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Sommario/riassunto	This book charts the striking rise, fall and restoration of the first earl of Ulster, Hugh II de Lacy, described by one contemporary chronicler as 'the most powerful of the English in Ireland'. A younger son of the lord of Meath, de Lacy ascended from relatively humble beginnings to join the top stratum of Angevin society, being granted in 1205 the first earldom in Ireland by King John. Subsequently, in 1210, having been implicated in rebellion, Hugh was expelled from Ulster by a royal army and joined the Albigensian crusade against Cathar heretics in southern France. Unusually, after almost two decades in exile and a second revolt against the English crown, de Lacy was restored to the earldom of Ulster by King Henry III in 1227, retaining it to his death, c. 1242. Situated in the north-east of Ireland, Ulster's remoteness from centres of colonial administration allowed Hugh de Lacy to operate beyond the normal mechanisms of royal control, forging his own connections with

other powerful lords of the Irish Sea province. The fluidity of noble identity in frontier zones is also underlined by the career of someone who, according to his political needs, presented himself to different audiences as a courtly sophisticate, freebooting colonist, crusading warrior, or marauding 'Irish' ruler. The foundation for this study is provided by Hugh de Lacy's acta, provided as an appendix, and representing the first collection of comital charters in an Irish context. These cast fresh light on the wider themes of power and identity, the intersection of crown and nobility, and the risks and rewards for ambitious frontiersmen in the Angevin world. Daniel Brown obtained his PhD from Queen's University Belfast, and completed his research on Hugh de Lacy as a postdoctoral fellow at Trinity College Dublin.

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