'Nation' Consciousnesses in Medieval Ireland

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Abstract

This paper considers the process of the formation of 'nation' consciousnesses in Medieval Ireland. It spans from the seventh century, when multiple historical sources appeared, to the second half of the twelfth century, when the period of English rule began. It can be said that Ireland was 'peripheralized' by the English 'empire' in the second half of the twelfth century and has remained so ever since. What nation consciousnesses had formed in Ireland until that time? Outside forces have invaded Ireland from both the Scandinavian Peninsula in the ninth century and from England in the second half of the twelfth century. How did the arrival of 'different ethnic groups' and 'different nations' affect the nation consciousnesses of the native inhabitants of Ireland? This paper examines such problems.

Introduction

By considering the history and cultural status of Ireland before it became 'peripheralized' we can contribute something toward an analysis and understanding of the peripheralization process and the progress of the decolonization of this country. Moreover, to examine the formation of 'nation' consciousnesses is to consider the political situation and the history of the kingdoms in medieval Ireland. In addition, needless to say, the geographical position of Ireland as an island country is considerably important in the formation of 'nation consciousnesses'.

A unified sovereignty never came into existence in Ireland throughout the middle ages. Nevertheless, the native inhabitants of this island have been reported as being of one nation in several different documents since the seventh century.

There are a number of books and papers on ideas of 'nation' or 'ethnicity' at home and abroad. To examine 'nation consciousnesses' in medieval Ireland, taking into account common ideas from various scholars (cf. Reynolds, 1998), these two terms are defined as the following in this paper: 'Nation' is connected with the formation of kingdoms—it refers to the people and their community and is concerned with the movements which cultivate the creation of a unified sovereignty spanning the whole of Ireland; 'Ethnicity' signifies the sense of belonging amongst people who share the same language, culture, and society. In this sense, one collective nation and ethnicity had lived in Ireland up until invaders from the Scandinavian Peninsula settled there after the ninth century.

The use of the term 'nation' in the middle ages deserves particular attention. The English word 'nation' is derived from the Latin *natio*, which according to some scholars held the same meaning of

familia or *gens* in the case of medieval Ireland (Lydon, 1995, p.114; Flanagan, forthcoming)[1] and can been spotted in various sources from Medieval Western Europe. In the author's opinion, there are few sources that include the term *natio*, and it was not distinguished from similar words like *familia*, *gens,* and *populus*. That is to say, on one hand we can supposedly grasp the whole island of Ireland as one unified kingdom—or one large nation—and on the other hand it can be seen as a make-up of small kingdoms belonging to each province, such as Munster or Leinster, or one smaller territory or dynasty as a single, small nation. For the purposes of analysis, this paper treats Ireland as 'one large nation' as mentioned above. The Latin word *natio* itself, which is included in different references, is not examined in this paper but the term 'nation' which appears as a concept and assumes the formation of a unified kingdom will be discussed.

Túath, the smallest political unit, is very important in early medieval Ireland and it is the core of kingdom-formation. The Irish word, *túath* sometimes means 'the territory of *túath*', and at other times 'the people of *túath*'. Ireland was divided into many *túath* and there was a king in each *túath*. At the first level, an Irish king would rule one *túath*. There were also kings of more than one *túath* on the top of him. The most powerful kings in Ireland were kings who ruled a whole province such as the territory of the Uí Néill or Munster. In secular laws these provincial kings were recognized as supreme kings (*Críth Gablach,* lines 444-489). The terms meaning king, such as *rí* or *rex*, were used for both 'kings of one *túath*' and 'supreme kings'.

Moreover, as T. Charles-Edwards points out, the names of kingdoms were represented by using the names of territories, dynasties, or 'people-groups', like *gens* (Charles-Edwards, 2003, p.12). For example, the Uí Néill is primarily the name of a dynasty which means 'the descendants of Niall' although it is also used as the name of a kingdom, the Uí Néill. Most of the names of Irish kingdoms and dynasties include a preposition or a noun, such as *Uí, Dál, Cenél,* and *Clann*. These words signify 'descendant' or 'kin', and like the Uí Néill, they precede the name of a person regarded as the common ancestor. These compounds are frequently used in the names of kingdoms or dynasties.

'Nation' Consciousnesses in the Seventh Century

S. Duffy argues that, "In the wake of Christianity in the fifth century…the Irish had a strong sense of belonging to one nation". He continues, "The thing that helped to intensify their sense of nationhood more so than anything else was the fact that they all spoken a common language" (Duffy, 2000; new ed. 2005, pp.6-7). Thus, the primary condition of being 'Irish' would seem to be that they spoke the Irish language, as Duffy points out. We have only the documents left by Patrick, who came from Roman Britain and was an immigrant, to serve as Irish historical references in the fifth century. Patrick calls *Scotti* or *Hiberionaci* Irish inhabitants (Patrick / Patricius, Saint, pp.25-81). That is, however, merely recognition of an Irish people from the viewpoint of an outsider. Patrick may have regarded the Irish people not as a 'nation' of people but rather an 'ethnic group' that spoke a different language than he did. If we examine Ireland as it was in the seventh century we can find a 'nation' consciousnesses because we have various sources written by Irish people from this century. It is very difficult to examine the kingdoms of Ireland of Patrick's era because there are very few documents remaining from this period. Thus, it is from the wealth of seventh-century records that we can examine and analyze the kingdoms or kingships of Ireland.

The Irish writers also use the terms *Scot(t)i* or *Hibernenses* in Latin themselves just as Patrick

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[1] In addition to the above two papers, the main bibliography on a medieval Irish 'nation' is mentioned. Ó Corráin (1978); Lydon (1984); Martin (1988); Carey (1994); Davies (1994-1997); Duffy (1999); Muldoon (2003); Charles-Edwards (2004).

distinguishes them from himself. The whole island that they inhabit is documented as *Scot(t)ia* or *Hibernia*.[2] However, there is a problem of how to discriminate *Scot(t)i* from *Hibernenses*, or *Scot(t)ia* from *Hibernia*, in not only the use of Patrick's fifth-century documents, but also in seventh-century sources.

It is likely that both terms were synonymous in historical records of the seventh century as well as in Patrick's texts. Irish speakers had also lived in the northwest of Britain at that time, in the kingdom of Dál Riata. In *Vita Columbae,* written by Adomnán, the ninth abbot of Iona, the people of the kingdom of Dál Riata--Irish speakers who lived in the northwest of Britain--are called *Scoti Brittaniae* (cf. Tanaka, 2003-2004). We can conclude from his documents that Patrick recognized the existence of the *Scot(t)i* who lived in Britain as well as on the island of Ireland. *Scot(t)i* and *Hibernenses* were used synonymously among the Irish speakers of Patrick's era and so it is difficult to discern the differences between these words. However, it is possible that while *Scot(t)i* was used for all of the Irish speakers who had lived in both Ireland and Britain, *Hibernenses* was used for the Irish speakers who had only lived on the island of Ireland.

As for *Scot(t)ia* and *Hibernia*, A. O. and M. O. Anderson, who are coeditors and co-translators of Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*, simply use the anglicized name 'Ireland' in place of both Latin words, as they regard both as the same name geographically (Anderson, 1961, pp.30, 570-571). Certainly, as the phrase *Scoti Brittaniae* appears, Adomnán writes *Scot(t)ia* or *Hibernia* for the island of Ireland and *Brittania* for Britain in *Vita Columbae*. *Scoti Brittaniae* means 'the Irish in Britain' . Not only Adomnán, but also early medieval Latin writers like Bede use both words for Ireland. *Scot(t)ia* and *Hibernia* were clearly distinguished from *Brittania,* which meant the island of Britain.

The author makes reference to the English terms for *Scotti* or *Hibernenses*. Scholars uniformly use 'the Irish' in English for *Hibernenses*, however they often use different terms such as, 'the Irish', 'the Scots', or 'Gaels' for *Scotti*. This depends on the field in which they study, whether each scholar's main subject is Ireland or Scotland, and their age. This paper will mainly deal with the island of Ireland. When scholars focus on Ireland they use the English term, 'the Irish'. Moreover, the author considers it inappropriate to use the term 'the Scots' because it implies the modern nation of Scotland and this paper mainly deals with Irish history. Hence, the two Latin words, *Scotti* and *Hibernenses* are translated to 'the Irish' in this paper.

In Ireland many historical sources, annals, hagiographies, secular and canon laws, genealogies, lists of kings, etc., have been written since the seventh century. Therefore, we can examine the 'nation' consciousnesses of the Irish people of this era in these sources. The inclination for hagiographers to position each saint as an Irish 'national saint' can be seen especially in the hagiographical texts of Patrick and Brigit (cf. Tanaka, 2000).

Vita Sanctae Brigidae was written by Cogitosus at Kildare monastery in the middle of the seventh century (Cogitosus; Connolly and Picard). His writing says that Brigit was "the abbess whom all the abbesses of Irish revere" and Conleth, whom she had selected, was "the archbishop of the bishops of Ireland". The monastery of Kildare is described as "the head of almost all the Irish Churches with supremacy over all the monasteries of the Irish, and its *paruchia* extends over the whole land of Ireland, reaching from sea to sea" (Cogitosus, p.135; Connolly and Picard, pp.11-12).

Two hagiographies of Patrick were written by Tírechán and Muirchú, respectively, in the latter half of the seventh century. The version written by Tírechán is called *Collectanea,* and it is generally assumed to have been written in the 670's. Muirchú's work was written after the 690's. Two hagiographies are contained in the *Book of Armagh,* compiled at Armagh in 807, as well as the

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[2] Different spellings are used in the historical records of seventh-century Ireland. For example, Adomnán uses not only the spelling 'Hibernia' but also 'Ebernia', 'Evernia', and 'Hevernia'. See: Anderson (1961), pp.30, 570-571. In this paper, such variations are not counted and these spellings are regarded as the same as 'Hibernia'.

anonymous *Liber Angeli*, the most part of this text was written in the middle of the seventh century, (Tírechán; Muirchú; *Liber Angeli*). In addition to the two hagiographies of Patrick, *Liber Angeli* is an important source for analyzing 'nation' consciousnesses in early medieval Ireland.

An angel tells Patrick that the Lord God has given all the people of Ireland as *paruchia* to Patrick and this city, which in Irish is named *Ardd Machae* in the *Book of the Angel*. The anonymous author of *Liber Angeli* insists that all churches and monasteries in Ireland under the bishop of Armagh are liable to a special tax to him (*Liber Angeli*, ch. 8, p.184). In this way Patrick was "the apostle of Ireland" and Armagh, connected to Patrick, was "the chief church of Ireland" in *Liber Angel*. Such claims by *Liber Angel* are depicted concretely throughout the missionary activities of Patrick by Tírechán's *Collectanea* (Tanaka, 2000, pp.62, 67-70). Muirchú's *Vita Sancti Patricii* tells of "A great king, a fierce pagan, an emperor of non-Romans, with his royal seat at Tara, which was then the capital of the realm of the Irish, by name Lóiguire son of Níall, a scion of the family that held the kingship of almost the entire island" (Muirchú, I 10(1), pp.74-75). Lóegaire mac Néill is regarded as the king of the Uí Néill and the king of Tara and at first he is recorded as a son of Niall Noígiallach, whose name became the origin of the term 'the Uí Néill'.

The king of the Uí Néill became the most powerful king in Ireland in the middle of the seventh century. Tara, which was an important place as the residence of the rulers and as a ritual and burial location, came to be included within the territory of the southern Uí Néill. The king who controlled Tara was called 'king of Tara' and it was the king of the Uí Néill that made a monopoly of the successive states of the 'king of Tara' (see Charles-Edwards, 2000, pp.469-521). It appeared the ascendancy of the Uí Néill, which had expanded its ruling territory in the island of Ireland, by various sources after the seventh century. The Uí Néill was superior to Connacht and Ulster in the northern areas of Ireland.

Adomnán writes about Diarmait mac Cerbaill, "who had been ordained, by God's will, as the ruler of all Ireland" in his *Vita Columbae* (Anderson, 1961, p.280).[3] Diarmait mac Cerbaill was the king of the Uí Néill and a contemporary of Columba. Although the kings of the Uí Néill who lived in the period of Columba appear in his hagiography, Adomnán does not call them 'kings of Tara'. Nevertheless, he gives them the position of 'kings of all Ireland ordained by God'. Both Columba and Adomnán came from the same powerful dynasty of the northern Uí Néill, Cenél Conaill. There were many kings of Tara from Cenél Conaill in the sixth and the seventh centuries. In the *Annals of Ulster*, the title of *rex Hiberniae* was given to only two kings, Domnall mac Áedo, who died in 642 and appeared in *Vita Columbae*, and Loingsech mac Óengussa, who died in 703 and was a contemporary of Adomnán (*AU*, 642.1, 703.2). There were no kings of Tara who gained the title except the above-mentioned two kings from Cenél Conaill before the ninth century.

The preceding sections of this paper have examined the hagiographical texts of the seventh century on Patrick, Brigit, and Columba. Both Kildare and Armagh claimed the title of chief church in Ireland and each text was written there. The patron saints of each church were described as 'national saints of Ireland' in their hagiographies. While in the case of Columba, who left Ireland and founded a monastery on a small island in the north-west of Britain, the characteristic description that he was 'the national saint' is not recognized in his hagiography. Adomnán, nevertheless, adopts the kings of the Uí Néill, his own relatives, as 'the kings of Ireland' in his *Vita Columbae*. The two *Lives of Patrick* also connect their patron saint with the Uí Néill, which gained power in the northern half of Ireland in the seventh century. Incidentally there is no reference to the Uí Néill in *Vita Sanctae Brigidae* by Cogitosus because the setting of this *Life* is in Leinster, in south-east Ireland.

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[3] *Vita Columbae*, I, 36.

According to M. T. Flanagan, "Muirchú depicted the Irish as a people who, by virtue of their baptism, had gained a place among *omnes gentes*" (Flanagan, forthcoming). We can see that the intention of Muirchú's Life was to make the kingship of the Uí Néill the centre of Ireland and to connect Patrick and Armagh with the kingship of the Uí Néill. Even Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* clearly placed the king of the Uí Néill as the king of the whole of Ireland. D. Ó Corráin points out that these claims of Muirchú or Adomnán are highly tendentious and testify to ambition rather than achievement. He says, "they testify, at least amongst some royal propagandists, to an awareness of the Irish as a *natio*, a wider community, rule over which, in one form or another, was a laudable ambition for an over-king of the Uí Néill in the seventh century" (Ó Corráin, 1978, p.8).

Certainly a few seventh-century Irish intellectuals already held the belief that the king of the Uí Néill was the king of Ireland. We can see that writers who had left various historical records regarded the people of the whole of Ireland as 'one nation' who were ruled by the kingship of the Uí Néill in the north part of Ireland under the Uí Néill. Although the reality was different from their own views, in the post seventh-century Ireland the dominant groups, or the intellectuals who were ecclesiastical or secular, held the concept of a unified sovereignty of the island of Ireland and thought of the inhabitants of the whole of Ireland as 'one nation of the Irish'.

Nevertheless, it is doubtful that the general population of Ireland recognized themselves as 'one nation of the Irish' under a unified sovereignty by the seventh century. Moreover, the situation in the south part of Ireland is unclear, especially in Munster, because there is a lack of historical records of this period. There is no evidence that the kings of the Uí Néill in the seventh century had expanded their dominant territory to Munster. The Uí Néill of the north side and the Éognchta of the south side expanded their own territories as the two significant powers in Ireland after the eighth century. Even if the struggle for supremacy in each area had continued after that, the power of the Uí Néill kings increased and some kings expanded their influence to Leinster, Connacht, and Munster, and they came to fight frequently against invaders from the Scandinavian Peninsula. We can only understand nation consciousness from sources that basically concern the Uí Néill, which were written in the north part of Ireland, and it is possible that the nation-centred kingship of the Uí Néill, which contained all of the inhabitants of the whole of Ireland, was already conceptualized in the north part of Ireland.

The author of this paper makes mention of the Irish consciousness as an 'ethnic group' signifying that there were Irish people living in Britain. Most of them had lived in the kingdom of Dál Riata on the west side of the Druim Alban--the mountains in central-north Britain. These mountains separated Irish language-speaking cultures from Pictish language-speaking cultures. It was not the Irish sea but the Druim Alban that created the 'border' between the Irish and the Pictish in the early medieval ages. While it is disputable whether the population of the Dál Riata was included in the Irish 'nation' as in the above-mentioned political unification, there exist no such claims in the hagiographical texts of Patrick or Brigit from the seventh century. Adomnán also describes the royal ordination of the king of the Dál Riata by Columba deliberately in addition to the king of the Uí Néill, or 'the king of Ireland', for him. Adomnán supposes the political unification as the kingdom of Dál Riata. In the case of the Irish, it is likely that the geographical sphere of the 'nation' as political unification was different from 'ethnicity' as a linguistic and cultural unification.

'Nation' Consciousnesses after the Ninth Century

Many sources came to be written in the Irish language after the eighth century, as well as in Latin. *Scot(t)i* in Latin corresponds to *Goídil / Gaídil* in Irish; the name of the language being

Goídelg. These terms were used for the Irish and their language in documents written in the Irish language. The anglicized terms for the two Irish languages are Gaels and Gaelic. The Irish word to signify the island of Ireland is *Ériu*, which is anglicized as Éire, the name of the present Republic of Ireland.

According to Duffy, "at least until the arrival of the Vikings at the end of the eighth century, Ireland was inhabited by a people who spoke a common language and who thereby could convince themselves that they were one nation: they were the *Gaídil*, and their language was the language of the Gaídil, and took its name from the *Goídelc* (*Gaeilge* in Modern Irish)…the indigenous inhabitants were always the Gaídil, and the newcomers, no matter how long they had been in Ireland, were always the *Gaill*. So, in Ireland there never emerged, at any stage in the Middle Ages, a willingness to accept foreigners and to offer them, as it were, membership of the Irish nation" (Duffy, 1999, p.17). Therefore, Ireland, until around the eighth century, had at least united as one ethnic group. The reasons for this are outlined below.

Ireland is an island and the inhabitants of this island spoke one language. However, speakers of the Irish language had also lived in the Dál Riata on the northwest side of Britain. Neither Ireland nor northern Britain had been under the imperial control of the Roman Empire, nor had they ever fallen to major outside invasion until the arrival of the Vikings. Also, in addition to kings and ecclesiastical persons even scholars, *fili*, specialists of the secular or canon law, and craftsmen were able to travel all over Ireland, bringing every culture and custom on the island together. With regard to the kingdom of Dál Riata, very few records exist and its political differences to Ireland have recently been a topic of debate (Sharpe, 2000). Even though many details about the Dál Riata remain unknown, there were most likely frequent comings and goings between Ireland and the Dál Riata, as we can see from the examples presented in Iona. Another 'ethnic group', the Vikings, then merged with this 'ethnic group' as well as with the Dál Riata.

The Vikings who flourished in Ireland mainly came from what is now Norway and in the annals of Irish history they were referred to as 'heretics', *gentilis / gentes* in Latin and *gent(t)i* in Irish, 'North men', *Normanni* in Latin and *Nortmann / Norddmann* in Irish, and 'outsiders / foreigners', *Gaill* in Irish, and they were most definitely distinguished from the native Irish.[4] The invaders from the Scandinavian Peninsula were heathens to the Christians. Their homeland was located in the north according to the Irish. Although *Gaill* was originally used to refer to the people of Gaul, this word would come to refer to the Vikings after the ninth century.

They settled in Ireland in the 830s and had formed an alliance with the native Irish from the 840s. The interchange between northern Europe and the British Isles began to advance from this period on as the Vikings intermixed with the native Irish. The Vikings influenced Ireland in all areas of society and economy from language and culture to arts and crafts (Clake, Ní Mhaonaigh, and Ó Floinn, 1998; Larsen, 2001). Irish kings, after the ninth century, frequently fought against the Vikings who had built the cities of Dublin, Limerick, Waterford, and so on. The kings of Tara from the Uí Néill went southward and began making continuous expeditions to Munster and Leinster after Viking settlements were made. Such Viking incursions considerably impacted the Uí Néill, which had strived for unified sovereignty. Even though it expanded its sphere of the dominance and ruled temporarily over parts of Munster, as a result, the power of the Uí Néill weakened. Moreover, new powers like the Dál Cais and others were on the rise (Jaski, 1995; Ó Corráin, 1998).

There is not enough space in this paper to go into great detail, but the genealogies and the origin myths of the dynasties and kingdoms of each area appeared in Ireland around this time. The island of Ireland can be separated largely into four provinces, Munster, Leinster, Ulster, and

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[4] These words appear frequently from the end of the eighth century in *AU*.

Connacht. Each province had already been divided as such in the sixth and the seventh centuries when the historical sources by letter were left to some extent, therefore we can come to the real historical study. The Uí Néill formed their kingdom extending the north and the central part, that is, a part of the land of Connacht, Ulster and Leinster. In addition, Airgialla occupied the relatively small territory in the midlands in the north of Ireland.

Examining documents concerning the inhabitants of each area, the phrase *fir Érenn* can be seen beginning in the middle of the ninth century. According to Ó Corráin, "the phrase *fir Érenn,* literally 'the men of Ireland' comes to be used of the followers of the greatest kings and of the lesser kings and nobles under their sway". He continues, "It is this feeling of identity which I understand by nationality and I think one can feel it in the changing nuances of the annalistic record between the ninth and the twelfth centuries" (Ó Corráin, 1978, p.8). According to records from 858 in the *Annals of Ulster*, for example, "[The king of Tara] Máel Sechnaill mac Máele Ruanaid came with the men of Ireland to the lands of Munster" (*AU*, 858.4). Like this, the phrase *fir* was used for warriors of the army sent by kings and for men who gathered assemblies held by kings. They gathered from all over Ireland and were able to participate in the battle. It is thought that such a phrase came into use in order to discriminate Irish from Vikings.

The claims of the seventh-century hagiographical texts of Patrick were fulfilled in the eighth and the ninth centuries. Patrick became recognized as the patron saint of Ireland and Armagh gained the status of chief church. In the ninth century, as a common 'nation' consciousness as 'the Irish' or 'men of Ireland' develops, we are able to see an elevation in their own consciousness in their genealogies and stories of origin myths. It is possible that the powers of each area had inspired a sense of belonging, such as 'people of Munster' or 'people of Ulster' through the creation of genealogies and origin myths. Origin myths connecting *all* Irish people had not yet spread at the point of the ninth century.

Although the same phenomenon is also recognized in the other areas of Europe in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, the origin myths of the Irish people were compiled and an identity or 'nation' consciousness as Irish people increased and spread throughout Ireland.

The king of Munster from the Dál Cais, Brían Boruma / Boru became a powerful king and ruled over a major part of Ireland, competing with the then king of the Uí Néill, Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill after 997. He dominated the king of the Uí Néill and he eventually became a high king of Ireland outside the Uí Néill in 1002. He also established good relations with Armagh when he offered twenty ounces of gold on Patrick's alter in 1005. Brían lost his life at the battle of Clontarf in 1014, but he had achieved an overlordship of Ireland. In the records of 1014, Brían was called *rí nErenn*, 'the king of Ireland' or *ardrí Gaidhel Erenn ⁊ Gall ⁊ Bretan*, 'the overking of the Irish of Ireland, and of the foreigners and of the Britons' and it is said that he was buried in Armagh in a new tomb (*AU*, 998.1, 1002.1, 1005.7, 1014.2; cf. Ní Mhaonaigh, 2007). Since Brían Boruma, who did not come from the Uí Néill, became 'king of Ireland' and unified almost the entirety of Ireland, a real political unification of Ireland advanced further and further. Public consciousness for unification for the whole island of Ireland developed for the first time from the territory of the Uí Néill to the entirety of Ireland. Various records reflecting this reality were written and compiled by intellectuals.

The most important work related to 'nation' among these records is *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, *the Book of the Taking of Ireland,* compiled in the second half of the eleventh century (*Lebor Gabála Érenn*; Scowcroft, 1987; id., 1988; Carey, 1993; id., 1994; Mori, 1993; id., 1994). It is an anonymously written book, but it is a historical story and an origin myth written by the intellectuals of Ireland. The story starts at creation and describes the different people who invaded Ireland in turn. According to *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, the sons of Míl, descendant of Japheth, one of sons of Noah,

finally arrived there after the invasion of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Because Míl was born to Spain, he is called *Míl Espáinne* in the Irish language. 'Míl of Spain', a phrase derived from *Miles Hispaniae* in Latin, means 'a warrior of Spain'. R. M. Scowcroft points out that "in the *Etimologiae*, Isidore says that Ireland is called *Hibernia* because of its proximity to (*H*)*ibernia*: hence, according to the rule of eponymy observed above, the Irish would have reason to believe that their ancestors came from Spain" (Scowcroft, 1987, p.14). Míl was created by the intellectuals from the Latin works written by Jerome, Orosius and Isidore and so on (Carey, 1994, pp.4, 9). At the very least, the Irish had regarded themselves as descendants of Míl at that time.

Gaedel Glas, a descendant of Japheth, formed *Goídelg*, the Irish language, from the seventy-two languages after the collapse of the Tower of Babel and *Ériu* appeared as the daughter of the royal family of the Tuatha Dé Danann in *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (*Lebor Gabála Érenn*, vol.2, §142, pp.52-55; vol.5, §392, pp.34-37). The origin of the name of the language and the island is also incorporated into this grand story.

The prehistory of this work was created by blending native legends, the Old Testament, and various Latin texts from the European continent. Ireland is compared to ancient Israel. The annals, tales and poetries, hagiographical texts, genealogies, etc. written and compiled in areas where the Irish language was spoken until then were quoted throughout *Lebor Gabála Érenn* and newly edited. The last part of the story describes the successive Irish kings, and a history of Irish kings was continually added up until the latter half of the twelfth century.

Especially, the prehistory of *Lebor Gabála Érenn* is false, nevertheless, the manuscripts and the revised editions of this story were widespread and referred to many texts, including the works of Gerald of Wales and G. Kaeting in the seventeenth century, from the later medieval period to modern times. Although this paper cannot examine this in detail, it is most likely that there was a strong influence from a powerful kingship or church at the outset for the creation of such a voluminous work.

Despite his death in battle halfway through his unification of Ireland, Brían Boruma from Munster, different from the conventional kings of Tara from the Uí Néill, greatly progressed with the unified sovereignty of the whole of Ireland, more than each successive king of Tara in the beginning of the eleventh century. *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, the corpus of the Irish origin myth, was edited in the second half of the eleventh century. Therefore it is possible to say that a nation consciousness was formed from around the eleventh century. Kings who had a strong kingship had not appeared in the ninth century because of the invasion of the Vikings. A common origin myth for all Irish culture came into existence with the appearance of Brían Boruma in the beginning of the eleventh century and was widely accepted thereafter.

The author examines 'the Irish in Britain' again at the end of this chapter. The Irish word *Alba* was used in the north of Britain around the 900s. Although Alba had originally meant the whole island of Britain, the word came to be used for the area in which the Irish in Britain had lived since then. Many scholars think that the Dál Riata, where the king of the Irish in Britain ruled, conquered Pictland in the middle of the ninth century and that the land of both the Dál Riata and Pictland became Alba. Moreover Alba extends its territory to the south and in addition to the name Alba, *Scotia* also came to be used for this territory. What the adoption of the word *Scotia* itself means is that the rulers of this area had an awareness of the ethnic relationship between themselves and Ireland. Nevertheless, after this the kingdom of Scotland, which was composed of many different kinds of the ethnic groups, was formed and the new 'Scottish nation' was also built under the king of Scotland (Tsunemi, 2001).

M. Herbert examines how the Irish intellectuals between the ninth and the twelfth centuries recognized the people of Alba who spoke the same language as the Irish in many quotations from

various texts of Ireland, such as the annals. While on one hand she points out that the political unification of the Irish had not included Alba from the eleventh century, on the other hand the cultural relationship on both sides of the Irish Sea had continued progressing due to their common language. In other words, the political connection between Ireland and Alba ended but the cultural connection continued (Herbert, 1999).

From Herbert's perspective, after the eleventh century the inhabitants of Alba were not regarded as the same 'nation' as the Irish, but they continued to be of the same 'ethnic group'. The author considers that the Irish of the island of Ireland recognized the Irish in Britain as a different 'nation' from themselves from the period of the Dál Riata. Although the Dál Riata and Alba appear occasionally in various records of Ireland, they are not beyond the scope of the same ethnic group, namely the part of Britain that was not included in the political unification of Ireland. The Irish in Britain were supposed to form a political unification such as the Dál Riata or Alba, different from the island of Ireland, and located in the north of Britain by the Irish in the island of Ireland.

As Herbert's paper mentions, the names 'Irish' for the inhabitants of the island of Ireland, 'Scots' for people in Alba, 'Gaels' for the 'Irish (Gaelic) speakers' containing both the 'Irish' and the 'Scots', and 'Gaeldom' for the area where the 'Gaels' lived have been used recently in a study which describes the relationship between Ireland and Alba after the ninth century. Indeed the words 'Gaels' or 'Gaeldom' are appropriate to express the same ethnic group.

'Nation' Consciousnesses after the Second Half of the Twelfth Century

After 1169, by the request of Diarmait Mac Murchada and the king of England, the subjects of the king of England invaded Ireland and appropriated the land there. They were different from the Vikings who had attacked rich monasteries first, settled in Ireland, and went on to build cities, such as Dublin. The new colonists came there at the invitation of the Irish king of Leinster to begin with (Tanaka, 2005). The Vikings had earlier already converted to Christianity and intermixed with Irish society. According to Irish records, the new colonists of Ireland in the latter half of the twelfth century were generally referred to as *Saxain* in the Irish language, which meant 'the English', and in the English records, such as those kept by Gerald of Wales, they are referred to as *Anglus,* the Latin word for 'the English'. Soon *Gaill* in Irish, meaning 'outsiders / foreigners', was used for the English rather than the Vikings. They were called 'the English nation', 'the English born in Ireland', or 'the English inhabiting our land' in addition to 'the English' in documents from the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries (Martin, 1987, pp.li-lii).

Even though they are called 'the English' or 'foreigners' in historical sources, among scholars they were also referred to as 'Normans', 'Anglo-Normans', 'Cambro-Normans', and 'Anglo-French'. They were traditionally called 'Anglo-Normans' in most cases, however the term 'Normans' is used more frequently by recent Irish scholars of Irish history. J. Gillingham and Flanagan argue that the above-mentioned name is anachronistic and the colonists should be called 'the English' because the invaders identified themselves as such, and scholars only came to use the term 'Normans' after the nineteenth century (Gillingham, 1993, pp.29-30; Flanagan, forthcoming).

Gerald of Wales left two valuable but prejudice-littered works on the colonization of Ireland by the English in the latter half of the twelfth century. It is evident that the invaders kept their English identity and despised the native Irish as barbarous and uncivilized from his two works, the *Topographia Hibernica* and the *Expugnatio Hibernica* (Dimock, 1867; Scott and Martin, 1978). His *Expugnatio* reads as follows, "We are now constrained in our actions by this circumstance, that just as we are English as far as the Irish are concerned, likewise to the English we are Irish, and the

inhabitants of this island and the other assail us with an equal degree of hatred" (Scott and Martin, 1978, pp.80-81). From this sentence we can see that the English who invaded Ireland were regarded as outsiders by their fellow English as well as the native Irish at the point of about 1188 when Gerald wrote this text. Although the colonists insistently identified themselves as 'the English', even their compatriots discriminated them as others while the Irish continued to call them 'foreigners' or 'outsiders'. Their many generations of kin kept living in Ireland and had adopted the Irish language, Irish literature, Irish customs, and so on, but they were still 'outsiders' according to the native Irish throughout the middle ages (Lydon, 1984, pp.7, 15; id., 1995, pp.104-105).

Shortly thereafter the invaders termed themselves 'the middle nation', *media natio* in Latin, as they belonged neither to the Irish nor the English.

The Remonstrance of the Irish Princes was sent to Pope John XXII by Domnall Ó Néill, king of Ulster in 1317. In this document Domnall Ó Néill, allied with Edward Bruce, brother of Robert, king of the Scots who made an expedition to Ireland, asserts to abdicate his claim to the succession of the whole of Ireland to Edward Bruce (Watt, 1991; See Tsunemi, 1999; id., 2003, p.97). There is no room for debate about this incursion of Edward Bruce or the Remonstrance itself. This paper makes an issue of how the English in Ireland were regarded by the Irish themselves at that time. There is one sentence in the Remonstrance that reads, "For the English inhabitants of our land who say that they belong to a middle nation are so different in behaviour from the English of England or from other nations that they can most properly be called a nation not of middling but of extreme perfidy" (Watt, 1991, pp.392-393). 'The middle nation' is naturally depicted with negative expressions and their peculiarity is also emphasized in this document. Not only the English in England but also the Irish in Ireland regarded them as 'a different nation from the English in England' . They who called themselves 'the middle nation' were conscious of their vague position which belonged neither to the English nor the Irish.

They are denigrated as so-called 'degenerate English' in the Statute of Kilkenny enacted in the name of Edward III, king of England in 1366. By then 'the degenerate English' had a relationship of matrimony or fosterage with the native Irish and supported Irish poets and musicians. The Statute complains about the 'Irishized' English that many English in Ireland, forsaking the English language, manners, mode of riding, laws and usages, live and govern themselves according to the manners, fashion, and language of the Irish enemies. It orders that every Englishman use the English language and be named by an English name, leaving off entirely the manner of naming used by the Irish; and that every Englishman use the English custom, fashion, mode of riding and apparel, according to his estate. "No difference of allegiance shall henceforth be made between the English born in Ireland, and the English born in England", and they were equally "the English lieges of our Lord the king", according to the Statute of Kilkenny (http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T300001-001/index.html).

As many scholars have already stated, the establishment of a law such as the Statute of Kilkenny itself is evidence of how the 'Irishization' of the English-born in Ireland proceeded. Conflicts arose between the English families of the first generation in Ireland and the English who had only recently come to Ireland because two hundred years had passed since the first English colonist came to Ireland, as previously described. After two hundred years the native Irish lords gradually regained their power and recovered the territory that once had been deprived of them by the English. A conquest of Ireland by the English was never accomplished during the medieval ages (Simms, 1989; Flanagan, forthcoming).   As the powers on the Irish side could neither agree nor unite to banish the English from Ireland, the powers on the English side could also not dominate Ireland outright.

S. Duffy argues the differences in 'nation' formation of the English newcomers in both Ireland and Scotland. According to him, the English who settled in Ireland lived as a separate 'nation' from

the Irish, and in contrast, "foreigners who settled in Scotland could very quickly (within the space of a generation or two) become Scots" and "in Ireland those Anglo-Normans remained a separate nation to the Irish, whereas in Scotland they became part of the Scots nation. The latter did not become 'the English of the land of Scotland' as their counterparts in Ireland became 'the English of the land of Ireland' ". Duffy also quotes a well-known part from a letter supposed to be sent by Robert Bruce, brother of Edward, on the occasion of Edward's invasion; it is the part that refers to both the 'nation' of Ireland and Scotland as *nostra nacio*, 'our nation'.

It is likely that the letter was sent by Robert who had just became the king of Scots but was in difficulties and asked for the support of Ireland between the autumn of 1306 and February, 1307 (Duffy, 1999, pp.17-18; Tsunemi, 1999, pp.24-28). Robert claimed that they both belonged to the same 'nation' on the grounds that the Irish and the Scots shared the same national ancestry, a common language, and common customs. Even though Robert uses the term *nacio*, does this signify their relationship as both of the same 'ethnic group', or as N. Tsunemi points out, if Robert developed 'anti-English propaganda' for Ireland and Wales at the time of his accession (Tsunemi, 1999. pp.36-37), and taking into consideration that the invasion of Ireland by Edward started in 1315, it is possible to say that the 'nation' referred to by Robert contains his own political ideology. At any rate, the original myth of Scotland itself, which does not contain the origin of Ireland, was created on the occasion of the Wars of Independence of Scotland between the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries (Tsunemi, 2002). Therefore, it is likely that Robert's mention of *nostra nacio*, 'our nation', is only from within the scope of 'ethnicity' and 'nation' expresses his own desire to conquer Ireland. There are more examples of powerful persons making use of this word 'nation' than we can count.

The two 'nations' of 'the Irish' and 'the English in Ireland' coexisted in Ireland in the second half of the twelfth century after the English invaded. 'The English in Ireland' maintained their identity as 'the English nation', as a single 'nation' consciousness with 'the English in England' even though they were regarded as belonging to a different 'nation' from 'the English' in their homeland.

Conclusion

This paper examines the concept of a 'nation' throughout the medieval ages in Ireland after the seventh century. In other words, we attempt to survey medieval Irish history with the keyword 'nation'. There was only a limited 'nation' consciousness in the centre of the kingship of the Uí Néill in the latter half of the seventh century. When the Vikings, who were of a different 'ethnic group', invaded Ireland, the Irish continued to treat them as outsiders. Although they held a common 'nation' consciousness against others, as in the seventh century, there was no unified sovereignty amongst the Irish and consequently 'nation' consciousness was also limited at that time. Brían Boruma from Munster almost unified the island of Ireland in the beginning of the eleventh century. *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, a compilation of Irish origin myths was edited in the latter half of the eleventh century. It is possible to say that 'nation' consciousness in Ireland was formed at this time along with a common Irish origin myth, and a unified sovereignty spanning all of Ireland was almost realized.

Nevertheless, most of Ireland came to be possessed temporarily by the English after the English invasion in the latter half of the twelfth century. The Irish kept treating new invaders as 'outsiders'. The invaders also maintained their 'nation' consciousness with the English in England. Ultimately, a unified sovereignty of the Irish, which could be credited to 'Míl of Spain' as their

common ancestor, was never accomplished during the medieval period. Ireland became an island of two coexisting but different 'nations'.

In Ireland, a one-island country, there had been ideas of a unified sovereignty spanning the whole island ever since the seventh century and many historical kings attempted to realize this sovereignty. The Irish were unified as an 'ethnic group' from the beginning and a 'nation' consciousness shared by the inhabitants of the whole of Ireland was formed in the eleventh century. Kings and kingdoms, however, continued to fight and divide the land. It was the invasion by the English in the second half of the twelfth century that held the most political significance in Ireland and decisively prevented any achievement of unified sovereignty. The invitation of foreigners from Britain at the request of the king of Leinster was a preface to this. Leinster is located in the east, adjacent to the island of Britain by the Irish Sea, and Dublin was the most important port in this area. There is such geographical condition against the background that Diarmait Mac Murchada made efforts overseas to ask for support in arms. Moreover, the geographic differences of each region had a large bearing on their policies and Irish history itself.[5]

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[5] This paper is based on my antedated paper in Japanese therefore I use the papers written in Japanese, which have already been studied by Japanese scholars, as the bibliography.

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