

Brian Boru Lecture Series

Dál Cais genealogies as embedded in those of Eóganacht Caisil

**Good ancestry is important
– even if you have to invent it**

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Acallamh na Senórach: Tales of the Elders of Ireland – written c. 1200-1210

- Cainén son of Failbe son of Fergus son of Eógán Mór asked of Cailte, “Where did Ailill Áulomm (of the Grazed Ear) die?” Cailte answered: “He died on the top of Mount of Cláire in the south from great loss of blood.” (Knocklary?)
- “And where did Sadb daughter of Conn die?” “Sadb daughter of Conn died in Tara of the kings” said Cailte, “grieving for her well-loved son, Mac Con.”
- “Where did Ferchis the poet, son of Comán die?” asked Cainén. Cailte said “Ferchis was killed on the top of the Galtee mountains by the hard holly spear that Áed son of Dergdub, threw at a deer.
- “And the seven handsome sons of Ailill” asked Cainén son of Fáilbe, “where did they die?” Cailte answered “It was Benne Brit who killed them in the great battle of Mucrama as they fled from the host of Mac Con.”

Area of Ailill Aúloinn's death in *Accallamh na Senórach* as depicted on William Petty's 17th C Down Survey map and on Google Earth



Acallamh na Senórach -contd.

- Why is the ford on this great level plain called the Ford of the Fall?” asked Cainén. Caílte answered, “Connla Derg from the hill of Dían there killed Fiacha Muillethan [of the Broad Crown] son of Eógan and for that reason it is called the Ford of the Fall.

Acallamh na Senórach -contd.

- “And the battle of *Samain*” asked Cainén, “who fought and perished there?” **Cormac Cas [the curly] son of Ailill Áulomm** attacked Eochaid Abratrúad [of the red eyelashes], the king of Ulster in the north. Eochaid died there and Cormac Cas was wounded and remained ill for 12 years. His brains were leaking but he held the kingship of Munster during this time. A stronghold and a fine residence were built for him at Dún ar Sléib [fortress on the mountain]. This mountain had a clear and pleasant natural well in its foundations and a great royal dwelling was built for him around it. Three stone pillars were erected around this well and the king’s bed was placed within them, with its head to the east. A trusted household warrior kept bathing his wound with water from a cup or a basin. He died there afterwards and was buried in a vault under the fortress. For this reason it is also called Dún Trí Liacc [the fortress of the three stones> Duntryleague].

Hogan: Duntryleague, 3 m. NW. of Galbally, Co. Limerick

i.e. place of Cormac Cas's death is identified in this early thirteenth century text as being far outside the Killaloe area where Brian Boru's family were located and close to Eóganacht Áine kingdom of east Limerick (in area of modern Knockainey



The following represents a draft translation of a genealogical text which is published in M.A. O'Brien, *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, (Dublin 1962), 195-6 but has not, in so far as I am aware, been made available anywhere in English.

It is debatable to what period this information belongs but I myself would tend to think of it as being post Brian Boru in origin.

Genealogical information from a twelfth century manuscript Rawlinson B 502 ed.

“Thus begins the Psalter of Cashel: Here begins the genealogy of the *Síl Ébir* (Dublin 1962)

An imprudent race of the *Scotti*, forgetful of their own affairs and deeds)... from these Irish genealogies will identify first the genealogy of Éremon, then the genealogy of Ébir, thirdly the genealogy of Ír and fourthly, that of Lugdach mac Ítha.”

These are names of individuals who, in Irish genealogical tradition represent the sons of Míl, the first humans who colonised Ireland

“There are two sons belonging to Mag Nuadat – that is Ailill Aulomm (Ailill of the Grazed Ear) and Lugaid Laga. Ailill Áulomm had 19 sons as follows:

Eogan Mór, Cormac Cass, Tidell, Mercón, Mac-Corb. **Cian**, Conall – these are the seven sons of Sadb daughter of Conn Cétchathaig (Conn of the Hundred Battles)

Uilenn, Errind (or Malleón), Tigernach. Mathrach, Mac-Coll, Mac-Malléon, Corrb, Chrocaini, Eochaid Fráech Irrind (the passionate chariot fighter?) Eochaid Órainech (Gold-Face),. Eochaid Baí (Sword-Feat (?)) or Dímóna (?), Eochaid Tóebfota (Long flanks).

They all perished in the battle of Mag Mucrama and the family withered away except for three men, that is

- Eogan Mór – from whom are the Eoganachta
- Cian – from whom are the Cianachta
- Cormac – from whom are the Dál Cais (that is, the Déise)”

i.e. in this (pro-Eóganacht) account, Cormac Cas, ancestor of the Dál Caís is being identified as the younger brother of Eógan Mór, ancestor of the Eóganacht kings of Cashel

This genealogy is essentially that of Eóganacht of Cashel

“Éogan Mór he however just had one son – that is Fiachu Mullethan (Fiachu the Flat-headed).

Fiachu had two sons – that is Ailill Flann Mór (big) & Ailill Flann Bec (small). Ailill Flann Mór however was childless. Ailill Flann Bec had two sons, that is Lugaid and Dáre Cerbba (the Scarred).

(Gloss: It is said in some genealogies that Ailill Flann Bec was the son of Ailill Flann Mór and that this is why Ailill Flann Bec followed Ailill Flann Mór in (control of) the ancestral kingdom for it was an evil thing with him that his eldest brother was without children. It is said in other books that the family of Ailill Flann Bec divided the ancestral kingdom with Ailill Flann Mór for the same reason. However, Ailill Flann Mór didn't have a single son.)

Dáre Cerbb then, the second son of Ailill Flann Bec, had six sons that is

Fiachu Fidgenid (born in a wood) - from whom are the Uí Fidgente – (controlling county of Limerick)

Eochu Liathán (Little grey) from whom are the Uí Liatháin – (controlling east Cork)

Fidach from whom is Crimthann Mór king of Ireland and Scotland

Dedad from whom are the Uí Dedaid that is the Uí Braccáin and the Uí Ailella in the east of the Eoganachta of Cashel

Dau

Der”

The sons of Corc mac Lugaid

“Lugaid, the other son [of AFB] had three sons – that is two sons of Duíl, daughter of Fiachra, king of Éle (in Tipperary > Ely O’Carroll); that is Lugaid from whom are the Uí Luigdech of Éle and Cathbad from whom are the Uí Cathbad Chuille (of the corner). The third son was

Corc mac Lugaid who had seven sons and these were

Cairpre Cruithnechán (of the Cruithni or Picts) or Cairpre Luachra (of Kerry), son of Mongfinne, daughter of Feradach of the Fair Deeds, the king of the Cruithni – from whom they called the son Cairpre Cruithnechán and from whom are descended the Eoganacht Locha Léin (of Killarney).

Corc also had four sons from Óebfinne, daughter of Óengus Bolg (the Belly), king of Corco Lóigde (diocese of Ross, West Cork) and they are

Nad-fróech from whom are Mac Láre and the **Eóganacht of Cashel** and the Eóganacht of Áine (=Any – Limerick/Tip borderlands) and the Eóganacht Glendamnach (of Glanworth) and the Eóganacht of Daurles – Thurles and the Eóganacht of Airthir Cliach (eastern Clíu – in barony of Small County, Limerick)

Mac-Cass from whom are the Uí Echach

Mac Brócc (Son of Badger) who is also called Trena and from whom are the Uí Threna

Mac Iair from whom are the Uí Meic Íair

The sixth son of Corc, he was Daig from whom are the Uí Muiredaig etc

The seventh son that is Cairpre Cruithnechán from whom are the Eóganacht of Mag Dergind in Scotland that is to say the family from whom was Oengus, king of Scotland”

Óebind, the West Cork wife of Corc and the story of the young pups = continuation of the above genealogical text

- “It was this Óebfind who saw in a dream on the first night that she spent with the king in Cashel that is she saw four pups being born and the first pup was washed in wine that is Nad-fróech; the second was washed in beer that is Mac-Cas, the third was washed in milk (that is Mac Brocc) and the fourth was washed in water that is Mac Iair. Then the fifth pup came to her from outside of her bed and she washed him in blood; that is Cairpre Cruithnechán [ancestor of Eóganacht of Killarney & Scotland] and he turned against her so that he tore her nipples from her breasts etc
- This story appears to be designed to justify the relatively bad relations between the Eóganacht of Cashel and the Eóganacht of Killarney

The sons of Nad-fróech

“**Nad-fróech** had two sons that is, Óengus and Ailill. Ailill from whom are the Eóganacht Áine.

Óengus, however, had 24 sons and 24 daughters. **After the coming of Patrick, he then donated twelve sons and twelve daughters to God who were all saints.** These are the names of the twelve sons of the world:

Feidlimid from whom are the Eóganacht of Cashel

Dub-gilcach from whom are Fingin and Fáilbe Fland

Eochaid from whom is Cathal mac Finguine [famous king of Cashel and Munster in 8th C – died 742]

Bressal from whom is Cormac mac Cuilennáin [famous king of Cashel and Munster in early 10th C – died 908]

Senach of whom it is said he took one band of guests with the king of his inheritance

Áed Cáech (the Blind)

Three sons he had with Eithne Uathaige (from whom are the kindred of Eithne):

Mac-Cairthind from whom are Gubi, and Dub-Conaind & Dub-Derir & Áed Colptha

Nath-fithrech from whom are the Uí Gruibni – Aed, Fedlimid Loscán

Nad-genaid of whom there are three groups of descendants in the lands of the Uí Duach (of Kilkenny) and another part of the family of Nad-genaid are in the regions of the Déise – that is Lugaid mac Nad-genaid, Nath-Í etc

Two sons then Óengus also had that is Colmán Mór son of Daráine whose relics are in Daire Mór (Derrymore, now Kilcolman, sth of Birr in Offaly) and Lugaid whose relics are in Druim Inasclaing (in Delvin ?).”

Division of Ireland from Rawlinson B 502 (O'Brien 1962, 206-7).

This is a continuation of the same text omitting a short section dealing with the divisions between the lands of the sons of Ailell Flann Bec

“Of the parts of Ireland here:

Ireland was divided into two equal parts between Conn Cétchathach and Eógán Mór whom we have also called Mug Nuadat son of Dergthene; from Áth Cliath (Dublin) in the east westwards along the Escir Riada through the very centre of Ireland to Fertais Medraige, king of Áth Cliath on the west etc. ..

Ailill Aulomm divided the right half of Ireland between Cormac Cas and Fiachu Muillethan son of Eógán and Ailill Aulomm said there would not men who would urge [an attack] from the family of either of these against the other till Judgement and that his curse would be given on anyone who broke this.”

Division of Ireland from Rawlinson B 502 (O'Brien 1962, 206-7). Contd.,

“This is the division of Cormac Cás in Cliu Máil from Mullach Cláire to Berna Trí Carpat [the gap of the three chariots], from Carn Feradaig and Cenn Fabrat northwards as far as Fochor Mág and with the side of the “*mag*” [plain of settlement] eastwards as far as Limerick to the north and from the ford of Tara eastwards to Fert Sceinde and from Fochormag to Dún nEclas eastwards at Emly and from Dún nEchlas northwards to Cathair Cairn Riavaich and from that north-eastwards to Slíab Éiblinne (Slieve Felim) to Gáethaich that is the river between Aradu (barony of Ara) and Músraige Tíri to the place where it enters Loch Derg. From Berna Trí Carpat northwards to the Wood Cétinis (first island) and to Fidmag Bera and to Eiscir Riada and to the Ford of the Borraime westwards as far as Léim Con-Culaind (Cú Culainn’s leap – Loop head.) There had been *tuatha* of the men of the ancient province of Connacht who had been in that land before.

Lugaid Mend son of Óengus Tírech son of Fer Cuirp son of Mog Coirp son of Cormac Cass, it is he who cleared it and who took it. Thence it is called the rough farm-land of Lugaid of the Red Hand. No-one comes into the reckoning of the division from the Men of Munster to the Dál Cais from that land and it is not permitted that there should be tax nor food-render nor hostages nor escort from that land to any king in Ireland except the king of the Dál Cais alone.

There was then an equal number of kings who controlled Munster from the Dál Cais and from the family of Fiachu Mullethan from the time of Ailell Aulomm to Óengus son of Nad-fraech.”

- This text is thus suggesting that the territory of the Dál Cais stretches as far south as the area of Bruff and Knockainey, east to Emly, north to Lough Derg and west to Loop Head. It is not at all certain that the ancestral Dál Cais who existed before the era of Brian Boru would have had a territory extending to anything like this in size and it seems most likely that this account represents the territory controlled by the Dál Cais at a period much closer to the twelfth-century date of the manuscript in which the text is found. Particularly problematic and difficult to interpret is the suggestion that the Dál Cais rule in east Limerick – historians sometimes argue that this was the case prior to the emergence of Dál Cais kings in the annalistic record for the 930s but in the absence of contemporary documentation, it is impossible to prove.

Division of Ireland from Rawlinson B 502 (O'Brien 1962, 206-7). Contd.,

“Dima Dub son of Rónan king of the Dál Cais contested against Failbe Fland for the kingship of Cashel.

The good men of Munster awarded it to them thus: Cashel to Failbe Fland first for he was older than Dímma and they resolved then that there would be rights for the king of Cashel in Thomond that is from Cuillend Osraige (in Kilkenny) to Cú Chulainn’s Leap (Loop Head) and escort and all their other appropriate taxes belonging to Díma and to the kings of Dál Cáis till judgement; this was the time when rulership and the sovereignty over these lands was not given to the Dál Cais.

It is this, moreover, the division of the Dál Cais in *Urmumain* (Ormond, East Munster) that is the grave-mound of Conall Echluath and Druim Cormaic and half of Cnoc Raphann and every part of a *bó-aire’s* heritage from Cnámcoil (by Tipperary town, border of Dál Cais territory) east to Áth Cliath.

It is this, the division of the Dál Cais in *Des-mumain* (Desmond, South Munster) from the location of Belach Conglais east to Carn Uí Néit. It is Cormac Cas who gave land to the son of his mother that is to Lugaid mac Con after he went to Tara. Conall Echluath was born of Eochaid son of Cas son of Corc and it is he who gave the land to him after the refusal of his brothers towards his father and the blessing of Corc was given to Conall and he gave the kingship of Cashel to himself afterwards and on every occasion henceforth till Judgement when the kingship was with the Dál Cais.

It is this the division of Dál Cais in west Munster that is in the half of the country where Cairpre Cruithnechán was located for he was the guarantor to whom Corc mac Lugdach as king gave the hand of Conall Echluath concerning the appropriate rights of Cashel vis a vis the Dál Cais until judgement. In that land also were found the Uí Thornae for whom Cóemhind daughter of Conall Echluath was the mother of offspring and it is from her contains the inheritance which is with the mother’s kin.

It is this, moreover the pact between the Dál Cais themselves, that is the Déise of the North and the Déise of the south that is everything that is in common between them when the kingship of Cashel is in the north as its grass-vassalry (*férdes*) and its prescriptive right to the king of the Déise of the south, thirty heifers from each inheritance every three years for him. In the time when there is no king from either in Cashel, his horse and his outer robe from the king of the north to the king of the south.

There are four wealthy ones who possess the southern kingship that is the king of the Uí Ehdach and the king of the Dál Cais and the king of [Ciarraige Luachra] and the king of Uí Chonaill and the king of the province of the Uí Cairpri.

Magnificence is due to him and there will not be his *aera* (?) from them.” (*aera* = satires? Sports?)

This section of the text is particularly interesting for our understanding of the Dál Cais power-base. It appears to be indicating that there are pieces of territory located outside the borders of Thomond which owed loyalty directly to Dál Cais kings and without intermediaries. Again, it would be wonderful to know what period this political arrangement belongs.

As a parallel to the genealogical text and its claim of shared ancestry amongst the Dál Cais and the Eóganacht , see the 12th C *Cogadh*:

XLIII: There was then governing and ruling this tribe two stout, able, valiant pillars, two fierce, lacerating, magnificent heroes, two gates of battle...viz. **Mathgamain and Brian, two sons of Cennétich** son of Lorcan son of Lachtna, son of Corc son of Anluan, son of Mathgamain, son of Toirdelbach, son of Cathal, son of Aed, son of Conall, son of Eochaid Ball-Derg, son of Cairthinn Finn, son of Blath, son of Cas, son of Conall Echluath, son of Lugaid Menn, son of Oengus Tirech, son of Fercorb, son of Mog Corb, son of Cas, son of Ailell Auloimm, son of Mug Nuadat who divided Ireland with Conn of the hundred battles (Conn Cétchathaig .. King of northern half of Ireland). This was one of the two couples that sustained the rule and sovereignty of Ireland from the time of Eremon son of Miled and Eber his brother and from the beginning of the world.