation of church lands commenced as New English settlers arrived in Ossory following the Reformation.

The archaeological evidence for the settlement is presented to propose that some of the earthworks were buildings that date to the later medieval period. The evidence suggests that the settlement was long-lived and complex; some earthworks are
sharply defined while others are more enigmatic and their interpretation is problematic. A combination of field survey, cartography, and digital surface modelling produced by remotely piloted aerial system (RPAS), other aerial photography and satellite imagery are employed to propose that the distinctive layout of buildings displayed little colonial influence and that symbolic features of the earlier period were respected and preserved by the episcopal tenants, the descendants of the former erenagh families.

6.2 Topographical setting of Tullaherin

The settlement at Tullaherin is situated in the parish of the same name, in the modern barony of Gowran, in Co. Kilkenny. The medieval county was coterminous with the diocese of Ossory and the ancient kingdom of the same name. The county was reduced in size in the sixteenth century when territories in the north were lost during the establishment of Queen’s County. The barony of Gowran was also an early modern creation. The medieval cantreds of Ogenty and Oskelan were incorporated with Gowran to form the modern barony. The medieval baronies bear little resemblance to the modern baronies in Co. Kilkenny. Oskelan followed the northern and eastern limits of the modern barony, with some minor divergences, while Ogenty, including the parish of Tullaherin, formed the southwestern region of the barony (Empey 1971, 129-31).

![Bing Satellite of Tullaherin parish church centre indicated](image)

*Figure 21: Bing Satellite of Tullaherin parish church centre indicated*
Tullaherin is not part of the champion agricultural heartland of Kilkenny, it is in an area of medium quality soils, still within the rich fertile core capable of sustaining a commercial agricultural economy (Smyth 1990, 129). The medieval parish church at Tullaherin is located on a natural elevation, which stands above the surrounding relatively flat countryside at 70m OD. The Irish name for the parish is Tulaigh Thirim, which means ‘dry mound or hillock’ (Placenames Committee) and it is from this feature that Tullaherin derived its name. In common with many deserted medieval villages, the area surrounding the settlement is marshy.

The parish church and settlement are located on the north-west side of a cross roads which runs east to west and southeast to northwest. These regional roads do not appear to have been important routeways in the later medieval period. More importantly, the site is on the fertile plain between the River Nore and River Barrow. The parish is c. 3.5km east of the Nore and c. 8km west of the Barrow. These rivers were the main highways from the interior of the lordship to the important later medieval deep-water port of New Ross, c. 30km to the south. The Nore was the main artery between the towns of Kilkenny and New Ross for most of the period 1200-1600 A.D. (Smyth 1990, 129-31).

6.3 Early medieval Tullaherin

Tullaherin had its genesis as an important monastery of the early medieval period, allegedly founded by St. Ciarán, the patron saint of the diocese of Ossory (Carrigan 1905, iii, 479-82). The site has early origins, as indicated by two ogham stones (fig 22). The origins of the ogham alphabet is uncertain, [14](http://www.logainm.ie/en/1372?sf=tullaherin) [Accessed 12/3/2016]. Formerly Irish Placenames committee, disbanded in September 2013 as part of Public Service Reform.

Figure 22: Ogham stone at Tullaherin

\[\text{Figure 22: Ogham stone at Tullaherin}\]
however ogam-inscribed monuments were already established by the fifth century (McManus 1991, 1) and their use as Christianised monuments continued during the seventh and into the eighth centuries (Edwards 1990, 103). The standing buildings of the early medieval foundation are the round tower and the medieval church. The importance and wealth of the monastery is illustrated in the chronicles for the year 1026 (AFM, ii, 813), when the Uí Muireadhaigh went into Ossory and ‘plundered Tealach-Dimainn and slew the vice abbot’. Manning (1998a, 20), deduced that this event indicated that the monastery was, ‘of some importance and worth raiding’.

The highly visible round tower stands near its original height, however, it was altered several times and the original bell storey and cap are missing (O’Keeffe 2004a, 154). The tower was damaged by lightning in 1121 ‘The cloictheach of Tealach-nimmainnep, in Osraighe was split by a thunderbolt and a stone flew from the cloictheach which killed a student in the church’ (AFM, ii, 1013-4). O’Keeffe (2004a, 23) considered that Tealach-nonmainnep was ‘sometimes identified as Tullamaine but is actually Tullaherin’. The event was also recorded in the Annals of Loch Cé (ALC, i, 115) and the Annals of Ulster (AU, i, 567), however, AU records that the death occurred ‘in the cell’ at the monastery. There was obviously a monastic school and buildings associated with the monastery. Tullaherin was a substantial, vibrant monastery and school in the first quarter of the twelfth century, less than fifty years before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans. The round tower and the mortared stone church suggest that the monastery had a powerful patron, possibly a king (Manning 1998a, 24) and such a foundation would have extensive churchlands that reflected its importance and prestige. The monastery would have been populated by a community of monks, students and tenants that farmed its churchlands under the stewardship of an erenagh and/or coarb, (7.6).

6.4 The emergence of the parish church

A combination of Church reforms, the introduction of new Continental orders and the arrival of the Anglo-Normans brought about a process that contributed to the demise of traditional monasticism. The pre-Anglo-Norman monastic structure was based on federations of monasteries affiliated to a mother church, forming part of the paruchia of the founder. This was incompatible with the hierarchical structure envisaged by church reformers and was arcane to the feudal world of the newcomers.
Tullaherin survived the demise of the old order and shortly after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, it emerged as a parish centre and the early monastic church adapted to its new role as a centre of pastoral care, dispensed by an incumbent priest, subject to a bishop (Empey 1984, 131-51).

The Irish bishops appeared to accept the new colonial order. According to Giraldus Cambrensis, the decrees issued following the synod of Cashel c. 1172, which were ‘very desirous of bringing the church of Ireland in all respect into conformity with the English church’ was ‘subscribed to by the prelates’ (Wright 1905, 132-4). However, tensions developed between bishops and some Anglo-Norman lords, and Tullaherin was at the centre of a bitter dispute between Felix Ó Duibhshlaine (O’Dulaney) an Irish Cistercian bishop of Ossory (1178-1202) and Theobald Fitz Walter, the founder of the Butler line. Fitz Walter was excommunicated following his encroachment on churchlands that included Tullaherin. The lands were restored by 1206 (Curtis 1932, i, 10-1) during the episcopate of Hugh de Rous, an Augustinian Canon originally from Bodmin in Cornwall and the first Anglo-Norman bishop of Ossory (Empey 1984, 145-6). The event makes clear that the churchlands of the old monastery had been transferred to episcopal control, as the bishops sought their return and not the abbot, coarb or erenagh of the pre-reform monastery.

One of the aims of the reformers of the Irish Church was to transfer control of monastic churchlands to the bishops. In areas that continued in Gaelic control the transfer was formalised in 1210 at the Council of Tuam (7.6). However, the process of transferring ecclesiastical estates to episcopal control in colonial regions is not understood, as the process is undocumented. The movement for change gained momentum with Anglo-Normans colonisation and episcopal control of churchlands may have occurred shortly after the synod of Cashel (1172) as part of the process ‘of bringing the church of Ireland in all respect into conformity with the English church’, as described by Giraldus Cambrensis (Wright 1905, 132-4).

Extensive lands were granted to the church before and after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169. The Cistercians, Augustinians and other religious houses were endowed with large estates. However, the largest ecclesiastical land holder in Ossory was the bishop, with a holding of c. 47,000 statute acres (Empey 1985, 18).
Episcopal lands were referred to in contemporary sources as ‘crosslands’ and these included the manors of Durrow, Freshford (alias Uppercourt), Kilkenny (alias Oldcourt), Bishopslough (with Tullaherin and Ballynaboley), Tiscoffin, Outrath, Ennisnag, Kilkeasy, Clonamery; and Clonmore (fig. 23) (Empey 1985, 18). Most episcopal manors originated as churchlands attached to monasteries, such as Tullaherin, Durrow, Freshford and Kilkenny. Episcopal manors, or crosslands, were held by the bishop as tenants-in-chief of the king, who therefore was answerable to the royal government in Dublin, not the secular administrations of the liberties of Leinster or Kilkenny. Initially the judicial and administrative function was attached to the bailiwick of the sheriff of Dublin. As a long-term arrangement this proved unsatisfactory and by 1333 a separate ‘County of the Cross’ was established within the borders of the royal county. The new arrangement was not to endure and a united county was established in 1352 (Empey 1990, 86-7). Tullaherin was possibly granted borough status. Empey (1985, 22) encountered a reference to burgage tenure in an undated rental in the OSSory episcopal archive. The rental is

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Footnote 10 ‘There is no contemporary evidence for a borough at Tullaherin (Manor of Bishopslough) but I have encountered a reference to burgage tenure there in an undated rental – probably early 17th
undated, possibly early seventeenth century, however, as Empey (ibid.) points out there is no other contemporary evidence to support the suggestion that Tullaherin was a medieval borough. The evidence is inconclusive; however, the possibility is explored further in section 6.7.

Tullaherin, as the parish church and centre of an ecclesiastical manor, had a specific function within the structure of the Anglo-Norman diocese of Ossory. Its role was to provide a stipend, or prebend, for diocesan dignitaries. Unlike monasteries, which maintained their community out of a common fund, each diocesan dignitary was assigned his own prebend and lived off its income (Empey 1985, 15). The dignitaries of Ossory received a prebend, an episcopal manor, which was attached to the office for the time being.

The canons preformed their liturgical duties, while resident at St. Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny, and appointed vicars to provide pastoral care for the communities of the manor (Empey 1985, 16). The senior dignitaries included; the dean, precentor, chancellor, treasurer and the archdeacon. The ecclesiastical taxation list of 1306 reveals that initially the income of the prebend was divided equally between the archdeacon and the precentor, and it is the only such arrangement recorded for the diocese (Hogan 1884, 341). The division of the income was to be short-lived, as a second taxation in 1323, noted that the prebend ‘belonged entirely to the precentor’ (Hogan 1884, 343). A subsequent taxation of c. 1487 does not list the valuation, but Tullaherin (Tylatyrum) is recorded as the prebend of the precentor (Hogan 1884, 342-3). The lists illustrate that the revenues of the manor that were initially divided between the archdeacon and the precentor, then later belonged entirely to the precentor, an arrangement that endured until the late fifteenth century, and probably later.

_The endowment [of the diocese] was divided into separate portions, each designated for the support of one member of the chapter. These acquired the name of ‘prebend’ from the fact that they, or furnished (praebere) a living to their holders, who in turn came to be known as ‘prebendaries’. The prebend normally consisted of the revenues from one manor of the cathedral estates (Cross and Livingstone 1997, 1318)._
The ecclesiastical taxation list of 1306 valued the ecclesiastical revenues of the parish at £26 13s 4d, a subsequent valuation of 1323 valued the revenues at £10 (Hogan 1884, 340-2). The second taxation arose as a consequence of a change in the traditional entitlement of the bishop to visit each parish where the parish priest entertained him. This custom ceased, in the early decades of the fourteenth-century, and a sum was paid by way of compensation for the provision that was otherwise procured for the bishop (Carrigan 1905, iv, 372). Both taxations were based on one-tenth (*decima*) of the valuation of all ecclesiastical benefices (Carrigan 1905, iv, 363).

The second decade of the fourteenth century was marked by a general decline across Europe (Davies 1996, 383-468). The decline was caused by a climatic deterioration that resulted in one of the worst famines in later medieval Ireland, but the position was exacerbated by the invasion of Edward Bruce (1315-18). The Bruce wars were a watershed in the colony, land fell into waste and many manors never recovered (Frame 2012, 128-53; Lydon 2003, 118-9; O’Conor 1998, 47-8). The community at Tullaherin was not immune from the devastation and the valuations of 1303 and 1323 (Carrigan 1905, iv, 363-75) provide evidence for the impact of these events on the community. The valuations represents a decline of 62.6% in the ecclesiastical revenue and certainly reflects the economic decline in the parish, however, while there was undoubtedly severe hardship the community did survive.

Within the diocesan structure of Ossory, the precentor was the rector of Tullaherin and a vicar would have been appointed to provide cure of souls. It is most unlikely that the precentor ever resided in the parish. Carrigan (1905, iii, 8) quotes from a seventeenth-century fragment of Bishop David Rothe’s (1620–1650) ‘Treatise on the History of Kilkenny’, describing the grounds of St. Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny. ‘The area containing the church is enclosed by a rectangular wall, three cubits high, at one corner of which is the palace of the bishop, and at the opposite corner the residence of the Dean; and, besides, there are along the enclosure, one after the other, the houses of the Precentor, Treasurer, and Archdeacon; so that those dignitaries are thus always at hand to discharge the sacred functions of divine worship and of the church’.
This document makes clear that the precentor and the archdeacon resided at St. Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny and were at hand for their liturgical duties and therefore it is unlikely that either ever resided at Tullaherin.

6.5 Change and continuity; the architecture of the parish church

The medieval parish church is located in the townland of Tullaherin. The church is located in the northern section of an enclosed graveyard. A modern east-west wall divides the graveyard. The northern section of the graveyard, closest to the church, contains modern burial memorials and some low uninscribed stone burial-markers. The southern section of the graveyard is a recent extension and therefore not depicted on the first-edition six-inch OS maps. The graveyard also encloses a round tower, located to the immediate south-west of the parish church, an ogam stone, a marigold design stone and a cross base. The church and round tower has evidence for what Manning (1998a, 25-8) describes as ‘roughly six phases of construction’ (fig. 25).
The standing fabric of the church, bicameral in plan, is separated into nave and chancel by a plain arch. Phase 1, the east end of the nave consists of the *anta*, or projections of the side walls beyond the gable, with cyclopean blocks in the lower courses of walls (fig. 26). Smaller stones are used above the first few courses. The length of the original church is difficult to determine as the walls have been lengthened to the west in the twelfth- or thirteenth-century phase. The indication from the north wall is that the original wall was at least 10.90m, and the internal width was 7.32m, with a wall thickness of 0.85m similar to the *anta*, which project
Chapter 6

Tullaherin

0.45m. Manning (1998a, 19-39) dates this phase of construction, based on the *antae* and general style to c. 1000 AD. Ó Carragáin (2010, 110) considers Tullaherin among the candidates for the oldest stone-built churches in the kingdom of Ossory. Mortared stone churches, or *Damiliac*, developed in the course of the eleventh century, however, those that pre-dated 1050 were located at important sites and commissioned by kings (Ó Carragáin 2010, 87). The comparative plans of fourteen pre-Romanesque churches restored to their probable original form, illustrates the importance of the site and the relatively large size of the church at Tullaherin (fig. 27), which suggests that it may have been the centre for the provision of pastoral care.

Phase 2 at Tullaherin relates solely to the round tower, it is later than phase 1 and earlier than phase 3. The structure is faced with well-squared sandstone blocks, which bears a similarity to the tower at Clonmacnoise. Both towers have plain lintelled windows, which suggest that they were constructed at approximately the same time (Manning 1998a, 25). The completion date for the round tower at Clonmacnoise can be confidently dated to 1124 (Manning 1997, 12-3) and as the round tower at Tullaherin was struck by lightning in 1121 (6.4) it was obviously extant at that time and probably relatively new. Because of its similarity to the Clonmacnoise, the same masons may have built both round towers.

Phase 3 saw the emergence of the bicameral plan of the church, the sidewalls were heightened, the building was extended to the west, a plain chancel arch was inserted into the east wall and a chancel added. The nave then measured 19.70m x 7.32m and the chancel 9.96m x 5.68m. The dating evidence for this phase of the building is sparse. Manning (1998a, 25-7) raises the possibility that the phase dates from the thirteenth century on the basis of the lower part of the south chancel doorway and the arched embrasure of the opposing windows at the east end of the nave. According to Manning (ibid.) these features do not look twelfth or fifteenth century and ‘so may fall between’. There is, however, a hint of a Romanesque phase due to the original east window being replaced by one in the Romanesque style. Many important churches had a bicameral plan dating from the first half of the twelfth-century, such as, Friars Island, Co. Clare, St. Peters, Waterford, St. Kieran’s, Reefert, Trinity, and St. Kevins’ house at Glendalough (Ó Carragáin 2010, 87). In view of the importance
of Tullaherin and their obvious patronage, it is likely that the chancel was added before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans. The importance and prestige of an ecclesiastical site did not ensure its endurance.

Figure 27: Comparative plans of pre-reform churches restored to their probable original form (after Ó Carragáin 2010, 179)
Some churches retained their original size while others, such as the cathedral at Clonmacnoise, were reduced in size, indicating a decline in their fortunes (Ó Carragáin 2010, 298). However, most important pre-Romanesque mortared churches, like Tullaherin, achieved parish church status, and were enlarged. The enlargement of the church in this phase indicates that the parish community continued to thrive during the course of the twelfth century and that the pre-twelfth century foundation developed as the parish church of an episcopal manor after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans.

Phase 4, probably occurred in the fifteenth century when the side walls were heightened and a self-draining wall-walk and parapets were added. During this phase, beam holes are evident in the north wall that suggests that a rood screen was constructed at the east end of the nave (Manning 1998a, 26). The parapets, crenelated in what Leask (1941, 88) described as ‘stepped battlements in the Irish manner’, appear in an 1813 illustration of the church, by Shee, (fig 28) (Ms 42, 359, reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland).

Phase 5 can be confidently dated to the early decades of the seventeenth century. An arch stone with a date of 1616 inscribed on it was described by Carrigan (1905, iii, 489) as lying in the graveyard. During this phase, the church was substantially reconstructed, ‘The greater part of the west wall and the entire western two thirds of the south wall were rebuilt’ (Manning 1998a, 26).

Phase 6, the final phase in the life of the church occurred when the chancel arch opening was narrowed. The bishop’s visitations of 1715 and 1731 recorded that the chancel was in use but that the nave was in ruin (Leslie 1933, 371). The narrowing of the chancel arch opening probably facilitated the insertion of a doorway at the time the nave was abandoned and the chancel only remained in use (Manning 1998a, 28).

However, a further phase is evident in the painting of the church by Shee (fig. 28), indicating supporting buttresses at the north wall. The buttresses have since collapsed and there is no indication of when they were constructed, however, they must have been erected some time prior to the painting in 1813 as they are depicted as being in ruinous condition. They were possibly built when the chancel arch was narrowed, in the early eighteenth century, or perhaps earlier.
The prestige attached to the traditional monastery was recognised and a conscious decision was made to retain and adapt the older church and maintain the link with its past, rather than to build a new church at a different location. The adaption of pre-twelfth century Reform churches centres by piecemeal additions are a feature of parish churches, particularly in Gaelic lordships (FitzPatrick 2006, 70). Changes in the fifteenth century demonstrate that the parish church at Tullaherin continued as the focus of vibrant community with the resources to maintain and modernise the fabric of the church. The substantial rebuilding in the seventeenth century suggests that the parish church survived the attrition of the Henrician reformation and remained dynamic. Decline is evident in the eighteenth century, when the chancel arch opening was narrowed to facilitate a door and the abandonment of the nave. The collapse of the church was arrested at some time in the past when three buttresses were erected to support the north wall.

6.6 Who lived at Tullaherin?

Unlike secular manors, there is an absence of documentary sources to assist in populating an episcopal manor. We can posit that prior to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans and the subinfeudation of Leinster, an erenagh and their kin occupied the churchlands of Tullaherin. There was a place for the bishop in the new hierarchical
feudal world of the colonists. The bishop was tenant-in-chief of the king and with a considerable land holding, which warranted his position among the ranks of the powerful honorial barons. One of the privileges extended to the bishop of Ossory was that his crosslands were outside the jurisdiction of the liberty of Leinster and later the liberty of Kilkenny, therefore the bishop was not answerable to the officers of the liberty. It appears that from the outset of the colonisation process coarbs and erenaghs could hardly have been tolerated by what Empey (1985, 18) described as ‘the new breed of book-balancing bishops intent on squeezing every penny out from every conceivable right and jurisdiction’. Shortly after the commencement of the colonisation process bishops gained firm control of churchlands. However, there was a labour shortage and it is most likely that the families of erenaghs were not displaced, and that they continued to live at the parish church-centre and farm the land, as tenants on the episcopal manors, but without their traditional rights, status and obligations. There were differences between the tenants on secular and episcopal manors. The tenants of crosslands, like their lord the bishop, were outside the jurisdiction of the Liberty. It is probable that the descendants of ecclesiastical families continued as episcopal tenants throughout the later medieval and well into the early modern period. Continuity is suggested by grave slab, within the parish church.

Figure 29: Tapered grave slab 1 with chamfered sides, decorated with plain cross and fleur-de-lys terminals
There are two intact grave slabs and two fragments in the interior of the church. The shape and form of the grave slabs, tapered, or coffin shaped, with chamfered sides dressed with diagonal tooling and decorated with a *fleur-de-Lys* cross can be dated to the thirteenth or fourteenth century (Maher 1997, 16-9). Inscriptions in the thirteenth and fourteenth century were invariably brief, in Lombardic lettering, and were usually in Latin or sometimes Norman French (Bradley 1985, 52; Maher 1997, 16-9).

Figure 30: Grave slab 1 with worn inscription (----OECHAIN-OLERD)

This style of grave slab is associated with slab-lined graves or sarcophagi (Maher 1997, 17). They were usually commissioned for people of the higher social strata, lords and senior clerics (Maher 1997, 46). The style and decoration of the grave slabs is colonial and similar in style to many found in England.

Grave slab 1 (fig. 29) is an intact recumbent grave slab, situated close to the east end of the south wall. The slab, executed in limestone survives in good condition. It is long and tapered with chamfered sides that are dressed with diagonal tooling (L 1.95m T 0.18m), 0.60m broad at its upper end and narrowing to 0.35m at its base. The decoration is a plain cross, with *fleur-de-lys* terminals and a long shaft that also terminates in a *fleur-de-lys*. A worn Gaelic inscription in an Irish hand along the
bottom left quarter of the slab can be partially deciphered as ‘----OECHAIN-OLERD’ (fig. 30). A precise interpretation of the name is problematic due its worn condition and the absence of standard spelling in the thirteenth century. It can be proposed, with some certainty, that the name is not Anglo Irish or English in origin.

It can be tentatively suggested that it is similar to a relatively common thirteenth-century Gaelic name MacEochaidh, from which a number of Irish surnames are derived, including MacKeogh and Kehoe (MacLysaght 1972, 199-200).

Grave slab 2 is intact and located close to grave slab 1. It is also executed in limestone, but lays partly buried face down and the undecorated and rough exposed surface is clearly the back of the slab.

Grave slab 3 (fig. 31) is fragmentary and lays near the west gable. Only the upper half (L 0.8m) survives and like 1 and 2 is executed in limestone. It is tapered, has chamfered sides and is decorated with a plain cross with *fleur-de-lys* terminals.

Grave slab 4, the final fragment is of sandstone and is situated in the north-west corner of the church and only the bottom half survives (L 0.58m). The sides of the fragment are chamfered and the end of the shaft terminates in a simple trefoil.

Grave slab 1 is the only grave slab to have an inscription in Gaelic and no such inscription appears in the Co. Tipperary *corpus* (Maher 1997) or among those
recorded in St. Canice’s cathedral in Kilkenny (Bradley 1985, 49-103). It is possible that the grave slabs were the burial markers of incumbent priests or possibly local Gaelic elites. It is also possible to tentatively suggest that the name MacEochaidh could be Kehoe or Keoghan and as one of the townlands in the parish is Ballykeoghan, Keoghans must have been a prominent family in the parish at some point and may even have been the descendants of an erenagh family at Tullaherin.

6.7 Population of the parish

The so-called ‘census’ of 1659 does not identify the parish of Tullaherin; however, the parish can be reconstructed from townlands listed in the ‘Down Survey of Ireland’ and the BSD. The so-called ‘census’ is an important resource in the understanding of population distribution in the early modern period. It provides, for the first time in Irish history, a picture of the population structure at townland level (Smyth 1988, 62) and is therefore important in an exploration of social structures of an earlier period. The census only recorded the adult male population and therefore it cannot be considered a complete census. Smyth (ibid.) suggests as a working hypothesis a multiplier of 2.5 as most appropriate to project a reasonable reflection of the actual population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Townland</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tullaherin</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballynaboly</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtowne</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishoppslogh</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilbayne</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2759</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Population distribution in the parish, based on the census of 1659

The adult population of the townland of Tullaherin was recorded at 42 (table 1) and that of the parish at 159 (Pender 1939, 416). Applying Smyth’s multiplier of 2.5, the actual population of the townland can be estimated at 105 and the parish at 367. The census reveals two features that render the townland of Tullaherin exceptional in the population pattern of the parish. The first aspect is the size of the population. With an adult population of 42, the townland was the most densely populated in the parish.
Based on Smyth’s research on settlement in Co. Tipperary, townlands with a recorded population in excess of 40 contain complex nucleated settlements, focused on both castle and church (Smyth 1988, 63). The second unique feature revealed in the census is that Tullaherin alone had no English listed among the population, suggesting that new settlers did not inhabit the townland containing the parish church, whereas each of the other townlands had two or three English (Pender 1939, 416).

The size of the townland cannot explain the density of population. The acreage of each townland in the parish is recorded in the BSD and the Down Survey of Ireland map (Downsurvey.trinity.ie) and at 488 acres (fig. 32), Tullaherin was certainly not the largest townland in the parish. The average size of the six townlands recorded in the parish was 460 acres and the townland of Tullaherin, while below average was the third largest, the largest townland being Bishoppslogh with 743 acres, followed by Kilbayne with 581 acres.

Figure 32: Down Survey of Ireland, map of Tullaherin parish. Ms 720 Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

The Down Survey map of the parish (fig. 32) also recorded the location of castles and churches in the townlands within the parish. All townlands have an icon depicting the presence of a castle with the exception of Tullaherin and it is clear that in the seventeenth-century castles were dispersed throughout the parish. Tullaherin alone contains the icon of a church. Castles and churches were powerful forces for settlement nucleation (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 369) and in the context of English medieval settlement studies Roberts (1987, 73-4) suggests that the success of a village is dependent on the blending of basic elements of house clusters, magnet farmstead and church into a whole. As an episcopal manor, the settlement at Tullaherin was ecclesiastical in nature and the absence of a secular elite house, or castle, is unsurprising and it is reasonable to propose that the large population was focused on the parish church. The manor and the parish were essential elements in the Anglo-Norman settlement pattern, with the parish church in juxtaposition with the castle, or elite dwelling, as central components. However, the great majority of manors in Co. Tipperary did not have motte castles. Empey’s research on manorial settlements in Co. Tipperary reveals the wide range of manor types, which were determined by land quality, location, and the personal inclination of the founding father. Many exercised lordship over a very largely undisturbed indigenous population (Empey 1985, 81-5).

At Tullaherin, cultural continuity is suggested in the place names of some of the parish townlands. The name of the townland containing the parish church, Tullaherin, is a purely Gaelic term. Other townlands Ballynaboley, Balie na Buaile,19 Baillykeoghan, Baile na Mhic Eocháin,20 and Boheragaddy, Bóther an Ghadhá21 (Logainm.ie) reflect Irish, rather than colonial culture. Cultural diversity is reflected in English place-names layered onto the landscape and place-names, such as Baronsland, Castlefield and Earlsquarter are a possible reflection of Anglo-Norman feudal influence.

There are five native enclosed settlements recorded in the parish (archaeology.ie)22, in the RMP, two each in the townlands of Tullaherin and Ballynaboley and one in the

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19 Townland, Homestead for Summer Pasture
20 Townland of the Keoghans
21 Road of the Graddys
townland of Boheragady. While there is no evidence that the enclosed settlements continued in use during the later medieval period, that possibility is suggested as only townlands with Gaelic place names contain native enclosed settlements.

The indications of acculturation and cultural fluidity in the parish are the colonial form of grave slab, with an Irish name commemorated the combination of English and Gaelic place-names of some townlands in the parish, the presence of native enclosed settlements in townlands with Gaelic place-names and their absence in townlands with English place-names. Unique features shown on the Down Survey of Ireland map, such as the absence of a castle in the townland of Tullaherin and the absence of English in the census of 1659 are not individually conclusive. However, the combined layers of evidence suggest that the existing Irish community was not disturbed by the arrival of the Anglo-Normans and that they continued to settle around the old monastery as it re-emerged as a parish church-centre in the twelfth or thirteenth century. It is possible that the descendants of the early medieval enenagh families continued to farm the land as tenants on the episcopal manor.

6.8 Later medieval settlement at the parish church

The site at Tullaherin contains the graveyard, the ruins of the medieval parish church, a round tower and ogam stones within the graveyard enclosure, the earthworks of the settlement are contained in the surrounding fields. The earthworks were recognised and recorded on the first-edition, six-inch OS compiled between 1829 and 1842, and recorded as a ‘deserted settlement – medieval’ in the RMP (KK024-062007). The archaeological evidence that the earthworks are the remains of medieval buildings is elusive, and none of the features are listed as an individual house in the RMP. The earthworks represent intensive and prolonged settlement and while some are sharply defined, others are more enigmatic and complex, making their interpretation is problematic. The earthworks were first surveyed and analysed by Moran (1996, 3-13). Moran interpreted the earthworks as mainly pre-Anglo-Norman, relating to the early medieval monastic phase at the site, however, as Manning (1998a, 29) points out the earthworks are more likely to be the remains of a deserted

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medieval settlement overlaying and almost obliterating from view any trace of the earlier settlement. The methodology used to record the earthworks, for this thesis, included; walk over field survey, the use of existing plans, satellite imagery and aerial photography. A digital surface model was also produced using a remotely piloted aerial system (RPAS), however it became apparent that a single methodology would reveal all features of the earthworks. Therefore a composite plan superimposed on the first-edition six-inch OS map (fig. 33).

Figure 33: Earthworks at Tullaherin (after Moran 1996 on first-edition six-inch map)
The area immediately surrounding the complex has been subject to vigorous ploughing and grazing activity in the past and a number of fields in the immediate vicinity are currently under tillage (fig.21). The field containing the earthworks is in permanent pasture, and currently grazed by horses. Seventeenth-century sources indicate that there was a substantial population at the parish church, however, as a consequence of disturbance only a small fraction of the settlement may have survived and evidence of settlement in the surrounding fields has been obliterated by intensive agriculture. The parish church is located within the graveyard that is in a central position in the lower third of a triangular field of c.11.75 acres. The earthworks consist of a series of hollow-ways, sub-rectangular, sub-circular and sub-triangular enclosures and linear embankments extending in an arc to the immediate west, north-west and north of the church (fig. 33).

6.8.1 The Earthworks

Evidence of a hollow-way, road, laneway or drove-way is clear from the digital surface model, satellite imagery and other aerial photography. The hollow-way runs north to south, west of the parish church, and then curves northeast where it exited the settlement (fig. 34). Roberts (1987, 120), in the context of English settlement archaeology, demonstrates that settlements need access at three levels, first to facilitate the movement of people and animals within the settlement, secondly to provide access from the settlement to other areas of the manor, the arable fields, meadows, rough pasture and turbarry. Finally, access was required to provide a link to adjacent

Figure 34: DSM of Tullaherin with hollow-way indicated (P. Naessens, Western Aerial Survey 2015)
places. As an important episcopal manor, the settlement must have been connected to the adjacent places, such as other villages, market centres and the diocesan centre of St. Canice at Kilkenny.

The hollow-way (fig. 34) provides the framework for the settlement, with earthworks laid out as house platforms and the wall-footings of possible buildings laid out either side of the street, track or laneway. Some house platforms and individual features are clearly defined, while others are more enigmatic.

**T1 (Tullaherin 1)**

![Figure 35: DSM of Tullaherin with T1 indicated (P. Naessens, Western Aerial Survey 2015)](image)

The earthworks, to the west of the parish church, (fig. 35) are located to the west of the hollow-way. The earthworks complex (int. c.75m N-S; 30m E-W) appear as a raised platform, sub-divided into three, or four and are possibly house platforms. Platforms are private enclosed space, outside of which are hollow-ways, formed by roads, lanes or drove ways (Roberts 1987, 120). The possible tofts do not contain the footprint of houses and there is an absence chronological indicators. However, the
arrangement of tofts and their relationship to the hollow-way, or street, suggests that the earthworks were possibly the remains of house platforms that may date from the later medieval period.

T2

The wall-footings of T2 (fig. 36) are located to the north of the hollow-way, where it turns to north-east and are c. 45m north of the parish church. The earthworks consist of the grass-covered wall-footings of a sub-rectangular enclosure (int. c. 23m SW-NE; 6m SE-NW). The enclosure contains the wall-footings of a possible small building (int. c. 6m SW-NE; 3m SE-NW). The southeast long wall of the building is shared with the southeast wall of the enclosure and both are probably contemporaneous. It is possible that the building was a small house and garden, within an enclosure. The east wall of the enclosure is connected to a low linear bank that runs parallel to the hollow-way. This area may contain house platforms, but there is no visibly evidence for them. There are further linear banks to the north of the sub-rectangular enclosure, however, their function is unclear.

Figure 36: DSM of Tullaherin T2 indicated (S. Dowling 2014)
**T3**

The grass-covered stone wall-footings of the enclosure, T3, (fig. 37) (int. c. 23m N-S; 17m E-W) are located to the west of the hollow-way and c. 10m west of the graveyard. There are wall-footings aligned east to west in the interior of the enclosure. The wall-footings stand c. 0.45m above the surrounding field surface and 0.25m over the interior of the building. The interior of the enclosure appears as an elevated platform. The wall in the interior of the enclosure may have been the end wall of a building, possibly a house, with a small garden inside the enclosure.

**T4**

The earthworks of T4 may possibly be the remains of an unenclosed building. They are located on the east side of the hollow-way and to the west of the round tower. The possible wall-footings do not appear to be contained within an enclosure and may be the remains of an unclosed house, or possibly a succession of houses rebuild on the same site, however the remains are too fragmentary for any firm conclusions to be drawn.

**T5**

T5 (fig. 38) are the earthworks of two possible rectangular structures adjoining the north wall of the church. The earthworks are very disturbed and their interpretation is problematic. An aerial photograph of the site, from July 1971, by Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photography (CUCAP, catalogue number BGK080) illustrates two clearly defined building platforms. In the succeeding decades, the earthworks have become more degraded and less well defined, probably as a consequence of intensive animal grazing.

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25 Cambridge University collection of aerial photography
http://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/cucap/location/bgk081/ [Accessed 18/5/2015]
grazing. The earthworks are important, as they provide an indication of a chronological sequence that contributes to our understanding of the site.

As noted (6.5), the painting of the church by Shee in 1813 (fig. 28), illustrates three buttresses supporting the north wall, which were constructed on top of the earthworks. The buttresses have since been removed and were in some state of decay at the time of the painting. The date of construction of the buttresses is unrecorded, but due to their condition in 1813, they must have been constructed some considerable time earlier. A considerable time elapsed from the erection and occupation of the buildings, their decline, abandonment and collapse and the erection of the buttresses and their subsequent decay and removal. It is reasonable to propose that the buildings were built and occupied in the later medieval period. However, the function of these structures is impossible to determine without excavation.
T6
The triangular enclosure, plot or small field, T6 (fig. 33) (int. c. 15m E-W; 12m NW-SE; 6m N-S) is unlikely to enclose a building, due to its plan and size.

Fieldwork, digital surface model, satellite imagery, historic maps and aerial photography have revealed that the area east of the parish church is completely devoid of any upstanding archaeology. The absence of buildings in this area suggests that it may have been a *platea*, or in the English tradition a ‘village green’, which Roberts (1987, 20), defines as ‘a communal space where the inhabitants of the village, and sometimes some outsiders have rights, although the land is usually vested in the lord of the manor’. However, there may have been buildings in this area that have been ploughed out, or cleared. Some traces of cultivation are evident, which may indicate that the area was ploughed flat (fig. 39). Conservation work on the round tower commenced in 2001 and an access track was built to facilitate the work.

*Figure 39: DSM of Tullaherin, flat area east of church indicated*

The work continued for several years and c. 2008-9, after completion of the work, the area was ploughed and re-seeded, and the track to the round tower was ploughed
The 1971 aerial photograph of the site by CUCAP shows that the area was flat. It may have been cleared earlier, however, there is an absence of clearance cairns, unlike those at Newtown Jerpoint which indicate the presence of buildings. While the evidence is far from conclusive it is possible to tentatively suggest that this area was the platea and the site of the later medieval market place. Public space was also a feature of early medieval monasteries. A *platea* or *faitche* is sometimes translated as a ‘green’ (DIL). It is defined by Piccard (2011, 61-3) as a relatively levelled area in front of a church or city, where common activities are conducted. Like the Anglo-Saxon green it was used for games and the grazing of animals, but unlike the Anglo-Saxon green it was a sacred place where blood should not be spilt. It was ‘a safe public place where exchange between men could take place in the knowledge that sanctity of the person would normally be respected’. Sacred space, with the right of sanctuary was not restricted to ecclesiastical sites. It also applied to *platea* / *faitche* of secular ráths that were occupied by nobles.

Continuity of respect for sanctuary at the sacred space of the *faitche* is demonstrated in the chronicles, which record for the year 1203 the murder of Murtough the Teffian, son of Conor Moinmoy, on the *faitche* of the cathedral settlement of Kilmacduagh, in Co. Galway by his paternal uncles (AFM, iii, 137). It seems that the main reason for mentioning the murder was that it occurred on the *faitche*. The act was considered so outrageous to be worthy of mention in the chronicles. The unoccupied space between the church and the road at Tullaherin might suggest that respect for this area may have begun as a monastic *platea* / *faitche*, which became a green for hosting a market, associated with the parish church during the later medieval period. The right to hold markets and fairs was usually synonymous with town status. Many episcopal manors in Ossory held town status and held licences to hold a weekly market and an annual fair. These included Tiscoffin, Clonmore, Irishtown, Durrow and Freshford. While, as Empey (1985, 22) points out that ‘there is no contemporary evidence for a borough’ the reference to burgage tenure, the large population and a possible green, all suggest that there was a market at Tullaherin.

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Many aspects of the settlement are problematic and in the absence of excavation, there is no conclusive evidence that the earthworks are house platforms relating to the later medieval period. It is, however, reasonable to propose that the area to east and north of the hollow-way was the site of a number of house platforms, T1 and T2. The house platforms to the west of the hollow-way contained a house platform, T3 and one or two unenclosed houses, T4. The earthworks to the north of the church and south of the hollow-way, T5, have chronological indicators, which suggest that they relate to the later medieval period. The earthworks reveal that the plots and possible houses varied in shape and size and their position on the plots was not regular in form. There is no evidence of straight tracks or streets and the hollow-way suggests that the trackway through the settlement was not laid out to a plan. It is clear that there is layout was highly irregular, which suggests that it developed organically over time, or that development and growth was haphazard or unplanned (Roberts 1987, 24). The layout of the settlement cluster at Tullaherin is in marked contrast to the form of the settlement at Newtown Jerpoint (5.5).

6.9 The impact of the Henrician Reformation

The later medieval settlement at Tullaherin endured as a thriving settlement as demonstrated by the many changes in the fabric of the church (6.5) and continued into the eighteenth century. The Reformation, instigated in the reign of Henry VIII, was a pivotal event that inevitably had an impact on Tullaherin. As an episcopal manor, the settlement had a close relationship with the church. Therefore the changes brought about by the Reformation are explored to assess their impact on the fortunes of the community and whether it was a turning points in the decline and desertion of the settlement.

The greatest impact of the Reformation was the dissolution of the monasteries and the loss of monastic lands. The reforms also had an impact on episcopal estates, however the effects were not as dramatic on local communities, as churchlands were then vested in the Protestant bishop of Ossory. The bishop remained a substantial landowner in Kilkenny after the Reformation (Smyth 1990, 137-8). Tullaherin continued as the prebendary of the Church of Ireland precentor. Leslie (1933 ,74-5) described how, Robert Gaffney, a precentor of the cathedral of St. Canice, Kilkenny, in 1581 left a bequest of twenty shillings towards the ‘reparacion of the vicar his part
of the church of Tullagh-hyrne.’ Nonetheless changes instigated by the Reformation were underway. An indenture, following death of the protestant bishop of Ossory Jonas Wheeler in October 1640, (Carrigan 1905, iv, 394-6) reveals that changes directly effectted the community at Tullaherin.

Sir Cyprian Horsfell, the son of the previous bishop of Ossory, John Horsfell (1586-1610), held the village and lands of Tullaherin ‘for a long term of years and paid the bishop an annual rent of £15.6s.8d.’ Sir Cyprian was not resident at Tullaherin; he held a castle and an episcopal manor at Ennisnag, also in the diocese of Ossory. He held lands besides at Ballnabolly, in the parish of Tullaherin, for which he also paid rent to the bishop. These extensive lands were acquired from his father Bishop John Horsfell, who was born in Yorkshire and one of the New English Protestant elite to emerge in Kilkenny. Sir Cyprian was to serve as sherriff of the County in 1609 (Edwards 2003, 270-1). This prestigious position and the acquisition of a cheap lease of episcopal land, was attributed to his closeness to the bishop (ibid.).

The elites, and principal episcopal tenants at Tullaherin were a mixture of Old and New English. The main land-holder was Sir Cypren Horsfell who held the manor of Bishoplough, Gerard Fitz Gerald held a house and lands of Naushistowne, James Poyne held a proportion of Ballinebolly and Lady Ormond held a portion of Newhouse. It is evident that by the end of the sixteenth century the lands of the parish were still owned by the bishop of Ossory, but a process of alienation had commenced and large parcels of land were in the hands of new, English proprietors, some on favourable terms. Leslie (1933, 15) considers that Bishop Horsfell is said to have alienated some of the See lands.

6.10 Conclusion

Early medieval Tullaherin was a monastery and monastic school was of sufficient importance to be raided in 1026, and its importance is reflected in the standing fabric of the church, the damliac, dating from the early decades of the eleventh century and the round tower that was built in the early twelfth century that are indications of a wealthy patron. Its importance and prestige as a monastery and centre of learning, before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, is reflected in the Irish chronicles, which record the death of a student when the round tower was struck by lightning in 1121.
Such an important monastery, would have been well endowed with extensive estates. Monks, students, would have populated the settlement and monastic tenants, under the stewardship of the hereditary erenagh, farmed their churchlands.

With the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, the community adapted to the new colonial world when the monastic church emerged as the parish church of an episcopal manor. Rather than build a new Gothic parish church, the existing church was enlarged and modernised to fulfil its new role as a parish church. Features that reflected the prestige and importance of the earlier church were retained. The many phases of building of the church reveal that the parish community thrived in the period 1200 to 1600 until it was abandoned in the eighteenth century.

Stability and continuity is evident at Tullaherin, lands held by the pre-reform church continued in ecclesiastical control throughout the period 1200 to 1600 and beyond, but with Anglo-Normans colonisation, hereditary churchlands rapidly appear as a feudal episcopal manor under the control of the bishop. It is proposed that the community who worked the land and lived at Tullaherin were the descendants of hereditary church officials, in the Gaelic tradition.

Evidence of colonial culture in the settlement at Tullaherin is sparse, there are, however, some indications of continuity of Gaelic cultural tradition and acculturation. The form of grave slabs in the parish church suggests continuity of Gaelic tradition alongside new colonial funerary monuments, which suggests some form of cultural hybridity. This is further suggested in the place-names of some of the parish townlands, which are purely Gaelic in origin while others reflect Anglo-Norman or English culture. The distribution of native enclosed settlements in the parish, are located exclusively in townlands with Gaelic place-names, which suggests that some aspects of Gaelic culture endured and adapted to layers of Anglo-Norman / English influences.

The census of 1659 (Pender 1939) and The Down Survey of Ireland maps (downsurvey.tcd.ie)²⁸, reveal that in the seventeenth century Tullaherin, was the most

densely populated townland in the parish. The large internal space of the parish church when it emerged as a parish church in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century suggests there was a large population from that time also. Longevity is a feature at Tullaherin and the settlement endured the changes introduced by the Anglo-Normans, changes in the late thirteenth and fourteenth century, Gaelic Resurgence, deterioration in climate, economic decline, disease and warfare were possible factors in decline and desertion of many manors and rural boroughs that the Anglo-Normans had established (O’Conor 1998, 47-8). The suppression of the monasteries, brought by the Henrician reforms. may have been the catalyst for decline at Newtown Jerpoint, but did not appear to have a long-term impact on Tullaherin. A possible explanation offered for the large population and its endurance is its role as a market centre.

The interpretation of the earthworks is problematic. The earthworks are the visible remains of very prolonged, intensive settlement from the early medieval period until well into the early modern period as successive generations changed and adapted their landscape and left their footprint (Gardiner and Rippon 2007, 1). There is no hint that the settlement was ever laid out to a regular plan. Rather it is so irregular as to suggest haphazard development and unplanned growth over time. The house plots and their houses were significantly smaller than the tofts typical of later medieval colonial settlements where long, narrow burgage plots prevailed. The typical medieval house in the colony was positioned at the front of the toft, with a garden to the rear, this feature is absent in the settlement layout at Tullaherin.

The village experience of the community at Tullaherin was different to that of communities at manors and boroughs in colonial Ireland. The community at Tullaherin endured throughout the period. They adapted to the colonial experience and emerged as a parish church centre of a feudal episcopal manor. By 1600 AD, the indications are that there was a thriving settlement at the parish church that continued for some time into the early modern period.
Part 1 The Anglo-Norman county of Kilkenny and later Butler lordship of Ormond – Conclusions

The aim of part 1 of this thesis is to compare and contrast Newtown Jerpoint and Tullaherin to highlight cultural and functional distinctions between settlements at parish churches in central Co. Kilkenny. The approach in this section is to discuss the distinctive features of settlement clusters explored in chapters 5 and 6.

Newtown Jerpoint was one of the new settlement forms introduced by the Anglo-Normans. There is no evidence of an earlier settlement and therefore the founders were not constrained by an existing settlement. The borough reflected the Anglo-Norman idea of a small urban, feudal society. The parish church was a key component and a primary focus for the settlement layout. While there are indications of phasing, the settlement was primarily laid out to a regular plan and was built within a relatively short period of time. The position of the church, the streetscape, the size and relationship of the tofts to the streets and the position of the houses on the plots were influenced by the organisation of settlements in England in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Tullaherin was a very different type of settlement. There was an existing settlement there, before the arrival of Anglo-Normans, centred on the monastery and school that had its own ecclesiastical estate with an existing community. The *damliac* and round tower illustrate its importance. The monastic church was enlarged and adapted as the parish church of an episcopal manor following the arrival of the Anglo-Normans.

Stability and continuity is evident at Tullaherin, as lands held by the church before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans continued in ecclesiastical control throughout the period 1200 to 1600, and beyond. However, change is apparent as shortly after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, control of hereditary churchlands in the diocese rapidly re-emerged as episcopal manors, held by the bishop as tenants-in-chief of the king.

Unlike Newtown Jerpoint, the settlement around the parish church at Tullaherin was not laid out on a regular plan and the house plots were significantly smaller. The tofts
at Newtown Jerpoint were laid out with the short end facing the street, the gardens extended to the rear, and the houses arranged at the front of the plots with their long wall facing the street, these features were absent at Tullaherin where there is little evidence of deliberate planning. Rather the settlement appears to be an organic development over a long period of time.

Episcopal manors in Ossory were economically successful (Empey 1985, 19) and the level of intensive agricultural production could not have been achieved without an adequate labour resource. Both settlements were firmly rooted in agriculture, the predominant feature of the colonial economy. Newtown Jerpoint was well located on the routeway between the medieval towns of Knocktopher and Thomastown and in close proximity to Jerpoint Abbey. As an episcopal manor, the principal role of Tullaherin, throughout the period was to provide a stipend for diocesan dignitaries.

Both settlements dominated their local areas. The geographical size of both parishes was relatively large, Jerpoint Church, in the barony of Gowran, contained 5,994 statute acres, while the average for the barony was 3,112 acres. Tullaherin, while smaller than Jerpoint church, with 5,052 statute acres, but was larger than the average parish in the Barony of Knocktopher, which was 2,922 acres (Healy 1893, 19-20). The economic success of both settlements is evidenced by the ecclesiastical taxation list of 1306, which reflects the size of the population and the level of economic activity of the parish (Morris 1989, 233). The valuation of the parish of Jerpoint Church the second highest in the Callan deanery and the valuation of Tullaherin was substantially higher than the average in the deanery of Clara and significantly higher than Jerpoint church.

The internal space of the parish church at Newtown Jerpoint is 212.3m$^2$ and Tullaherin was marginally smaller at 210.3m$^2$. The internal space of the parish church at Tullaherin suggests that in the fourteenth century, the population of the parish was broadly similar to the borough of Newtown Jerpoint and the valuation of the ecclesiastical benefice exceeded that of the borough. These suggest that Tullaherin was the centre of a vibrant community that was probably larger than that of Newtown Jerpoint.
Newtown Jerpoint was described in contemporary sources as a town, however, it lacked many attributes of a true town and may never have developed beyond a rural borough. The documentary evidence for Tullaherin is inconclusive, however, the combined evidence of the reference in a seventeenth-century rental, population density, and the tentative identification of a green, or market place suggests that Tullaherin was the centre of a market or fair, like other episcopal manors in Ossory, such as Tiscoffin, Clonmore, Irishtown, Durrow and Freshford,

The majority of burgages at Newtown Jerpoint, in the thirteenth century were of English or Welsh descent. We lack the same detail for the community at Tullaherin, but there was an existing community before the arrival of the colonist. These were coarbs, erenaghs and their families. It is reasonable to assume that the community who worked the land and lived at Tullaherin were the descendants of ecclesiastical families of the earlier period, that continued as tenants of crosslands.

There is very little evidence of colonial culture in the settlement at Tullaherin, there are however indications of continuity of some Gaelic practices and cultural hybridity is evident. Continuity and hybridity is suggested in the place-names of some of the parish townlands, the distribution of native enclosed settlements and the shape and style of decoration on inscribed grave slab that reflects colonial culture with the inscription of a Gaelic name, in a Gaelic hand.

Newtown Jerpoint and Tullaherin had different experiences following the reforms brought by Henry VIII. The success of Newtown Jerpoint was partly due to its proximity to Jerpoint Abbey and its location on the routeway between Knocktopher and Thomastown and control of the bridge crossing the River Nore. Dependence on factors that contributed to the prosperity of the borough also left it vulnerably and the dissolution of the abbey in 1540 was the catalyst for a process of slow decline. Tullaherin survived these changes and was a vibrant community in the mid-seventeenth century. However, as a consequence of the Reformation, a new elite had emerged. Tullaherin was in the hands of Sir Cyprian Horsfell, son of the bishop of Ossory and churchlands were in the process of alienation.

There are still many unanswered questions at Newtown Jerpoint and Tullaherin. No excavations have been carried out at either site. Geophysical surveys at Newtown
Jerpoint could reveal greater details of the extent of the settlement to the west of East-West Street and the crofts along the riverbank. At Tullaherin, some clarity could be brought to the flat area to the east of the church by geophysical survey. The settlement was obviously much larger than the standing remains suggest and a targeted geophysical survey of the surrounding fields could provide a greater insight on the extent of the settlement.
Part 2 Case studies from the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren

Introduction

In part 2 of this thesis settlement clusters at the parish churches of Oughtmama, Noughaval, Carran and Killeany in the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren are presented in order to highlight some of the distinctions between them in the period 1200 to 1600 AD. Burren was a region that was not actively colonised in the Anglo-Norman period. Nonetheless, it was exposed to colonial influences under the overlordship of the Ó Briain, especially after the Composition of Connacht in 1585, and the Cromwellian settlement of the mid-seventeenth century; however, it remained culturally stable and essentially Gaelic during the period 1200-1600 AD.

The approach in part 2 is to compare and contrast the settlement clusters at these parish churches in order to highlight functional distinctions between settlements at these parish- church centres. The archaeology and cultural history of each parish church-centred settlement is explored and presented in chapters 7, 8 and 9, in order to identify unique features in their form and function and their community’s response to change in the period.
The geography of Burren

The Burren lordship is located in the northwest of modern Co. Clare. The lordship is coterminous with the modern barony of the same name and at its greatest extent is 24.14km east to west, and 14.5km from north to south, containing 74,361 statute acres, which is contained in eleven civil parishes listed in the Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland 1845 (Anon 1845).\(^{29}\) The area is bounded to the northwest by the Atlantic Ocean, to the north by Galway Bay and to the northeast lays a series of hills, which range in height from 240m to 295m, and form a natural boundary to the lordship and marked the limit of colonial expansion in the later medieval period. To the southeast and south lies, Inchiquin in the Ó Briain lands of Thomond and to the southwest is the Ó Conchobhair lordship of Corcomroe.

The Burren region is distinguished by karst geology, with an area of 250km\(^2\) of bare exposed limestone dominating the landscape (Feehan 1991, 14). The Burren hills, in the north-west of the area, rise to a height of 305m and consist of almost horizontal strata of bare limestone with some soil in the valleys and dolines.

The pavement surface has been moulded into a variety of features, pits, hollows, rills and channels, for which the term karst is applied. At the end of the Lower Carboniferous period c. 340 million years ago, the limestone was laid down. Limestone is permeable and when hit by acid water, it disappears underground through a series of swallow holes. The waters have hollowed out a remarkable system of underground rivers, streams and caves. The landscape, results from the solution of the limestone and underwater circulation, is called karst and the Burren plateau the finest example of karstic landscape in Ireland ‘with a full assemblage of curious landforms and subterranean drainage systems that characterise such limestone terrains’ (Drew 1997, 287).

At least two episodes of glaciation, which started a million years ago, have affected the region. The earlier glaciation brought south-moving ice from Connemara across Galway Bay covering the Burren and left erratics of Galway granite. The final advance covered the eastern Burren and replaced the granite with its own limestone erratics. Glaciation widened the north-south valleys facing Galway Bay and carved

out the gorge of the Glencolumbkille Valley (Feehan 1991, 21-2). The ice left materials on much of the surface with patches of moraine on valley bottoms and drumlin-like deposits in some places.

The quality of soil in the surrounding area seems to have been a factor in determining the location of parish churches and their associated settlements. Finch, (1971) recorded and mapped the soils of the Buren and identified rendzina as the most common type among a wide and varied range of soils in the region. This thin, dark, free-draining organic soil, dominates many upland grasslands and is well suited to winter grazing, but are otherwise limited agriculturally as they are usually nutrient-poor (Dunford 2002, 8). Deeper, more fertile mineral soils were deposited by glaciers moving along the along valleys and hillsides, forming pockets of free-draining fertile boulder clay. These pockets are suitable for tillage and year round grazing. Small pockets of deeper soil were suitable for cultivated by hand (ibid., 7-9).

In general, the Ó Lochlainn lords of Burren their kin and chief vassals had their centres on prime lands, such as the chief Ó Lochlainn residence at Gragan and a cadet branch at Glencolmbkille, near the western boundary of Burren (9.2.1). These centres had access to soils, which Finch (1971) classifies as type ‘a’ with no serious limitations, ‘very good for tillage and very good for grassland’. Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 326-31) demonstrates that while tower-houses were located near prime lands, churches were also located near the best available soils, suited to tillage and well suited to pastoral farming.

Rivers and streams run mainly underground through the Burren and the only over-ground river is the Caher, near Fanore. Others appear over-ground for a short period before again disappearing under-ground, such as the Oweentoberlea at Killeany (Feehan 1991, 18-9), while others only appear suddenly and briefly after heavy rainfall, as occurs at Oughtmama. Wells provide a source of water supply in other areas.

Three main routeways run north to south through the Burren following the natural geology of the region, these run through the Caher valley to the west, linking Lisdoonvarna to Fanore, from the Burren uplands through the Turlough valley to the natural harbour at Ballyvaughan and from the Ó Briain caput at Leamaneh to Carcair
na gCléireach, Corker Pass. The most important east-west routeway leading from the Burren is in the northeast at Carcair na gCléireach, leading from the Cistercian abbey at Corcomroe and Oughtmama to the plains of south Galway.

Figure 41: Routeways through Burren

This routeway was described in 1599 (AFM vi, 2103), when Aodh Ó Domhnaill and his followers plundered Thomond and proceeded homeward with their spoils, ‘passing by Nuachongbhaill (Noughaval), Turlach, the monastery of Corcomroe, and Carcair-na-gCleireach (Corker Pass)’. This entry establishes that this important routeway existed from at least the late sixteenth century.

The only possible east-west routeway is the pass through the Glencolumbkille valley between Slieveecarran to the north and Turloughmore to the south. The main approach from the south follows the modern road from Corofin westward to the medieval diocesan centre at Kilfenora. These routeways may have been poorly defined tracks but would have been important arteries of communication and transport in the medieval, if not prehistoric times (Gosling 1991, 124-7).
**Historical Background**

The Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren and the adjoining lordship to the southwest, Corcomroe, formed part of the early medieval *tricha cét* of Corcu Modruad and the later medieval diocese of Kilfenora. Corcu Modruad was an early medieval *tricha cét*, however, by the middle of the eighth century it came under increasing pressure from the Déis Tuaiscirt, later the Dál Cais. Following their defeat in battle in 744 AD, Corcu Modruad were driven into the area now comprising the baronies of Corcomroe and Burren (Ó Corráin 1972, 7). After the death in 983AD of Máel Sechnaill the Uí Thoirdelbaig king of Corcu Modruad, rule moved between the descendants of his son, Lochlainn and his nephew Conchobar (Gibson 2012, 200).

By the high medieval period, there were two lordships or sub-territories of Corcu Modruad, with the Uí Conchobhair holding in the west and the Uí Lochlainn in the east.

In the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the kingship of the united realm of Corcu Modruad fluctuated between the ruling families of Ó Conchobhair and Ó Lochlainn. Hogan (1928, 231–2) concludes ‘although there were two distinct spheres of political influence in Corcu Modhruadh from the eleventh century onward the entire territory formed a single *tricha cét.*’ It is probable that Corcu Modruad was a single political entity at the time the diocese of Kilfenora was established after the, Synod of Kells 1152 and fragmented into two distinct and independent lordships sometime before the fourteenth century.

The arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169 was a pivotal event in Irish history; however, it did not have had an immediate impact on the people of Burren. A process of greater significance was the reforms of the Church in Ireland, which were underway in the course of the late twelfth, and early thirteenth centuries. These reforms brought profound change to the Irish Church and during which pre-reform monastic communities were irrevocably altered. One of the consequences of the reforms was the introduction of new Continental orders to Corcu Modhruadh, such as the Cistercian and the Augustinians. The Cistercians founded an abbey at Corcomroe, in 1194/5 (Stalley 1987, 243-4) and the Augustinians established Kilshanny Abbey in 1194 (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 469). The patron of Kilshanny was
Donal Mór Ó Briain, king of Thomond and Corcomroe was patronised by Donal Mór or his son Donough Cairbreach (Stalley 1975, 25-7).

The reforming synods envisaged the establishment of a parochial network, with each parish in a defined territory, with its own parish church, priest, tithes and endowment, under the control of the diocesan bishop (Addleshaw 1953, 3). The process of parish formation did not begin in Ireland until the decades following the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, in the areas they controlled, however it is not as clear when the process begun, or was completed, in areas which remained under Gaelic control. However, Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 152-4) describes ‘an explosion in church-building towards the end of the twelfth century that probably indicates that the process of parish formation was well under way by this time. Many pre-reform monasteries survived the major changes of this period and reappeared as parish churches. The difficulties of pre-reform monastic communities were exacerbated in 1210 when The Council of Tuam transferred ownership of church lands from coarbs and eneaghs, hereditary stewards of churchlands, to the bishop. However, these ecclesiastical families continued in possession of their lands, but now as tenants of the bishop (Nicholls 2003, 127-30).
Chapter 7 Oughtmama – spatial organisation of an erenagh settlement

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the plan and layout of the settlement cluster at the parish church of Oughtmama and to establish a social and cultural context for them in a Gaelic dominated lordship during the later medieval and early modern periods. Oughtmama was an important place. It was a significant ecclesiastical centre in the north Burren from its foundation in the early medieval until well into the later medieval period. The parish was located on the northeast boundary of the early medieval Tricha Cét of Corcu Modruad, and the later lordships of Burren and Corcomroe. The region was never actively colonised, but nonetheless, it was exposed to the colonial world under the overlordship of the Ó Briain, especially in the sixteenth century and remained culturally stable and Gaelic during the period 1200-1600. The parish was formed as a consequence of the twelfth-century reforms of the Irish church that also saw the introduction of new Continental orders. As historical context, I explore the impact of the new Cistercian Abbey of

Figure 42: Location map of Burren in Co. Clare
Saint Mary’s, Corcomroe, its effect on the community of Oughtmama and their response during their transition from pre-reform monastery to parish church.

The churchlands at Oughtmama were occupied by erenaghs, church officials who were responsible for the upkeep of church fabric and farmed its churchlands. The site around the parish church is a layered, or palimpsest, cultural landscape. In this chapter, I present and examine the remains of the buildings at the parish church at Oughtmama and explore their relationship to the monastic enclosures, later field walls and areas of terracing. It is also shown that a consideration of the spatial relationship of the buildings to each other provides an insight into how space may have been used and how people moved through and around this church-centred settlement.

I will also assess modifications to the fabric of the church, historical sources, such as The Register of Papal Letters (CPR), maps and seventeenth-century records, in order to identify and discuss changes, as the settlement matured and declined over time.

7.2 Territorial geography, history and local topography

The parish of Oughtmama is bounded to the north by Galway bay and in the south, it extends to the Burren uplands and Sliabh Cairn, at a height of 326m. The eastern boundary of the parish is the boundary of counties Clare and Galway and to the west, Sliabh Ailwee bound the parish at a height of 300m. Some townlands in the northern extent of the parish are separated, or detached from the main area of the parish by the parish of Abbey. To the south lays the parish of Carran, to the south-west Kilcorney, the west Rathborney and Drumcreehy, and all parishes are within the barony of Burren and medieval dioceses of Kilfenora.

Being located on the northeastern boundary of Corcu Modruad, the parish occupied an important strategic position. The boundary marked the limit of colonial expansion in the later medieval period and, politically, Burren remained in Gaelic control throughout this period. There are two natural routeways running through the parish, which are marked by modern roads. The N67 runs from east to west following the coastline, then south, skirting the inlet of Poulnaclogh Bay and the village of Bealaclugga (Bell Harbour), continuing west, through Ballyvaughan and south to
Ennistymon. The N 67 divides the detached townlands in the parish to the north from those in the southern zone. A regional road, the L 1014, branches from the N 67, at the boundary of Corcu Modruad, through the Corker Pass (Corcar Na Cléireach) ‘The Monks Pass’ also which divides the parishes of Abbey and Oughtmama. The L 1014 proceeds through the Dubh Gleann valley between Abbey Hill to the north and Slieve Oughtmama to the south (fig. 41). This was an ancient routeway into Corcu Modruad from Galway and runs to Leamaneh Castle, where it meets a major east-west routeway leading to the medieval diocesan centre at Kilfenora. The townlands to the north of the routeway are named Abbey East and Abbey West and are undoubtedly abbey lands associated with the Abbey of St. Mary’s, Corcomroe c. 300m, to the north of the routeway.

Oughtmama contained 4,064 plantation acres in the BSD in the seventeenth century, with some townlands detached from the main area of the parish, separated by the parish of Abbey, which contains the Cistercian abbey of St. Mary, Corcomroe (fig. 43). Detached townlands may indicate that at one time, the

Figure 43: Detached townlands of Oughtmama parish
parishes of Oughtmama and Abbey were united, covering the entire Dubh Gleann area, and that Abbey parish was established at the time of the foundation of the abbey in the late twelfth century. Both Abbey and Oughtmama shared the Dubh Glean valley and it is rare for two parishes to share a valley or, a distinct topographical feature. Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 254-7) cites this feature in order to support the view that the parishes originally formed a single parochial unit. In the Burren, as elsewhere in Ireland the geography of pre-existing land territorial units formed the basis of the parish. The parish was coterminous with the early medieval túath (Nugent 2006, 187; MacCotter 2008, 48), and it is probable that a single túath was the basis for the territory of both Abbey and Oughtmama.

The boundaries of Oughtmama, like most parishes in Burren, follow natural boundaries, particularly watersheds. The low-lying coastal valley of Dubh Gleann, which divides the parishes, contains some of the best soils in the diocese of Kilfenora (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 254). Oughtmama contained some good deep brown-earth soils, which were well suited to arable and pastoral farming. The valley of Abbey was described by Lewis (1837, i, 1) as follows, ‘The greater portion is under tillage; the land along the coast produces good crops of wheat’. The parish contains a rich diversity of agricultural resources, from the maritime resources in the north, the rich, brown well-drained soils of the Dubh Gleann in the central zone of the parish and to the south of the limestone karst uplands that provided rich winter grazing.

The importance of Oughtmama is reflected in the large number of monuments listed for the parish in the RMP for Co. Clare (archaeology.ie)30. The recorded monuments range from prehistoric wedge tombs, cists, fulacht fia, a hill fort, and a cliff edge fort, to enclosed settlements, children’s burial grounds, a penitential station, and the remains of medieval churches. The list of monuments also includes a mill and castle. The Cistercian abbey of St. Mary’s (Petra Fertili) Corcomroe was founded c. 1194/5 (Stalley 1987, 243-4) in the adjoining parish of Abbey and had a close relationship with the parish of Oughtmama. Finnavarra, one of the detached townlands of Oughtmama in the north of the parish, was the home of the Uí Dalaigh, hereditary poets to the Ó Lochlainns (Frost 1898, 27).

7.3 Oughtmama townland

The medieval parish church of Oughtmama is in the townland of the same name in the northeastern part of the parish. The eastern boundaries of the townland delimit the extent of the parish and mark the boundary of the lordship of Burren. The townland is surrounded on three sides by low hills (fig. 44). To the north lays Abbey Hill (OD 240m), to the east Slieve Oughtmama, (OD 240m), and to the south lays Turlough Hill (OD 280m). These low hills form an amphitheatre, which is open to the north, facing the sea and Galway Bay.

The townland includes an area of rich, fertile land and an area of karst upland with the three churches sited on the interface between the two zones. The strategic location of the settlement between upland and lowland areas underlines the value of diversity in a mixed farming, arable and pastoral economy. Dunford (2002, 8) describes the upland ‘that sporadically cloth the skeletal limestone of the Burren’ as widely varied in type and quality. ‘The most common type is described as rendzina, a very thin (usually <5cm) dark, free-draining organic soil that dominates many upland grasslands. The soils are well suited to winter grazing, as it remains relatively dry and warm throughout the year, whereas the rich fertile soils of the valley are eminently suitable for tillage and year-round grazing. The upland limestone retains heat, built up over the summer, and is dissipated over the winter, ensuring a dry, warm lie and is very resistant to water logging, muddying and erosion’ (Dunford 2002, 39).
7.3.1 Oughtmama in the historical context of parish formation

An important aim of this thesis is to establish why settlement clusters occurred at parish churches in the period 1200-1600 and a crucial question is when was the parish of Oughtmama formed? Although there is little recorded history of the site, a monastery was supposedly founded there by St. Colmán MacDuach in the seventh century (Frost 1898, 25-7) and it remained an important ecclesiastical centre throughout the early medieval and later medieval periods. Reforms of the church in Ireland that were underway in the course of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, brought about profound change to the Irish Church. The pre-reform monastic community of Oughtmama was irrevocably altered by the reforms. The diocese of Kilfenora was established following the synod of Kells in 1152. One of the consequences of the reforms was the introduction of new Continental orders, such as the Cistercians, and in all probability, the first impact of reforms was the foundation of the Cistercian Abbey of Saint Mary’s at Corcomroe, just over 1km north-west of Oughtmama.

The reforming synods also envisaged the establishment of a parochial network. Each parish was to be located within a defined territory, with its own parish church, priest, tithes and endowment, under the control of the diocesan bishop (Addleshaw 1953, 3). The process of the parish formation did not begin in Ireland until the decades following the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, in 1169, in the areas they controlled. However, it is not as clear when the process of reform begun, or was completed, in areas that remained in the control of Gaelic lords.

The geographical evidence of the detached townlands of the parish Oughtmama, (7.2), led Ní Ghabhláin (1996, 45) to suggest that a portion of church lands of Oughtmama was granted to the Cistercians that and this change implied a switch in patronage from Oughtmama to the Cistercians coincided with parish formation. The difficulties of Oughtmama were exacerbated in 1210 when The Council of Tuam transferred ownership of church lands from the hereditary stewards, erenaghs and coarbs to the bishop. Erenaghs and coarbs continued in possession of their lands, but now as tenants of the bishop (Ó Scea 2012, 274). The ecclesiastical taxation list of 1302-6 (CDI, v, 298-9) can provide an insight into ecclesiastical revenues of
individual parishes and other religious foundations. Oughtmama was not included in the list and the reference to ‘The chapel of the monks’ with a value of 20 shillings is generally considered to refer to Corcomroe Abbey (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 225).

It is worth noting that the valuation of the chapel of the monks at 20 shillings is particularly low for a Cistercian abbey and lower than that the ordinary parish church in the diocese of Kilfenora which were consistently valued at 23 shillings or 26 shillings. On the basis of the valuation, any suggestion that the benefice of Oughtmama was incorporated with Abbey can be dismissed.

The omission raises doubts as to whether Oughtmama had attained parochial status at that time. Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 324 -5) interprets the omission as, ‘Oughtmama monastery is not mentioned, probably because it did not serve as a parish church, but there is evidence of re-building there in the fifteenth century’. The omission appears to contradict the physical evidence, which is discussed below (7.4.1).

7.4 The cultural landscape around the parish church

The area surrounding the parish church is a palimpsest cultural landscape containing the ruins of three churches, monastic enclosures, wall-footings of a settlement cluster and areas of terracing, a millrace, field-walls, other bank and enclosures. Many features interrelate, and to obtain an understanding of the sequence of events I have attempted to strip back the layers in the landscape and examine these relationships, to suggest a chronology for the houses.

7.4.1 The parish church and ancillary churches

The three medieval churches are the most impressive architectural feature at Oughtmama. The westerly church (Oughtmama 1) is the earliest and largest on the site and emerged as the parish church in the later medieval period (fig. 45). A number of phases are evident; the earliest was a single cell church, measuring 14m internally with a trabeate lintelled west doorway and a monolithic east window. This phase is dated to the second half of the eleventh century, based on the hollow-chamfered corbels on the western corners of the church (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 127-8). There are hints of an earlier church in the fabric of the north and south walls but there is no dating evidence for this possible phase. A further early medieval feature is
the use of large cyclopean masonry blocks, however, questions arise on the use of cyclopean masonry as a methodology for ascribing an early medieval date to ecclesiastical foundations, as local geology had an influence on the size of blocks employed. Nonetheless the large, to massive, masonry blocks in Oughtmama 1 with few spalls, squared and shaped to provide an excellent fitting are described by Ó Carragáin (2005, 124) as ‘fine early masonry’.

Towards the end of the twelfth or early thirteenth century, the church was extended and enlarged, an arch as inserted into the east-gable wall and a chancel added. During this phase, the nave was extended to the west and widened to the south.

The original west trabeate doorway with its massive lintel was re-erected in the west gable wall (fig. 46) and the earlier hollow-chamfered corbels were reused (Ó Carragáin 2010, 300-13). Two tall transitional windows were placed in the south wall, the lintel of the original round headed window lays ex situ to the west (ibid.). The nave of the enlarged church (int. dims 14.2m E-W; 6.82m N-S) and the chancel (int. dims. 6.34m E-W; 5.37m N-S) provides an internal space of 130.9m². The dating evidence for this phase is the two transitional windows in the south wall, which dates from the late twelfth century and the bowtell mouldings of the corbels in the chancel that date from the early thirteenth century (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 482-4). The evidence suggests that the work was carried out in two phases, which coincided
with the period of parish formation in the diocese of Kilfenora. The extension and modernisation of the church indicates that the pre-twelfth century monastic church made the transition to parish church and the work made it suitable for that purpose.

The retention of the lintel and the reuse of the hollow-chamfered corbels demonstrate an anxiety to maintain some of the integrity of the early medieval building (Ó Carragáin 2010, 299-300).

A further change in masonry style indicates that the church was re-roofed and new parapets were added in the fifteenth or sixteenth century (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 172). This was also a time of intensive church building in Kilfenora, when the majority of parish churches in Kilfenora were either rebuilt or altered.

The second church, Oughtmama 2 (fig. 47), is smaller, (int. dims. 7.3m E-W; 4.35m N-S) shares the same east to west alignment as Oughtmama 1 and is located to the immediate east of Oughtmama 1. This single-cell church has a round arch and its doorway in the west wall, dates to the end of the twelfth century, similar to the extension phase of Oughtmama 1 (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 146).
The smallest church, Oughtmama 3 (fig. 48) (int. dims. 6.6m SW-NE; 3.7m SE-NW) is c 230m northeast of Oughtmama 1 and it has a slightly different alignment. Whereas Oughtmama 1 and 2 are orientated east to west, Oughtmama 3 is orientated southwest to northeast. The church is in a poor state of preservation and, in contrast to the other churches, the doorway is in the south wall. The east window is round-headed and may be transitional, which dates the church to the beginning of the thirteenth century.

The parish church was extended and modernised and the two smaller churches were built within a relatively short time-frame, from the last quarter of the twelfth to the early decades of the thirteenth century. There were
undoubtedly earlier churches, which may have been of stone or possibly timber, but no traces of these have survived. Multiple churches are not an unusual feature at later medieval sites. They may have been used for different purposes, such as shrine chapels, or served different segments of the community, such as monks, the lay community and women (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 198-9) and they are also an index of patronage.

It is possible that the pre-reform Irish monasteries viewed the twelfth-century reforms of the Irish Church with concern and a threat to their existence, as many monasteries turned to organising pilgrimages in order to survive (Harbison 2000, 4-5). Oughtmama may have been a saintly cult centre dedicated to St. Colmán, founder of the early medieval monastery and Oughtmama 3 may have been a shrine chapel in the later medieval period. This could explain the distinctive alignment of the church. Mitchel (2001, 209-22) suggests that an apparently arbitrary off-axial location, may be a way of signalling the exceptional power of the cult, by implying that it cannot be subordinated to the dictates of symmetrical design. Oughtmama 3 may have been aligned on the rising sun on the feast day of the saint (Ali and Cunich 2001, 155-93). The cult of St. Colmán is associated with the nearby holy well, dedicated to the saint. O’Donovan (O’Flanagan 1927, 31-7) records the tradition of a pattern there on 5 November. The hermitage of St Colmán is located to the south of Oughtmama, in the townland of Keelhilla in the adjoining parish of Carran (9.5).

### 7.4.2 Enclosures

The parish church and ancillary churches are located within a series of enclosures that obviously relate to the monastic phase of the site. It has been suggested (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 480-1; Jones 2004, 91) that there were two enclosures. However, the LiDAR image reveals that there were possibly three enclosures (fig. 40). The three sub-circular enclosures, the outer *vallum* (c. 340m E-W, 290m N-S), the central *vallum* (c. diam. c. 175m) and the inner *vallum* (diam. c. 75m) are clearly visible on the LiDAR image in the north-east and south-west quadrants. The two larger churches, Oughtmama 1 and 2 are located within the inner *vallum*, while the small church, Oughtmama 3 is located in the central enclosure. The enclosures, their
relation to the buildings at the settlement and their use as chronological indicators are discussed below (7.5.2).

There are a number of north-south linear features apparent on the LiDAR image. There is no obvious explanation for these, however, as this area has been the centre of intensive tillage and grazing activity, since at least the early medieval period, as indicated by the nearby mill, it is reasonable to propose that the features may relate to farming activity.

### 7.4.3 Terracing

There are a number of areas of man-made terracing around the churches (fig. 50). An area of terracing lays to the northeast of the two larger churches. This area (c. 0.50 acres) and adjoins the outer side of the inner enclosure. There are further areas of terracing (c. 0.60 acres) to the east of the outer enclosure (c. 0.27 acres), to the south of the small church, between the inner enclosure and the central enclosure. There is no dating evidence for the terracing, but they are truncated by later field walls, which suggest that they possibly relate to the later medieval period.

### 7.4.4 Mill

To the east of the monastic enclosures there is what O’Donovan, (O’ Flanagan 1927, 31-7) described as ‘a mill which once belonged to the clergy of Oughtmama, the site of which is still pointed out’. The stream, which feeds the mill, ‘was once conducted
through an artificial channel in the direction of the Churches’. The footprint of the mill and millrace is still visible on the ground (fig. 50). However, there is no dating evidence for the construction or use of what must have been a horizontal mill (Jones, 2004, 90-1) but, based on O’Donovan’s observation and recorded folk memory it is possible to suggest that it may relate to the later medieval period.

![Figure 50: Terracing, millrace and stream fed by Tobar Colmán](image)

### 7.4.5 Water

Access to a reliable supply of water would have been an important consideration for the community, their livestock and the operation of the water mill. As watercourses shifted over the centuries it is very difficult to ascertain with certainty, what the position was in the later medieval period. However, there are a number of springs to the east of the settlement and in addition, there was a very substantial holy well, Tobar Colmán, located c. 0.5km east of the settlement. There are indications that watercourses were manipulated in the past. The well feeds a stream known as Sruth na Naomh ‘the stream of the saint’. Water from the well has been piped in modern times and is used to supply water to animals in the Oughtmama area. The consequence is that the millrace is now dry.
When there is particularly heavy rainfall the springs and the well overflows and a torrential volume descends from the east and forms a fast-flowing stream through the
settlement at the interface between the karst limestone area and the fertile soil. The stream flows south of the parish church and disappears through a sinkhole to the southwest of the church within the *vallum* of the monastic site (fig. 51). A bank in the field to the east of Oughtmama 1 was probably built to contain the stream when in spate. There is also a suggestion of a bank southeast of the millrace that diverted water into the millrace. It is clear that water was manipulated and managed at Oughtmama, but it is unclear when this occurred.

### 7.5. The Settlement at Oughtmama

There are the wall-footings of six buildings to the east of the churches, and a hint of a possible building to the west. The settlement is listed in the RMP as a ‘deserted medieval settlement’ (CL003-032005). O’Donovan (O’Flanagan 1927, 31-7) noted that there were traces of the ‘village’, but that ‘little is to be seen there but the foundations of small quadrangular houses’. The surveyors recorded the site as ‘Oughtmama Old Town’ that appears in the first-edition six-inch OS map. The Ordnance Survey of Ireland of the site provided a LiDAR data set in 2012 (fig. 51) and this was used in combination with field survey to record these buildings.

**O1 (Oughtmama 1)**

![Figure 52: Balloon - kite image of O1](image-url)
The grass-covered stone wall-footings of structure O1 (Oughtmama 1) (fig. 52) are located at the northern end of a south-facing field, in permanent pasture and are c. 150m northeast of the small church. The wall-footings are (int. dims. c. 10m SW-NE; 5M x 5m SE-NW). The walls are c. 1m thick and stand c. 0.20m to 0.50m over the surrounding field level and 0.23m to 0.50m above the interior of the building. There is no indication of an internal partition. An entrance is evident in the southwest wall, and faces structures O2 and O3. The south-west wall of house was built against the east bank of the outer monastic enclosure.

**O2.**

*Figure 53: O2 from north*

The stone wall-footings of building O2 (fig.53) are located to the immediate south of O1. The building (int. dims. c. 11m SW-NE; 5m SE-NW) has walls c. 1m thick, stand 0.40m over the surrounding field level and 0.10m above the interior of the building. There is evidence for a possible entrance in the southwest wall. The building is enclosed by a curvilinear bank that is conjoined at the northeast corner. The bank is c. 25m in diameter, 2m thick and stands 0.20m over the surrounding field level. The enclosure is connected to the building O3 to the south (fig. 54).
O3

The earthworks (ext. dims c. 12.8m SW-NE; 6m SE-NW) are defined as an elevated platform, that stand c. 0.40m over the surrounding field level with a level interior.

The earthworks are located to the immediate south of O2. The building is conjoined at the north-west corner to the same curvilinear bank that encloses O2 (fig. 54). To the south of the building the outer vallum, continues south for a further 18m. The vallum is 2.5m thick and stands c. 0.40m over the surrounding field level.

O4

The stone wall-footings this building (int. dims. c. 8m NW-SE; 5m NE-SW) with walls c. 1m thick and stand c. 0.30m over the surrounding field level and c. 0.20m over the interior of the building (fig. 55). The wall-footings are located to the southeast of O1 and to the northeast of O2 and are truncated by a field wall. The field wall runs north to south and is 0.30m thick and 1.50m high. The gable wall-footings, on the east of the field wall are in situ and the long wall, which is truncated, can be seen on both sides of the field wall. However, the north-west long wall and the north-west gable wall are almost completely denuded, to the west of the field wall. The measurements are estimated based on the dimensions of the surviving walls.

Figure 54: Lidar image of O2 and O3 within curvilinear enclosure
7.5.1 Interpreting the easterly house cluster

The four houses in this cluster are in close proximity to each other and share similar morphological features. The long axis of three houses (O1, O2 and O3) have the same general, south-west to northeast alignment and have a remarkable consistency in size and plan. They are likely to have resembled each other and may be contemporary. Due to their fragmentary condition, it is only possible to identify a possible entrance in O1 and O2, and in both houses, the entrance is in the southwest long wall. The ground where the houses are located is gently sloping to the south and O1, on the higher ground, overlooks the other houses in the cluster. The curvilinear enclosure surrounding O2 and connected to O3 may have related to the management of stock, but it would also have provided the inhabitants with privacy and shelter. The south-facing entrance is focused on the adjoining building O3 to the south and beyond to the karst foothills of Turlough Hill.

The long axis of the fourth house in this cluster, O4, runs north-west to southeast and is on a different alignment to the other houses in the cluster. The wall-footings are very fragmented due to truncation by a field wall. The wall-footings of the east gable have survived and the south-west long wall has survived on either side of the field wall that truncates it. The wall thickness of O1, O2 and O4 can be reliably identified.
and show a consistency of c. 1m. The internal space of O1, O2 and O3 range from
$50m^2$, $55m^2$ and $40m^2$ and in the case of O4, $24m^2$.

The decision to build a building on a particular alignment cannot have been a random choice. The consistency in three of the buildings in this cluster must have had meaning for the community and, combined with the constancy of wall thickness and size, supports the suggestion that the houses were in contemporary use and may have formed a composite farmstead. The northwest to southeast alignment of the fourth house in the cluster, O4, is different to the other building, but a wall thickness of c. 1m is remarkably consistent.

**O5**

![Figure 56: O5 truncated by field wall](image)

The grass-covered stone wall-footings of O5 (fig. 56) are located c. 5m west of the small church and c. 25m northwest of O6. The wall-footings are very fragmented, they are truncated by a field and visible remains can be seen to the east of the wall, but to the west, they are completely denuded. The sections of the two surviving wall-footings suggest a building (int. dims. c. 5m NW-SE; 5m SW-NE) the walls are 1m thick and stand c. 0.25m above the surrounding field surface and 0.20 above the interior of the building. As the wall-footings are very disturbed, the exact dimensions
of the building are unknown. The wall-footings are not apparent on LiDar but are visible on the ground.

The building is of particular interest because is truncated by a field wall, which is useful in proposing a chronology for the building (7.5.2). The suggested wall thickness of c. 1m is consistent with other houses on the site. The orientation of this house is similar to O4, and both structures may have had a different function, or may represent accretions over time.

**O6**

The visible remains of O6 are located in the same area as O5 and 15m southeast of the small church. The grass-covered stone wall-footings of the building (int. dim. c. 7.50m NW-SE; 3.50m SW-NE), the walls are c. 1m thick and stand c. 0.25m over the surrounding field surface and 0.25m above the interior of the building (fig. 57).

There is a possible entrance in the northeast wall and no evidence for an internal partition. The wall-footings are located in a hollow area and partially enclosed by a curvilinear stone wall. Within the enclosure, there is a terraced area to the west, truncated by a field wall, which runs north to south. The terracing probably relates to the same period of occupation and may have been a garden that was attached to the house. Between the house and the terraced area, there is a north to south hollow-way, suggesting a track or drove-way connecting the house to the karst uplands to the south or to water. This house is the smallest on the site and lays on

*Figure 57: Balloon - kite image of O6*
a different alignment. O6 is close to the small church and slightly peripheral to the cluster to the east, yet the entrance in the long wall is focused on the cluster. Isolation is also suggested by the enclosing bank. These factors suggest privacy, and the structure may have been the home of the incumbent priest (7.6).

![Figure 58: Enclosed buildings O2 and O6](image)

Two houses at Oughtmama, O2 and O6 (fig. 59) are enclosed by curvilinear banks, a feature also shared by a house at Noughaval (8.8.3), excavated by Ní Ghabhláin (1992). There are some similarities in the siting of N5 and O6. Both houses were apart from the main settlement cluster. The bank enclosing O2 is less substantial, only 0.20m above the surrounding surface and its location is different. Unlike O6 and N5, O6 is located in the heart of the cluster. There are recognisable similarities and differences in the enclosures, however, each has delaminated space that suggests ‘privacy’.

**O7**

In the gentle sloping, south facing rectangular field, of 2.23 acres in permanent pasture, c. 30m west of parish church there are hints of possible buildings (fig. 59). The evidence for the building O7 is the most enigmatic at Oughtmama. The area contains part of the central monastic *vallum* and a number of enclosures and linear
banks. The LiDAR image reveals a hint of a rectangular feature that cut the *vallum*. This feature may be the remains of a building, or the entrance to a sub-rectangular enclosure that abuts the east side of the *vallum*. Within the sub-rectangular enclosure, there is faint evidence of the foundations of a building, which is rectangular in plan, with its long axis aligned north to south. The east bank of the sub-rectangular enclosure truncates a possible sub-circular features that may be a building. The features are identifiable on the image depicted on LiDAR, however, they are not distinguishable on the ground. Only excavation can reveal the precise nature of these possible buildings. They may relate to the monastic phase of the complex or to the later medieval period.

![LiDAR image of possible building](image)

*Figure 59: LiDAR image of possible building, O7*

### 7.5.2 **Boundary walls as chronological indicators**

The buildings, field walls, monastic *vallum* and their relationship to each other are important to our understanding of the chronology of the settlement. As a method of establishing a later medieval genesis horizon for the houses, I attempt to strip the later features from the multi-layered landscape to establish a timeline for the buildings.

The modern landscape around the parish church is organised in a series of linear field strips that are enclosed by stone field walls approximately 1.5m in height and 0.30m
thick. A comparative analysis of the first-edition six-inch OS maps (1842) and the second-edition (1914) reveals that new field boundaries were erected in the fields to the immediate north of the settlement. This phase of modern enclosure was possibly due to landlord intervention or more likely to have been the outcome of the activities of the Congested Districts Board, in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century (Aalen, Whelan et al. 1997, 140).

The first-edition six-inch OS map also reveal that field boundaries enclosing some of the strip fields within the settlement were in situ prior to 1842 and the field walls which truncate some of the buildings were unaffected by nineteenth- and twentieth-century enclosure. Enclosure, drainage and reclamation were changes in agricultural practices that reflected the concept of private ownership and improvement. The notion of improvement was firmly established in Britain by the end of the seventeenth century and spread to Ireland in the course of the eighteenth century (Forsythe 2007, 223-4). These field walls were erected when the landscape underwent a major reorganisation. This can be reliably attributed to modern improvement, probably in the course of the eighteenth century. There may have been a medieval pattern of field enclosure associated with the hinterland that is not marked on maps and is therefore concealed from us.

Two building (O4 and O5) clearly have a relationship to the linear field walls, as they are truncated by them (figs. 55 and 56). The field walls respect the profile of the wall-footings and fossilised their shape when the field walls were built. There must have been a considerable time-lapse from the construction, occupation, abandonment, collapse and falling into ruin of the buildings and the erection of the boundaries that preserved the final phase in the life of the buildings. The building predated this phase of enclosure by a considerable period and possibly relate to the later medieval period.

The footprint of the vallum is eroded, however, many sections and can be easily identified and others are clearly visible on the LiDar image (fig. 52). The outer vallum, a substantial enclosure c. 2.5m thick, enclosed and delimited the monastic site. O1, O2 and O3 in the eastern section and possibly O7 in the western section, have a relationship to the vallum that appears to have been cut to facilitate the
construction of the buildings. It is inconceivable that the *vallum*, which defined the sanctuary or sacred space of the monastery would have been breached in this manner during the monastic phase of the settlement. It is possible that buildings were built in gaps where previously there had been entrances to the monastery. Entrances in the eastern and western quadrants were a characteristic of some monastic sites, such as Nendrum, Co. Down (McErlean and Crothers 2007), and may have been a feature of the monastic site at Oughtmama. Whether a breach was created, or existing entrances gaps were used, the buildings must have post-dated the monastic phase of the settlement. By then the *vallum* would have ceased to define the sacred space of the monastery. This must have occurred after the time Oughtmama emerged as a parish in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. Therefore, the buildings must post-date the breakup of the monastic tradition and relate to the later medieval period. The relationship between the buildings, the later field walls and the *vallum* provide chronological indicators that suggest the buildings were built after the late twelfth century and considerably before the eighteenth-century phase of enclosure and it is reasonable to propose that they relate to the later medieval period.

7.5.4 Use of space and movement

*Figure 60: LiDAR image with possible hollow-ways indicated*
Space, architecture and boundaries provide, as Smyth describes, ‘a structure for human action, allowing some interactions and activities and barring or discouraging others and therefore impact on social meaning’ (Smyth 1988, 67-8). Hollow-ways, drove-ways and lane-ways facilitated movement of the inhabitants and the management of stock within the settlement. They would have reflected the inhabitant’s experience of community as they moved within the settlement. The entrances to the settlement can inform approaches to and from the settlement, and movement within the wider landscape.

A significant embanked hollow-way in the north sector of the settlement runs north to south, leading from outside the monastic site to the parish church (fig. 59). It is difficult to interpret this feature, as it appears to be truncated by the vallum. It is possible, however, that the hollow-way relates to the later medieval phase of the settlement and, as this is the most visible hollow-way in the settlement, it may have been a street within the settlement with house-plots adjoining it, but there is no visible evidence of any structures in this zone. There is a hollow-way running east to west, between structures O2 and O3. This may have been used for the movement of livestock to pastures to the east of the settlement, or it may suggest movement to and from the mill that was also sited to the east. Two hollow-ways run north to south and terminate near the gully which floods when the stream is in spate. These hollow-ways were probably drove-ways for the movement of livestock within the settlement, on their way to and from watering places.

The houses were not set-out on a grid and therefore, based on the English experience (Roberts 1987, 20-32), there are no indications that the houses were laid-out at a single time to an overall plan. Rather the house clusters were agglomerated around the parish church. The settlement was small and by the standards of English or Anglo-Norman villages may not be considered a fully functioning village, nonetheless, there is a degree of nucleation in the later medieval period, as the houses were focused on the parish church.

The builders have avoided the terraced area to the east of the outer vallum (fig. 51). This area may have been a platea, which like the secular fuitche is sometimes
translated as a ‘green’ (DIL).\(^{31}\) Like Tullaherin (6.8.1), symbolic meaning attached to the feature was recognised by successive generations, which ensured its preservation (Gardiner and Rippon 2007, 1).

### 7.6 Populating the landscape

During the later medieval period, parish churchlands were occupied by coarbs (*comarba*) and erenaghs (*airchinnech*), as tenants of the bishop. In the early medieval period, coarbs were the descendants, or heirs, of the founding saint while erenaghs were the stewards of church lands and responsible for the church fabric. Erenaghs were not necessarily priests, but many may have been in minor orders and as such, they were clerics and tonsured. Coarbs, who were known by their surname, had a higher status than erenaghs, known by their, title ‘erenagh’. Erenaghs retained their sense of what Jefferies (1999, 16) described as ‘ecclesiastics’ and were recognised as such throughout the medieval period. They were usually able to speak Latin and a very high proportion of priests were from erenagh septs (ibid.). Clerical celibacy was largely ignored in Gaelic areas in the later medieval period and many priests and bishops were married, or kept concubines and usually passed on their offices to their own descendants (Simms 1978, 70).

As a consequence of the reform movement, the Council of Tuam (1210) transferred control of churchlands to the bishops. The transfer was possibly the culmination of a process of establishing a hierarchal structure and enhancing the control and authority of bishops, envisaged by the reformers and an inevitable outcome of a process underway from at least the beginning of the twelfth century. Erenaghs continued in possession of their lands but now as chief tenants of episcopal lands. This change ‘redefined the respective roles of the *airchinnech*, the *comarba* and the *sacart*’ (Ó Scea 2012, 274). The power of the pre-reform erenagh was reduced and the reforms instituted the system of hereditary erenagh families tied to the church lands, which were redistributed, at least in theory, on a parochial basis (ibid.). Erenaghs were responsible for collection of parochial tithes, the maintenance of the fabric of church buildings, ensuring the celebration of Mass and the fulfilment of their hereditary

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obligations of providing hospitality to the bishop, pilgrims and travellers (Simms 1978, 70; Jefferies 1999, 16). Erenaghs were specialist ecclesiastical families, however, erenaghs were also farmers of church lands, some of which was occupied by other members of the sept in return for rent, and service in the same manner as temporal lords.

We have a practical example of late fourteenth-century guesting (Reeves 1850, 10) when William Colton, Archbishop of Armagh and primate of all Ireland, visited the vacant see of Derry in October 1397. In the course of his ten-day visitation, the archbishop and his retinue were hosted for five nights by erenaghs. The first night was spent at Ardstraw, Co. Tyrone, where the erenagh ‘provided milk, butter and beef, found straw and oats for their horses and supplied night watch over the party’. On departure, they were supplied with seven fresh horses (Watt 1987, 339). The pattern of supplying food for the party, and their horses, maintaining guard, overnight and supplying fresh horses on their departure was repeated in the other parishes in the course of the visitation (Watt 1987, 337-8). The account also reveals that not all erenaghs were in a position to meet the cost of the visitations. The neighbouring parish of Cappagh was too small to bear the full cost of the visitation and the erenaghs of Ardstraw sent beef to assist their neighbours (Reeves 1850, 10). The account illustrates the different fortunes of erenagh families in the course of the later medieval.

The Jury of Inquisition at Dungannon in1609 (Reeves 1850, 5) provides a detailed account of the medieval world of the erenagh, how church lands were managed and how different social relationships functioned. The account is clear that church lands were in the possession of erenaghs and their families. The erenagh did not personally possess the lands, which were divided among his extended family, in return for rent, cuttinge and service. The erenagh had the same relationship with their tenants as other elites had with their tenants or landholders. However, as church lands, the erenagh estates were different from secular lands. As church lands, termon or spiritual lands, they carried the right of sanctuary (Loeber 2001, 303). Erenaghs usually owed a low rent to the bishop and were subject to exactions (Reeves 1850, 117).
Succession was by way of tanistry, when an erenagh died the successor was chosen by the rest of the extended family, but his appointment was subject to approval of his bishop, which could not reasonably be withheld. If the bishop for good reason refused to confirm the appointment of the erenagh, the rest of the sept must choose and present another, but not from outside the sept (Reeves 1850, 5).

It is clear from the reports to the inquisition that the office of parish priest and erenagh were separate. Incumbent priests were undoubtedly from hereditary clerical lineages, but not necessarily the lineage associated with the parish. The jury of the inquisition heard that in the parish of Cappagh the vicar lived in his own house separate from the community and was supported by his portion of the tithes and other revenues, such as burials and christenings. ‘They also had small parcels of land next to the church, where a house was built for residence which was called *terra sacerdotalis, libera et sine censu*’ (Reeves 1850, 7).

The idea of a house and garden beside the church at Oughtmama, set aside for the incumbent priest, is credible in view of the above description. O6 is aloof from the settlement cluster, it is self-contained, with its own building and garden. Bermingham (2006, 168-85) demonstrated that the most usual priestly accommodation in later medieval Ireland was accommodation incorporated into the body if the church or attached one side or the gable end of the church and that free-standing priest’s houses were less common. However, it is possible that at Oughtmama, O6 was the house of the incumbent priest and that the cluster of buildings (O1, O2 and O3) was the composite homestead of the erenagh and his family.

7.7 Oughtmama in the late medieval period

The upstanding remains and documentary evidence do not provide a continuous narrative of life through the later medieval period settlement at Oughtmama, and there are gaps in our understanding of the community in the fourteenth century, however, we have physical and documentary evidence that the community endured

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32 Sacred ground, free and without rent.
climatic deterioration, economic decline, warfare and disease of the turbulent fourteenth century.

The physical evidence of well-patronised incumbents is reflected in changes in the fabric of the parish church during the course of the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries (7.4.1). The parish church was re-roofed in that period. This change is indicated by a change in masonry style, the use of smaller stones, a style typical of the late medieval period in the Burren (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 483-4).

Hennessey (1985, 68) described the collection of papal letters as ‘the essential sources for the study of parochial organisation from the late fourteenth century onward’. The appointment to a vicarage was the prerogative of the bishop; however, under canon law papal authority was paramount in all matters, including clerical appointments. From the late fourteenth-century applications to the papal curia increased, from clerics seeking appointments. If the petitioner alleged immorality, incompetency or some other reason that demanded the removal of the incumbent, a papal commission was established to investigate the complaint and if found to be true the incumbent was removed and the petitioner was granted the benefice. The Calendar of Papal Registers (CPR) provides a prism to explore parochial organisation at Oughtmama in the fifteenth century. The earliest letter (CPR, vii, 58) that refers to Oughtmama reveals that in 1417 Odo Otiegernayg, (O’Tierney) was given the perpetual vicarage of ‘Huttmagma’ (Oughtmama). Odo O’Tierney was a Cistercian monk, and an ordained priest from St. Mary’s Abbey, Corcomroe, who ‘could not be maintained in the said monastery on account of its poverty’. The vicarage of Oughtmama had been void by the death of Nicholas Ogabuayn, (O’Gowan). The letter confirms the early difficulties of abbey at Corcomroe continued into the early fifteenth century and that the abbey was not in a position to support a member of its own community, whereas the perpetual vicarage of Oughtmama was in a better position.

In July 1455 Oughtmama was once again mentioned (CPR, xi, 244-5) when the perpetual vicarage of ‘Uietmama’ (Oughtmama) was void by the death of Donald O’Gowan and it was alleged that the abbot of Corcomroe had ‘intruded himself into the said vicarage and detained possession for sixteen years’. The letter named Mathew
Olochlaynd (Ó Lochlainn) as the abbot of Corcomroe and if the allegations were founded the vicarage was to be assigned to the petitioner, John Macgeruaistir (MacGuilistur, Anglised Nestor), a clerk in the diocese of Kilfenora.

### Vicars of Oughtmama named in CPR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name recorded</th>
<th>Anglicised</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas Ogabuyn</td>
<td>Nicholas O'Gowan</td>
<td>1417</td>
<td>Died in that year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odo Otigernayg</td>
<td>Odo O'Tierney</td>
<td>1417</td>
<td>Appointed in that year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Ogavnayn</td>
<td>Donald O'Gowan</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>Died in that year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathew Olochlaynd</td>
<td>Mathew O Lochlainn</td>
<td>1439</td>
<td>Appointed in that year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Macgguirastir</td>
<td>John Nestor</td>
<td>1455-1465</td>
<td>Served during this period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Ocumin</td>
<td>Thomas O Cummin</td>
<td>1465</td>
<td>Occupied office from that date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maurice Macguirastir</td>
<td>Maurice Nestor</td>
<td>1470</td>
<td>Appointed in that year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Incumbent priests at Oughtmama in CPR*

In 1469 the vicarage of Oughtmama had once again become void by the death of John MacGuilistur (CPR, xii, 320). The correspondance does not state how long the vicarage was void, however Thomas Ocumin (O Cumin), a clerk of the diocese of Kilfenora had ‘without title or title of right’ had taken possession for about four years. It can be concluded that John MacGuilistur died c. 1465 and that he is probably the same John MacGuilistur who was appointed in 1455. The letter of 1469 assigned the vicarage to Maurice MacGuilistur, a clerk of Kilfenora. Maurice had the same family name as John, he may have been the son or otherwise related to John.

The CPR suggests that priests, either with or without papal approval, occupied the parish church, more or less, continuously during the fifteenth century. The letters reinforce the independence of the parish of Oughtmama from the abbey at Corcomroe. When Odo O Tierney was granted the perpetual vicarage, it was obviously not in the gift of the abbot to grant the office (CPR, vii, 58). Similarly, on the death of Donald O Gowan c. 1439 the abbot took possession of the vicarage and the letter of 1455 makes it clear that his action was unlawful (CPR, xi, 244-5).
Therefore the benefice of the vicarage was not the property of the abbey and that there was a separation between the parish of Oughtmama and the benefice of the abbey.

The CPR provides the names of seven incumbent priests of the parish of Oughtmama in the fifteenth century (table 2). Two vicars share the name Ogabuayn (O’Gowan) and two others share the name Macgeruaistir (Nestor). The remaining three were either appointed following complaint to the Holy See, or removed following complaint. The vicar or incumbent priest was a separate office from erenagh. It is tempting to see Ogabuayn or Macgeruaistir as being from the erenagh sept of Oughtmama. It is evident that the benefice and fruits of the parish were valued and the community was sufficiently vibrant to undertake the changes to the fabric of the church. The changes also confirm that the church remained in use throughout the period and Oughtmama endured as the parish centre.

7.8 Decline from the sixteenth century

Figure 61: Petty's Hiberniae Delineatio county map, 1685, parish and church

The community at Oughtmama continued through the sixteenth century, and while the seventeenth century is outside the scope of this thesis, nonetheless the seventeenth-century cartographic and documentary sources point to the endurance and eventual demise of the church settlement at Oughtmama in the early modern period.
Petty’s, Down Survey of Ireland, map of Burren (1685) names Oughtmama as a place within the parish and the church is depicted by an icon (fig. 61). The BSD contains a list of proprietors in 1641 and those to whom land had been disposed. The Book was arranged by barony, parish and townland, however, the list is scanty, as some townlands including Oughtmama were omitted.

The census of 1659, which is described by Smyth (1988, 55) as a ‘so called census’, and like the BSD it is based on barony, parish and townland, however, the census did include the townland of Oughtmama. This census reveals a population in the townland of nineteen adults (Pender 1939, 185-6). Smyth (1988, 56) drew attention to a limitation in the census, as only male adults over the age of 15 years, with the exception of single females were recorded. Therefore, it can be considered a partial census and not a complete and accurate reflection of the full population at local, regional or national level (ibid.,194). To extrapolate the total population, Smyth (ibid., 56) considers that ‘as a working hypothesis it is suggested that a multiplier of 2.5 [...] is most applicable’. Applying this multiplier to the townland of Oughtmama the population would amount to approximately 47. The adults recorded in the parish were 104, and applying the same multiplier, the overall population of the parish could be estimated at 260.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Townland</th>
<th>Tituladoes Name</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thurlagh</td>
<td>Donagh McFineen, Donogh McFineen, his son and Daniell McFineen</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oughtmanea</td>
<td>Charles Mc Donogh gent Dermot McFineen gent</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duellen</td>
<td>Daniell Oge gent</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dulline</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finavarra</td>
<td>Teige Ó Daly gent, Lawrence Bigg, Lawrence Macraghane</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aghavinane</td>
<td>Teige Mc Fineen gent, Daniell McTeige gent</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: The census of 1659, with townlands, tituladoes and adult population
The census recorded six townlands in the parish (table 3), four of which had a population of between sixteen and nineteen adults. Finavarra was the most densely populated townland in the parish with an adult population recorded of 33, including two people, who are described as of English origin. Ascribing ethnicity, based on the census is problematic and is used with caution (2.2.1). Finavarra was the seat of the Skerretts, a Galway merchant family, in the late seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and was the centre of the Ó Dalaigh, hereditary poets of the Ó Lochlainns in the later medieval period. Oughtmama was the second most densely populated townland in the parish with nineteen adults recorded, followed by three townland with between sixteen and eighteen recorded. Dulline with five was the least densely populated. The census also records the names of the tituladoes for each townland. The titulado is described by Pender (1939, v) as 'the principal person or persons of standing in any particular locality a person could have been of either sex, a nobleman, baronet, gentleman, esquire, military officer, or adventurer. [...] Titulado and landowner are not synonymous’. The McFineens were obviously the most prominent family in the parish in 1659. Five of the eleven tituladoes in the parish had the family name McFinneen, including Donagh, his son Donagh, Daniel, Dermot and Teige. Other tituladoes were Charles McDonogh, Daniel Oge, Teige Ó Dalaigh, Lawrence Bigge and Lawrence Marcaghane (Pender, 1939, 185-6). It is to note that Teige Ó Dalaigh was recorded as a titulado in Finavarra.

Smyth (1988, 63) concluded that townlands, in Tipperary, with an adult population exceeding 40 had nucleated settlements and more complex social structures. Townlands with lower levels of population, between 20 and 40 are more problematic, but many had had nucleated or agglomerated settlements. It is possible that Oughtmama, with a population of 19, would have had an agglomerated settlement. The only castle in the parish was in the townland of Thurlagh. O’Donovan described the castle as an Ó Lochlainn castle and ‘nearly level with the ground’ in 1839 (O’Flanagan 1927, 31-7). Thurlagh was depicted, with the icon of a castle in the Down Survey of Ireland, map of Burren in 1685 (Down Survey of
Ireland, TCD)\(^{33}\). With an adult population of sixteen in the townland, the castle was not the main focus of settlement in the parish in the seventeenth century.

The registration of popish parish priests in 1704, records that a priest was resident in Turlagh, a townland close to the western boundary of the parish of Oughtmama. The priest was named as Walter Markham, who was aged 44 and was parish priest of Oughtmama\(^{34}\) and Abbey. The register also notes the he was appointed in 1683 (Anonymous 1876, 342-3). The report on the state of popery in Ireland for 1731 does not record a priest in the parish of Oughtmama (Anonymous 1913, 108-56) and it is possible that there was not priest in the parish at that time.

![Figure 62: John Rocque map of the Kingdom of Ireland 1790, abbey and Oughtmama noted](image)

In summary, Oughtmama continued as a parochial centre through the later medieval and into the early modern period. By the second half of the seventeenth century, it is evident that change was underway. Oughtmama remained a well-populated and important place in the parish but there was a shift in population to Finavarra, which was by then controlled by a Galway merchant family. By 1683 Oughtmama shared a parish priest with the parish of Abbey and significantly the priest resided at Turlagh, rather than based at either parish church. By 1731, there was no record of a priest for the parish. It is probable that as Oughtmama declined in importance as a parochial centre many of the houses around the parish church were probably abandoned.


\(^{34}\) In the report Oughtmama was spelt Ughlmama
However, while the settlement at the parish church was abandoned, Oughtmama endured as a place and was indicated on the map of the Kingdom of Ireland in 1790 (fig. 62).

7.9 Conclusions

The origin of Oughtmama parish

Oughtmama, like Tullaherin (6.3) had its origin as an important monastery in the early medieval period and like Tullaherin (6.4), it adapted to changes brought by the reforms of the Irish Church in the twelfth century. Oughtmama 1 emerged as a parish church as a result of the process of parish formation that developed in the course of the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. The inexplicable omission of Oughtmama from the ecclesiastical taxation list of 1302-6 has raised doubts on its status as a parish church in the early fourteenth century (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 324-5). However, the physical evidence of the church buildings clearly suggests that Oughtmama was a parish church from the outset of the diocesan parochial network in Kilfenora.

The enormous church building programme at Oughtmama, including by the rebuilding and enlargement of Oughtmama 1 and the construction of the two smaller churches, all within a relatively short period of time, in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. These works suggests that Oughtmama had a wealthy patron. The work coincided with the time of parish formation in the diocese of Kilfenora, when new parish churches were being built and existing churches were extended to reflect their new role as parish churches. The plan of the Oughtmama 1, with nave and chancel, was one of nine churches in Kilfenora; built, or rebuilt in this fashion, the other eight were parish churches. Oughtmama parish church was typical in form and size to the other parish churches in Kilfenora.

Relationship to Abbey

It is evident that the arrival of the Cistercians in Corcomroe had a serious impact on the community of Oughtmama. Their arrival resulted in the loss of some Oughtmama lands to the Cistercians and possibly a switch in patronage. Yet at the time of these apparent setbacks, Oughtmama participated in a massive church building programme. This work required a significant patron and raises questions regarding
the apparent loss of patronage to the Cistercians (7.2). As discussed above (7.7) the papal letter demonstrates that Corcomroe was not able to support its own community in 1417 ‘on account of its poverty’ (CPR, vii, 58). The architectural evidence suggests poverty at Corcomroe from an early date (Stalley 1975, 45).

A possible explanation for early decline is that anticipated patronage failed to materialise. Stalley (ibid.) suggests\(^\text{35}\) that ‘Speculative endowments were not unknown at this time involving land over which a ruler did not have complete authority’. If this suggestion is correct, patronage anticipated by the Cistercians and as a consequential switch from Oughtmama did not materialise and the Cistercians endowment was restricted to the lands of Abbey parish.

**Oughtmama as a saintly cult centre**

The immediate response of the community at Oughtmama to the real threat to their survival, by the reform movement, was like many other monasteries, to develop pilgrimage activity. The nearby holy well, dedicated to St. Colmán MacDuach, was probably a saintly cult centre from the early medieval times and there was possibly a timber shrine chapel at Oughtmama before the new stone chapel was built in the early thirteenth century.

**Evidence of the settlement cluster**

Oughtmama is unique as the only site listed for Co. Clare in the RMP as a ‘deserted medieval settlement’. The wall-footings of six building to the east of the later medieval parish church are well defined, with indications of a seventh possible building to the west. The relationship between the wall-footings, the early medieval vallum and the later field walls is crucial to an understanding of the settlement and I have attempted to strip the layers in the landscape, to establish that the buildings were generally of late medieval origin. The buildings post-date the pre-reform phase of occupation. They were built, occupied, abandoned, fell into ruin some considerable time before the later field walls were built, probably as a result of modern improvement sometime in the late seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. The profile of the wall-footings were fossilised at the time of the construction of the field

\(^{35}\) Quoting Liam de Paor in discussion at the Merriman Summer School, Lahinch 1975
walls. The buildings may reasonably be narrowed down to later medieval origin on the basis of these relationships.

**The role of the later medieval erenagh**

It is proposed that erenaghs and their kin occupied the settlement at Oughtmama. In addition to their hereditary ecclesiastical responsibilities they were also farmers of church lands, some of which was occupied by other members of the sept in return for rent and service in the same manner as temporal lords.

The cluster of three houses east of the parish church share common features and were probably the composite settlement of the erenagh and his family. Two other houses east of the church are on a different alignment to the buildings in this cluster. They may have been part of the composite settlement or may have been accretions over time. The house, south of the small church (O6), like the house in the centre of the cluster is partially enclosed by a curvilinear bank, however, the enclosures may not have served the same function. The house south of the church (O6) appears peripheral to the main cluster and located in a hollow has greater privacy, with a garden and its own access to water. This house is more isolated, self-contained and private. This may be the home of the incumbent priest.

**Oughtmama, development and decline**

There was a change in the fabric of the parish church, when it was re-roofed in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries. This alteration is indicated by a change in masonry style, the use of smaller stones and a roof style, typical of the late medieval in the Burren. We know the names of seven incumbent priests, of the perpetual vicarage, in the fifteenth century. The priests were undoubtedly members of an erenagh sept, although not necessarily the erenagh sept of Oughtmama, the office of vicar and erenagh were separate. The surname Ogabuayn, (O Gowan) and Macgeruaistir, MacGuirister (Nestor) appears twice in the list of seven vicars and it is tempting to consider either as the erenagh sept at Oughtmama.

The CPR also reveals aspects of the relationship between the parish of Oughtmama and the Cistercians of Corcomroe. Nugent (2007a, 135-6) argues that their more dominant neighbours overwhelmed the community of Oughtmama by the early
sixteenth-century. Two papal letters of the fifteenth century show that, at that time, Oughtmama was independent of the abbey. The appointment of an incumbent priest to the perpetual vicarage was not in the gift of the abbot of the abbey and papal authority was required to authorise the appointment. Later in the same century, the abbot was removed as incumbent of Oughtmama.

The community endured as a vibrant, living community through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and through the prism of the census of 1659, we know that there was a significant population in both parish and townland. The parish church remained a focus of population within the parish, however Finavarra, then populated by a Galway merchant family, had now emerged as the largest population centre in the parish, with some English recorded.

Decline in the course of the final decades of the seventeenth century is apparent. There was no longer a resident priest in the parish, Oughtmama shared a priest with the parish of Abbey, and the priest was resident in the townland of Thurlagh, which is in the parish of Oughtmama. Thurlagh also contains an Ó Lochlainn tower-house. By 1731, the demise of Oughtmama as a parochial centre was probably irreversible. There was no recorded priest in the parish. It is probable that at this time the settlement at the parish church was long abandoned.
Chapter 8 - Noughaval: market place and parish-church centred settlement

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present and interpret the evidence for a settlement cluster at the medieval parish church of Noughaval, in the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren. Noughaval is the only parish church in the region that is known to have a medieval market at the heart of its settlement. The distinctive features of Noughaval are examined to determine how its functional distinction as a market place set it apart from other parish church-centred settlements in the Ó Lochlainn lordship.

Noughaval presents a rare opportunity to investigate a market at a parish church in an area that remained Gaelic in culture in the period 1200-1600 A.D. This chapter explores its social and cultural context for a specialist erenagh market, to identify nuances that are reflected in the appearance of the settlement clusters in the later medieval and early modern period. Market activity in regions of Ireland that remained under the control of Gaelic lords in the period 1200 to 1600 is largely
unrecorded and therefore establishing the connections at Noughaval between the settlement, the parish church and the market is challenging.

Changes in the standing fabric of the parish church indicate a number of phases, suggesting it was the centre of community worship from the early medieval period. The large internal space of the church suggests that in the twelfth century the population of the parish was sufficiently large and had the resources to build a substantial church. A final rebuilding phase in the late medieval period confirms that the parish church remained an important focus for the community throughout the period. Documentary evidence from the second half of the seventeenth century suggests that the townland containing the parish church was the focus of an exceptionally large population, which probably lived adjacent to the parish church throughout the later medieval period and possibly earlier.

The typical agricultural economy in a Gaelic region could not have supported the community, therefore market-related activities may explain how such a large population, in the townland containing the parish church, was sustained. The market at Noughaval has long been recognised, however, its origin is unclear and the absence of documents renders ascribing market activity to the later medieval period problematic. The association of markets to churchyards from the early medieval period in the European context has been well established (Simms 2006, 224). The market cross is investigated to propose that market activity occurred at the parish church from at least the later medieval period. As the market was located on church lands, the role of the erenagh would have been pivotal to its operation. Markets operated under patronage and, as the market at Noughaval occurred on church lands, the patron was undoubtedly the bishop of Kilfenora, however, as the episcopal temporalities were the responsibility of the erenagh, his involvement at local level would have been critical. The role of the erenagh at the market, in collecting tolls, maintaining trading standards and possibly serving as a local merchant is discussed and it is proposed that the settlement cluster may have had its origins as an erenagh’s homestead.

Sinéad Ní Ghabhláin (1992) excavated one of the houses at the site and drew attention to the settlement at the parish church of Noughaval. The house is the only
one excavated at a parish church context in the Burren and Ní Ghabhláin has suggested that its earliest occupation layer relates to the thirteenth century, however, this interpretation is questionable (8.8.1). The chronology of wall-footings of other buildings at the settlement is difficult to establish. I investigate the excavation report and landscape setting of the seventeenth-century house to explore the possibility that an earlier house may have been built on the site, which may have been the home of an erenagh. I then attempt to strip back the later layers in the landscape and propose that the relationship, which the wall-footings have to the enclosures and field walls, are chronological indicators, suggesting that some of the buildings may relate to the later medieval period.

8.2 The parish of Noughaval, its history and local topography

The medieval parish of Noughaval was a sub-division of Túath Eannuigh, a túath of the early medieval trícha cét of Corcu Modruad. The trícha cét was coterminous with the later twelfth-century medieval diocese of Kilfenora. The parish was a sub-territory of Túath Eannuigh, which adjoined Túath Mhuintire Fhiatheartaigh to the
south, in the parish of Kilfenora (fig. 64). Two small townlands, ‘Kreaganacloyain’ and ‘Ballyhumulto,’ were detached portions of the parish. The BSD record the townlands as being in the parish of Noughaval, but within the geographical territory of the parish of Kilfenora. This suggests that Noughaval and Kilfenora may at one time have formed a single territory, or parish (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 259).

It is interesting to note that while Noughaval is in the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren, Kilfenora lays in the Ó Conchobhair lordship of Corcomroe and perhaps, as suggested by Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 262), ‘the boundaries did not exist or that they were of little significance when the primary parish or territory were in existence’. However, by the late twelfth, or early thirteenth century, when the parochial network was established, the lordships of Burren and Corcomroe were formed.

The parish of Noughaval is on the southern boundary of the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren and the Ó Briain overlordship of Thomond. The parish church is located c. 3.62km northeast of the diocesan centre of Kilfenora. The geographical territory of the parish contains 4,661 statute acres, fourteen townlands and stretches 6.44km southeast to north-west and at its widest is 3.22km. It is bounded to the north by the parish of Rathbornery, to the northwest by Killeany, to the southwest and south by the parish of Kilfenora. To the south lays Inchiquin, the Ó Briain lands of Thomond and to the east the parish of Carran.

The parish is on the southern edge of the Burren lowlands, close to the boundary between the limestone regions of the Burren to the north and east and the sandstone shale region to the south and west (Finch 1971, 34-5). The typical Burren series of rendzina soils are prone to excessive draining and are normally never more than 0.23m deep. The use-range of the soils is severely limited by their shallowness and the amount of exposed rock. They are suited mostly to extensive grazing. Poaching is not a problem, because of strong structure and good drainage. The soils, therefore, are very suitable for out-wintering stock (ibid.). The deeper soils in the parish may have been suitable for tillage, but these areas would have been exceptional and even when suitable, tillage on a conventional basis is not practicable; however, in places some hand cultivation and more intensive grazing was conducted (ibid.). According to Lewis (1839, ii, 444-5), ‘the proportion of tillage or meadow is very small and that
of limestone rocky pasture is very large, and quite predominant. The tillage land produces potatoes, oats and beer. The pasturable mountain amounts to about 80 acres and the extent of bog amounts to about 20 Irish acres’. While Lewis’s account relates to nineteenth-century farming practices, it does reflect the generally poor quality of soil in the parish.

Figure 65: Map with routeways indicated

There are no mountains or rivers in the parish. The area in the south of the parish is more low-lying, c. 80m OD in the townland of Ballyganner South, and gradually rises, in the townland of Ballymahony on the northern boundary of the parish, to maximum height of 190m OD.

The parish was well connected to the southeast, by an important routeway to the diocesan centre of Kilfenora, at a distance of c. 3.62 kilometres. Noughaval was close to the boundary between the Ó Lochlainn and Ó Conchobhair lordships. This is one of the main routeways through the Burren. It continues through the interior of the parish to the natural harbour at Ballyvaughan in the north. To the south, it connects to the Ó Briain caput at Leamanah and on to the diocesan centre at Kilfenora.

Noughaval was connected within the Ó Lochlainn lordship by a network of
routeways and to the outside world by routeways through the valleys of the Burren uplands.

Some 52 ‘cashels’ and three ‘raths’ are recorded for the parish in the RMP. The 55 native enclosed settlements are morphologically diverse, which suggests that they may have varied in function and date (Campbell 2012, 82). The number of monuments suggests that the parish was reasonably densely populated from the early medieval period onward. Forty-four percent of the monuments are located in the townland with the parish church and the townlands immediately surrounding it, suggesting that within the wider landscape the parish church centre was the focus for settlement from an early date.

8.3 Noughaval, a densely populated parish

![Size of the parish, based on The Books of Survey and Distribution](image)

*Figure 66: The size of Burren parishes based on the Book of Survey and Distribution*

The number of native enclosed settlements, of cashel and rath type, suggests that there was a relatively large population in the parish. The parish of Noughaval was relatively small within the geography of the Ó Lochlainn lordship, yet the historical evidence of population distribution from seventeenth century sources confirms that

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the parish was densely populated at that time. In this section, the seventeenth-century evidence is examined and other sources are explored to propose that the parish had a substantial population from an earlier period.

The geographical size of the parish, with 4,612 statute acres (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 290), places Noughaval well below the average 6,419 acres parish size in the lordship of Burren.

The so-called ‘census’ of 1659 (6.7) is an important resource in understanding population distribution in the mid seventeenth century. It provided, for the first time, a picture of the population structure at townland level (Smyth 1988, 62) and is therefore important in exploring social structures of an earlier period. The census recorded the adult population at the parish of Noughaval as 141, or 22% higher than the average of the seven parishes recorded for Burren (fig. 67) (Pender 1939, 185-7).

As discussed (6.7) Smyth (1988, 55-6), suggests a working hypothesis of 2.5 as the most appropriate multiplier to obtain a reasonable reflection of the actual population, and on that basis, the population of the parish could be extrapolated at 352 persons. Therefore, 17% of the population of the Ó Lochlainn lordship was recorded in the parish, which contained 6.5% of its geographical area. The census of 1659 is an indication of population levels at a moment in time and it cannot be assumed that the same population pattern existed in the later medieval period. Bond (1988, 141-4), based on his study of churches in Worcestershire, argues that there is a correlation between the size of the nave and the recorded population in the Domesday Book (1086). However Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 224) demonstrates that there is a strong
positive correlation between the parish population in the 1659 census and the total internal space of the parish churches in the diocese of Kilfenora. The medieval parish church at Noughaval had the second largest interior in the Ó Lochlainn lordship. The plan and size of the parish church was determined when the church was completely rebuilt in the late twelfth century. The internal area of the parish church reflects the size of the community of the parish, as tithes in the early thirteenth century were the main source of revenue to fund the building work.

Consequently, the level of tithes reflected the size of the population. A large parish community is also reflected in the internal space of the church, which had to be sufficiently large to accommodate the congregation it served (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 224). It is evident that the size of the parish church confirms the findings of the 1659 census, that the population of the parish of Noughaval was large from at least the late twelfth century to the mid-seventeenth century (fig. 68).

The quality of the land in the parish was generally poor. It was described in the nineteenth century by Lewis (1839, ii.444-5) ‘as poor, with only a small part suitable for tillage, portion consisting of rocky limestone pasture, yielding rich, though scanty herbage’ and cannot account for the parish being the focus for such a large population. Therefore, the quality of the land, nor the geographical size of the parish
were factors in sustaining such a large population, and the reason for the economic endurance of the community must lie outside the normal agricultural economy which dominated the Ó Lochlainn lordship. It is reasonable to seek the explanation for the support of such a sizeable population in its role as a market centre.

8.4 The parish church: the focus for a distinctly different community

The later medieval parish centre contains the parish church of Noughaval in the townland of the same name. The place name, Noughaval, is the anglicised form of the Gaelic name Nuachabháil (logainm.ie)\(^{37}\) and is generally considered as ‘new settlement, establishment or monastery’ (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 476; Westropp 1900, 133).

The early history of the church at Noughaval is obscure. According to Westropp (1900, 133), the church at Noughaval was supposedly founded by St. Mogua, however, the identity and the date of the foundation is unclear. St. Mogua is the patron saint of the parish and a well is dedicated to him. Tobar Mogua, is located to the east of the parish church. There are hints of an early medieval foundation at the site. Field survey has identified a curved 3m thick wall, which according to Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 476) appears to be an early medieval monastic enclosure. Cyclopean masonry blocks in the south wall of the later medieval parish church (Ó Carragáin 2010, 313) and a leacht (9.9.4), or dry-stone outdoor altar, in the graveyard (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 475), also suggest an early medieval origin for the construction of the church. While there is a lack of historical sources for the foundation, the possible monastic enclosure, early medieval phase of the church fabric, and the leacht strongly suggest that the parish church had its genesis as an early medieval monastery.

8.5 Architectural change in the fabric of the church

The later medieval parish church has a bicameral plan, separated into nave and chancel by a chancel arch (int. 25m x 6.5m). The west gable has collapsed and many

features of the church are currently obscured by vegetation, however, a number of phases are evident in the stranding fabric.

Figure 69: The parish church at Noughaval form south

Figure 70: Plan of Noughaval medieval parish church (Ní Ghabhláin 1995)
In the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, the church was enlarged, the nave was extended to the east and north, unlike Oughtmama (7.4.1) where it was widened to the west and south (Ó Carragáin 2010, 300). The impost mouldings are rounded and shallow, rounded mouldings on the jambs of the arch are in situ. The jamb and impost, at its north-west junction is decorated with an animal head with an open mouth that may possibly have gripped onto the post (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 475).

The south wall of the nave is built mainly of large cyclopean blocks, roughly coursed, some shaped to fit with few spalls that indicates that it is probably of pre-twelfth century origin into which a later door was inserted (Ó Carragáin 2005, 110). Also incorporated into the south wall are dressed stones, reused from an earlier building phase, including a moulded cornerstone, possibly from a twin-light window. The door (fig. 71) is in the style of (c. 1200) late Romanesque School of the West, as indicated by the moulding profiles and the tubular chevrons of the tympanum. This style is comparable to the rib vaulting in the presbytery in Corcomroe abbey (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 475-6), which suggests that the same School of the West masons

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38 ‘A vertical recessed triangular space forming the centre of a pediment of or over a door’ (Concise Oxford English Dictionary 2006, 1535)
were employed on both churches (Jones 2004, 132). Two chancel windows probably date from this phase of construction (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 475-6).

The latest phase of construction is indicated by a window in the east wall of the chancel, where there is a narrow embrasure and round-headed window. Ní Ghabhláin (ibid.) dates this window to the late medieval or possibly the early modern period, as the moulding profile is different from the two early thirteenth-century windows in the south wall of the chancel.

![Figure 72: The O'Davoren mortuary chapel](image)

The medieval parish church lays within an enclosed graveyard and within the graveyard are the remains of a small chapel, a *leacht*, a number of low uninscribed stone grave markers and modern burials. The small, vault-roofed chapel (int. dims. 6.09m E-W; 3.65m N-S) is of eighteenth-century date and is the mortuary chapel of James Davoren, of Lisdoonvarna, who died 31 July 1725 aged 59 years.

O’ Donovan (O’Flanagan 1927, 66) noted a commemorative inscription on a stone tablet on the tympanum over the door. The door and tablet had been removed by 1900, as noted by Westropp (1900, 133), however, the tablet is now preserved, cemented into the west wall of the chapel.
A *leacht*, or dry-stone altar, is located south of the parish church and west of the O’Davoren chapel (Fig 75). The *leacht* is surmounted by a ringed cross. Harbison (1992, 158) described the ringed cross segments as not forming a perfect circle, with ‘a humped look of some twelfth-century crosses although the cross could be as late as the thirteenth century’.

### 8.6 Noughaval townland; parish church-centred market

From an analysis of the population distribution within the parish, based on the census of 1659, it is apparent that there was a large population in the townland of Noughaval at that time, probably focused on the parish church. The population recorded is 42 adults (Pender 1939, 186-7) which is exceptionally high, making Noughaval the most densely populated townland in the parish, and also in the Ó Lochlainn lordship by a substantial margin (table 4). Applying Smyth’s (1988, 56) suggested multiplier of 2.5 Noughaval was clearly the most densely populated townland in the parish and its dominance cannot be explained by normal agricultural activity. The explanation suggested in this thesis is that the settlement pattern reflects market activity at the parish church centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Townlands</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
<th>Tituladoes</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cahirpullagh</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballygannor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noghovall</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cahir</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gillermeal oge Ó Davoren gent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McInaghtie</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballyvoragagh</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Owen Hallurane gent</td>
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<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymahona</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Cormucke McCarty gent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lissy Lisseena</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Owen Mc Carty</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poulcullickie</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4: Population distribution in the townlands of the parish of Noughaval in 1659*
8.6.1 The later medieval market

Market activity focused on the parish church may have been the primary role for the settlement at Noughaval and an explanation for the population density of the parish. Markets are largely unrecorded in Gaelic Ireland, however, there are fleeting references to market activity, for instance the chronicles for the year 1231 record that Cormac, son of Tomaltach MacDiarmata, ‘began to make a market-town at Purt na Carce’ (ALC, 40-1) in the Gaelic lordship of Moylurg. There is also a suggestion that a nucleated village-type settlement with trading functions possibly existed in this area (O’Conor et. al. 2010, 30-1). Markets emerged gradually and very slowly, but from the sixteenth century onwards, they became increasingly important (Doherty 1980, 68-9). There is no surviving patent, or other documentary evidence indicating when a market commenced at Noughaval, or how it developed or declined. The Commission, appointed to inquire into the state of fairs and markets in Ireland (Anon. 1853, 49-67), recorded a patent issued to John, Lord Bishop of Kilfenora to hold a market at Kilfenora in 1621 ‘daily during the summer and every Wednesday from 1 June to 1 March, for butter only.’ At the same time, a patent was issued to hold a fair there, ‘on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday preceding the feast of Pentecost and one other on the feast of St. Michael the Archangel and the following two days.’

The omission of Noughaval from the nineteenth-century report, on fairs and markets in Ireland (Anon. 1853), is unsurprising. In Co. Clare, the commissioners only visited the towns of Ennis and Kilrush and were primarily concerned with control, regulation and improvement of nineteenth-century standards of market activity. The report only recorded continuity of markets from the seventeenth century and not later medieval markets and fairs that no longer operated. The market at Noughaval may have been transferred to Kilfenora, or may have been independent from Kilfenora, while still under the patronage of the bishop.

The evidence of the 1853 Commission report appears to suggest that, at least in 1641, the market at Kilfenora was restricted to butter, while at Noughaval the range of trading activities appears to have been different. The archaeological connection between Noughaval and market activity is the market cross (fig. 73), located north of
the gates of the parish church and the settlement cluster. Nineteenth-century commentators noted the cross. Frost (1893, 29) recorded that ‘a little distance from the church stands a stone pillar, without inscription, but is said to be a market cross, which with certain lines drawn upon it to serve as a measure of length for the people’. The Parliamentary Gazeteer of Ireland (anon. 1845) noted that ‘the principal antiquities are the cross and ruined church of Nohoval’.

The monument is a stone-cut octagonal pillar (H. 1.29m, diam. 0.55m) surmounted by a tapered cap (H. 0.0.28m, diam. 0.40m at base tapering to 0.25m at top). The pillar is set on a two-stepped rectangular base, which sits on a rectangular plinth. The monument, including base, pillar and cap stands at a height of 2.19m. The pillar, base and cap are punch dressed, a masonry style typical of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries (McAfee 1997, 26-94). The pillar is uninscribed and undecorated and its only feature is the line drawn upon it, described above (Frost 1898, 29). Market crosses were a regular feature of market places throughout Western Europe; however, they are little understood in Ireland, particularly outside the Pale (King 1984, 79). They have a

*Figure 73: Market cross at Noughaval*
poor survival record as some were most likely made of wood, but the more usual form of cross was of stone, mounted on steps. The only fifteenth-century example to survive is at Athenry, Co. Galway. This is of pillar type, which was probably the most common form (Bradley 1991, 26).

A reference in the Annals of Inisfallen for the year 1275, (AI, 372-3) which according to Doherty (1980, 83) is the earliest reference to a market cross in Ireland, records ‘a hosting by MacCarthy into in Tricha, and the market cross was cut [down]’. The reference to the market cross being ‘cut’, do gearradh cros in mhargaidh, suggests that this cross was of timber. A pillar mounted on steps is a style well known in Scotland (Drummond 1860-2, 89). The style probably evolved over time. In former times transactions may have been considered binding if contracted at a cross, with its sacred significance, especially if, while hand fasting, the parties touched the cross with the other hand.

Over time the cruciform shape disappeared until it was transformed into the pillar form, but was still referred to as a market cross (Drummond 1860-2, 91). The market may originally have been held in the churchyard. In the European context the association of a marketplace with church and churchyards is a well-known feature of
urban development. From the Carolingian period, markets were held in the churchyards, with graves fulfilling the function of stalls (Simms 2006, 224). The common practice continued until there was general ecclesiastical opposition to the practice in the first decade of the thirteenth century (Gardiner 2012, 114). Examples of market activity from East Anglia and Cambridgeshire suggest that they had a role in encouraging the development of nucleated settlements and may have predated the village (Gardiner 2012, 114-5). The market at Noughaval may have been moved to the platea, or green, the public space of the earlier monastic foundation (6.8.1) (Picard 2011, 61). The most likely place for the platea and the market place is the area south of the parish church, the area indicated on the six-inch first-edition OS map as ‘Glebe’ or church land. There are other areas, designated as ‘glebe’ on the first-edition six-inch OS map, but these are some distance from the parish church and were also some distance from the routeway and are unlikely to have been related to market activity.

According to Doherty (1980, 83), in Ireland the market place itself existed before the twelfth century at major monasteries such as, Kells, Armagh and Glendalough. There is every reason to consider that similar developments occurred at smaller ecclesiastical sites. Markets and fairs appear to been held at some ecclesiastical site, such as Eastersnow (Disert Nuadham) in Co. Roscommon, where it is recorded in 1590 that a Saturday market had traditionally been held beside the church (Nicholls 1987, 420). We have little information on trade within Gaelic lordships, but there is some evidence that grey merchants, from the port towns of Galway and Limerick travelled the countryside, selling imported merchandise and collecting local products for export (ibid., 419).

There were probably always local merchant families resident in Gaelic lordships. In 1560 there were native Gaelic merchants at Armagh trading through the O’Neill lordship and this was probably a long-standing arrangement (Nicholls 1987, 419). It seems likely that some Gaelic families who were established in port towns in the course of the fifteenth century, such as the Dorsey family in Galway, or the

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39 In the Irish context, itinerant merchant; specifically one who buys up goods before they reach the public markets (Oxford Directory.com) http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/grey-merchant [Accessed 8/9/2016]
Ronaynes in Cork and Kinsale, had been rural merchants before moving to the towns. According to Nicholls (1987, 419), these merchant families had their origins as traders at ecclesiastical sites. Medieval markets and fairs had patrons, and their long association with church sites suggests that many functioned under episcopal patronage in the later medieval period. However, at local level it would not have been possible to hold markets adjacent to the parish church without the close involvement of the erenagh. It is likely that erenaghs exercised local control and some may have been traders and merchants at small ecclesiastical sites before they moved to the towns.

Exports from the port towns of Galway and Limerick are a good indication of the goods gathered by merchants at rural markets. Cattle were a primary element in the pastoral economy, providing not only milk and its derivate products, but also meat and hides which came to be the largest item in Ireland’s exports (Nicholls 1987, 423). Linen cloth was produced for home use as well as export, and pieces of linen served as a medium of exchange in Galway in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, however trade in linen declined in the sixteenth century and was replaced by woollen cloth (Nicholls 1987, 417). The function of the lines on the market cross at Noughaval, as noted by Frost (1893, 29), were to ‘serve as a measure of length for the people’ indicates that the community at Noughaval participated in the trade of cloth. The cross is known locally as ‘the bandle cross’ (Campbell 2013, 14). A bandle is defined as ‘an Irish measure of two feet in length’ (OED on line)⁴⁰. This was not a standard measure and varied from place to place. Dutton (1808, 357) described differences the standard measurements in the early nineteenth century, and while ‘it ought to measure 27 inches, however in the county of Galway the bandle is 30 inches, Limerick 21inches and some parts of Kilkenny 24 inches’. The circumference of the Noughaval cross measures 54 inches, which tallies well with the 27-inch bandle, as cloth could be measured by wrapping it around the shaft the desired number of times (Campbell 2012, 77).

By the nineteenth century, ‘the market as a self-regulating institution with a life of its own came into being and was very different from markets of the later medieval

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period’ (Doherty 1980, 68-9). It is evident from the much later nineteenth-century ‘Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State of Fairs and Markets in Ireland’ (Anon. 1853) that the primary concern was regulation of these activities and to ensure that standard weights and measures were applied. However, there is evident that markets were regulated from at least the high medieval period in those parts of Ireland under colonial control. In 1307 a legal case was heard at Limerick when ‘the custos of pleas\(^{41}\) of the market came to the town of Any\(^{42}\) to exercise his office, to wit, to see and examine measures and weights, as is customary, and the bailiffs and community refused to obey him, and show their measures. On which he said, I amerce\(^{43}\) you at 100s’ (Mills 1914, 438). It cannot be assumed that the same level of regulation applied in areas that remained culturally Gaelic, nonetheless it is a reasonable assumption that markets in Gaelic Ireland operated under patronage, that tolls were levied and collected and that standards were regulated to some extent. The bandle cross, at Noughaval, as a standard measure is evidence of standards and regulation.

Markets held on church lands were, like the market at Kilfenora, under the patronage of the bishop, but local control was likely to have been exercised by the coarb or the erenagh, who in particular had responsibility for ecclesiastical temporalities including the collection of ecclesiastical revenues, such as tithes (Simms 1987, 170). Market tolls that were invariably charged would have been considered church revenues, and as such, would certainly have been the responsibility of erenaghs.

Campbell (2013, 13-4) demonstrated that in the seventeenth century and probably earlier, the Ó Duibhdábhoireann (O’Davoren) were the erenaghs at Noughaval, and significant landholders of churchlands. As an ecclesiastical family of some importance, they were probably engaged in commercial trade at local or regional level, in their own right. The Ó Duibhdábhoireann were a hereditary learned family, brehons to the Ó Lochlainn, lord of Burren and they also ran a school of brehon law at Cahermacnaghten (FitzPatrick 2009, 290-1; Kelly 1988, 340). Learned families

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\(^{41}\) An official of the Court if Common Pleas (The Law Dictionary on line) [http://thelawdictionary.org/custos-brevium/](http://thelawdictionary.org/custos-brevium/) [Accessed 20/10/2014]

\(^{42}\) The medieval town of Any cannot now be identified

\(^{43}\) To punish by imposing an arbitrary fine (The Free Dictionary by Farlex) [http://www.thefreedictionary.com/amerce](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/amerce) [accessed 20/10/2014]
had a close connection with the church, which is manifested by the number of learned families who were erenaghs (Nicholls 2003, 91). Erenaghs were well educated, proficient in Latin, and well connected. Many of the learned class originated from erenagh septs including, historians, poets, physicians and men of literature in Fermanagh (ibid.). It is possible that the Ó Duibhdábhóireann were also merchants, trading at the market place at Noughaval.

There are remarkable similarities between Noughaval and the townland of Finavarra, in the parish of Oughtmama, in the northeast of the Burren, on the south shore of Galway Bay (7.8). The similarities lie in the size of their populations and market crosses. While Noughaval had the largest population in the lordship, Finavarra contained the second largest, with an adult population of 33 (Pender 1939, 185). The Finavarra pillar stone is hexagonal in section, rather than octagonal and mounted on four steps, rather than a two (fig. 75). The Finavarra pillar is on a grander scale and more impressive than the Noughaval market cross. The masonry style of both stones are similar, both display punch dressing.

The similarity in design and style of these crosses suggests that the same mason may have carved them. The Finavarra pillar stone is recorded by O’Donovan (O’Flanagan...
1927, 12) as Leacht Uí Dhalaigh, as a memorial monument to Domhnall Mór Ó Dalaigh. The Uí Dalaigh were hereditary poets to the Ó Lochlainn, lords of Burren, with hereditary lands at Finavarra (7.8). In 1612, Donogh McLoughlin Roe Ó Dalaigh sold land in the townland to Anthony Mac (Fitz) James Mac (Fitz) Ambrose A’ Liusi (Lynch) who was described in the assignment as a Galway merchant (Hardiman, et. al 1828, 91-2). It is interesting to note that two of the witnesses to the assignment were Ó Duibhdábhóireann, brehon lawyers who were kinsmen of the Ó Duibhdábhóireann erenaghs of Noughaval (Campbell 2012, 72). There is further evidence that in the seventeenth century, Finvarra was an enclave of Galway merchants. Under the terms of his will, dated 26 November 1681, James Skerrett FitzMarcus, from a Galway merchant family, bequeathed his estate in Co. Clare to his second son William (landedestates.ie) 44.

It is likely that the Finavarra cross was situated at a market centre. The size of its population, the market cross and its location on a sheltered bay on south shore of Galway Bay, within easy sailing distance from the port town of Galway, made Finavarra an ideal market location. The first-edition six-inch OS map depicts two

piers at Finavarra, Skerretts Quay and Parkmore Quay close to the pillar cross (fig. 76). Grey merchant from the port of Galway were consolidating a trading presence in the seventeenth century, which was probably established some considerable time earlier. The direct connection between the market at Noughaval and the Galway merchants at Finavarra is indicated by the similarity in style of the two crosses and two of the witnesses to the 1612 deed of assignment were Ó Duibhdábhóireann, connected to the erenaghs of Noughaval. The community at Noughaval were well connected to a trading network linking the community to the port town of Galway.

8.7 The community at the parish centre and settlement complexity

Smyth (1988, 63) concluded that in Co. Tipperary, townlands with an adult population that was in excess of 40 and a total population in excess of 100 was a rare occurrence and this was probably the same in other areas. By the mid-seventeenth century, at least three quarters of the townlands in Co. Tipperary, with this level of population density, contained nucleated settlements (ibid.). Such settlements housed more complex social structures, comprising servants, artisans, farming and service populations, as well as lay and / or ecclesiastical elites (ibid.). This study raises questions about the nature of the settlement at Noughaval; was it a nucleated village, a hamlet or was settlement dispersed throughout the townland? It is possible that there was a complex social structure at Noughaval. The unique level of population at Noughaval set the townland apart from others in the Ó Lochlainn lordship. The community living in the settlement at Noughaval were obviously not engaged in purely traditional agricultural activity, they were engaged in the trade of cloth, linen, wool or both. Market activity and trade had a role in encouraging the development of nucleated settlement (Gardiner 2012, 114). There may have been spinners and weavers in the Burren region engaged in textile production and a variety of traditional crafts associated with urban and probably rural markets, such as coopers, leatherwork, bronze-smiths, ironsmiths and possibly skinners for the production of hides (Bradley 1991, 25-6). However, there is no archaeological evidence that such activities were carried out at the settlement and therefore the question must remain unanswered.
The census of 1659 does not mention the name of the titulado for the townland of Noughaval but, records those for the parish, which are, Gillermeal Oge Ó Davoren (Ó Duibhdábhóireann), gent, Owen Hallurane, gent, and Cormucke and Owen McCarthy (Pender 1939, 186-7). Conoghor roe Ó Davoren (Ó Duibhdábhóireann) was named in 1601 among those who received a pardon, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (Nicholls 1994, 506). The inclusion of the Ó Davorens among those pardoned in 1601 and their listing among the titulado in the parish confirms their status as a prominent family at Noughaval. Campbell (2012, 86) suggests that the Ó Duibhdábhóireann were erenaghs at Noughaval, at least for some time. McInerney (2014, 164-5) also points out that as well as brehons to the Ó Lochlainn, lords of Burren, the Ó Duibhdábhóireann were erenaghs at Noughaval. The name Ó Duibhdábhóireann appears in papal correspondence (CPR) on several occasions in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries along with others, providing us with the names of some members of the community. However, it is unclear whether they were the descendants of erenaghs or coarb families, or as McInerney (2014, 127-8) suggests secular lineages, which do not generally have coarbal or erenagh origins.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
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<td>MacGiruastir</td>
<td>Nestor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1443</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>MacGiruastir</td>
<td>Nestor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>John Odubgaborndy</td>
<td>Ó Duibhdábhóireann</td>
<td>O’ Davoren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Ó Lochlainn</td>
<td>O’ Loughlin</td>
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<tr>
<td>1511</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1511</td>
<td>Thady Ibreyn</td>
<td>Ó Briain</td>
<td>O’Brien</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Incumbent priests at Noughaval named in CPR

The MacGiruastir family (Nestor) appear prominently as incumbent priests (table 5) at Noughaval and also at Oughtmama (7.7). They were a prominent ecclesiastical family in the diocese of Kilfenora and several appeared as diocesan dignitaries in the fifteenth century (McInerney 2014, 272-5).
In 1455 a petition is recorded (CPR, xi, 206) by Denis Yconnuyd (O Connor) concerning certain lands, ‘called de Nuova, partly cultivated and partly uncultivated, belonging to the episcopal mensal lands of Kilfenora in the said diocese.’ The lands were held by ‘Dermit Oduauoreid (Ó Duibhdábhoireann) and Malachy Otyernayd (O Tierney) and certain other powerful laymen without payment of cess or rent’. The official of Kilfenora was mandated to summon the laymen and others and if he finds the above to be true and ‘if the bishop consents to make the desired grant to Denis, the illegitimate son of a bishop and an unmarried woman’. The outcome of the enquiry is unrecorded; the entry underlines the prominence of the Ó Duibhdábhoireann family in the later medieval period.

8.8 The archaeology of the settlement at Noughaval

The settlement at Noughaval extends across the fields to the east, south and south-west of the parish church. The upstanding evidence for the settlement of Noughaval consists of the remains of fourteen possible buildings and their associated field walls, banks and enclosures (fig 77). The majority of the buildings are located within their own enclosures. The site, in a karst landscape, is spread over an area of 27,000 square metres to the immediate east, south and southwest of the medieval parish church. It sits in an area in permanent rough pasture, with a south-facing aspect. There are no streams, rivers or lakes near the settlement, but a ready supply of water is available from a holy well, Tobar Mogua, which lays c. 60m east of the parish church.

The modern landscape around the parish church is organised in a series of small irregular fields, bounded by stone field walls, which are generally c. 1m to 1.50m in height and c. 0.30m to 0.50m thick. It is evident from a comparison between the first-edition six-inch OS map (1842) and the second-edition (1914) that some additional enclosures were constructed during the intervening period. As discussed above (7.5.2), this phase of modern enclosure possibly occurred in the course of the eighteenth or nineteenth century (Aalen and Whelan 1997, 140), when the landscape underwent a major reorganisation. When a landscape was redesigned, all the earlier features were rarely wiped clean (Gardiner and Rippon 2007, 1).
Figure 77: DSM of settlement at Noughaval (P. Naessens, Western Aerial Survey)
The new field walls and enclosures at Noughaval respected the pre-existing wall-footing of buildings which they truncated, in effect preserving the remains of the buildings and fossilising the state of decay at the time of the wall construction.

In the area to the immediate west of the parish church there is an absence of evidence for buildings (fig. 78). The area has been subject to modern improvement and clearance that may have obliterated evidence of earlier buildings.

Account must also be taken of the diverse nature of Gaelic later medieval housing and as pointed out by Campbell (2012, 79) ‘a variety of building materials and construction techniques probably encompassing, stone, sod and wattle, all easily procurable at the site.’ Houses constructed of such material would have been more ephemeral. It is most likely that at Noughaval, and possibly Oughtmama, the existing remains represent a small portion of a much larger settlement and that other building have since been cleared as part of modern improvement, or have disintegrated following their abandonment. The settlement sites at Noughaval, like Newtown Jerpoint, Tullaherin and Oughtmama may have extended beyond the present visible extent and future targeted geophysical survey could reveal greater details of these settlements.

It is clear that there is not a standard building of the medieval or post-medieval period at Noughaval. In the absence of extensive excavation, the precise chronology
of the buildings in the settlement remains problematic. The approach adopted to suggest a chronology for the buildings and to propose that some were houses of the medieval period, is to explore the details of the excavated house, relationship of the enclosures, banks and field walls to the buildings and to analyse their morphological features to propose a series of phases for the settlement. A number of building phases are evident at the settlement. The zone south of the parish church contains the standing remains of four possible buildings that appear to date from the post-medieval period. They are integrated into associated enclosures and field walls that are probably contemporary.

![Figure 79: Possible routeways through Noughaval](image)

The zone of settlement closest to the medieval parish church contains the wall-footings of buildings that are truncated by field walls, which can be proposed as older than the walls and possibly of later medieval date. The wall-footings of these buildings pre-date the field walls and enclosures, which respect the profile of the wall-footings at the time of their construction. The field walls cross over the wall-footings and preserved the final phase in the life of the buildings. Other possible structures near the medieval parish church may relate to the later medieval period, this is based on their morphological similarity to the buildings that are truncated by field walls, however, the evidence is inconclusive. The possibility of the structures being houses and their possible chronology is explored in detail (8.8.2 and 8.8.3). Due to the shallow nature of the soil around the settlement, there is no indication of hollow-ways, roadways or lanes through it. However, the arrangement of buildings...
suggest that a lane ran through the settlement (fig. 78) connecting the main routeway to the possible _faithche_, noted as glebe lands on the first-edition six-inch OS map (fig. 74).

Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 375) first identified and recorded the settlement at Noughaval and noted that ‘this settlement is recorded only as small fields on the first-edition OS maps, but field survey of the site confirmed that these small “fields” enclosed the foundations of a series of rectangular houses.’ Campbell (2013, 15) built on the work of Ní Ghabhláin and identified further potential sites. Additional field survey for this thesis during 2013 and 2014 focused on the challenge of suggesting a chronology for the buildings and proposing that some of the buildings were houses that can reasonably be assigned to the later medieval period. One house at the site, N5, has been excavated. This excavation is important and is explored to contribute to our understanding of the chronology of the settlement at Noughaval.

### 8.8.1 What the excavated house reveals

The house was excavated in 1990 (Ní Ghabhláin 1990; 1992; 1995) as part of a research project into ecclesiastical settlement within the diocese of Kilfenora.

The aim of the excavation was ‘to establish a chronological relationship for the settlement surrounding the graveyard with the medieval church and market place’ (Ní Ghabhláin 1990). The excavation revealed a stone-built structure rectangular in plan (int. 7.1m E-W, 4.2m N-S) (ext. diam. 11.7m E-W, 5.7m N-S).

*Figure 80: Aerial image of site of excavated house and curvilinear enclosure (P. Naessens, Western Aerial Survey, 2015)*
Chapter 8

Noughaval

8.75m x 6m). The walls are of double course construction, the outer wall of dressed stone with rubble infill, c. 90m thick. The structure lays within a low curvilinear stone enclosure. The wall thickness varied from 1m to 1.5m (ibid., 1992, 10). The doorway lay midway along the south wall with a possible opposing doorway in the north wall. A hearth feature was uncovered in the east wall (ibid). The excavation revealed two occupation levels. The later occupation level was identified by a large amount of animal bones and domestic material and artefacts dateable to the seventeenth and later centuries.

Under this occupation level, ‘there was a thick grey/white sterile deposit. Sealed beneath this stratum was another occupation level. This was identified in the western section of the house where there was evidence of intensive and extensive burning. No structure was identified with this occupation level. Associated with this occupation was domestic material but only one possible diagnostic artefact was found, which was a tiny polished bone die (7mm) decorated with double concentric circles around the dots (Ní Ghabhláin 1990; 1992, 16; 1995, 378).

Figure 81: Images of Noughaval dice (Thanks to Sinéad Ní Ghabhláin)

The Noughaval dice (fig. 81) was tentatively ascribed a thirteenth-century date, based on an ‘identical dice found in a thirteenth century excavation in Dublin’. A number of dice were found in the Dublin excavation, the majority were not numbered in an orthodox fashion (Clarke et. al 2002, 101). Egan (1997, 1) describes the convention of placing the numbers one to six so that the opposite faces total
seven as a ‘regular’ layout. Non-regular arrangements, where the opposite faces do not total seven, are most common from the thirteenth century to the end of the middle ages.

Dice laid out in a non-regular fashion are therefore reasonably diagnostic. However, the Noughaval dice is laid out in a ‘regular’ fashion, the numbers on the opposite faces total seven and do not bear a similarity to the Christchurch dice. The dot and double circle motif on the Noughaval dice is widely found in European contexts ranging from Early medieval to the early modern period and cannot be reliably considered diagnostic. It is still entirely possible that the Noughaval dice dates from the thirteenth century, however, it has to be treated with great caution.

Figure 82: Plan of excavation of house site at Noughaval (after Ní Ghabhláin 1992)
There are features of the excavated building that sets it apart from other buildings on the site. It is the only building set within a curvilinear enclosure. There is no dating evidence for the enclosure, which is roughly circular (int. dims. c. 14m x 12m) and varies in thickness from 1m to 1.5m (Ní Ghabhláin 1992, 11). The enclosure wall is different from the other enclosures and field walls at the settlement, which do not exceed 1m in thickness. This suggests that the curvilinear enclosure relates to an earlier phase of enclosure, possibly the later medieval period.

The enclosure served as a screen between the house, the church and the other houses, and provided privacy. The house is located to the southeast of the medieval parish church, and east of the house-cluster. Its location is at the edge, or periphery of the settlement, indicating that the occupant was set apart from the rest of the community and was of some importance. Bermingham (2006, 170) demonstrated that in later medieval Ireland the incumbent priest, usually lived in accommodation in the modified west end of the parish church, and is therefore unlikely to have been the occupant of this house.

Dressed stones used for the outer faces of the walls and according to Ní Ghabhláin (1992, 26-7) it is likely that the nearby church was the source for at least some of the dressed stone used. It is most unlikely that material would have been removed from the church unless the builder had a strong connection with it.

The erenagh was the most important members of the community (7.6) and it is most likely that this house was the home of the erenagh and his family. The house site ensured privacy and status, it is the most important house-site at the settlement and Gaelic society attached great importance to site pedigree (FitzPatrick 2006, 70-2), and where you lived was an essential social value (FitzPatrick 2009, 302). This house may have been built and rebuilt, through time as the home of an ecclesiastical family.

8.8.2 The post-medieval phase of buildings and enclosures

Four buildings are located c. 95m south and southeast of the parish church (figs. 83-4). The soil here is thinner, with more exposed bedrock than in the area closer to the parish church. Two buildings (N11 and N12) are built within a series of small enclosures and are incorporated into the walls of the enclosure (fig. 83). The west
gable and the south wall of building N11 (int. dims. c. 8.7m E-W; 4.70m N-S) are structurally integrated into the enclosure. The west gable and the south long wall of N12, (int. dims. c. 7.5m E-W; 2.5m N-S) is also incorporated into the enclosure. The enclosure walls of both buildings extend and connect to the network of associated field walls in the surrounding landscape. The close relationship between the buildings, the enclosures and the field walls suggests that all were constructed at the same time. The house sites, N13 (int. dims. c. 5.0m E-W; 4.0m N-S) and N14 (int. dims c. 7.5m E-W; 2.5m N-S), are also incorporated into the enclosure walls and obviously related to the same period of construction as N11 and N12. Two small animal enclosures associated with these buildings. The upstanding remains of the four buildings stand at a greater height than other buildings on the site. They range in height from c. 0.50m, to 1.40m over the surrounding field surface and from c. 0.50m to 1.50m above the interior of the buildings.

The height of the standing remains and their relationship to the surrounding enclosures and field walls suggest that the buildings were abandoned and fell into
ruin some time later than the other buildings on the site. The network of field walls and enclosures, into which the buildings are integrated, suggests that they were built contemporaneously, and it is reasonable to suggest that they were part of modern improvement, probably in the eighteenth or nineteenth century and may have been small houses, which were part of a composite farmstead.

**N4**

The stone wall-footings of N4 (int. dims c. 9.0m E-W; 4.0m N-S;). are located c. 40.0m south of the graveyard and c. 6.0m south of N3. Like the buildings N11, N12, N13 and N14, this building is structurally incorporated into the surrounding field walls. It is conjoined with the field wall at the junction of the west gable and south long wall. This integration with the field wall suggests that the building is contemporaneous with the eighteenth or nineteenth-century phase of enclosure.

**N8 and N9**

There is an absence of chronological indicators for other buildings at Noughaval, N8 and N9 (fig. 77), and it is not possible to determine their function, or to ascribe them to a particular time period with any degree of certainty. The standing stone wall remains of N9, which stand c. 2m over the surrounding field surface are the highest of any structure on the site. The structure is square in plan (int. dims c.4.m E-W; 4m N-S), with a wall thickness of c. 0.50m. N8 (int. c. 4.m N-S; 3.5 E-W), with a wall thickness of c. 0.60m and stands c.
1m over the surrounding field surface. The building is located c. 5m northeast of N9. The close proximity of the buildings suggests that they were associated with each other in the past. As stated above, the absence of chronological indicators makes it impossible to date the buildings or ascribe a function to them.

### 8.8.3 The earlier building cluster

The modern landscape around the parish church with a series of small irregular fields, bounded by stone field walls that are generally c. 1m to 1.50m in height and c. 0.30m to 0.50m thick (8.8). This phase of modern enclosure like Oughtmama (7.5.2) was probably as a result of nineteenth-century improvement.

#### N2

The stone wall-footings of N2 (int. dims c.4.75m E-W; 2.50m N-S) are located c. 20.0m south of the graveyard and within a small stone-built sub-rectangular enclosure (fig. 86).

The sub-rectangular enclosure is set within a sub-triangular field c. 0.257 acres. The field is in permanent pasture with a greater depth of soil and less exposed bedrock than the area to the south. To the immediate south of the enclosure, the land falls sharply to the south. The field is shown on the first-edition six-inch OS map and described as ‘Glebe’ (fig. 74), or church land, which confirms the association of the building with the church. The building is truncated to the east by a field.

*Figure 86: Plan of N2*
wall (c. H 1.20m; T 0.50m) and to the north by the sub-rectangular enclosure. The building clearly pre-dates the field wall and the final phase in the life of the building is fossilised by the field wall.

**N3**
The grass-covered stone wall-footings of N 3 (int. dims. 8.3m E-W; 3.5m) are located c. 15m south-west of N2 (fig. 87). The wall-footings are located in an area of thin soil with some exposed bedrock. The wall-footings are located in a sub-triangular enclosure, which also encloses N4. A north to south-aligned field wall (H 1m; T 0.50m) truncates the structure (fig. 88). The wall-footings are clearly visible east of the field wall, but more eroded to the west. As the wall-footings are truncated, they are clearly older than the field wall.

**N6**
The grass-covered stone wall-footings of N6 are located c. 30m southeast of the graveyard and c. 45m south of N7 (figs. 89). The wall-footings are located in a field of shallow soils with some
exposed bedrock and are in close proximity to the holy well. The wall-footings (int. dims c. 5.20m E-W; 1.20m N-S) are truncated, and badly disturbed by a field wall (c. H 1.30m; T 0.60m) which runs north to south.

**N7**
The grass-covered, stone wall-footings of N7 (int. dims c. 7.50m E-W; 5.50m N-S) are located c. 13m east of the graveyard and c. 45m north of N6. The site is located in the same field as N6 and is the closest structure to the holy well. The wall-footings are truncated and disturbed by a stone field wall (c. H 1.30m; T 0.50m) to the east.

The wall-footings of N6 and N7 (T 1.0m) are morphologically similar and are possibly the remains of houses. The field wall that truncates both buildings is of similar height and thickness and therefore relate to the same phase of enclosure. However, the remains are very disturbed and there is no evidence of structures east of the field wall where the ground falls away. The relationship of some the field walls to these buildings are similar to N2 and N3 and the field walls post-date the buildings and preserve the condition of the wall-footing at the time that the field walls were built.

**N1**
The stone, grass-covered wall-footings of N1 ((int. dims c. 7.0m; 3.0m E-W), are located c. 25.0m south of the graveyard (fig. 90). The wall-footings are situated in the southern zone of a small field, depicted on the first-edition OS map containing c. 0.6 acres. The soil is thin and there is some exposed bedrock. To the south of the wall-footings, there is a slight scarp. There is an indication of an entrance in the south wall, and no evidence for an internal partition.
The wall-footings are not enclosed and in the absence of an established relationship between it and the field-walls, the approximate period of the building cannot be established. This building shares some features with the others, such as wall thickness and height above the interior of the building.

**N10**

Following fieldwork in 2010, Campbell (2013, 15) identified the footprint of an additional building, N10 (int. dims c. 5.90m E-W; 3.70m N-S). The grass-covered stone wall-footings (fig. 91) are located c. 95m south-west of the graveyard. The site is located in a field of shallow soil with some exposed bedrock. The wall footings are partially denuded, particularly the western wall, but it is clearly visible as an elevated platform. Like N1, the wall-footings are not enclosed and...
therefore, cannot reliably be considered to be of medieval date, however it shares the same wall thickness as other building that possibly relate to that period.

### 8.8.4 Summary

There is no obvious pattern in the settlement to assist in establishing the chronology or function of the buildings. The evidence suggests that different areas within the settlement developed at different times, and that it was an organic development over time rather than a planned development.

In summary, the buildings, N1, N12, N13 and N14, located c. 90m south of the parish church, most likely relate to the post-medieval phase of construction or occupation at the settlement. The basis for proposing that these buildings relate to this period is their relationship to the surrounding field walls into which they are incorporated. These buildings and their associated enclosures and surrounding field walls, probably relate to modern improvement, most likely in the eighteenth or nineteenth century and were obviously constructed contemporaneously. Buildings, N2, N3, N6 and N7 are truncated by field walls that respect the profile of the wall-footings and preserve the final phase in the life of the buildings and are therefore clearly older than, N11, N12, N13 and N14, which are integrated into field walls and enclosures. It is a reasonable assumption that some of these buildings relate to the later medieval period and that some may have been houses.

The possible building, N4, which is in close proximity to N2 and N3 is not truncated and like those in the southern zone it is incorporated into a field wall and cannot be older than the field wall and probably dates to the eighteenth, or nineteenth century. Other buildings, N1 and N10, are more enigmatic as there is an absence of associated field walls to provide an indication of their chronology. An analysis of morphological features (table 6), such as, dimensions, internal area and wall thickness, provide a hint that these buildings may relate to the same generation of building as N2, N3, N6 and N7. These wall-footings share a similar, c. 1m, wall thickness as N1, and N10 is also similar at 0.85m, however, there are similarities that may suggest these buildings relate to the later medieval period, the evidence is not conclusive.
### Noughaval Buildings

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Table 6: Table of morphological similarities of Noughaval houses

The chronology and function of N8 and N9 is most obscure. There is no evidence to suggest whether the buildings relate to the eighteenth or nineteenth century, or whether they are older. The evidence from the house excavated by Ní Ghabhláin (1992) suggests that it may be from the seventeenth century, or later. However, there is a very tentative possibility that if the dice is thirteenth rather than seventeenth century in date that the earliest phase of the house may be of high medieval origin. It is entirely possible that other houses were built on the remains of earlier structures and the visible remains may represent the final stage in a series of house building. As discussed above, modern improvement and clearance, the diverse and ephemeral nature of Gaelic medieval housing may preclude the discovery of other buildings and the remains visible today may represent but a small portion of a much larger settlement.

The possible later medieval buildings at Noughaval appear smaller than those at Oughtmama. The average internal space at Noughaval is 22.2m² and Oughtmama 40.3m². The Noughaval houses compare well to Carran, 21.3m² and Killeany 19.3m² (fig. 92). The other later medieval house excavated in Burren was at Caherconnell (Comber and Hull 2010, 134-171), which dates from the early fifteenth to the mid-
seventeenth century, and measures, internally 10m x 5m. The Caherconnell house was located within the garth of a cathair that suggests that it was the home of Gaelic later medieval and early-modern gentry class. There is an absence of rounded quoins in the houses at Noughaval and the other case study sites, however they are a feature of other Burren houses, such as Caherconnell, Cahermacnaghten, Cahermore, Ballyganner Castle, Caherwalsh and Caheridoula (FitzPatrick 2009, 299-302). The majority of Burren houses, summarised by FitzPatrick (ibid.), were more substantial than the houses at settlement clusters at parish churches, which suggests that the ecclesiastical families, who lived in the settlement clusters at parish churches were below the social standing of the Gaelic gentry class who lived in cathair sites. However, some ecclesiastical families lived in somewhat superior dwellings was suggested by a petition to Rome in 1433, when David Obeachayn, a priest in of the diocese of Kilfenora, reveals that he had ‘built a stone house at his own expense’ (CPR, viii, 501). The stone house was not a tower-house, rather ‘it seems to have been a superior domestic building’ (Gardiner 2011, 718).

8.9 Conclusions

The market centre at Noughaval provides an opportunity to explore the nature of a specialised erenagh settlement, centred on a market in an area that remained culturally Gaelic throughout the period 1200 to 1600 A.D. The parish of Noughaval was smaller than average and the quality of its land was poor, yet the parish was exceptionally well populated. Documents suggest that in the mid-seventeenth century, higher population density was a feature of the townland that contains the parish church, and continuity of this pattern is evident by the large parish church, suggesting that there was a substantial community in the parish from at least the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. The size of the parish, nor the quality of its soil could not have sustained such a large population within the normal agricultural economy prevalent in this Gaelic lordship. The explanation for the economic endurance of the community must lie in market-related activity.

The relationship between the parish church, marketplace and settlement at Noughaval is illustrated by the market cross just north of the graveyard gate. The masonry style of the cross is typical of the late medieval period and it provides clear
evidence that a market was operating in that period. The market cross may have been moved from its present roadside location, and the market at Noughaval may well have been held on the *platea*, or green of the former early medieval monastery. The most likely area for the market is to the south of the medieval church, in an area designated as ‘glebe’ on the six-inch first-edition OS map.

**Figure 92: Internal space of houses at case study sites**

It is evident that the large community was sustained through market activity, rather than agricultural production and we can confidently deduce that the lines on the ‘bandle’ cross were used as a measure for textiles and that, the linen and possibly woollen textiles were traded at the market. A possible explanation for population density in the townland may lie in community involvement in spinning, weaving and possibly some other activities associated with markets, including a range of crafts such as, coopers, leatherwork, bronze-smiths, iron-smiths and possibly skinners for the production of hides (Bradley 1991, 25-6). However, the archaeological evidence of such activities remains elusive and other activities cannot be conclusively established.

Our understanding of the structure and organisation of markets outside colonial urban areas is limited, and in areas that continued under Gaelic control it is non-existent. Nonetheless, markets operated under patronage, and as churchlands were
controlled by the bishop in the later medieval period, inevitably the patron of the market at Noughaval was the bishop of Kilfenora. Markets universally attracted tolls. The erenagh, was responsible for ecclesiastical temporalities and the collection of tithes and other church revenues and would have been responsible for the collection of market tolls.

Markets were organised and regulated. In the English lordships weights and measures were examined and officials were engaged in ensuring that standards were maintained (Mills 1914, 438). This aspect of Gaelic markets is unrecorded, but it is reasonable to assume that some control was exercised particularly for markets held on churchlands. The erenagh, with responsibilities for parish temporalities, would have been responsible for regulating the standards of the market.

Nicholls (1987, 419) has suggested that Gaelic merchant families were probably merchants at ecclesiastical sites, and as such, it is likely that they were from erenagh families. It is possible that early merchants at Noughaval were erenaghs, or from erenagh families.

Market crosses occur rarely in Gaelic Ireland and in Co. Meath the majority of late medieval crosses were in wayside locations and only two of which were associated with market activity. The Leacht Uí Dhalaigh, at Finavarra in the parish of Oughtmama, is remarkably similar in appearance to the cross at Noughaval and was undoubtedly a market centre. These crosses are among a number of crosses at market centres in the adjoining late medieval lordship, such as Athenry, Ardrahan and Ennis. It appears that, while wayside crosses are known, such as the example at Glencolumbkille in Carran parish, crosses were more likely to have been market crosses in Gaelic and Gaelicised areas.
Chapter 9 Carran and Killeany - contrasting parish church-centred settlements in the Lordship of Burren

9.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the results of investigations at two settlement clusters at the parish churches of Carran and Killeany, in the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren and to highlight their respective roles. In both parishes, the remains of their medieval parish churches have survived in reasonable condition. Almost half the churches in the diocese of Kilfenora, including, Carran and Killeany, were either completely, or substantially rebuilt c.1500 (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 172).

Carran parish church was completely rebuilt (9.4) in the late medieval period, however, some architectural features of the earlier church were incorporated into the new building. Around 1500 the parish church at Killeany was enlarged and substantially rebuilt, but the plan of the earlier phase can still be identified and some architectural features of the early church were retained. Changes in the structure of the churches are explored to identify social change in the local communities (9.3; 9.8.2).
Aerial and other photographic surveys together with nineteenth-century cartographic sources were used to inform the local geography of the sites, and to determine the strategy to be employed for field survey and recording (2.2). A digital surface model was produced through the use of remotely piloted aerial system (RPAS) technology to investigate and record the earthworks. A walkover field survey and a hand-held Trimble Global Positioning System (GPS) device was employed to record the features at the parish church-centred settlements and make a plan of the wall-footings of possible buildings, field walls, banks and enclosures. Plans were generated in order to assist in determining a basic chronology for the buildings and to propose that some wall-footings were the remains of houses that relate to the later medieval period.

The ecclesiastical taxation list of 1302-6 (CDI, v, 298-9) is the earliest survey of church revenues and, as it was compiled shortly after the completion of the parochial network in the diocese. It is particularly useful in suggesting distinctions in the roles of the two parishes in the later medieval period. The extraordinary high value of the revenues of Carran, at 80s (Shillings) is in marked contrast to the value of Killeaney at 26s 8d, which is more typical of a medieval parish in the diocese. The high value of the parish revenues of Carran reveals its origin as a ‘tribal church’ in the Túath Slíocht Iriail (fig. 94) and its later status as the centre of a rectory.

The geographic size of the two parishes is remarkably different. Carran is substantially the largest parish in the diocese, whereas Killeaney is among the smallest. The communities at the parish churches did not live in isolation; they were part of the wider parish community. Carran with multiple churches within its boundaries has an extraordinary high number of penitential stations clustered around its subsidiary churches, which suggests that pilgrimage was an important activity in the parish in the later medieval period. The parish church was the ecclesiastical centre of the parish and the surrounding churchlands were under the control of an erenagh (7.6). Among their hereditary obligation was the duty to provide hospitality for travellers and pilgrims (Simms 1978, 70; Jefferies 1999, 16).
Carran was also a rectory and had extensive church-lands, which remained in ecclesiastical control throughout the later medieval period. In addition to lands around the parish church, ecclesiastical estates may have been attached to the five subsidiary churches in the parish, possibly since their foundation in the early medieval period. As a rectory, the evidence contained in the CPR is investigated to establish whether clerical revenues were used to provide a prebendary for dignitaries of the cathedral of Kilfenora. The smaller parish of Killeaney also had church lands and the evidence in the CPR is investigated to establish if it too had a role in the provision of support for diocesan dignitaries.

The settlements at both parish churches failed as long-term settlements, and they were ultimately deserted. The census of 1659 and other seventeenth-century documents and maps are investigated to ascertain whether decline is evident before the end of the sixteenth century.

Figure 94: Parish map of Burren, site of parish churches indicated (After FitzPatrick and Hennessey 2008)
9.2 Carran and Killeany; history, territory and topography

To understand both settlements we must take into account their landed resources, the boundaries of the estates within which they lay and their system of communication (Lewis et al. 1997, 3).

9.2.1 Carran

The parish of Carran is located in the northeastern area of the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren and extends to the boundary between the Ó Lochlainn lordship and the MacWilliam Uachtar, (Burke) lordship of Clanrickard. To the south and southeast lays the Ó Briain lordship of Thomond, which had overlordship of Burren (Quinn and Nicholls 1976, 2-3). The parish is bounded by the parishes of Oughtmama to the north, Kilcorney to the northwest and by Noughaval to the west.

The parish church of Carran was well connected to the outside world. It lays immediately east of a north-south routeway (today the R480 regional road), which passes through the interior of the Burren linking the natural harbour at Ballyvaughan, on the northern coast of Burren, to the Ó Briain caput of Leamaneh in the south. From there it connects to the diocesan centre at Kilfenora. This routeway, at a distance of 1.5km north of the parish church, connects to a series of local and regional routeways that extend the full east to west width of the parish where it forms one of few possible ancient east-west routeway across the Burren (Gosling 1991, 125-6). The routeway follows the natural geography of the Burren and extends eastward from the parish church, in the Burren uplands, through a series of low passes and valleys to the Glencolumbkille pass south of Slievecarran (329m) where it leaves the Ó Lochlainn lordship and enters the MacWilliam Uachtar lordship of Clanrickard, to the east. There is no historic evidence for the antiquity of this routeway. However, its importance within the parish is evident as it links the parish church to subsidiary chapels, it provided access for parishioners in the east to the parish church. It also connects clusters of penitential stations at Sladoo, Termon, Glencolumbkille and Keelhilla. The routeway is also adjacent to tower-houses at Glencolumbkille and Castlefield and it was undoubtedly important in the later medieval period, and probably earlier.
Agricultural diversity in the Burren region has been long recognised (Dunford 2002, 28). The rendzina soils of the Burren series, which predominate in the parish, are described by Finch (1971, soils map) as ‘very shallow soils over bedrock’. The use-range of such soil is limited due to its shallowness and by the amount of exposed rock, however, because of its strong structure and good drainage it is suitable for extensive grazing, including overwintering, but very poor for tillage (Finch 1971, 35). Pockets of rendzina of the Kilcolgan phase are scattered throughout the parish and while not prime lands, they are good for tillage and very good grassland (Finch 1971, 36). The best lands in the parish are in the east of the parish, close to the Glencolumbkille tower-houses, these consist of brown earths of the Kinvarra phase that have a wide use-range and are well suited to tillage and excellent for grassland (Finch 1971, 13).

Figure 95: Túatha divisions in the Ó Lochlainn lordship (FitzPatrick and Hennessey 2008)

Little is known of the later medieval history of the parish of Carran, however, a separate parish, Glencolumbkille, is recorded within its boundary. A vicar is recorded there in 1574 (Twigge 1910, 75-85). It appears that the parish emerged
following a sub-division of the *túatha* as a consequence of a split within the Ó Lochlainn sept (fig 101). The parish was short-lived and was later subsumed into Carran. The chronicles record a feud among the Ó Lochlainn sept following the death of Donough Ó Lochlainn, ‘Lord of Corcomroe’ in 1361 (AFM iii, 621-2). In 1389 ‘Melaghlin Cam Ó Lochlainn, Lord of Corcomroe, was treacherously slain by his own brother’ (AFM, iv, 716-7). Seven years later Iriail Ó Lochlainn, ‘lord of Corcomroe, was slain by MacGirr-an-Adhastair (Nestor), one of his own tribe, in revenge of his foster-brother Melaghlin, whom he, Iriail, had killed some time before’ (AFM, iv, 744). These events suggests to Nugent (2007a, 134) that the territory was split between the descendants of Iriail, Sliocht Iriail, and the descendants of his father, Donagh, ‘the “proper” line of descent Sliocht Donagh Uí Lochlainn’ (ibid.). The secular split was mirrored by an ecclesiastical division of the parish of Carran when, in the fourteenth century, a separate parish was established that was coextensive with the secular holding at Glencolumbkille. The exact dates of the partition of the parish and its later reunification are not recorded.

### 9.2.2 Killeany

The parish of Killeany is located in the southern fringe of the Burren uplands, bounded to the east and north by the parish of Rathborney, by Kilmoon to the west, Kilfenora to the south and Kilcorney, to the southeast. The small, compact parish of Killeany extends 5.23km north to south and 3.22km at its greatest extent and contains 3,306 acres in nine townlands (Anon. 1845). The national primary route, N67, which passes from west to east, divides the parish, with the parish-Church centre and three townlands to the north and the remaining four townlands south of the routeway. The N67 connects the modern villages of Lisdoonvarna and Ballyvaughan. A regional road branches off the N67, passes west of the parish church, continues north by the east of Slieve Elva, (344m) and through the Caher Valley to the coast at Fanore.

There is a great variety of soils in the parish, most of these soils consist of rendzinas of the ‘Burren very rocky phase’ which is very shallow soil over bedrock and vulnerable to drought, very poor for tillage and very poor for grassland, it is, however, very suitable for overwintering stock (Finch 1971, 34-5). There is a small
parcel of better soil around the parish church, which consists of grey-brown podzolic group, of the Kilfenora phase. These soils are limited, due to weak structure and moderate drainage. Their prime use is in grassland, but they are suitable for tillage, with carefully rotation (ibid., 27-8). The best soils are located in the south of the parish and are described by Lewis (1837, ii, 100) as ‘very rich grazing farms, from which large droves of cattle are sent to Cork and Liverpool’. The underlying limestone bedrock, just c. 0.60m under the ground surface, resulted in ‘great productiveness in the soil, which on the townland of Ballyconnoe South, has been known to yield none crops in succession without manuring’.

9.3 Carran, an exceptionally large parish

There are a number of aspects of Carran which sets it apart from the other parishes in the diocese of Kilfenora. The geographical size, the valuation of parish revenues in the early fourteenth century, the number of subsidiary chapels and penitential stations are remarkably different from other parishes in the diocese.

![The size parishes in Kilfenora](image)

Figure 96: The size of parishes in Burren

Carran is the largest parish in Burren, with 42 townlands (fig. 97) containing 14,465 statute acres. There are great variations in the size of parishes in Kilfenora and for comparative purposes it is worth noting that the average medieval parish in the diocese was 6,410 (fig. 96) acres. Oughtmama, is the second largest with 9,116 acres,
List of townlands in Carran parish

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<td>Ballydora</td>
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<td>Cloncoose</td>
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*Figure 97: Townlands in the parish of Carran*
Killeany is the second smallest with 3,304 acres, while Noughaval was smaller than average with 4,612 acres.

There is a marked contrast in the size of the parish of Carran to the smaller parishes of colonial Ireland, which range from 1,700 to 5,000 acres (Duffy 2006, 43). Exceptionally large parishes are known in the Gaelic regions of Ireland, a pattern also seen in the marcher regions of Wales, where occasional enormous parishes exist in contrast to the small, compact parishes in Norman areas of south Wales (Nicholls 1971, 55). The value of the revenues of the parish of Carran, as recorded in the ecclesiastical taxation list of 1302-6, was 80 shillings, the second highest in the diocese, after the cathedral parish of Kilfenora. More than 60% of parishes had a valuation of either 23s 4d or 26s 8d, underlining the remarkably high valuation of Carran (CDI, v, 289-9).

9.4 The parish church of Carran

The parish church of Carran, An Carn, which translates from the Irish as a ‘cairn, pile of rocks’ (Placenames Committee), is located in the townland of Poulacarran at

an altitude of 120m OD in a karst limestone upland area of very poor, shallow soil. The early history of the church is obscure and the founder is unknown. However, the parish church of ‘Carne’ is recorded in the ecclesiastical taxation list of 1302-6 (CDI, v 98-9). In the southern end of the graveyard, there is a penitential cairn around which coffins were carried before burial (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 414). Westropp (1900, 133-4) dated the upstanding remains of the parish church to c. 1500 and the latest architectural features of the building can be dated with certainty to that period, but there are indications of an earlier phase. Some stones of an earlier church were incorporated into the later structure.

Diagonal tooling, a masonry style of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (McAfee, 1997, 94-5), is evident on the south window (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 416). An earlier monolithic window head (fig. 99) is built into the interior wall over the south doorway (ibid.). The size, form and precise date of the earlier church is unknown. There are no architectural features relating to a church pre-dating the twelfth century, however, Ní Ghabhláin (ibid., 305) argues that the large stone cairn, to the immediate south of the parish church was possibly a leacht from the early medieval period and may represent an earlier church. It is from this cairn too that the parish possibly derives its name.

Figure 99: Monolithic window head incorporated into interior of south wall

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46 Leacht (plural Leachtanna) are small rectangular stone mounds found on many early ecclesiastical sites. Some may have been used as open-air altars and some were certainly incorporated into pilgrimage rounds. Although by no means certain it is possible that some leachtanna ay mark the graves of important people such as early saints while others may have been dedicated to people buried elsewhere. The word leacht translates as a ‘grave’ a ‘grave mound’ or ‘memorial cairn’ (Jones 2004, 91).
The building (c.17.5m x 6.5m), 113.7m$^2$, was built c.1500. It is well preserved, with the walls standing to roof level. The doorway in the south wall is pointed, richly moulded and has a stoup in the right jamb which is punch dressed. There is also a blocked doorway in the north wall, although there is no evidence of cut stone in situ.

The window in the east wall is tall and pointed and one of the windows in the southern wall is ogee-headed (Westropp 1900, 134). There is the remains of a bellcote in the west gable. An upper storey is indicated by corbels in the interior of the west wall and windows located in the south wall above the level of the weather coursing (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 414-6).

An unusual feature, incorporated in the north-west corner of the church, suggests that access to the area immediately north of the church may have been controlled. The feature concerned has the appearance of a machicolation (fig. 100), a projecting structure supported by corbels from which stones or other objects could be dropped on attackers below (Sweetman 1999, 208). There are some problems in the interpretation of this feature. Firstly, while it has the appearance of machicolation, it is positioned on the gable wall and not over the door church, or other feature vulnerable to attack by intruders. Secondly, the surviving features suggests that it...
was small for a machicoltion. It is possible that the parish church served as a fortified
dwelling of the priest. It may also have been a garderobe chute. It can also be
tentitivly suggested that it may have been a defensive feature, contolling access to
the building (9.7.1) north of the parish church.

Westropp (1990, 134) recorded three carved heads from the church, those of ‘a king,
a woman and a warrior’, two are now missing. The surviving head is a small carved
small helmeted head of a soldier or knight (fig. 101). The helmet is a close-fitting
ridged type known as a ‘bascinet’ (Higgins 1992, 21). The position of the head, in
the north wall, c. 1m above the floor level, and its relative closeness to the altar at the
east end of the church, suggest that it was symbolically guarding the sanctuary, the
most sacred part of the church (Higgins 1992, 24). As the ground level of the interior
of the church would have built up over time due to burials and the natural
growth of soil, the original surface may have been significently lower than the present
level. The carved head was possibly a grave marker or a memorial monument that is below
the present ground level.

The parish church dominated the everyday lives of later medieval society. The church presided over every major event in the lives of the members of the parish community. It was the place where births were celebrated, marriage was solemnised and the graveyard at the parish church was the last resting place for deceased members of the community and, of course, the principal place of prayer. It was also at the parish church that the fields were blessed for fertility and the seas for safe passage (Bradley 1991, 27). The parish church was the focus of the parish and central to all ecclesiastical activity, which would have included pilgrimage activity.
There is also a suggestion that the parish church was itself a pilgrimage centre. There are four cairns, one in the graveyard and three c. 50m south of the graveyard, which may have had a penitential role (fig. 102). The churchlands attached to the church were occupied by a coarb or erenagh. These clerical officers also had a responsibility for the provision of hospitality for pilgrims (Simms 1978, 70).

The provision of hospitality was a long-established tradition in Ireland, which originated in early medieval times. The provision of guesting for pilgrims and others was an obligation of every church and it is evident, from the saints Lives, and other religious narratives, compiled long after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans that the practice continued through the later medieval period. The task of maintaining church guesthouses was largely delegated to hereditary churchmen holding the office of coarb or erenagh (O’Sullivan 2004, 146-9). Obituaries recorded in the chronicles, such as Cathal MacMaghnus Mág Uidhir who died 1433 (AU, ii, 130) makes clear that pilgrims were among those accommodated in church guesthouses and that the practice continued well into the later medieval period.

9.5 Multiple churches, a centre of pilgrimage

As expected of a large parish, a number of subsidiary churches (chapels of ease) were built to accommodate parishioners scattered over a large geographical area. In addition to the parish church, there were five subsidiary chapels in Carran (fig. 103). Eight parishes in the diocese have multiple churches, four have single subsidiary churches, including the O’Davoren mortuary chapel at Noughaval and three, including Oughtmama, have two (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 197). Multiple churches are an established feature in the diocese of Kilfenora, however, Carran is unique with five.
Subsidiary chapels had a variety of functions, those close to the parish were mortuary chapels, such as at Noughaval and Kilmoon. Others served a particular function, such as the hospital chapel at Kilcarragh, in cathedral parish of Kilfenora and a possible proprietary chapel at Toomullin in the parish of Killilagh (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 197). The majority were chapels of ease that served remote communities in large parishes, however, baptism or burial could only be carried out at the parish church (FitzPatrick 2006, 62-3).

The parish church, in the townland of Poulacarran, near the south-east boundary of the parish, was remote from scattered communities near the north-western part of the parish, a distance of c. 15km and it is therefore reasonable to expect chapels of ease to have assisted in the provision of pastoral care. ‘Cure of souls’ may have been a function of the subsidiary chapels, however, this may not have been their main function.
The subsidiary chapels as saintly cult centres

There suggestions that the five subsidiary chapels in the parish had their genesis as early Christian foundations and there are indications that some continued into the later medieval period as saintly cult centres and pilgrimage sites.

Teampall Crónán

St. Crónán of Roscrea reportedly founded the church here (Westropp 1900, 134) and a well dedicated to the saint is located south of the chapel (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 489).

The standing remains of Teampall Crónán, within a possible vallum (fig. 104), are in excellent condition. The small chapel, (int. dims c. 6.5m x 4m) is located in the townland of Termon. There are several phases of construction, with some features relating to a pre-twelfth-century phase (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 488-9).

The early features include, large cyclopean masonry blocks and two curvilinear enclosures to the north and west of the chapel that may well be the remains of the vallum of the early Christian foundation (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 488-9). Westropp (1900, 134) recorded that the base and shaft of a plain cross, stood on the ridge to the northwest. While the use of cyclopean masonry can be indicative of a pre-twelfth century date, however, in northwest Clare the size range of blocks can also be influenced by geology (Ó Carragáin 2005, 124) and therefore this masonry style alone cannot be used to conclusively attribute a date to this phase of the building.
The chapel was completely rebuilt in the late twelfth century and the large cyclopean blocks were reused. Decorated corbels with carved heads projecting from the gable and the external corner mouldings are consistent with this period (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 449). A later phase of construction, possibly fifteenth century, is suggested by the insertion of a pointed door in the north wall and the blocking up of the west door (Westropp 1900, 134).

Two gabled tomb-shrines lie to the southeast and the northeast of the chapel. Tomb-shrines consisting of inwardly inclining slabs forming a roof, without supporting walls, are described by Harbison (1991, 153) as ‘cumdach or bone-box.’ Tomb-shrines, containing the remains of founding saints or abbots, are known features on early medieval church sites (Harbison 1991, 147-9). Reliquaries must have been a feature of every century from the seventh century onwards, and it appears that the practice was particularly common in the eighth and ninth centuries. Teampall Crónán was a saintly cult centre in the early medieval period and continued as an important pilgrimage site. There was resurgence in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries (Ó Carragáin 2010, 67) and continuity of the tradition of pilgrimage at Teampall Crónán is evident well into the later medieval period by the changes in the fabric of the chapel in the late twelfth and fifteenth centuries. The importance of Teampall Crónán as a pilgrimage site is indicated by nine penitential stations in the townland, with a further five in the adjoining townland of Coskeam (archaeological.ie), all within a distance of 1.6km of Teampall Crónán chapel.

**Keelhilla**

The chapel in the townland of Keelhilla is located in the most northeasterly townland of the parish, c. 15km from the parish church. It was described by Westropp (1900, 134) as the hermitage of St. Colmán MacDuach. The complex includes the chapel and graveyard, the cave (or bed) of the saint, four holy wells and four penitential stations, or leachtanna (9.4) (archaeology.ie). Ní Ghabhláin (2006, 164) identified two styles of masonry, with most of the fabric of the chapel being consistent with the later medieval period. However, large cyclopean blocks are interspaced with smaller blocks suggesting the possibility that masonry from an earlier church was reused in

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the construction of the later chapel. Harbison (1991, 125) considers that these monuments suggest that Keelhilla was a place of pilgrimage, connected to St. Colmán, who was the supposed founder of the early medieval monasteries at Oughtmama (7.4.1) and Kilmacduagh, located c. 7km to the southeast. The ruins of the chapel are featureless (Westropp 1900, 134) and it is not possible to attribute phases to the construction of the building. However, one of the *leachtanna* is built over the rubble of the earlier church, indicating that the *leacht* was late (Jones 2004, 85) and that the site continued in use and retained its importance as a pilgrimage site from the medieval period into the nineteenth century when Keelhilla was noted as place of pilgrimage (Jones 2004, 93).

**Glencolumbkille**

The standing remains of the chapel in the townland of Glencolumbkille are of fifteenth-century date, however, its origin as a church of the early medieval period is suggested by a circular enclosure. A carved head discovered at the site by Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 431) is of tenth century date as suggests by stylistic similarities with other carvings that date to that period (Jones 2004, 96). The Glencolumbkille head is now in the Clare County Museum.

Four tower-houses are recorded in the parish in 1570, two of which are located in Glencolumbkille and one each in the townlands of Castletown and Cappagh (Breen 1995, 130-8). The tower-houses in the townland of Glencolumbkille reflect its importance as a secular centre, following the split of the *tíatha* between the descendants of Iriail and Donagh Ó Lochlainn (9.2.1), and it is likely that parish emerged at that time to mirror this territorial split and that the chapel was re-built as a parish church. The absences of a reference to Glencolumbkille, as a parish in the ecclesiastical taxation list of 1302-6 or any other high medieval sources, together with the absence of later references to Glenculbmkille suggests to Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 359-60) that the parish was short-lived.

In an analysis of the medieval churches in Kilfenora, Ní Ghabhláin (1995) classifies the chapel of Glencolumbkille as ‘a proprietary or church of ease’, however, it is possible that the chapel, associated with St. Columbkille was a saintly cult centre, or pilgrimage chapel in the later medieval period. This view is supported by a cluster of

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49 The Glencolumbkille head is now in the Clare County Museum.
ten penitential stations on the boundary of the adjoining townlands of Fahee North and Fahee South, which are all within a radius of 900m of the chapel.

**Tempeline**

Tempeline chapel in the townland of Ballyline (fig. 105) is described by Westropp (1900, 135) as ‘a rudely built, late church, all features destroyed’. While there is little evidence of an early foundation in the fabric of the chapel, a Bing satellite image, (fig. 105) suggests that the chapel is surrounded by a sub-circular enclosure, recorded as an ecclesiastical enclosure in the RMP (CL101-087001)\(^{50}\). The feature is possibly the *vallum* of an earlier church.

![Figure 105: Bing image of enclosure at Tempeline chapel](http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/) [Accessed 9/9/2016]

**Sladoo**

The chapel at Sladoo (fig. 106), in the townland of the same name, like Tempeline,

![Figure 106: Bing satellite image of Sladoo chapel with possible vallum indicated](http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/) [Accessed 9/9/2016]

may be of early date but there is no evidence of such. Sladoo is described by Westropp (1900, 134) ‘as a rudely build late structure all features destroyed’. Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 178) suggests that it may be a penal chapel. However, like Tempeline, there is a hint of a curvilinear enclosure to the east of the chapel, which suggests the possibility of a *vallum* of an early medieval foundation.

**The role of subsidiary chapels at Carran**

The subsidiary chapels discussed above are concentrated on the routeway that runs from Keelhilla on the northeast boundary of the parish, through Glencolumbkille, Termon and Sladoo to the parish church at Poulacarran. A possible explanation for the subsidiary chapels in the parish may lie in the strong association of the parish with pilgrimage. Pilgrimage has been a practice at Irish monasteries since the seventh century, but in twelfth-century Europe, it became the greatest occupation of church sites, and Ireland followed the European trend and attracted the faithful to venerate relics at old monastic sites.

![Parish church subsidiary churches and penitential stations in Carran](image)

*Figure 107: Subsidiary chapels and clusters of penitential stations indicated*
The unusually large number and location of penitential stations (fig. 107) suggests that pilgrimage was a very important activity in the parish. The 29 penitential stations in the parish represent 87% of such monuments in Co. Clare, and an extraordinary 15% of penitential stations nationally, as recorded in the RMP (Archaeology.ie)^51. The evidence of medieval pilgrimage activity at Teampall Crónán and Keelhilla is compelling, although less so for Glencolumbkille, however while Tempeline and Sladoo may have been pilgrimage centres, the evidence is inconclusive. It is possible that the penitential stations are of post-medieval date. However, changes to the fabric of the chapel and the two tomb-shrines at Teampall Crónán and the construction of the penitential station over the rubble of the earlier chapel at Keelhilla suggests that pilgrimage was an important activity in the parish, which continued into the later medieval period.

9.6 Carran, extensive church-lands and cathedral prebendary

As discussed (9.3) the ecclesiastical taxation list of 1302-6 recorded the revenues of Carran parish at 80 shillings (CDI, v, 289-9), which suggests that the parish had extensive church-lands in the early fourteenth century. Ecclesiastical lands would have been attached to the early medieval religious foundations that later emerged as subsidiary chapels within the parish (fig. 108). Increasing episcopal control in the course of the twelfth century, culminated in 1210 when churchlands were passed to the control of the bishop. When the list was compiled in 1302-6, all church revenues were probably consolidated in the single parish valuation, which may explain the high valuation of the parish.

Carran was the centre of a rectory incorporating the parish of Noughaval (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 268), however, the details of how the parish and the rectory functioned within the diocese is unclear, as the information for Kilfenora in the ecclesiastical taxation list is sparse.

From the analysis of the episcopal manor of Tullaherin in the diocese of Ossory (6.6), it is clear that pre twelfth-century monastic or church-lands were quickly

absorbed into episcopal manors and were used to provide financial support for diocesan dignitaries. This transition did not occur in areas that remained under Gaelic control. In dioceses such as Tuam, Clonfert and Kilmacduagh, where greater details have survived, prebendaries consisted of the rectorial share of townlands that formed old episcopal lands (Nicholls 1971, 57-62). It is reasonable to consider that a similar arrangement applied in the diocese of Kilfenora and the rectories of church-lands belonged to the cathedral chapter.

After the council of Tuam (1210), the extensive church-lands scattered throughout the parish of Carran were under episcopal control. As most, if not all, of the later medieval chapels in the parish had their genesis in the earlier period and would have had church-lands attached, they too would have come under the control of the bishop. However, the descendants of hereditary ecclesiastical families, coarbs or erenaghs probably remained in occupation of the lands, but as tenants of the bishop (7.6). The ecclesiastical taxation list for the diocese of kilfenora did not include a division of the tithes between between the vicar and the rector. However, it is reasonable to

Figure 108: Parish with possible churchlands indicated
propose that in Kilfenora, like Tuam, Clonfert and Kilmacduagh, the diocesan prebendaries may have consisted of the rectorial share of townlands, which formed old episcopal lands and the rectorial share of the church revenues provided a prebendary for diocesan dignitaries.

Some aspects of the churchlands in the parish are revealed by place-name evidence. Teampall Crónán, as described above, is in the townland of Termon. Termon, (*an tearmann*) means churchlands or sanctuary lands attached to a church, which enjoyed the right of sanctuary and protection (Nicholls 2003, 226). The land to the east of the parish church is described in the first-edition six-inch OS map as ‘Glebe’ (fig. 109).

![Figure 109: First-edition six-inch OS map with 'Glebe' indicated](image)

Some indications of the function of the parish as a rectory and diocesan prebendary are to be found in the Papal letters (CPR, vi, 36-7). A letter of 1405 collated and assigned to Florence Olochlaynd (Ó Lochlainn), an archdeacon of the diocese, the perpetual vicarage of Carudnahymyn (Carran)\(^{52}\) A subsequent papal letter (CPR, vii, 535-7) recognises Carran as a rectory. In 1418, John Oconnbaith (O’Conway) had been appointed to the perpetual vicarage of Killeany, having previously

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\(^{52}\) Carudnahymyn, translated by Twemlow (ed.) as Carran (CPR, vi, 536)
‘obtained the rectory of Carudnahymigean de Ybflathmat (Carran)\textsuperscript{53} in the same diocese, and who has held both rectory and vicarage together for several years without having himself ordained priest and without dispensation’ (CPR, vii, 105). The pope rehabilitated John, who was required to resign both offices and ‘made collation and provision to him of the said vicarage’ (ibid.).

The status of Carran as a rectory and a prebendary of the diocese continued into the nineteenth century as the Union of Noughaval and Carran was ‘in the gift of the bishop of Killaloo and Kilfenora and they are the corpse of the chantership of Kilfenora’\textsuperscript{54} (Mason 1819, 284). This position is confirmed by Lewis (1837, i, 282) who described the parish as ‘part of the union of Noughaval, and the corps of the precentorship of the cathedral church of St. Fachnan, Kilfenora, in the patronage of the bishop. The tithes amount to £70 per annum, of which one half is payable to the rector, and the other to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, in whom the benefice is sequestrated’.

9.7 The settlement cluster at the parish church of Carran

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{carran_settlement_cluster.png}
\caption{Plan of settlement cluster at Carran parish church}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{53} Carudnahymigean de Ybflathmat translated by Editor as Carran Vol. VII p. 597

\textsuperscript{54} Meaning it was vested in the in the office of the chantership.
The settlement at the parish church of Carran is contained within a compact sub-triangular area of c. 5.5 acres. The area is divided by an east to west track way, and is in permanent rough grazing. Located within this area are the standing fabric of the medieval parish church set within a graveyard enclosure and the wall-footings of eight possible buildings and their associated enclosures, low banks and field walls. The site is bounded to the west by the modern roadway, R480. To the north, the site is bounded by fields in permanent rough pasture, to the east lays a valley, also in permanent pasture. This valley is indicated as Glebe and commonage (figs. 109 and 111), and to the south there are fields of rough grazing. The site is divided by a lane leading from the R480 to the valley east of the church, and this forms the boundary between the townlands of Poulacarran and Poulcargharush, with four possible buildings in the north sector and four in the south.

The soil in the area around the settlement (9.4) is generally poor and large areas of exposed rock with some shallow soils and is suitable for grazing; including overwintering of stock, but it is unsuitable to tillage (Finch 1971, 35).

Figure 111: Map of Burren with parish church and commonage indicated (after Robinson 1997)

The valley to the immediate northeast of the settlement, described as ‘Glebe’ (fig. 109) and ‘commonage’ (fig. 111), contains better soil. The gleys of the Howardstown
phase in the valley, while limited, are nonetheless moderately useful for grassland and tillage (Finch 1971, 30-1). This area of relatively good soil is important as it gave the ecclesiastical community access to a diverse range of agricultural resources. The community of the settlement also had access to water as a well, ‘Tobermacreagh’, which lays to the south of the settlement.

9.7.1 The evidence for the settlement cluster at the parish church

Figure 112: DSM of Carran with features indicated
C1 (Carran 1)

This building is located less than two metres from the north wall of the parish church (fig. 113). The grass-covered stone wall-footings (int. dim. c. 8.3m E-W: 3.7m N-S) share the same east-west orientation as the church. The walls are c. 0.80m thick and stand c. 0.60m over the surrounding field surface and c. 0.70m over the interior of the building. There is an indication of an entrance in the south wall. The wall-footings of C1 are located within a series of enclosed fields, low banks and enclosures that have a relationship to the structure. An assessment of the likely phasing of these features can assist in an understanding of the role and chronology of the possible building. An examination of the enclosures reveals that there are at least three phases in their construction. The most recent phase is the construction of the modern graveyard wall (fig. 114) (H c. 1.20m; W 0.60) which abuts the northeast gable of the church.

However, an earlier graveyard enclosure is shown on the first-edition six-inch OS map, c. 1842 (fig. 115). This is a larger enclosure and encloses the graveyard, church and the possible building, C1. The modern graveyard wall was clearly rebuilt on
substantially the same lines as the older enclosure. Some sections of the older wall have collapsed and the only remains are a grass-covered stone bank. C1 is located in the southeast section of the enclosure and the wall curves to avoid it. The enclosure, possibly the remains of an earlier graveyard enclosure, respects the building, which was clearly in situ before the enclosure was constructed, and therefore pre-dates it.

An earlier phase of enclosure is suggested by a low grass-covered stone bank (H c. 0.25m; W 0.90m) that runs east to west, towards the western exterior of the older graveyard enclosure. This low bank is older than the enclosure, as it is truncated by the enclosure wall and terminates before it reaches C1. It is reasonable to propose that C1 predated the construction of the bank.

The building is probably a house and its proximity to the church and its location within the earlier graveyard enclosure, suggests that its occupant was associated with the church. It is therefore possible that C1 was the home of the erenagh and his family. The possible machicolation on the northwest gable wall of the church may

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**Figure 114:** Settlement indicating the relationship of C1 and C2 to the church

**Figure 115:** Plan of graveyard enclosure

**Figure 116:** First-edition six-inch OS map with graveyard enclosure
have been defensive feature of the church, or a garderobe chute, it is tentatively suggested that it may have been a defensive feature to control access to this building rather than the defence of the church (9.4).

C2
The grass-covered wall-footings of a second building (C2) are located in same enclosure as C1 (fig. 114). The wall-footings (int. dim. c. 3m E-W; 2.8m N-S) are c. 0.80m thick and stand c. 0.30m above the surrounding field level. The enclosure is divided by a linear wall, or low bank (H c. 0.25m; W 0.90m), running east to west. The wall runs in the direction of C2, but does not connect to it. As the bank respects the building it must therefore pre-date the bank. This suggests that C1 and C2 were built at the same time. While it is likely that C1 was a house with an internal space of 30.7m² and that C2, with 8.4m², was an animal shelter, both are of some antiquity and possibly relate to the later medieval period.

C3

Figure 117: Aerial image of C3 (P. Naessens, Western Aerial Survey 2015)

The grass-covered stone wall-footings of C3 are located to the west of C1 (fig. 117). The northeast wall is missing therefore, the precise dimensions of the house cannot
be determined and the possible building was probably longer than the standing remains suggest. The surviving wall-footings (int. dim. c. 4.5m SW-NE: 6m SE-NW) are c. 1m thick and stand c. 0.40m over the surrounding field surface and c.0.50m above the interior of the building. A series of low banks to the north of the house appears to have enclosed this building. The south bank of the enclosure is truncated by the same enclosure as C1, which suggests that C1, C2 and C3 date from the same period.

C4

Figure 118: C4 from south

The grass-covered stone wall-footings of building C4 (fig. 118) are located c. 90m north-west of the church and adjacent to the lane leading from the R480 to the valley, that is east of the church. The building (int. dim. c. 5.5m E-W; 3.5m N-S) has walls that are c. 0.80m thick and stand at a maximum of c. 0.50m over the surrounding field level and c. 0.50m above the interior of the building. A low bank to the east of the building runs north to south and abuts the southeast corner of the house (fig. 114). The bank may be the remains of a stone wall that enclosed the house. The building may be a house relating to the later medieval period, as the morphology of
the banks appears similar to the earliest phase of banks that related to buildings C1, C2 and C3. The lane leading to the commonage, east of the church divides the northern from the southern section of the settlement. Buildings C5, C6, C7 and C8 are located north of the lane. The lane is recorded on the first-edition six-inch OS map. The laneway forms the boundary between the townlands of Poulacarran, which contains the parish church, and the neighbouring townland of Poulcaragharush, to the north. The standing remains are generally less degraded than those in the south, which suggests that most are of post-medieval or modern date.

C5

Figure 119: C5 from west

The wall-footings of C5 (fig. 119) (int. dim c. 6.5m E-W; 4.0m N-S) are c. 0.90m thick and stand c. 0.50m over the surrounding field level and c. 0.40m above the interior of the building. The possible building adjoins the laneway dividing the site and a boundary wall to the north of the laneway truncates it. This field wall, which passes over the wall-footings, respects their condition at the time of its construction. The wall-footings of this building have more evidence of decay than other buildings.
in this section, which tentatively suggests that it may be older, possibly of the later medieval period.

**C6**
The boundary wall on the north side of the lane extends to form the boundary of the R480 and encloses the northern section of the site.

At the point where the east-west wall curves north to south, the gable wall of a building is incorporated into the boundary wall (fig. 120). The gable wall is c. 4.8m in length and stands at the same height as the adjoining boundary wall (1.20m).

The gable can be identified by two vertical breaks in the wall. The wall thickness of the gable is c. 1m whereas on either side the wall ranges from 0.20m to 0.30m in thickness. There is no other physical evidence for this building; however, a building on a similar location is depicted on the first-edition six-inch OS map (fig. 120) and

![Figure 120: First-edition six-inch OS map with location of C6 indicated](image1)

![Figure 121: C6 with gable wall incorporated into boundary wall](image2)
therefore it is possible that this building dates from the eighteenth, or early decades of the nineteenth century.

C7

Figure 122: Aerial image of C4, C5 and C6 (P. Naessens, Western Aerial Survey 2015)

C7 is located c. 25m north of C5 in the northern sector of the site (fig. 122). The wall-footings (int. dim c. 13m E-W; 6m N-S) are c. 1m thick and stand c. 0.50m over the surrounding field level and c. 0.90m above the interior of the building. There is a doorway in the south wall and an additional structure is attached to the east gable, possibly an annex, which is the same width as the house and c. 2m in length. There appears to be an opening between the house and the annex.

A house at this location is indicated on the first-edition six-inch map, but the house indicated on the map is aligned on a north-south axis, which is different from the wall-footings at the site, however, it is possible that the house indicated on the map is C7. The standing fabric represents a very substantial structure, the largest on the site, the only structure with an annex and the wall-footings stand higher and better preserved than other building at the site.
C8 is the most northern building on the site (fig. 124) (int. dim c. 7m N-S; 3.5m E-W). The walls are c. 0.90m thick and stand c. 0.80m over the surrounding field level and c. 0.50m above the interior of the building. There is an indication of an entrance in the east wall. The upstanding remains, like C7, are well preserved, which suggest that both buildings can reasonably be attributed to the post-medieval or modern era.

Summary

At least two phases of construction are evident at the settlement. It is proposed that the earliest phase probably dates from the later medieval period. C1 is closest to the parish church, which suggests that it was possibly the residence of the erenagh. C2,
may have been an animal shelter and the other buildings, C3 and C4 may have been the homes of the erenagh’s kin, or structures built to offer hospitality for pilgrims. The settlement represents haphazard or un-planned development over time. C5 in the northern zone may have been associated with the earlier phase of activity. A second phase in the northern zone is later, when the settlement drifted from the parish church and this may have occurred in the course of the eighteenth or nineteenth century. The physical evidence suggests that the parish church-centered settlement had its genesis as the home of an erenagh and his family and developed organically over a longer period of time, from the later medieval to the nineteenth century.

9.8 Killeany, a diminutive parish

The site of the medieval parish church of Killeany is located in the townland of the same name, at an altitude of approximately 160m OD in a small area of grey-brown podzolic soil of the Kilfenora phase. This soil type is limited due to its weak structure and moderate drainage capability. Its prime use is in grassland, but is also
suited to tillage, with carefully controlled rotation. A stream lays 50m west of the parish church, known as Abhaintobairlea, which has its origin as surface water entering the Poulnagollum-Pollelva cave complex. Along with its tributaries, it runs underground, before emerging on the surface at ‘The Killeany Rising’ (Feehan (1991, 26-7). There it runs c. 200m over-ground before once again disappearing underground before once again reappearing at St. Brendan’s well (ibid.).

The name of the site, Cell Éinne, provides a link to St. Enda of Aran, who according to Westropp (1990, 108) founded a church here towards the end of the fifth century.

9.8.1 Parish church at Killeany

![Figure 126: Killeany parish church from south](image)

The parish church at Killeany, like Carran and the majority of churches in Kilfenora, was almost completely rebuilt in the fifteenth century. Westropp (1900, 132) pointed to several features which date from that period, including the large pointed chancel arch and several windows in the south wall and west gable. The cut-stone in the doorway of the south wall, since removed, was described by Westropp (ibid.) as ‘pointed’ and also dates from this period. The well-preserved standing remains of the church survive to roof level. The building has a bicameral plan (c. 18m x 6.5m
internally). There are several phases of construction evident. The earliest phase has been dated by Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 148-9) to the twelfth century, on the basis of the style of the east gable window, which she describes as ‘transitional’. The round-headed window is dateable to c. 1200. Interestingly, Ní Ghabhláin (ibid.) notes similarities in the moulding on the exterior of the east window of the parish church at Oughtmama (7.4.1).

In the fifteenth-century phase, the church was widened, a pointed arch was inserted and a nave added to the west. There is a different building line evident in the east gable, with different masonry styles and different masonry, indicating the widening of the church (fig. 127).

The pointed exterior of the south chancel window, with carved spandrels, is of fifteenth-century date and may have been a later insertion, as the window interior appears to be of twelfth-century origin (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 148-9).

The remaining windows are all of fifteenth-century date (ibid.). Corbels and windows high in the gable wall indicate a second storey in the west end of the church. As demonstrated by Bermingham (2006, 170) first floor apartments, in the west gable end of the church, ‘was the most common and widespread accommodation for the priest throughout Ireland.’ The church is located in a sub rectangular graveyard (fig. 125), that also contains what Westropp (1900, 125)
described as ‘an altar’ or *leacht* (9.4). This structure measures 3.2m x 2.9m and is made of large pseudo cyclopean blocks. Westropp (1990, 134) recorded that there were ‘many rounded cursing stones’, which have since been removed. Cursing stones are a feature of early medieval monastic sites, such as Inishmurray, Co. Sligo. They were used as monasteries developed liturgies and rituals for cursing those who violated their sanctuaries (Ó Carragáin 2010, 154). An enclosure to the south of the graveyard, identified by Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 455) and confirmed by field survey and satellite imagery suggests that this was portion of the *vallum* of the early ecclesiastical foundation.

The archaeological evidence suggests that the earlier monastery developed as a parish centre in the late twelfth, or early thirteenth century and that a new parish church was built at the time of the establishment of the parochial network in the diocese of Kilfenora. Further changes that are in the fabric of the church, when the church was extended in the fifteenth century, reflect continuity of use of the parish church.

**9.9 Function of the parish of Killeany**

The parish of Killeany (fig. 128) contains 3,304 acres, making it the second smallest parish, and almost half the size of the average parish in the diocese of Kilfenora.(6,410 acres). The valuation of the church revenues listed in the ecclesiastical taxation list of 1302-6 (CDI, v, 298-9) is 26s 8d. This valuation places Killeany among a group of larger parishes valuations in Kilfenora and raises questions about the high valuation for such a small parish. Of the twenty two churches in the diocese the majority, thirteen or 59 % have a valuation of either 26s 8d or 23s 4d. Five churches have valuations greater and four below this typical range (Sweetman and Handcock 1886, v, 298-9). Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 230) suggests the largest grouping of 26s 8d and 23s 4d suggests either the grouping of churches by type i.e. parish churches, or a number of churches shared in a certain revenues, which were divided equally between them. It appears from the valuation of Killeany, that the valuations of parish revenues were arbitrary, as the size and the quality of the land would not appear to justify a valuation of 26s 8d at Killeany.
The relatively high value of the parish revenue, the size and status of the parish church appears to be inconsistent with the relatively small size of the parish. There is no doubt that the parish was viable. The construction of the church in the late twelfth, or early thirteenth centuries, the rebuilding of the church in the fifteenth century and Edmond White’s ‘Description of Thomond in 1574’ (Twigge 1910, 75-85) which confirms that there was a ‘Vicar of Kileyne’ are all testimony to the endurance of the small parish throughout the period 1200-1600 A. D. To understand the apparent contradiction between the valuation of the parish revenue and the settlement at the parish church, it is necessary to explore the parish church and its settlement in the context of the wider parish landscape.

The comment by Lewis (1837, ii, 69) in the nineteenth century, concerning the productiveness in the soil in the south of the parish, in the townland of Ballyconnroe South (9.2.2) and undoubtedly the soil in this area was equally productive in the later medieval period. There are eight townlands, with three in the northern zone of the parish, Killeany with the parish church and Cooleamore and Lisarheenbeg. The soil in these townlands is generally poor, suitable for pastoral farming but not tillage.

Figure 128: Townlands in the parish of Killeany
(Finch 1971, 34-5). A small parcel of soil around the parish church, while somewhat limited, it is suitable for tillage with careful management and controlled crop rotation (Finch 1971, 27-8). The churchlands at Killeany like Carran were the best lands locally available (9.6). The quality of soil in the northern part of the parish is in marked contrast to the townlands to the south, which contains deeper, richer soil, more suitable for tillage. The population distribution in the parish reflects the differences in soil type. The townland of Ballyconnoe North, which adjoins Killeany to the east and has better soil, appears to have been the focus of population. There is a settlement cluster recorded in this townland with four houses, of indeterminate date, and a house of sixteenth- or seventeenth-century date in the RMP (archaeology.ie)\textsuperscript{55}. The houses form a cluster, possibly nucleated on the sixteenth- or seventeenth-century house. The townlands south of the parish church, have some houses of indeterminate date, two in Ballyconnoe South, Ballygastell and Cahermaan, while Cahermackirilla has a single house (Archaeology .ie).\textsuperscript{56} In the absence of excavated evidence it is not possible to determine whether the houses are of later medieval date, nonetheless, the houses may date from this period. 

The distribution of native enclosed settlements for the parish of Killeany in the RPM also suggests a settlement pattern for the parish. There are thirteen native enclosed settlements recorded for the parish, mainly cashel type, none in the northern townlands of Killeany, Cooleamore and Lisarheenbeg and one in Ballyconnoe North. The heaviest concentrations are in the southern townlands, which has the best soils,  


![Figure 129: Six-inch OS Map with Cahermaan indicated](image-url)
Ballyconnoe South contains five, Ballygastell four, Cahermaan three and Cahermackirilla one. The townland of Cahermaan is so-called after the cashel, depicted on the six-inch first-edition OS map (fig. 129), indicating its importance.

The distribution of native enclosed settlements and possible later medieval houses strongly suggests that the more densely populated townlands were those on the better soils and that the settlement pattern was dispersed houses with a small, nucleated settlement cluster focused on the sixteenth- or seventeenth-century house in the townland of Ballyconnoe North.

The census of 1659 records an adult male population for the parish of 182 (Pender 1939, 186-7) and with Smyth’s extrapolation (1988, 56) of 2.5 the population would amount to 455. It would appear from the census that the parish was densely populated at this time, however caution is required as the census is not a precise record, but for the parish of Killeany it is particularly unsatisfactory. Ní Ghabhláin (1995, 217-8) compared the townland names in the census with those in the BSD, which led her to suggest that the parish of Killeany was combined with Kilmoon and Killonaghan, for the purposes of the census. However, as the townlands are listed consecutively Ní Ghabhláin suggested a reconstruction of the parish and deduced that the townlands of Ballyconnoe South, Knockenard and Carrowkerrily, could be identified as comprising the parish of Killeany. The adult population recorded for these townlands is 35 (table 6) (Pender 1939, 186-7).

Applying Smyth’s suggested extrapolation, the population of the parish would amount to 87, the second most sparsely populated in Burren, after the tiny parish of Gleninagh. There was no population recorded for the townland of Killeany, or other townlands in the northern section of the parish. The population distribution in the census suggests that the small population was centred on the better agricultural land in the southern zone of the parish, and the house cluster at the parish church may have been deserted by this time.
Chapter 9

Carran and Killeany

9.10 Killeany’s place in the diocese of Kilfenora

It is suggested that the parish of Killeany was ‘the prebend of Kilfenora’ (McInerney 2014, 249). The question is important for our understanding of the function and status of the parish, however, the evidence from the papal letters is far from clear-cut.

A letter dated December 1418 (CPR, vii, 105) reveals that the perpetual vicarage of Killeany, became vacant following the death of Mathew Ocondbaith (Mathew O’Conway) and was reserved to Pope John XXIII and subsequently ‘collated to John Oconnbaith’ (John O’Conway) by Richard, archbishop of Cashel. John O’Conway ‘had previously obtained the rectory of Carudnahymigean de Ybflathmai (Carran) at the age of 18 years and had held both offices for several years’. John had not been
ordained and was without dispensation. Pope John XXIII was deposed at the Council of Constance, May 1418 (CPR, vi, vii), the process of reserving the vicarage was not considered legitimate, and the new pope, Martin V, asked O‘Conway to resign both offices, which he did. Pope Martin ‘rehabilitated O‘Conway and made collation of the vicarage of Killeany’.

A subsequent letter (CPR, vii, 114), dated February 1419, refers to Killeany, when the ‘canonry and prebend of ‘Kyllennyarann’ in Kilfenora was assigned to Frargallus Oconry (O Conroy). The letter also assigned the deanery of Kilfenora to O Conroy. ‘Kyllennyarann’ is interpreted as ‘in Inishmore parish, Co. Galway, prebend in Kilfenora’ (CPR, vii, 365). St. Enda of Aran (Westropp 1900, 108), reportedly founded both early Christian foundations, Aran and Killeane in Burren and the remains of St. Enda’s monastery are still standing at Killeany on Inishmore (Jones 2004, 190-6). It is improbable that Killeany, on Inishmore, was a prebend of Kilfenora as it lay geographically outside the medieval diocese of Kilfenora. It is more likely that Killeane in Burren was the prebend refered to the the papal letters. There can be little doubt that Killeane was the prebend of the diocese of Kilfenora and that both John O‘Conway and Frargallus O Conroy were diocesan dignitaries. This arrangement continued into the nineteenth century as Lewis (1837, ii, 69) describes the tithes as £25 and the parish as being a rectory and vicarage in the diocese of Kilfenora, forming the union of Kilcorney, and the corps of the chancellorship of the cathedral of Kilfenora.

9.11 Settlement cluster at Killeany

The small house-cluster at the medieval parish church of Killeane (fig. 130) is contained within an area bounded to the west by the stream, the Abhaintobairlea and to the north by a modern field-wall, beyond which lays a valley with relatively better land. To the east, the site is bounded by a modern field wall, which incorporates an ancient bank and to the south by a modern trackway. The site contains the enclosed graveyard, medieval parish church, leacht, (9.4) or altar, and a series of banks, walls, enclosures and to the north and northeast of the graveyard are the standing remains of three possible buildings of later medieval date.
K1 (Killeany 1)

The largest and most clearly defined grass covered wall-footings (fig. 131) are located c. 5.7m north of the north-west corner of the graveyard. The wall-footings of the building (int. dim. c 7.5m NW-SE; 3.5m SW-NE) are c. 0.60m thick and stand c. 0.65m over the surrounding field level and c. 0.40m above the interior of the building. There is no indication of an internal partition, nor is there evidence of an entrance.
K2

The grass-covered stone wall-footing of the building are located 28m southeast of K1 (fig. 131). The graveyard wall truncates the wall-footings of the building and only one wall survives inside the graveyard enclosure. The wall-footings (int. dims. c. 3.8m N-S; 3.6m E-W) are c. 0.90m thick and stand c. 0.60m over the surrounding field level and c. 0.25m above the interior of the building. The wall-footings appear as an elevated house platform. The surviving section of the west wall inside the graveyard survives for a length of c. 2.9m, where a return is evident. The remains of the south and east wall-footings have not survived.

Figure 132: K2 truncated by graveyard wall

K3

The remains of K3 (fig. 133) are the grass-covered stone wall-footings located c. 10m west of K1. The wall-footings (int. dim. 6m NE-SW; 3m NW-SE) are c. 1m thick.

Figure 133: Image of K3 from north
and stand c. 0.5m over the surrounding field surface and c. 0.80m above the interior of the building. There is a depression in the centre of the building.

9.11.1   Banks and enclosures

The site contains a number of banks and enclosures, which have a relationship to the buildings and can assist in establishing their chronology. The graveyard is enclosed by a boundary wall c. 1.2m high and generally c. 0.60m thick; however, the south-east corner is c. 4.0m thick (fig. 134). The graveyard enclosure is not recorded on the first-edition six-inch O S map. The graveyard contains some nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first century burial monuments, together with a large number of low uninscribed stone burial markers in the southeastern section of the graveyard. The graveyard enclosure probably dates from the mid-nineteenth century but the wider southwestern corner of the wall may be the remains of an earlier enclosure.

K1 is enclosed by series of low banks, c. 0.25m high and c. 1m thick, which forms a sub-rectangular enclosure. The low bank extend south into the graveyard, where it is truncated by the graveyard wall, and continues within the graveyard to terminate just short of the south-west gable of the church. The enclosure is again evident to the
north of the church, where it continues north and is again truncated by the graveyard wall, before it turns west to complete the sub-rectangular enclosure. The relict enclosure is truncated at two points by the graveyard wall and is clearly an older feature. However, within the graveyard there is a suggestion that the enclosure pre-dates the c. 1500 phase of the church, as portion of the enclosure was removed to facilitate the enlarging of the church (fig. 134). As K1 is within, and associated with this enclosure, it is reasonable to propose that the building was a house, probably relating to the later medieval period.

The enclosure surrounding K1 provided privacy and its proximity to the church suggests that the occupant of the house was of some status and associated with the church, most likely the erenagh and his family.

The graveyard wall truncates K2 and the plan and profile of the wall-footings are respected at the time the graveyard wall was constructed. The building is enclosed by a sub-rectangular low bank, c. 0.20m high and c. 1.0m thick. The west section of the enclosure is a party wall connected to the enclosure surrounding K1 and it is of similar morphology to the enclosure of K1 and it was probably a house platform relating to the later medieval period.

K3 has a small enclosure (int. dim. c. 8m N-S; 6m E-W) attached to its west wall. The enclosure consists of low grass-covered stone walls. The enclosure is c. 1.0m thick and stands c. 0.50m above the surrounding field level and 0.80m over the interior of the enclosure. The earthworks are recorded in the RMP as a kiln (CL005-1087), however, it is possible that the earthworks are the remains of a small house with garden, or animal enclosure attached. Field evidence at Killeany suggests there was a small cluster of two or three houses at the parish church representing a discrete settlement, probably dating from the later medieval period and possibly the home of the erenagh and his family.

9.12 Conclusions

The comparative size of Carran and Killeany

The most obvious distinction between the parishes of Carran and Killeany is the difference in their size. Carran is exceptionally large, in both its geographical size
and the value of its church revenues. The valuation of 60 shillings sets Carran apart from the other parishes in the diocese. Killeany by contrast is among the geographically smallest parishes in the diocese, however its valuation of 26s 8d is similar to the majority of parishes in the diocese. The early history of Carran is not recorded, it is likely that the large parish emerged as a territorial church, an intermediate stage in parish formation (Nicholls 1971, 60-20). The parish church is in the southwestern sector of the parish, which extends to the northeastern boundary of the Ó Lochlainn lordship, a distance of c. 15km. The parish church was connected by routeway to the five subsidiary chapels, many of whom had their genesis as early medieval foundations. Killeany, while near the southern boundary of Burren was more physically isolated. The church had its genesis as an early medieval foundation in the fifth century. The small compact settlement at the parish church was located close to a small area of good soil, in a region of relatively poor soil. However, the best soils are in the townlands to the south of the parish and there are indications of settlement drift, away from the parish church, to the better lands in mid-seventeenth century and these townlands may have always been the main focus of population.

**Continuity, status and longevity indicated by changes in the fabric of the church**

Both parish churches were rebuilt in the late fifteenth of early sixteenth century. At Killeany there is evidence of an earlier church, dating from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, which is evident in the east gable wall that was retained. Carran was completely rebuilt c. 1500 and the only evidence of an earlier church is the high medieval period window with diagonal tooling at the east end of the south wall and the incorporation of a twelfth- or thirteenth-century window head in the fabric of the later church. It is evident from the later buildings that the parish churches had their origins from the time of the establishment of the parochial network in Kilfenora and that an active, well-resourced community under definite leadership existed at both phases of church building. The maintenance of the church building was primarily an erenagh’s responsibility and it is evident that an erenagh was active at both parish church communities. Embellishments to parish churches rarely survive; however, the decorated head in the parish church at Carran is testimony that the church was of some importance.
The evidence of the settlement

The house clusters at the parish churches of Carran and Killeany are contained within compact sites, which unlike the other sites investigated in this thesis, are unlikely to have extended beyond the boundaries of their present extent. The complex at the parish church centres includes modern and ancient walls, enclosures and banks that assist in proposing a chronology, linking the houses to the later medieval period. Two buildings at Carran are located within the same earlier enclosure as the church and graveyard. They were undoubtedly connected to the church, possibly the home of an erenagh and his family. The church continued as the focus of settlement and the remains of houses suggests multi-period building and occupancy from the later medieval period through to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as indicated by a house built into the boundary wall and recorded on the six-inch first-edition OS map. The later building in the northern section of the site, suggests a shift in population away from the parish church in the post-medieval era. The settlement at Killeany was small; possibly two or three houses that were in close proximity to the church and probably represent the settlement of an erenagh, his family and tenants.

Distinctions in the functions of the settlements

A most significant activity in the parish of Carran was its role as a pilgrimage centre. The five subsidiary chapels in the parish possibly had their genesis as early medieval foundations. Two, and possibly more, continued as saintly cult centres well into the later medieval period. The first phase of the chapel at Teampall Crónán is pre-twelfth century in date, with later phases in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century and the fifteenth-century. Keelhilla was the hermitage of St. Colmán MacDuach. The archaeological evidence suggests continuity of use at this pilgrimage site, as a penitential station was built on the rubble of an earlier church.

The number of penitential stations in the parish that indicates pilgrimage is extraordinary, with 15% of this monument type recorded for the Republic of Ireland in the parish of Carran, with the majority clustered around the subsidiary chapels of the parish. Glencolumbkille emerged as a short-lived parish, following a split in the Ó Lochlainn lordship between the descendants of Iriail and Donagh (Nugent 2007a, 134). However, the site had an earlier life as an early medieval foundation, possibly
founded by St. Columbkille. The possibility that it too was a pilgrimage site is indicated by a cluster of penitential stations within a radius of less than 1km. Teampall Crónán, Keelhilla, Glencolumbkille and Sladoo are connected to the parish church by the east to west routeway.

The parish church was the ecclesiastical heart of the parish and had a central role in all ecclesiastical activity, including pilgrimage activity. The cairns at the parish church, possibly penitential stations, suggest that it was also the focus of pilgrimage, the erenagh had responsibility for providing hospitality for pilgrims, and the parish church would have been central to pilgrimage activity.

**The role of Carran and Killeany within the diocese of Kilfenora**

Carran and Killeany failed as long-term settlements and they were deserted. Decline at Killeany is evident by the time of the 1659 census when there is no return for the townland. The population distribution of the parish indicates that there was a shift to the better land in the south of the parish. The census records a population of 23 for the townland of Poullvall, probably Poulacarran, with the parish church suggests that there was a viable population in the townland at that time. Two houses are recorded at the parish church on the first-edition six-inch OS map suggesting that the site endured as a settlement until the eighteenth or nineteenth century.
Part 2 – The Ó Lochlainn lordship - Conclusions

The aim of part 2 of this thesis has been to compare and contrast settlement clusters at Oughtmama, Noughaval, Carran and Killeany to highlight why they occurred at parish churches in the Ó Lochlainn lordship and to establish a social and cultural context for them. The approach in this section has been to discuss the distinctive functional distinctions between settlements at parish churches explored and presented in chapters 7, 8 and 9.

A feature of the settlement clusters at the parish churches in Burren is their longevity. Oughtmama, Noughaval and Killeany had their origins as early medieval monasteries. Killeany and Oughtmama were supposedly founded in the sixth or seventh century. While the foundation date of Noughaval is unrecorded, there is a strong local tradition of veneration to St. Mogua, the supposed founder of the early medieval monastery. The parish church at Carran was built c. 1500, however, there is architectural evidence there for a church, dating from the twelfth or thirteenth century. There is no evidence of an earlier church, but there may have been a small shrine chapel before that time. Killeany was possibly deserted in the course of the sixteenth century, Oughtmama, and Noughaval endured until the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Two buildings that are indicated at Carran on the first-edition six-inch OS map suggests that the parish church was the focus of settlement until the nineteenth century.

The monastic churches were adapted, as they were made suitable for their new role as parish churches. Locating parish churches at early medieval monastic sites and maintaining a link to the past, by retaining symbolically important architectural features, had a cultural value in the Ó Lochlainn lordship. Site pedigree and attachment to place was a cultural imperative to the Gaelic polity.

An important conclusion in this thesis is that the settlement clusters at the parish churches in Burren were homesteads of coarbs and enernachs. Erenaghs were specialist ecclesiastical families. Among their primary responsibilities was providing hospitality for pilgrims and travellers (Simms 1978, 70: Jefferies 1999, 16) (7.6).
However, at some parish church settlements, they developed a more specialised function and the role of the erenaghs at these settlements evolved. Noughaval was clearly a market centre, Carran became the centre of pilgrimage, and the role of erenaghs was pivotal to these activities. Erenaghs provided leadership at local level and among their hereditary obligations throughout the later medieval period was responsible for the maintenance of the fabric of the church in the Gaelic tradition. Historians have sometimes assumed that substantial change, especially one that required co-ordinated action, could only have been achieved through the agency of Seigneurial action (Gardiner 2009, 12-3). However, while not without direction and guidance, in the absence of a resident diocesan elite and their officials, erenaghs, who were probably minor gentry, appeared well capable of providing leadership and imitative at local level.
Chapter 10 – Discussion

10.1 Introduction

In this chapter, some major themes and findings relating to the roles of settlements at parish churches in the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren and in the Anglo-Norman county of Kilkenny and later Butler lordship of Ormond are drawn together and discussed. Key findings of this thesis are the differences between settlements that arise as a result of customary practice and the origins of settlements. Newtown Jerpoint, in central Kilkenny, is the only settlement in this research where the parish church was built as a component of a new planned settlement arising from Anglo-Norman colonisation, unlike the monastic churches at Oughtmama, Noughaval and Killeany in the Burren, which emerged as parish churches during the consolidation of the parochial network in Ireland. Those settlements were organised by coarbs and erenaghs and the premise of their foundation was very different. Tullaherin in the heart of Kilkenny had its origins as a monastic church. There, an existing ecclesiastical community adapted to colonisation, and cultural hybridity is evident in certain features of the site.

10.2 Differences between Anglo-Norman and Gaelic settlement at parish churches

A key feature of parish churches in the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren is that many had their origins as early medieval ecclesiastical foundations. The archaeological evidence suggests that there was a substantial monastery at Oughtmama, and that Noughaval and Killeany also had their origins as ecclesiastical foundations in the early medieval period. The ecclesiastical taxation list for the diocese of Kilfenora lists 23 churches. (CDI, v, 298-9) and as tithes were the main source of ecclesiastical revenue it is reasonable to suggest that the churches listed were parish churches. There is a very high rate of preservation of medieval church buildings in the diocese, and Ní Ghabhláin (2006, 154-5) identifies 20 of those listed and in an analysis proposes that 17, or an extraordinarily high, 85% had their origins as early medieval foundations. Ní Ghabhláin based her conclusions on the association of the church with an early saint, the evidence of early enclosures, early masonry styles, bullaun
stones, souterrains and sculpture. The evidence for these deductions may be somewhat speculative, however, the clear pattern that emerges is that the overwhelming majority of parish churches in the diocese had their origins as early medieval ecclesiastical foundations.

When these early medieval churches were adapted and extended, in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, for their new role as parish churches, they already had existing communities possibly monks, priests and ecclesiastical families. The absence of firm evidence of an earlier church at Carran suggests that a new parish church was built at a new site in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, when the parochial network in the diocese of Kilfenora was formed (Ní Ghabhláin 2006, 147-9; Nugent 2006, 186-95; Nicholls 1971, 60-9). Carran was the only parish church in the Ó Lochlainn lordship that was built afresh at the time of parish formation. The only other parish church in the diocese of Kilfenora that has no suggestion of an early medieval ecclesiastical antecedence is at Killilagh, in the adjoining Ó Conchobhair lordship of Corcomroe. This church, like Carran was substantially built in the late fifteenth or sixteenth century, however, Westropp (1905-8, 143-59) recorded a tall round-headed lancet in the east gable that is likely to date from c. 1200. It is possible that there were earlier churches at Carran and Killilagh, but these were wiped clean when the new parish churches were built, however, there is no archaeological evidence for this and the proposal must be speculative. Morris (1983, 82-3) drew attention to the large number of phases revealed by excavation of English medieval churches, twelve at Wharram Percy, Yorkshire, and eighteen at St. Paul-in-the-bail in Lincolnshire, therefore earlier churches at Carran and Killilagh remains a possibility.

For the Anglo-Normans, the parish, like the manor, was an essential component of the colonial process (Hennessey 1985, 61). The strategy they adopted in establishing the parochial network in the areas they controlled was to adapt existing monastic churches and construct new parish churches, or modify existing churches for pastoral care, as a component in their new settlements (FitzPatrick 2006, 66-9). Newtown Jerpoint is the only settlement investigated in this thesis, with the possible exception of Carran, where there is no clear evidence of a settlement before the borough was established. The ordering of space at Newtown Jerpoint, with its regular layout,
reflected cultural influences of Norman France, England and Wales that were well established before the arrival of Anglo-Normans in Ireland and shared little cultural practices with the other sites investigated in this thesis. The regular layout of the settlement at Newtown Jerpoint is in marked contrast to the other sites, which were irregular in layout and organic developments over a long period of time.

Tullaherin was an existing settlement that was absorbed into the Anglo-Norman world as the parish church of an episcopal manor. The plan of the later medieval settlement was irregular in layout and bore little resemblance to the regular layout that is evident at Newtown Jerpoint. The question is how typical was the layout of these settlement in the central region of Kilkenny?

There is archaeological evidence for settlement at other parish churches in Co. Kilkenny and some settlements appear to have been built afresh by the Anglo-Normans, while others may have been early medieval church sites before their arrival. The settlement in the townland of Castlemarket in the parish of Rosconnell, Co. Kilkenny is associated with an unclassified castle and a motte, located some 400m northeast of the church and graveyard. According to Orpen (1909, 313-42) Castlemarket was possibly the caput of the Anglo-Norman lord, William St. Ledger. The only remains of the settlement are five parallel linear plots, which suggest that they may have been burgage plots (Archaeology.ie)\textsuperscript{57}. There is little to suggest there was an early medieval church at this site. It is most likely that this was a new nucleated settlement associated with the manor and the layout of the plots tentatively suggests that the settlement may have been laid out to a regular plan, focused on the castle and the parish church, in the late-twelfth or early-thirteenth century.

The deserted medieval settlement, located in the townland of Rathealy in the parish of Tullaroan, Co. Kilkenny is associated with a ringwork castle with the parish church and graveyard 135m to the east. The site is very disturbed due to reclamation as noted in 1987 (National Monument file). Four buildings are recorded within the ringwork and only two possible rectangular house sites can be identified in the settlement. A possible hollow-way runs just north of the settlement in the direction of

the entrance to the ringwork (Archaeology.ie)58. There is an absence of any evidence of an early medieval foundation and it is probable that this was a new settlement founded by the Anglo-Norman Grace family, who were associated with the parish of Tullaroan (Carrigan 1905, iii, 291-509). Like Castlemarket, Rathealy was probably much larger than the surviving evidence indicates. The hollow-way suggests that the settlement may have been laid out to a regular plan, however, as so little evidence remains above ground, only excavation may reveal the full extent and layout of the settlement.

The Anglo-Normans established new settlements, however, they were also attracted to existing church sites. The deserted medieval settlement in the townland of Grangefertagh, in the parish of Fertagh, was the centre of a grange of the Augustinian Canons, Kilkenny. Evidence that there was an early medieval monastery Grangefertagh is clearly indicated by its round tower. The deserted medieval settlement is c. 65m north of the church and graveyard. The foundations of buildings were recorded by Carrigan (1905, ii, 297) and are still visible today, however, they are not sufficiently well preserved to determine a pattern to the layout of the settlement.

The settlement in the townland of Aughatubbrid, or Chatsworth, in the parish of Castlecomer, is associated with a moated site. The settlement is c. 180m south of the parish church and graveyard and c. 80m northeast of the moated site. A series of low irregular banks and at least one raised rectangular platform was noted during field inspection in 1986, however, the field was levelled as part of land reclamation during 1986-7 (Archaeology.ie)59. Carrigan (1905, ii, 190) recorded the foundations of the church within the graveyard and the tradition that the church had been founded by St. Patrick. There is no indication of layout, or dating of the settlement, church or moated site. It is possible that there was an early medieval ecclesiastical church, which attracted settlement in the later medieval period.

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While Newtown Jerpoint was described in contemporary sources as a ‘town’, it may never have developed to the same extent as other urban centres in Co. Kilkenny and may more correctly be described as a rural borough. The settlement lacked sufficient urban components (5.1) to be considered a town (Bradley 1985, 35). Towns founded by Anglo-Norman lords, in central Co. Kilkenny, those that have survived include, Thomastown, Callan and Gowran, (Empey 1990, 80-1).

The layout of medieval Thomastown (Bradley and Murtagh 2003, 195) reflects some relatively straight streets, with long narrow burgage plots laid out at right angles to the streets, aspects that reflect a regular layout (fig. 135).

The first-edition six-inch map of Gowran (fig. 136), probably reflects the layout of the medieval town. The main street is more or less straight and long narrow plots are probably a reflection of the regular lay out of the medieval town.

The medieval core of Callan is reflected in the first-edition OS map and also in a map of the town dated 1681 (fig. 137), copied by Richard Frizell and dated 13 August 1765 (Manning 1998b, 62-3). The straight streets of West Street, Mill Street and Green Street converge at the site of the town’s market cross that was probably the site of the medieval market place, and continue to the bridge crossing the River Nore.
The earthworks of the settlements at Newtown Jerpoint and Tullaherin are among the best preserved in that county. According to the records of the RMP, there are 44 recorded deserted medieval settlements in Co. Kilkenny (archaeology.ie), however, eleven are known only from historical sources, with no visible evidence for them, include important settlements at Castle Eve, Danesfort and Sheepstown. Other sites, recorded by Carrigan (1905, ii-iv) that were clearly identifiable at the end of the

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nineteenth century have since been cleared. Many sites were disturbed as a consequence of intensive agricultural activity, land clearance, quarrying, roadworks and other developments. Disturbance and the short-lived nature of some manorial villages and rural boroughs (O’Conor 1998, 47-8) make their interpretation based on visible archaeological remains problematic.

Medieval urban centres, like Newtown Jerpoint, established by the Anglo-Normans appear to have been built to a regular layout, with relatively straight streets and long narrow plots. It is tempting to propose that the evidence from deserted settlements like Castlemarket and Rathealy suggests that when Anglo-Norman lords settled their new manors they established nucleated settlements on a planned regular layout. However, the evidence for the layout of these settlements is too destroyed to make firm conclusions. The settlement cluster at existing ecclesiastical sites, such as Tullaherin, Grangefertagh and Aughatubbrid / Chatsworth were laid out to an irregular plan and appear to have been haphazard developments over a long period of time. Oughtmama, Noughaval and Killeany, like the overwhelming majority of parish churches in the diocese of Kilfenora had their origins as monasteries in the early medieval period and were populated by ecclesiastical families. The parish church at Carran was possibly built on the site of an earlier church, but no evidence for this has survived, or it may also have been built on a new site with the subsequent development of an attendant settlement.

10.3 Why parish churches were the focus of settlement

In England, from the eleventh century, possession of a church was considered one of the attributes of thegny rank and the majority of local churches came into existence as a result of seigneurial initiative and were located adjacent to Anglo-Saxon halls or settlements (Morris 1983, 71-2). In the post-Conquest era, English churches are regularly found in close proximity to mottes, a Norman innovation that had its heyday in the period 1070-1170 (Morris 1989, 250-2).

In Kilkenny, the church was a key component in Anglo-Norman settlements. In Co. Kilkenny this pattern is well illustrated in the distribution of the 32 deserted medieval settlements, whose location can be identified (RMP). Twenty-two (69%) settlements were focused on a church, usually a parish church, and it is evident that the church
Chapter 10  Discussion

was a major focus for settlement nucleation. Eighteen settlements (56%) were associated with castle and parish church, a pattern that is typical of Anglo-Norman manors in the east and southeast of Ireland.

Newtown Jerpoint and Tullaherin are exceptional, there are no indications of a high medieval castle at either site. Other sites that have early medieval origins and evidence for later medieval settlement clusters are in juxtaposition with both parish church and castle. This aspect of Anglo-Norman settlement pattern is evident at other prominent pre-twelfth-century monastic sites, such as Fertagh, in the townland of Grangefertagh, with a round tower (mentioned above), and Killamery with a very fine high cross. There were nuances in the appearances of the settlements at these sites. At Fertagh, the priory of the Augustinian Canons is found in association with the settlement and a motte and bailey castle located c. 650m northwest of the settlement. According to Archdall (1876, ii, 304-6), a priory was founded at Fertagh in the thirteenth century by the Blanchfield (Blanchville) family for the Regular Canons of St. Augustine. The Blanchfields came to Ireland soon after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans and while little is known of their early history, surce to say that they held a prominent place among the nobility of the county (Carrigan 1905, iii, 414). The priory also served as a parish church, it was listed in the ecclesiastical taxation list of the early fourteenth century.

A motte castle is also evident at the settlement at Killamery, Co. Kilkenny. The settlement is located just outside the graveyard and parish church and c. 100m south-west of the motte castle. The townland of Killamery appears to have been See lands from an early date, until the bishop exchanged the townland with William Marshal for the townland of Stonycarthy, between 1192 and 1231. Marshal granted the townland to de Albin (Tobin) and it remained in the hands of the Tobins (Brooks 1950, 252-61), until it was forfeited in Cromwellian times by James Tobin. The church of Killamery became the prebendary of the diocese of Ossory on the establishment of the chapter and continued to form the corps of the diocesan chancellor until at least the fifteenth century (Carrigan 1905, iv, 311-20).

The priority that the Anglo-Normans attached to the establishment of a parish church is evident by the speed with which the parish church at Newtown Jerpoint was built
The parish church contains features, which Murtagh (1997, 122-5) describes as Gothic, an architectural style that first appeared in Ireland in the 1190s and more generally in the early thirteenth century (O’Keeffe 2006, 133). The style of the new church would certainly have appeared very modern at the time it was built.

Anglo-Norman and English cultural influences predominate at Newtown Jerpoint, however, there are differences in the architectural features of the parish church in the context of local, colonial, urban-parish churches in Ossory. Other medieval parish churches have not survived to the same extent as Newtown Jerpoint, or Tullaherin, nonetheless, some remarks about them can be made. At Thomastown the chancel was destroyed in 1809 when a new church was constructed, however, the footprint of the nave (int. dims. 29.26m E-W; 7.32m N-W) has survived, providing an internal space of 214m$^2$. The internal space of the nave at St. Nicholas, at Newtown Jerpoint, is 145.5m$^2$ and the nave at Tullaherin is marginally smaller at 144.2m$^2$.

The church at Thomastown had lateral aisles, a rare feature of parish churches outside major urban areas in Anglo-Norman control (O’Keeffe 2006, 139). The parish church at Knocktopher for example was almost completely ‘thrown down’ in 1838 when a new church was built and very little of the original building has survived. Carrigan (1905, iv, 22-4) suggests that as far as can be judged the church consisted of a nave and chancel 26.5m in length with no surviving indication of its width. The length of the churches at Knocktopher, Newtown Jerpoint (28.2m) and Tullaherin (29.66m) are broadly similar. This tentatively suggests that these three churches were of similar size and there is a correlation between the size of the church and parish congregation, the population of the three settlements was broadly similar, but the church at Thomastown was exceptional, it was grander in form and size, suggesting it had greater prestige and served a substantially larger the population.

The long nave, such as that at Newtown Jerpoint, was typical of Anglo-Norman parish churches in Ireland. However, it was culturally different from parish churches in England. In Norman England in the first half of the twelfth century aisles were still uncommon, but by end of the twelfth century many parish churches had acquired at least one aisle and from the thirteenth century, they became a normal component
of both large and small churches (Morris 1983, 84). O’Keeffe (2006, 140) suggests that the absence of aisles was a consequence of a major input of Gaelic-Irish building traditions, indicating a major involvement of native builders in shaping Anglo-Norman parish church templates. It also suggests that familiar ecclesiastical architectural features were not slavishly introduced to Ireland and that the Anglo-Normans compromised and adapted to local conditions, which suggests that hybridity had emerged in church architecture by the early thirteenth century.

A feature of parish churches in the Burren is the high number that had their origins as ecclesiastical foundations in the early medieval period, which is generally typical of parish churches in Gaelic lordships where the pedigree of a site was fundamental to its continuity (FitzPatrick 2006, 70-4). The retention of early medieval architectural features suggests that preserving the memory of the founder’s church was of prime importance (Ó Carragáin 2010, 300). Ní Ghabhláin (2006, 155) demonstrated that fourteen of twenty-six churches in the diocese of Kilfenora had a close association with an early saint. That number is probably an underestimation as many holy wells dedicated to founders, that were recorded by Westropp (1900, 130-8) are not all included by Ní Ghabhláin. The memory of founder and the retention of features of the early medieval architectural package that reflected the memory of the founders church added site prestige to the church.

The list of castles in Thomond, compiled by Edward White in 1574 (Twigge 1910, 75-85), includes tower-houses and native enclosed settlements, the residences of the principal landowners in Thomond. This reveals that there were multiple secular elite centres in Oughtmama, Noughaval and Carran. Killeany is the only parish in the Ó Lochlainn lordship with no castle listed. It is evident that castles were located some distance from the parish churches and were not components in the same settlement nucleation. In the parish of Oughtmama, an Ó Lochlainn tower-house was located in the townland of Turlough, which is on the western boundary of the parish, a distance of c. 3.5km from the parish church, which was on the eastern boundary. In the parish of Carran, two Ó Lochlainn tower-houses are recorded in the townland of Glencolumbkille. These tower-houses are near the eastern boundary, whereas the parish church is located at a distance c. 15km, near the western boundary. Two other tower-houses in this parish are located in the townlands of Castletown c. 4.5km from
the parish church and at Cappagh c. 9km from the parish church with an unclassified castle in the townland of Crughwill c. 4.5km for the parish church.

At Noughaval, there are no tower-houses in the townland with the parish church, or the adjoining townlands. An unclassified castle is recorded at a distance of c. 2km south of the parish church and a tower-house c. 1.5km to the north with a further unclassified castle c. 1km south of the parish church. There are no tower-houses recorded for the parish of Killeany. In Noughaval and Killeany, there are substantial cashel settlements near the parish churches and these are not included in the list of castles. The work of Comber and Hull (2010) and FitzPatrick (2009), clearly demonstrates that cashels continued in use as the homes of minor elite members of Gaelic society in the Burren throughout the later medieval and into the early modern period. FitzPatrick (2009, 302) has shown that late medieval tower-houses are found in association with cahir and mothair sites in the Burren, where tower-houses of cadet branches of the Ó Lochlainn and Ó Briain septs, are found in the garth of cahir and mothair sites. However, settlements at parish churches do not appear to be jointly focused on elite centres. In the case of Noughaval a cashel is a distance of c. 500m, however, the settlement cluster is directly associated with the parish church.

At Killeany, there is a cluster of cashels c. 2km from the parish church.

Nugent (2006, 194-5) noted that in the late medieval settlement pattern in Co. Clare that some parish centres were allied to lordly estates when tower-houses were constructed from 1500AD. This feature is not evident in the sites investigated in this thesis and in the case of Oughmama and Carran, tower-houses could not have been located further from the parish church. Within the Ó Lochlainn lordship, only the parish church of Gleninagh is located in the same townland as a tower-house. The parish church in this townland is located c. 200m south of the tower-house and a house of indeterminate date, possible of later medieval date, is associated with the tower-house rather than the parish church. The tower-house at Gragan, the chiefry seat of the Ó Lochlainn lords of Burren, in the parish of Rathbournery is not located in the same townland as the parish church. The parish church and graveyard are located over 1km south of the tower-house and there is no evidence of houses at either site.
Locating tower-houses near parish centres occurs at a single site in the adjoining Ó Conchobhair lordship of Corcomroe in the parish of Clooney, where a tower-house is located c. 130m north of parish church. The evidence from these two lordships strongly suggests that tower-houses were not located at parish centres, while tower-houses were located in every parish in these two lordships, with the exception of Killeany, they were located some considerable distance from the parish church.

The settlement pattern in this region of Gaelic Ireland was distinctive from that evident in Kilkenny and probably other areas of Anglo-Norman and later Anglo-Irish influence, where at least 56% of later medieval settlements were nucleated on both parish church and castle.

The fundamental reason for this difference is that the lands around the church in Gaelic Ireland were the hereditary churchlands of ecclesiastical families and after 1210, these families became tenants of the bishop. Settlements in later medieval Gaelic regions of Ireland, below the level of elites, were small and are notoriously difficult to identify. A possible explanation for the low visibility of Gaelic settlements is that they were divided between those focused on castles and those clustered at parish churches, whereas in Anglo-Norman lordships the parish church and the castle were closely associated and consequently settlements nucleated on them were larger. O’Conor (1998, 104) demonstrates that Gaelic tower-houses and possibly early lordly centres were the focus of settlement clusters for service providers at these centres. In Co. Clare, the earthworks of two medieval houses are located at the tower-house of Dysart, in the parish of Killimer and also the remains of a medieval house at the tower-house at Lisdoonvarna in the parish of Kilmoon. Earthworks of a medieval house is also evident at the tower-house at Glencolumbkille in the parish of Carran. It is probable that there were more houses at these and other tower-house sites, but there is no longer any visible evidence for them. In North Roscommon, an area of mainly Gaelic influence, the Rock of Cé, there is a crannog and associated dry land complex that was the chiefry seat of the MacDiarmata, lords of Moylurg (O’Conor et. al. 2010, 30-1). There was possibly a settlement at this site focused on the lordly centre (ibid.), however, the parish church was probably at Ardcarn, a distance of c. 3km. There are earthworks of a settlement at the parish church and a reference in the Irish chronicles, for the year 1235, that in
the course of an attack on the Rock at Lough Cé, the Anglo-Normans ‘made numerous vessels out of the houses of Ardcarne’ (ALC, 57). This suggests that there was a settlement at the MacDiarmata chiefry seat and a separate settlement at the parish church, and that the settlements were separated by a distance of 3km.

The evidence from my research shows that in areas of Gaelic control, settlement clusters were focused on parish churches and that settlement clustering also occurred within the same parish focused on lordly centres. In Co. Kilkenny, and probably other areas under the control of Anglo-Norman lords, the majority of settlements were nucleated to the lordly centre with the parish church also a central component. In the Gaelic world, parish churches were built on churchlands and the building of a castle there would not have been possible (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 362). Having at least two independent foci for settlement clustering within the same parish was certainly a factor inhibiting the development of larger settlements, such as those that appear in the Anglo-Norman world.

10.4 Morphology, plan and layout of settlement clusters at parish churches

The form and regular layout of the borough of Newtown Jerpoint is very different to the other sites investigated in this thesis (8.8.3). The parish church of St. Nicholas and its graveyard was a primary focus for the settlement and a key component in the layout of the borough. The decision to position the church at the edge of the settlement may have been deliberate and may have reflected the position of many churches in English medieval settlements (Morris 1989, 239-40). Locating the parish church at the edge of the settlement was also a feature at Thomastown, where the church was located at the edge of the borough, just inside the northeast wall of the town. The peripheral position of the parish church is also a feature of medieval towns that have survived in Co. Tipperary, such as Carrick-on-Suir, Cashel, Fethard and Clonmel (Bradley 1985, 39-56).

The spatial organisation of the borough of Newtown Jerpoint, with Long Street and East-West Street converging at the market place and continuing in the direction of the bridge, with the size and regular pattern of houses and garden plots laid out on either side of the streets, is distinctive. There are similarities with planned, regular settlements that developed in England in the course of the late eleventh and twelfth
centuries (Taylor 1983, 133-4) a culture that well known to the colonists. The evidence from Somerset, Shropshire, Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and elsewhere, suggests to Morris (1989, 245) that many, possibly the majority of planned settlements in England, were laid out during this period. It is also evident that older sites were remodelled and rebuilt as planned regular settlements, while others were built on completely new sites (Taylor 1983, 147-50). East-West Street at Newtown Jerpoint is less regular than the straight streets that were so prevalent in planned settlement in England and Anglo-Norman Ireland. This suggests that East West Street may have been the earliest phase and that it followed the natural topography or an earlier routeway leading to a crossing place on the River Nore. A subsequent phase is evident as Long Street, which was laid out as a relatively straight street. A possible chronology can be proposed for the borough, as the morphology of the two streets represents different stages of the planning and development process.

At Newtown Jerpoint, the tofts are preserved as slight banks, ditches and edges of terraces stepping down to the next terrace (Oxford Archaeology 2007, 41). The boundaries of the tofts may have been fenced, delimiting the space and indicating privacy.

The interpretation of the earthworks at Tullaherin (6.8.1) is problematic and the position of the houses on the plots cannot be determined with any degree of certainty due to the lack of surviving evidence. The hollow-way that curves through the settlement provides the framework for the settlement and unlike the streetscape at Newtown Jerpoint, there is no indication of straight streets, however, there is a similarity as some house sites were enclosed ensuring privacy. The layout of the tofts at Tullaherin is in contrast to long and narrow burgage plots, which are a feature of the borough and other colonial settlements in Ireland and England. There is little apparent colonial influence in the layout of the settlement. There is no indication that it was ever laid out to a regular plan, rather it is so irregular as to suggest haphazard development and unplanned growth over time (Roberts 1987, 24).

Hollow-ways, drove-ways and lane-ways are evident at Oughtmama and Noughaval; however, like Tullaherin there is no indication of straight streets. At Oughtmama the building cluster (O1, O2, O3) and the building (O6) are distinctive as they are
enclosed, which suggests privacy and that the inhabitants were of some importance. The settlement cluster was not set out on a grid, nor is there evidence that it was laid out to a plan, rather the house cluster was an agglomeration over time, focused on the parish church. However, some planning is indicated for some houses, as they were positioned in such a way to ensure that they had a sense of privacy from the rest of the settlement. The excavated house at Noughaval (8.8.1) revealed the remains of a two-roomed house that was in use from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. The excavator (Ní Ghabhláín 1995, 378-9) suggests the possibility of an earlier occupation level, however, no structure was identified and no reliable dating evidence was obtained. The location of this house at the edge of the settlement is similar to the house O6 at Oughtmama (7.5), and a curvilinear wall encloses both. The enclosing wall at Noughaval was not excavated and it may relate to a possible earlier phase of occupation. The enclosure ensured that the inhabitant had privacy, suggesting that they were of some importance, probably erenaghs.

Privacy is also evident at Carran where the building (C1) nearest the church is probably a house. Its proximity to the church, location within the earlier graveyard enclosure, and the possible machicolation on the north-west gable wall of the church, which may have controlled access to this building C1 (9.4), suggests that its occupant was associated with the church, perhaps the coarb or erenagh. Like Oughtmama and Noughaval, the occupier was of sufficient importance to merit privacy.

The small settlement cluster at Killeany may only have consisted of two or three houses that probably represent the settlement of an erenagh, his family and tenants. Excavation is ultimately required to address the chronology of the buildings here as elsewhere. Most houses at Noughaval, Carran (C1, C3 and C4) and Killeany (K1 and K2) are located within stone-wall enclosures, which define the plots and provide privacy. The house plots at the Burren sites were more irregular in plan and haphazard than Tullaherin. Hollow-ways have not survived at Carran or Killeany and the layout of the plots do not appear to respect to roadways or laneways.

The settlement clusters were components within their wider landscape and communication with the wider network was of crucial importance. Newtown Jerpoint on the banks of the River Nore was established on the major routeway connecting the
medieval towns of Thomastown and Knocktopher and the river connected the borough to the town of Kilkenny to the port of New Ross. There are some interesting comparisons to be made between Newtown Jerpoint and other medieval towns. Thomastown, c. 3km to the northeast of Newtown Jerpoint, was a new borough established in the early decades of the thirteenth century, which developed as an important inland port and benefited from access to the Nore and boats traveling up and down the river (Bradley and Murtagh 2003, 194). At Newtown Jerpoint, the area adjoining the riverbank is generally marshy and is likely to have been pasture, divided among the burgesses (Oxford Archaeology 2007, 99). A plan of medieval Thomastown (Brady and Murtagh 2003, 195) makes clear that some tofts extended to the banks of the River Nore, providing direct access for loading and unloading boats. There is no surviving evidence of a landing place at Newtown Jerpoint and the layout of the streets converging as a single street in the direction of the bridge suggests that the terrestrial routeway was of greater importance to the borough than the riverine routeway. Major navigable rivers in the south east of Ireland, the Barrow, Nore and Suir were magnets for major Anglo-Norman settlement. The medieval towns of Kilkenny, Inistioge and Bennettsbridge were located on the River Nore, Carlow and Graiguenamanagh on the Barrow and Carrick-on-Suir and Clonmel on the Suir. Anglo-Norman towns were also located on tributaries of major river systems such as Gowran, Kells and Callan (Bradley 1985, 40-56). It appears that establishing towns near rivers was a priority for the Anglo-Normans. Tofts at towns located on major rivers extend to the river banks, indicating the importance as riverine trade routes, whereas at towns, located on tributaries the tofts do not extend to the banks and were more focused on a bridge or crossing point, suggesting that for these settlements terrestrial routeways were of greater importance. This is evident in the layout of Callan and Gowran in Co. Kilkenny and Fethard, Tipperary and Thurles, in Co. Tipperary (ibid.). The layout of Newtown Jerpoint was not unique, with its focus on the bridge and terrestrial routeway, but settlements on major navigable rivers, like the Nore, usually had a greater focus on the riverine routeway.

As an episcopal manor, the settlement at Tullaherin was undoubtedly connected to other villages, market centres and particularly to the diocesan centre of St. Canice’s in the town of Kilkenny. Tullaherin is located on the fertile plain, c. 3.5km east of
River Nore and c. 8km west of the River Barrow and was well situated to avail of the riverine navigation on both rivers. These rivers were the main highways from the interior of the lordship to the important medieval deep-water port of New Ross, c. 30km to the south and the Nore was the main artery between the towns of Kilkenny and New Ross for most of the period 1200-1600 AD. (Smyth 1990, 129-31).

Connectivity is also evident at the settlement clusters in the Ó Lochlainn lordship. They were connected by a series of local and regional routeways to other places within their parishes, to the diocesan centre at Kilfenora and the outside world. A feature of all four sites is their location close to major routeways.

In the context of English medieval settlement research, Roberts (1987, 120) established that the number of row villages along axial routes is smaller than might be expected, while true cross-roads villages seems to be late features of the settlement landscape. Taylor (1983, 131) demonstrates that if there was a pre-existing road then the subsequent settlement may well have taken on a more regular form, with houses arranged along a single street. This form of settlement arrangement is not present at any of the sites investigated. The settlements at these sites seem to have been populated by ecclesiastical families and the focus of settlement was the parish church. While situated near routeways, they were not the foci of the settlements and they were not arranged along the routeways. The rationale for settlement clustering in the Burren was the parish churches and the families of Church officials, coarbs and especially erenaghs who lived there, and as argued in the case of the clusters at Oughtmama, Noughaval and Killeany, their presence was determined by the early medieval monasteries that preceded them. Routeways may have been factors in determining the location of the early medieval monasteries, but they were also located near boundaries, which may have been of greater importance. The tendency to locate churches on the boundaries of territories is well-attested (Ó Riain 1972, 18-9). Churchlands often functioned as buffer zones between rival chiefs because they carried with them the right of sanctuary (Loeber 2001, 303). This is very evident at Oughtmama, as in the later medieval period the extensive churchlands of the parish and abbey lands of the Cistercians provided a significant internal buffer against the Ó Conchobhair kings of Connacht.
The precise details of the houses at Newtown Jerpoint cannot be determined due to clearance in the nineteenth century when the land was given as ‘potato ground’ to the surrounding population, on terms that they removed the house foundations and piled the stones into cairn-like heaps (Graves 1868, 13-4). The stone cairns that are still evident suggest that the houses were built of stone. At the medieval settlement excavated by Claire Foley (1989) c. 380m west of the parish church the earliest building was cob built on low stone wall-footings. The building was later rebuilt, again with cob-walls on stone wall-footings. This structure is clearly a peasant longhouse. A subsequent phase of building was a two-storey mortared stone building and this was probably too elaborate to be a peasant house (Gardiner 2011, 719). Few finds were recovered were associated with this phase and its function is unclear. It may have been a manor house, a barn or a grange (Barry 1987, 76; Foley 1989, 125; O’Conor 1998, 50-1). Two shallow trenches indicate a possible timber-framed structure laid on horizontal sill-beams. Foley’s excavation demonstrates the range and diversity of construction methods and materials used in the buildings at this site, and diversity may also have been a feature of houses at the nearby borough. The prevalence of stone material suggests the houses were constructed of stone, probably wall-footings surmounted by cob walls or they may have been of timber-framed construction on top of stone wall-footings.

At Tullaherin, insufficient house remains have survived to draw many firm conclusions, however, the surviving stone wall-footings suggest that like Newtown Jerpoint, stone was used in the construction of dwarf walls, surmounted by cob walls, or possibly timber frames.

At Wharram Percy, the presence of pivot stones for hanging doors shows that the doors were solid framed rather than of wattle, mat or sacking. Keys and small hinges were among the finds, which suggests to Beresford and Hurst (1990, 39) that this was private property to be secured and that the doors and walls were too solid to be broken through. It is worth noting that keys were among the stray finds at both Newtown Jerpoint (Graves 1868, 12) and Tullaherin (Moran 1996, 6). Keys are well represented in finds from the excavations of medieval houses in Ireland, such as Liathmore Co. Tipperary (Leask and MacAlister 1945-8, 1-14) and Killegland, Ashbourn Co. Meath (Frazer 2009, 116). While the precise find spots for keys at
Newtown Jerpoint and Tullherin are unknown, they could relate to any time period and it could be tentatively suggested that like Wharram Percy securing property of some value was a priority.

The form of the buildings in Burren is best preserved at Oughtmama where diversity is evident, since no two buildings are similar (table 8). The internal space of five of six possible buildings range from 25m$^2$ to 55m$^2$, the sixth (O3) at 76.8m$^2$ may have been a building associated with farming, possibly a barn, byre or tithe barn. The wall-footings of the gable walls of six possible buildings have survived to the extent that some reasonable conclusions can be made. The gable walls of four buildings (O1, O2, O4 and O5) measure 5m, a fifth O6 is 3.5m and the sixth (O3) 6m, with the latter being the possible farm building.

The seventeenth-century house at Noughaval, N5, has an internal space of 29.82m$^2$ and is broadly similar to N3 (29.05m$^2$). Other possible later medieval houses, at Noughaval, range in size from 21m$^2$ to 41.25m$^2$, the latter possibly a farm building. The possible later medieval buildings at Noughaval, Carran and Killeany appear to be smaller than those at Oughtmama.

At Noughaval, the buildings are very disturbed, however, the internal length of gable walls range from 3.5m to 5.5m. Based on the surviving evidence of the buildings, it can be tentatively suggested that the internal space is less than 30m$^2$ in contrast to Oughtmama where the average internal space was 39m$^2$. The building nearest the parish church at Carran (C1) is the largest of the possible later medieval buildings at 30.71m$^2$, while C5 is 26m$^2$ and the internal space at C3 is 27m$^2$.

At Killeany, the largest house measures 26.25m$^2$ internally. It can be tentatively suggested that the buildings at Oughtmama are the largest in the case study settlement clusters, the buildings are smaller at Noughaval and Carran (c. 30m$^2$) and the smallest buildings are at Killeany.

A later medieval house excavated in Burren, Caherconnell (Cumber and Hull 2010, 134-171) dates from the early fifteenth century, with occupation evidence also for the mid-seventeenth century. It measures, internally, 10m x 5m, similar to O1 at Oughtmama.
The Caherconnell house was located within the garth of a cathair, which suggests that it was the home of Gaelic later medieval and early-modern gentry class. There is an absence of rounded quoins at the houses investigated in this thesis, however, they are a feature of other Burren houses, such as Caherconnell, Cahermacnaghten, Cahermore, Ballyganner Castle, Caherwalsh and Caheridoula (FitzPatrick 2009, 299-302). Generally, the case study houses in Burren were also smaller than those in areas of Anglo-Norman control (table 9).
### Dimensions of selected buildings at Burren case study sites, including other Burren houses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study possible Buildings</th>
<th>Int. length (metres)</th>
<th>Int. width (metres)</th>
<th>Area (metres square)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oughtmama 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>O2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>O4</td>
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<td>O5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>26.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Noughaval1</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>11.875</td>
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<td><strong>Carran 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>19.25</td>
</tr>
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<td>C5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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<td><strong>Killeany 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>13.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Burren Houses</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cahermacnaghten - Tighe Móir</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cahermacnaghten</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caher Connell a</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caher Connell B</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caheridoula</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>27.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballyganner Castle</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caherwalsh 1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caherwalsh 2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cahermore</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>98</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Table 9: Dimensions of possible buildings at selected case study sites and other Burren houses*
Discussion

Dimensions of selected houses in Anglo-Norman areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anglo-Norman / English</th>
<th>Int. length (metres)</th>
<th>Int. width (metres)</th>
<th>Area (metres square)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caherguillamore Co Tipperary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerpoint Church (Structure 1)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerpoint Church (Structure 2)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thady's Fort</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>83.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liathmore-Mochoewmóg</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>51.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyerstown</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashbourne</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piperstown</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Dimensions of selected houses in Anglo-Norman / English areas

However, some ecclesiastical families lived in somewhat superior dwellings as suggested by a petition to Rome in 1433, when David Obeachayn, a priest in of the diocese of Kilfenora, reveals that he had ‘built a stone house at his own expense’ (CPR, viii, 501). The stone house was not a tower-house, rather ‘it seems to have been a superior domestic building’ (Gardiner 2011, 718). Birmingham (2006, 168-85) has shown the diversity and range of priestly accommodation in Ireland during the later medieval period. Accommodation was usually incorporated into the west gable end of the church, attached to one side of the church, or in tower accommodation within the church. Free standing houses were scarce but they did occur (ibid., 182-5).

10.5 Church officials and settlement clusters at parish churches

There are similarities and differences between the settlement clusters investigated in this thesis and the reasons why they were formed. A common feature of the settlement clusters at the parish churches in the Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren and Tullaherin in central Kilkenny, is that they were ecclesiastical estates and the people who lived there were tenants of the bishop. However, in the Burren the estates were the hereditary lands of ecclesiastical families, coarbs and erenaghs, often closely allied to ruling families. They continued in possession of their lands as tenants of the bishop after 1210, whereas Tullaherin was the parish church of an episcopal manor held by the bishop of Ossory as tenant-in-chief of the king and populated by feudal tenants of the bishop. The borough of Newtown Jerpoint is the only settlement
investigated that remained in secular control and it is in marked contrast to the other sites.

While erenaghs continued to hold their lands after 1210, their position had changed, they were now as chief tenants of episcopal lands, but with reduced powers (Ó Scea 2012, 74). However, their hereditary responsibilities endured, including maintenance of the fabric of the parish church, collection of parochial tithes, providing for the celebration of divine service and providing hospitality to the bishop, pilgrims and travellers (Simms 1978, 70; Jefferies 1999, 16) (7.6). The transfer of churchlands to the bishops in Gaelic dioceses was the culmination of a process of establishing a hierarchal structure and enhancing the control and authority of bishops and was an inevitable outcome of a process underway from at least the beginning of the twelfth century.

Tullaherin was a monastery before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, with extensive lands populated by monks and students, with an associated settlement and its churchlands under the stewardship of an erenagh. As part of the colonisation process, the monastic church emerged as the parish church of an episcopal manor. Stability and continuity is evident as lands held by the pre-reform church continued in ecclesiastical control throughout the period 1200 to 1600 and beyond. An important point that is evident from the dispute between Bishop Felix Ó Dulany and Fitz Walter, founder of the Butler line, over the control of churchlands, is that the bishop sought to protect churchlands and not the abbot, coarb or erenagh of the pre-reform monastery. This distinction demonstrates that pre-reform monastic estates were completely in episcopal control from an early stage after arrival of the Anglo-Normans and that their arrival was probably the catalyst for this change, a process not formalised in Gaelic dioceses until the council of Tuam 1210 (7.6). As an episcopal manor, Tullaherin had a principal role in providing a prebendary for diocesan dignitaries, the precentor and the archdeacon in 1302-6 and the precentor solely from at least 1323, a position that continued until well into the early modern period (6.4).

Episcopal manors in Ossory were firmly rooted in agriculture and were extraordinarily economically successful (Empey 1985, 19). The level of intensive
agricultural production, which they undertook could not have been achieved without an adequate labour force. The movement of peasant immigrants to the secular manors and boroughs of the east and southeast of Ireland in the thirteenth century is well known (O’Conor 1998, 41-2). There are references to clerics coming to Ireland from parts of England, such as four canons from Bodmin in Cornwall (Empey 1984, 145). There is, however, little indication of peasant immigrants to episcopal manors or the displacement of existing populations. It is reasonable to propose that the community who worked the land and lived at Tullaherin were the descendants of hereditary church officials, in the Gaelic tradition. However, there was no place for the office of coarb or erenagh in the feudal world, and therefore these families continued as tenants of crosslands without the recognition of their former office or their earlier obligations.

There are strong indications that aspects of Gaelic cultural traditions endured and that existing communities adapted to the new circumstances that prevailed with the arrival of the Anglo-Normans. When the parish at Tullaherin was established, a decision was made to adapt the monastic church for its new role as a parish church, rather than build a new Gothic church, which was a feature of many parish churches, such as St. Nicholas in Newtown Jerpoint. When the monastic church was adapted, elements of the architectural package of the early church, such as, the antae and the round tower, were retained. This indicated the long pedigree of the site, and the remembrance of the founder’s church continued to have a cultural value.

The tapered shape, chamfered sides and the fleur-de-lys decoration on the terminals of the cross on the grave slab in the church at Tullaherin are features that reflect Anglo-Norman and English culture (Maher 1997, 28). However, the worn inscription in a Gaelic hand was certainly not an English name and the person commemorated was undoubtedly Irish. The place-names of townlands in the parish were a mixture of Gaelic and English and the distribution of the earthworks of native enclosed settlements indicate that all the townlands with Gaelic place-names had such monuments and those with English place-names had none.

It is proposed that these layers of evidence suggest that the Gaelic people who continued to live at Tullaherin were the descendants of ecclesiastical families of the
pre-Anglo-Norman era and that aspects of Gaelic and English cultural influences co-existed, and that a new hybridity emerged.

The long nave church, which, appeared as the preferred church plan of the Anglo-Normans at a time when aisled church plans were more popular in England, indicates that Anglo-Normans compromised and adapted to Irish conditions and did not introduce all aspects of English church architecture.

Hybridity and acculturation is also suggested from an excavation of a Betagh settlement at Attyflin, Co. Limerick. The excavator Eogan (2009, 67-77) considered that the scale of the settlement and the artefacts uncovered suggest that the people who lived there may not have been from the Betagh class, but were most likely free tenants on an Anglo-Norman manor, at a distance from the known manorial centres in that part of Co. Limerick. Acculturation is suggested from the artefacts uncovered. A stick-pin of native Irish type and a typical Anglo-Norman ring brooch were among the finds. Tableware dominated the pottery finds, with much smaller quantities of cooking ware recorded. Elsewhere in the Anglo-Norman colony, cooking ware was dominant. The contrast in the pottery assemblage and Anglo-Norman and Gaelic dress fashions represented suggests acculturation and the adoption by this Gaelic society of new Anglo-Norman dress styles (ibid.).

There is little archaeological evidence of settlement at other medieval episcopal manors in the diocese of Ossory. The episcopal manor of Clonamery contains a motte castle in association with an unclassified castle, which is c. 330m south of the parish church and graveyard. The unclassified castle is probably a tower-house that replaced the earlier motte castle and this is in contrast to Tullaherin where there is no evidence of a castle. The only medieval house recorded at an episcopal manor of Clonmore. The house lays c. 340m south of the parish church and graveyard. There is no indication that the settlement pattern evident at Tullaherin was repeated at other episcopal manors, but as most sites have been disturbed, and any evidence of settlement may have been cleared.

The programme of church building and rebuilding in the diocese of Kilfenora, in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century and later in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries suggests that ecclesiastical officials continued to fulfil their
obligations throughout the period. The re-building of parish churches at long-established ecclesiastical sites, maintaining the link to the past by retaining symbolically important architectural features and revering the memory of the founding saint, emphasised the pedigree of the site that had a cultural value in Gaelic society (FitzPatrick 2006, 66-70), a practice undoubtedly influenced by erenaghs.

10.6 Specialisation and parish church centres: market activity and pilgrimage

Erenaghs were specialist ecclesiastical families whose official role in the pre-twelfth century period was as a leader of a church community, or church-tenants. From the later medieval period, under the authority of the local bishop, they had the responsibility for maintaining the fabric of the church and providing for the celebration of divine service when not himself ordained (Simms 1987, 170). The upkeep of church land would of course be included in the keeper role and undoubtedly erenaghs continued to be leaders in their communities. However, there were distinctions in the settlements, some developed specialist functions and the role of erenaghs at these settlements evolved and changed. This is most evident at Noughaval, which developed as a market centre and Carran, which developed as a centre of pilgrimage.

Noughaval is a rare example of a market in a region of Ireland that remained under the control of Gaelic lords throughout the later medieval period. Markets are relatively unknown in Gaelic polities, due to a lack of detailed socio-economic documents, but there are some exceptions. There is evidence for markets at Cavan and Longford (Nicholls 1987, 419) and possibly Sligo, where port activity and settlement continued when it reverted to the control of Gaelic lords in the fourteenth and fifteenth century (Nicholls 2003, 18). There is also a reference in the Irish chronicles to a market near the chieftain seat of the MacDiarmata lordship, Purt na Carraige (Rockingham) in 1231 (O’Conor et. al 2010, 30-1).

The relationship between the parish church, settlement and market activity at Noughaval is underlined by its market cross. The monument is punch dressed, a masonry style that is typical of the late medieval period (McAfee 1997, 26-94). The lines on the ‘bandle’ cross strongly suggest its use as a measure for textiles and that the community was involved in trade of linen and possibly woollen textiles.
The market cross is located just north of the graveyard gate, however, it may have been moved to its present location. The association of market and churchyard is well known throughout Western Europe (Simms 2006 224; Gardiner 2012, 114-5). The market may originally have been held on the *platea* or green, the public space of the former early medieval monastery, possibly and areas shown as ‘glebe’ on the six-inch first-edition OS map. Ecclesiastical opposition developed to the common practice of holding markets in or near churchyards in the first decades of the thirteenth century (Gardiner 2012, 114-5). It is possible that the earliest market was held in the churchyard and was later moved to the *platea*, or public area.

Our understanding of the structure and organisation of markets in colonial urban areas is limited and in areas that continued under Gaelic control it is non-existent. Evidence of a cross is not necessarily evidence for a market. In a detailed analysis of late medieval crosses in Co. Meath, King (1984, 75-115) demonstrates that that almost all were set up in wayside positions and that only two, Duleek and Navan were associated with markets. A market cross is recorded in the town of Ennis (Archaeology.ie) and Campbell (2012, 75-6) lists the Noughaval cross among a small group of pillar type crosses in the Galway hinterland including; Finavarra, Ballynacourty, Co. Galway and a tentatively unidentified fourth monument derived from a sketch by Molyneux c.1709. The *leacht* Uí Dhalaigh in the townland of Finavarra is morphologically remarkably similar to a market cross, the population level in that townland and their connection to Galway merchants strongly suggests that there was a market here in the late medieval period. A market was certainly held at Kilfenora, as a patent was issued in 1621 to the Bishop of Kilfenora to hold a market there (Anon. 1853, 49-67). Market crosses also occur in the adjoining Clanrickard lordship at Ardrahan and Athenry, which is the only surviving fifteenth-century example (Bradley 1991, 25-8). The pillar-type stone market crosses, usually mounted on steeps, such as the Noughaval cross, was probably the most common form (ibid.). They are, however, remarkably similar in form to some crosses in Co. Meath recorded by King (1984, 85), which were in wayside locations, rather than at market centres. Consequently, we cannot assume that a polygonal pillar cross,

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mounted on steeps is an indicator of a market place. The bandle lines on the cross at
Noughaval provide a strong indication of market activity and also its association with
textiles. While there is limited archaeological evidence, or historical references to
markets in Gaelic Ireland there is a hint of markets in an early seventeenth-century
poem. The poem ‘Who will buy a poem’ by Mathghamhain Ó Hifearnáin, imagines
the poet walking all of Munster, with his poem to ‘every market from cross to cross
[gach margadh ó chrois go chrois] (Bergin 1970, 145-279). This poem might imply
that crosses were common to market places, at least in that province at the beginning
of the seventeenth century.

The market cross is not the only market indicator at Noughaval. An outstanding
feature of the townland is the extraordinarily large population recorded in the census
of 1659. An adult population of 42 is recorded, exceeding the average for the
townlands in the Burren lordship, of 13.5, by a considerable margin. The large
population in the townland is not reflected in the population listed for the parish,
which was 141, higher than the Burren average of 117.6. When the townland of
Noughaval is excluded, the population for the parish would have been 102, which is
below average. It is reasonable to conclude, that the main driver for settlement in the
parish was market activity in the townland, and that it was the dominant focus for the
population in the parish.

The census reflects the settlement pattern in the mid-seventeenth century, but it
cannot be assumed that this pattern prevailed from an earlier time. Ní Ghabhláin
(1995, 215-24) established a strong correlation between the internal space of the
medieval churches in the diocese of Kilfenora and the population size in the 1659
census. Population must be a determining factor in church size, as the resources of a
church are mainly determined by the tithes they receive, therefore the size of the
population affects the resources of the church. The church also needed to be large
enough to accommodate the congregation it served. The internal space of the parish
church at Noughaval was only exceeded in Burren by the Cistercian abbey church at
Corcomroe. It is evident that the parish was densely populated from at least the late
twelfth or early thirteenth century, when the parish church was extended (8.7).
The economy of Burren, like most of later medieval Ireland, was mainly agricultural and the question is how the townland of Noughaval could sustain such a disproportionately large population? The size of the parish was not exceptional, it was below average in the lordship and the quality of its land was poor, yet a disproportionately high population was sustained throughout the later medieval period. The explanation for its economic endurance must lie in its market-related activity. The economy was evidently not based on subsistence farming. Implicit in market activity is an economy producing a surplus with the resources to trade at the market. Trade in agricultural produce, such as butter, could not sustain such a large local community. The bandle market cross suggests that cloth was traded at Noughaval, but whether trading activities could have supported such a large population is debatable.

Universal features of markets are that they operated under patronage, they attracted tolls and were regulated. The market at Noughaval was held on churchlands controlled by the bishop, in the later medieval period, the patron of the market would have undoubtedly been the bishop of Kilfenora. The erenagh, as ‘head man’ or leader (Simms 1987, 170) was responsible for ecclesiastical temporalities, the collection of tithes and other church revenues and would certainly have been responsible for the collection of market tolls. There are hints that markets were regulated in Anglo-Norman areas (8.6.1), but we cannot assume the same degree of control was exercised at markets in the Gaelic world. However, it is reasonable to propose that some control was exercised, particularly for markets held on churchlands and that erenaghs, with responsibilities for parish temporalities, would also have been responsible for regulating standards at the market. Nicholls (1987, 419) suggests that before Gaelic merchant families migrated to the port towns, they were probably merchants at ecclesiastical sites and, as such, it is likely that they were from erenagh families. It is possible that, as prominent, influential men in their community, erenaghs were early local merchants at Noughaval.

A significant activity in the parish of Carran was its role as a centre of pilgrimage. The archaeological evidence for pilgrimage is the high number of subsidiary chapels in the parish and the extraordinary number of penitential stations. The five subsidiary chapels in the parish possibly had their genesis as early medieval foundations.
Multiple chapels are known in the diocese of Kilfenora, but where they occur there is usually a single chapel and in three parishes, including Oughtmama there are two chapels, Carran is unique with five (9.5). Two subsidiary chapels in the parish, possibly more, continued as saintly cult centres, well into the later medieval period. The church at Teampall Crónan appears to have been dedicated to St. Cronan of Roscrea and two gabled tomb-shrines that lie close to the church and the multiple phases of building and rebuilding indicate its importance as a saintly cult centre. Keelhilla was the hermitage of St. Colmán MacDuach, an important local saint and retained its importance for pilgrimage into the nineteenth century (Jones 2004, 93). Archaeological evidence for continuity of pilgrimage at this site is suggested by a penitential station that was built on the rubble of an earlier church. The church at Glencolumbkille emerged as a short-lived parish church, however, it had an earlier history as an early medieval ecclesiastical foundation, possibly founded by St. Columbkillle, which is indicated by its enclosure and crosshead. The possibility that it too was a pilgrimage site is suggested by a cluster of penitential stations within a radius of less than 1km of the church.

The number of penitential stations, which are indicative of pilgrimage, recorded for the parish of Carran is extraordinary, albeit that their date range is as yet unknown. In the Republic of Ireland, 197 such monuments are listed in the RMP (Archaeology.ie) and of those 29 (15%) are recorded in the parish of Carran. The majority are clustered around the subsidiary chapels of the parish and four cairns at the parish church, possibly penitential stations, suggest that the parish church was itself the focus of pilgrimage.

It is proposed that Carran was the centre of pilgrimage activity with multiple saintly cult centres. The parish church was the ecclesiastical heart of the parish and central to all ecclesiastical activity, including pilgrimage. The erenagh had responsibility for providing hospitality for pilgrims and the parish church would have been central to pilgrimage activity.

There is no evidence of specialist activity at Tullaherin. At its height, the function of Newtown Jerpoint is clear. The Anglo-Norman economy was primarily agricultural.

but the inquisition of 1289 demonstrates that the borough was not solely dependent on agriculture. There was a market, indicated by the market cross (5.4) and the old ash tree that stood in the ‘market place’ (Graves 1868, 12). There was a mill, as according to the 1289 inquisition, the burgesses owed ‘service at the mill’ and one of the burgesses was named as ‘Wyn the miller’. The community were probably service providers to the nearby Cistercian abbey and benefited from trade generated by visitors to the abbey. There is no doubt that Thomastown benefited from trade on the River Nore. It developed as an important inland port (Bradley and Murtagh 2003, 194). There is a reference (CDI, iv, 110) to hides, the property of merchants from Cornwall and Flanders in the cellar of Richard la Marshal at Thomastown in 1295. This illustrates the wide range of trade contacts with this urban centre. It is possible that Newtown Jerpoint had a similar range of contacts but there are no references to such.
Chapter 11 – Conclusions

The primary aim of this thesis has been to establish why settlement clusters occur at parish churches in the lordships of Ireland, focusing on the Gaelic Ó Lochlainn lordship of Burren and the polity of the Anglo-Norman county of Kilkenny and later Butler lordship as key case studies. This investigation has revealed differences and similarities in the plan and layout of the buildings, highlighted their social and cultural contexts and identified nuances that are reflected in the appearance of the respective settlement clusters in Anglo-Norman / English- and Gaelic-dominated lordships c. 1200-1600.

Distinctions and similarities were identified in the layout of the settlements and the buildings associated with them. Newtown Jerpoint is distinctly different from the other sites investigated. It was a new settlement founded by the Anglo-Normans within the first few generations of their arrival. The borough was laid out to a regular plan, with the parish church an essential element. The spatial organisation of the borough, its streets converging at the market place, the size and regular pattern of tofts, laid out on either side of the streets, are distinctive and mirror planned, regular settlements that developed in England in the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Taylor 1983).

The settlement clusters at the other parish churches investigated do not reveal any indication of planning, rather they appear to conform to what Roberts (1987) described as highly irregular in layout, suggesting haphazard or unplanned growth and accretions over a long period of time. The earthworks of the settlement at Tullaherin, also in Co. Kilkenny are the remains of prolonged and intensive settlement from the early medieval until well into the early modern period. The tofts and their houses are significantly smaller than those at Newtown Jerpoint where long, narrow burgage plots prevailed. The houses at the borough were positioned at the front of the toft, with a garden to the rear, a feature absent in the settlement layout at Tullaherin, which suggests that it was not laid out at a single point in time, or to a regular plan.
At Oughtmama the plan and layout of the settlement was influenced by the geography of the early medieval monastery. A cluster of buildings within a curvilinear enclosure may have been the composite farmstead of the erenagh. Another enclosed building may have been the self-contained home of the incumbent priest or coarb. The houses at Oughtmama were not set out on a grid and there is no evidence that they were laid out to a plan, rather the house clusters were agglomerations, focused on the parish church. Several buildings at Noughaval may have been houses that were built and occupied during the later medieval period. The settlement was probably larger, but due to modern improvement and the ephemeral nature of Irish rural housing, many buildings in the settlement may have been erased from the landscape. At Carran, a number of phases are evident, an earlier phase of buildings nearest the church are probably a composite farmstead, occupied by the erenagh and his kin. Its proximity to the church and its location within the earlier graveyard enclosure suggests that the occupant was associated with the church, perhaps the coarb or erenagh. The settlement cluster at Killeany was small. It may only have consisted of two or possibly three houses, one of which was perhaps the home of an erenagh.

Establishing a chronology for buildings in settlements at parish churches has proven problematic and excavation is ultimately required to resolve the date of buildings. However, by peeling back landscape features, enclosures, banks and field walls that have a relationship to the buildings, it has been possible to provisionally conclude that some buildings were probably houses of later medieval date.

There are similarities and differences between the settlement clusters investigated and the reasons why they were formed. The settlements at five of the six sites at parish churches, those in the Ó Lochlainn lordship and Tullaherin in Kilkenny, were ecclesiastical estates and the people who lived there were tenants of the bishop. Tullaherin was the parish church centre of a feudal episcopal manor held by the bishop of Ossory as a tenant-in-chief of the king, whereas in Burren, the estates were the hereditary lands of ecclesiastical families, erenaghs, who continued to hold their lands but as tenants of the bishop after 1210. The Anglo-Normans were attracted to existing church sites as a strategy for colonisation and parish consolidation and Tullaherin as an important monastery in the pre-Anglo-Norman era rapidly emerged.
as the parish church of an episcopal manor. In contrast, Newtown Jerpoint was a secular settlement, and the founders established a new parish church as a key component in the settlement and its priority is evident by the speed with which the church was established. Tullaherin, as an important monastery would have had extensive lands, farmed by monastic tenants, under the stewardship of an erenagh. It is a reasonable conclusion that the community that worked the land and lived at Tullaherin were the descendants of hereditary church officials, in the Gaelic tradition. However, there was no place for the office of coarb or erenagh in the feudal world and these families continued as tenants of crosslands without the recognition of their former office or their earlier obligations.

In the lordship of Burren, the parish churches, with the possibility of Carran, were established at mostly long-standing monasteries. The monastic churches were adapted and made suitable for their new role as parish churches and when they were modernised some features were retained in a deliberate attempt to retain elements of the older church and to make them appear older than they were. Linking the past to the present was certainly evident in the continued use of archaic forms of dwellings by members of Gaelic elite, such as crannogs and post-and-wattle halls (O’Conor 2016, 1-18). It is also evident by the appropriation of prehistoric ceremonial landscapes for assembly and inauguration purposes (FitzPatrick 2004, 52).

Continuity of occupation is also evident by leading families building tower-houses within the garths of cathairs and mothairs (FitzPatrick 2006, 70-2; 2009, 302). Locating parish churches at early medieval monastic sites and maintaining a link to the past, by retaining symbolically important architectural features, had a cultural value in the Ó Lochlainn lordship. Site pedigree and attachment to place was a cultural imperative in Gaelic polity (FitzPatrick 2006, 70). The practice was undoubtedly influenced at local level by erenaghs who were primarily responsible for the maintenance of the fabric of the church in the Gaelic tradition. Gardiner (2009, 12-3) has questioned the view of some historians who sometimes assume that substantial change, especially one that required co-ordinated action, could only have been achieved through the agency of Seigneurial action. However, in the absence of resident diocesan elite, erenaghs appeared well capable of providing leadership and initiative at local level.
Erenaghs were specialist ecclesiastical families whose primary role the later medieval period, was as a leader of a church community and tenants of churchlands, with hereditary responsibilities (10.6) and in the Ó Lochlainn lordship erenagh settlements, some developed specialist functions and the role of erenaghs at these settlements evolved and changed. The market cross at Noughaval indicates that a market was operating there from at least the late medieval period and the bandle lines on the cross strongly suggest that the community was involved in the trade of textiles (Campbell 2012, 76-7). The market may have originally have been on the platea, faitche or green, shown as ‘glebe’ on the six-inch first-edition OS map. Markets invariably operated under patronage, and the patron of the market at Noughaval would have undoubtedly been the bishop of Kilfenora. The erenagh with responsibility for parish temporalities would have been responsible for the collection of market tolls and regulation of standards. It is also possible that, as leaders in their community, erenaghs were early local merchants at Noughaval. It is clear from seventeenth-century sources that there was an exceptionally large population in the townland of Noughaval, a trend also evident from the large internal space of the medieval parish church, which was extended in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, indicating that a disproportionally high population was sustained throughout the later medieval period. The explanation for its economic endurance must lie in its market-related activity. Trade in agricultural produce could not alone have sustained such a large local community, but whether trading activities could have supported such a large population is debatable and it is possible that some form of manufacturing was carried out at the settlement.

Historically pilgrimage was the most significant activity in the parish of Carran. Albeit the antiquity of that cultural practice cannot be fully determined, however, in twelfth-century Europe, pilgrimage became the greatest occupation of church sites, and Ireland followed the European trend and attracted the faithful to venerate relics at old monastic sites (Harbison 2000, 4). The parish is unique, with five subsidiary churches and the number of penitential stations, indicative of pilgrimage, in the parish of Carran is extraordinary. The parish contains 15% of such monuments in the Republic of Ireland, with the majority clustered around the subsidiary chapels of the parish, which suggests that they were centres for pilgrimage. Cairns at the parish
church, possibly penitential stations, suggest that the parish church may itself have once been the focus of pilgrimage. The parish church was the ecclesiastical heart of the parish and central to all ecclesiastical activity, including pilgrimage. The erenagh had responsibility for providing hospitality for pilgrims and the parish church would have been central to pilgrimage activity. The success of Noughaval and Carran could not have been achieved without strong local leadership and the role of erenaghs was pivotal in their success.

Newtown Jerpoint reflected cultural influences of Norman France, England and Wales. The rights, or liberties granted to burgesses, reflect the charter given to small towns in Normandy before the Conquest (1066). The surnames of the burgesses demonstrate that the overwhelming majority had English or Welsh names suggesting that they were English or Welsh immigrants or their descendants. By the end of the thirteenth century, the borough appeared well positioned to prosper and endure, however, decline appears to have set in earlier there than at the other sites investigated. Both Newtown Jerpoint and Tullaherin suffered a similar economic decline (c. 60 %,) as a consequence of the Bruce Wars (1315-8). Change is evident by 1595 from the list of the Earl of Ormond’s tenants when only six tenants are recorded and as many with Irish names as English. Decline is evident in the 1659 census as the adult population recorded was 29 (5.8). The census recorded a more robust adult population at Tullaherin of 42 adults (6.7).

Tullaherin is in marked contrast to Newtown Jerpoint. It lacks the typical appearance of an Anglo-Norman planned settlement, with long narrow burgage plots, so evident at Newtown Jerpoint and other colonial settlements, such as Thomastown, Callen and Gowran. There are, however, indications of hybridity and continuity of Gaelic cultural traditions. The form of grave slabs in the parish church suggests that the Irish language was used on funerary monuments of Anglo-Norman / English style. Place-names of some townlands in the parish suggest continuity of Gaelic traditions. All townlands in the parish with Gaelic place-names have earthworks of native enclosed settlements, whereas those with English place-names have no such monuments (6.7). Seventeenth-century documentary sources record that the townland of Tullaherin is the only townland in the parish with no English recorded among the population. It is also the only townland without a castle. Cultural continuity through this long period
of time and recognition and acknowledgment of site pedigree was a significant factor in the endurance of Tullaherin, which was most likely populated by the descendants of erenagh families in the Gaelic tradition.

**Future research**

Gaps remain in our understanding of the social and cultural world that emerged in the wake of Anglo-Norman colonisation. In particular, how ecclesiastical families that lived on monastic churchlands in the pre-reform era adapted to change in areas of Anglo-Norman control and also in areas that remained in the control of Gaelic lords.

The extensive remains of the settlement at Tullaherin are still little understood and future work might extend our understanding of occupation at the site. Targeted excavation at some of the house sites could establish a more precise chronology for the buildings at this important site. Future archaeological investigation of settlements at parish churches that emerged at the existing monastic sites in Anglo-Norman Ireland would add to our understanding of how the descendants of coarbs and erenaghs adapted to the new feudal world of the colonists. The bishop was the largest landholder in Ossory, with 47,000 acres in ten episcopal manors, many of which had their origins as pre-reform monasteries. Archaeological enquiry for evidence of settlement at the parish churches of these manors could reveal how the old monastic lands were absorbed into episcopal crosslands, how local communities endured the transition and survived in the new feudal world.

The earthworks at Newtown Jerpoint are among the most interesting deserted medieval sites in the country. Glasscock (1970, 190) drew attention to the importance of Newtown Jerpoint and suggested a large-scale excavation. In the intervening decades, a rescue excavation by Claire Foley (1989) of a house-site, c. 300m from the borough, raised more questions about the relationship to the borough. The detailed topographical survey by Oxford Archaeology (2007) also raises more questions, in particular in relation to the possible tower-house and the possibility that it was the site of an earlier elite residence. It is unlikely that further progress can be made in understanding the settlement at the borough without excavation.
Future archaeological investigation and archaeological related methods of enquiry of settlements at parish churches in areas that remained in the control of Gaelic lords would add to our understanding of how ecclesiastical families settled at parish churches in Gaelic regions in the later medieval and early modern period. The development of new technologies in recording earthworks at deserted settlements, the increasing availability of LiDar datasets and developments in RPAS and digital surface modelling might extend our understanding of the remains of possible house-sites and their associated field walls and enclosures.

Research questions of settlement clusters at the parish church sites in Burren cannot be resolved without excavation. The precise dating and chronology of the houses, dating of the mill and millrace at Oughtmama and market activity at Noughaval would add much to our understanding of Gaelic society and ecclesiastical families.


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