

HPHI 7016: Past Peoples, Present Societies

Fall 2021

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Assessment 1: Archival Exercise

Topic: Roesia de Verdun & Roche Castle, County Louth, Ireland (approved by Alex Scott on 7 Oct)

Research Methodology:

In addition to using resources identified during the Module, I also searched online for websites with reliable citations.

Useful websites include:

- <https://womensmuseumofireland.ie/articles/roesia-de-verdun>
- <http://archive.org> (*Handbook of Dates, Calendar of Documents*)
- <http://finerollshenry3.org.uk>

Primary Sources

These are government documents of legal and official proceedings that I was able to find translations of online. From these I found several actions Roesia de Verdun took in order to secure her lands and rights as well as a potential action against her from Ralph Basset which begs further exploration!

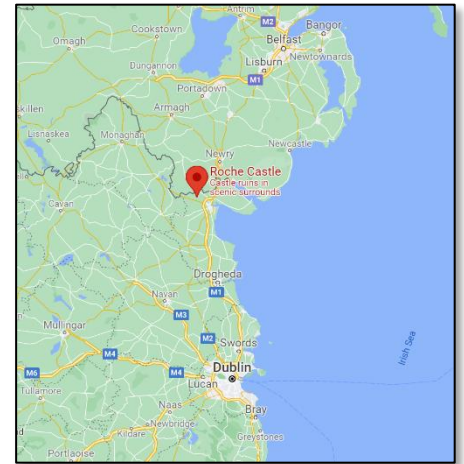


Figure 1: Location of Roche Castle, Co. Louth, Ireland (Google Maps)

Calendar of the Charter Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Vol 1, 1226-1257, ed. by H.C.

Maxwell-Lyte, (London: Macie and Co. Ltd., 1903) from the Internet Archive

<https://archive.org/details/calendarofcharte01gree/page/n19/mode/2up> [accessed 16 October 2021]

Calendar of Documents Related to Ireland, 1171-1251, ed. by H.S. Sweetman, (London: Longman & Co., 1875) from the Internet Archive

https://archive.org/details/calendarofdocume02gree_0/page/n401/mode/2up [accessed 16 October 2021]

Calendar of the Fine Rolls of the Reign of Henry III 1216-1272, ed. and trans. by P. Dryburgh and B. Hartland, technical eds. by A. Ciula and J.M. Viera, from the Henry III Fine Rolls Project

<https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/> [accessed 8 October 2021]

Secondary Sources

Sources referencing the castle discuss the architecture and design. In addition, I was able to use the *Handbook of Dates* to determine modern dates for events referenced in the Fine Rolls. These were print sources (though I did reference a digital copy of the *Handbook* while I waited for my hard copy to arrive!).

Handbook of Dates for Students of English History, ed. by C.R. Cheney (London: Offices Of The Royal Historical Society, 1961)

Leask, H. G., *Irish Castles*, 2nd ed. (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1944)

Stalley, R. A, *Architecture and Sculpture in Ireland 1150-1350* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1971)

Online Sources

One challenge with websites was confirming the information listed. While I would not reference something I could not find a credible source for, websites were helpful to give me names, places and topics I could research from a reliable source. Reliable online sources I found include digitized books on various topics as well as the Medieval Genealogy site suggested in the Module. From these sources I was able to determine specific dates of the fine and calendar roll entries as well as identify a number of other individuals and events to research going forward.

Dugdale, Sir Wm., *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. and revised by J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel (London: James Bohn, 1846) from Google Books

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Monasticon_Anglicanum/IcRAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover [accessed 17 October 2021]

Kenny, G., "Roesia de Verdun: Norman femme sole"

<https://womensmuseumofireland.ie/articles/roesia-de-verdun> [accessed 8 October 2021]

"Reign of Henry III" <http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/cal/reg8.htm> [accessed 31 October 2021]

Archival Research Key Findings:

I was able to get a lot of information from the Henry III Fine Rolls. In one, Roesia de Verdun petitions King Henry III to gain possession (seisen) of the lands held by her father, who had died. Henry III grants her the land and orders a fine of 700 marks to be paid in four installments on Easter & Michaelmas in Henry's 16th and 17th years.¹

To determine when the referenced payments were due, I used the *Handbook of Dates* to find the dates of Henry's 16th & 17th regnal years:²

Year 16 – 28 Oct 1231 to 27 Oct 1232

Year 17 – 28 Oct 1232 to 27 Oct 1233

¹ *Calendar of the Fine Rolls of the Reign of Henry III* (hereafter CFR) 1230-1231, ed. and trans by P, Dryburgh and B. Hartland with technical ed. by A. Ciula and J.M. Vieria, entry no. 339, from the Henry III Fine Rolls Project https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_030.html [accessed 8 October 2021].

² *Handbook of Dates for Students of English History*, ed. by C. R. Cheney (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1961) p. 19.

In 1232, Easter was on 11 April³ and in 1233, Easter was on 3 April.⁴ Michaelmas always falls on 29 September.⁵ Based on this information, Roesia would have been expected to make her payments on 11 April of 1232, 29 September 1232, 3 April 1233 and the final payment on 29 September 1233. This was not, however, the end of Roesia's obligations to Henry. In November 1233 she again appears in the Fine Rolls making a payment of 10 m. in lieu of sending a knight to his army (scutage).⁶

Aside from these payments, Roesia also appears in the Fine Rolls for other matters. In 1238, a man named Ralph Basset gives Henry III 2m. "for having four justices to take the assize that he arraigned against Rose de Verdun"⁷, which seems to be some kind of legal dispute he was having with her. Three years later, King Henry III gives Roesia additional land in Louth, which may be an adjacent plot to the original land she secured in 1231 to build Roche Castle.⁸

The final entry in the Fine Rolls I could find was from 20 October 1242, when Roesia de Verdun pays Henry III for a writ that says she does not have to pay money that the executors of the will of John fitz Alan are saying she owes to his estate. Her daughter was married to the son of John fitz Alan, also named John, and Roesia is making the argument that she should not pay until it is determined if the money she owes is to John the father or to her son-in-law.⁹ It could be my modern bias, but I like how this exchange shows Roesia's "spunk" in not just paying what is demanded but instead taking action to make sure the request is valid.

The Charter Rolls show that Henry III confirms a charter for Roesia de Verdun in 1241, granting the manor of Beleton to the nuns of St. Mary and the church of Holy Trinity de la Grace Deu.¹⁰

Other references detail the history and architecture of Castle Roche itself. In one book, there is a mention of the area being damaged during the Bruce invasion and the castle itself being burned by the Irish in 1332.¹¹

³ "Reign of Henry III" <http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/cal/reg8.htm> [accessed 31 October 2021].

⁴ *ibid*, p. 108.

⁵ *Handbook*, Table 13, p. 56.

⁶ *CFR 1233-1234*, entry no. 45, from the Henry III Fine Rolls Project https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_033.html [accessed 8 October 2021].

⁷ *CFR 1237-1238*, entry no. 21, from the Henry III Fine Rolls Project https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_005E.html [accessed 8 October 2021].

⁸ *CFR 1241-1242*, entry no. 3, from the Henry III Fine Rolls Project https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_038.html [accessed 8 October 2021].

⁹ *CFR 16 May 1242-27 October 1242*, entry no. 546, from the Henry III Fine Rolls Project https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_039a.html [accessed 8 October 2021].

¹⁰ *Calendar of the Charter Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Vol 1, 1226-1257*, ed. by H. C. Maxwell-Lyte (London: Macie and Co. Ltd., 1903), p. 265.

¹¹ R. A. Stalley, *Architecture and Sculpture in Ireland 1150-1350* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1971), pp 43-46.

Conclusion

I was glad to find several references to Roesia de Verdun in the archives. I also found several names of other individuals she had dealings with that would be worth researching. Future archival searches would include looking for records confirming her family members and their activities, in particular her father and grandfather, to better understand how and why they came to be granted the lands they received from the King. I would also like to see what information I can find on the Grace Dieu Priory to understand Roesia's involvement there.

Finally, I would like to do more research around the Castle and the history of the surrounding area more to understand the context around which a fortified structure was necessary to build. The fact that the Irish attacked it suggests the nature of the relationship between the de Verduns and local Irish, but it's certainly a future topic to explore!