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I was awarded a single semester sabbatical leave for Spring 2018. I had originally proposed to work with the El Pilar Archaeological Research Project in Belize. For the past two summers I had been assisting this project in its efforts to record pre-Columbian Maya settlement remains within the El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna in Belize and Guatemala. I had proposed to the Principal Investigator, Dr. Anabel Ford, that I would come out to Belize before the beginning of the project's field season in April to conduct a small research excavation upon one of El Pilar's monuments, a hilltop surmounted by three small pyramids called the Citadel. The intent of this excavation would have been to determine whether the apparent physical modifications to the hilltop consisting of a massive declivity at the base and potential palisade higher upslope constituted military fortifications. Following this excavation I would continue as a team member of the survey in its regular season of work. Sadly, Dr. Ford did not agree to my proposal.

In lieu of working at El Pilar, I decided to undertake several alternative scholarly research projects that would not require fresh fieldwork. Through my years of reading the literature pertaining to the political systems of the ancient Maya I had become convinced that there were broad similarities between those of the Classical Period and the political systems of medieval Ireland. There has been a long-standing debate among Mayanists concerning the character of Classic Period Maya political systems. One body

of scholars holds that the evidence of settlement archaeology and epigraphy points towards some of the Maya polities having become politically centralized to the degree that they could be termed states. Other scholars felt that both Spanish descriptions of contact period Maya courts and the settlement and epigraphical evidence depict Maya political systems as being both small-scale and fissiparous, with weakly developed administrative institutions. In 2017 I wrote a paper intended for presentation at several conferences that made the case that both in terms of the spatial scale, territorial structure, and the degree to which they possessed administrative bureaucracies that Maya and medieval Irish political systems were roughly analogous. I concluded that unlike the medieval Irish, Maya political systems never achieved full statehood. In the spring of 2018 I presented this paper 'Viewing Maya political systems through Irish eyes' at the Society for American Archaeology meetings in Washington DC. I also prepared an extended version of this paper which I submitted to be evaluated for publication to the journal *Current Anthropology* in August.

In 2016 the results of an excavation carried out on a multi-component habitation site in the Burren region of Ireland were published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*. Following publication, it remained to finalize the shipment of the excavation's finds to the National Museum in Ireland. Most of the work of rebagging the finds and creating a digital inventory had been carried out by students under my supervision over the previous two years. It remained to finalize the inventory and to box the artifacts following directions issued by the National Museum. I carried out this work in December

and January of 2018. The artifacts should be shipped at some point this Fall when I have amassed sufficient funds.

In the Fall of 2017 I became aware that a number of instructors on campus had gone over to online testing in their face-to-face classrooms. I became attracted to online assessment by the prospect of gaining more instruction time in the classroom, and the elimination of the premises for so many make-up exams, so I signed up for training in Canvas. Transitioning my exams from Microsoft Word to Canvas proved to be a laborious multistage process. My exams had to be brought into Notepad and reformatted in order to lose the electronic formatting of Word. Then they had to be imported into Etudes as there was no way to bring them into Canvas other than by transferring them from Etudes. The work had to be accomplished before El Camino College's license for Etudes expired. I have just finished dispersing all of my tests to the appropriate Canvas shells, and writing a question bank for my quiz on the syllabus. At present I am checking over the question banks for completeness, and reformatting the questions once again so that Canvas can draw upon them for the semester's quizzes and exams.

During the summers of 1995 and 1996 I directed the excavation of a ruined building on the grounds of a Late Medieval tower house in north central Co. Clare, Ireland called (in English) O'Dea's Castle. I had hoped to complete a report for publication on this excavation during the sabbatical leave. This would first entail obtaining radiocarbon dates on charcoal samples that were in storage. The samples were brought out of storage,

provenience data were recorded in the excavation's finds catalogue, and the charcoal was separated from soil and pebbles. Nine samples were then sent off to the AMS lab at the University of Arizona for dating. I am pleased to report that all samples yielded usable dates ranging from the 14th to the 17th centuries.

I also wanted to complete research into the historic records relevant to the castle and its lands. The historic documentation is quite extensive as the castle and its lands were involved with protracted multiparty litigation lasting 150 years. I am still examining primary sources which are handwritten, and in Latin. This involves no travel to Ireland as I can obtain digital images (at a substantial cost) from the National Library where they are stored. I am also still working my way through secondary literature relevant to the period. I have not previously been involved with this period of Irish history (15th – 17th centuries) so there is a steep learning curve. The Early Modern period of Ireland was very turbulent due to the imposition of the New English administration and the concomitant Reformation of the church, the 1641 rebellion, and multiple wars. There are many historical sources that must be consulted - everything from chancery pleadings to military memoirs.

While reading my way through this literature I came to the realization that there are actually two separate publications that should arise from all of these data. I have therefore begun to write a paper dealing with the history of the sub-region's polities and aristocratic lineages spanning the Early Medieval Period to the Early Modern Period.

This paper will present the history of the chiefdom polities of the *tríocha cead* of Cenél Fermaic from the Early Medieval to the Early Modern period through cartographic reconstructions. The second publication will be concerned with O’Dea’s castle, its lands, and the fates of the two families that inhabited it. I also plan to write a popular article dealing solely with the excavated building, which I have determined to have begun its existence as a stable before it was supplanted by a bake house serving the Cromwellian garrison that occupied the castle in the aftermath of the 1649 invasion of Ireland. The bake house was built using rubble taken from the demolition of the castle’s wall and partial demolition of the tower house itself. The bake house will be proposed as a signature of Cromwellian occupation as a similar structure was found in the course of the excavation of another castle once owned by a prominent Catholic family of Munster.

I agreed to write a review of the book *Medieval Ireland* by Clare Downham for the UCLA journal *Comitatus*. This review was completed in the spring and revised this summer, and has been submitted. I have been organizing a symposium for next year’s Society for American Archaeology meetings in Albuquerque New Mexico. The symposium is entitled ‘Exploring the Gaelic Social Order through Castle Archaeology.’

