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SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE 'DUBLIN ANNALS OF INISFALLEN'*

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the compilation and transcription of the eighteenth-century source commonly known as the 'Dublin Annals of Inisfallen'. It reviews, in particular, the work's most substantial entries, i.e. those which concern the O'Briens and the history of Thomond in the medieval period, and briefly highlights the historical value of other longer entries relating to the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The 'Dublin Annals' attests to the readiness with which scribes indulged in editorial intrusion, while it also offers insights into the factors which impinged upon textual transmission in the Modern Irish period.

INTRODUCTION

I argued some years ago for the importance of a shifting in focus in the area of post-classical Modern Irish manuscript studies from the material transcribed to the scribe who produced it. This synchronic approach, I suggested, could throw some light from within on a layer of culture of which the scribe himself is an exponent. Not only can he be regarded as the inheritor of a tradition, therefore, but he is also its carrier, interpreter, selector and transmitter.[1] Tradition in this scheme of things, then, is viewed as a dynamic process of conscious transmission which is determined by its exponents. At that time, I stated that such an approach contrasts with that of editorial work.[2] Now, I would say that they complement each other. For it is the case, I believe, that the attitudes, values and milieu of the producers themselves constitute important factors which determine not only the material transcribed, but the methodology itself of the transcribers and the extent to which they indulge in editorial intrusion. These matters, in fact, have received attention in Irish manuscript studies in recent times.[3] This paper is a further contribution in that it focuses particularly on the question of the methodology of scribes in the post-classical

* I am grateful to Professor Pádraig Ó Macháin for reading this article in draft, as well as to the editors of *Ériu* and an anonymous reader for their many helpful comments.

[1] Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, *The scribe in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland: motivations and milieu* (Münster, 2000), 16–23.

[2] Ní Úrdail, *The scribe in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland*, 17.

[3] Pádraig Ó Macháin, *Téacs agus údar i bhfilíocht na scol* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1998); Ní Úrdail, *The scribe in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland*, 134–225; Ruairí Ó hUiginn (ed.), *Oidhreacht na lámhscríbhinní. Léachtaí Cholm Cille* 34 (2004), *passim*; Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, '*Annála Inse Faithleann* an ochtú céad déag agus Cath Chluain Tarbh', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland. Iris an dá Chultúr* 20 (2005), 104–19; Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'Scribal practice and textual survival: the example of Uilliam mac Mhurchaidh', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 22 (2006), 95–122: 95–107.

Modern Irish period. Factors determining the material transcribed and the scribe as editor are also addressed here.

In undertaking this, I will make some observations on a set of annals known as the 'Dublin Annals of Inisfallen'. A number of preliminary remarks about the title 'Annals of Inisfallen' are necessary at the outset, however, as it refers to three different texts from the modern period. The title itself recalls a more famous set of annals, i.e. that compiled between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries which is now housed in the Bodleian Library at Oxford under the designation Rawlinson B. 503.[4] That text differs, however, from the post-classical triad styled the 'Annals of Inisfallen' which were first compiled in the second half of the eighteenth century and which deal mainly with events relevant to Munster.

As well as the 'Dublin Annals of Inisfallen' which is our concern here, a second set of annals has survived in Irish manuscripts which bears the title *Blodh d'Annálaibh Innis Faithlionn*, 'An Extract from the Annals of Inisfallen', in its three earliest sources from the 1760s. In essence, this compilation may be divided into a series of historical descriptions relating to Munster: it begins with an account of the possessions and rights of Cas, ancestor of the Dál gCais, and continues with a summary of material deriving ultimately from *Lebor na Cert* which, in turn, is followed by a short account of *Cath Maighe Mucraimhe* and the cause of this battle, and concludes with a series of annals, beginning at A.D. 250 and extending down to A.D. 1435.[5] The work itself came to be known as the 'MacCurtin Annals of Inisfallen' because its authorship was attributed by Seosamh Ó Longáin (1817–1880), scribe for the Royal Irish Academy, to Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín, or Hugh MacCurtin (ob. 1755), from Co. Clare.[6]

Somewhat similarly styled is an extant copy of a third fragmentary compilation, i.e. *Bloidh don tSeanstairr dá ngoirthear Analadha Innis Faithliond: iarna sgríobhadh as seinleabhar meamaruim do fríoth a cConntae Chiar*[*r*]*uídhe*, 'An Extract from the Old History which is called the Annals of Inisfallen, having been written from an old vellum book which was found in County Kerry'. It was compiled between 1759 and 1761 by Mícheál (mac Peadair) Ó Longáin (ob. 1770), grandfather of the aforementioned Seosamh Ó Longáin, and I have referred to it elsewhere as *Annála Inse Faithleann Uí Longáin*, or the 'Ó Longáin Annals of Inisfallen', in order to distinguish it from the other two eighteenth-century Inisfallen annals.[7] This third set of annals may be divided into

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[4] Seán Mac Airt, *The Annals of Inisfallen* (Dublin, 1944); for a description of the manuscript and its contents, see Brian Ó Cuív, *Catalogue of Irish language manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College libraries* (2 parts, Dublin, 2001), part 1, 201–7.

[5] Ní Úrdail, '*Annála Inse Faithleann* an ochtú céad déag', 105–6, 113.

[6] 'It is a copy of a work compiled by Hugh Buidhe Mac Cruitin (or Curtin) of the Co. Clare, and not a compilation of the O'Longans', a note in pencil signed 'J L' which Ó Longáin inserted into Eugene O'Curry's unpublished description of RIA MS 732 (23 N 3) in the 'Catalogue of the Betham Collection in the Royal Irish Academy' (5 vols, no date), II = RIA MS 1308 (67 E 16), p. [522v]. For Seosamh Ó Longáin, see Breandán Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí 1700–1850* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1982), 149–58, and Ní Úrdail, *The scribe in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland*, 119–33, while Mac Cruitín and his contribution to Irish scholarship is discussed by Vincent Morley, *An crann os coill. Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín, c. 1680-1755* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1995).

[7] Ní Úrdail, '*Annála Inse Faithleann* an ochtú céad déag', 106, 117; for Mícheál Ó Longáin and an inventory of his manuscripts, see Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 88–91, and Ní Úrdail, *The scribe in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland*, 35–43.

two sections, the first beginning at A.D. 180 during the reign of Art mac Cuinn, king of Ireland, and continuing down to the early twelfth century with a description of a hosting led by Muircheartach Ó Briain, great-grandson of Brian Bóraimhe, into Midhe, where he deposed Donnchadh Ó Maoil Sheachlainn.[8] The second section reverts to early tenth-century Munster with a series of annals, beginning at A.D. 915 and continuing down to A.D. 1014, where the title 'Cath Cluana Tairbh' is inserted along with an opening fragmentary line from the prose romantic tale on the battle of Clontarf.

Another preliminary consideration here is the importance of the collation, compilation and transmission of Irish historical sources for scholars in eighteenth-century Ireland. Not only were they concerned with the recording of history, but scholars also advocated its rewriting. The foundation for this rewriting, of course, had already been established in seventeenth-century Irish historiography. One thinks, for example, of Míchéal Ó Cléirigh and his fellow Franciscans whose assiduous work between the years 1632 and 1636 resulted in *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann*, commonly designated the 'Annals of the Four Masters'. Similarly, the intention by Séathrún Céitinn, or Geoffrey Keating, to compile an Irish origin legend for his contemporaries and for future generations resulted in *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (FFÉ) which was completed about the year 1633.[9]

In the century that followed, the question of an identity and the understanding of Irish culture were becoming more important for the Protestant ascendancy, and shared elements between the Irish- and English-speaking worlds were being sought after. Such cultural reappraisal is highlighed by the founding of a number of antiquarian societies during the eighteenth century, the most famous of which was the Royal Irish Academy.[10] A further spin-off was the increasing growth of an antiquarian readership in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland, and its concomitant patronage of Irish scribes at that time. Thus, we find that the contents of extant Irish manuscripts constitute a substantial corpus of historical matter, namely prose texts based on historical events, genealogies, historical treatises such as Keating's FFÉ, the *Chronicum Scotorum*,[11] and annalistic treatises which include the three eighteenth-century 'Annals of Inisfallen' texts referred to already here.

THE 'DUBLIN ANNALS OF INISFALLEN': COMPILATION AND TRANSCRIPTION

The 'Dublin Annals of Inisfallen' came to be thus known because of a Latin ascription given to the text by the Reverend Charles O'Conor (1764–1828) to distinguish it from the Bodleian 'Annals of Inisfallen' in excerpts he printed of both sources.[12] These annals, now Part One of TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), ff. 14r–78v, record events which mostly concern

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[8] AU, AI, ALC, AFM s.a. 1105.

[9] These two works in the context of Irish historiography are discussed by Breandán Ó Buachalla, '*Annála Ríoghachta Éireann* is *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*: an comhthéacs comhaimseartha', *Studia Hibernica* 22–3 (1982–3), 59–105; see also Bernadette Cunningham, *The world of Geoffrey Keating: history, myth and religion in seventeenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2000).

[10] Ní Úrdail, *The scribe in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland*, 200–4.

[11] William Maunsell Hennessy (ed. and trans.), *Chronicum Scotorum: A chronicle of Irish affairs from the earliest times to AD 1135*, *with a supplement*, *1114–50* (London, 1866).

[12] Charles O'Conor, 'Annales Inisfalenses, ex duobus codicibus, Dubliniense et Bodleiano', *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores* 2 (1825), 1–83 and 1–122.

Munster *sub annis* A.D. 250–1320.[13] No title, however, is given to the original work in Irish in this source.

Three notes in all occur in Part One of TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7) which offer certain clues about the work's compilation. The first, jotted in an unidentified hand on a folio preceding the beginning of the text of the 'Dublin Annals', names Seán Ó Conaire and gives the date 1765.[14] Two more notes occur on the final leaf which state that the text was written in France. The first of these is also in an unidentified hand and refers again to Seán Ó Conaire as scribe, while the attribution in the second is to Seán Ua Maolchonaire by one Cathal Ó Conchobhair, 1775.[15] The latter is Charles O'Conor (1710–1791), scholarly antiquary and historian (and grandfather of the aforementioned Reverend Charles O'Conor) of Belanagare, Co. Roscommon. The parish of Clooncraff near Strokestown in O'Conor's native county was once the patrimony of the Uí Mhaoil Chonaire, and this may explain his use of the surname *Ua Maolchonaire* rather than its counterpart, *Ó Conaire*, which occurs in the other two notes.[16]

Seán Ó Conaire (ob. 1773) was a Cork priest whose work survives in ten extant documents.[17] It is evident, however, that the script of the main text of the 'Dublin Annals' and that of the two anonymous notes differ. Even though this discrepancy did not go unnoticed, the scribe of the two anonymous notes was not conclusively identified until more recent times by Breandán Ó Conchúir who stated that they were inserted by the Cork scribe Séamas Ó Conaire (fl. 1774), probably a relative of Seán Ó Conaire.[18] This identification is supported by manuscript evidence of further contact between these scribes. RIA MS 375 (23 C 12), for example, was written jointly by Séamas and Seán Ó Conaire.[19] Moreover, the historical content of their work is the same: of the five eighteenth-century transcripts of the 'Dublin Annals', two of them form part of the

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[13] Thomas Kingsmill Abbot, Edward John Gwynn, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the library of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin, 1921), 16. Ff. 1–13r of part one of this manuscript are blank and a jotting which occurs on f. 13v is reproduced in note 14 below.

[14] *Ségan Ó Conaire san mblíghan 1765* (f. 13v), 'Seághan Ó Conaire in the year 1765'.

[15] *Scríobhtha le Ségan Ó Connaire san b*[*h*]*Frainc* (f. 78v), 'written by Seághan Ó Conaire in France', and *San bhFrainc ro scríobhadh an Leabhar Airis so la Seán Ua Maolchonaire, et é lan do lochtaibh iomdha a gcronic, et a ndechtughadh, et cruthaighthe iomdha ar sin anos a lámhaibh Chathail Uí Chonchabhair A.D. 1775* (f. 78v), 'this Leabhar Oiris was written in France by Seán Ua Maolchonaire, and it full of many faults in history and composition, and much proof of that now [is] in the hands of Cathal Ó Conchobhair A.D. 1775', respectively.

[16] Edward MacLysaght, *Irish families: their names, arms and origins* (Dublin, 1957), 90–1.

[17] Biographical details and an inventory of Ó Conaire's manuscripts may be consulted in Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 51–3, and Roibeárd Ó hÉanna, 'Alumnus de chuid Choláiste na nGael, Páras', *Irisleabhar Mhá Nuad* (1989), 103–49.

[18] Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 50 (cf. 323 n. 85); for an account of Séamas Ó Conaire and an inventory of his manuscripts, see Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 50–1. The difference in script between the anonymous notes and the main text was referred to by Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin, 'The Dublin Annals of Inisfallen', in Séamus Pender (ed.), *Féilscríbhinn Torna* (Cork, 1947), 183–202: 187, and also by the Reverend Charles O'Conor. O'Conor stated in the introduction to his printed excerpts of the 'Dublin Annals' that the first of the anonymous notes (f. 13v) was written *avi mei manu*, 'in the hand of my grandfather', and that the script of the second (f. 78v) was the same as that of the main text ('Annales Inisfalenses', vii); these assertions are not supported, however, by the palaeographic evidence.

[19] Thomas Francis O'Rahilly, Kathleen Mulchrone *et al.*, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin, 1926–70), 1020–4. Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 265 n. 335, argues that Seán Ó Conaire's contribution to this volume is considerably more than that stated in the catalogue's description.

contents of Maynooth Renehan MS 64, Part C, and RIA MS 764 (23 C 11), sources which, according to Ó Conchúir, were penned by Séamas and Seán Ó Conaire, respectively.[20]

Neither date nor signature accompany Seán Ó Conaire's transcript of the 'Dublin Annals' in RIA MS 764, pp. 57–64 and pp. 109–[234], and the document was tentatively, albeit erroneously, attributed in the manuscript catalogue to one 'Peter Connell', i.e. Peadar Ó Conaill (1755–1826) from Co. Clare.[21] In addition, the style of presentation in this transcript contrasts considerably with that by Ó Conaire in TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7). It does not, for example, pay the same attention to detail and individual entries tend, at times at least, to be noticeably shorter. Other entries are simply excluded altogether by our scribe. Thus, although it covers the period A.D. 250–1320, the transcript in RIA MS 764 is rather telegraphic in style. Besides, some of the leaves are incorrectly bound into the manuscript, thereby giving a modern-day reader the impression that it contains a lacunar transcript of the 'Dublin Annals'.[22] Also, the text itself appears to have been penned rather hurriedly because the script is by no means as neat and clear as that of its counterpart in TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7). This difference, in fact, is a feature of Seán Ó Conaire's work in general: some texts by him may be carefully penned, while others seem to have been hurriedly produced.[23] In the case of the 'Dublin Annals', then, it is possible that our scribe may have intended the text of RIA MS 764 to be a synopsis for his own use rather than for a particular reader or, alternatively, it may have acted as a draft version which he subsequently fleshed out in TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7). The manner in which the text is presented in the latter source, therefore, suggests that this was Ó Conaire's definitive text, produced with a particular reader in mind.

The other important contributor to the 'Dublin Annals' project was John O'Brien, RC Bishop of Cloyne and Ross (1748–1769).[24] Ó Conaire, as we have seen, wrote the text

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[20] Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 50 and 51, respectively. Séamas Ó Conaire's copy of the 'Dublin Annals' in Maynooth MS Renehan 64, part c, pp. 143–94, breaks off at p. 172 after an opening two lines of text s.a. 1013 and resumes on p. 177 with an abbreviated description of events for the year 1170 (= TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 1, f. 22v and f. 41v, respectively). As well as part c, part a of MS Renehan 64 was also attributed by Ó Conchúir to this Ó Conaire scribe while both parts remain unidentified in the catalogue by Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, *Lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge Choláiste Phádraig Má Nuad* (Má Nuad, 1967), fasiculus iv, 38, 42. The other eighteenth-century copies of these annals are: RIA MS 1194 (23 F 9) (*circa* 1775); BL Egerton MS 98 (1783); Copenhagen MS NKS 266c (1789).

[21] O'Rahilly, Mulchrone *et al*., *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts*, 2353–5; for biographical details on Peadar Ó Conaill, see Eilís Ní Dheá, 'Peadar Ó Conaill, scoláire agus scríobhaí (1755–1826)', in Ciarán Ó Murchadha (ed), *County Clare Studies: essays in memory of Gerald O'Connell, Seán Ó Murchadha, Thomas Coffey and Pat Flynn* (Ennis, 2000), 137–49.

[22] The description 'Extracts from the Annals of Inisfallen covering the years 250–1558' in O'Rahilly, Mulchrone *et al*., *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts*, 2354, is misleading, and the pagination cited for the text is inaccurate.

[23] Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 265 n. 336, refers to *an dá stíl*, 'the two styles', by our scribe. This duality of presentation may explain why our Ó Conaire's penmanship has been erroneously attributed to others, or is not fully accounted for; cf. notes 19 and 20 above, and note 35 below.

[24] On this Irish scholar, see James Coombes, *A bishop of penal times. The life and times of John O'Brien Bishop of Cloyne and Ross 1701–1769* (Cork, 1981); Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 218–22; Diarmaid Ó Catháin, 'An Irish scholar abroad: Bishop John O'Brien of Cloyne and the Macpherson controversy', in Patrick O'Flanagan, Cornelius G. Buttimer (eds), *Cork: history and society* (Dublin, 1993), 499–533; Proinsias Mac Cana, *Collège des Irlandais Paris and Irish studies* (Dublin, 2001), 97–113.

down, but Dr O'Brien was certainly its intended reader.[25] The prelate provided much of the work's source material which includes the following texts: an imperfect copy of the *Annals of Tigernach* and two fragments of Irish annals describing events mainly outside Munster, A.D. 1237–1249 and A.D. 1303–1314, both copied from Rawlinson MS B. 488; Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh's transcript of the *Chronicum Scotorum*; and the earliest complete copy of *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh* penned by Aindrias Mac Cruitín.[26] This substantial body of source material forms part of the contents of one volume, now preserved as TCD MS 1292 (H.1.18), which according to a note on folio three was compiled 'zelo ac industria illustrissimi ac reverendissimi Joannis O'Brien, Episcopi Cloynensis et Rossensis in Hibernia qui die xiii[a] mensis Martii, anno 1769, Lugduni in Gallia obiit'.[27]

That Keating's FFÉ hardly features among the sources directly drawn upon for the 'Dublin Annals' is significant, especially when one considers that it was one of the texts most frequently copied by scribes of the post-classical Modern Irish period. Yet, this too points to John O'Brien's involvement in the compilatory stages of our annals. We may note, for example, an article published by the Bishop in 1764 under the pseudonym M. de C., i.e. Monseigneur de Cloyne, which described FFÉ not only as 'l'Histoire fabuleuse du Docteur Keating', but relegated its author to a circle 'd'autres Ecrivains fabuleux'.[28] Dr O'Brien expressed similar sentiments four years later in the preface to his *Focalóir Gaoidhilge-Sax-Bhéarla* where he stressed the importance of native sources and, in particular, the lexicographic richness of what he styled 'our authentic annals', while he dismissed as 'fabulous stories' those 'of the kind, published in the translation of Dr. Keating's history'.[29] Clearly, the Bishop did not rate FFÉ very highly in the canon of Irish historiography. Indeed, we may also note that although most of the work transcribed in manuscripts by Dr O'Brien's scribe, Seán Ó Conaire, is historical in content, not one copy of so popular a work as FFÉ was penned by him. Thus, it may be argued that this is a good example of how a patron of particular preferences and a scribe who was aware of such preferences could impinge on the textual tradition, and determine, to some extent, the course of transmission itself.

Textual preferences notwithstanding, a certain *literary* debt to FFÉ is evident in the 'Dublin Annals'. It will emerge presently that the account of events s.a. 1014 derives inspiration from the story which evolved around the battle of Clontarf as a historical event. Keating contributed to this story and we find, for example, his particular motif of a treacherous Maol Sheachlainn, king of Midhe, also appearing in our annals. It is the case, therefore, that even though the intended reader of the 'Dublin Annals', Dr John O'Brien,

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[25] Ó Cuilleanáin, 'The Dublin Annals', 186–9. We may note, however, that during the years 1765 and 1766, Dr O'Brien conducted a general mission for his two dioceses personally, so that his contribution to the 'Dublin Annals' project in 1765, the year it was completed in France, could not have been a significant one; cf. Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 219.

[26] Abbot, Gwynn, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts*, 64–6.

[27] Abbot, Gwynn, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts*, 64; cf. Ó Cuilleanáin, 'The Dublin Annals', 188 n. 18.

[28] 'Mémoire de M. de C. a Messieurs les auteurs du Journal des Sçavans, au Sujet des Poëms de M. Macpherson', *Journal des Sçavans* (May 1764), 277–92, (June 1764), 353–62, 408–17, (August 1764), 537–55, (September 1764), 604–17, (December 1764), 845–57: December 1764, 851 and August 1764, 539–40, respectively. I am particularly grateful to Diarmaid Ó Catháin for placing his copy of the latter source at my disposal.

[29] *Focalóir Gaoidhilge-Sax-Bhéarla or an Irish-English dictionary* (Paris, 1768), xl–xlj.

showed little regard for FFÉ as authentic history, these annals attest nonetheless to the literary influence of Keating's history on the post-classical narrative tradition concerning the battle of Clontarf.[30]

TEXTUAL AND CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

The most substantial entries in the 'Dublin Annals of Inisfallen' concern the O'Briens of Thomond. This is not surprising, of course, given the particular predilections of the work's patron: Dr John O'Brien was most conscious of the role his ancestors played in Irish history, as is evidenced, for example, in repeated references to them not only in his *Focalóir Gaoidhilge-Sax-Bhéarla*, but also in lengthy digressions which feature the O'Briens in his aforementioned article published in 1764.[31] In addition, TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), the very volume which contains the commissioned 'Dublin Annals' text, reflects Dr O'Brien's pride in his ancestry, as almost a quarter of the contents of the second part of this document, copied between 1760 and 1762 by Mícheál Ó Longáin, comprises a chronicle of Thomond kings and O'Brien genealogies.[32] Significantly, the scribe appended a note to one of these genealogies which specifically refers to Bishop O'Brien, claiming he descended from Conchobhar Ó Briain, joint-king of Thomond (1118–1142).[33]

Mícheál Ó Longáin produced further O'Brien genealogies also at this time.[34] Similar material, moreover, forms part of the contents of RIA MS 673 (23 C 23), a manuscript compiled jointly by Ó Longáin and Seán Ó Conaire who, as we have seen, penned the text of the 'Dublin Annals' for Dr O'Brien.[35] Neither mentions a patron, but the contents

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[30] In this connection, see Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, '*Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*: establishing a literary canon', in Pádraig A. Breatnach, Caoimhín Breatnach, Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail (eds), *Léann Lámhscríbhinní Lobháin. The Louvain Manuscript Heritage* (Dublin, 2007), 139–67: 149–50, 153–63.

[31] Ó Catháin, 'An Irish scholar', 512–3.

[32] TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 2, ff. 98r–120v, published by Tadhg Ó Donnchadha (ed.), *An Leabhar Muimhneach maraon le suim aguisíní* (Baile Átha Cliath, [1940]), 293–398. For Ó Longáin, whose signature occurs on f. 120v, see note 7 above; the dates 1760 and 1762 were inserted by this scribe on f. 108v and f. 84r, respectively.

[33] TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 2, f. 166r (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 387).

[34] Dublin MS IL 1, part e, pp. 36–52 (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín I, 294–327); Dublin MS IL 1, part b, pp. 1–17 (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 332–72); Dublin MS IL 1, part b, pp. 19–23, and part e, pp. 92–5 (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 387–98); Dublin MS IL 1, part f, p. q (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 374–6, 379–80); RIA MS 486 (23 G 22), pp. 57–78, p. 80 (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 332–72), pp. 53–6 (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 387–98). The scribe inserted the dates 1759 and 1761 into MS IL 1 which is now housed in the Irish Jesuit Archives, 35 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2, while the material in the second volume was probably written at this time also; for a description of the latter manuscripts and their contents, see Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, *Clár lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge: leabharlanna na cléire agus mionchnuasaigh* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1980), fasciculus ii, 70–6, and O'Rahilly, Mulchrone *et al.*, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts*, 1300–3, respectively. Although Ó Fiannachta noted that the date 1759 occurs in Dublin MS IL 1, part b, p. 18, he overlooked its occurrence in part f of the same volume on a page which is marked 'q', as well as the date 1761 which occurs on the same page.

[35] RIA MS 673 (23 C 23) and its contents are described in O'Rahilly, Mulchrone *et al.*, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts*, 2076–85; Ó Conaire's contribution, pp. 1–123 and pp. 141–221, has been identified by Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 265 n. 336. The Uí Bhriain material in this volume occurs on pp. 8–12 (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 387–98), p. 97 (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar*

of the manuscript suggest that it was intended for the Bishop. The same patron, in fact, also provided his scribes with copies of genealogies relevant to the O'Brien and Burke families, copies which ultimately derived from *Leabhar Iris Chloinne Uí Mhaolchonaire* (LCM) and which formed part of the contents of his anthology of texts, the aforementioned TCD MS 1292 (H.1.18).[36] The O'Brien genealogies from LCM were incorporated into the 'Dublin Annals', while the same source is also acknowledged by Ó Longáin and Ó Conaire elsewhere in their work.[37] Taken together, then, not only does the evidence suggest that Ó Conaire and Ó Longáin worked together, but that they also produced transcriptions for Dr O'Brien who, in turn, also supplied them with source material. The 'Dublin Annals', then, was part of a larger project by this scholarly threesome which was dedicated to the recording of Munster history and the role therein of the Uí Bhriain in particular.

One wonders whether contemporary matters also had a role in supporting such a project and had heightened Dr O'Brien's awareness of the importance of his ancestry. Of relevance in this connection, is a dispute concerning the Thomond earldom which arose in the early 1750s between two expatriate branches of the O'Brien family living in France. One of these was headed by Charles O'Brien (ob. 1761), sixth viscount Clare, Maréchal de Thomond, while the second branch was headed by Colonel Daniel O'Brien (ob. 1759), first earl of Lismore. Both O'Briens were rival claimants to the title 'Earl of Thomond'. The dispute continued into the early 1760s, with the widows of each O'Brien advancing the cause of the respective branches.[38] Interestingly, Dr John O'Brien took part in this genealogical controversy between 1758 and 1762, and is identified as a supporter of the Lismore faction — not only in the papers of the Chevalier Thomas O'Gorman now housed in the National Library of Ireland, but also in the collection of Stuart Papers at Windsor Castle in England.[39] Significantly, a genealogy tracing the first earl of Lismore's

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Muimhneach, aguisín II, 373–4), p. 106 (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 383–4), pp. 193–4 (= Ó Donnchadha *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 332–6), p. 197, p. 204 (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 385–6, 386–7, respectively), pp. 205–10 (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 354–66), pp. 210–12 (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 367–72), pp. 217–8 (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 346–52).

[36] See note 27 above. This material, ff. 4v–13r and ff. 13v–14v, is reproduced as Appendix D and Appendix AA, respectively, in Standish Hayes O'Grady (ed. and trans.), *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh* (2 vols, London, 1929), I.171–92, 159–61, II.181–202, 169–71. The original LCM is now lost, but it appears to have been compiled in 1611 (O'Rahilly, Mulchrone *et al*., *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts*, 851).

[37] The source of the extract from O'Brien genealogies by Seán Ó Conaire in RIA MS 673 (23 C 23), pp. 193–4, is located *a ttosach an Leabhair Iris Chloinn Í Mhaolchonnaire*, 'in the beginning of Leabhar Iris Chloinne Uí Mhaolchonaire' (p. 193), while Mícheál Ó Longáin 'found' his extract on the Burkes, RIA MS 486 (23 G 22), pp. 81–3, *a Leabhar Iris Chloinne Í M*[*h*]*ulchonaire*, 'in Leabhar Iris Chloinne Uí Mhaolchonaire' (p. 81). Ó Longáin's copies of O'Brien genealogies are: Dublin MS IL 1, part b, pp. 1–17, the source being acknowledged on p. 18, RIA MS 486 (23 G 22), pp. 57–78, p. 80, and TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 2, ff. 105r–112r, where the source is referred to on f. 105r; the latter two texts were used in preparing the treatise on Brian Bóraimhe and his descendants down to 1694 by Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 332–72.

[38] Morley, *An crann os coill*, 113–8; Richard Hayes, 'A forgotten Irish antiquary: Chevalier Thomas O'Gorman 1732–1809', *Studies* 30 (1941), 587–96: 591–3; Coombes, *A bishop of penal times*, 72–4.

[39] John Ainsworth (ed.), *The Inchiquin manuscripts* (Dublin, 1961), 169–70 (no. 570), 179 (no. 593); Patrick Fagan, (ed.), *Ireland in the Stuart papers* (2 vols, Dublin, 1995), II.219 (vol. 380, no. 114), II.221–2 (vol. 380, no. 164), II.230 (vol. 382, no.150). The O'Gorman collection of papers is discussed by Edward

ancestry back to the O'Briens of Carrigogunnell and to Conchobhar, king of Thomond (1400–1426), is included by Mícheál Ó Longáin and Seán Ó Conaire in two of their transcripts of the aforementioned chronicle of Thomond kings and O'Brien genealogies.[40] This material, too, was provided at the behest of Dr O'Brien who was clearly keen to procure any documents which would solve the genealogical crux relating to the Thomond earldom in favour of the Lismore faction.[41]

THE BATTLE OF CLONTARF IN THE 'DUBLIN ANNALS OF INISFALLEN'

The annals' record of events *sub annis* A.D. 1013 (when Brian Bóraimhe marched into Osraighe as part of a campaign to quash any revolt against him by the Leinstermen) to A.D. 1027 (when Donnchadh son of Brian attacked Mac Giolla Phádraig, king of Osraighe) ultimately derives from a post-classical Munster compilation known as the *Leabhar Oiris* (LO).[42] The work is most likely the product of an ardent adherent of the O'Briens because much of it concerns Brian Bóraimhe's assertion of his authority as king of Munster and overking of Ireland, and it includes a detailed account of the battle of Clontarf. The 'Dublin Annals', too, is comprehensive in its description of this conflict. Indeed, the account of events s.a. 1014 is the work's first considerable entry, taking up almost four leaves in the manuscript. Length alone, however, is not its distinguishing feature. There is also a stylistic shift in the narrative at this point in the annals. Instead of the terseness of presentation which dominated heretofore, the prose is more detailed and is marked by a series of *non sequiturs*:

> *1014 Kl Sluag*[*hadh*] *mór le Brian Borúmha mac Cinnēide rígh Ēireann*[43] *et le Maolseachluinn rígh Mídhe go hÁith Cliath ag tabhairt catha do Ghallaibh et do Laighnibh um a ttaoiseacha Lochlannach*[*a*] *et um Maolmórdha mac Murchadh rīgh Laighean gona rīog*[*h*]*ra et go* [*t*]*trí catha uime, gur chuir Maolseachloinn teachta chuige ós ísiol dā inisin gur chuir Brian Don*[*n*]*chadh mac Briain go nglasladh*[44] *Dháil cCais et go* [*t*]*trían shlúagh sleachta Eoghain Mhōir air cheann chreach Laigheann et Ó cCinnsealach, et geallas féin go bhfúigfeadh Brian et deich ccéad do Mhídheachaibh leis. Ó'd-choncadar Gaill et Laighnig Brian air*

MacLysaght, 'Survey of documents in private keeping: O Gorman papers', *Analecta Hibernica* 15 (1944), 382–3.

[40] TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 2, f. 112v, and RIA MS 673 (23 C 23), p. 97 (= Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, aguisín II, 373–4), respectively.

[41] In this connection, we may note the following description by one Fr Thomas Kennedy in a letter addressed to the first earl of Lismore, 5 June 1758: 'I went to join his Lordship, the bishop of Cloyne, who is the great agent of this matter. He has left no stone unturned to make all the necessary discoveries upon this occasion. He certainly has behaved like a true friend to your Lordship's family in discovering things that never could come to light without him. He's made out the genealogy in the County of Cork by old books both English and Irish, and the concurrent testimony of all the old people in the country who have the names of your Lordship's ancestors and their possessions as if they were matters transacted only yesterday' (Fagan, *Ireland in the Stuart Papers*, II.230 (vol. 382, no.150)).

[42] Richard Irvine Best, (ed.), 'The Leabhar Oiris', *Ériu* 1 (1904), 74–112; at least twenty-five copies of this text have survived in manuscripts dating from 1711/12 to 1848 but only ten were known to Best while producing his edition.

[43] *Cinnēide* [*le* cancelled] *rígh Ēireann*

[44] i.e. *nglasláith*

uathadh sochuídhe air faithche Áith Cliath a n-oireachtas, tángadar féin seacht ccatha 'na choinne, et do roinneadar a ttrí iad féin .i. sluag[*h*] *Lochlannach lán d'arm is d'ēide ó mhullach*[45] *go lár um Caralas mac Eibhricc et um Anrudh mac Eibhric, dā mhac rīgh Fionnlochlan*[*n*]*ach, et um Dolat et Conmhaol dá thréinmhīleadha et Gaill*[46] *Áith Clíath mar aon reo. An dara slúagh .i. Maolmórdha mac Murchadh rīgh Laighean gona Laighnibh, et an treas sluagh le Gallaibh*[47] *na nOileán um Luadar Iarla Inse hOrc, et um Bruadar taoiseach Danair, et Gaill Innse Céad, et M*[*h*]*anainne, et Sgiticc, et Leodhasa, et C*[*h*]*inntīre, et Oirear Gaedhil* [*sic*]*, et Coirbhreathnaicc et Breathnaicc C*[*h*]*ille Minne* [*sic*]*, et Coir na Liogóg gona rīoghaibh uile, et fós Gaill ó Thíre an tSneachta et óna Gaothloighibh Meódhanach*[*a*].[48]

'1014 Kl. A great hosting by Brian Bóraimhe son of Cinnéidigh, king of Ireland, and Maol Sheachlainn, king of Midhe, to Dublin, fighting the foreigners and the Leinstermen led by their Viking rulers, and Maol Mórdha son of Murchadh, king of Leinster, together with his chiefs and three battalions about him, and Maol Sheachlainn sent him [Maol Mórdha] a message secretly telling him that Brian had sent Donnchadh son of Brian and the young champions of the Dál gCais and a third of the host of the descendants of Eoghan Mór to plunder Leinster and the Uí Chinnsealaigh, and he himself promised that he, along with ten hundred men from Midhe, would abandon Brian. When the foreigners and Leinstermen saw Brian with a diminished host around him on the outskirts of Dublin, they themselves advanced as seven battalions against him and divided themselves into three, i.e. a Viking host equipped with arms and in uniform from head to foot led by Carolus son of Eibhric and Anrudh son of Eibhric, two sons of the king of the Norwegians, and led by Dolat and Conmhaol, two strong warriors, and the foreigners of Dublin with them. The second host, i.e. Maol Mórdha son of Murchadh, king of Leinster, with his Leinstermen, and the third host with the foreigners of the Isles led by Luadar, earl of Inis Orc, and Brodar ruler of the Danes, including the foreigners of Inis Céad and Manainn and Sgiticc and Leodhas and Ceanntíre and Oirear Gaoidheal, and the Corr-Britons and Britons of Cill Muine, and Coir na Liogóg with all their kings, and also foreigners from Tír an tSneachta and the Maeotian marshes.'

This pre-battle depiction of the enemy forces in the 'Dublin Annals' replicates almost to the word that in the LO which, in turn, echoes that in *Cath Cluana Tarbh* (CCT), one of the most popular prose tales of the post-classical Modern Irish period.[49] The description of Brian's enemies, their advance in seven battalions and their threefold division *ar*

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[45] *d'ēide* [*ó bhonn go bathas* cancelled] *ó mhullach*
[46] *thréinmhīleadha* [*um Luadha* cancelled] *et Gaill*
[47] *le* [*Luadar* cancelled] *Gallaibh*
[48] TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 1, f. 22v; the accompanying English translation and all those that follow here are my own. The placenames *Inis Orc*, *Inis Céad*, *Manainn*, *Sgiticc* and *Leodhas* are glossed *Orcades Insula*, *Hebrides*, *Mona Insula*, *Insula de Shetland* [and] *Insula Lewisa*, respectively, in the margin of the manuscript; *Coirbhreathnaicc* is glossed *Cornwallia*, and *Tír an tSneachta* is explained as *Norwegia*, *Suedia* [and] *Jutlandia*.
[49] Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, 'Seachadadh *Cath Cluana Tarbh* sna lámhscríbhinní', *Léachtaí Cholm Cille* 34 (2004), 179–215; also Ní Úrdail, '*Annála Inse Faithleann* an ochtú céad déag', 109–10.

faithche Átha Cliath, 'on the outskirts of Dublin', ultimately derives, of course, from the Middle Irish account of the battle in *Cogad Gáedhel re Gallaib* (CGG).[50] However, the above characterisation of Maol Sheachlainn as traitor who informs the enemy of Brian's diminished numbers is a later textual accretion of the Modern Irish period which first occurs in Keating's colourful account of the battle of Clontarf in FFÉ.[51] Keating's characterisation of Maol Sheachlainn as friend turned foe is an interpolation which occurs in some copies of the LO, while it also becomes an important motif in the subsequent transmission of CCT. Evidently, then, the manner in which the historical event is presented at this point in the 'Dublin Annals of Inisfallen' is influenced by the story which had evolved around it.

Continuing in bombastic vein, the next section of the entry s.a. 1014 in the 'Dublin Annals' reiterates Maol Sheachlainn's duplicitous act and introduces a valiant Brian Bóraimhe:

> *Ar riaradh a shluaighte amhla san do Bhrian, do luidh féin mar aon le Murcha mac Briain 'na measg ón cceann go roile dá ndúsgadh chum crōdhachta a n-aighidh na n-allmhúrach, et ró fhoillsicc dóibh gan luighid meanma do ghabháil tré Dhonnchadh mac Bríain go* [*t*]*trian sluagh Muímhnicc d'imtheacht uatha ōir is ag creachadh Laighean et Gall do bhí; iar san nochtas dóibh gur fada bhādar fir Ēirionn fá anbhruid na Lochlannach n-allmhúrdha ag marbhadh iomad ríghthe et príomhthaoiseacha et ag sīorargain 's ag losgad dúnta et cealla et eaglaise Dé go mionnaibh Naomh; et ró ráidh sé do ghuth árd: "a cháirde, ró thug an Coimhde*[52] *cómhachta et calmachta díbhse aniúgh chum an annfhlathas Lochlannach fór fhearaibh Éirionn do shríanadh go bhruinne* [*sic*] *an bhrátha, et chuim na n-iomad feall et ceallairgthe sin do dhīog*[*h*]*ailt fhorra an lá so 'nar fhuilling Críost féin bás ar bhúr soin"; et taisbeánas dóibh an tan san an chros-fhighil ina láimh chlídhe et a chloídheamh go* [*n*]*dora*[*n*]*chlainn*[53] *óir ina láimh dheis, dá fhoillsiúghadh dóibh go bhfúigheadh féin bás mar aon leó dá cosnamh.*
> *Iar san gabhas Brian et Murchadh go sluagh D*[*h*]*áil cCais ag ionnsaighe lucht na deich ccēad lúithreach um dhís m*[*h*]*ac rīgh Fionnlochlan*[*n*]*ach, ach d'ēalaigh Maolseachloinn gona Mhidhechaibh, mar do gheall an oidhche roimhe sin, et do chuir gort eatartha et an chath; acht nír luíghdig sin meanmain Bhriain ná an Dáil cCais, ōir do chosnamhadar an cath go ró dhásachtach.*[54]
>
> 'Having arranged his hosts thus, Brian, together with his son, Murchadh, went amongst them from one to another, encouraging them to valiant deeds against the foreigners; and he indicated to them that they should not lose heart at the departure from them of Donnchadh son of Brian and a third of the Munster hosts, for they

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[50] James Henthorn Todd (ed. and transl.), *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*. *The war of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, *or the invasions of Ireland by the Danes and other Norsemen* (London, 1867), 150–3, § lxxxvii.
[51] David Comyn, Patrick S. Dinneen (ed. and transl.), *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn le Seathrún Céitinn*, *D.D. The history of Ireland by Geoffrey Keating*, *D.D.* (4 vols, London, 1902–14), III.274 ll 4301–2, 284–6 ll 4474–9; cf. Ní Úrdail, 'Seachadadh *Cath Cluana Tarbh*', 185–7; Ní Úrdail, '*Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*', 153–4.
[52] i.e. *Coimdhe*
[53] i.e. *ndornchlainn*
[54] TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 1, f. 23r–23v.

were plundering the men of Leinster and the foreigners; after that he explained to them that the men of Ireland were for a long time under the oppression of the foreign Vikings, killing many kings and chief leaders, and constantly plundering and burning fortresses and monasteries and churches of God containing saints' relics; and he said in a loud voice: "friends, the Lord granted you powers and strengths today to curb the Viking oppression of the men of Ireland till doomsday, and to exact vengeance for those many treacheries and church-plunders this day on which Christ himself died on your behalf"; and he showed them then the crucifix in his left hand and his gold-hilted sword in his right hand, revealing to them that he himself would die together with them protecting it.

After that Brian, Murchadh and the Dál gCais host set about attacking the ten hundred armoured men led by the two sons of the king of the Norwegians, but Maol Sheachlainn absconded with his men of Meath as he promised the night before and established a distance of a field between them and the battle; but this did not diminish Brian's courage nor that of the Dál gCais for they contested the fight very fiercely.'

Brian Bóraimhe, as presented here, is not only a source of strength for his men, but he is also protector of the *crosfhighil* which, in this context, refers to the cross.[55] The *crosfhighil* is also the standard reference for the cross in the LO and CCT, although in these sources it is held by the Dál gCais king while praying in his tent.[56] The pre-battle account just cited does not occur in other prose descriptions and is, it seems, peculiar to the 'Dublin Annals'. It is not part of the narrative in CGG, for example, nor is it in the Modern Irish accounts of Clontarf in the Annals of Loch Cé, the Annals of Boyle, LO, FFÉ or in CCT. Notably, in all of these sources Brian Bóraimhe adopts the more passive role befitting an elderly king who opts to remain apart in prayer from the combat. According to the 'Dublin Annals', however, the Thomond king is above all else an active defender of the cross — *dá cosnamh* — rather than protector of his men — *dá ccosnamh*.[57]

The ensuing account of the battle would amount to little more than a list of casualties on both sides were it not for the colourful description of how Murchadh son of Brian meets his death:

Is amhla do marbhadh Murchadh mac Briain le Anrudh .i. sáith sanntach do sgían Mhurchadh a n-íochtar a chuirp tug an t-allmhurdhach dó, et é treasgartha fá lár ag an laochmhíleadh óir do rug Murchadh air lena lāimh chlídhe (uáir nár bhféidir leis breith air 'na láimh d[*h*]*eis iar sgolta a laghrach 'sa ghlaice et iar*

[55] For *crosfhighil*, literally 'cross-vigil', and the extending of the arms in the form of a cross while praying, see DIL s.v. *crosfigel*(*l*).

[56] In the following seventeen copies of CCT, however, Brian Bóraimhe prays with his rosary beads rather than with the crucifix: Aberystwyth Additional MS 414D, p. 131; UCC MS 106, p. 27; UCC MS 124, p. 56; NLI MS G 63, p. 88; NLI MS G 122, p. 200; RIA MS 327 (23 C 28), p. 10; RIA MS 505 (23 D 12), p. 278; RIA MS 897 (12 F 20), p. 216; RIA MS 946 (23 H 15), p. 63; RIA MS 981 (23 N 18), p. 85; RIA MS 1132 (23 O 52), p. 124; RIA MS 1383 (23 O 74), p. 46; UCD Ferriter MS 25, p. 122; Fermoy MS 3, p. 27; Manchester MS 73, p. 9; Roscrea MS 5, p. [172]; Wisconsin, MS 175(a), p. 99.

[57] We may note here that the translation *ad eos protegendos* by the Reverend Charles O'Conor ('Annales Inisfalenses', 65) is erroneous; cf. Ní Úrdail, '*Annála Inse Faithleann* an ochtú céad déag', 112 n. 36.

dornclaoin[58] *a chloidhimh do léigheadh*[59] *'na chrobh tré iomad úrluighe) et croithis as a lúithricc amach é fa thalamh, gur sháidh a chloídheamh lena ucht tríd an t-allmhúrach, gur thar*[*r*]*aing Annrugh sgian Mhurchadh et gur sháig an rīghmhílig, acht do mhair Murcha gur chaith sé corp C*[*h*]*rīosd iar ndéanamh a fhaoisidin*[*e*].[60]

'Murchadh son of Brian was thus killed by Anrudh, i.e. the foreigner thrust Murchadh's [own] knife fiercely into his lower body while he [the foreigner] was pinned flat to the ground by the mighty hero, for Murchadh had grabbed him with his left hand (since he could not hold him in his right hand, his fingers and palm having split and the hilt of his sword having melted in his hand from [heat caused by] excess smiting) shook him out of his armour onto the ground and forced his sword with his chest through the foreigner, and Anrudh drew Murchadh's knife and stabbed the great hero, but Murchadh survived until he received the body of Christ, having made his confession.'

Although this passage ultimately derives from CGG, its animated depiction of the heroic Murchadh, overcoming his opponent before succumbing to death on receiving absolution and communion, closely follows that of the LO and CCT. By way of illustration, we may note the following from the latter source:

Gidheadh síneas an lámh chlí chum an allmhúraicc 7 croitheas a lúireach tar a cheann amach 7 glacas a chloidheamh 7 an Lochlannach faoi 7 léigios a ucht air an ccloidheamh ó nárbh fhéidir leis a bhualadh 7 sáthas tríd go talmha[*i*]*n é. As ann sin ró tharraing Hannrí sgian Mhurchadh asa chúmhdach 7 ró sháthaidh go sanntach anntrén ós a chionn í a n-íochtar a mheadhóin gur thuit an cathmhíleadh Murchadh don aonghoin sin. Gidheadh éirghios arís go deaghthapa 7 díthcheannas mac rígh Lochlann ann sin 7 ró mhair féin go solas tráth éirghe don ló arna mhárach gur chaith corp Chríost iar ndéanamh faoisdin a bheatha 7 lórghníomha ris an saoghal.*[61]

'Nevertheless, he stretched out his left hand to the foreigner and shook his armour out over his head, and grabbed his sword with the Viking beneath him and pressed his chest onto the sword since he could not strike him, and forced it through him to the ground. Annraoi then drew Murchadh's knife from its cover and thrust it

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[58] i.e. *dornchlann*

[59] The scribe inserted a length-mark here to represent the diphthong /əi/ in the first syllable of *leigheadh*, i.e. *leaghadh* 'melting, dissolution'. We may note *Leigheann lúthgháir an formadach*, 'joy melts [grieves] the envious one', in *Párliament na mBan* which Domhnall Ó Colmáin from Co. Cork first compiled in 1670 and revised in 1703 (Brian Ó Cuív (ed.), *Párliament na mBan* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1952), 46 l. 1451); *Do thóg sí aon díobh agus do chuir dá leigheadh i bhinéigre é*, 'she took one of them [an earring] and placed it for melting in vinegar', in *Corraghliocas na mban léirmhínithe* which Dáibhí de Barra, also from Co. Cork, compiled between 1775 and 1780 (Breandán Ó Conchúir (ed.), *Corraghliocas na mban* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1991), 27 l. 1045); we may also note *ór athleighte*, 'refined gold', in the latter text (Ó Conchúir, *Corraghliocas na mban*, 20 l. 799, 27 l. 1044).

[60] TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 1, f. 23v.

[61] RIA MS 707 (23 H 18), pp. 92–3; cf. Best, 'The Leabhar Oiris', 87–8, §33.

> fiercely and most powerfully out over him into his [Murchadh's] lower midriff and the champion, Murchadh, fell as a result of that single wound. He rose most speedily again, however, and decapitated the son of the king of the Vikings then and he himself lived until daylight the following day and he received the body of Christ after making his life's confession and atonement with the world.'

The interpretation of events s.a. 1014 in the 'Dublin Annals', therefore, portrays Brian Bóraimhe as the consummate ruler who, together with his son, opposes the forces of evil. Such a presentation of his eponymous ancestor would undoubtedly appeal to the partisan sympathies of Dr John O'Brien who commissioned the work itself: a valiant Brian Bóraimhe and his heroic son, Murchadh, both pitted against foreign oppression and plunder, would engage the reader whose episcopate was one of vigilance and steadfastness in the defence of the liberties of the Catholic Church.[62]

This may explain, in fact, why the concluding section of the entry s.a. 1014 returns to the rather flat style of presentation which dominated hitherto in the annals. It outlines in brief the internal dynastic struggle of Eoghanacht Raithlinn and their revolt against the O'Briens, which is derived from LO.[63] Unlike the latter source, however, three poems on the theme of the *ubi sunt?* which celebrate the bygone glorious era of the Dál gCais are excluded in the annals' account.[64] Consequently, the detailed interpolation in the LO is considerably shorter in the 'Dublin Annals', the main concern of which, no doubt, is the retelling of the battle of Clontarf, as well as the highlighting of its heroic contributors, the O'Briens of Thomond. In style and form, then, the entry s.a. 1014 is a literary re-creation of the historical event itself rather than a factual recording thereof.

THE 'DUBLIN ANNALS OF INISFALLEN', 'MAC CÁRTHAIGH'S BOOK' AND *CAITHRÉIM THOIRDHEALBHAIGH*

It has been argued thus far that the first substantial entry in the 'Dublin Annals' exemplifies the re-creation of an event in history. What then of the historical value of other substantial entries in this compilation? To this end, we may examine those entries in the work which focus mainly on Munster affairs in the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

A first set of entries forms a group which deals particularly with the affairs of Desmond and which is closely related to another collection of Irish annals, styled 'Mac Cárthaigh's Book' (MCB). This source was once in the possession of the Mac Cárthaigh family and appears to have been originally written in the late fifteenth century. It begins at A.D. 1114 and concludes with a series of unconnected events of various years from 1424 to 1464, all of which are entered s.a. 1437.[65] The events documented in MCB and

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[62] Dr O'Brien's episcopal difficulties are outlined by Coombes, *A bishop of penal times*, 40–69.

[63] Best, 'The Leabhar Oiris', 89, §37, 90, §39, 92, §42–3, 93, §45, 101, §54, 102, §57–8; cf. John Ryan, 'The O'Briens in Munster after Clontarf', *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* 2 (1940–1), 141–52: 141.

[64] Best, 'The Leabhar Oiris', 95–101, §50, §52–3; cf. A.J. Goedheer, *Irish and Norse traditions about the battle of Clontarf* (Haarlem, 1938), 62–3, and Colm Ó Lochlainn, 'Poets on the battle of Clontarf', *Éigse* 4 (1945), 33–47: 36, 38. The metre of these poems is *óglách*as, mainly of *rannaíocht mhór*.

[65] NLI MS G 6, ff. 1r–12v and NLI MS G 5, ff. 9r–24v, now Fragment I in Séamus Ó hInnse (ed. and transl.), *Miscellaneous Irish annals (A.D. 1114–1437)* (Dublin, 1947), 2–115; for a description of these

the 'Dublin Annals' are undoubtedly important as sources for Munster history, but it is also the case that the number of northern entries in them is by no means negligible and adds considerably to information not recorded elsewhere. The entries A.D. 1134–1154 help complete the chasm at this point in the Annals of Ulster, while entries *sub annis* 1206–1210 are more informative than their counterparts in the Annals of Ulster and Annals of Loch Cé.[66] As such, therefore, both texts are valuable historical documents for the medieval period.

The close relationship between MCB and the 'Dublin Annals' notwithstanding, certain differences are also evident between them. For example, a number of lacunae occur in the former source, the most extensive being the absence of entries from 1264 to 1305 and from 1316 to 1397. Entries in the 'Dublin Annals' bridge the first of these textual gaps, while the second chasm is completed in part because the final kalend in the eighteenth-century compilation, as stated earlier, is A.D. 1320.[67] Furthermore, although succession dates and obituaries of several Munster kings are established in the annals from 1215 until the first chasm which occurs after 1263 in MCB, many of them contain a single entry only for each year. The documentation for the same period is more comprehensive in the post-classical 'Dublin Annals' compilation. Indeed, a number of other entries common to each source are more detailed in the eighteenth-century text.[68]

A second set of substantial entries in the 'Dublin Annals' focuses at length on the O'Briens of Thomond in the early fourteenth century. By way of illustration, we may consider the account for the year 1306 and compare it with the equivalent annal in MCB. The latter source gives the following four entries in brief under this year: the death of Toirdhealbhach Mór Ó Briain; the succession of his son, Donnchadh, as eighth king of Thomond; the defeat of Sir Piers de Bermingham and his followers by Ó Maoil Sheachlainn and Mac Eochagáin in Midhe; and, finally, the capture of Domhnall Óg Mac Cárthaigh by his kinsman, Domhnall Maol, and his subsequent beheading at Baile Uí Mhoinigh, probably Ballymoney near Ballineen, Co. Cork.[69]

The corresponding text s.a. 1306 in the 'Dublin Annals' is interspersed with additional entries, and many of these, incidentally, are also found in Rawlinson MS B. 488, a copy of which forms part of the contents of TCD MS 1292 (H.1.18), which itself, as we have seen, was made available to Seán Ó Conaire by Dr John O'Brien.[70] The first of the additional entries in question refers to the killing of Fearghal Mac Raghnaill, chief of Muintear Eolais in Co. Leitrim, by his own kinsmen, while the second records the killing of Donnchadh son of Conchobhar an Chopáin Mac Diarmada and Flann Ó Floinn by

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volumes, see Nessa Ní Shéaghdha, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland* (Dublin 1961), fasciculus i, 31–6.

[66] Tomás Ó Fiaich, 'The contents of Mac Carthaigh's book', *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 74 (1950), 30–9.

[67] See note 13; the relevant entries from the 'Dublin Annals' are in TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 1, ff. 57v–64r and ff. 72v–78v, respectively.

[68] For example *sub annis* 1124, 1128, 1129, 1136, 1138, 1148, 1171, 1173, 1175, 1176, 1196, 1197, 1198, 1213–1214, 1306–1311, 1315.

[69] Ó hInnse, *Miscellaneous Irish Annals*, 104–6, s.a. 1306; the location of Baile Uí Mhoinigh has been suggested by John T. Collins, 'A McCarthy miscellany', *Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 53 (1948), 95–103: 103.

[70] See notes 26 and 27 above; for the relevant text from Rawlinson MS B. 488, see Ó hInnse, *Miscellaneous Irish Annals*, 130–2, s.a. 1306.

Aodh son of Eoghan Ó Conchobhar. Further entries follow (for example, the death of Henry III, king of England; the succession of Edward II; the threat to Aodh son of Eoghan Ó Conchobhair's kingship of Connacht; the death of Donnchadh Ó Flaithbheartaigh, bishop of Killala; Robert Bruce's contending for the kingship of Scotland; the deaths of Domhnall Ó Néill of Tuirtre and Sir William Prendergast; and a great foray by Clann Mhuircheartaigh into Cairbre) before documenting de Bermingham's defeat in Midhe and the capture of Domhnall Óg Mac Cárthaigh.[71] Not only is the account for the year 1306 longer in the 'Dublin Annals', but its main concern is with the history of the O'Briens and that of Thomond in general. In this connection, we may note the following concluding entries which include the death of Toirdhealbhach Mór Ó Briain and Donnchadh's subsequent accession to the Thomond kingship:

> *Toirdhealbhach mac Taidhg Chaoluisge mic Chonchúbhair na Siúdaine h. Bhriain d'éag et a adhlacadh san mainistir aolta do rinn féin a nInnse an Laoighe.*
> *Donnchadh mac Toirdhealbhaigh mic Taidhg Chaoluisge h. Bhriain do ríogadh a Máighe Adhair le Cui Mheádha Mór Mac Con Mara fór oiriochtaibh Tuadhmhumhain* [*sic*] *uile gona himlibh et for Uaithne et an dá Ēile, et Urmhúmha, et h. Luígh*[*dh*]*each, et Aos Grēine, et Cuanach et Eoghanacht B*[*h*]*eag, et Aos Trí Muíghe et bladh do Chonnachtaibh, et d'fhágaibh Toirdhealbhach h. Briain a athair na ttíortha san uile fó áirdríghe a mhic Don*[*n*]*cha san mbliadhain so. Ag so iomshláine ríghe Túadhmhumhan .i. ó Léim Chon Chulloinn go hÁith na Bóraimhe, et ó Bhiorra go Cnoc Áine Cliach et ó Eoghanacht Chaisil go tuaisgirt na Bóirne bánchlochaigh*[*e*].
> *Galar mór do ghabháil Cú Mheadha Mór Mac Con Mara et a éag dhe, et a adhlacadh a bhfochair a rígh a nInis Chluain Rāmhfhada gur thoghasad Cloinn C*[*h*]*oilēin Do*[*n*]*ncha mac Con Mheádha chum árdcheannais do ghabháil orrtha féin.*[72]

> 'Toirdhealbhach son of Tadhg Caoluisce son of Conchobhar na Siúdaine Ó Briain died and was buried in the limewhite abbey he himself built at Inis an Laoigh.
> Donnchadh son of Toirdhealbhach son of Tadhg Caoluisce Ó Briain was made king in Magh Adhair by Cú Mheadha Mór Mac Con Mara over the districts of all Thomond and its borders, and Uaithne and the two Éile [i.e. Éile Thuaiscirt and Éile Deiscirt], and Urmhumha and Uí Luíghdheach and Aos Gréine and Cuanach and the Eoghanacht Bheag and Aos Trí Maighe and a portion of Connacht, and Toirdhealbhach Ó Briain, his father, left all those territories under the high-kingship of his son Donnchadh in this year. Here follows the full extent of the Thomond kingdom, i.e. from Léim Chon Chulainn to Áth na Bóraimhe and from Biorra to Cnoc Áine Cliach and from the Eoghanacht of Caiseal to the north of the white, stony Boireann.

[71] TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 1, f. 64r–64v; the dating of the first additional entry is arbitrary, of course, as Henry III died in 1272.
[72] TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 1, ff. 64v–65r.

A great sickness befell Cú Mheadha Mór Mac Con Mara and he died as a result of it, and he was buried next to his king at Inis Chluain Rámhfhada and the Clann Chuiléin chose Donnchadh son of Cú Mheadha to take leadership over themselves.'

Significant here, of course, is the evocative use of placenames in the 'Dublin Annals' which clearly fixes the territorial claims of the O'Briens to Thomond.

The above concluding encomium s.a. 1306 echoes passages from the mid-fourteenth-century *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh* (CT).[73] It has been noted already here that the earliest complete copy of this historical saga forms part of an anthology of texts, now preserved as TCD MS 1292 (H.1.18), which was in the possession of Dr John O'Brien who, in turn, supplied its contents as source material for the compilation of the 'Dublin Annals'.[74] CT was also the source for the substantial material inserted in our annals *sub annis* 1308–1309 and 1311–1318 which outlines at length political upheavals in Thomond at that time. In certain cases, individual phrases or longer passages derive from the text of CT.[75] Furthermore, the latter text's biased presentation of events in favour of Clann Thaidhg, the descendants of Tadhg Ó Briain (ob. 1259), but at the expense of Clann Bhriain, the opposing faction descended from Brian Ruadh Ó Briain (ob. 1277), is also apparent in the 'Dublin Annals'. CT, for example, outlines in exaggerated terms the high regard of the Anglo-Irish for Muircheartach Ó Briain (ob. 1343), son of Toirdhealbhach Mór son of Tadhg, who in 1317 supported Lord Richard de Clare in blocking the Scots' invasion of Thomond led by Edward and Robert Bruce. Not only is Muircheartach described as the chosen leader of the Anglo-Irish magnates, but the Gaelic chief was given audience by them, directly after the Bruce invasion, in a parliament at Dublin where he confuted de Clare's attempts at purchasing peace for his rivals, the descendants of Brian Ruadh.[76]

Similar propaganda in favour of Muircheartach Ó Briain is evident in two entries from the 'Dublin Annals' inserted s.a. 1316:

Comhthionól do dhéanamh do Ghallaibh Leithe Mogha idir iarla et barún, idir cniocht et cathbharún et glasghallaibh fó dhaingin Luimnigh a n-adhaigh na nAlbannach do thógha árdtaoiseach orro re hucht an chatha, gur thoghasad uile Muircheartach mac Toirdhealbhaigh mic Taidhg Chaoluisge h. Briain don dula san.

An Clárach do dhol go siosa Átha Cliath do cheannach síodha do chloinn Bhriain Ruadh go ndeachaidh Muirchiortach h. Bríain air choimirce an Bhuiltéaraigh[77]

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[73] O'Grady, *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh*, I.1–2, 27, 34, II.1, 29, 34.

[74] See notes 26 and 27 above.

[75] For example s.a. 1308 (= O'Grady, *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh*, I.35–6, II.36), 1309 (= O'Grady, *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh*, I.37–43, II.37–43), 1311 (= O'Grady, *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh*, I.51, 53–4, II.49, 50–1), 1318 (note 81 below).

[76] O'Grady, *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh*, I.91, 93, II.84, 86. For these events, see Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, (4 vols, Oxford 1911–20), IV.88–90; cf. Aoife Nic Ghiollamhaith, 'Dynastic warfare and historical writing in north Munster, 1276–1350', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 2 (Winter 1981), 73–89: 84–7.

[77] *air choimirce an* [*Chláraigh* cancelled] *Bhuiltéaraigh*

*gus an siosa céadhna a ccoinne an Chláraigh, et a rí*g[*h*]*e do thabhairt air iocht et air choimirce Díarmada h. Bhríain*, *a dhearbhráthair.*[78]

'An assembly was held by the foreigners of Leath Mogha, lord and baron, soldier and officer and steel-armoured foreigners, gathered in opposition to the Scots at the stronghold of Limerick to appoint a commander in chief over them for the battle, and they all chose Muircheartach son of Toirdhealbhach son of Tadhg Caoluisce Ó Briain on that occasion.
De Clare went to the assizes in Dublin to purchase peace for the descendants of Brian Ruadh, and Muircheartach Ó Briain under the protection of [Edmund] Butler went to the same assizes against de Clare and gave his kingdom into the charge and protection of Diarmaid Ó Briain, his brother.'

The text of CT, then, was extensively borrowed from in the concluding section of the 'Dublin Annals' which deals in particular with the O'Briens and outlines political unrest in Thomond in the early fourteenth century. However, there are also instances where the annals dispense with extended lavish prose passages typical of the historical saga. A case in point is the description of the battle at Corcumroe Abbey in 1317 which marked a decisive victory for Muircheartach Ó Briain and his followers over the descendants of Brian Ruadh. The 'Dublin Annals' follows the order of presentation as given in CT, albeit in more measured tones.[79]

The last set of substantial entries in the post-classical text occurs under the year 1318 and marks a final flourish on the glorious era of the O'Briens.[80] The reader is given a detailed description of Muircheartach Ó Briain's second great victory which resulted in the death of Richard de Clare at Dysert O'Dea and ultimately quashed any Anglo-Norman hopes of conquering Thomond. Once again, the account in the 'Dublin Annals' closely follows that in CT.[81] Indeed, the length and style of the text s.a. 1318 contrasts with that to follow which marks a return to affairs concerning Desmond in a series of short entries *sub annis* 1319–1320. Thus, the history of Thomond in the early fourteenth century features prominently in the closing section of the 'Dublin Annals of Inisfallen', and would have been of special interest to the intended reader of the work, Dr John O'Brien.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above observations, then, it has been argued that substantial entries in the eighteenth-century 'Dublin Annals of Inisfallen' concentrate in particular on the O'Briens of Thomond. The first of these entries is a literary re-creation of the battle of Clontarf, showing that an O'Brien saga of sorts continued to be re-created down to the post-classical Modern Irish period. By contrast, the early fourteenth-century entries in the text, which rely heavily on CT, are an important authority on the history of Thomond in

[78] TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 1, f. 72v and f. 73r, respectively.
[79] TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 1, ff. 73r–75r (= O'Grady, *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh*, I.94–102, 107–10, 113, 116–7, 121, 130, 133–4, II.86–92, 95–7, 99, 103, 107–8, 114, 117–8).
[80] TCD MS 1281 (H.1.7), part 1, ff. 75r–77v.
[81] O'Grady, *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh*, I.135–40, 142, 144–5, II.119–24, 126, 127–9.

the medieval period. In addition, these annals provide important documentation of affairs in the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The compilation itself, moreover, attests to the importance of contextual matters — be they the scribe–patron relationship, the particular interests of the patron, or contemporary issues — in determining the process of textual transmission in the Modern Irish period.