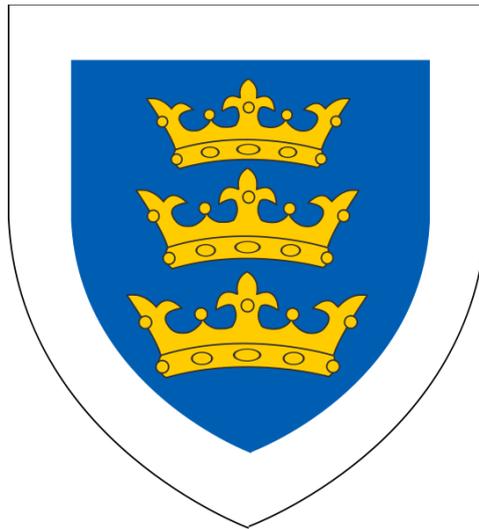


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Lordship of Ireland



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Lordship of Ireland
Seigneurie d'Irlande
Tiarnas na hÉireann



1171–1542



[Coat of arms¹](#)

Motto

Dieu et mon droit

"God and my right"



The Lordship of Ireland (pink) in 1300.

Capital	Dublin ²
Languages	English , Irish , Anglo-Norman
Religion	Roman Catholic
Government	Feudal Monarchy
<u>Lord</u>	
- 1171–1189	Henry II (first)
- 1509–1542	Henry VIII (last)
<u>Lord Lieutenant</u>	
- 1316–1318	Roger Mortimer (first)
- 1529–1534	Henry FitzRoy (last)
Legislature	Parliament
- Upper house	House of Lords
- Lower house	House of Commons
Historical era	Middle Ages
- Invasion of Ireland	18 October 1171
- Crown of Ireland Act	1542
Today part of	 Ireland  United Kingdom ³

¹A commission of [Edward IV](#) into the arms of Ireland found these to be the arms of the Lordship. The blazon is *Azure, three crowns in pale Or, bordure Argent*. Typically, bordered arms represent the younger branch of a family or maternal descent.^{[1][2]}

²Although Dublin was the capital, parliament was held in other towns at various times.

³[Northern Ireland](#).

The **Lordship of Ireland** ([Irish](#): *Tiarnas na hÉireann*) was a period of feudal rule in [Ireland](#) between 1177 and 1542 under the [King of England](#), styled as *Lord of Ireland*. The lordship was created as a [Papal possession](#) following the [Norman invasion of Ireland](#) in 1169–71. As the Lord of Ireland was also [King of England](#), he was represented locally by the [Lord Lieutenant of Ireland](#).

Ostensibly, the lordship extended throughout all of Ireland. However, in reality, the king's rule only ever extended to parts of the island. Areas under English rule expanded and retreated over time. Some areas remained separate outside of English rule until the 16th century.

The fluid political situation and feudal system allowed a significant amount of practical autonomy for the [Hiberno-Norman](#) nobility, who carved earldoms out for themselves and had almost as much authority as some of the native Gaelic kings. The period was brought to a close by the creation of the [Kingdom of Ireland](#) in 1542.

Background

The authority of the Lordship of Ireland's government was seldom extended throughout the island of Ireland at any time during its existence but was restricted to [the Pale](#) around [Dublin](#), and some provincial towns, including [Cork](#), [Limerick](#), [Waterford](#), [Wexford](#) and their hinterlands. It owed its origins to the decision of a Leinster dynast, Diarmait Mac Murchada ([Diarmuid MacMorrough](#)), to bring in a Norman knight based in Wales, [Richard de Clare, 2nd Earl of Pembroke](#) (alias 'Strongbow'), to aid him in his battle to regain his throne, after being overthrown by a confederation led by the new [Irish High King](#) (the previous incumbent had protected MacMurrough). [Henry II of England](#), who reigned over the [Angevin Empire](#), invaded Ireland to control Strongbow, who he feared was becoming a threat to the stability of his own kingdom on its western fringes (there had been earlier fears that Saxon refugees might use either Ireland or Flanders as a base for a counter-offensive after 1066); much of the later [Plantagenet](#) consolidation of South [Wales](#) was in furtherance of holding open routes to Ireland.

Laudabiliter 1155

Another reason King Henry invaded Ireland was because Pope [Adrian IV](#), the only Englishman to have occupied the papal throne, had issued a papal bull [Laudabiliter](#) (1155) authorising the English monarch to take possession of Ireland. Religious practices and ecclesiastical organisation in Ireland had evolved divergently from those in areas of Europe influenced more directly by the [Holy See](#), although many of these differences had been eliminated or greatly lessened by the time the bull was issued in 1155.^[3] Further, the former [Irish church](#) had never sent its dues ("tithes") to Rome. Henry's primary motivation for invading Ireland 1171 was to control Strongbow and other Norman lords. In the process he

accepted the [fealty](#) of the [Gaelic](#) kings at Dublin in November 1171, and he summoned the [Synod of Cashel](#) in 1172, which brought the Irish Church into conformity with English and European norms.

The pope asserted the right to grant sovereignty over islands to different monarchs on the basis of a document, later proved to be a forgery, called the [Donation of Constantine](#). Doubts were cast by eminent scholars on *Laudabiliter* itself in the 19th century, but its effect was confirmed by letters of [Pope Alexander III](#) and by the facts on the ground. The Papal power to grant also fell within the remit of [Dictatus papae](#) (1075–87). While *Laudabiliter* had referred to the "kingdom" of Ireland, the Papacy was ambiguous about describing it as a kingdom as early as 1185.

John, Lord in 1177–1216

Main article: [John's first expedition to Ireland](#)

Having captured a small part of Ireland on the east coast, Henry used the land to solve a dispute dividing his family. For he had divided his territories between his sons, with the youngest being nicknamed "Jean sans-terre" (in English, "John Lackland") as he was left without lands to rule. At the [Oxford](#) parliament in May 1177, Henry replaced [William FitzAldelm](#) and granted John his Irish lands, so becoming Lord of Ireland (*Dominus Hiberniae*) in 1177 when he was 10 years old, with the territory being known in English as the Lordship of Ireland.

Henry had wanted John to be crowned King of Ireland on his first visit in 1185, but [Pope Lucius III](#) specifically refused permission. "Dominus" was the usual title of a king who had not yet been crowned, suggesting that it was Henry's intention. Lucius then died while John was in Ireland, and Henry obtained consent from [Pope Urban III](#) and ordered a crown of gold and [peacock](#) feathers for John. In late 1185 the crown was ready, but John's visit had by then proved a complete failure, so Henry cancelled the coronation.^[4]

Following the deaths of John's older brothers he became King of England in 1199, and so the Lordship of Ireland, instead of being a separate country ruled by a junior Norman prince, came under the direct rule of the Norman-English Crown.

Progress and decline

Main article: [History of Ireland 1169–1536](#)



The Pale (red) in 1450

The Lordship thrived in the 13th century during the [Medieval Warm Period](#), a time of warm climate and better harvests. The [feudal system](#) was introduced, and the [Parliament of Ireland](#) first sat in 1297. Some counties were created by [shiring](#), while walled towns and castles became a feature of the landscape. But little of this engagement with mainstream European life was of benefit to those the Normans called the "mere Irish". "Mere" derived from the Latin *merus*, meaning pure. Environmental decay and deforestation continued unabated throughout this period, being greatly exacerbated by the English newcomers and an increase in population.

The Norman élite and churchmen spoke Norman French and Latin. Many poorer settlers spoke English, Welsh and Flemish. The Gaelic areas spoke Irish dialects. The [Yola language](#) of [County Wexford](#) was a survivor of the early English dialects.

The Lordship suffered invasion from Scotland by [Edward Bruce](#) in 1315–18 which destroyed much of the economy and coincided with the [great famine of 1315–17](#). The [earldom of Ulster](#) ended in 1333 and the [Black Death](#) of 1348–50 impacted more on the town-dwelling Normans than on the remaining [Gaelic](#) clans. The Norman and English colonists exhibited a tendency to adopt much of the native culture and language, becoming "Gaelicized" or in the words of some [More Irish than the Irish themselves](#). In 1366 the [Statute of Kilkenny](#) tried to keep aspects of Gaelic culture out of the Norman-controlled areas, but in vain. As the Norman lordships became increasingly Gaelicized and made alliances with native chiefs, whose power steadily increased, crown control slowly eroded. Additionally, the Angevin government increasingly alienated the Irish chiefs and people on whom they often relied for their military strength. It had been a common practice for the Norman lordships as well as government forces to recruit the native Irish who were allied to them or living in English controlled areas (i.e. [Meath](#), [Leinster](#), [Ossory](#), [Munster](#) and [Connacht](#)). This was easy to do as the native Irish had no great sense of national identity at that time and were prone to mercenarism and shifting alliances. But as Irish chiefs became increasingly alienated by the oppressive measures of the English government and began openly rebelling against the

crown, the difficulties faced by the [Angevin](#) government mounted. Some of the more notable among those clans who had formerly cooperated with the English but became increasingly alienated until turning openly anti-Norman and a thorn in the side of the Dublin administration were the O'Connor Falys, the [MacMurrough-Kavanagh dynasty](#), the [Byrnes](#) and the O'Mores of Leix. These clans were able to successfully defend their territories against English attack for a very long time through a use of asymmetrical guerrilla warfare and devastating raids into the lands held by the colonists. Additionally, the power of native chiefs who had never come under English domination such as the O'Neills and the O'Donnells increased steadily until these became once again major power players on the scene of Irish politics. Historians refer to a Gaelic revival or resurgence as occurring between 1350 and 1500, by which time the area ruled for the Crown — "[the Pale](#)" — had shrunk to a small area around Dublin.

Between 1500 and 1542 a mixed situation arose. Most clans remained loyal to the Lord most of the time, using a Gaelic-style system of alliances centred around the [Lord Deputy](#) who was usually the current [Earl of Kildare](#). However a rebellion by the 9th Earl's heir [Silken Thomas](#) in 1535 led on to a less sympathetic system of rule by mainly English-born administrators. The rebellion and Henry VIII's seizure of the Irish monasteries around 1540 led on to his plan to create a new kingdom based on the existing parliament.

Lordship to Kingdom, 1542

English monarchs continued to use the title "Lord of Ireland" to refer to their position of conquered lands on the island of Ireland. The title was changed by the [Crown of Ireland Act](#) passed by the [Irish Parliament](#) in 1542 when, on [Henry VIII's](#) demand, he was granted a new title, [King of Ireland](#), with the state renamed the [Kingdom of Ireland](#). Henry VIII changed his title because the Lordship of Ireland had been granted to the Norman monarchy by the Papacy; Henry had been excommunicated by the Catholic Church and worried that his title could be withdrawn by the [Holy See](#). Henry VIII also wanted Ireland to become a full kingdom to encourage a greater sense of loyalty amongst his Irish subjects, some of whom took part in his policy of [surrender and regrant](#).

The policies of Henry VIII began the so-called [Tudor re-conquest of Ireland](#), in which the English government once again began to assert its authority over the island, through the use of brutal, genocidal warfare as well as diplomacy, treachery, bribery and fomenting internecine conflict among the natives. The proclivity of the native Irish to play mercenary, fight internecine conflicts against each other and even make alliances with the English government to do so while neglecting the threat posed by the English enabled the re-conquest to succeed, as exemplified by the [Desmond Rebellions](#). Government forces still faced remarkably stiff resistance, especially from the more warlike and powerful [O'Neill](#)^{[\[disambiguation needed\]](#)} and [O'Donnell](#) clans. The wars culminated in the [Nine Years' War \(Ireland\)](#) in which the Irish displayed remarkable bravery, determination and prowess in their resistance, being able to defeat the English in many battles, most notably the [battle of Clontibret](#) in 1595, the [battle of the Yellow Ford](#) in 1598 and the [battle of Curlew Pass](#) in 1599. However, the Irish were ultimately unable to rid the island of the English threat, the rebellion being crushed after the English defeated O'Neill's and O'Donnell's combined forces in 1601 at the [battle of Kinsale](#).