

SLAVERY, POWER AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE IRISH SEA REGION, 1066–1171

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Slavery was an ancient institution of some cultural significance for the societies bordering the Irish Sea Region in the early medieval period. Within these societies behavioural norms were influenced by notions of rank and social standing in opposition to those in the lower orders who were deemed to be naturally inferior and even polluted.¹ The marginality of the slave was therefore used to define the community's hierarchy and to reinforce collective identity and morality.² In these societies direct exploitation and naked power were avenues toward prestige and status. Slavery, then, was not simply an institution concerned with the manipulation of labour and financial gain; it also had powerfully symbolic psychological and cultural facets. Indeed, slavery was a significant social institution in the medieval period which was intimately related to constructions of prestige, honour and gender identity.³ Furthermore, during the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries the British sources appear to indicate significant levels of slave raiding activities within the 'Celtic' regions of the British Isles.⁴ This might, initially, appear to be surprising

¹ R. Samson, "The End of Medieval Slavery", *The Work of Work: Servitude, Slavery and Labor in Medieval England* eds. A. J. Frantzen and D. Moffat, (Glasgow: Cruithne Press, 1994), 95–125, 104.

² O. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: a comparative study* (Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press, 1982), 47.

³ Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 86–94, R. M. Karras, "Servitude and Sexuality", *From Sagas to Society: Comparative Approaches to Early Iceland* ed. Gísli Pálsson, (Enfield Lock: Hisarlik Press, 1992): 289–304, 300; R. M. Karras, "Desire, descendants and dominance: slavery, the exchange of women, and masculine power", *The Work of Work*, Frantzen and Moffat, 16–30; S. M. Stuard "Ancillary evidence for the decline of medieval slavery", *Past & Present* 149 (November, 1995): 3–28.

⁴ P. Holm, "The Slave Trade of Dublin, Ninth to Twelfth Centuries", *Peritia* 4 (1986): 315–45, 317–45 and 341; D. Wyatt, "Gruffudd ap Cynan and the Hiberno-Norse World", *The Welsh History Review* 19 (2000): 595–617, see also D. A. E. Pelteret, *Slavery in Early Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 78–9. There has been some debate concerning the use of the term 'Celts' and 'Celtic' in reference to the medieval societies of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. I have, therefore, chosen to use these terms in inverted commas during the course of this article. They will be employed as a term of reference to denote the communities, which modern linguists refer to as 'P' Celtic and 'Q' Celtic

given that this is exactly the period in which historians have traditionally argued that slavery was disappearing before the progressive forces of the market economy.⁵ So how can the vibrant slave raiding and trading activities of the Irish Sea region be explained?

Generally, modern historians have attributed the high incidence of 'Celtic' slave raiding in this period to the long standing corrupting influence of Scandinavian settlers within the Irish Sea region. For example, E. I. Bromberg argued, in an early article on the medieval Welsh slave trade published in 1942, "it was probably the Viking trader-raider who turned the attention of the Welshman to the slave trade."⁶ More recently, Poul Holm in his 1986 study "The Slave Trade of Dublin, Ninth to Twelfth Centuries" argued that although the Irish kings became involved in slave raiding during the tenth century these leaders "... seem to have learnt the practice of slave-taking from the Vikings."⁷ In order to support this general contention, historians have pointed to the increasing number of collaborative enterprises undertaken by mixed native and Scandinavian war bands in the 'Celtic' regions.⁸ Yet, this explanation fails to acknowledge the longstanding cultural significance of the institution of slavery within the indigenous or native communities of the region. Indeed, slave raiding and slave holding were important expressions of identity and patriarchal power and as such had extreme social and cultural significance in the societies of Ireland, Scotland and Wales.⁹ When this is taken into consideration, then the notion of native Christian war bands being corrupted or exploited by pagan Viking sensibilities appears unconvincing. Indeed, the predominant reason for any alliance of 'Celtic' and Norse

speaking peoples. For a full debate see M. Chapman *The Celts, The Construction of a Myth* (London: Macmillan, 1992).

⁵ This may well be a flawed contention; see D. Wyatt, "The Significance of Slavery: Alternative Approaches to Anglo-Saxon Slavery" in *Anglo-Norman Studies XXIII*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001): 327–47, 332–5.

⁶ E. I. Bromberg, "Wales and the Medieval Slave Trade", *Speculum* 18 (1942): 263–9.

⁷ See Holm, "Slave Trade", 330. For a similar comment see D. Ó Croinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (London; New York: Longman, 1995), 268–9. Indeed, the same contention has been made regarding the Scandinavian influence upon Anglo-Saxon society, see D. J. V. Fisher, *The Anglo-Saxon Age c. 400–1042*, (1st edn. Harlow: Longman, 1973; 2nd edn. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1992), 333. For other examples see Wyatt "Significance", 329.

⁸ C. Etchingham, *Viking Raids on Irish Church Settlements in the Ninth Century* (Maynooth: St. Patrick's College, Department of Old & Middle Irish, 1996), 49, Holm, "Slave Trade": 328, Bromberg, "Wales and the Medieval Slave Trade", 269; Wyatt, "Gruffudd", 595–617.

⁹ As they had been in Anglo-Saxon England see Wyatt, "Significance", 340–1 and D. Wyatt, *Slavery and Culture in medieval Britain and Ireland: an alternative perspective of an enduring institution*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Cardiff University, 2002, 44–130.

slave taking warrior groups were that both had similar social objectives and motivations. Furthermore, both occupied a similar conceptual world that related masculinity with both physical and social power.

Gender identity and power were intimately linked in the medieval societies of the Irish Sea region. For these societies displays of sheer masculinity were the predominant way in which an individual's status was defined. A man's life was, therefore, structured by his constant struggle to assert his masculine honour. This sense of masculine honour was expressed primarily through two institutionalised media, namely, formal vengeance in association with the blood feud and a highly developed and complex sense of sexual jealousy.¹⁰ Within these intensely patriarchal societies powerful men accumulated women and then jealously controlled sexual access to them. The guardianship of numerous females underlined masculinity, virility, wealth, prowess and the military power to protect and, in addition, guaranteed lineage. Consequently control over women was considered to be fundamental to the essence of power within these communities. The abduction and the enslavement of women, therefore, constituted a symbolic gauntlet that could be thrown down as a statement of intent to conquer or as a means to emphasise power and masculine prowess. Cowardice and weakness were closely associated with loss of status and with emasculation and effeminacy for the populations of the Irish Sea Region. This was especially true in relation to any failure to protect women. Indeed, it seems clear that the mass abduction and enslavement of all the women (including those of lower status) within opponent's territory was a powerfully symbolic way by which a young warrior might assert his masculine prowess. This usurpation of the procreative control of the vanquished male might also be symbolically emphasised by the massacre of the very young and the abduction, not only, of the women but also of the children of his territory. This was a practice that was evident within all the societies of medieval Britain prior to the Norman conquest. Indeed, if the Old Irish tale *Táin Bó Cúalnge* provides any reflection of early Irish

¹⁰ The medieval British societies under discussion may be closely paralleled by similar patriarchal societies in the Middle East during this period; see M. G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, Conscience and History in World Civilisation*, vol. II, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 140–1. Hodgson has noted that within these societies any violation of a man's personal honour was intimately related to the women who were under his guardianship. Furthermore, he has argued that "...a woman's 'honour', her shame, formed an important point in determining the honour of her man." (p. 141). See also H. Kennedy, *The Court of the Caliphs, The Rise and Fall of Islam's Greatest Dynasty* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004), 172–8.

society then “womenfolk and youths and boys” must have been a stock form of plunder for the early medieval Irish warrior.¹¹ This literary supposition receives further support from the terse but more reliable entries of the Irish Annals. For example, the *Annals of Inisfallen* note that in 1111 Muirchertach Ua Briain (the king of Dublin and Munster, d. 1119) made a raid against the men of Bréifne and “plundered them and brought their womenfolk and cows to Mumu.”¹² Moreover, the twelfth-century dynastic panegyric *The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* provides an interesting account of the Irish victory over Scandinavian forces at Limerick in 968.¹³ The author of the text felt that following that great battle the Irish war bands had “...carried away their [the Scandinavians] soft, youthful, bright, matchless girls; their blooming silk-clad young women; and their active, large, and well formed boys.”¹⁴

Warrior fraternities within Wales appear to have been conducting similar slaving activities. This is made clear in the twelfth-century panegyric of Gruffudd ap Cynan (king of Gwynedd 1098–1137). The *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* is extant in a thirteenth century vernacular redaction of a twelfth-century Latin text. The historical details within the text are far from reliable; nevertheless, it contains much that can be corroborated by other

¹¹ *Táin Bó Cúalnge* ed. and trans. C. O. Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1970), 177, 218–9, 246–9. The earliest recension of the *Táin* is a conflation of two ninth-century versions extant in a manuscript from around 1100. Nevertheless, the tale was almost certainly composed at an earlier date, probably during the eighth century.

¹² “...coros airg 7 co tarat a mmná 7 a mbú co firu Muman”, *Annals of Inisfallen*, ed. and trans. S. Mac Airt, (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1951), 268–9; see 128–9 for a further example of mass female abduction. Similarly, we also see high level abductions of significant individual women. For example, Diarmait Mac Murchada, king of Leinster, abducted the abbess of Cell Dair in 1132 and the wife of his rival Tigernán Ua Ruairc in 1152; see *The Annals of Loch Cé*, ed. and trans. W. M. Hennessy, (London: Longman, 1871), s. a. 1132, p. 131 and F. X. Martin “Diarmait Mac Murchada and the Coming of the Normans”, *A New History of Ireland*, ed. A. Cosgrove (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), II: 43–66, 49–50.

¹³ *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh, The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, ed. and trans. J. Todd, (London: Longman, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1867), 78–81. Admittedly this is a late account for a tenth-century battle, however, at the very least it provides an idea of what the twelfth-century author felt would have happened to a defeated army's community.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 78–81. The late eleventh Irish text *Lebor na Cert* also reveals that female slaves were a highly sought after prey. This text consists of a lengthy poem that lists a notional set of stipends and tributes payable to and from the high kings, provincial kings and tribal leaders and groups of Ireland. Significantly, female slaves feature in the majority of these stipends, and are equated with extremely high status goods; see, *Lebor na Cert, The Book of Rights*, ed. and trans M. Dillon, (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 46, 1962), 33, 69, 71, 81, 87, 89, 99 and 107. Indeed, in medieval Irish society the *cumal* (female slave) was the highest attainable unit of value: F. Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, (Dublin: Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies, 1991), 112–3.

sources and gives us an idea about 12th century conceptions concerning Gruffudd's likely activities.¹⁵ The author of the *Historia* commented that during his struggle for the throne of Gwynedd the Welsh prince fought a battle at Mynydd Carn during which he slew his enemy Trahaearn ap Caradog (king of Gwynedd, d. 1081). Following this Gruffudd is said to have asserted his power over his rival by marching to Trahaearn's territory in Arwystli where he "destroyed and killed its people; he burned its houses, and took its women and maidens captive."¹⁶ It is extremely significant that the author of the *Historia* considered Gruffudd's actions in this instance to be, not only noteworthy, but also boastworthy. This would indicate that, far from being condemned, female enslavement and rapine were expected activities for a young Welsh warrior in the transitional phase before assuming kingship.¹⁷ The sparse sources make it harder to identify how such activities were regarded in Scottish communities. However, it seems likely that similar practices of rapine and enslavement were taking place. Indeed, if the Durham chronicler is to be believed, following a raid on Northumbria in 1070, Malcolm Canmore (king of Scotland, 1058–93) carried away so many "youths and girls" into Scotland so that the region was thereafter filled with the "slaves and handmaids of the English race."¹⁸

¹⁵ For a full debate on this text see *Gruffudd ap Cynan: a collaborative biography*, ed. K. Maund (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1996) and Wyatt, "Gruffudd", 594–617.

¹⁶ "... ac y distrywys ac y lladaud y guerin; ac llokes y thei, a'e gvraged a'e morynnyon a duc keithiwet" *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan, The History of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, ed. and trans., D. Simon Evans, (Llanerch: Llanerch Enterprises, 1990), pp. 36–7, 69; *ibid.*, pp. 46–7, 78–9. The *Brut y Tywysogyon* confirms that Gruffudd fought a battle at Mynydd Carn in 1081 and that Trahaearn was slain during that conflict. Furthermore, the author's account of slave taking is supported by the poem 'Meilir's Elegy for Gruffudd ap Cynan' which was written shortly after the Welsh king's death in 1137. See "Meilir's Elegy for Gruffudd ap Cynan", ed. and trans., A. French, *Études Celtique*, 16 (1979): 263–68. For a summary of Welsh slaving activities in this period see Wyatt, "Gruffudd", 595–617. As in Ireland, we also see similar high level abductions of individual women in Wales. For example, in an entry for 1041 the *Brut y Tywysogyon* relates that, early in his career, the powerful king of Gwynedd, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, defeated Hywel ab Edwin, king of Deheubarth, and assumed control of his kingdom. In order to underline this conquest, Gruffudd then "... seized his [Hywel's] wife and took her as wife for himself." See *Brut y Tywysogyon or The Chronicle of the Princes. Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. and trans., T. Jones, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955), 22–3.

¹⁷ See also Wyatt, "Gruffudd", 614–5. Interestingly, the *Historia* also notes that during an invasion of Gruffudd's kingdom in 1098 Hugh of Avranches, earl of Chester, was able to bribe an Irish war fleet with the promise of youthful female slaves, *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*, 46–7, 78–9.

¹⁸ *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, 2 vols., ed., T. Arnold, (Rolls Series, London: Longman, 1882–85), II: 190–2, translation from *Scottish Annals from English Chroniclers*,

Violent slave raiding activities and the abduction particularly of women and the young were methods by which powerful men and their war bands emphasised their masculine prowess over vanquished opponents in the indigenous societies of the Irish Sea Region. Such practises were intimately associated with traditional patriarchal values which regarded the protection of women to be of fundamental importance to an individual's honour. Slave taking was thereby a powerfully symbolic action intended to usurp the prowess and honour of political opponents by highlighting their physical inability to prevent the abduction and indeed sexual abuse of those individuals under their protection.

A Twelfth-Century Revision in English Attitudes Towards Slave Taking

In the generations immediately following the Norman Conquest English writers became busy cultivating a new and 'superior' self-image for their countrymen. During this period, the English elite increasingly came to regard their 'Celtic' neighbours with an attitude of condescending disdain. This is illustrated by the negative portrayals of the social and political mores of the 'Celtic' (and Hiberno-Norse communities) found within the contemporary English narratives.¹⁹ This English sense of superiority was based upon the clear assumption that these neighbouring communities failed to adhere to the norms of ecclesiastical reform and chivalry (which had been only tacitly adopted within English society). This failure meant that the 'Celtic' communities were increasingly stigmatised and condemned as barbarous, lawless and uncivilised. One of the keystones in

ed. and trans., A. O. Anderson, (London: D. N. Nutt, 1908), 91–3. Furthermore, in 1079 Malcolm once again raided Northumbria and his army is said to have assaulted the priory at Hexham. Again a multitude of men *and women* were said to have been led away into slavery; *Symeonis Monachi*, II: 36–8. This account is supported by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (redaction E, s. a. 1079) ed. and trans., M. Swanton, (London: J. M. Dent, 1996), 213–214 and Ælred of Rievaulx, *De Sanctis Ecclesie Haugustaldensis*, edited in J. Raine, *The Priory of Hexham, its Chroniclers, Endowments and Annals*, *Surtees Society* 44 (1863): 173–203, 177–80.

¹⁹ These negative twelfth-century portrayals may be juxtaposed against pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxon attitudes that appear to have regarded the 'Celtic' populations as cultural equals, see J. Gillingham, "The English invasion of Ireland", *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, eds. S. Forde et al., (Leeds: University of Leeds School of English, 1995), 75–101, 75–9 and J. Gillingham, "Conquering the Barbarians: War and Chivalry in Twelfth Century Britain", *Haskins Society Journal* 4 (1992): 67–84, 68–9. See also D. Bethell, "English monks and Irish reform in the eleventh and twelfth centuries" *Historical Studies* 8 (1971): 117–26.

this imperialistic English ideology was an antipathy towards 'Celtic' slave raiding and trading activities, especially in relation to the abduction of women. For example, the Worcester chronicler noted with some horror that such activities were taking place during a Welsh 'uprising' in 1136. He related that:

There was such slaughter that besides those men taken into captivity there remained 10,000 captive women whose husbands with numberless children were drowned, consumed by flames, or put to the sword.²⁰

Richard of Hexham made a similar comment when describing a Scottish slave raid upon the north of England in 1138. Richard felt that this raid had resulted in Scots carrying away "noble widowed matrons" and "chaste maidens".²¹ He depicted their Scottish captors as being devoid of sexual restraint, moral character and, therefore, humanity. He described their actions in the following, colourful, manner.

...these bestial men, who regard as nothing adultery and incest and the other crimes, after they were weary of abusing these most hapless creatures [the widows and maidens] after the manner of brute beasts, either made them their slaves or sold them to other barbarians for cows.²²

This ecclesiastical writer clearly regarded his 'Celtic' neighbours' failure to adhere to the norms of chivalry and reform meant that they could no longer be regarded, in any real sense, to be fully Christian peoples. This attitude, which is evident in many of the ecclesiastical narratives of the period, is synonymous with the uniform classification of the 'Celtic' peoples as 'barbarians'.²³ Furthermore, such English ecclesiastical accounts

²⁰ "...in quo tante hominum strages facta est, ut, exceptis uiris in captiuitatem abductis, de mulieribus captiuitatis decies centum decime remanerent, maritis earum cum paruulis innumeris, partim aqua demersis, partim flamma consumtis, partim gladio trucidatis". The Worcester chronicler's account was written close to the events during the first half of the twelfth century, see *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 3 vols., eds and trans. R. R. Darlington and P. McGurk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995–1998), III: 220–21.

²¹ Richard of Hexham, *De Gestis Regis Stephani* in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, 4 vols., ed. R. Howlett, (Rolls Series, London: Longman, 1884–1889), III: 157. Richard of Hexham was the reform-minded chronicler and prior at the Augustinian priory of Hexham, Northumberland. His account of Stephen's reign was written shortly before the prior's death in the 1140s.

²² "Denique illi bestiales homines, adulterium et incestum ac cetera scelera pro nichilo ducentes, postquam more brutorum animalium illis miserrimis abuti pertesi sunt, eas vel sibi ancillas fecerunt, vel pro vaccis aliis barbaris vendiderunt" Ibid., translation from Anderson, *Scottish Annals*, 187.

²³ Gillingham, "Conquering", 69 and J. Gillingham, "Foundations of a Disunited Kingdom", *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History*, eds. A. Grant and K. J. Stringer,

appear to have provided their secular elite with a kind of proselytising superior ideology which gave them both a context and a justification for English militaristic and political domination of the British Isles.

Slavery and Cultural Antipathy in Twelfth-Century Britain

In the decades following the Norman Conquest individual magnates began to make territorial inroads into all areas of Wales. They established themselves in powerful lordships colonised with settlers from England and France. Moreover, the intrusion of these settlers appears to have placed phenomenal strains upon the structures of native Welsh society. These strains initially came to a head between 1094 and 1098, when there were several Welsh uprisings against their new territorial overlords.²⁴ Interestingly, slave raiding activities appear to have characterised these uprisings. For example, in around 1093, the Norman knight, Robert of Rhuddlan was slain whilst attempting to repel a Welsh slaving raid upon his newly established castle at Rhuddlan.²⁵ Moreover, the author of the *Brut y Tywysogyon* noted that in 1094 the Welsh:

...destroyed all the castles of Ceredigion and Dyfed...And they took with them the people and all the cattle of Dyfed, and they left Dyfed and Ceredigion waste.²⁶

Further insurgencies ensued over the next fifty years and a number of them were characterised by slave taking.²⁷

Similar activities can be seen to characterise English conflicts with the other 'Celtic' peoples of Britain. For example, The Durham chronicler

(London; New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 48–64, p. 59. See also J. Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century, imperialism, national identity and political values* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 43, 104, and M. Strickland, "Slaughter, Slavery or Ransom: The Impact of the Conquest on the Conduct in Warfare" *England in the Eleventh Century*, ed. C. Hicks, (Stamford, Lincs: Paul Watkins, 1992), 41–61.

²⁴ R. R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change, Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 35.

²⁵ *Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, 6 vols., ed. and trans. M. Chibnall, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969–1980), IV: 141.

²⁶ "...gestyll Keredigyawn a Dyuet eithyr deu, nyt [amgen] Penuro a Ryt y Gors; a'r bobyl a'r holl any[ueileit] Dyuet a dugant gantunt ac adaw a oru[gant] Dyuet a Cheredigyawn ynn diffeith." *Brut y Tywysogyon*, 34–5, see also *Annales Cambriae* ed. J. Williams ab Ithel, (London: Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts, 1860), 34–5. The events of 1094 are further supported by the later and slightly less reliable *Brenhinedd y Saesson, The Kings of the Saxons*, ed. and trans. T. Jones, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1971), 86–7.

²⁷ For examples see Wyatt, "Gruffudd", 607 and 615.

notes that the forces of the Scottish King, Malcolm Canmore (*d.* 1093), had harried Northumbria five times "... with savage devastation, and carried off the wretched inhabitants as captives, to reduce them to slavery".²⁸ Furthermore, such Scottish slave raiding tactics are widely reported in hysterical terms by a number of English ecclesiasts during the period immediately preceding the Battle of the Standard in 1138. This battle is particularly significant because it was portrayed within the contemporary English chronicles using the terminology of holy war. Indeed, the English army was personally assembled and commanded by an Archbishop, Thurstan of York.²⁹ Prior to the battle Thurstan is said to have given the English troops papal sanction for their enterprise and absolved them of their sins.³⁰ Several English chroniclers describe this army using crusading imagery. They clearly portrayed their warriors as *milites dei*, pious role models for the martial secular elite of England. This is, perhaps, best exemplified by the account of Ælred of Rievaulx who described these 'holy' troops in the following manner:

Shield was joined to shield, side pressed to side, lances were rained with pennons unfurled, hauberks glittered in the brilliance of the sun; priests white clad in their sacred robes, went round the army with crosses and relics of the saints.³¹

²⁸ "*Quinques namque illam atroci depopulatione altrivit, et miseros indigenas in servitutem redigendos abduxit captives*"; *Symeonis Monachi*, II: 221; translation from Anderson, *Scottish Annals*, 112–113. This account is supported by the slightly more reliable and less sensationalist *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (redaction E, s. a. 1079), Swanton, 213–4.

²⁹ The *Vita Thurstani* relates that the archbishop actually took part in the battle, and claims that he and his knights slew several thousand Scots; *Vita Thurstani Archiepiscopi in Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops* ed. J. Raine (Rolls Series, London: Longman, 1886), II: 266. Henry of Huntingdon, however, feels that the archbishop merely coordinated the English forces and sent Ralph, bishop of the Orkneys to the battlefield as his representative, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. D. Greenway, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 713. See also D. Nicholl, *Thurstan Archbishop of York (1114–1140)* (York: Stonegate Press, 1964), 227–8. Thurstan certainly had a vested interest in the conflict as York had claimed primacy over the Scottish Church and had secured papal backing over this issue. See Hugh the Chanter, *The History of the Church of York 1066–1127* ed. and trans. C. Johnson, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), xlv–liv and A. A. M. Duncan, *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom*, (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1975), 131, 219.

³⁰ "... *ac deinde absolutionem et benedictionem Dei et suam eis sollempniter tribuit... Tunc crucem suam et sancti Petri vexillum, ac suos homines eis tradidit*". ("... then he [Archbishop Thurstan] solemnly bestowed upon them absolution, and God's blessing and his own... Then he gave them his cross, and the banner of St. Peter [i.e. the banner of St. Peter's, York] and his vassals", *De Gestis Regis Stephani in Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen etc.*, III: 161–2. See also Ælred of Rievaulx's *Relatio de Standardo* in *ibid.* III: 182.

³¹ "*Scutis scuta junguntur, lateribus latera conseruntur, laxatis vexillis eriguntur lanceae, ad solis splendorem loricae candescunt; sacerdotes sacris vestibus candidati, cum crucibus*

On the other hand, the Scottish forces, especially those from Galloway, Moray and the Isles, were clearly cast in the role of savage and blood-thirsty heathen barbarians devoid of humanity. Richard of Hexham described them thus "...that execrable army, savager than any race of heathen, yielding honour to neither God nor man".³²

The subsequent resounding English victory at the Standard was significant as it set the tone for centuries of English militaristic hegemony and domination in Scotland. Moreover, the terms of the ensuing peace treaty at Durham are particularly significant. This treaty was negotiated not by an Englishman but, rather by Alberic, a papal legate from Ostia. Richard of Hexham provides us with a fairly reliable account:

This... [Alberic] obtained of the Galwegians, that they should bring back to Carlisle before the same time limit all captive girls and women whom they might have and restore them to liberty there. [The Galwegians] also, and all the others, promised him most faithfully that they would by no means violate churches thenceforth; and that they would spare children and woman-kind, and [men] who were disabled by weakness or age; and that they would thenceforth slay no one unless he opposed them.³³

et reliquiis Sanctorum, exercitum ambiebant, et sermone simul et oratione populum decensissime roborabant", *Relatio de Standardo* in *ibid.* III: 191–192; translation from Anderson, *Scottish Annals*, 201–2.

³² "Igitur ille detestandus exercitus, omni paganorum genere atrocior, nec Deo nec hominibus reverentiam deferens...". *De Gestis Regis Stephani* in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen etc.*, III: 151–2, 163; translation from Anderson, *Scottish Annals*, 180, 202. It should be noted that King David I and his retinue generally escaped the pejorative condemnations directed against the rest of his army because he had been brought up within the chivalric orbit of the English court. The twelfth-century chronicler William of Malmesbury remarked that David was "a young man of more courtly disposition than the rest, since he had from boyhood been polished by familiar intercourse with the us [i.e. the English], and rubbed off the barbarian gaucherie of Scottish manners" ("*iuuenis ceteris curialior et qui, nostrorum conuictu et familiaritate limatus a puero, omnem rubiginem Scotticæ barbariei deteraserat.*"), *Gesta Regum Anglorum, The History of the English Kings*, eds. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors et al., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 726–7.

³³ "*Illi vero diu a Cisalpina, immo fere ab universa ecclesia discordantes... Tuc vero divina gratia inspirati, mandata Innocentii papæ et legatum ejus omnes unanimiter cum magna veneratione susceperunt... Convenit quoque regem de reformanda pace inter eum et regem Angliæ, et hujus rei gratia ad ejus pedes cecidit, scilicet ut sanctæ ecclesiæ et sui ipsius et suorum misereretur, quibus tot et tanta mala fecerat... Hoc etiam apud Pictos impetravit, quod omnes puellas ac mulieres captivas, quas habere possent, ante eundem terminum ad Carlel reducerent, et eas ibi libertati redderent. Ipsi quoque et omnes alii firmissime promiserunt, quod nullo modo ecclesias amplius violarent; et quod parvulis et fæmineo sexui et ex infirmitate et ætate debilibus parcerent; et omnino neminem nisi sibi resistentem amplius occiderent.*" *De Gestis Regis Stephani* in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen etc.*, III: 170–1; translation from Anderson, *Scottish Annals*, 211–2. We may assume that this is a relatively accurate account of the treaty of Durham because Robert Biset, prior of Hexham, was present at the

Interestingly, a very similar statement was made following the first English imperial incursions into Ireland around 30 years later. Giraldus de Barri gives us the following account of a decree made by Council of Armagh in 1170 justifying the English incursions into Ireland:

...because of the sins of their own people, and in particular because it had formerly been their habit to purchase Englishmen indiscriminately from merchants as well as from robbers and pirates, and to make slaves of them, this disaster had befallen them [the Irish] ... to the end that they in turn should now be enslaved by that same race. For the English, in the days when the government of England remained fully in their hands, used to put their children up for sale—a vicious piracy in which the whole race had a part—and would sell their own sons and relations into Ireland ... So there are good grounds for believing that, just as formerly those who sold slaves, so now also those who bought them, have, by committing such a monstrous crime, deserved the yoke of slavery. The aforesaid council therefore decided that throughout the island Englishmen should be freed from the bonds of slavery and restored to their former freedom.³⁴

These extracts are particularly fascinating because they clearly illustrate a powerful antipathy towards slave raiding and trading activities. Giraldus's account of the Armagh Council reveals that it was extremely similar in its objectives and tone to the peace treaty enacted by Alberic, bishop of Ostia following the Battle of the Standard. Furthermore, it is very significant that both appear to have been brokered by reforming ecclesiasts. Indeed, the vociferous twelfth century condemnations of the 'Celtic' populations evident in the English sources emanated predominantly from men committed to the ideals of reform. Their foremost criticisms regarding the 'Celtic' populations were therefore founded upon the underlying objectives of the reform movement. They sought to eradicate traditional expressions

peace council. Robert Biset was Richard's predecessor at the priory of Hexham. The author was, therefore, both a friend and colleague of this first hand witness.

³⁴ "...propter peccata scilicet populi sui, eoque precipue quod Anglos olim tam a mercatoribus quam predonibus atque piratis emere passim ei in servitutum redigere consueverant, divine censura vindicta hoc eis incommodum accidisse, ut et ipsi quoque ab eadem gente in servitutum vice reciproca iam redigantur. Anglorum namque populus, adhuc integro eorumdem regno, communi gentis vicio liberos suos venales exponere, et priusquam inopiam ullam aut inediam sustinerent, filios proprios et cognatos in Hiberniam vendere consueverant. Unde et probabiliter credi potest, sicut venditores dim ita et emptores tam enormi delicto iuga servitutis iam meruisse. Decretum est itaque predicto concili, et cum universitatis assensu publice statutum, ut Angli ubique per insulam servitutis vinculo mancipati in pristinam revocentur libertatem"; Giraldus Cambrensis, *Expugnatio Hibernica*, eds. and trans. A. B. Scott and F. X. Martin, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978), 69–71. Giraldus provides the only account of this Council.

of masculine prowess and virility and to create a more stable and peaceful Christian society.³⁵ It is not difficult to imagine how traditional slave raiding activities might have been a major cause of concern for such men. Consequently, the proceedings of the Armagh Council clearly imply that because Anglo-Saxon society had participated in the sin of slave taking, it had been conquered by the Normans and then integrated into the 'civilised' sphere of continental Christendom. By the same token, Irish society had now been punished by conquest for its participation in such illicit practices and was to now be similarly integrated. Moreover, the Council of Armagh and the Treaty of the Standard constituted an enforced prohibition against such unchivalric activities in Ireland and Scotland and demanded the emancipation of all those English women and youths who had been alienated from their origins through enslavement. However, this increasing English antipathy towards 'Celtic' slave taking may have been reciprocated in kind. Indeed, the twelfth-century proliferation of 'Celtic' slave raiding activities, which I have attempted to highlight, appears to have been symptomatic of an equally powerful cultural antipathy evident within the more traditional elements of Welsh, Irish and Scottish society. This antipathy was directed against the increasingly invasive cultural and political influences exerted by the English elite within these communities.³⁶ Yet, twelfth-century 'Celtic' slave raiding campaigns should not necessarily be regarded as expressions of nascent nationalism.³⁷ Rather, they were a defiant gesture of adherence to traditional warrior values in the face of an increasing infiltration of the external cultural norms of chivalry and reform.

³⁵ Wyatt, *Slavery and Culture*, 288.

³⁶ R. R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 6, 48–58 and Wyatt, *Slavery and Culture*, 292–300.

³⁷ Indeed, Welsh, Irish and Scottish rulers frequently allied themselves with other like-minded ethnic groups including Hiberno-Norse warriors. Moreover, all of these communities registered significant instances of slave raiding activity during the early years of the twelfth century. Wyatt, *Slavery and Culture*, 295, 312 and 322.