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S. Ciarán's Church and his Lands

A Study of the History and Development of  
Clonmacnois

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October, 1994

St. Columba's Church and his work  
A Study of the History and Development of  
the Church



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## Summary

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*Annette Kehnel*

Annette Kehnel

24 October 1994

### Summary

Clonmacnois was founded in the middle of the sixth century, as a place of contemplation by S. Ciarán. In the course of the following two centuries it became one of the largest churches in Ireland. A considerable number of lay people, monastic clients, lived nearby the church, employed in work on the ecclesiastical estate in the service of the abbot of Clonmacnois as their ecclesiastical overlord. Furthermore the abbots of Clonmacnois held lands in a number of associated churches, spread all over the country, which were under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of its bishop. In the thesis the organisation of the church of Clonmacnois as an ecclesiastical institution will be discussed. It seems that government was in the hands of a lay ecclesiastical ruling class, who in a widely spread network of relationships exercised power over lands and people, as landlords of a large estate. The power held by those in government of the church relied very much on constant interaction with the secular rulers at the time. Close links with the leading dynasties in Connacht are apparent for the early period, from the seventh to the ninth century. From the late ninth century onwards the Clann Cholmáin kings of Mide assume increasing importance as the secular patrons of the ecclesiastical estate. With the decline of the kingdom of Mide in the course of the eleventh century, smaller kingdoms in the immediate neighbourhood of Clonmacnois, such as Tethba and Uí Maine, became closely involved in the fortunes of the nearby ecclesiastical estate, and families from these territories appear frequently in leading offices. Finally, with the close of the eleventh century, the Ua Conchobair kings of Connacht found a close ally in Clonmacnois, a friendship with was maintained throughout the twelfth down to the early thirteenth century.

Another problem most central to the present study is that of reconstructing the extent of the ecclesiastical estate, the lands and churches under the rule of Clonmacnois. Hagiographical writings and saga material contain the most genuine information here, if only in highly stratified texts, which underwent many, often late medieval, redactions. However, these texts preserved earlier material in which the relationship between S. Ciaran's church and other foundations found expression in terms of friendship between the respective founder patrons. Additional information might be gleaned from the Irish annals, where obituaries of ecclesiastical officials are noted, and in many cases the family background, or geographical origin of those who held offices in Clonmacnois are given. Often one man held leading positions in two, sometime three, or even four churches at a time. It seems that the exchange of

ecclesiastical personnel was one means by which Clonmacnois maintained the relationship with its dependencies. Unfortunately, no genuine medieval account of the churches under S. Ciaran's authority is preserved. There is, however, a late medieval source, now known as the 'Registry of Clonmacnois', in which a number of churches and lands are listed and claimed to have at some stage belonged under the authority of the bishop of Clonmacnois. The document is preserved in a seventeenth-century translation into English only, but there is evidence suggesting that it ultimately depended on a pre-reform account of the lands under the authority of Clonmacnois. Using the 'Registry' as a source, reading it alongside the early history of Clonmacnois, comparing it with the evidence contained in the hagiographical writings plus the information on the local origin of those in the leadership of the church prior to the twelfth century, the attempt will be made to establish the approximate extent of Clonmacnois' sphere of influence prior to the twelfth century.

In the reform of the Irish church, which took place in the twelfth century the ecclesiastical landscape in Ireland seems to have changed dramatically. These changes, in the case of Clonmacnois, brought about the loss of authority over its affiliated churches and their lands and ultimately resulted in the decline of the ecclesiastical estate. Clonmacnois survived the church reform and the arrival of the Anglo-Normans as the episcopal seat of one of the smallest dioceses in Ireland.



## Acknowledgements

The present study could not have been written without the generosity of Trinity College Dublin, enabling my research by awarding me an International Postgraduate Studentship between 1990 and 1994, the final year of which I lived and worked in exile in Germany.

During those years I had the pleasure to profit from the riches of Trinity College Libraries and from the helpful support of its staff.

I am also greatly indebted to the staff in the Medieval History Department in particular to Dr. Katharine Simms who guided my interest in medieval Ireland to the study of church history in the very first place, teaching me its use as a vehicle to learn about social, political and economic conditions in the middle ages. She was extremely helpful and patient as a supervisor, generously giving her time and scholarly advice throughout the years of researching and writing the thesis.

Also I received much help from my fellow students and friends in Trinity and elsewhere, to mention them all by name would be outside the scope of the preface to a thesis. I am particularly grateful to Seán Duffy, Colmán Etchingham, Alan MacGovern and Mario Sughì, who not only gave me academic support in reading through drafts of different chapters and sharing with me results of their own work, but also moral encouragement by keeping up correspondence once I had moved back to Munich. Tim Gorringer contributed a great deal to my work by taking on the tiresome business of reading through it all, correcting grammar, style and Germanisms, and putting many critical questionmarks.

Finally I wish to thank my two children Paul and Klara for the many, mostly pleasant, hours of distraction inbetween work, and Ludger Lieb my husband, for everything (including baby-minding and the splendid editing of the thesis).

Annette Kehnel

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**Abbreviations:**

<i>AClon</i>	<i>The Annals of Clonmacnoise</i>
<i>AConn</i>	<i>Annála Connacht: The Annals of Connacht</i>
<i>ACott</i>	<i>The Annals in Cotton</i>
<i>AFM</i>	<i>Annála ríoghachta Éireann: annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters</i>
<i>AI</i>	<i>The Annals of Inisfallen</i>
<i>ALCé</i>	<i>The Annals of Loch Cé</i>
<i>Anal. Hib.</i>	<i>Analecta Hibernica</i>
<i>arch.</i>	<i>archaeological</i>
<i>ant.</i>	<i>antiquarian</i>
<i>AT</i>	<i>The Annals of Tigernach</i>
<i>AU</i>	<i>The Annals of Ulster and Annála Uladh. The Annals of Ulster</i>
<i>Cal. Doc. Irel.</i>	<i>Calendar of documents relating to Ireland</i>
<i>Cal. Pap. Let.</i>	<i>Calendar of entries in the papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: papal letters</i>
<i>Corp. Gen. Hib.</i>	<i>Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae</i>
<i>CS</i>	<i>Chronicum Scotorum</i>
<i>Galway Arch. Hist. Soc. Jn.</i>	<i>Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society</i>
<i>Gwynn &amp; Hadcock</i>	<i>A. GWYNN and R. N. HADCOCK, Medieval Religious Houses</i>
<i>hist.</i>	<i>historical</i>
<i>IER</i>	<i>Irish Ecclesiastical Record</i>
<i>IHS</i>	<i>Irish Historical Studies</i>
<i>Jn.</i>	<i>Journal</i>
<i>Jn. Kilk. SE. Irel. Arch. Soc.</i>	<i>The Journal of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society</i>
<i>JRSAI</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland</i>
<i>Misc. Annals</i>	<i>Miscellaneous Irish Annals</i>
<i>n.</i>	<i>note</i>
<i>NHI</i>	<i>A new History of Ireland</i>
<i>PRIA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C</i>
<i>R.I.A.</i>	<i>Royal Irish Academy</i>
<i>Registry</i>	<i>'The Registry of Clonmacnoise'</i>
<i>RS</i>	<i>Rolls Series</i>
<i>Soc.</i>	<i>Society</i>
<i>TCD</i>	<i>Trinity College Dublin</i>
<i>ZCP</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie</i>

## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. SOURCES.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1. Annals .....	3
1.2. Hagiography and Saga material.....	11
1.2.1. Dating of S. Ciarán's Lives .....	13
1.2.2. Saga material.....	17
1.3. Late medieval documents .....	19
1.3.1. The 'Registry of Clonmacnoise' .....	19
1.3.2. Papal Letters.....	20
1.3.3. Books of Survey and Distribution.....	21
<b>2. THE CHURCH OF CLONMACNOIS PRIOR TO THE CHURCH REFORM -     ITS GOVERNMENT, THE RULING DYNASTIES AND ITS     ECCLESIASTICAL ALLIES.....</b>	<b>22</b>
2.1. The organization of the monastic institution.....	23
2.2. Septs and families represented in offices in Clonmacnois - Clanship in the monastic community? .....	37
2.3. Affiliations between Clonmacnois and other churches.....	41
<b>3. CLONMACNOIS AND ITS NEIGHBOURS - THE POLITICAL HISTORY     OF THE SETTLEMENT .....</b>	<b>73</b>
3.1. Clonmacnois and its western neighbours in the early period, from the seventh to ninth centuries.....	76
3.2. Clonmacnois and the kings of Tara of the Southern Uí Néill. ....	86
3.3. The eleventh century .....	97
3.4. The Ua Conchobair kings of Connacht as patrons of Clonmacnois since the later eleventh century .....	102
3.5. Conclusions: Secular patronage - a reassessment.....	105
<b>4. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY. CLONMACNOIS     UNDER THE IMPACT OF CHURCH REFORM AND THE ANGLO-     NORMAN INVASION.....</b>	<b>108</b>
4.1. The condition of Clonmacnois on the eve of the church reform. ....	108
4.1.1. The Meic Cuinn na mBocht.....	108
4.1.2. The ecclesiastical aristocracy of Clonmacnois .....	113
4.2. Clonmacnois in the Age of Reform.....	118
4.2.1. Condition of the Irish church in comparison with the situation in the continental church.....	118
4.2.2. Changes in the governmental structures of Clonmacnois in the twelfth century.....	121
4.2.3. The development of the ecclesiastical estate under the impact of the church reform .....	125
4.3. The Anglo-Norman invasion.....	132
4.3.1. The immediate effects of the Anglo-Norman invasion.....	132
4.3.2. Clonmacnois' role in the restoration of Ua Conchobair power in Connacht under Cathal Crobderg.....	136
4.4. Summary .....	140

<b>5. THE HISTORY OF CLONMACNOIS IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES.....</b>	<b>142</b>
5.1. The Extent of the diocese of Clonmacnois .....	142
5.2. The history of the bishopric of Clonmacnois.....	148
5.2.1. The see of Clonmacnois in the sphere of Anglo-Norman influence during the thirteenth century. The bishopric under royal control. ....	148
5.2.2. The see of Clonmacnois in the course of the Gaelic revival in the fourteenth and fifteenth century.....	152
5.3. The history of the former ecclesiastical aristocracy in the later middle ages.....	159
<b>6. THE REGISTRY OF CLONMACNOIS - A POTENTIAL SOURCE FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FORMER ECCLESIASTICAL LANDS OF CLONMACNOIS. THE HISTORY OF THE TRANSMISSION OF THE DOCUMENT.....</b>	<b>166</b>
6.1. The Manuscript.....	167
6.2. The content of the Registry.....	168
6.3. Dating of the document.....	170
6.3.1. The early forerunner of the Registry: The 'Red booke' - The book of the ecclesiastical accountancy.....	171
6.3.2. The history of transmission of the Registry - various later redactions of the 'Red booke'. ....	172
<b>7. THE EXTENT OF S. CIARÁN'S POSSESSIONS ACCORDING TO THE REGISTRY OF CLONMACNOIS.....</b>	<b>181</b>
7.1. The Ua Ceallaigh donations to Clonmacnois.....	182
7.2. The grant of 'Ceallach mac Finachta'.....	186
7.3. Ua Máelsechlainn .....	187
7.4. Ua Conchobair.....	189
7.5. Ua Ruairc.....	190
7.6. Mac Diarmada .....	193
7.7. Mac Carthaigh.....	194
7.8. The abbatial lands.....	196
7.9. The lands of S. Ciarán - an attempt to reconstruct the extent of the ecclesiastical estate.....	196
<b>8. 'THE HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL' OF CLONMACNOIS - CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1. CATALOGUE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY OF CLONMACNOIS, FROM THE SIXTH TO THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.....</b>	<b>205</b>
Appendix 1.1. List of monastic officials .....	205
Abbots (A).....	205
Bishops (B) .....	229
Vice-Abbots, steward, <i>equonimus</i> , <i>secnab</i> , <i>tánaisi</i> or <i>prior</i> (vA).....	235
Priests (P).....	240
Scribes, Lectors and Wise men (S).....	243
Anchorites (An).....	249
Head of the Céili Dé, <i>cenn Chéile Dhé</i> or <i>cenn bocht</i> (C) .....	251
Seniors and Wise men (Sen).....	252
Head of the little church, <i>airchinnech Eglaisi Bige</i> (AE) .....	254
Guestmaster, <i>airchinnech tige oiged</i> (G).....	255

Others (O).....	256
Appendix 1.2: Tribes and families represented in offices in Clonmacnois. ....	258
Appendix 1.3: Churches from which ecclesiastical officials in Clonmacnois came. ....	261

**APPENDIX 2. THE LANDS OF CLONMACNOIS ACCORDING TO THE  
REGISTRY..... 262**

Ua Ceallaigh donations to Clonmacnois (nos. 1-40).....	262
The Ua Máelsechlainn donations (nos. 41 - 60).....	274
The Ua Conchobair donations (nos. 60 - 65).....	280
The Ua Ruairc donations (nos. 66 - 72).....	281
The Mac Diarmada donations (nos. 73 - 75).....	283
The Mac Carthaigh donations (nos. 76 - 79).....	283
Donations by the Geraldines from Desmond (nos. 80 - 87).....	284
The living of the abbot of Clonmacnois (nos. 88 - 93).....	285
The livings of Ua Cillín (nos. 94 -95).....	286

**BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 287**

Manuscripts.....	287
Primary Works.....	287
Secondary Works.....	291

## INTRODUCTION

"Ich bin meiner Heimat sehr anhänglich, Sankt Patricks buchtenreichem Eiland, seinen Weiden, Hecken und Mooren. Dort gehen die Lüfte feucht und mild, und milde auch ist die Lebensluft unseres Klosters Clonmacnois, will sagen: zugetan einer von mäßiger Askese gezügelten Bildung."<sup>1</sup>

Clonmacnois, one of the main ecclesiastical centres in early Christian Ireland, attracted the attention of many. Be it a an Irish antiquarian in the early nineteenth century, a German writer in the twentieth century, or a contemporary tourist, the place was and still is visited as a remnant of early Christian civilisation, a witness to past days of piety and learning, combining saintly life with glorious achievements for the progress of human kind.<sup>2</sup> Others with a more specialised interest, such as art historians and more recently those interested in the economic functions of early monastic proto-towns in rural societies, study the monastery's extensive remains.<sup>3</sup> However no comprehensive work on Clonmacnois has been published, which takes into account its history as an institution, its role in the political landscape of pre-Norman Ireland, its position in the network of power in the Irish church. The most detailed work on the matter remains the seventy pages of historical summary on Clonmacnois by Father John Ryan, published in 1973.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Mann, *Der Erwählte* (Frankfurt 1980) 9.

<sup>2</sup> See Conleth Manning, *Clonmacnois* (Dublin 1994); John Corkery, *Cluan Chiaráin - The city of Ciarán* (Longford 1979); Doirin Doyle, *The story of Clonmacnois* (Dublin 1970); William Lee M. Giff, *The story of Clonmacnois* (Athlone 1957); W. Gamble, *Clonmacnois, its history and achievements* (Dublin 1950).

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Johnson Westropp, 'A description of the ancient buildings and crosses at Clonmacnois, King's county', *JRSAI* 37 (1907) 277-306; Henry S. Crawford, 'Athlone excursion. Descriptive particulars of places visited', *JRSAI* 37 (1907) 318-348, esp. 329; Robert Alexander Steward Macalister, *The memorial slabs of Clonmacnois* (Dublin 1909); Brendan Molloy, *A guide to the ruins of Clonmacnois* (Athlone 1957); Françoise Henry, *Studies in early Christian and medieval Irish art*, vol 3: *Architecture and sculpture* (London 1985); for the approach by the historical geographers see Charles Doherty, 'The monastic town in early medieval Ireland', in Anngret Simms and H. B. Clarke (eds), *The comparative history of urban origins in non-roman Europe* (Oxford 1985) vol 1, 45-75, esp. 63-66, where Clonmacnois is discussed as one example.

<sup>4</sup> John Ryan, *Clonmacnois. A historical summary* (Dublin 1973); see also Charles Doherty, 'Clonmacnois', *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 4 (1989) 2166-2169; A. Gwynn and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses Ireland. With an Appendix to early sites* (London 1970, reprint Dublin 1988), 64-65, 165; James F. Kenney, *The sources for the early history of Ireland*, vol 1: *Ecclesiastical* (New York 1929) 376-384; Kathleen Hughes, 'The distribution of Irish Scriptoria and centres of learning from 730 to 1111', in K. Hughes, *Church and society in Ireland A.D. 400-*

History is made by historians. Their writings, on the other hand, become a source of history for the time in which they were writing. This, of course, not only applies to those who revised the medieval Irish annals and saga tales in tenth century Ireland but also to the student of history in the late twentieth century. I might therefore just as well reveal my intentions and bias in the very first place, to spare future historians some two hundred pages of tiresome reading.

The history of Clonmacnois, founded in the middle of the sixth century, started with but a few houses, built by a pious man called Ciarán as a place of contemplation for himself and his disciples somewhere in the middle of some of the most boggy parts of Ireland. In the course of the following two centuries it developed into a large community, a place where people, together with their families, settled, worked, made their living and died. Moreover it became an ecclesiastical centre of power, exercising authority over lands and people in a large area.

Following an introductory chapter on the sources, I attempt in chapter two and three of the thesis to find out what we can know about the organization of the church of Clonmacnois as an ecclesiastical institution. It seems that government lay in the hands of a lay ecclesiastical ruling class, who in a widely spread network of relationships exercised power as lords of a large estate. Although they were often laymen, their power apparently largely relied on their authority as men of the church, and on their close interaction with the respective secular rulers. This ultimately leads us to the question of the political role of Clonmacnois, the relationship between the ecclesiastical and the secular world, between the successors of S. Ciarán and their secular counterparts, which will be discussed in chapter three.

In the reform of the Irish church, which took place in the twelfth century, the ecclesiastical landscape in Ireland seems to have changed dramatically. How did these changes effect the church of Clonmacnois? In chapter four of the thesis I try to assess its development in the course of the twelfth century reform. It seems the changes, in the case of Clonmacnois, ultimately resulted in the decline of the ecclesiastical estate. The church survived the period of the church reform and the Anglo-Norman invasion as one of the smallest dioceses of Ireland. Its history in the later middle ages will be briefly discussed in chapter five. In the remaining chapters of the present study an attempt is made to reconstruct the ecclesiastical lands of Clonmacnois. As a most valuable source here appears the so-called 'Registry of Clonmacnoise', a document preserved in a

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1200, ed. David Dumville (London 1987) chap. XI; Francis John Byrne, *Irish kings and highkings* (London 1973) 171, 221-222, 240-242; Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry. The history and hagiography of the monastic familia of Columba* (Oxford 1988) 30, 32, 54, 66.

seventeenth century transcript only. I argue in chapter six of the thesis that the 'Registry' ultimately depended on a pre-reform account of the lands under the authority of Clonmacnois. Using it as a source we can establish the approximate extent of Clonmacnois' sphere of influence, and in some cases traces the history of the former ecclesiastical property down to the later middle ages. In a final and concluding chapter the suggestion is made that the 'decline' of the ecclesiastical estate of Clonmacnois was ultimately linked with the loss of the ecclesiastical lands in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth century. Clonmacnois lost its authority over the affiliated churches and therewith its lands, which seem to have constituted the economic basis of the ecclesiastical estate.

## 1. SOURCES

### 1.1. Annals

Given the size and importance of Clonmacnois as one of the main churches in Ireland prior to the twelfth century, comparatively little source material has come down to us. No foundation charters, no original church registers, no contemporary history of the church or biographies of its most outstanding abbots are preserved. Until such documents will be discovered we have to rely on the information scattered in the various sources for medieval Irish history. Some of them, such as the annals have, however, the great advantage of having partly been written in Clonmacnois itself.

The now extant annalistic compilations are generally divided into two main bodies, one represented by the Annals of Ulster, the other by the 'Clonmacnois group of annals' (including *AT*, *CS*, *AClon*, *AI*, *ARoscrea*), both named after their presumed places of origin. A comparison between the two reveals great agreement concerning the entries for the early period. It has been suggested that all of them go back to one ancestor text, a hypothetical common source, now lost, named by Professor K. Hughes the 'chronicle of Ireland'.<sup>5</sup> This chronicle was used as a common source down to the early tenth century, more precisely the year 911, when the Clonmacnois group of annals start to

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<sup>5</sup> Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the sources* (London 1972) 101, also 117-119 for the incorporation of material from the hypothetical 'Iona Chronicle'; David Dumville & Kathryn Grabowski, *Chronicles and annals of mediaeval Ireland and Wales. The Clonmacnois-group Texts* (Woodbridge 1984) 53-56.



diverge considerably from the annals of Ulster, and apparently led an independent existence.<sup>6</sup> Using evidence from the Welsh chronicles David Dumville further suggested that a common ancestor text to the Clonmacnois group of annals, a hypothetical 'Clonmacnois chronicle', was written sometime between the year 911 and 954.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately this original 'Clonmacnois Chronicle', if it ever existed, like its hypothetical predecessor, was not preserved. It comes down to us in four rather incomplete recensions, all of which underwent later redactions.

First amongst them, and the most original one, are the so-called Annals of Tigernach (*AT*), misleadingly named after their presumed author Tigernach Ua Braoín.<sup>8</sup> They are fragmentarily preserved in two fourteenth century manuscripts Rawlinson B. 488 and Rawlinson B. 502.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately entries are missing for over two centuries between the year 767 and 974. They continue recording for the following two hundred years and break off in the middle of an entry for the year 1178.<sup>10</sup> Secondly there is the *Chronicum Scotorum* (*CS*), preserved in a seventeenth century transcript only. It was made by Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh for James Ware, now TCD MS no. 1292 (formerly H. 1. 18). The chronicle ceases recording in the year 1150, with a brief hiatus for the years 1136 to 1139.<sup>11</sup> Then there are the so-called Annals of Clonmacnois (*AClon*), a seventeenth century translation of an Irish chronicle into English, made by Conell Mageoghagan. His autograph has not yet been discovered, and only copies of the translation exist, the most complete being that in the British Library, MS Add. 4817.<sup>12</sup> However the 'olde Booke' which Mageoghagan translated was in bad repair and often

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<sup>6</sup> Dumville & Grabowski, *Chronicles and annals*, 53-56; see also Gearóid Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals* (Dublin 1975) 22-23, 27; K. Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 107; J. V. Kelleher, 'The Tain and the annals', *Ériu* 22 (1971) 107-127, here 116-117.

<sup>7</sup> Dumville & Grabowski, *Chronicles and annals*, 209-226.

<sup>8</sup> The supposed author was Tigernach Ua Braoín, abbot of Clonmacnois in the late eleventh century, who died in 1088 (see Appendix 1, A67). The theory of his authorship has been convincingly refuted by R. A. S. Macalister, 'The sources of the preface of the "Tigernach annals"', *IHS* 4 (1944-50) 38-57; Paul Walsh, 'The annals attributed to Tigernach', in P. Walsh (ed), *Irish men of learning* (Dublin 1947) 219-225.

<sup>9</sup> An other imperfect copy is also preserved in TCD MS no. 1292 (formerly H. 1. 18), which also contains the *Chronicum Scotorum*. For the manuscripts of the principal Irish Annals see G. Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals*, 40-41.

<sup>10</sup> Whitley Stokes (ed), *The Annals of Tigernach*, 2 vols (Felinfach 1993); see also *Revue Celtique* 16 (1895) 374-419; vol 17 (1896) 6-33, 119-263, 337-420; vol 18 (1897) 9-59, 150-197, 267-303.

<sup>11</sup> William M. Hennessy (ed), *Chronicum Scotorum. A chronicle of Irish affairs, from the earliest times to A.D. 1135* (RS, London 1866).

<sup>12</sup> Sarah Sanderlin, 'The manuscripts of the Annals of Clonmacnois', *PRIA* 82 (1982) 111-123.

defective, as apparent from his repeated complaints about the many pages missing, stolen or unreadable.<sup>13</sup> His source recorded events down to the year 1407. Finally there is the 'Leabhar Cluana mic nóis', a chronicle apparently now lost, but used as a source by the Four Masters, who state that it went down to the year 1227.<sup>14</sup>

The Annals of Tigernach are, together with the Annals of Ulster, generally regarded as the principal witness to the original Irish chronicle, be it the Iona chronicle or the chronicle of Ireland. The *Chronicum* has been classified as a faithful, though much abbreviated version of Tigernach's annals, or of the text from which they immediately derived.<sup>15</sup> Mageoghagan's annals for the early period have little material which is not contained elsewhere, and the same seems to apply for the Clonmacnois source used by the Four Masters. Only in the late eighth century do they start recording events not to be found in the other chronicles.<sup>16</sup>

In a sample study of the obituaries of the Clonmacnois clergy in the various sets of annals (compare Appendix 1), we will try to assess the value of the *Chronicum Scotorum* and the Clonmacnois source used by the Four Masters, as a reliable representatives of the Clonmacnois annals. Part of the group of entries common to the Annals of Ulster as well as the Clonmacnois chronicles were obviously the obituaries of the abbots of Clonmacnois. Down to the year 766, when the Annals of Tigernach break off, the death notices in the Clonmacnois chronicles largely agree with those in the Annals of Ulster even in the choice of words and phraseology.<sup>17</sup> Sometimes additional

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<sup>13</sup> Denis Murphy (ed), *The Annals of Clonmacnoise being Annals of Ireland from the earliest period to A.D. 1408. Translated into English A.D. 1627 by Conell Mageoghagan* (Dublin 1896, reprint Felinagh 1993); *ibid*, 9, 215 (references to the annals are generally given by the year, to the Annals of Clonmacnois I refer by year and pagenumber).

<sup>14</sup> John O'Donovan (ed), *Annála rioghachta Éireann: annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*, 7 vols (Dublin 1851) vol 1, Lxiv-Lxv.

<sup>15</sup> Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 106-107; Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals*, 20, 23.

<sup>16</sup> Dumville & Grabowski, *Chronicles and annals*, 177 n.76 for singular entries for Clonmacnois in *AFM*. See also below, 9 n.34.

<sup>17</sup> See for example: A3

*AU* 585.1 Quies M. Nisse, abb Cluana Moccu Nois, .xiii. anno.

*AT* (584) Quies Maic (nisse) abadh Cluana maic nóis.

*CS* 584 Quies mic Nissi, dUlltoibh do, Ab Cluana muc Nois.

A6

*AU* 628.4 Pausa Columbani filii Bairddaeni abbatis Clono.

*AT* (627) Pausatio Columbani filii Bardani do Dháil Baird Ulad, abbadh Cluana.

*CS* 628 Pausan Columbani filii Baddani Abbad Cluana.

A17

*AU* 724.4 Cuinnles, abbas Cluana M. Noois, obiit.

*AT* (723) Cuíndles abb Cluana maic Nois obit. Di Soghain Condacht dó.

A23

*AU* 762.3 Quies Cormaic abbatis Cluana Moccu Nois.

*AT* (761) Quies Cormaic ab Cluana maic Nois, + do Sil Cairpri do.

information concerning the family background of the respective abbot is added in the Annals of Tigernach and the *Chronicum*, which appear to be later insertions, dating at least from the tenth century when the Clonmacnois chronicles were kept independently. Obviously the lacuna in the Annals of Tigernach, over two hundred years from the year 767 to 974, make a comparison for this period difficult. We have to rely on the Four Masters and the *Chronicum*; the latter, however, have no entries for the years 719 to 803. When they restart continuous recording in the early ninth century the abbatial obituaries for Clonmacnois are still recorded in more or less the same way as in the Annals of Ulster.<sup>18</sup> Even the change in title, from the traditional *abb* or *abbas* to *princeps* happens simultaneously in the later ninth century for abbot Ferdornach.<sup>19</sup> Only with the tenth century, when the Clonmacnois chronicles began to be kept independently from the Annals of Ulster, do the obituaries differ considerably. The Annals of Ulster soon go over to the use of the title *comarba*, rather than *princeps*,<sup>20</sup> whereas the *Chronicum* adjusts to this convention only in the mid tenth century.<sup>21</sup> When the Annals

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<sup>18</sup> See: A36

*AU* 816.4. Combustio Cluana M. Nois demedia ex maiore parte. 5. Mors Suibne m. Cuanach, abbatis Cluana M. Nois.

*CS* 816 Loscadh cluana muc Nois. Mors Cathail mic Oililla, Rí H. ffiacrach. Tibraide Ab Cluana ferta brenaind [quieuit]. Suibne mac Cuanach, do Ib briain [S]jeola, Ab Cluana muc Nois, quieuit iar tricaid la ar loscad Cluana.

A37

*AU* 823.6 Ronan, abbas Cluana M. Nois, reliquit principatum suum.

*CS* 823 Ronan, Ab Cluana muc Nois do [f]ágaibh a abdaine.

A38

*AU* 850.1 Cetadhach abbas Cluana Moccu Nois + Tuathal m. Ferdadhaich abbas Rechrann + Dermaighe ... defuncti sunt.

*CS* 850 Cédadhach Ab Cluana muc Nois, de Ib Cormaic Maen Maighe, et Tuathal mac Feradhaigh, Ab Recrann et Dermaighe, quieuerunt.

<sup>19</sup> See: A41

*AU* 872.4 Ferdornach, princeps Cluana Moccu Nois, dormiuit.

*CS* 872 Feardornach .i. do Mughdornaibh, Princeps Cluana muc Nois, quieuit.

<sup>20</sup> See: A50

*AU* 931. 1 Tipraití m. Annseneb, comarba Ciarain, extenso dolore obiit. [b e2 add. subscript. H.]

*CS* 930 Tipraide mac Ainnsine de aibh Briuin, Princeps Cluana muc Nois, quieuit.

A51

*AU* 948.3 Anmere h. Adlai, comarba Ciarain m. int Sair.

*CS* 947 Ainmire .H. Catlain dUí mic Uais Midhe, Princeps Cluana muc Nois, quieuit.

A52

*AU* 952.1 Ferdornach comarba Ciarain.

*CS* 951 Ferdornach .H. Maoinaigh, Abb Cluana muc Nois, quieuit .i. i nGlinn da loca mortuus .i. do Corco Moga.

<sup>21</sup> See: A53

*AU* 954.6 Ceilechair comarba Ciarain + Finnian.

*CS* 953 Celechair mac Robartaig do Ib mic Uais Midhe, comarba Finnain ocus Ciarain. See also D. Dumville, 'Latin and Irish in the Annals of Ulster, A.D. 431- 1050', *Ireland in early medieval Europe. Studies in memory of Kathleen Hughes*, ed. D. Whitelock, R. McKitterick, D. Dumville (Cambridge 1982) 320-341, here 326-327 for the changing titulation in *AU*.

of Tigernach restart recording with the year 974, the obituaries of Clonmacnois abbots are no longer included, whereas the *Chronicum*, down to its end in the mid twelfth century, together with the Clonmacnois source used by the Four Masters, represents the fullest account of the abbatial succession in Clonmacnois.<sup>22</sup>

Hand in hand with the beginning of independent recording in Clonmacnois in the tenth century went a revision of the already extant annals. The many notes concerning the origin of Clonmacnois abbots of the early period, exclusively contained in the Clonmacnois annals, seem to have been added to the abbatial obituaries in the annals at this time. Obviously this information must have been preserved in the monastery prior to the tenth century, perhaps in a kind of necrology, or abbatial succession list, which was then copied into the annals.

More detailed information on local affairs can be traced in the Clonmacnois chronicles from the tenth century onwards. The scribe sometimes adds insider information about the political struggles in his ecclesiastical home, such as for example the replacement of the sitting abbot Dedimus by one Joseph in the year 901, or the deposition of abbot Ua Beguláin in the year 1002.<sup>23</sup> Or there is, in the *Chronicum*, the detailed account of the synod of Uisnech in the year 1111.<sup>24</sup> This event is unknown to the other annals, but was apparently a highly important historic event in the eyes of the chronicler in Clonmacnois.

Other information on Clonmacnois affairs, of lesser political importance, was sometimes also included, as for example a great flooding of Clonmacnois in the year 918, which according to the source used by the Four Masters reached the abbot's house as well as the causeway of the three crosses.<sup>25</sup> On another occasion we are told by the writer of the *Chronicum*, that the Crozier of S. Ciarán (*bachall Chiaráin*) got lost in Lough Gara in the year 932.<sup>26</sup> The Clonmacnois source used by the Four Masters added that it was the gold-surfaced staff, which was drowned in the accident (*bachall Chiaráin .i. an óraíneach*) indicating that a particularly well informed scribe was at work here.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Apart from the abbots mentioned in *AU* the *Chronicum* has the following additional names: Ua Beguláin, (deposed in 1002, *CS* 1000); Macraith Ua Flaithéin, comarba Ciaráin agus Cronáin Tuama gréine (d.1098, *CS* 1096); Cormac mac Cuinn na mbocht, do Mughdhornaibh Maigen, comarba Ciaráin Cluana muc Nois, (d.1103, *CS* 1099); Flaithbertach Ua Loingsigh, comarba Ciaráin, (d.1109, *CS* 1105). See Appendix 1, A58, A69, A70, A71.

<sup>23</sup> *CS* 901; *CS* 1000 (recte 1002).

<sup>24</sup> *CS* 1107 (recte 1111); *AFM* 1111. The only other annals which record this synod are *ACott* 1111.

<sup>25</sup> *AFM* 918 (recte 920).

<sup>26</sup> *CS* 930.

<sup>27</sup> *AFM* 930.

In the tenth century, when chronicles were first independently kept in Clonmacnois, the most powerful secular friends of S. Ciarán's ecclesiastical settlement were the Clann Cholmáin kings of Mide. It seems plausible that their patronage also found reflection in the writing and rewriting of the chronicles at the time. The portrayal of Flann Sinna, the then king of Mide, his friendship with Colmán, abbot of Clonmacnois at the time (904-926), their joint building activities, or the death of king Flann's daughters in Clonmacnois, seem to be the direct outcome of contemporary recording, reflecting the political alliances at the time.<sup>28</sup> It seems that in order to document the friendship between Clonmacnois and its Clann Cholmáin patrons the annals were revised to a certain degree in the tenth century. A note concerning the death of the mother of King Flann Sinna, and her interment in Clonmacnois, was inserted in an entry for the year 890.<sup>29</sup> Some additional information about the involvement of the royal dynasty of Mide in the foundation of Clonmacnois would also have found admission in the annals at that time.<sup>30</sup>

The latter half of the eleventh century can be identified as a further period of substantial revision of the annalistic records in Clonmacnois. A considerable number of entries dealing with one particular family in Clonmacnois, the Meic Cuinn na mBocht, are to be found in the *Chronicum*, Mageoghagan's annals and in the 'Book of Clonmacnois' used by the Four Masters.<sup>31</sup> Most of the entries in question here are obituaries or glosses to the obituaries of the ancestors of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht. In the *Chronicum*, for example, a death note of Gormán, the ultimate ancestor of the family who died in the year 758 according to the *Annals of Tigernach* seems to have been copied and added by mistake under the year 615. The entry reads '*Gormán do Mughdhornaibh, a quo nati sunt Mic Cuinn*'.<sup>32</sup> This kind of commentary concerning the pedigree and the relationship between the various members of the ancestors of the 'sons of Conn', the Meic Cuinn na mBocht, must date at least to the time after their eponymous family member, Conn na mBocht had died, which was in the year 1060. Together with a number of obituaries concerning various sons and grandsons of Conn, who never held an office in Clonmacnois, they testify to the involvement of the family in

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<sup>28</sup> CS 908; CS 925; *AClon* 901, p. 144; *AClon* 921, p. 148; *AFM* 904; *AU* 924. For king Flann's daughter CS 922; *AClon* 919, p. 147.

<sup>29</sup> *AFM* 886.

<sup>30</sup> The foundation of Clonmacnois in the mid sixth century was associated with the accession of Diarmait mac Cerbaill (the ultimate ancestor of the Clann Cholmáin) to the kingship of Ireland, in the Clonmacnois annals. *AT* (548), CS 544, *AClon* 547, p. 81.

<sup>31</sup> Dumville & Grabowski, *Chronicles and annals*, 176-180, where the respective entries are listed individually.

<sup>32</sup> CS 615.

chronicle keeping at the time.<sup>33</sup> Their impact is traceable in the *Chronicum*, the *Annals of Clonmacnois* and the *Clonmacnois* source used by the Four Masters, but not in the *Annals of Tigernach*. They also left their traces in the hagiographical productions in *Clonmacnois* at the time.

To sum up we can make the following statements concerning the *Clonmacnois* chronicles: the *Chronicum Scotorum*, from the tenth down to its end in the mid-twelfth century includes a number of seemingly contemporary entries, giving details about internal affairs in *Clonmacnois* obviously relating insider knowledge. The source used by the Four Masters shows a similarly *Clonmacnois*-centered view. It apparently also included a large number of obituaries, most of them belonging to persons who held lesser offices in the ecclesiastical establishment, like scribes, seniors or guestmasters. Despite the unfortunate tendency of the Four Masters to adjust the terminology of the original entries according to their own ideas, these obituaries give an insight into the wide range of offices which existed in the medieval settlement of *Clonmacnois*.<sup>34</sup> In

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<sup>33</sup> See for example *AFM* 1056; *AFM* 1072; *AClon* 1069, p. 180; *AFM* 1085; *AFM* 1103; *CS* 1130.

<sup>34</sup> Obituaries of those who died in *Clonmacnois* only to be found in *AFM*:

*AFM* 763 - Forгла, *sruithe Cluana mic Nóis*, d.768.  
*AFM* 768 - Gallbran Ua Lingáin, *scribhneoir*, d.773.  
*AFM* 789 - Colgu Ua Duineachda, *ferleighind* d.794.  
*AFM* 814 - Dubinse, *sgribhneóir* d.819.  
*AFM* 855 - Máel Oena son of Olbrand, *fear leighinn*, d.857.  
*AFM* 863 - Luchairén, son of Eógan, *scribhnid*, + *angcoire*, d.865.  
*AFM* 865 - Áedacán son of Finnsnecht, *tanaisi abbadh Cluana*, d.867.  
*AFM* 886 - Flann, *ben Máilsechlainn mic Maolruanaidh*, *mathair Fhloinn Sionna*, d.888.  
*AFM* 893 - Ecertach, *airchinnech eccailsi bicce*, *athair Aenacáin + Dúnadhaigh*, d.898.  
*AFM* 921 - Fiachra of Eglais Beag, *Fiachra eccailsi bicce*, d.923.  
*AFM* 927 - Máel Giricc, *abb Tighe Sruithe*, d.929.  
*AFM* 927 - Máel Muccheirge, *feirthighis*, d.929.  
*AFM* 948 - Oengus son of Bran, *saccart*, + *sruith senoir*, d.950.  
*AFM* 948 - Donngal Ua Máelmíde, *fer leighinn*, d.950.  
*AFM* 977 - Cathasach, *airchindeach Eaccailsi bicce*, d.978.  
*AFM* 979 - Adga son of Dubcenn, *tigherna Teathbha*, (prince of Tethba) d.980.  
*AFM* 986 - Broen Ua hAedha, *airchindech eccailsi bicce*, d.987.  
*AFM* 988 - Loingsech son of Máel Pátraic, *fearleighinn*, d.989.  
*AFM* 994 - Odrán Ua hEolais, *scribhnidh*, d.995.  
*AFM* 1005 - Dúnchad son of Dúnadach, *ferleighind Cluana mic Nóis*, + *a hangcoire iarsin*, *ceud a riaghla*, + *a sencais*, d.1006  
*AFM* 1011 - Connmach Ua Tomrair, *sacart*, + *toiseach ceiliabhartha*, d.1012.  
*AFM* 1022 - Catasach Ua Garbáin, *ferleighinn*, d.1022.  
*AFM* 1024 - Dubsláine, *prímh anmchara na nGaoidheal*, + *saccart Aird brecaín*, d.1024.  
*AFM* 1028 - Cernach, *aistire*, d.1028.  
*AFM* 1031 - Mac Finn, *airchinnech tige aoidhedh*, d.1031.  
*AFM* 1032 - Dubinse, *liachtair* (bellringer) d.1032.  
*AFM* 1044 - Ailill son of Bresal, *saccart foir Cluana mic Nóis*, (resident priest) d.1044.  
*AFM* 1051 - Mac Sluagadaig, *uasal shagart*, d.1051.  
*AFM* 1056 - Daighre Ua Dubhatán, *anmchara*, d.1056.  
*AFM* 1056 - Máelfindén son of Conn na mBocht, *athair Chormaic*, *comharba Chiaráin*, d.1056.  
*AFM* 1060 - Ailill Ua Máelchiaráin, *airchinneach Eaccailsi bicce*, d.1060.

contrast the Annals of Tigernach, for the same period, show great concentration on the political history of the time, in particular that of Connacht, with an undisguised support for the Uí Chonchobair kings of Connacht, from the latter half of the eleventh century.<sup>35</sup>

Maybe, instead of postulating a number of hypothetical 'original chronicles' and trying to restore their presumed original text by meticulous and endless comparison of entries, one might simply accept that more than one chronicle was kept in Clonmacnois at a time. The church had many affiliated houses, and the writing of history might not have been confined to the *scriptorium* in Clonmacnois itself. Certainly books of history were kept in the libraries of other monastic centres, copies wandered round, and information was exchanged between the various historians at work. The Annals of Tigernach with their narrow outlook on Connacht history in support of Uí Chonchobair power might have been kept for some time in Roscommon.<sup>36</sup> The Chronicum with its concentration on internal affairs in Clonmacnois and the preferential treatment of

AFM 1061 - Máelcoluim Ua Loingsigh, *saol + sagart Cluana mic Nóis Ciaráin, ferleighind Cenansa*, d.1061.

AFM 1063 - Ua Miadacháin, *ferleighinn*, d.1063.

AFM 1063 - Conaing Ua hEaghra, *ferleighinn*, d.1063.

AFM 1073 - Cormac Ua Máeldúin, *aird fherleighinn + sruith senóir Ereann*, d.1073.

AFM 1077 - Máel Martain son of Ua Certa, *sruith senóir*, d.1077.

AFM 1081 - Fothudh Ua hAille, *ard anmchara Cluana mic Nóis, + Leithi Cuinn*, d.1081.

AFM 1085 - Gilla Christ son of Conn na mBocht, *maic cleirigh as ferr baol in Erinn ina reimher ordán + oirechus Cluana mic Nóis*, d.1085.

AFM 1089 - Concobar son of Fogartach Ua Máeldúin, *secnab*, d.1089.

AFM 1093 - Aodh Ua Conghaile, *airchinneach Taighe aidhedh*, d.1093.

AFM 1097 - Máelán Ua Cuinn, *airchinneach Eccailsi bicce*, d.1097.

AFM 1101 - Máel Chiaráin Ua Donnghasa, *sruith Shenóir*, d.1101.

AFM 1103 - Máel Íosa, *Mac Cuind na mBocht*, d.1103.

AFM 1105 - Muirchertach Ua Catharnaigh, *sruith tocchaidh do mhuintir Chluana mic Nóis*, d.1105.

AFM 1106 - Muirchertach Ua Cearnaigh, *airdfherleighind na nGaidheal*, d.1106.

AFM 1106 - Máelmuire, *mac Mic Cuind na mBocht*, d.1106.

AFM 1116 - Congalach son of Gilla Chiaráin, *airchinneach Lis aoidheadh*, d.1116.

AFM 1128 - Ceinneittigh Ua Conghaile, *airchinneach lis aoidheadh*, d.1128.

AFM 1134 - Máel Chiaráin son of Cormac (Meic Cuinn na mBocht) *uasal shaccart tuir crabhaidh, + eccnae uasal chend Cluana mic Nois*, d.1134.

AFM 1166 - Céilechair Ua Conghaile, *airchindeach tíghe aoidheadh*, d.1166.

AFM 1168 - Gallbrat son of Duaric Ua Tadgain, *sagart mor*, d.1168.

AFM 1180 - Máel Muire son of Conn na mBocht, *primhshenóir Erean*, d.1180.

AFM 1181 - Máel Chiaráin Ua Fidabra, *comarba Chiaráin*, d.1181.

AFM 1187 - Muirchertach Ua Máeluidir, *espoc Cluana fearta, + cluana mic nois*, d.1187.

AFM 1200 - Uaireirge son of Máel Mórda mic Uairergi Ua Nechtain, *ceann cele ndé cluana*, d.1200.

AFM 1205 - Tadg, son of Cathal Crobderg, d.1205.

<sup>35</sup> John Ryan, *Toirdelbach O Conchubair (1088-1156), King of Connacht, King of Ireland co fresabra* (Dublin 1966) 12-13; Dumville & Grabowski, *Chronicles and annals*, 171-176.

<sup>36</sup> Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals*, 28 suggests that the Annals of Tigernach in the twelfth century were no longer of monastic origin, but written by secular historians, possibly the Uí Máelchonaire.

political history in Mide,<sup>37</sup> might have been kept in Clonmacnois itself, or one of the neighbouring centres of learning such as, for example, Gallen or Íseal Chiaráin. A great proportion of the 'Book of Clonmacnois', as it is known through the Four Masters, apparently consisted in obituaries of Clonmacnois clergy and we might assume that it contained a kind of death register, where the names of those who died in Clonmacnois, both clergy and laymen, were taken down. The Annals of Mageoghagan finally have little exclusive material for the early period, and might simply have been a copy of the Annals of Tigernach or their immediate predecessor. It seems possible that Mageoghagan, when translating his original chronicle, added information from other Clonmacnois sources. However, the two chronicles, that of Mageoghagan and Tigernach's annals, share an overt Connacht bias in their political outlook, whereas the kings of Mide are at times portrayed in a rather critical light.<sup>38</sup> In any case, the greatest value of Mageoghagan's annals seems to be the reporting on the history of Clonmacnois after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, mainly in terms of its involvement in the succession struggles in Connacht at the time. They are a most valuable source of information for affairs in Clonmacnois once the more original Clonmacnois chronicles come to an end in the mid- and late twelfth century. Together with material on Clonmacnois supplied by the Four Masters they give witness that chronicles were kept in the monastic *scriptorium*, or somewhere nearby, down to the thirteenth century.

On the basis of the information supplied in the annals, a list of the ecclesiastical officials in Clonmacnois has been made available, and is added below in Appendix 1.

## 1.2. Hagiography and Saga material

No primary text of an early Life of Ciarán of Clonmacnois has come down to us. The surviving Latin versions of the Life of S. Ciarán form part of the three major hagiographical collections relating to Irish saints.<sup>39</sup> The longest and most detailed one is that known as the 'Dublin Collection', sometimes also referred to as Codex

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<sup>37</sup> Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals*, 27.

<sup>38</sup> See for example the criticism of king Máel Sechnaill Mór for his lack of support for Brian Bóruma, in the battle of Clontarf. According to Mageoghagan Máel Sechnaill was 'content rather to lose the field than win it.' *AClon*, p. 167.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives. An introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford 1991); Kim McCone, 'An introduction to early Irish Saints' Lives', *The Maynooth Review. Reiviú Mhá Nuad* 11 (1984) 26-59; esp. 39ff; C. Plummer, *Miscellanea Hagiographica Hibernica, Subsidia Hagiographica* 15 (Brussels 1925) 239.



Kilkenniensis, which has been edited by Charles Plummer.<sup>40</sup> It is preserved in two manuscripts, one in Archbishop Marsh's Library, Dublin, MS V. 3. 4., the other in the library of Trinity College Dublin MS no. 175 (formerly MS E. 3. 11). Sharpe has classified the collection as a thirteenth-century recension of earlier material on Irish saints. He gives as an approximate date of the redactors' work some time around 1220 and 1230.<sup>41</sup> The recension of St. Ciarán's Life contained here seems to owe much to the hand of the thirteenth century redactor himself, since many of his most characteristic words and phrases reappear frequently.<sup>42</sup>

The second version is contained in two manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Rawl. B 485 and Rawl. B 505) in the so-called Codex Insulensis, otherwise known as the Oxford Collection.<sup>43</sup> This version of Ciarán's Life has been edited by Macalister in an appendix to his translations of S. Ciarán's Lives.<sup>44</sup> The Oxford Collection seems to be the work of one or several late thirteenth-century redactors, who much abbreviated the Lives, making them suitable for liturgical use. Many of the details, to be found in the Dublin Collection, especially those on geographical and local matters, are omitted by the redactors of the late thirteenth century.<sup>45</sup>

Thirdly, there is a fragment of a Latin Life of Ciarán preserved as part of the Codex Salmanticensis, a fourteenth century collection once preserved in Salamanca, now in the Royal Library at Brussels. This collection commands increasing attention because of its value as a relatively original and unrevised work, preserving many of the early elements of Irish hagiography.<sup>46</sup> The Life of Ciarán contained in the collection is however a mere fragment. The account starts with relatively detailed stories of Ciarán's childhood but ends abruptly after his time as a student under St. Finnian in Clonard.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 93-119; Charles Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford 1910) vol 1, 200-217.

<sup>41</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 347-367.

<sup>42</sup> Some of his favourite adverbs and phrases, frequently reappearing in the *vita Ciaráni* are 'prophetic', 'honorific', or 'accepta licentia et benedictione', see Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 143n, 146n, 152n, 159n.

<sup>43</sup> See Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 247-273; Charles Plummer, 'On two collections of Latin Lives of Irish Saints in the Bodleian Library, Rawl. B 485 and Rawl. B 505', *ZCP* 5 (1905) 429-454, for a discussion of the MSS.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Alexander Steward Macalister (ed), *The Latin and Irish Lives of St. Ciarán* (London 1921) Appendix 1, 172-183; for a transl. *ibid*, 44-58.

<sup>45</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 363.

<sup>46</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 227-246; William W. Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae ex Codice olim Salmanticensi nunc Bruxellensi* (Brussels 1965) Introduction, xi-xiii.

<sup>47</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* 78-81; for a translation see Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 59-65.

Finally, there is the Irish version of the Life of Ciarán which is preserved in the Book of Lismore, also known as the Book of Mac Carthaigh Reagh, a fifteenth century manuscript in Irish. Together with other Saints' Lives from the same manuscript this version has been edited by Whitley Stokes.<sup>48</sup> Like the Life of Ciarán contained in the Oxford collection the Irish version bears many homiletic characteristics, and seems to have been written and used as a sermon, preached on the Saint's day, the ninth of September.<sup>49</sup> Another copy of the Irish Life, made by Micheal Ó Cleirigh in the friary of Athlone from the book of 'Aodh Óg Ua Dálacháin of Les Cluaine in Meath', is preserved in the Bibliothèque Royale at Brussels, vol XI (4190-4200) fo. 149a.

Henceforth reference to the different Latin versions of S. Ciarán's Life will be made by the name of the collection in which they are contained, i.e. the Dublin version, the Oxford version, the Salamanca version.<sup>50</sup>

### 1.2.1. Dating of S. Ciarán's Lives

In their present form the various Lives of Ciarán are the undoubted result of a thirteenth century redaction. It seems the Dublin and the Oxford versions derive from a common source whereas the Salamanca Life goes back to a different original, which was, however, known to the redactor of the Dublin version, and incorporated in his compilation.<sup>51</sup> Kenney assumes that all of the now extant Lives of Ciarán ultimately depend on a text or a collection of texts compiled sometime during the ninth century.<sup>52</sup> More recently Sharpe has argued that most Latin Lives, preserved in the fourteenth century compilations, might, in an original form, prove to be datable to as early as the seventh or eighth century. This was the heyday of Latin learning in Ireland, whereas Irish predominated from the ninth to the twelfth centuries as a literary medium.<sup>53</sup> The Latin versions of Ciarán's Life which we now have might therefore go back to a seventh or eighth century original. This assumption would need confirmation by comparison with the earliest securely datable hagiographical sources, like the work of Tirechán, Muirchú,

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<sup>48</sup> Whitley Stokes (ed), *Lives of the Irish Saints from the Book of Lismore* (Oxford 1890), 117-134; C. Plummer, *Miscellanea Hagiographica Hibernica*, 183-184.

<sup>49</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 118, ll. 3948-49; Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 68: "The date which the Faithful honour as the feast-day of this noble one is the fifth of the ides of September according to the day of the solar month and this day today according to the day of the week. Accordingly I shall relate a short memoir of the signs and wonders of that devout one, for a delight of soul to the Faithful."

<sup>50</sup> Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 5-7 names these versions respectively LA, LB, LC and VG.

<sup>51</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 291-292.

<sup>52</sup> Kenney, *The sources*, 376-384.

<sup>53</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 15, 19-26, 320-324.

Cogitosus or Adamnán. In fact the latter mentions the visit of S. Colum Cille to Clonmacnois, after the foundation of Durrow during the abbacy of Ailither (585-599).<sup>54</sup> The Dublin version of Ciarán's Life makes allusion to the same event, comparing the great party which was given for the monks from Iona on the occasion with a feast during Ciarán's life-time, where the community was miraculously supplied with wine.<sup>55</sup> The story is told in order to compare the splendid old days with the less splendid, and more recent past. The party for the Iona monks is described without any didactic overtone, as a very joyful occasion, on which a senior monk in Clonmacnois talked about S. Ciarán's party as one of the most impressive experiences in his youth.<sup>56</sup> The internal narrative structure of the text therefore suggests that the visit of the monks from Iona, in the late sixth century, was not too far removed from living memory at the time when the episode was written down. Obviously we have to rely here on this kind of suggestive evidence. Nevertheless it does all in all seem very plausible that an original biography of the founder saint, or a collection of stories around him, existed in Clonmacnois some one or two hundred years after Ciarán's death.<sup>57</sup>

An original Irish Life would correspondingly need to be dated sometime between the ninth and eleventh century, when the vernacular predominated as the literary medium. It has been observed that the language of the Lismore version of Ciarán's Life preserved a substantial number of ancient forms pointing to its composition in the Middle Irish period.<sup>58</sup>

Internal evidence, the emphasis on the involvement of Diarmait mac Cerbaill, the ultimate ancestor of the Clann Cholmáin kings of Mide, in the foundation of Clonmacnois points to the tenth century as the time of origin of the *Betha Chiaráin*. In fact King Diarmait appears as the co-founder of Clonmacnois, which corresponds to the appearance of King Flann Sinna, his descendant as the co-founder of the main church in Clonmacnois in the year 908. The hagiography at the time simply projected the contemporary political reality onto the past. The same statement was carved in stone in Clonmacnois, in the scene on the 'Cross of the Scriptures', where King Diarmait and S. Ciarán are shown, according to the usual interpretation, jointly planting the foundation

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<sup>54</sup> Alan O. Anderson and Marjorie O. Anderson (ed and transl), *Adomnán's Life of Columba* (Oxford 1991) 24, §14a.

<sup>55</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* I, 214.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 214; "Et cum illi venissent ad cenobium sancti Kiarani, suscepti sunt in magna hilaritate et diligentia; et illa cena refecti sunt largissime, et fama ipsius refectiois per totam ciuitatem et eius circuitum late diuulgabatur."

<sup>57</sup> Adomnán wrote sometime between the years 688 and 704, when he died, Anderson (ed), *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, xLiii.

<sup>58</sup> McCone, *The Maynooth Review* 11 (1984), 38-39; Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 21-24.

post in Clonmacnois. This evidence would point to the composition of an Irish Life in the early tenth century, possibly during the reign of Flann Sinna.<sup>59</sup> At that time Clonard and Clonmacnois were under the government of one head. This ecclesiastical alliance between Clonard and Clonmacnois would then have found expression in the Irish Life, where the friendship between Finnian and Ciarán is strongly emphasised and S. Ciarán's time of study in Clonard is dealt with in detail.<sup>60</sup> In fact the suspicious stress on the equality of the two founder saints, by the Clonmacnois hagiographers but not by those at work in Clonard, might also point to the early tenth century as the most plausible time of the compilation of the Irish Life. Clonmacnois might have felt somehow inferior when in the year 904, a man well established in the leadership of Clonard in effect annexed Clonmacnois as well, by becoming its *princeps*.<sup>61</sup>

Another church under the patronage of King Flann Sinna was the Columban foundation of Durrow, in the eastern neighbourhood of Clonmacnois, where he sponsored the enshrining of the relics of S. Colum Cille.<sup>62</sup> We know from annalistic evidence that the relationship between Clonmacnois and Durrow was at one stage far from friendly. In fact the two communities went to war against each other in the year 764.<sup>63</sup> It seems that from the latter part of the ninth century onwards, probably under the impact of the king of Mide as a common patron, the relations between the two houses gradually normalized. This rapprochement between the two communities found reflection in a very friendly portrayal of S. Colum Cille in some of the anecdotes from Clonard, which belong to the material exclusive to the Irish Life.<sup>64</sup>

So far we have established the evidence for the original composition of an Irish Life, perhaps in the early tenth century during the reign of Flann Sinna. Episodes from the already existing Latin biography of Ciarán were certainly translated and included. However, there is linguistic evidence which points to a further substantial redaction of the Irish Life of Ciarán some time around the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The *Betha Chiaráin* contains an episode according to which, shortly before his death, S. Ciarán prophesies great persecution for his community in Clonmacnois: '*Adubart robudh*

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<sup>59</sup> See below, chap. 3, 86-92.

<sup>60</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 122-127.

<sup>61</sup> See below, 88-89.

<sup>62</sup> A. A. Luce, e. a. (eds.), *Evangeliorum Quattuor Codex Durmachensis* (Olten-Lausanne 1960) 55.

<sup>63</sup> *AU* 764.6; *AT* (764); *AClon* 759, p. 121.

<sup>64</sup> See for example a vision of S. Finnian, where he saw two golden moons, one wandering to the east the other the west, interpreted as the future of Colum Cille and Ciarán as the two greatest saints in Ireland, each dominating in their respective sphere of influence; S. Colum Cille is also portrayed as the only saint, amongst S. Finnian's disciples who was not jealous of S. Ciarán. Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 126-127.

*mhor ingreim a cathrach o drochdhainib fri deredh ndomain*'.<sup>65</sup> The wording here is surprisingly similar to that used in an entry in the *Chronicum Scotorum* which records a raid on the monastic settlement in the year 1095: '*Ingrem mor o droch dainibh for Clúain in hoc anno*'.<sup>66</sup> Both phrases seem to stem from the same time and were perhaps written by the same scribe. Collation with the annals of the time points to the Meic Cuinn na mBocht as the authors of the episode here. They were an ecclesiastical dynasty in Clonmacnois with a clearly attested influence on the literary productions, renowned for their participation in the writing of the contemporary annals and the *Lebor na hUidre*.<sup>67</sup> The above passage, about the great persecution in Clonmacnois, continues with a fictional dialogue between Ciarán and his disciples. They ask the saint whether in the time of those evils it would be better to leave Clonmacnois and Ciarán's relics or to stay with them. Ciarán is made to say that it would be better to set off for a more peaceful place, and leave behind his relics, which are just dry bones.<sup>68</sup> In this context it is interesting to note that in the year 1093 Cormac, the head of the family of Meic Cuinn na mBocht had bought Íseal Chiaráin, a church affiliated with Clonmacnois, for him and his family, which apparently was used as the family residence from then onwards. The passage in the saint's Life here seems to supply a reasonable justification for the family's emigration from Clonmacnois to Íseal Chiaráin, since the founder saint himself had advised his disciples to do so.

What seems to be the literary outcome of the rival party to the Meic Cuinn na mBocht comes down to us in another hagiographical anecdote. It is also incorporated in the Lismore version of Ciarán's Life, in a passage dealing with S. Ciarán's time in Íseal Chiaráin, the church of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht from the late eleventh century. After a few descriptive anecdotes which tell us about S. Ciarán as a guestmaster there, a rather hostile comment follows in which the brethren in Íseal Chiaráin are said to have evicted Ciarán from their house, because they could not bear his generosity to the poor.<sup>69</sup> Obviously such a statement implies the reproach of greed and looks like a reply to the alienation of Íseal Chiaráin from the authority of the abbot of Clonmacnois in the year 1093, when Cormac, a grandson of Conn na mBocht bought the church of Íseal Chiaráin

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<sup>65</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 132.

<sup>66</sup> CS 1091 (recte 1095). Macalister earlier pointed to this congruence, but seems to use it as proof for a common belief in Ireland that the end of the world would come in the year 1096, Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 5n.

<sup>67</sup> Dumville & Grabowski, *Chronicles and annals*, 176-180; R. I. Best and Osborn Bergin (eds.), *Lebor na hUidre* (Dublin 1929, reprint 1992), Introd., xiv; R. I. Best, 'Notes on the script of *Lebor na Huidre*', *Ériu* 6 (1912) 161ff.

<sup>68</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 132, also translated into Latin by the redactor of the Dublin version, Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 215.

<sup>69</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 129; Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 209-210.

for his own family.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps the same anti-Meic Cuinn na mBocht bias found reflection in the Annals of Tigernach, where abbot Cormac, who died in the year 1103 and was otherwise known as *comarba Chiaráin* is only acknowledged as *tániste abadh Cluana maic Nois*.<sup>71</sup>

The Irish Life, originally composed in the early tenth century, may have been later revised independently by different scribes belonging to different factions, one seated in Clonmacnois, the other seated in Íseal Chiaráin. Later the different versions of the saint's Life were incorporated into one, so that in its present form the *Betha Chiaráin* contains the various redactions, including the rival accounts dating from the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

Sharpe suggested that the fullness of the Dublin version has as much to do with the redactor as with the source he used.<sup>72</sup> The Dublin version goes back to the same original as the Oxford version. However, the redactor seems to have had the original copy of the Salamanca version, as well as a copy of the Irish Life of Ciarán at hand. The conclusion is that the Dublin version of Ciarán's Life represents a kind of thirteenth century summary or survey of the then extant hagiographical writings about S. Ciarán.

### 1.2.2. Saga material

Finally there is a large body of saga material, tales relating to S. Ciarán or his church, which often supply literary explanations for the respective political situations at the time of their composition. Some of these tales entered the annals but the majority are preserved amongst late medieval collections of religious tales.<sup>73</sup>

There are a great many stories about S. Ciarán which concern King Diarmait mac Cerbaill or his descendants, pointing to a date of composition when the Clann Cholmáin kings of Mide were closely associated with Clonmacnois. Mageoghagan's annals in particular contain several of these tales. It is of course possible that Mageoghagan, when he made his translation, had additional sources at hand, from which he copied these stories. One example is the anecdote about S. Ciarán's bell, which, so we are told, was the only adequate remedy for King Diarmait mac Cerbaill, when he suffered from deafness after having heard the news of S. Ciarán's death.<sup>74</sup> There is a similar tale, even more directly related to the reign of King Flann, about the apparition of the spirit of

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<sup>70</sup> See below, 110-111.

<sup>71</sup> *AT* (1103); *AFM* 1103; *CS* 1099; see also Dumville & Grabowski, *Chronicles and annals*, 179.

<sup>72</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 391.

<sup>73</sup> C. Plummer, *Miscellanea Hagiographica Hibernica*, 206-208.

<sup>74</sup> *AClon* 547, p. 82-83.

Flann's father to a bishop in Clonmacnois, who successfully laboured for the *post mortem* redemption of the dead king's soul. Details of the story are to be found in late medieval sources only.<sup>75</sup> It is, however, also mentioned in a gloss to the obituary of the bishop in the *Chronicum*.<sup>76</sup>

Often these tales have a strongly didactic overtone, and seem to explain how certain lands came into the possession of Clonmacnois. An example here is the detailed account of the battle of Carn Conaill, to be found in all four versions of the Clonmacnois annals.<sup>77</sup> There the story is told how Diarmait, son of Áed Sláine, the ancestor of the Sil nÁedo Sláine, won the battle against his rival Guaire from Connacht, with the support and prayers of the community in Clonmacnois. In return and as a thanksgiving he made a large grant of lands to Clonmacnois. This story has the advantage of being very probably datable to the mid-tenth century, since that was the only period when the Sil nÁedo Sláine supplied a king of Tara.<sup>78</sup> The story reads like a history lesson, especially designed for this king, admonishing him to remember that his dynasty owed much to the community in Clonmacnois.<sup>79</sup> A similarly didactic overtone is found in a tale linking Cairpre Crum, the ultimate ancestor of the kings of Uí Maine with the founder saint of Clonmacnois. We are told that Cairpre was once resuscitated from the dead by Ciarán himself, and in return granted a large amount of land to Clonmacnois.<sup>80</sup> What looks like a drastically abbreviated version of the story, but with the same message, namely a huge grant of land made by the king of Uí Maine to Clonmacnois, was applied to an early ninth century king of Uí Maine and included in the Clonmacnois chronicles.<sup>81</sup> Since the account presupposes hostility between the Uí Maine and Clonmacnois it should probably

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<sup>75</sup> The story is preserved amongst the religious tales in the fifteenth century British Library MS Egerton 92; in the *Leabar Brecc*, p. 259, col. 2; and Brussels MS 5100-5104, fol. 76b. See Robin Flower, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the British Library*, vol 2 (London 1926, reprint Dublin 1992) 514-515, §52. A shorter version can be found in *The Martyrology of Donegal. A calendar of the Saints of Ireland*, transl. John O'Donovan, ed. James Henthorn Todd and William Reeves (Dublin 1864) 66-67. A Latin version of the tale is preserved in the *Acta Sanctorum Veteris et Maioris Scotiae sev Hiberniae Sanctorum Insvlae per Ioannem Colganvm* (Louvain 1645, reprint with an introd. by B. JENNINGS, Dublin 1947) 508-599 (recte 508-509).

<sup>76</sup> CS 904. Of course there is the possibility that Mac Fhirbhisigh, the transcriber of the *Chronicum*, who must have known the tale, added the gloss.

<sup>77</sup> AT 641 (recte 649); CS 646; *AClon* 642, p. 103-104; AFM 645; compare AU 649.2.

<sup>78</sup> Congalach mac Máel Mithig, died as king of Tara in 956 (AU 956.3).

<sup>79</sup> See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 161-162.

<sup>80</sup> The story is preserved in the Book of Uí Maine, Egerton 92, the Book of Fermoy and in the Book of Mac Carthaigh Reagh. See Flower, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts II*, 517, §61. The tale was edited by J. O'Donovan from MS Egerton 92 in the *Jn. Kilk. SE. Irel. Arch. Soc.* 1 (1856/57) 453n.

<sup>81</sup> CS 823; AFM 834 (recte 835).

be dated around the eleventh century, when relations between the two were indeed hostile.<sup>82</sup>

These kind of moralistic tales, supplying pseudo-historical evidence for certain lands being in the lawful possession of Clonmacnois, testify to property claims of the monastic settlement.

### 1.3. Late medieval documents

#### 1.3.1. The 'Registry of Clonmacnoise'

Apart from hagiography and saga tales, a document dating from the early modern period, known as the 'Registry of Clonmacnoise' preserves a detailed list of Clonmacnois' claims to lands and property.<sup>83</sup> The history of transmission of the document, which now exists in an early seventeenth century translation into English only, will be discussed below in chapter six, where I suggest that it ultimately depended on a pre-reform account of the lands and churches held, or at least claimed, by Clonmacnois. The land claims propagated in the medieval Saints' Lives and saga tradition can possibly provide a basis of comparison to test the reliability of the Registry. The seventeenth century document, probably for reasons of its transmission in the later middle ages, mainly concentrates on Connacht. Most of the lands and churches listed there can be identified with the aid of early modern administrative documents, such as the Books of Survey and Distribution. The history of individual parishes can often be traced on the basis of information contained in the Papal Letters, or episcopal visitation reports and rental lists.<sup>84</sup> The existing source material seems to provide a basis for a policy of reconstructing the extent of the lands of Clonmacnois, by carefully reading the Registry alongside the early history of Clonmacnois, the geographical background of leading functionaries in the church, early hagiographical works, the medieval sagas and early modern administrative sources. In some cases place name studies and local traditions collected and preserved by nineteenth century antiquarians can provide additional help in

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<sup>82</sup> See below, chap. 3.

<sup>83</sup> John O'Donovan (ed), 'The Registry of Clonmacnoise; with notes and introductory remarks', *Jn. Kilk. SE. Irel. Arch. Soc.* 1 (1856/57) 444-460.

<sup>84</sup> 'The Episcopal Rentals of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh', ed. K. W. Nicholls, *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 130-143; 'Visitations of the dioceses of Clonfert, Tuam and Kilmacduagh, c. 1565-67', ed. K. W. Nicholls, *ibid.*, 144-157; 'The royal visitation of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh 1615', ed. Patrick K. Egan, *Galway Arch. Hist. Soc. Jn.* 35 (1976) 67-76.



tracing the places once associated with S. Ciarán and his church.<sup>85</sup> This strategy will be tested in chapter seven of the thesis, where I attempt to give a preliminary account of the lands associated with Clonmacnois. For reasons of perspicuity a list of the places named in the Registry, including references to them in sources and literature, will be added separately in Appendix 2.

### 1.3.2. Papal Letters

Papal letters, the outcome of papal administration in Ireland, have the great advantage of dealing with problems otherwise scarcely documented for the middle ages. Many of the cases concern the appointment of the ordinary parish clergy, who were often dominated by the local leading family. They therefore give insight into politics on a local level. Obviously complaints were brought before the pope when several candidates were competing for one and the same position. One way to fight a rival was to doubt his canonical right to the position, accuse him of fornication or defect of birth, and depose him on the authority of the pope.

Here, of course, the great disadvantage of the papal letters as a source for local politics is apparent. They are a very one-sided and fragmentary source. First of all the actual issues are known to us only through the letters of reply, sent from the *Curia* back to Ireland, copies of which were preserved in the Vatican archives. Although these letters often contain a detailed summary of the case in question, these are obviously very biased presentations of the actual situation. The counter-presentations from the rival position are occasionally preserved, when the other party also went to court in Rome. In most cases, however, their position has to be reconstructed or remains unknown. Finally the editors of the papal letters relating to Ireland, especially those of the early volumes, presented the student of history with a kind of a 'selected choice'. The material preserved in the Vatican archives is vast and must wait for generations to come to explore its riches.

Nevertheless, bits and pieces of information are better than none at all, and when taken together with the archiepiscopal records of Ireland and the Irish annals, the papal letters present valuable details and allow insight into the political landscape of Ireland on a very local level. They become even more important with the beginning of the Gaelic revival in the course of the fourteenth century, when large parts of Ireland, the Gaelic areas, were no longer subject to Anglo-Norman administration.

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<sup>85</sup> See for example the *Ordnance Survey Letters*, by John O'Donovan et al. (reproduced in typescript, Bray 1933, now in the R. I. A. Dublin).

### 1.3.3. Books of Survey and Distribution

The Books of Survey and Distribution, formerly in official use in the Quit rent Office, are now lodged in the National Archives, in Dublin.<sup>86</sup> The series consists of twenty folio volumes and includes all of the counties of Ireland. They are the outcome of the Down survey (1654) and the Civil Survey (ca. 1652). The volumes for Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, most frequently used in the present study, refer back to the Strafford Survey (ca. 1636). They contain information about land ownership in 1641, the transfer of property in that year and refer furthermore to the forfeitures in 1688 and the sales thereof in 1701.<sup>87</sup> These administrative workbooks of the seventeenth century present us with detailed descriptions of landholding in Ireland, ultimately reporting on the state of affairs in the year 1641. They supply an immense wealth of detailed information about the distribution of land in post-Norman Ireland. While a number of plantations had taken place in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, continuity and development of landholding can be demonstrated. This is especially true in the case of churchlands, which can sometimes be traced from the early middle ages (according to early Saint's Lives), through the Anglo-Norman invasion (in Anglo-Norman land grants and administrative documents), and the later middle ages (in papal letters) down to the early modern period (according to surveys of the seventeenth century).

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<sup>86</sup> Robert Simington (ed), *Books of Survey and Distribution*, vol I, *Roscommon* (Dublin 1949); vol II, *Mayo* (Dublin 1956); vol III, *Galway* (Dublin 1962); vol IV, *Clare* (Dublin 1967); J. C. Lyons (ed), *Book of Survey and Distribution of co. Westmeath* (Ladiston 1852).

<sup>87</sup> *Books of Survey and Distribution* I, Introduction, v-ix.

## 2. THE CHURCH OF CLONMACNOIS PRIOR TO THE CHURCH REFORM - ITS GOVERNMENT, THE RULING DYNASTIES AND ITS ECCLESIASTICAL ALLIES.

Saint Ciarán is commonly known as the founder of a monastery in Clonmacnois, the first abbot of a community of monks who lived together under the same religious rule. More recent research has led to doubts about the strictly monastic character of the Irish churches in general. In fact the Latin biographers of Ciarán, who may have been writing as early as the seventh or eighth century, use a very non-monastic terminology. Once it comes to the laying of the foundation stone of Clonmacnois they simply talk of the first house (*domus*), which Ciarán founded in his city of Clonmacnois (*in sua ciuitate Chuain meic Nois*).<sup>1</sup> It is also a well known fact that by the time of the eighth century a large number of lay-people, monastic clients, employed in work on the ecclesiastical estate, had come to live nearby the Irish monasteries. Extensive lands were under the authority of those who ruled the estate, and the originally monastic settlements were gradually turned into urban-style communities, often referred to as monastic cities, assuming the function of centres of trade and traffic.<sup>2</sup>

In this context the use of a monastic terminology needs to be questioned since we seem to be talking about settlements and communities, which simply happen to be monastic in origin. On the other hand, in the political life of these settlements monastic features persisted. The Latin terminology for various officials in the monastic hierarchy was preserved. In the settlements' foreign policy, the founder saint played a most prominent part as the patron and guardian of his community or *familia*. The true nature of the Irish churches seems to lie somewhere between those poles. They were secular establishments, where lay-people lived, worked and died, ruled over by great landowners, who played a decisive role in secular politics. At the same time the spiritual dimension played an important part in the exercise of authority over the people and lands belonging to the church. The monastic tradition was therefore cherished by those in power, in order to preserve one of their most essential sources of power. We might

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<sup>1</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 211-212.

<sup>2</sup> K. Hughes, *The church in early Irish society* (London 1966) 139-142; Doherty, 'The monastic town', 45-76.

therefore talk of Clonmacnois as an ecclesiastical settlement, which preserved in the institutional terminology and in its self-understanding certain monastic features.

In the following chapter I discuss first of all the organization of Clonmacnois as an ecclesiastical institution. Various offices in a seemingly monastic hierarchy are known to us from the annals, shedding light on the central positions from whence power was exercised in the church. Sometimes the regional origin, and later the surnames of those who held offices are also mentioned in the obituaries, and often show close blood ties between the various rulers of the church. Those leading families in Clonmacnois will be discussed in the second section. The third part will deal with the ecclesiastical alliances, which existed between Clonmacnois and other churches, mainly drawing on the hagiographical writings, where those alliances found expression in, for example, the acclaimed friendship between S. Ciarán and the founder saint of another church.

## 2.1. The organization of the monastic institution

### **Abbots**

Monasticism, as the most characteristic feature of the Irish church, has for a long time been an un-questioned paradigm.<sup>3</sup> The prominent role assigned to the abbot in the most accessible sources for the early Irish history led to the assumption that he was the actual head of the church, whereas the bishop was but a sort of employee, responsible for spiritual matters, in his service. Richard Sharpe was the first to suggest very convincingly that despite the seemingly monastic organization episcopal authority was of much greater importance in Ireland than generally imagined.<sup>4</sup> Moreover he pointed out that the conventional interpretation of the *paruchia*, as a non-territorial monastic federation, resulted from a premature generalization of the example of the Columban houses in Ireland and Scotland, as being typical of the whole of the Irish church. The Iona-type of monastic confederation was often confused with the *paruchia*, denoting the territorial sphere of jurisdictional authority of the head of a mother church over its

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<sup>3</sup> See for example John Ryan, *Irish monasticism. Origins and early development* (London, New York 1931) 167-190; Hughes, *The church*, 81-90; R. Sharpe, 'Some problems concerning the organization of the church in early medieval Ireland', *Peritia* 3 (1984) 230-270, here 230-247 for a summary of the most current views on church organization.

<sup>4</sup> Sharpe, *Peritia* 3 (1984) 230-270; see also the more recent work of Colmán Etchingham, *Aspects of early Irish ecclesiastical organisation*, 2 vols (Ph.D. Thesis, TCD 1992).

dependencies.<sup>5</sup> It seems that the jurisdictional authority in a *paruchia* was essentially exercised by the bishop, even though historians long failed to appreciate his position. The other most important person in ecclesiastical government, variously entitled *abbas*, *princeps*, *airchinnech* or *comarba*, was basically the lay ruler of the monastic estate, with the principal role of administering the temporalities of the church, as is apparent from the early eighth century Irish canon law.<sup>6</sup> The over-emphasis on the monastic character of the Irish church resulted, at least partly, from misleading linguistic conventions, the fact that monastic vocabulary was applied to the temporal dimension of the church. While the terms *princeps*, *airchinnech* and *comarba* express the image of rulership quite unambiguously the title *abbas* still preserved the monastic connotations, but was likewise used to designate the lay ecclesiastical ruler of the church.

The various titles seem to represent different facets of the abbot's position as the secular leader of an ecclesiastical settlement. There is his role as a political figure, the head of a church with many dependencies, who had control over a large number of people, which quite compares to the power of a secular king over his clients. This power over people, depending ultimately on rights of property, is the power of the abbot as *princeps*, or *airchinnech* (the Irish equivalent). The understanding of these rights of property and jurisdiction as an inheritance, handed on by election, family rights or political appointment, found expression in the use of the title *comarba*, as the heir of the patron saint in its widest sense.<sup>7</sup>

Strictly speaking we should, therefore, no longer use the title 'abbot' for the leader of the Irish churches, since its monastic connotations are entirely inadequate. However, as with the traditional approach, where the monastic character of the Irish church was much overstressed, the more recent view tends to treat the unique position of the Irish abbots as lay rulers of an ecclesiastical estate, as the new 'be-all and end-all' of Irish ecclesiastical organization. Obviously the Benedictine definition of the abbot in its strict sense as the spiritual father of a community of religious does not hold in the whole of Christian Europe. It would be difficult to find a historical context and time in which it could be applied to the abbot of a Christian monastery. Lay-abbots were a common feature in continental monasteries from the time of Charlemagne. None of the abbots of the great German *Reichsklöster* were simply the head of their monastic communities, but powerful lords over lands and people, with great political influence. Like the German *Reichsbischöfe*, who were primarily secular magnates, eventually even electing and

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<sup>5</sup> Sharpe, *Peritia* 3 (1984) 243-247; C. Etchingham, 'The implications of *paruchia*', *Ériu* 44 (1993) 139-162.

<sup>6</sup> Sharpe, *Peritia* 3 (1984) 236, 258, 263-265.

<sup>7</sup> Sharpe, *Peritia* 3 (1984) 259, 264.

crowning the German Emperors, they exercised secular power. The assumption of secular power did not reduce the ecclesiastical authority of these churchmen, in fact, quite the opposite was the case. However, nobody ever doubted the use of their traditional titles. Since the Irish sources use *abbas*, *princeps*, *airchinnech* and *comarba*, indistinguishably as the title assigned to an ecclesiastical ruler we will maintain the traditional title *abbot* in the present study.

Some eighty abbots of Clonmacnois are recorded in the annals from the time of its foundation by S. Ciarán in the mid-sixth century down to the late thirteenth century. This is a surprisingly high number, especially if we compare it with that for other Irish monasteries.<sup>8</sup> For the community of Clonard, for example, between the mid-sixth and the mid-twelfth century, forty-eight abbots are recorded in the annals and for Glendalough the names of only forty-two. This striking divergence could be the result of a more accurate recording of events in Clonmacnois, due to the fact that chronicles were written in the *scriptorium* of Clonmacnois itself.<sup>9</sup> Ryan suggested that this large number of abbots was due to a frequent turnover in the abbot's chair in Clonmacnois. This, he thought, was a consequence of the fact that preference was given to older candidates in the abbatial elections in Clonmacnois.<sup>10</sup> It might also be, however, that political instability should be reckoned as an additional factor accounting for the quick succession of abbots in Clonmacnois. Occasionally the annalists give little hints, indicating disturbances which led to the end of an abbacy. There is for example the 'change of abbots in Clonmacnois' recorded in the *Chronicum Scotorum* in the early ninth century, in which abbot Rónán resigned, possibly due to political pressure from the king of Munster (see A37).<sup>11</sup> Disturbances preceded the abbacy of Colmán Conaillech in the early tenth century. A certain Dedimus resigned in the year 901 after five years as abbot. His successor, a Connachtman died only three years later and was followed by Colmán, head of the church in Clonard, who thus ruled the two major ecclesiastical centres in the kingdom of Mide at the time (see A47, A48, A49). Very similar circumstances preceded

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Byrne, 'The community of Clonard, sixth to twelfth centuries', *Peritia* 4 (1985) 157-173; Ailbhe S. Mac Shamhráin, 'Prosopographica Glindelachensis. The monastic church of Glendalough and its community, sixth to thirteenth centuries', *JRS* 119 (1989) 79-97.

<sup>9</sup> In this case however the number of the pre-tenth century abbots of Clonard should come close to that of Clonmacnois, since prior to the time of abbot Colmán Conaillech (d.926) chronicles were apparently kept in S. Finian's monastery. However Colmán, as head of both monastic houses, was the thirtieth abbot of Clonard, but the forty-seventh abbot of Clonmacnois. For chronicle keeping in Clonard in the early period see Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals*, 21-23; also Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 107.

<sup>10</sup> John Ryan suggested that the abbots' chair and other leading positions in the monastic community were filled from the group of seniors, who formed an integral part of the monastic community, see Ryan, *Irish monasticism*, 271.

<sup>11</sup> The figures in brackets refer to the 'Catalogue of members of the community of Clonmacnois' in Appendix 1.

the abbacy of Flaithbertach son of Domnall, brother of King Máel Sechnaill Mór in the early eleventh century. Again, we have the deposition of an abbot from Tethba in the year 1002. His successor in office died in the course of a year, to be followed by the king's brother as holder of the abbacy in Clonmacnois and Clonard for the next ten years (A58, A59, A60). Due to the border position of Clonmacnois, changing political sympathies played an important part in its history. The interests of the three competing overkingdoms, those of Mide, Connacht and Munster, interfered with, and therefore determined, politics in the monastic settlement and might indeed have been partly responsible for the high turnover in its abbatial chair.

Down to the second half of the ninth century the annals generally refer to the head of the community in Clonmacnois as *abbas*. Ferdomnach, of the Mugdorna Maigen who died in the year 872 (A41), is the first abbot bearing the title *princeps Cluana*.<sup>12</sup> The traditional *abbas* is used for his immediate successors, then follows Blamac son of Tarcedach from Bregmaine (A46), again styled *princeps* in the annals.<sup>13</sup> Colmán Conaillech bears the title *princeps Cluana Iraid + Cluana M. Nois*. He was abbot for most of the first quarter of the tenth century.<sup>14</sup> It has been said above, that with the beginning of independent chronicle keeping in Clonmacnois in the tenth century, the titles assigned to the abbots in the Clonmacnois chronicles start to vary slightly from those in the Annals of Ulster. Thus Colmán's successor was *princeps* according to the *Chronicum*, but *comarba* according to the Annals of Ulster.<sup>15</sup> From the time of abbot Céilechair in the mid-tenth century onwards, the title *comarba Ciaráin* is invariably used in all of the contemporary annals.

It seems the division between spiritual and temporal jurisdiction was maintained in the church of Clonmacnois, despite the fact that the abbot's power appears to be much more prominent. There is also some evidence pointing to the suggestion that the abbot also assumed episcopal orders in the tenth century. However, this problem appears to be one of scribal transmission. Two or three of the rulers of the monastic estate in the tenth century might also have held episcopal orders.<sup>16</sup> Colmán is styled a bishop in the Annals of Ulster only, but not in the Clonmacnois chronicles. *Episcopus* as part of his title is preceded by one, or even two unreadable words in the manuscript, which might possibly have been the name of a second person, a bishop, commemorated in a joint obituary with abbot Colmán. The second presumed bishop abbot was Cormac Ua Cillín, *comorba*

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<sup>12</sup> AU 872.4; CS 872.

<sup>13</sup> AU 896.1; CS 896.

<sup>14</sup> AU 926.3; CS 925.

<sup>15</sup> AU 931.1; CS 930; see A50.

<sup>16</sup> Colmán son of Ailill (A49, d.926), Cormac Ua Cillín (A54, d.966), Tuathal (A55, d.971).

*Ciaráin oculus Comáin, oculus comarba Tuamagréne ... sapiens et senex, et Episcopus*, according to the *Chronicum*. The Four Masters, otherwise known for their penchant to accumulate titles, simply style him *comharba Ciaráin*, suggesting that this was the actual title assigned to Cormac by their Clonmacnois source. His successor Tuathal finally appears as the only tenth century abbot of Clonmacnois who was a bishop according to the now existant Clonmacnois chronicles. The annals of Ulster, however, simply name him *comarba Ciarain*.

In any case, it seems clear that the abbot of Clonmacnois from the tenth century onwards becomes increasingly prominent. He appears as the leader of S. Ciarán's *familia*, i.e. the community of the people who lived in and around the city of S. Ciarán. Maybe we should see him as a kind of mayor of the settlement, who apart from administrating the income of the church of Clonmacnois was also responsible for representation of his community in the outside world, as well as for public works. Thus he acted as the friend of kings, appears as the co-founder of churches in Clonmacnois or had the roads in the settlement rebuilt.<sup>17</sup>

## Bishops

The spiritual counterpart to the abbot as the top manager of temporal affairs was the bishop, as the highest ecclesiastical dignitary in the Irish church. He was the spiritual head of his church and its dependencies, exercised pastoral jurisdiction, including the appointment and ordination of priests, the visitation of the dependent churches as well as the general responsibility for the maintenance of the church's ministry.<sup>18</sup>

S. Ciarán, in contrast to most Irish saints, is nowhere claimed to have been a bishop. The highest orders he received were priestly orders which he took on Aran island from S. Énda.<sup>19</sup> Only from the latter half of the ninth century do the obituaries of the bishops of the church of Clonmacnois and its dependencies start to be regularly

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix 1, for example Colmán son of Ailill (A49), or Cormac grandson of Conn na mBocht (A70).

<sup>18</sup> Sharpe, *Peritia* 3 (1984) 263. The division of power between the bishop and the abbot, the role of the bishop in a monastic church and its paruchia has presented some problems to historians, see K. Hughes, *The church*, 83-88, where she discusses the example of Kildare; Ryan, *Irish monasticism*, 167-190. The Irish canon law, however, seems to make provision for the bishops in its church, in a very conservative sense of the bishop as the head of a territory and people under his ecclesiastical jurisdiction. See H. Wasserschleben (ed), *Die Irische Kanonensammlung* (Leipzig 1885) xxxvii-xLi; see also C. Etchingham, 'Bishops in the early Irish church: a re-assessment', forthcoming in *Studia Hibernica* 28 (1994).

<sup>19</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 208: 'Et ibi sanctus Kiaranus consecratus est sacerdos'.



recorded in the annals.<sup>20</sup> The obituaries of these late ninth and early tenth century bishops of Clonmacnois do not occur in the Annals of Ulster. It seems very likely that their names were included in the Clonmacnois chronicles subsequently, as the bishops who still survived in living memory in the early tenth century, when chronicles started to be written in Clonmacnois itself. The writing of history was primarily a secular business, which might account for the fact that the spiritual heads of the Irish churches received so little attention from the contemporary chroniclers in the early period. It seems plausible, however, that the episcopal succession in Clonmacnois was listed separately from the annalistic records, which dealt with worldly affairs in the first place.

With the beginning of the tenth century the obituaries of the bishops of Clonmacnois were included in the annals. Generally they were recorded by their Christian name only. Dynastic affiliations are therefore difficult to trace. It appears, however, that several bishops in the tenth and eleventh century came of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht, the family which also led the community of the religious in the ecclesiastical settlement.<sup>21</sup> The two brothers, Dúnadach and Óenacán were successively bishops of Clonmacnois in the mid-tenth century.<sup>22</sup> Another two members of the family held episcopal orders in the eleventh century.<sup>23</sup> The organizational changes in the Irish church in the course of the twelfth century reform might account for the fact that after the death of Gilla Christ Ua hEchtigern in the early twelfth century, uncertainty about the bishops of Clonmacnois prevails in the records. Only in the second half of the century can a regular succession of bishops of Clonmacnois, now bishops of the diocese, again be traced.<sup>24</sup>

### Vice-abbots

The office of the vice-abbot, also known as *prior* or *praepositus*, was a traditional feature of Benedictine monasteries. In the *regula Benedicti*, the vice-abbot, or *praepositus* is admonished not to abuse his power and not to compete with the abbot for

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<sup>20</sup> Tuadcar died in 889 (CS 889); Máel Odar, died in 890 (CS 890; AFM 886); Cairpre Cam, died in 904 (CS 904; AFM 899); Loingsech, died in 920 (CS 918; AFM 918). See Appendix 1, B2, B3, B4, B5.

<sup>21</sup> See below, 35-36 under the Céili Dé.

<sup>22</sup> Óenacán son of Ecertach, died in 949 (CS 948; AFM 947); Dúnadach son of Ecertach, died in 955 (CS 954; AFM 953; AClon 950, p. 156). See Appendix 1, B9, B10.

<sup>23</sup> Conaing son of Óenacán, died in 1011 (CS 1008; AFM 1009); Céilechair Mugdornach died in 1067 (CS 1064; AFM 1067). See Appendix 1, B17, B20.

<sup>24</sup> Gilla Christ Ua hEchtigern, died in 1104 (CS 1100; AT 1104; AFM 1104); Muirchertach Ua Máeluidir, died as bishop of Clonmacnois in the year 1187 (AFM 1187). See Appendix 1, B21, B24.

authority. The exact nature of his office and status is not defined.<sup>25</sup> The title for the vice-abbot, generally used in the contemporary Irish annals was the Latin title *secundus abbas*, often contracted to *secnabb*. Since the later ninth century, when the vernacular became the main literary medium, *tanisi abbad* is most frequent. The Four Masters use the standard title *prioir*. Twice the term *equonimus*, is used by the scribe of the Annals of Ulster.<sup>26</sup>

Ryan assumes that the office of the vice-abbot in Irish monasteries developed from the position of the *equonimus*, the steward or administrator of the monastery's material resources. The importance of that office, he says, increased due to the growing land possessions of the church, so that eventually the actual power of the *equonimus* was nearly that of the abbot.<sup>27</sup> His position has therefore been characterized as the 'real power base in the monastery'.<sup>28</sup> Such a statement, however, remains historically unfounded as long as the actual tasks and the authority of the vice-abbots in the Irish churches cannot be clearly defined.

It seems in fact plausible that he had a kind of auxiliary position to the *abbas* in the government and administration of the ecclesiastical estate. He possibly functioned as the official of the abbot, once it came to the collection of the taxes. This idea is supported by the fact that he repeatedly attracted hostility. Thus vice-abbot Máel Achaid was killed by the people of Delbna. Another vice-abbot was drowned by the king of Uí Maine, a third one was expelled from office by the abbot himself.<sup>29</sup> It seems plausible that the *secnabb* was a rather unpopular figure due to his function as tax collector.

Often the vice-abbacy in Clonmacnois was held by the abbot of one of its affiliated churches. Two, possibly four of them, between the early ninth and early tenth century, had links with Fore, the church of S. Fechin in Mide.<sup>30</sup> Ruaidrí son of Donnchad was *secundus abbas* in Clonard and *tanaisi* of Clonmacnois in the first half of the ninth century.<sup>31</sup> Áedán his successor in office was abbot of Roscrea as well, according to the

<sup>25</sup> G. Holzherr (ed), *Die Benediktiner Regel* (Zürich 1976) 306, chap. 65 'De Praeposito monasterii'.

<sup>26</sup> *AU* 797.2; *AU* 894.3.

<sup>27</sup> Ryan, *Irish monasticism*, 273-274.

<sup>28</sup> Doherty, 'The monastic town', 64.

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix 1, vA4, vA13, vA16.

<sup>30</sup> Cumuscach, *secnab Cluana M. Nois* died in the year 835 (*AU*). He was possibly the father of Cormac, abbot of Fore (d.868, *AU*); Máel Mide, son of Cumuscach, *secnab Cluana M. Nois* died in the year 871 (*AU*). Cormac, *princeps Fobair + tanisi abad Cluna M. Nois*, died in the year 891 (*AU*). Flann Fobair, Flann from Fore was *tanaisi Cluana muc Nois*, for one year only in 923, according to the *Chronicum*. He retired to Fore where he died in 930 (*CS* 922; *AU* 930.2). See appendix 1, vA5, vA9, vA11, vA16.

<sup>31</sup> Ruaidrí son of Donnchad, *secundus Abbas Cluana Iriaird, tanaisi Abb Cluana muc Nois* (*CS* 838). See Appendix 1, vA6.

Clonmacnois source used by the Four Masters.<sup>32</sup> Máel Achaid, who was killed as *tanaisi* of Clonmacnois in the year 896, was also *princeps* of Devenish, S. Lasrén's church in Fermanagh.<sup>33</sup> Murchad son of Riata, *tanaisi Cluana muc Nois* in the second half of the tenth century was *princeps* of Roscommon as well.<sup>34</sup>

It seems possible that in the course of time, with the extension of the *paruchia* of Clonmacnois, a tendency towards regional jurisdiction of the vice-abbot resulted out of this practice. The abbot of a dependent house, in his function as vice-abbot of Clonmacnois, was in charge of the temporalities, the collection of tithes and rents, in one particular territory of the *paruchia* of Clonmacnois. The abbot from Fore would thus have been responsible for the churches and lands of Clonmacnois in what is now Westmeath. Devenish was the centre of ecclesiastical administration for S. Ciarán's churches in Fermanagh, whilst the vice-abbot from Roscommon would have had responsibility for the Clonmacnois churches in Connacht. By the time of the eleventh century the notion of territorial jurisdiction found expression in the vice-abbot's title as well. Cormac Ua Cillín, guestmaster in Clonmacnois and from a traditional Clonmacnois dynasty is styled *secnab Sil Muiredaig* by the author of the *Chronicum*. Probably this title should be rendered 'vice-abbot in Clonmacnois, responsible for S. Ciarán's churches and their congregations in the territory of the Sil Muiredaig' which would be the churches in the area to which Roscommon was central.<sup>35</sup> Cormac thus would have held the same position as Murchad son of Riata, who as abbot of Roscommon was *tanaisi Cluana muc Nois* in the second half of the tenth century.<sup>36</sup> Gilla na Coimdead might have been vice-abbot in Clonmacnois responsible for Ciarán's churches in Delbna in the early twelfth century.<sup>37</sup> Similarly Gilla Íosa Ua Braóin, *secnab Uí Mainé*, might have been in charge of the churches belonging to Clonmacnois in the territory of the Uí

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<sup>32</sup> He is styled *abbas Rois Cre* in *AU* 839.2; *prióir Cluana mic Nóis*, + *abb Rosa Cré*, *AFM* 838. See Appendix 1, vA7.

<sup>33</sup> Máel Achaid, *tanusi Cluana M. Nois*, + *princeps Daminisi* (*AU* 896.8). See Appendix vA13.

<sup>34</sup> Murchad son of Riata, *ab Ruis Comain*, et *tanaisi Cluana muc Nois* (*CS* 978, recte 980). See Appendix 1, vA17.

<sup>35</sup> His full title, according to the *Chronicum* was *ard seacnab Sil Muiredaigh, oculus aricinnech tige aiged Cluana muc Nois*. (*CS* 1102). See Appendix 1, vA 24.

<sup>36</sup> See Appendix 1, vA17.

<sup>37</sup> The title assigned to him in his obituary in the *Chronicum* is not quite clear, possibly slightly distorted by the seventeenth century transcriber. It reads *Giolla an Coimdeadh mac Cuinn Dealbhnaigh, tanaisi Abbadh Cluana muc Nois, quieuit* (*CS* 1124). As the entry stands, the man's father was Conn Dealbhnach, 'Conn fostered in Dealbhna'. It seems however possible that *Dealbhnaigh*, as genitive plural referred to the men of Delbna, and in the original formed part of the title rather than belonging to the name of the man's father. See Appendix 1, vA25.

Maine.<sup>38</sup> The vice-abbots in the church of Clonmacnois would thus have been officials, working in the service of the abbot, as his representative. It seems that in the late eleventh century, but possibly earlier, the title began to imply temporal authority in one particular geographical area of the *paruchia* of Clonmacnois.

Also in the eleventh century a tendency towards hereditary transmission of the vice-abacy in Clonmacnois can be observed. The Ua Máeldúin family who claimed common ancestry with the Clann Cholmáin kings of Mide, supplied vice-abbots of Clonmacnois over three generations.<sup>39</sup>

### Priests

With the beginning of independent chronicle keeping in the early tenth century the obituaries of officials less central to the government of the church, such as priest, guestmaster or superintendant of individual churches in Clonmacnois, were also recorded in the annals. Most of the names were transmitted via the Clonmacnois source which the Four Masters had at their disposal.<sup>40</sup> Priests of the community are generally recorded as *sacart* or *uasal shacart*. The position of the priest within the ecclesiastical hierarchy has been studied by the late Cardinal Ó Fiaich, for the case of Armagh. He came to the conclusion that in general only one member of the community at a time would be in priestly orders.<sup>41</sup> This seems to have been the situation in Clonmacnois as well where a regular succession list of priests can be established from the early tenth century onwards. Several of the priests in Clonmacnois were linked through family ties with the respective abbot at the time, pointing to the important position they held in the community. The priest Rehtabra, son of Maonach was possibly related to Ferdornach Ua Maonaigh, the abbot of Clonmacnois in the mid-tenth century.<sup>42</sup> Máel Pátraic Ua Beguláin, who died as priest in Clonmacnois in the year 1028, seem to have been abbot of Clonmacnois for a short term earlier in the century.<sup>43</sup> The priest Ailill, son of Bresal

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<sup>38</sup> Gilla Íosa Ua Braóin *sechnap ua maine*, died in the year 1187 (*AFM* 1187). Since he was of a traditional Clonmacnois dynasty it seems very likely that he was linked to Clonmacnois, even though this connection is not explicitly stated by the Four Masters. See Appendix 1, vA26.

<sup>39</sup> Longarg Ua Máeldúin, *sechnab Cluana muc Nois*, died in 1021 (*CS* 1019); Concobar son of Fogartach Ua Máeldúin, *sechnab Cluana muc Nois* died in 1089 (*AFM* 1089); Muiredach Ua Máeldúin, *sechnab Cluana muc Nois*, died in 1106 (*AFM* 1106). See Appendix 1, vA18, vA21, vA23.

<sup>40</sup> *CS*, and even more so *AT* contain little information about minor officials in Clonmacnois. See above, p. 9 n.34.

<sup>41</sup> T. Ó Fiaich, 'The church of Armagh under lay control', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 5 (1969) 75-127, here 103-104.

<sup>42</sup> See Appendix 1, P4, A52.

<sup>43</sup> *CS* 1000 (recte 1002); *AFM* 1028. See Appendix 1, A58.

was most likely the son of abbot Bresal, who had died in 1030.<sup>44</sup> A striking predominance of family names from Tethba amongst the priests in Clonmacnois can also be observed.<sup>45</sup>

### Scribes and Lectors

Prior to the tenth century the monastic scholars and scribes are generally recorded in the annals under the descriptive titles *scriba*, *sapiens*, *sui* or *doctor*. The title *fer léiginn*, literally a man of learning, applying to the head of a monastic school, was only introduced with the beginning of independent chronicle keeping in the early tenth century.<sup>46</sup> The names of some thirty-two learned members of the community in Clonmacnois are recorded between the early eighth and mid-twelfth century.<sup>47</sup> Kathleen Hughes suggested that with the tenth century the golden age of book illumination in the Irish *scriptoria* was over and the scribe lost much of his traditionally high prestige. Scribes were further employed in the *scriptoria* of the great churches like Armagh and Clonmacnois, but subject to the authority of the *fer léiginn* as the leader and administrator of the schools. His position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy was very high, and, as studies for the church of Armagh and Kells have shown, could even serve as the stepping-stone to the leadership of the whole church.<sup>48</sup> In this context it is significant that in the early tenth century Máel Tuile, son of Colmán, presumably the son of abbot Colmán Conaillech, was promoted to the leadership of the schools in Clonmacnois, with the support of his father.<sup>49</sup> Another member of the family succeeded to the same position in the later tenth century.<sup>50</sup> It seems that in a kind of rotating system, the most influential

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<sup>44</sup> *AFM* 1044. See Appendix 1, P10, A62.

<sup>45</sup> Guaire, son of Máel Acain, died in 922 (*AU*); Dubtach Ua Tadhgáin, died in 996 (*AU*); Máel Pátraic Ua Beguláin, died in 1028 (*AFM*); Gallbrat son of Duaric Ua Tadhgáin, died in 1168 (*AFM*); Ua Catharnaigh, died in 1196 (*ALCé*). See Appendix 1, P3, P6, P9, P14, P16. For family names from Tethba compare M. Dobbs, 'The territory and people of Tethba', *JRSAI* 68 (1938) 241-259; 71 (1941/42) 101-110.

<sup>46</sup> Hughes, 'The distribution of Irish *scriptoria*', 243-269; Mac Shamhráin, *JRSAI* 119 (1989) 93.

<sup>47</sup> Compare Clonard where seventeen scribes, lectors or learned men are recorded in the sources, P. Byrne, *Peritia* 4 (1985) 171-173; or the monastic community in Glendalough, where we know the names of merely five lectors, see Mac Shamhráin, *JRSAI* 119 (1989) 93-94.

<sup>48</sup> Hughes, 'The distribution of Irish *scriptoria*', 248; Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 102; B. Nic Aongusa, 'The monastic hierarchy in twelfth century Ireland: the case of Kells', *Riocht na Midhe* 8 (1990/1991) 3-20, here 13-14.

<sup>49</sup> He died in the year 923 (*CS* 922; *AFM* 921). See Appendix 1, S12.

<sup>50</sup> Diarmait, *fer leiginn*, died in 1000. He is called 'Conaillech', which was the family's surname (*AFM* 999). See Appendix 1, S17.

of the ecclesiastical dynasties in Clonmacnois, who also dominated other leading positions in the church of Clonmacnois, supplied the *fer léiginn* henceforward.<sup>51</sup>

### **Guestmaster (*airchinnech tige Oiged*)**

From the eleventh century onwards the obituaries of the *airchinnech Lis Oiged*, or *tige Oiged*, the superintendant of the guesthouse in Clonmacnois are recorded in the annals. S. Ciarán himself, according to his eleventh century hagiographers, was master of the guests for a while in the monastery of his brother in Íseal Chiaráin, and is described as an extremely dedicated host.<sup>52</sup> It seems that as head of the guesthouse the *airchinnech* was responsible for organization and order in the coming and going of people in the ecclesiastical settlement. An episode is told in the Latin life of S. Columba of Terryglass in which the '*castellum hospitum*', i.e. the *Lis Oiged* of Clonmacnois is mentioned as the place where the monks of Terryglass took quarter for the night. A miracle happened, namely the hostel seemed to be in flames several times that night. But by the time the *fratres* had jumped out of their beds and reached the hostel no trace of a fire was seen. Eventually it turned out that the guests had with them the relics of S. Columba, the supernatural power of which caused the miracle.<sup>53</sup> Six masters of the guesthouse are recorded in the annals from the eleventh down to the second half of the twelfth century. Their names come down to us through the Clonmacnois source used by the Four Masters. Three, possibly four, of them belonged to Uí Chongaile from Tethba and it seems that the office in the twelfth century had become a hereditary family position.<sup>54</sup>

### **Head of the Little Church (*Airchinnech Eglaisi Bige*)**

The *airchinnech Eglaisi bige*, the 'supervisor of the little church', is first mentioned in the annals in the late ninth century. Since the church had an independent head it has been suggested that it was a monastery somehow separate from Clonmacnois.<sup>55</sup> However in the Lismore version of Ciarán's life the little church, *Eglais Beag* is mentioned as the building in which Ciarán died and was lying in state before his

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<sup>51</sup> There were two *fer léiginn* of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht (S18, S31); one from the Uí Máeldúin (S28); one, possibly two of the Uí Loingsig (S22, S24); one of the Uí Lachtnáin (S23).

<sup>52</sup> The episode about Ciarán in the church of Íseal Chiaráin formed an original part of the Irish Life of Ciarán, and seems to have been translated into the Latin and copied by the thirteenth century redactors. Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 128-129; Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 209-210, §§23-25; Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 177-178.

<sup>53</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 231-233, §§28-29.

<sup>54</sup> See Appendix 1, G2, ?G4, G5, G6.

<sup>55</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 32.

interment.<sup>56</sup> There is also an independent saga tradition, probably dating from the tenth century, according to which Diarmait mac Cerbaill reserved for himself the right to be buried in Clonmacnois and also ordered that his body should be guarded in the little church for one night.<sup>57</sup> This evidence points to the fact that *Eglais Beag* functioned as the mortuary chapel of Clonmacnois. The Latin *vita* simply talks of the house in which Ciarán died and where he conversed with S. Cóemgen before his soul ascended to heaven. Presumably Ciarán's monastic cell in Clonmacnois was turned into a chapel some time after his death and eventually functioned as a mortuary chapel for the prominent secular and monastic persons who died in Clonmacnois. We might also assume that the bed of Ciarán (*imleach Chiaráin*), mentioned by the Four Masters as the place where people died,<sup>58</sup> was another name for *Eglais Beag*, since it was the building in which Ciarán is said to have died, and therefore most likely would have sheltered his bed. It would also have been the place where the pillow of S. Ciarán, a stone on which the saint used to sleep, and which was venerated in Clonmacnois possibly as early as the eighth century.<sup>59</sup>

The introduction of a separate office for some one in charge of the dead in Clonmacnois testifies to a high burial rate in the monastery. The Irish version of S. Ciarán's Life, the original of which was compiled sometime during the tenth century, contains the promise of immediate ascent into heaven, to every soul that would die on the hide of S. Ciarán's cow.<sup>60</sup> Obviously such a story has particular relevance to those about to die. For the monastic city, however, it could be read as propaganda material for a burial in S. Ciarán's graveyard. The function of Clonmacnois as a burial place of many prominent nobles and kings of Ireland, was in fact much developed in the course of the tenth century.<sup>61</sup> It is therefore possible that an increasing demand for burials in Clonmacnois made the introduction of the office of the custodian of the mortuary chapel necessary. The first supervisors of *Eglais Beag*, in the late ninth and first half of the tenth century were of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht family.<sup>62</sup> They might have contributed considerably to the consolidation of the fame of the monastic graveyard as the place of rest for Irish dignitaries.

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<sup>56</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 133.

<sup>57</sup> Paul Grosjean (ed), 'Notes d'hagiographie Celtique: Aní día fil manchine Chloinde Colmáin ocus Sil Aodha Sláine do Chlúain', *Analecta Bollandiana* 69 (1951) 96-102, here 98.

<sup>58</sup> *AFM* 997; *AFM* 1134.

<sup>59</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 215: "Ceruical lapideum sub capite semper habebat, quod vsque hodie in monasterio sancti Kiarani manet, et ab omnibus veneratur."

<sup>60</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 127.

<sup>61</sup> See below, 95-96.

<sup>62</sup> See Appendix 1, AE1, AE3.

## The community of religious within the monastic settlement, the anchorite, the Céili Dé and seniors in Clonmacnois

The names of some fifteen anchorites of Clonmacnois are recorded in the annals, one in the eighth, six in the ninth, none in the tenth and nine in the eleventh century. Men from all over Ireland, Fingen from Munster or Fogartach from Ulster seemed to have lived and died as anchorites in Clonmacnois. Prominent scholars, such as Suibne son of Máel Umai in the late ninth, or Dúnchad a lector in the early tenth century, were anchorites in Clonmacnois.

Strictly speaking the abbot would have been the father of the group of religious men living together in the monastic community. Since, however, the title 'abbot' was often retained by the lay ruler of the monastic estate, new titles were created for the head of the group of religious who lived within the settlement.<sup>63</sup> It seems possible that those of the anchorites, who are mentioned in the annals were leading members, or possible the leaders of the religious community in Clonmacnois. Later on, from the eleventh century onwards the role seems to have been taken by the *cend Celedh ndhé*, the 'head of the Céili Dé', first assigned to Conn na mBocht, the eponym of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht family.<sup>64</sup> The son of Conn, Máel Chiaráin, is styled *cenn bocht Cluana M. Nois*, seemingly applying to the same offices held by his father.<sup>65</sup>

The fact that the Meic Cuinn na mBocht, apart from leading the religious community in Clonmacnois also took an active part in the chronicle writing from the latter part of the eleventh century, might account for the comparatively high figure of nine obituaries of anchorites recorded in the annals during the eleventh century. It seems the family scribes reported home affairs in the first place and had a special liking for members of their own group inside the ecclesiastical settlement.<sup>66</sup> From the eleventh century on there is also evidence, that the community of the Céili Dé were seated in Íseal Chiaráin, a church in the neighbourhood of Clonmacnois, which eventually became

<sup>63</sup> Sharpe, *Peritia* 3 (1984) 265.

<sup>64</sup> *AFM* 1031; *AU* 1060 talks simply of Conn na mBocht, i.e. Conn of the Poor.

<sup>65</sup> *AU* 1079.1. The *bocht*, the Poor, were a feature of monastic life since the eleventh century, presumably a religious community largely identical or at least closely associated with the Céili Dé. Brian O Cuív, 'Miscellanea 1. "Boicht" Chorcaige', *Celtica* 18 (1986) 105-111. The office *cenn bocht* is also found in Armagh at the time, see *AU* 1074.4.

<sup>66</sup> See Appendix 1. under Anchorites. Dúnchad is praised as lector as well as anchorite, his son Joseph was a bishop, and Conn his grandson is praised as head of the Céili Dé. The anchorite Dubsláine, a priest of Ardbraccan is styled *prim anmchara na nGaoideal* by the Four Masters. Fothud Ua hAille, is praised as *ard anmchara* of Leth Cuinn. Also the annals report a number of foreign anchorites, who died in Clonmacnois, Fingen from Munster, Fogartach from Ulster, Dubsláine from Ardbraccan. Daigre Ua Dubhatáin is mentioned as an anchorite based in Clonmacnois who died in Glendalough.



independent from its mother church and was privately held by the Meic Cuinn na mBocht from the end of the eleventh century.<sup>67</sup>

### The community of the Seniors

According to Ryan the title *sruith* or *senóir* was assigned to senior members of the monastic community, from whose ranks offices of authority were often filled in Clonmacnois.<sup>68</sup> Already the Dublin version of the Life of S. Ciarán describes a separate community of seniors '*qui habebant cellulam seorsum in monasterio sancti Kiarani*'. They are mentioned in the account of the visit of S. Colum Cille to Clonmacnois, which seems to have formed part of the *vita* in its early seventh or eighth century version.<sup>69</sup> The annals attest to the community of the seniors as a constituent part of the monastic institution from the second half of the eighth century.<sup>70</sup> Obituaries of senior members are regularly included in the annals down to the twelfth century. They seem to have been closely associated with the community of religious in Clonmacnois, otherwise known as the community of the Céili Dé. The comparatively high number of seniors in Clonmacnois, recorded in the later eleventh and early twelfth century might again have been due to the fact that the Meic Cuinn na mBocht, who presided over the religious community were actively involved in chronicle keeping in Clonmacnois.

### Others

In the eleventh century three rather unusual obituaries are included in the annals, all referring to those holding minor offices in the monastic community. There is Cernach styled *aistire*, a porter of Clonmacnois,<sup>71</sup> Connmach, *toiseach ceileabharta*, the chief singer, and the *liachtaire*, the bell-ringer of Clonmacnois. All of them lived in the first half of the eleventh century, and most likely obtained their obituaries in the annals through being friendly with or related to those who wrote the contemporary chronicles.

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<sup>67</sup> The head of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht bought the church in the year 1093, see CS 1089; *AClon* 1087, p. 184; see below, 111.

<sup>68</sup> Ryan, *Irish monasticism*, 271.

<sup>69</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 214; see also Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 131, where the *tich sruithi* is mentioned.

<sup>70</sup> The first abbot of the seniors (*abbas sruithe Cluana*) mentioned in the annals died in 768 (Sen2), his successor died in 811 (Sen3). The death of another holder of the office is recorded in the early tenth century (Sen4), after which follows a long gap.

<sup>71</sup> He seems to have been the equivalent to the *hostiarius* of a Benedictine monastery. The *Regula Benedicti* dedicates a whole chapter to this office, stating that it should be a *senes sapiens* of the community who sits at the door, responsible and mature enough not to be tempted to wander round. He lives near the main door of the monastery, so that every visitor always finds him there to give information. G. Holzherr (ed), *Die Benediktiner Regel*, 310.

So far the various offices and groups within the church of Clonmacnois have been discussed. A wide variety of ecclesiastical officials, leaders of the monastic schools, priests, guestmasters, those in charge of individual churches in Clonmacnois, is recorded from the tenth century onwards, when due to the independent recording of history in Clonmacnois itself, the annalistic accounts become more detailed. It appears from these contemporary records that most of the leading positions within the institution were dominated by several families, who had apparently settled in Clonmacnois. These families will be discussed in the following section.

## **2.2. Septs and families represented in offices in Clonmacnois - Clanship in the monastic community?**

Family background and local origin of the leading members of a monastic community are often seen as one mechanism by which the interaction between the monastic and the secular world functioned, and are therefore examined as an indicator for the various political allies of the respective church. Father John Ryan studied the abbatial succession in Clonmacnois from the sixth to the eighth centuries primarily to demonstrate that, unlike the case of Iona, clanship did not exist in the religious community of Clonmacnois.<sup>72</sup> Thus the kin of the founder S. Ciarán, the Latharna Molt, of Dál nAraide in Ulster were in no way preferred in the choice of abbots in Clonmacnois. In fact no member of that people appears amongst the successors of S. Ciarán.<sup>73</sup> Instead, the abbots of Clonmacnois came more or less from all over Ireland in the early period. Preference was given to candidates from the northern half of Ireland after the late seventh century. Furthermore, Ryan observed that the monastery was primarily ruled by abbots of a non-aristocratic background, which accounts for the fact that Clonmacnois never became the appurtenance of any state, sept or family, and no secular power ever succeeded in turning the monastery into its satellite. In a general

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<sup>72</sup> John Ryan, 'The abbatial succession at Clonmacnois', in John Ryan (ed), *Féil-scribhinn Eóin Mhic Néill. Essays and Studies presented to Professor Eoin MacNeill* (Dublin 1940) 490-507, here 490. He contradicts Reeves, who in his edition of Adamnán's *Vita Columbae* points out the connection between Iona and the Cenél Conaill, the branch of the founder saint. For a more recent study of the abbatial succession in Iona, from the later sixth century see Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 36-46.

<sup>73</sup> In comparison nine of the eleven direct successors of S. Colum Cille in Iona, were of the Cenél Conaill, the branch of the Uí Néill from which S. Colum Cille himself came.

assessment of future developments he predicted no essential change in personnel or policy for the period between the Norse invasion and the late twelfth century.<sup>74</sup>

However, there are a few problems with these arguments, most decisive being the fact that the family background of S. Ciarán is rather controversial. According to one set of the Clonmacnois annals, as well as his hagiographers, he was of the Latharna,<sup>75</sup> a branch of the Dál nAraide in Ulster.<sup>76</sup> The Dublin Life of Ciarán, however, explains that Latharna was a region in Mide, in the middle of Ireland.<sup>77</sup> Mageoghagan, finally, transmitted a tradition according to which S. Ciarán's father was a Connacht man, who with his family lived in Mide for a while.<sup>78</sup>

Such disagreement in the sources seems indicative. The tribal origin of Ciarán with the Dál nAraide in Ulster, claimed in the Oxford Life, seems quite plausible. The fact that apparently later interpretations claim that the founder saint of Clonmacnois came from Mide, or Connacht respectively, appears to be a result of actual political constellations and alliances between the leading dynasties in Clonmacnois and their secular counterparts. Thus the claimed Mide origin must date to a period when the kings of Mide were the leading secular allies of Clonmacnois, namely in the tenth century. Connacht origin, accordingly, would be assigned to Ciarán at a time of predominant Connacht influence in the monastic settlement, which was the case in the early period, from the late seventh and throughout the eighth centuries, as well as from the latter half of the eleventh century onwards. Secular alliances found reflection in the various editions of the history of S. Ciarán's origin, and also influenced local politics within the ecclesiastical settlement. Thus under the impact of royal patronage from, for example, Connacht, ecclesiastical dynasties from that part of Ireland rose to power in Clonmacnois. The various traditions concerning Ciarán's origin would thus represent the points of view of the various leading dynasties in Clonmacnois, which were in fact predominantly from the three alleged homes of S. Ciarán, namely from the south-eastern

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<sup>74</sup> Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 507; compare Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 171.

<sup>75</sup> *AT* (548); *CS* 544. His descent from the Latharna is also mentioned in the Dublin version, Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 200, and in the Oxford version, which talks of the Dál nAraide and the northern regions of Ireland "Hic traxit originem de aquilonali parte Hibernie, Ardensium sílicet genere", Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 172.

<sup>76</sup> John Bannerman, *Studies in the history of Dalriada* (Edinburgh, London 1974) 1-8; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 109, 110, 217.

<sup>77</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 200, "Sanctus abbas Kyaranus de plebe Latronensium que est in regione Midhi, id est in medio Hybernie, ortus fuit".

<sup>78</sup> *AClon* 547, p. 81. He says that Ciarán was brought up in 'Templevickinloyhe in Kinaleagh', which according to Macalister was identical with 'Temple Mac in tsair' in Ardnurcher parish in Mide, the home of S. Ciarán according to the Irish life of Ciarán, Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 119; Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 111.

parts of Ulster, from various branches of the Southern Uí Néill in Mide, and from the kingdom of Connacht.

In the early period, from the seventh to the mid-ninth century, the leadership of Clonmacnois was clearly dominated by Connachtmen. Fifty per cent of the abbots between the years 600 and 850 were from Connacht.<sup>79</sup> Possibly six of them were from Uí Maine, a sub-kingdom in Connacht, in the immediate neighbourhood of Clonmacnois, west of the Shannon.<sup>80</sup> A high proportion of churchmen in Clonmacnois, in this early period also came from Ulster mainly from the area, represented by the kingdom of Airgialla, in the counties Louth, Monaghan and Armagh. The Uí Méith and the Uí Chremthainn, as well as the Mugdorna Maigen are represented in leading positions in Clonmacnois.<sup>81</sup> Their neighbours, the Ciannachta Breg, a tribe subject to the Southern Uí Néill kings, supplied two abbots of Clonmacnois in the eighth century.<sup>82</sup> Only in the course of the ninth century did Mide-men become prominent in leading offices. Ruaidri son of Donnchad, most likely a brother of Conchobar son of Donnchad, king of Tara of the Clann Cholmáin, is said to have been *tanaisi* of Clonmacnois in the late thirties of the ninth century.<sup>83</sup> Around the same time a family from Fore in the western parts of the kingdom of Mide first appears in the vice-abbacy of Clonmacnois.<sup>84</sup>

With the beginning of the tenth century, when history was first recorded in Clonmacnois itself, more detailed information about the various office holders in the monastic settlement is given in the annals. Family links between the various people can often be reconstructed, and hereditary dynasties holding offices in Clonmacnois over several generations can be traced from then on.

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<sup>79</sup> Between the years 599 and 850, the names of thirty-four abbots of Clonmacnois are recorded (A5-38). For four of them no family background is given (A13, 25, 28, 32), the descent of another six is unclear (A22, 24, 26, 30, 35, 37). Of the remaining twenty-four, one was from Munster (A7), five were from Ulster (A6, Dál mBairdene; A14, A18 from the territory of the Airgialla; A19, A33 from the Ciannachta Breg) and one from Tethba (A15). The remaining seventeen abbots were all Connachtmen.

<sup>80</sup> See Appendix 1, A5, A21, A23, A26, A29, A38. For the Uí Maine and their links with Clonmacnois. See below, 77-85.

<sup>81</sup> See Appendix 1, A14 (d.694), A18 (d.832), A42 (d.877). See C1 (d.1060) for the Meic Cuinn na mBocht who were of the Mugdorna Maigen.

<sup>82</sup> See Appendix 1, A19 (d.737), A33 (d.794).

<sup>83</sup> See Appendix 1, vA6, (d.838). He is only recorded in the *Chronicum* and is said to have been vice-abbot of Clonard as well. The entry of his death seems to be a later insertion, added in the annals some time in the reign of Flann Sinna. It seems however possible that in the first half of the ninth century, under common pressure from the king of Munster, the leaders of Clonmacnois and the kings of Mide joined their forces for the first time. A brother of the then king of Mide as vice-abbot in Clonmacnois at the time seems therefore quite plausible.

<sup>84</sup> See Appendix 1, vA5 (d.835), vA9 (d.871); also from Fore was vice-abbot Cormac, vA11 (d.891).

One of the earliest examples are the 'Conaillech'-clan, surnamed after their origin among the Conaille Muirthemne, a branch of the Ulaid, settled in the territory of present county Louth, Dundalk Bay. The Clonmacnois branch of the family was founded by Colmán son of Ailill, *princeps* of Clonmacnois for over twenty years in the early tenth century. His son Máel Tuile, was *fer léiginn*, the leader of the monastic schools. Another of Colmán's descendants, held the same position in the later tenth century. Bresal Conaillech became *comarba Ciaráin* in the year 1025 and his son Ailill, was a priest of the church of Clonmacnois.<sup>85</sup> Another family also originally from the same general area were the descendants of Gormán, an eighth century abbot of Louth, who retired to and died in Clonmacnois. They became later known as the Meic Cuinn na mBocht, named after an eleventh century member of the dynasty. However, the family was settled in Clonmacnois and provided many leading officials from at least the ninth century.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore there was the Ua Maonaigh family whose surname suggests that ecclesiastical functionaries were also recruited from the community of the ecclesiastical tenants (*manaig*) living nearby the church.<sup>87</sup>

In the eleventh century, due to even fuller annalistic accounts, many more of the ecclesiastical dynasties in Clonmacnois become known by name. The Uí Maéldúin, who claimed common ancestry with the Clann Cholmáin kings of Mide, supplied several vice-abbots, as well as a head of the school in Clonmacnois in the course of the eleventh century.<sup>88</sup> Two of the eleventh century abbots were of the Uí Flaithéin, also a family from Mide.<sup>89</sup> Many of the Clonmacnois families during that period seem to have come from Tethba, a subkingdom in Mide. Uí Tadóin, Uí Chongaile, Uí Chatharnaigh and Uí Lachtnáin were all Tethba family names. Other families who had a share in the government of Clonmacnois were from Connacht, like the Uí Braóin and the Uí Chillín, who provided several abbots and vice-abbots.<sup>90</sup> Several Uí Maine families, like the Uí Ruadáin, Uí Maonaigh or Uí Nechtain can be traced in various monastic offices. Finally the Uí Mháeleoin, most likely another family from Connacht appear in the leadership of the church of Clonmacnois at the beginning of the twelfth century.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> See Appendix 1, A49 (d.926), S12 (d.923), S17 (d.1000), A62 (d.1030), P10 (d.1044).

<sup>86</sup> John V. Kelleher, 'The Tain and the annals', *Ériu* 22 (1972) 107-127, here 125-127. For the family see also below, 108-111.

<sup>87</sup> For the *manaig* see C. Etchingham, 'The early Irish church: some observations on pastoral care and dues', *Ériu* 42 (1991) 99-118, here 105-113; C. Doherty, 'Some aspects of hagiography as a source for Irish economic history', *Peritia* 1 (1982) 300-328, here 315-321.

<sup>88</sup> See Appendix 1, vA18, vA21, vA23, S28.

<sup>89</sup> See Appendix 1, A63, A69.

<sup>90</sup> See Appendix 1, Uí Braóin: ?P5 (d.948), A56 (d.989), A67 (d.1088), vA26 (d.1187); Uí Chillín A54 (d.966), vA24 (d.1106).

<sup>91</sup> See A72.

Thus we might agree with Ryan that clanship in terms of direct blood ties between one particular secular dynasty and those who ruled in Clonmacnois did not exist. However the appearance, for example, of Mide men in governmental offices in Clonmacnois from the tenth century onwards was certainly linked with the fact that the Clann Cholmáin kings from Mide cherished Clonmacnois as one of the main ecclesiastical centres in their kingdom. The predominance of Connacht abbots in Clonmacnois, throughout the seventh and eighth centuries, would correspondingly point to close alliances between the church and its secular neighbours to the west. This friendship seems to have seen a revival in the course of the eleventh century, when dynasties from Connacht again became more prominent amongst the ruling class in Clonmacnois.

A correlation between what we might call the secular patrons of Clonmacnois and its respective ecclesiastical rulers certainly existed. The evidence points further to the fact that the monastic establishment produced its own aristocratic ruling class. A policy of hereditary transmission of leading offices was gradually adopted on different levels in the institutional hierarchy in Clonmacnois. This development can be traced in the annals from the ninth century onwards.

### 2.3. Affiliations between Clonmacnois and other churches

One of the most valuable sources from which we learn about the interaction between the individual churches and the ecclesiastical hierarchy in medieval Ireland are Saint's Lives. Historians have long agreed that most hagiographical writings have little direct historical value concerning the actual object of their story. Instead they contain immense riches relating to the history and political constellations at the time when the life was composed, or, as is often the case, subsequently revised.<sup>92</sup> Thus if the Life of a saint talks about friendship or union between two saints this should be read as the outcome of an alliance which existed between their respective foundations at the time when the life was composed. For the chronological context of such an alliance one must rely on the annals, where, apart from the political history of the time, exchange of personnel between two churches is frequently indicated in the obituaries, when office-holders are commemorated for having held positions in two different churches at a time.

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<sup>92</sup> Kenney, *The sources*, 299; McCone, *The Maynooth Review* 11 (1984) 56; Doherty, 'The Irish hagiographer: resources, aims, results', in Tom Dunne (ed), *The writer as witness: literature as historical evidence* (Cork 1987) 10-22, here 11.

Those alliances are referred to by the hagiographers as *fraternitas* (brotherhood), or the Irish *óentu* (unity) and appear in the first place as a kind of confraternity of prayer.<sup>93</sup> There was, however, more than a merely spiritual dimension to them. As a mutual agreement between two churches they created an umbrella of peace which allowed for cooperation between the two partners.<sup>94</sup> Other unions described in the Saints' Lives clearly express less equal relations between the two partners involved. They seem to have, in reality, functioned on a basis of dependency, including the obligations to pay tax and render services for the inferior of the two partners. The image of spiritual friendships seem to have provided the theological superstructure by which one church could claim authority over another, and from which the right to exercise power was derived.

A considerable number of churches can be discovered as having been associated with Clonmacnois in the latter way. A church, placed by its founder patron under the authority of Ciarán, would thus be under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the bishop of Clonmacnois. It seems that he was responsible for the keeping of the ministry in the dependent church. The priest there might have been supplied by Clonmacnois, and the bishop would have the right of visitation, thus exercising control of affairs in the daughter church. In return the dependent house would render taxes and services to its ecclesiastical overlord, consisting of natural goods, or duties like providing food and lodging for members of the community of the mother house. A vivid picture of such a relation comes down to us in the so-called Registry of Clonmacnois, where the bishop of Clonmacnois is described as the head of a number of churches in what is now county Leitrim. As a kind of token he held certain lands in the respective churches, which were obliged to pay a yearly rent of two cows and one pig to the abbot, or *comarba* of Ciarán, who, as the one in charge of the temporalities, would come to collect the rent every S. Martin's day.<sup>95</sup> It seems this was primarily the nature of the relation between a mother church and the various dependencies, forming its *paruchia*.

Often such a friendship, even though it implies inferiority for the church dependent on Clonmacnois, is commented upon in detail in the Lives of the less powerful founder saint, but is not mentioned by S. Ciarán's hagiographers, implying that there must have been some advantage for the dependent church as well. It seems membership of the *paruchia* of a powerful church was, in fact, in high demand. This might have been partly the result of the fact that every church needed its priest, who in his turn, of course,

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<sup>93</sup> Ryan, *Irish monasticism*, 326; Doherty, 'Some aspects of hagiography as a source for Irish economic history', *Peritia* 1 (1982) 300-328, here 325-327.

<sup>94</sup> Doherty, *Peritia* 1 (1982) 326.

<sup>95</sup> *Registry*, 452. See below, chap. 6 for the transmission of the document.

needed episcopal authorization for the due performance of his ministry. Membership of a *paruchia* also constituted an element of security, since you had a powerful friend, who would, if needed, defend you against enemies, both secular and ecclesiastical. This aspect might be a reason for the fact that at times the friendship with S. Ciarán would be sought by churches relatively distant from Clonmacnois. Often those tendencies can be explained as the result of political pressure on the respective church by local secular or ecclesiastical powers. Submission to the more distant church of Clonmacnois could provide helpful support in the local quarrels.<sup>96</sup>

In the following we will first look at the churches who seem to have been on equal terms with Clonmacnois, i.e other ecclesiastical centres who themselves had their own extended *paruchia*.

### Armagh

The *vita* of S. Ciarán contains no direct comment on the relation between the founder of Clonmacnois and S. Patrick. In fact, the patron saint of the church of Armagh finds no direct mention at all. Only through comparison with the *vita* of S. Patrick can a link be discovered. A certain Diarmait, otherwise known as Justus, is mentioned as the one who baptised Ciarán.<sup>97</sup> Tirechán informs us that Justus was a deacon of S. Patrick's household, whom he installed in the church of Fuerty (Fidarta), one of the Patrician foundations in the territory of Uí Maine in Connacht. Deacon Justus, at the very end of his life, in his hundred and fortieth year baptized S. Ciarán, the son of the craftsman.<sup>98</sup> Such a statement, especially since it was apparently unknown to, or ignored by S. Ciarán's biographers, implied that Ciarán owed his faith, transmitted via baptism, to S. Patrick. This in any case seems to have been the opinion of S. Patrick's biographer in the later seventh century. At the same time Tirechán complains that the community of Clonmacnois had got hold of many of the Patrician churches in Connacht, mentioning the churches of 'Cellola Toch' 'Tamnuch' and 'Dumech' by name.<sup>99</sup> He accuses the

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<sup>96</sup> See K. McCone, 'Clones and her neighbours in the early period: hints from some Airgiolla Saints' Lives', *Clogher Record* 11 (1984) 305-325, here 323, who named this mechanism 'Sletty syndrome', after the church for which he first observed it. In short it means that 'if a powerful church nearby is threatening your independence, protect yourself by submission to a powerful church further away whose control is likely to be less pervasive and irksome' (*ibid*, 323).

<sup>97</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 201; Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 173, §3; Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 78; Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 120.

<sup>98</sup> Ludwig Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts in the Book of Armagh* (Dublin 1979) 128, §7.2; 146-147, §28.1-3. The story is also contained in the Tripartite Life of Patrick, see W. Stokes (ed), *The Tripartite Life of Patrick* (London 1887) 104-105.

<sup>99</sup> Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 160-161, §47.4 and 154-155, §39.8 for 'Cellola Toch'; 142-143, §25.2 for 'Tamnuch' and 'Dumech'.



'familia' of Clonmacnois for having taken advantage of the plague in the later seventh century.<sup>100</sup> We may conclude that Connacht was a particularly infested area, and many of the priests of the churches there died in the course of the plague. Tirechán's complaint seems to imply that Clonmacnois simply filled the vacant positions in the churches with its own priest - pointing to the fact that the foremost task of an ecclesiastical overlord was to provide a priest in its dependencies. Thus, whoever supplied the priest of a church could claim ecclesiastical overlordship, including tithes and ecclesiastical tax. Obviously competition for ecclesiastical authority in Connacht dominated the relations between the churches of Armagh and Clonmacnois in the late seventh century.

It seems Clonmacnois was, for the century to come, the more successful contestant and exercised ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Connacht for most of the eighth century. This was the time in which Connacht men dominated in the abbacy of Clonmacnois, and the *Lex Ciaráni*, with the support of the kings of the Uí Briúin, was four times promulgated in Connacht.<sup>101</sup> However, from the later eighth century onwards, Armagh regained authority in the area. The *Cáin Pátraic* was regularly promulgated in Connacht, often in association with a circuit of S. Patrick's relics.<sup>102</sup> Rivalries between Armagh and Clonmacnois for authority over churches seem to have been carried out down to the eleventh century. The complaints about churches rightly belonging to Armagh, but claimed by Clonmacnois, still form part of the Tripartite Life of Patrick, and are extended to three churches in Mide.<sup>103</sup> The eleventh century Life of Patrick also contains a polemical comment on the scarcity of relics in Clonmacnois, in which the superiority of Armagh over Clonmacnois as regards the possession of relics seems to have found expression.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 142-143, §25.2: 'familia Clona per vim tenent locos Patricii multos post mortalitates novissimas'.

<sup>101</sup> *AU* 744.9; *AI* 775; *AU* 788; *AU* 814.

<sup>102</sup> *AFM* 779 (recte 783); *AU* 799; *AU* 811; *AU* 818; *AU* 825; *AU* 836; *AU* 845, 846. The fact that these circuits of the saint's relics were often performed by an abbot of Armagh expelled from his city (so in the year 811 and 845) only stresses the importance of Connacht as the loyal 'hinterland' of S. Patrick's *paruchia*.

<sup>103</sup> Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, Lxiii, 76, 78, 80. Compare below, 70-71.

<sup>104</sup> Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, 84. A second version of the same story is contained in a note to the Martyrology of Oengus in Rawlinson B 512, fol. 62, edited by Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, 556. The relevant passage in the manuscript contains the preface, part of the prologue and the epilogue to the Martyrology of Oengus, including some notes to it. See Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, p. xxiv, for a description of Rawl. 512.

## The Columban community in Scotland and Ireland

The earliest securely datable reference to links between Clonmacnois and the Columban community is contained in the life of Colum Cille, written by Adamnán, abbot of Iona, in the late seventh century. It preserves the account of S. Colum Cille's visit to Clonmacnois during the time of abbot Ailither (585-599).<sup>105</sup> According to Adamnán Colum Cille was received by the monks like an angel of the Lord, they bowed before the saint and kissed him with all reverence. A kind of pyramid was built out of branches and carried over the head of the saint, to give shelter on his way to the church in Clonmacnois.<sup>106</sup> This story presents us with an ideal of harmony between the churches of Colum Cille and that of Ciarán, which seems to have existed in the late seventh century, when Adamnán wrote his biography.<sup>107</sup> The event is also told, though in a different context, in the Dublin Life of S. Ciarán.<sup>108</sup> According to an anecdote contained in the ninth century 'Rule of Tallaght' Adamnán once interfered in a conflict for the abbacy of Clonmacnois in the late seventh and early eighth century and it has been suggested that the episode might reflect Iona claims to jurisdiction or supervisory authority over Clonmacnois during the abbacy of Adamnán.<sup>109</sup>

In any case, harmony between Ciarán and Colum Cille did not survive the political reality of the eighth century, in which the Clann Cholmáin rose to power as the leading dynasty in Mide.<sup>110</sup> Those who seem to have profited most from the dynasty's initial success were the Columban churches in Ireland. The *Lex Colum Cille* was twice proclaimed in Mide during the reign of Domnall Midi (743-763), the founder of the dynasty.<sup>111</sup> When he died in the year 763, he was buried in the Columban house of

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<sup>105</sup> Anderson, *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, 24-27, Book I, 3. The visit allegedly took place when S. Colum Cille was in Ireland to found the church of Durrow. See Appendix 1, A4.

<sup>106</sup> Anderson, *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, 24-27, Book I, 3; "humiliatisque in terram uultibus eo uisco cum omni reuerentia exoscultatus ab eis est; ymnis et laudibus resonantes honorifice ad ecclesiam perducunt. Quandamque de lignis piramidem erga sanctum deambulantes constringentes a quatuor uiris eque ambulantes subportari fecerunt, ne uidelicet sanctus senior Columba eiusdem fratrum multitudinis constipatione molestaretur."

<sup>107</sup> Some time between 688 and 697; Anderson, *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, xLii; compare Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 54.

<sup>108</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum I*, 213-214, §31; Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 131.

<sup>109</sup> 'The monastery of Tallaght', ed. E. J. Gwynn and W. J. Purton, *PRIA* 29 (1911) 115-179, here 162, §85; see C. Etchingham, *Ériu* 44 (1993) 155.

<sup>110</sup> Francis John Byrne, *The rise of Uí Néill and the high-kingship of Ireland* (Dublin 1969) 20; Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 64-67.

<sup>111</sup> *AU* 753.4; *AU* 757.9.

Durrow.<sup>112</sup> Domnall's church policy and his preferential treatment of the Columban community apparently provoked hostility from Clonmacnois, likewise striving for the position of leading church in the kingdom. This kind of rivalry might have been the background to the battle between the communities of Clonmacnois and Durrow in 764, one year after king Domnall's death.<sup>113</sup> Donnchad, son and successor to Domnall Midi, continued the policy of his father, the *Lex Colum Cille* was again promulgated in the year 778,<sup>114</sup> and the king had the active military support of the forces of Durrow in his campaign against the king of Munster.<sup>115</sup> However with his death in the year 797, the Cenél nEógain of the Northern Uí Néill regained the over-kingship. The Clann Cholmáin, if only temporarily, lost their leading position and the Columban houses in Mide a powerful secular patron.<sup>116</sup>

The dynasty's revival, their gradual ascent as the most powerful secular rulers in the midlands in the course of the ninth century, went along with a more balanced church policy. Whereas in the eighth century the Clann Cholmáin patronage over the Columban churches was at the expense of other ecclesiastical centres,<sup>117</sup> the ninth century saw the kings of the Clann Cholmáin in peaceful alliance with several churches. Besides the traditional links with Durrow, the kings maintained links with Clonard and Clonmacnois which during the reign of Flann Sinna (879-916) became the leading churches in Mide, and were under joint government of a close friend of the king.<sup>118</sup>

The period saw a comparatively peaceful consolidation of the relationship between the Columban churches in Ireland and Clonmacnois, since both enjoyed Clann Cholmáin patronage. King Flann Sinna, the builder of the main church in Clonmacnois, had the relics of Colum Cille enshrined in Durrow.<sup>119</sup> Links between the two churches can be

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<sup>112</sup> *AFM* 758. According to the Annals of Clonmacnois he was the 'first K. of Ireland of Clann Cholmáin or o'Melaghlynes & died quitly in his Deathbed the 12th of the kalends of December', *AClon* 759, p. 121.

<sup>113</sup> For the Battle of Argaman see *AU* 764.6; *AT* (764); *AClon* 759, p. 121. Diarmait son of Domnall (possibly a son of king Domnall Midi) was killed in battle together with Diglach son of Dubless. His opponent Bresal, son of Murchad (possibly nephew of Domnall Midi, the son of his brother Murchad) was victorious on the side of Clonmacnois, he was killed later in the same year (*AU* 764.11). Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 66.

<sup>114</sup> *AU* 778.4.

<sup>115</sup> *AU* 776.11.

<sup>116</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 160; Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 67.

<sup>117</sup> In the year 775 king Donchad had an armed encounter in Clonard with the community (*AU* 775.6). In the year 789 he was accused of having dishonoured the staff of Jesus and the relics of Patrick in an assembly at Ráith Airthir (*AU* 789.17). Compare Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 157.

<sup>118</sup> See below, 86-92.

<sup>119</sup> Luce (ed), *Evangeliorum Quattuor Codex Durmachensis*, 55.

established on archeological grounds from the later ninth century.<sup>120</sup> It seems that a series of tales, unique to the Irish Life of Ciarán, should be dated to this period. A number of anecdotes from Clonard, where both founder saints, Colum Cille and Ciarán are said to have studied, shed a particularly friendly light on the founder of Durrow.<sup>121</sup> S. Finnian on one occasion was asked who would lead the prayers after his death. Finnian pointed out S. Ciarán, in consequence of which all the saints, with the notable exception of Colum Cille, were jealous of Ciarán, because of the pre-eminence given to him by S. Finnian. According to the second story S. Finnian once had a vision of two golden moons in the sky, one of which went to the north-east across the sea, the other over the middle of Ireland. The dream is interpreted as a vision about the future of Colum Cille and Ciarán. It clearly reflects the harmonious coexistence of their ecclesiastical foundations and defines the respective spheres of interest, namely Ireland for Ciarán, and Scotland and the Scottish Isles for Colum Cille.<sup>122</sup>

Finally, friendship between Clonmacnois and the Columban foundation Kells can be traced in the annals for the latter half of the eleventh century, when two lectors from Kells had links with Clonmacnois as well. Máel Choluim Ua Loingsigh, *fer léiginn* in Kells, who died in the year 1061, seems to have come from an ecclesiastical dynasty of Clonmacnois, which was also the place where he died.<sup>123</sup> Donngal son of Gormán, another *fer léiginn* of Kells who died in the year 1070, was according to the Annals of Innisfallen lector in Clonmacnois as well.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> A resemblance between the presentation of lions, found on a group of crosses, which originated in Clonmacnois and the presentation of the lion symbolising the evangelist John in the Book of Durrow has been described by C. Hicks. She assumes that there were close connections between the craftsmen of the two monasteries at least since 870, when the Book of Durrow was first definitely in Durrow. Carola Hicks, 'A Clonmacnois workshop in stone', *JRSAI* 110 (1980) 5-35, here 11.

<sup>121</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 126-127; the anecdotes are also contained in the sixteenth century life of Colum Cille, compiled from various sources under the direction of Manus O'Donnell, A. O'Kelleher and G. Shoepferle (eds), *Betha Colaim Chille: Life of Columcille compiled by Manus O'Donnell in 1532* (Urbana 1918) 128.

<sup>122</sup> The anecdotes are not contained in the Latin Lives of Ciarán.

<sup>123</sup> He was '*saol + sagart Cluana mic Nóis, Ciaráin, ferleighind Cenannsa*', according to the Four Masters died in the year 1061 (see P12). He was possibly the son of Flaithbertach son of Loingsech, *fer léiginn* of Clonmacnois a generation earlier, who died in 1038 (see B18). The Uí Loingsigh supplied an abbot of Clonmacnois in the early twelfth century (see A71).

<sup>124</sup> He was *tánaisi Abbadh Cluana muc Nois* according to the Chronicum (CS 1067); the Annals of Ulster say he was *fer léiginn* in Kells (AU 1070.10), the Annals of Innisfallen style him *fer leigind Cluana M. Nois ocus Cenannsa* (AI 1070.7), and according to the Four Masters he was *áird ferleighinn Leithe Chuinn, + tánaissi abbaidh Cluana mic Nóis* (AFM 1070). See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 90 n.12; also below, Appendix 1, S27.

## Clonard

Clonard, the foundation of S. Finnian, seems to have become the most important church in the kingdom of Mide, under the kings of the Clann Cholmáin in the course of the ninth century.<sup>125</sup> Together with many other famous Irish saints, like Colum Cille, Ciarán of Saighir, or Brendan of Clonfert, Ciarán is said, in all of the extant versions of his Life, to have been a disciple of Finnian, before founding his own church.<sup>126</sup> The teacher-pupil relationship obviously implies a superiority of some kind for the church of S. Finnian. There is an obvious tendency in the Lives of S. Ciarán, in particular in the Irish version, to stress the special position which Ciarán had amongst the twelve apostles of Ireland in Clonard. He is portrayed as having had a very special relationship with Finnian, his teacher. Thus according to the Salamanca version of his *vita* each of the apostles in Clonard had to grind corn with a quern (*molam manu sua*) on a given day. When it was Ciarán's turn, the angel of God in person used to grind for him.<sup>127</sup> According to another episode Finnian sent visitors to S. Ciarán. Thus a young girl who had decided to remain as a holy virgin under S. Finnian's charge is sent to study with Ciarán; similarly, twelve lepers once came to Clonard and were sent to Ciarán to be healed.<sup>128</sup> As we have seen earlier, S. Finnian himself is said to have given priority to Ciarán, when he appointed him as the one to lead the prayers, after his death.<sup>129</sup> At another occasion he gave a blessing to Ciarán, promising him that his name should be *Leath n-Eirim*.<sup>130</sup>

S. Ciarán is occasionally brought in, in connection with S. Finnian's wealth. Again the Irish Life puts much emphasis on the fact that S. Ciarán's cow supplied not only the twelve disciples of Finnian with milk, but also fed the guests and the sick in Clonard, all in all three times fifty men a day.<sup>131</sup> Another time Ciarán was sent to grind corn at night in a mill, some miles away from Clonard. A petty king living nearby sent meat and drink to the holy man who used the food for the common good by throwing it into the mill and

<sup>125</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 63; Ryan, *Irish monasticism*, 115-118; Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 81, 90-91.

<sup>126</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 101, §19; all the versions of S. Ciarán's Life comment on Ciarán's time as a student in Clonard. See Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 205-206, §§15-17; Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 173-174, §§4-6; Heist, (ed) *Vitae Sanctorum*, 80-81, §§12-13; Stokes (ed) *Lives of Saints*, 122-127.

<sup>127</sup> Heist (ed) *Vitae Sanctorum*, 81, §13.

<sup>128</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 123.

<sup>129</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 126.

<sup>130</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 124. It seems the episode was translated and incorporated by the thirteenth century redactor into the Dublin version, Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 206, §17.

<sup>131</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 122.

transforming it into flour. The king gave the mill to Ciarán, who passed the church, which was later built there, on to his master Finnian. This story is, in a short version, contained in the Oxford Life of S. Ciarán, and was possibly copied and translated from the Irish. There the episode is much embellished through the romantic involvement of the miller's daughter. Also the conclusion is drawn that Finnian owes his wealth to Ciarán. In return Ciarán receives from Finnian another blessing, promising fame, learning and wealth.<sup>132</sup>

The peak of S. Ciarán's ambitions for equality with his teacher is reached in the Lismore Life at the departure of Ciarán from Clonard. On that occasion, says the author, S. Finnian offered his church to his pupil, who politely refrained from taking the offer with the argument that none but God alone should receive such a gift. The two saints decide that instead unity (*óentad*) should exist between them, and that he who breaks the unity should have no share in earth or in heaven.<sup>133</sup>

These or comparable statements concerning the relationship between S. Ciarán and his teacher are not contained in S. Finnian's lives. There, the only very vague indication of some kind of equality is the fact that the mothers of Ciarán and Finnian, together with that of Colum Cille, are said to have retired to the same cell.<sup>134</sup> A balance of power between the two churches is only suggested in the various versions of the Life of S. Ciarán, most outspoken in the Irish Life. They therefore probably express the relation between the two churches as the Clonmacnois people would like to have had it rather than as it actually was.

Links between the two churches are first attested in the annals for the ninth century, when Ruaidrí son of Donnchad (d.838) is said to have held the vice-abbacy in both churches.<sup>135</sup> In the course of the tenth and early eleventh century Clonard and Clonmacnois were three times under the government of one and the same abbot, Colmán Conaillech (d.926), Céilechair son of Robartach (d.954) and Flaithbertach son of Domnall (d.1014). Two of the four men here were close relatives of the kings of the Clann Cholmáin, and a third, Colmán Conaillech appears to have been a very good friend of Flann Sinna, his contemporary. Colmán had been abbot of Clonard for a considerable time already (his predecessor there had died in 888), when he was promoted to the abbot's chair in Clonmacnois in the year 904. This constellation, an old and trusted abbot of Clonard taking over the government in Clonmacnois, implies if not a mother-daughter

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<sup>132</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 124-125; for the Oxford version see Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 174, §6.

<sup>133</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 127.

<sup>134</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 102, §21.

<sup>135</sup> See Appendix 1, vA6; also below, chap. 3, 88-89.

relationship, at least a certain inferiority on the part of the latter. Moreover Clonard, situated right in the centre of Mide, established itself as the greatest of the churches in the kingdom ruled over by the kings of the Clann Cholmáin. This situation possibly provoked the insistence on equality and union between the two saints, most clearly expressed in the Irish Life of S. Ciarán.

### Glendalough.

The Latin Life of Cóemgen, contained in the Dublin collection, includes a story about how the saint went to visit Clonmacnois, shortly after S. Ciarán's death.<sup>136</sup> He entered the mortuary chapel, and Ciarán was temporarily restored to life, so that the two men could engage in conversation. At S. Ciarán's request they exchanged their garments as a sign of eternal friendship, and the following morning the monks, when opening the chapel, found the two saints wearing each other's clothes. In the Dublin Life of Ciarán the episode is commented on very briefly. We are told that on the third night after the death of Ciarán Cóemgen came from the province of Leinster for the burial service (*exequias*) to Clonmacnois. Ciarán spoke to Cóemgen and they exchanged their coats, and made a contract of brotherhood (*fraternitas*) between themselves and their people for ever. The author ends the account with a reference to the Life of Cóemgen, to the effect that further details of the story may be there obtained.<sup>137</sup> The Irish Life of Ciarán contains a slightly different version of the same story. Again Cóemgen arrived in Clonmacnois three days after S. Ciarán's death. The monks, preoccupied with mourning, failed to give proper attention to the saintly visitor, who eventually pronounced upon them a prophecy of eternal sadness. The elders in the community now woke up, obeyed S. Cóemgen and opened *Eglais Beag*, where S. Ciarán lay in state, so that he could talk to his departed fellow saint, whose soul was still with the body. The two saints conversed with each other, and Ciarán blessed Cóemgen. Cóemgen on his part blessed water and the two held communion together. Ciarán then gave his bell to Cóemgen as a sign of the covenant (*óentad*) between the two.<sup>138</sup>

Exchange of personnel between Clonmacnois and Glendalough is documented for the tenth and eleventh centuries. The abbot of Clonmacnois, Ferdornach Ua Maonaigh, is said to have died in the year 952, in Glendalough. One of his successors later in the century, who was also a bishop of Clonmacnois, seems to come of the Uí Tuathail, a

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<sup>136</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 248-249, §28. A very brief mention of the incident in just one sentence is to be found in Salamanca version of Cóemgen's Life: Heist (ed) *Vitae Sanctorum*, 364, §12; Kenney, *The sources*, 403-404; Gwynn & Hadcock, 80-83.

<sup>137</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 215, §32.

<sup>138</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 132-133.

branch of the royal dynasty of Uí Muiredaig in Leinster. Finally, there was an anchorite of Clonmacnois who died in pilgrimage in Glendalough in the mid-eleventh century.<sup>139</sup> It has also been observed that the Annals of Tigernach contain a substantial amount of Leinster material, after they restart recording in the year 974, which again points to current exchange between Glendalough, as the central church in Leinster, and Clonmacnois.<sup>140</sup>

Ailbhe Mac Shamhráin pointed to the political constellation in Leinster in the ninth and tenth century as the most likely background to an alliance between Glendalough and Clonmacnois. During this period the north Leinster kingdom of Uí Dúnlainge came under severe pressure, in the first place through the expanding power of Norse Dublin, but also through the impact of the Osraige from Munster, whose expansionist ambitions reached as far as the patrimonial Uí Muiredaig territory. The changing political balance of power found reflection in the ecclesiastical sphere, where Uí Dúnlainge dominance was reduced in the course of the tenth century. The abbatial succession in Glendalough clearly shows an Osraige bias, whereas names of the Uí Dúnlainge become rare amongst the officials in Glendalough. It has been said that ecclesiastical alliances were often sought by a monastery at times of political strain, as an attempt to strengthen its position through an affiliation with a bigger and more powerful monastery.<sup>141</sup> Mac Shamhráin suggested that the *óentad* between Glendalough and Clonmacnois was of such a nature. The political interests in Leinster of the Osraige were accompanied by efforts to establish themselves in Glendalough at the expense of the Uí Dúnlainge interests. The traditional Uí Dúnlainge party in Glendalough sought support through joining up with the great midland church of Clonmacnois.<sup>142</sup>

Information about the extent of the *paruchia* of individual Irish churches is contained in very different sources. The *paruchia* of Colum Cille, for example, consisted in the first place of all the churches founded by the saint.<sup>143</sup> For Armagh we have detailed lists of churches belonging to, or more precisely claimed as established by, the

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<sup>139</sup> See Appendix 1, A52 (d.952), A55 (d.971), B8 (d.942), An13 (d.1054).

<sup>140</sup> Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals*, 27.

<sup>141</sup> Hughes, *The church*, 165-166; McCone, *Clogher Record* 11 (1984) 314, 323.

<sup>142</sup> A. S. Mac Shamhráin, 'The Unity of Cóemgen and Ciarán. Reflections of a covenant between Glendalough and Clonmacnois in the tenth to eleventh centuries', *unpublished paper*, which the author kindly allowed me to read. See also A. S. Mac Shamhráin, 'The Uí Muiredaig and the abbacy of Glendalough in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 25 (1993) 55-75.

<sup>143</sup> Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 2.



founder saint, compiled as early as the seventh century.<sup>144</sup> In the reconstruction of the *paruchia* of Clonmacnois we are dependent on the Lives of S. Ciarán, together with hints to be gleaned from the hagiographical works about other saints. Additional information is supplied by the annals, where double abbacies are often indicated in the obituaries of monastic officials.

S. Ciarán's hagiographers agree that his sphere of influence was very large. Thus S. Finnian on one occasion talks about Ciarán as 'the father of many congregations'.<sup>145</sup> Likewise, according to Ciarán's Life, his *paruchia* was growing steadily,<sup>146</sup> so that his death was welcomed by all the saints of Ireland as a blessing from God, because if he had lived longer, there would have been hardly a place in Ireland, that would not have been his.<sup>147</sup>

However, the actual number of churches mentioned in connection with S. Ciarán in his Lives is comparatively small. The saint is said to have stayed in Clonard with S. Finnian, on the Aran islands with S. Énda, and on Inis Cathaig with S. Senán.<sup>148</sup> Apart from that there is Íseal Chiaráin, a monastery where two brothers of Ciarán are said to have lived, with whom the saint stayed for a while.<sup>149</sup> Finally there is Inis Ainghin (Hare island on Lough Ree), where S. Ciarán was led by his stag, and which belonged to the envious presbyter Daniel. There and only there S. Ciarán is said to have founded a monastery which attracted many pious men to the island. The presbyter, jealous of Ciarán's success, intrigued to expel the saint from his island, but Ciarán reconciled him through a gift, Daniel repented and gave Inis Ainghin to Ciarán in return. Before leaving the island Ciarán appointed Aenu (*Aengus filius Luigse*) as his successor to the abbacy there.<sup>150</sup> In the Irish version as well as in the Oxford version, a nephew of S. Senán from Inis Cathaig, of the Corco Baiscind, is explicitly mentioned as the one to whom Ciarán left the island before his departure.<sup>151</sup> Thus the one and only proper Ciaránian foundation

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<sup>144</sup> For Tirechán and Muirchú see Bieler, *The Patrician texts*, 61-165; Daniel Binchy, 'Patrick and his biographers: ancient and modern', *Studia Hibernica* 2 (1962) 7-173.

<sup>145</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* II, 74, §32.

<sup>146</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 211, §28, "et parrochia eius per circuitum multum dilatata est; et nomen sancti Kiarani per totam Hiberniam multum celebratur".

<sup>147</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 215, §33; Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 133.

<sup>148</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 205-208; Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 122-128; Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 173-176.

<sup>149</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 209; Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 128-129; Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 177-178.

<sup>150</sup> Aena later became S. Ciarán's successor in Clonmacnois, see Appendix 1, A2.

<sup>151</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 129-130; Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 210; Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 179-180; compare also the annotations by Macalister, *ibid*, 145-147.

besides Clonmacnois was donated to another saint by Ciarán himself, according to his hagiographers.

### Énda from Aran

Inishmore, the biggest of the Aran islands off the Galway coast, is said to have been granted to S. Énda in the early sixth century, by Aengus, king of Munster with the assistance of S. Ailbe.<sup>152</sup> We are told that Ciarán spent some time there after leaving Clonard and before founding Clonmacnois. The island is commemorated by all the versions of Ciarán's life as the place of the tree vision, which comments on the future greatness and fame of S. Ciarán. The story goes that Ciarán had a dream of seeing a large tree near a big river in the middle of Ireland, which was flowering and bearing fruit, the branches of which were covering all of Ireland. S. Énda is called upon to interpret the vision and explains that the tree represents Ciarán himself, great before God and men, who will protect the whole of Ireland against demons and dangers, just like a tree which gives shelter.<sup>153</sup> Thus the tree near a river in the middle of Ireland clearly stands for Clonmacnois, near the river Shannon in the Irish midlands.

The Life of Énda comes to us in only one version, contained in the Oxford collection.<sup>154</sup> This Life sheds a slightly different light on the relationship between Ciarán and Énda, his former master. We learn first of all that Ciarán stayed for seven years in the service of Énda, and was the 'triturator', the thresher of the monastery. The tree vision of Ciarán is mentioned in almost the same words as in the Latin versions of Ciarán's Life. S. Énda's Life adds, however, that Ciarán left Aran at the order of Énda, that he put his *paruchia* under Énda's protection and suggested, that he and his disciples should be Énda's monks for ever. Énda refused, but nevertheless the two saints made an agreement of perpetual unity and fraternity between them.<sup>155</sup>

The account of another, very disturbing, vision is included in Énda's life, according to which Énda saw that all the angels of Aran had left together with Ciarán. In great distress he started to fast until an angel of the Lord appeared to whom Énda related all

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<sup>152</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 28; Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* II, 56, 66.

<sup>153</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 128; Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 208, §21; Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 177, §11. The Dublin version adds that it was on Inishmore, that Ciarán was ordained as a priest, and by order of S. Énda set out for the mainland with the prayer and blessing of all the saints on Aran.

<sup>154</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* II, 60-75; see Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 393, who dates the Life in its present form to the thirteenth century.

<sup>155</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* II, 72, §27; Ciarán performs another miracle on behalf of Énda, namely the expulsion of a beast from 'Achad Draygnichi', a place where one of Enda's disciples called Gigneus, a saint from overseas, lived as a hermit, Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* II, 72, §28.

his trouble. The extraterrestrial visitor assured Énda that S. Ciarán, being a very holy man, would send back all the angels to Aran and ordered Énda to stop fasting. Énda agreed on condition that God would grant him three wishes. The first that everybody who, repenting of his sins and seeking Énda's grave, should escape eternal fire, the second that whoever invokes Énda in frightening situations would be assisted by Jesus Christ, and the third that Énda himself would be allowed to sit at the right hand of God the father, together with the other saints. All three wishes were granted to him.<sup>156</sup>

It is a small step to interpret Énda's hunger strike and anxiety as the expression of his inferiority complex towards his former pupil Ciarán. The competition for fame between S. Énda and his disciple, i.e. between the church on Aran and Clonmacnois, figures prominently in S. Énda's life only, whereas S. Ciarán's hagiographers have a comparatively brief and rather marginal comment on the founder of the church on Aran, as one of the former teachers of Ciarán. The Saint's Lives here apparently comment on a period in which Aran had already lost its leading position in the Irish church, whereas Clonmacnois was at the height of its fame.

### **Senán of Inis Cathaig (Scattery Island)**

Another incident common to all versions of S. Ciarán's Life is his visit to Inis Cathaig, or Scattery island, where the bright and holy city of S. Senán was situated.<sup>157</sup> On his way there Ciarán met a poor man to whom he gave his cloak. S. Senán, who foresaw Ciarán's arrival and his nakedness, hid a cloak under his armpit and went to meet Ciarán, scolding him by saying that it was not decent for a priest to wander round without clothes. S. Ciarán on his part, foreseeing that Senán had a cloak for him, laughingly replied that his nakedness would see consolation very shortly, through Senán himself. The two saints stayed together, shared communion, and made a contract of

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<sup>156</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* II, 73-74, §§30-32. A third story with a similar undertone is also told here, which happened when Ciarán at some stage returned to Aran to take his monastic vows. On this occasion Énda had another vision: He saw a tree in the middle of his island, growing up high, stretching its branches to the sea. Then he saw many men climbing the tree, and the tree raised its roots and together with the men it lifted itself into the air and flew to the river Shannon, there it replanted itself. And Énda saw the same tree growing very high there, so that its branches could reach the sea again. Saint Finnian happened to be on Aran at the same time, and he interpreted the vision as belonging to 'our brother Ciarán, who will be the father of many congregations'. And everybody was moved to tears by Énda's sermon including Ciarán himself, who then left Aran to fulfill his mission, and to found a monastery at the Shannon. This is of course a variation of the story of the tree vision as it is told earlier in the same Life and in the Lives of Ciarán.

<sup>157</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 128; Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 208-09; Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 177, §12. The most detailed account is that in the Dublin version (Plummer). See also Gwynn & Hadcock, 96-97; D. F. Gleeson and A. Gwynn, *A history of the diocese of Killaloe* (Dublin 1961) 15-23; Breandán Ó Cíobháin, 'Logainmneacha ó bharúntacht Mhaigh Fhearta. co. An Chlair - V. Inis Cathaigh', *Dinnseanchas* 4 (1970) 113-125.

fraternity (*societas et fraternitas*) between them. The Lismore Life adds that after founding Clonmacnois S. Ciarán sent back a cloak to S. Senán on the waterway. He ordered his monks to throw it into the Shannon and the cloth arrived dry on the shores of Scattery island.

In the Dublin Life the island is described as situated at the mouth of the river Shannon, to the west in the channel of Limerick, between the regions of the Ciarraige of north Kerry and the Corco Baiscind of west Clare. It has been suggested that these two tribes formed a maritime federation controlling the Shannon estuary, and thus the access provided by the river to the midlands and Connacht.<sup>158</sup> Good relations with the monastic house situated at such an important strategic point were certainly essential for the economy of Clonmacnois, especially since the Shannon was a very important waterway for foreign trade in Ireland.

### Íseal Chiaráin

A further station on the pilgrimage of S. Ciarán before he found the place of his resurrection in Clonmacnois, was Íseal Chiaráin, which the saint visited after he had left Scattery island.<sup>159</sup> The Irish Life mentions that the place was given to Ciarán by Cobthach son of Breccan, the grandson of Maine, son of Niall Noígíallach. Moreover it was the place where Lúchran and Odran the two brothers of Ciarán are said to have lived and were buried.<sup>160</sup> We are told that Ciarán stayed with them as the almoner and guestmaster for a time.<sup>161</sup>

An incident is recorded, which happened once when Ciarán, totally absorbed by his task of welcoming newly arriving guests, accidentally left his gospel book outside in the grass. The book miraculously survived a whole night's rain, without one wet spot. The other noteworthy event in Íseal Chiaráin concerned the neighbours of the church who lived on an island in the nearby lake. With their loud and noisy behaviour they constantly disturbed the monks in their prayers. S. Ciarán solved the problem by removing the lake, the island and the people altogether, through the power of prayer. Thirdly the saint's

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<sup>158</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 170.

<sup>159</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 209-210, §§23-25; Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 128-129; Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 177-178.

<sup>160</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 119; Paul Walsh (ed), *Genealogiae Regum et Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin 1918) 109. The episodes in Íseal Chiaráin seem to have been translated and copied from the Irish Life by the thirteenth century redactor in the Dublin version, Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 209-210.

<sup>161</sup> See the genealogies in the Book of Ballymote, where Breccan is also mentioned as the one who gave Íseal Chiaráin to God and Clonmacnois. 'The genealogies of the Southern Uí Néill', ed. M. C. Dobbs, *ZCP* 20 (1936) 1-30, here 5.

departure from the place receives special mention by the hagiographer and differs very much from the farewell scenes with S. Énda or S. Senán. We are told that the brothers of Ciarán literally ordered him to leave because they could not bear his generosity towards the poor.<sup>162</sup>

Íseal Chiaráin translated as the 'hospital of Ciarán' by Mageoghagan was sometimes thought to be identical with the guesthouse in Clonmacnois.<sup>163</sup> However the evidence of the Saint's Lives clearly shows that it was a separate church situated some distance from Clonmacnois. The Life also implies that the monks there were related to S. Ciarán, but not on extremely friendly terms with him. Liam Fox identified Íseal Chiaráin as Twyford, a townland in the Western parts of the parish of Ballyloughloe.<sup>164</sup> Ruins there as well as local tradition, testify to a connection between this part of Ballyloughloe parish and S. Ciarán. Moreover a sculptured cross in Twyford townland, known as Bealin cross can clearly be recognized as the work of a Clonmacnois sculptor, dating from sometime around the year 800 according to recent studies in art history.<sup>165</sup>

In the annals of the eleventh century Íseal Chiaráin finds repeated mention as the church of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht family in Clonmacnois. The Four Masters call it the church of Conn na mBocht, and Mageoghagan talks of the 'family of Moylekyeran mc

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<sup>162</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 119; Plummer (ed), *Vitae sanctorum* I, 210.

<sup>163</sup> *AClon* 1087, p. 184 'Isill Kieran or the hospitall of St. Queran'. O'Donovan translates Íseal Chiaráin as 'St. Ciarán's lowland' and explains it, to be the name of one of the churches in Clonmacnois, O'Donovan (ed), *AFM* II, p. 824 note r. In the Ordnance Survey Letters he expresses a different opinion, see J. O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, King's county I*, (Dublin 1839, reproduced in typescript, Bray, 1933) 178: "I always thought and do still think, that Isil Chiarain was a tract of low-lying (Iseal) country, belonging to Clonmacnois. What could be the meaning of an Abbot of Clonmacnois purchasing the Hospital of Clonmacnois from the King of Meath? If the Book of Lecan be right, Isil Chiarain was mort-main to the Abbey since the time of ? great grandson of Maine (600); how then could the King of Meath have any claim on it? ...I do suspect that it is a blunder of Archdall's or Mageoghagan's to make Isil Chiarain the same as the Hospital house of Clonmacnois. Perhaps Mageoghagan wrote or intended to have written Isill Cieran or the Hospital lands of Clonmacnois? I am wearied with conjectures." A glance at the Saints lives of Ciarán could certainly have relieved O'Donovan's mind in this respect. Compare O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, co. Westmeath I*, 25-35, Letter dated 4.9.1837, where he describes Ballyloughloe parish as the site of Lough Luatha, the lake which dried out according to S. Ciarán's Life.

<sup>164</sup> Liam Fox, 'Íseal Chiaráin, the low place of St. Ciarán, where was it situated?', *Jn. of the Old Athlone Soc.* 1 (1969) 6-14. Traces of the monastery are still to be found on the nineteenth century Ordnance survey map, where the site of an abbey is indicated a little north-west of the Catholic chapel near Mount Temple. *Ordnance Survey, 6 inch maps, co. Westmeath, sheet 30* (Dublin 1838).

<sup>165</sup> C. Hicks, *JRSAI* 110 (1980) 5-35; Nancy Edwards, 'The South Cross Clonmacnois', in John Higgitt (ed), *Early medieval sculpture in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford 1986) 23-48, here 23; N. Edwards, *The archaeology of early medieval Ireland* (Philadelphia 1990) 164. See also Henry S. Crawford, 'Bealin Cross, Twyford, county Westmeath', *JRSAI* 37 (1907) 320-22. The cross finds special mention for its unusual zoomorphic design. Its situation in the graveyard at 'Twyford House' is still given on the *Ordnance Survey 6 inch Maps, co. Westmeath, sheet 29* (Dublin 1838).

Con ne mboght in Isellkyeran' in an entry referring to the year 1072.<sup>166</sup> It seems that in the later eleventh century Cormac, the head of the family bought Íseal Chiaráin.<sup>167</sup> Perhaps the hostility towards S. Ciarán's brothers in Íseal Chiaráin apparent from the Irish Life of Ciarán, should be understood as a direct comment on internal politics, and the ever increasing power of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht in Clonmacnois in the course of the eleventh century.<sup>168</sup>

### **Inis Ainghin, or Hare Island on Lough Ree**

Finally there is Inis Ainghin in Lough Ree, the last station on Ciarán's pilgrimage before the foundation of Clonmacnois. It has been mentioned earlier as the only proper monastic foundation by S. Ciarán, apart from Clonmacnois itself.<sup>169</sup> At his departure from the island Ciarán is said to have given it away to Donan, a nephew of S. Senán of the Corco Baiscind. This construction of a link between Inis Ainghin on Lough Ree and Scattery island at the estuary of the Shannon possibly reflects the importance of both places as two crucial points for foreign trade in Ireland which went via Clonmacnois. Trading ships from France and Spain arriving at the west coast of Ireland, possibly stopped at Scattery island before sailing up the Shannon. The next station would have been Lough Ree, where the island Inis Ainghin might have had auxiliary functions as a harbour of Clonmacnois.

As associated churches Clonmacnois and Inis Ainghin repeatedly attracted the hostility of common enemies and were attacked simultaneously.<sup>170</sup> Perhaps the island also functioned as a kind of ecclesiastical conference centre for Clonmacnois, suggested by the fact that a synod under the lead of Cairpre, bishop of Clonmacnois was held there in the year 899.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *AFM* 1031, *AClon* 1069, p. 180, on the occasion of the over-taxation of the church by the son of the king of Mide in 1072.

<sup>167</sup> *CS* 1089 (recte 1093); *AClon* 1087, p. 184.

<sup>168</sup> Compare below, 111-113.

<sup>169</sup> See above, 52. For the identification of Hare island as Inis Ainghin see O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, co. Westmeath* I, 4-25, Letters from Athlone, dated 1.9.1837. O'Donovan, according to his own witness, showed great concern for the islands: "I considered these islands until I got sick of them - I dreamed of them - I gave them up...". For the islands of Lough Ree compare O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, co. Roscommon* II, 217-226, Letter dated 9.7.1839.

<sup>170</sup> In the year 899 the bishop of Clonmacnois was attacked by the Connachtmen, on Inis Ainghin, *CS* 899, *AFM* 894; see also *AU* 922, *CS* 921; *AT* (1089), *AFM* 1089.

<sup>171</sup> *CS* 899; *AFM* 894.

## Inishmacsaint

S. Ninned's church in Inismacsaint (Inis-Maige-Samh on Lough Erne, north of Devenish in county Fermanagh) appears as another ally of Clonmacnois.<sup>172</sup> Very little is known about the founder saint. Ninned appears, however, in a very favourable light in the Irish Life of Ciarán, as a fellow student in Clonard. We are told that Ciarán was the only one amongst S. Finnian's students willing to give his book of studies to S. Ninned, after he had arrived in Clonard.<sup>173</sup> Such an anecdote obviously implies that S. Ninned at one stage had profited from S. Ciarán's generosity, thus being always indebted to him. The friendship between the two saints is further elaborated in that Ciarán trusted his most precious earthly possession, his cow, to S. Ninned.<sup>174</sup> The message of this anecdote heavily relies on the importance of the hide of S. Ciarán's cow as a relic which guarantees direct ascent into heaven for the soul of every one who would die on it. This myth was the ground on which the salvation-bringing function of S. Ciarán's graveyard was developed from the tenth century onwards.<sup>175</sup> The friendship between Ciarán and Ninned therefore seems to reflect good relations between the churches of Clonmacnois and Inishmacsaint around the time of the tenth century. Links between the two churches might have been maintained via the common friend Devenish, situated a little south of Inishmacsaint, also on Lough Erne.

## Ciarán of Saighir

Once Clonmacnois was founded the Lives of S. Ciarán are already nearing their end, since the saint is said to have survived his greatest achievement by only seven months. The only ecclesiastical foundation which was visited by Ciarán after the foundation was, according to his hagiographers, Saighir in Ossory, the foundation of his namesake Ciarán, the Elder.<sup>176</sup> The story goes that Crithir, a boy of the family of Clonmacnois, fled from Ciarán to the city of Saighir, where he stayed for some time with Ciarán the Elder. Although a good boy he was bad tempered and poured the drink of the

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<sup>172</sup> Ryan, *Irish monasticism* 118, 124; Gwynn & Hadcock, 38.

<sup>173</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 123.

<sup>174</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 127.

<sup>175</sup> See below, 95-96.

<sup>176</sup> The Life of Ciarán of Saighir survived in the Dublin collection, the Codex Salmanticensis and two Irish versions in the O'Clery manuscript in Brussels. Kenney assumes that although the four versions differ considerably, they go back to a common original of great antiquity, composed by a monk of Saighir himself. Local details and bias indicate a date of compilation, when Saighir was still a flourishing monastic community. See Kenney, *The sources*, 316-317; see also John Hogan, *St. Ciarán, Patron of Ossory* (Kilkenny 1887); William Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*, 4 vols (Dublin 1905) here vol 2, 12f; Gwynn & Hadcock, 194-5.

monks of Saighir over the fire and extinguished it. This was not only the holy fire, but also the only fire which existed in Saighir, and Crithir fled from the anger of Ciarán the Elder into the woods, where he was killed by the wolves. Ciarán of Clonmacnois hearing about the death of one of his men went to Saighir and asked his fellow saint to restore his disciple to life and give him back. Ciarán of Saighir responded that first of all the feet of Ciarán needed to be washed, which, however, could not be done because there was no fire to heat the water in the whole monastic city. Once Ciarán of Clonmacnois heard of the evil deed which his man had committed in Saighir he restored the holy fire by a miracle through prayer. In return Crithir was restored to life by Ciarán the Elder. Afterwards the two saints made an alliance of unity and fraternity between themselves and their successors. Ciarán the Younger blessed the foundation of Ciarán the Elder, foretelling that honour and abundant wealth would always remain in Saighir. In return Ciarán the Elder promised that power and wisdom would be perpetual properties of Clonmacnois. Ciarán then returned to Clonmacnois, together with Crithir, the boy.<sup>177</sup>

This story is contained in the Lives of both saints, and clearly implies mutual friendship between Saighir and Clonmacnois. The obvious need to stress the harmony and equality of the two saints might in actual fact attest to tension between the two churches. The annals, however, do not comment on links between the communities.<sup>178</sup> The fact, however, that the founder saint of Saighir receives such detailed attention already by the Latin hagiographers in Clonmacnois, appears to confirm the postulated early date of an original *vita* of S. Ciarán, since Saighir, portrayed as a flourishing, large and important ecclesiastical settlement seems to have lost its leading position in the Irish church at a comparatively early stage.

The Life of Ciarán of Saighir has an additional tale, in which Ciarán the Younger is rescued from serious trouble by the patron of Saighir. A certain regional king Furbicius had entrusted his treasures to Ciarán of Clonmacnois, who, as befitted a saint, distributed the riches amongst the poor. When the king saw this he got angry and made the bad treasurer his prisoner, promising freedom only on condition that Ciarán would supply him with 'seven cows without horns, and red bodies and white heads'. Ciarán got

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<sup>177</sup> Contained in the Dublin versions of both the saint's Lives, Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 212-13, §30 (Ciarán of Clonmacnois); I, 230-31, §32 (Ciarán of Saighir). Likewise in the Lismore version of the Life of Ciarán of Clonmacnois, Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 131-132; and the O'Clery MS Life of Ciarán of Saighir, see C. Plummer (ed), *Bethada Náem nÉirenn: Lives of Irish Saints* (Oxford 1922, reprint 1968) 2 vols, here I, 110-111; II, 106-107. Here the main 'hero', instead of Crithir is a certain Trichem, a rich man of Clonmacnois (*fer saidhbhir*). The version retold above is that in the Dublin version of the Life of Ciarán of Clonmacnois, Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 212-13.

<sup>178</sup> CS 842, where a raid by the gentiles on the churches of Birr and Saighir is recorded, appears to be the only reference to Saighir in the Clonmacnois annals.



leave to find what the king desired and ran straight off to the church of his namesake in Saighir to seek assistance. It happened that at the time the two Brendans, from Birr and Clonfert, were visiting Saighir as well, and the four saints, after a miracle performed over dinner, made a fraternity pact between them. All of a sudden the seven cows came out of nowhere and Ciarán from Clonmacnois could take them to the tyrant and regain his freedom.<sup>179</sup> It seems the story wants to convey that the founder of Clonmacnois should be much obliged to the patron saint of Saighir. It seems to belong to the time when Saighir was about to lose its position and authority in the ecclesiastical world. The fact that Birr is explicitly mentioned as partner in the fraternity pact might point to a date as late as the eleventh century, when Saighir and Birr were united under the rule of one abbot.<sup>180</sup>

### **Birr**

The appearance of Brendan of Birr in this tale, as one of the partners in the fraternity pact between the holy quartet, is certainly an anomaly in the light of the S. Ciarán's Life. There, the very same saint figures as a jealous fellow disciple of Ciarán during his apprenticeship under S. Finnian of Clonard. We mentioned earlier the story about S. Finnian appointing Ciarán as the one to lead the prayers after his death, which aroused the anger and envy of all the saints present, but in particular that of S. Brendan, who became the object of a prophecy by S. Finnian, foretelling that both Brendan and Ciarán would found two churches at two streams, the size of the rivers indicating the size of the respective foundations.<sup>181</sup> Obviously Camcor river and the Little Brosna (sidebranches of the Shannon) at the meeting of which Birr is situated can hardly compare in size with the Shannon, the largest river in Ireland. This sounds like a polite version, to express a certain lack of sympathy between the two communities. However the annals are less polite and reveal unconcealed hostility between the two houses in the late eighth century. A battle between the community of Clonmacnois and that of Birr is mentioned in the annals under the year 770.<sup>182</sup>

So far the churches mentioned in the hagiographical works of S. Ciarán have been discussed. They were all situated in the extended neighbourhood of Clonmacnois. With

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<sup>179</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 352-353, §§16-18; Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 229-230, §§30-31; Plummer (ed), *Bethada Náem nÉrenn* I, 106; II, 110.

<sup>180</sup> *AFM* 1079.

<sup>181</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 127.

<sup>182</sup> Called the battle of Máin Choise Blae (i.e. the Bog at the foot of the river Blai) *AU* 760, *AT* (759); Gwynn & Hadcock, 30.

the exception of Íseal Chiaráin and Birr, Ciarán had good relations with all of them, *fraternitas* and *óentad* forming a steady part of each of the stories. A further number of churches were associated with Clonmacnois, which will be dealt with in the final part of the chapter. Links between them and Clonmacnois are, however, only documented in the hagiographical literature concerning the other church. It seems the position of a church in the ecclesiastical hierarchy at the time determined the selection of fellow saints mentioned by its hagiographers. The Life of Ciarán itself shows a tendency to deal with the churches founded by saints somehow superior to Ciarán. It primarily defines S. Ciarán's relations with the celebrities of the Irish church, such as Finnian, Ciarán of Saighir or Cóemgen of Glendalough. Obviously the need to specify the relation with inferior saints, was not as urgent - the same mechanisms might have functioned for the churches who sought S. Ciarán's friendship more than he theirs.

### Devenish

Friendship between Devenish and Clonmacnois is claimed in the life of S. Lasrén, alias Molaisse, the founder of Devenish. His Latin Life contains a vision, in which the hagiographers in Devenish express their opinion about the position of their church, by styling their founder saint very close friend of Ciarán.<sup>183</sup> The story is told how Colum Cille together with some of his monks once visited Devenish. Baithene, the nephew and successor of Colum Cille had a vision there, seeing three chairs, one made of gold the other of silver and the third one of glass. Colum Cille, 'who was like another Daniel in the interpretation of dreams', explained that the golden chair was that of Ciarán, the son of the carpenter, because of his charity which outshines all other colours. The silver chair, he said, belonged to Lasrén, who is more eloquent and learned than all the others. The glass chair, finally, was that of Colum Cille because it best compares to his fragile nature.

This story is obviously the expression of a very subjective perception of Devenish itself. The total exclusion of other prominent saints such as S. Finnian or S. Brigit and in particular the striking omission of S. Patrick point to the context of this vision within a particular ecclesiastical federation, seemingly the *paruchia* of Clonmacnois. Only as a very close associate of Ciarán, could Lasrén, i.e Devenish claim such a high position.

According to the Irish Life of Lasrén, a late medieval work, compiled from earlier sources, Devenish held lands in Connacht, in the immediate neighbourhood of Clonmacnois.<sup>184</sup> We are told that a certain king Áed, once gave a feast in Moycarnan.

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<sup>183</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae sanctorum* II, 139, §32.

<sup>184</sup> Contained in a sixteenth century MS Add. 18205 in the British Library. Edited by St. H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica* (London 1892) 17-37.

When the messenger of S. Lasrén came there, he was refused ale and meat by the royal steward. The messenger caused food and drink to vanish on the spot, so that the banquet was ruined. The king, to make up for the bad behaviour of his steward offered the lands of Moycarnan to Lasrén.<sup>185</sup> Since the lands in Moycarnan, now represented by the parish of Moore, west of the Shannon, opposite Clonmacnois, apparently belonged to Clonmacnois, the claims of Devenish seem again rather far-fetched.<sup>186</sup>

The annals attest to links between Devenish and Clonmacnois during the ninth century, for the first time around the year 869, when the abbot of Clonmacnois was also leader of the church in Devenish. Later in the century an abbot of Devenish also functioned as *tanaisi* of Clonmacnois. He was murdered in very unlucky circumstances, possibly in his function as vice-abbot, who was charged with responsibility for levying service and taxes.<sup>187</sup>

### Inishkeen

Another member of S. Ciarán's *paruchia* was Inishkeen, the church of S. Daig mac Cairill, situated at the border between Louth and Monaghan, some four miles north west of the church of Louth. Previously Kenney and more recently McCone have pointed to Inishkeen as a church which acknowledged the authority of Clonmacnois, at least in the early period, at the time of the composition of the *vita* of Daig.<sup>188</sup>

The Codex Salmanticensis contains three unique stories, linking Daig mac Cairill with Ciarán of Clonmacnois.<sup>189</sup> Daig is said to have spent his youth in Louth, the foundation of S. Mochta, who at some stage prophesied that the boy would found a beautiful church not far north from Louth. Moreover Mochta had the vision of how Daig was given by God into the hand of a yet unborn saint, namely Ciarán of Clonmacnois, and therefore would not be under his own overlordship, which is to say subject to the authority of Louth. The prophecy is fulfilled when Daig later in his life went to Clonmacnois where he was welcomed by Ciarán and formally acknowledged the authority

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>186</sup> For S. Ciarán's lands west of the Shannon, see below, chap. 5, 144-147.

<sup>187</sup> See Appendix 1, A40 (d.869); vA 14 (d.896). Máel Achaid was accused for having killed the son of the king of Delbna, and was murdered by the Delbna in revenge.

<sup>188</sup> Kenney, *The sources*, 383-84; more recently McCone, *Clogher Record* 11 (1982-84) 325; I wish to thank Dr. Colmán Etchingham, who allowed me to read the section on Inishkeen, from his unpublished work on the *paruchia* of Armagh, on which my presentation largely relies.

<sup>189</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 390, §4, Mochta of Louth prophesies that Daig's foundation would be subject to Ciarán of Clonmacnois and not to him. See also 390-91, §§7-8, when Daig went to Clonmacnois he is welcomed by Ciarán, prostrates himself on the ground, and willingly undertakes subjection and humility before Ciarán. See also 392-3, §16 for the incident with the nuns.

of Ciarán over him by a kind of ceremonial subjection.<sup>190</sup> After some time and at the order of Ciarán Daig returned to his home territory to found Inishkeen. The fame of Daig's sanctity spread all over Ireland, so that many came to live under his rule. Amongst them were three virgins, Cunnea, Lassara (Daig's sister) and Dulvina. When the abbot of Clonmacnois learned this news he sent messengers to Inishkeen, forbidding Daig to accept women in his community. The messengers from Clonmacnois, however, when they arrived in Inishkeen were convinced of the rightness of Daig's conduct through the humility and deeds of the three virgins themselves.<sup>191</sup> It has been suggested by Colmán Etchingham that this incident might reflect actual control, exercised from Clonmacnois over the community in Inishkeen.<sup>192</sup> Neither the Life of Ciarán, nor the annals, indicate connections between the two houses. However the appearance of two men from the Ciannachta Breg, who also supplied officials in Inishkeen, in the abbacy of Clonmacnois in the eighth century might have been a result of the alliance between the two churches.<sup>193</sup> It seems possible that other families, as for example the 'Conaillech' clan, surnamed after their origin with the Conaille Muirthemne, also migrated to Clonmacnois at a time when its relations with Inishkeen, also situated in the territory of the Conaille Muirthemne, were very close.<sup>194</sup> Moreover it has been suggested that the stress on Daig's submission to Clonmacnois, was in the first place an expression of the struggle for exemption from the authority of the nearby monasteries of Louth and Armagh.<sup>195</sup>

## Bangor

In the Life of Daig mac Cairill, Comgall, founder of Bangor, is acknowledged as the superior of S. Daig, before his submission to S. Ciarán's authority.<sup>196</sup> The Dublin version of the Life of Comgall claims a genealogical link between Ciarán of Clonmacnois

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<sup>190</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 391, §7.

<sup>191</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 392, §16.

<sup>192</sup> See above, n.188.

<sup>193</sup> See Appendix 1, A19 (d.737), A33 (d.794).

<sup>194</sup> By the tenth century Inishkeen was clearly perceived as a church associated with the Conaille Muirthemne. Matudán mac Áeda, king of the Ulaid, attacked Inishkeen on a campaign against the Conaille (AFM 949). The 'Conaillech' family appears for the first time in leading office in Clonmacnois in the early tenth century (see A49).

<sup>195</sup> McCone, *Clogher Record* 11 (1984) 325.

<sup>196</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 391, §7. Before his time in Clonmacnois Daig was in Bangor with S. Comgall and from there set out to meet Ciarán in Clonmacnois. The story goes, that on his way from Bangor to Clonmacnois Daig did not take any food or drink, because according to his reasoning he could not see 'How without a head the body could consume any food?' Comgall founded Bangor in 555 or 559, and is said to have died in 602.

and Comgall.<sup>197</sup> Again later in Comgall's life he is said to have been in Clonmacnois, and was ordained there as a deacon by a certain bishop Ligidus.<sup>198</sup>

## Roscrea

Both extant versions of the Life of S. Cronán of Roscrea contain evidence for links with Clonmacnois.<sup>199</sup> Cronán is said to have stayed in the community of Clonmacnois for a time. A blessing by the abbot of Clonmacnois foretelling that riches and charity would rule in the future foundation of Cronán is part of an episode which took place in Clonmacnois.<sup>200</sup> Another story is told about how a leper came to Cronán to be cured, whilst he was in Clonmacnois. Since the saint was deeply involved in prayer the leper did not want to disturb him, and instead washed himself with the rain water which ran from the roof of the house in which Cronán was praying. The leper was cured by the power of Cronán, transmitted through the water.<sup>201</sup>

Roscrea, in north-eastern Tipperary was the principal church of Elé. Cronán its founder is, however, nowhere mentioned in the annals. Colgan in a note to his 'Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae' reckons that he lived some time between the year 571 and 636.<sup>202</sup> As in the case of Devenish, links between the two ecclesiastical settlements, claimed in the hagiographical works, are confirmed by evidence from the annals. Áedán, an abbot of Roscrea, according to the Four Masters, was also *prióir* in Clonmacnois in the first half of the ninth century.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* II, 3, §1. One of the manuscripts gives an extensive version of Comgall's pedigree, going back to a certain Rudraige, adding in a note that it is here where Brendan, Ciarán and Comgall (i.e. their pedigree) meet.

<sup>198</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* II, 6, §11 Ligidus could be Ciarán's brother Lúchran, named Luccenus in the Dublin version of Ciarán's Life, see Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 200, §1.

<sup>199</sup> One version is preserved in the Dublin collection, the other in the Codex Salmanticensis. Kenney assumes that the original was written at Roscrea sometime in the eleventh or first half of the twelfth century, Kenney, *The sources*, 460-61; see also Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 393.

<sup>200</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 275, §4; Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* II, 23, §5. Cronán together with an otherwise unknown S. Molan stayed in the community of Ciarán near Clonmacnois. S. Cronán carried with him the remains of his lunch (*reliquias sui prandii*) and gave them to the poor; whereas S. Molan left his in the community. The abbot, seeing this is made saying, 'this will be the difference between the two places of the two saints: at the place of S. Cronán riches and charity will be superfluous, whereas at the other place the rule will always be kept.'

<sup>201</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 275-6, §5; Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* II, 24, §6.

<sup>202</sup> Colgan, *Acta Sanctorum*, 304 n. 11 and 18. Colgan deduces the dates for Cronán's floruit based on references to him in Mo-Chuda's Life and the dates for Mo-Chuda given by the Four Masters. Many thanks to Dr. K. Simms, who pointed this reference out to me. See also Gwynn & Hadcock, 43, 95-96.

<sup>203</sup> See Appendix 1, vA7.

## Fore

Even though the life of the founder of the church of Fore in Westmeath does not comment on a relation between Fechin and Ciarán, links between the two foundations are testified to in the annals.<sup>204</sup> A steady tradition of officials from Fore was kept in Clonmacnois during the ninth century, in which four of the ten vice-abbots of Clonmacnois had links with Fore.<sup>205</sup> According to a tale contained in Mageoghagan's translation of the Annals of Clonmacnois a certain 'Lowna', or 'Loway' was parish priest in Clonmacnois during the abbacy of Aenu, Ciarán's direct successor. He was actively involved in curing King Diarmait mac Cerbaill from deafness, with the help of S. Ciarán's bell. After his time in Clonmacnois Lowna went on to the church of Fore where he stayed, and with him went the bell of S. Ciarán, which henceforward was kept in Fore.<sup>206</sup> This tradition of friendly relations between the two churches apparently came to an end in the early tenth century when vice-abbot Flann Fobair was forced to resign his office in Clonmacnois, and returned to Fore in 923.<sup>207</sup> Fore was situated in the territory of the Caille Follamain, a royal branch of the Southern Uí Néill. They were however excluded from the kingship of Mide from the second half of the eighth century onwards.<sup>208</sup> The community of S. Fechin, aware of the loss of power of their secular patrons, probably saw one means by which to maintain their position in a rapprochement with Clonmacnois. By the time of the tenth century Clonmacnois had however become, together with Clonard, the central church in Mide, subject to the kings of the Clann Cholmáin. It seems that the break with Fore followed out of the growing links with Clonard. Colmán Conaillech, the abbot at the time when Flann Fobair resigned, originally came from Clonard. The changing ecclesiastical alliance was one result of the changes in the secular power balance in Mide. The Clann Cholmáin as the leading dynasty in Mide from the tenth century onwards actively promoted a brotherly union between the successors of S. Finnian and S. Ciarán, whereas S. Fechin's church in the territory of the Caille Follamain was outside their sphere of interest.

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<sup>204</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* II, 76-86; also Stokes (ed), 'Betha Féchin Fabair. The Life of Féchin of Fore', *Revue Celtique* XII (1891) 318-353.

<sup>205</sup> Possibly they came from one family. Vice-abbot Cumuscach son of Aengus, died in 835; a certain Máel Mide, son of Cumuscach died as holder of the same office in 871. His next but one successor in office was Cormac, who was princeps of Fore at the same time. He died in 891, and was succeeded as vice-abbot in Clonmacnois by Fergus son of Máel Michil (d.894). See Appendix 1, vA5, vA9, vA11, vA16.

<sup>206</sup> *AClon*, p. 82-83.

<sup>207</sup> Flann died happily as a bishop and anchorite in Fore (*AU* 930). See Appendix 1, vA16. There is one more bishop of Clonmacnois who was abbot of Fore as well in the late tenth century (B16).

<sup>208</sup> See Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 90, 116.

## Killare

An unnamed nunnery is mentioned as a cell under the cure of Ciarán in the life of Áed mac Bricc of Killare in Westmeath.<sup>209</sup> Áed mac Bricc himself figures as an antagonist to Ciarán's authority over the church of the nuns. According to the Salamanca version of his life, he once came to the *hospitum* of the virgins who were friends with Ciarán. The nuns fed Áed a meal which was prepared for Ciarán, who turned up as soon as Áed had finished with the little refreshment. Áed, seeing the virgins in great fear of Ciarán, rescued the situation by a miracle and transformed the bones and leftovers from his tea back into a delicious and complete meal ready to be eaten by the approaching Ciarán.

Killare, the church of S. Áed, was situated in what is now county Westmeath.<sup>210</sup> The tale here seems to be a rather humorous and critical comment on the relationship between Ciarán and the churches under his authority. Ciarán's right to a proper meal at his arrival in the convent, reflects on food and drink, possibly feasting (*cáe, coinnem*), as part of a dependency's obligation towards its ecclesiastical overlord.

## Terryglass

Another subversive comment on Clonmacnois' claims to authority over other churches is preserved in the *vita* of S. Columban, the founder of Terryglass.<sup>211</sup> He is said to have died and been buried in Cluain Hi, a now unknown location somewhere near Clonard. Nadcuimius (Nathcheime) his successor, wanted to transfer the relics of the founder saint to Terryglass, where Columban wished the place of his resurrection to be. But the Uí Néill of Mide were eager to retain the relics for themselves. Nathcheime therefore took them secretly, hiding them in one of twelve wagons loaded with corn. Six of the wagons returned to Terryglass via Leinster, the other six including the relics returned through the territory of the Uí Néill. They stayed overnight in the guesthouse (*castellum hospitum*, i.e. the *Lis oiged* in the annals) of Clonmacnois. During the night flames were seen at the guesthouse, the brothers jumped out of their beds to extinguish the fire, but when they arrived everything was calm, quiet and dark. This happened three times in a row. Finally Aengus (i.e. Aenu, S. Ciarán's direct successor) the abbot of the city, called Nadcuimius to account, who knowing that the abbot of Clonmacnois was a

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<sup>209</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 174, §20, 'que erant amice sancto Kerano artificis filio'; Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 34-35, §15, 'que erant sub cura sancti Cyarani abbatis'.

<sup>210</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 392; Kenney dates the Life of Áed mac Bricc fairly late, around the twelfth century, Kenney, *The sources*, 393.

<sup>211</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 231-233, §§28-29.

man filled with the fear of God revealed his secret. Aenu sank to the ground, lifted his arms and thanked God, for having brought such a treasure to his monastery. Nadcuimius had a hard time persuading the abbot of Clonmacnois not to insist on keeping the relics. Only after he had promised that the name of Aenu's master Ciarán would come before the name of his own master Columba in the Book of offerings (*librum offerendi*) did Aenu allow him to take the relics with him.

The incident is said to have happened in the late sixth century.<sup>212</sup> The compilation took place at a time when someone afraid of the Southern Uí Néill could find shelter and a bed for a night in Clonmacnois. It should therefore possibly be regarded as an early composition, predating the ninth century, when Clonmacnois gradually became close friend to the Clann Cholmáin kings of Mide.<sup>213</sup> The text apart from demonstrating the immense value of relics, also criticises a certain greed for spiritual treasures in Clonmacnois, which would compare to the polemic tale about the lack of relics in Clonmacnois contained in the Tripartite Life of Patrick.<sup>214</sup>

Columban, a disciple of Colmán Cúle of Clonkeen and of Finnian of Clonard, founded several churches, the most important being Clonenagh, Iniscaltra and Terryglass. Terryglass, with Tallaght and Finglas was one of the leading centres of the Céili Dé movement.<sup>215</sup> Links between the churches might have resulted out of the contact maintained amongst the Céili Dé communities in the various foundations. Connmach, abbot of Clonmacnois in the late ninth century is said to have come from the 'Cenél Eachach Gall', which should perhaps be read as the 'familia of Echar Gabul', referring to a church of this name in Leinster which is said to have been founded by S. Columban of Terryglass.<sup>216</sup>

### Drumlane and Rossinver

Links between the two main churches in the territory of Bréifne existed according to the hagiographers of S. Maedóc, the founder saint of Drumlane and Rossinver. In the

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<sup>212</sup> Nathcheime, alias Nadcuimius died as abbot of Terryglass in 584. Oengus the abbot of Clonmacnois was Ciarán's immediate successor Aenu moccu Loígse who died in 570 (*AU*); see Appendix 1, A2.

<sup>213</sup> Kenney recognizes an element of antiquity in the Life of Colmán, but dates the production as a whole 'rather late', Kenney, *The sources*, 385-386. Sharpe regards the text as an original compilation, belonging to the eighth century, Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 311ff, 392. For Terryglass see Gwynn & Hadcock, 45; Gleeson & Gwynn, *A history of the diocese of Killaloe*, 36-40.

<sup>214</sup> See above, 44.

<sup>215</sup> Máel Dithruib, a monk of Terryglass, and prominent disciple of Máel Ruanaid of Tallaght, died in the year 840 (*AFM*).

<sup>216</sup> Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 228, §12. The location of Echar Gabul, or Etar Gabul has not been identified. See Appendix 1, A39 (d.868).



Dublin version of his Life we are told that at some stage S. Maedóc went to Clonmacnois to bind his alliance and covenant with Ciarán.<sup>217</sup> The passage might preserve a genuine tradition concerning an early affiliation of S. Maedóc's churches in Bréifne with Clonmacnois.

### **Lemanaghan (Liathmancháin) and Gallen**

There are two more churches in the immediate neighbourhood of Clonmacnois which also belonged to S. Ciarán's *paruchia*. One is Liathmancháin, the founder of which is sometimes claimed to have been a Welshman, or a brother of Ciarán.<sup>218</sup> The lands of Liathmancháin were according to a gloss in the Clonmacnois annals given to Clonmacnois by the ultimate ancestor of the Sil nÁedo Sláine, a branch of the Southern Uí Néill, after the victory in the battle of Carn Conaill.<sup>219</sup> The dynasty was excluded from the kingship from the late seventh century onwards, but again provided a king of Tara in the mid-tenth century, which seems to be a very suitable time for the insertion of the gloss in the Clonmacnois annals.

Links between Clonmacnois and Gallen, the church neighbouring Liathmancháin to the south-west, seem to have existed in the early ninth century, when Gallen was attacked, seemingly as an ally of Clonmacnois, by the king of Munster.<sup>220</sup> The church which is also referred to as '*Galinne na mBretan*', was a Welsh foundation. A number of entries, relating affairs in Wales, were inserted in the Clonmacnois chronicles between the years 911 and 950. The information might have reached Clonmacnois via its ally Gallen.<sup>221</sup>

### **Kilmore (Cell Mór Mag Enir)**

Another of the dependencies of Clonmacnois was a church called Kilmore. Since the church belonged to the secular authority of the king of Mide, it must have been situated in his kingdom. In the early twelfth century the church was the subject of controversy between the king of Mide and the community in Clonmacnois, who

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<sup>217</sup> Plummer (ed), *Bethada Náem nÉrenn* I, 251.

<sup>218</sup> *AFM* 664, *AClon* 661, p. 107. John O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, Kings county* I, 221.

<sup>219</sup> *CS* 646; *AT* (649); *AClon* 642, p. 104; *AFM* 645; *AU* 649.

<sup>220</sup> *AU* 823.9; *CS* 823. See below, 79 n.33; Gwynn & Hadcock, 176; James Ware, *De Hibernia et Antiquitatibus ejus* (London 1654) 161.

<sup>221</sup> Dumville & Grabowski, *Chronicles and annals*, 209-226.

eventually fasted against the king, claiming immunity, freedom from secular taxation (*saoire*) for their dependency Kilmore.<sup>222</sup>

### 'Tamnuch, Cellola Toch and Dumech'

These were three churches in Connacht, belonging to the paruchia of Clonmacnois as early as the late seventh century, according to the witness of Tirechán.<sup>223</sup> 'Tamnuch' in the territory of the Uí Ailella is the modern Tawnagh in county Sligo, north of Lough Arrow, near Riverstown.<sup>224</sup> 'Dumech' also in the territory of the Uí Aillello seems to be Shankill in the former barony of Tirerrill, county Sligo.<sup>225</sup> 'Cellola Toch' near the well of Slán, in the territory of the Corcu Teimne was probably situated in Aglish parish, some three miles south-west of Turlough, in county Mayo.<sup>226</sup> Tirechán states that these churches originally belonged to Armagh, but more recently had come under the authority of Clonmacnois. He also seems to suggest that the ecclesiastical overlordship of Armagh was much more agreeable with these churches, in stating that the people of the church of Cellola Toch suffered hardship under Clonmacnois government.<sup>227</sup> Links between Clonmacnois and the northern parts of Connacht are also attested in the artistic field. A cruxifixion plaque, found in county Mayo, in the previous century, has a close resemblance, both in style and craftsmanship, to a cruxifixion plaque found in Clonmacnois.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> *AT* (1108) named '*Cill Mór i Muig in fír*', *CS* 1104. The church '*Cell Mór Mag Enir*' is mentioned earlier in the *Annals of Ulster*, as having been plundered by the Vikings in the year 874 (*AU* 874.5).

<sup>223</sup> Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 142-43, §25.2 for 'Tamnuch' and the 'familia Dumiche' or 'Dumech'; 154-55, §39.8 and 160-1, §47.4 for 'Cellola Toch'.

<sup>224</sup> Kenneth W. Nicholls, 'Some Patrician sites of eastern Connacht', *Dinnseanchas* 5 (1972) 114-118, here 114 n.5.

<sup>225</sup> See also Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 140-41, §23.

<sup>226</sup> See Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 152-153, §39, and 254 n.2, for Corcu Temne, and Findmag within it. 'Slán Findmag', has been identified by K. W. Nicholls with a ruined church in Ballynew townland in Aglish parish, former barony Carra, in county Mayo. K. W. Nicholls, 'Tobar Finnmuighie - Slán Pádraig', *Dinnseanchas* 2 (1966/67) 97-98. Cellola Toch is described by Tirechán as being situated in the territory of the Corcu Theimne, 'Temenrige in Cerae ... prope fontem Slán', and must thus have been somewhere near Ballynew in Aglish parish. I wish to thank Dr. Colmán Etchingham who kindly drew my attention to this reference for the identification of the placename.

<sup>227</sup> Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 160-61, §47.4 'et est locus eorum cum familia Clono et ingemescunt uiri loci illius'.

<sup>228</sup> P. Harbison, 'A lost cruxifixion plaque of Clonmacnoise type found in county Mayo', in Harman Murtagh (ed), *Irish Midland Studies. Essays in commemoration of N. W. English* (Athlone 1980) 24-38.

## Ailech Mór.

Also in the Tripartite Life a tale is contained according to which one Cormac, the son of Énda in Carn Fiachach was offered to Ciarán by his father. He was reared in the territory of 'Enda Artech', that is to say (in the church of?) bishop Domnall in Ailech Mór, which the community of Clonmacnois is said to have taken away from the authority of Armagh (*furóxail muintir Cluana macc Noiss.*).<sup>229</sup> This was also a church in Connacht, possibly north county Roscommon, somewhere in the plain of Artech, south of Lough Gara, where a number of officials in Clonmacnois came from in the early period.

## Some unidentified churches in Mide

Further churches in Mide belonged under the ecclesiastical authority of Clonmacnois according to the witness of the Tripartite Life of Patrick, possibly testifying to the situation in the tenth century.<sup>230</sup>

First of all there is 'Cail hUallech', the church of Lonan son of Senach, and of Rígell, his mother. It was possibly situated somewhere near Donnaghmore, in Navan, south-east of Kells, where Patrick is said to have stayed before coming to Senán's church.<sup>231</sup> The church, originally under Patrick's authority, was obtained by Clonmacnois, who later exchanged it with the community of Clonard for 'Cell Lothair in Brega' (Cill Lothair i mBregaib) and Cluain Alad Deirg in the west (Cluain Alad Deirg tiar).<sup>232</sup>

Also there is the church 'Imliuch Sescainn', described as situated near 'Tech Laisrén on the shores of Lough Aininne'. There, we are told, lived Molue, a pilgrim of the Britons, one of Patrick's household (*do muintir Pátraic*). Again we are told that the community of Clonmacnois obtained authority over the church (*fordosrola muintir Cluana ma Nóis*).<sup>233</sup> A church named 'Imbliuch Sescinn' is mentioned as a Patrician

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<sup>229</sup> Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, 80; Gwynn & Hadcock, 372.

<sup>230</sup> The Tripartite life is preserved in MS Egerton 93, MS Rawl. B 512. e.a. On historical and linguistic grounds Stokes suggests that the Life was written before the middle of the tenth century and that it was probably compiled in the eleventh. Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, Lxiii. Confirmed by Prof. Kim McCone, in private correspondence.

<sup>231</sup> Perhaps somewhere near the church of Fennor (a little north-east of Donnaghmore), the *airchinnech* of which in the early eleventh century was a priest from Clonmacnois (see Appendix 1, P8).

<sup>232</sup> Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, 76.

<sup>233</sup> Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, 78; Tech Laisrén in the south is the place where Patrick baptised the men of Mide; there is also a well and he left two virgins, named Bice and Lugaid.

foundation in the 'Notulae', a kind of incomplete index to the Patrician works, probably written sometime in the first half of the ninth century.<sup>234</sup> It has been identified as Imlech, or Emlagh, near Lough Ennel, county Westmeath.<sup>235</sup>

### **Kinneigh**

This seems to have been a church in Mide, somewhere near the hill of Tara. It was the place where King Flann Sinna died in the year 916, according to the Four Masters. The *Chronicum* names Kinneigh as the exact location, which therefore seems to have been somewhere near the hill of Tara. It is also stated that Kinneigh belonged to the family of Clonmacnois (*Cind eich muintire Cluana*).<sup>236</sup>

Since the churches belonging to the ecclesiastical authority of Clonmacnois, are known to us by more or less incidental references, scattered in different sources, we must assume there are more of them still to be discovered. However, the above-listed communities give an impression of the extent of S. Ciarán's *paruchia*. It was not confined to lands and churches in the neighbourhood of Clonmacnois, but included territories situated as far east as county Louth. The two churches in county Fermanagh would thus constitute the northern boundaries of the *paruchia*, which also extended to the north-western parts of Connacht in county Sligo. Scattery Island and Roscrea appear as the most southern foundations for which claims to authority were made by Clonmacnois.

So far we looked at the internal organization of the church of Clonmacnois. It appears to have been an ecclesiastical estate, under the authority of a bishop, but governed and administered by the abbot, and various other officials, in charge of individual tasks. We have seen that rulership was exercised by several families, ecclesiastical dynasties who lived in Clonmacnois, as their home town so to speak. They provided leading officials in the ecclesiastical settlement over generations. Finally the churches affiliated to Clonmacnois were looked at. Unlike other churches who claimed authority over their dependencies by right of a common founder, Clonmacnois could not make recourse to S. Ciarán's activities as a founder of many churches. Instead S. Ciarán had friends all over Ireland, in Connacht, Leinster, the northern parts of Munster, in

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<sup>234</sup> Bieler, *The Patrician texts*, 180, §19; see *ibid*, 49-52 for the nature and dating of the *notulae*.

<sup>235</sup> According to Hogan, *ibid*, 260; could be possibly related to, or somewhere near 'Imlech-forderach', where an abbot of Clonmacnois in the early eleventh century is said to have come from (A61).

<sup>236</sup> CS 915; AFM 914; AU 916. A battle fought in Kinneigh in the sixth century is recorded in the annals (CS 528, AT [532], AU 533.3).

Mide and Bréifne, as well as in Ulster, especially in the area of what is now county Louth.

In the following chapter the political history of the church of Clonmacnois will be discussed, including the relationship with the neighbouring kingdoms and tribes, and the interaction between Clonmacnois as an ecclesiastical power and its secular counterparts.

### 3. CLONMACNOIS AND ITS NEIGHBOURS - THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE SETTLEMENT

The interaction between a church and its secular friends is often talked about in terms of ecclesiastical patronage, presupposing a straightforward division between ecclesiastical and secular power. It has been argued above that the supposed monastery of Clonmacnois was in fact a large ecclesiastical estate, under the headship of a bishop, ruled over by the abbot, also called *princeps* or *comarba*. This functionary would often have been a layman, who governed the settlement and its lands. The temporal or secular dimension, its function as a landholding unit, exercising authority over lands and people seems to outweigh the merely spiritual aspects of the church. The question therefore is, whether the distinction between the secular and the ecclesiastical or spiritual is a valid concept underlying an analysis of political history in medieval Ireland. A strong argument in favour of the division is that the contemporary medieval writers had no problems with these categories. Their notion of S. Ciarán's power and rights, his property and his community, is quite distinct from that of the power of any secular lord. Even though a secular ruler might occasionally do what is pleasing to God or even act on behalf of God or a saint, S. Ciarán himself, and therefore his community and his successors, enjoy constant and direct divine support. In making the distinction between the divine ecclesiastical world and that of profane politics we are therefore only being true to the understanding of affairs by the contemporary historians and hagiographers. In fact it seems that spiritual power, exclusively held by the church, was made an implement, used as a powerful weapon in the church's participation in secular politics. The king who raided the territory of his secular neighbour would have to reckon with a military counter-attack; the one who raided the estate of Clonmacnois would meet with S. Ciarán's forces, which not only existed in, say the army of S. Ciarán's friend, but could also mean things like immediate death, illness or loss of eternal life. The fact that Clonmacnois participated in secular politics, and of course constituted a significant secular power factor, did not impair its position as a saintly foundation, invested with spiritual authority. On the contrary, spiritual authority was the means by which secular power was claimed and in fact held.

Vital for its political role was the geographical situation of Clonmacnois. The Dublin version of S. Ciarán's Life gives a description of the localities, pointing out three features essential for Clonmacnois' history and development: Clonmacnois was situated at the western extremities of the territory of the Southern Uí Néill, it was on the border

between the kingdom of Mide and the province of Connacht, and finally it lay on the river Shannon, which, as explicitly stated by the author, was very rich in fish.<sup>1</sup> The first aspect concerns the political affiliation with the kingdom of Mide. Clonmacnois was founded in Delbna Ethra, a territory at the western fringe of the kingdom of Mide, ruled by the Cenél Fiachach, a branch of the Southern Uí Néill.<sup>2</sup> S. Ciarán's foundation therefore belonged to the territory under the secular authority of the Southern Uí Néill kings of Tara. The hagiographer also points out the immediate neighbourhood of the province of Connacht. The function of Clonmacnois as a burial ground for kings and lords from both regions is explained as an outcome of this border position between the two kingdoms. Clonmacnois was not, like Clonard for example, central to any medieval Irish kingdom. This seems to have been the main reason for the fact that, as Ryan observed, Clonmacnois never became a direct satellite of one particular secular dynasty or power.<sup>3</sup> Instead, all the neighbouring states and dynasties, the various branches of the Southern Uí Néill as well as the kings and subkings of Connacht, like the Uí Briúin, the Uí Fiachrach, the Uí Maine and later the lords of Bréifne as well as the kings of Munster, took an interest in and sought the alliance with S. Ciarán, as soon as their political ambitions demanded that they should. A final observation of the hagiographer concerned the economic foundations of S. Ciarán's settlement. He points to the river Shannon as a rich fishing ground, indicating its important role as a natural source of food supply for the monastery. Moreover, the river was one of the preconditions for trading, both home- and foreign trade, thus guaranteeing a certain degree of economic independence for the settlement. Apart from that, the river provided a link of communication with those churches and people situated up and down the Shannon. Furthermore Clonmacnois was situated at one of the main roads in Medieval Ireland, the great Road, an tSlighe Mhór, leading from Dublin to the west coast, right through central Ireland.<sup>4</sup> Sufficient means of transport together with nearby natural resources of food supply were essential for the maintenance of the community, and relative economic independence.

Apart from the annals, the most important source of information for links between Clonmacnois and its secular neighbours is the hagiographical saga-tradition which

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<sup>1</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 211, §28, "Et clara ac sancta ciuitatis in ipso loco in honore sancti Ciaráni creuit, cuius nomen Cluain meic Nois vocatur; que est in occidentali plaga regionis Nepotum Neill super ripam orientalem fluminis Synna, contra provinchiám Connactorum; in qua siue reges siue duces nepotum Neill et Connactorum apud sanctum Kiaranum sepeliuntur. Flumen enim Synna, quod est fructiferum ualde in diuersis piscibus, regiones Neill, id est Midhi, et provinchiám Connactorum diuidit."

<sup>2</sup> Ryan, 'Abbatial Succession', 492.

<sup>3</sup> Ryan, 'Abbatial Succession', 507.

<sup>4</sup> Colm Ó Lochlainn, 'Roadways in ancient Ireland', in J. Ryan (ed), *Féil-scribhinn Eóin Mhic Néill. Essays and Studies presented to Professor Eoin MacNeill* (Dublin 1940) 465-474, here 471.

developed around S. Ciarán over the centuries. As we have said earlier friendly relations between one particular secular dynasty and the church of S. Ciarán found expression in hagiographical tales. Alleged past links are claimed, such as for example cordial friendship between one of the ancestors of the dynasty and the founder saint of Clonmacnois. In general such a friendship relies on a miracle performed by Ciarán for the benefit of the ancestor of the dynasty, who in return offers great gifts to Ciarán and, even more important, his successors. These stories must be understood as the outcome of the political necessities of the time in which they were either written down or revised. They reflect on periods of secular patronage and clearly have the function of propaganda material. Some of these tales are preserved in the Lives of S. Ciarán, either as consistent stories, like that of the foundation of Clonmacnois with the assistance of the king of Mide, or as more hidden hints, such as the marginal mention of over-taxation in the kingdom of Mide, which caused Ciarán's parents to leave the country. Those stories and remarks need to be coordinated with (and often serve to identify) the various strata of the hagiographical texts and their dates of composition or redaction.<sup>5</sup> Ideally they can be recognized or interpreted as a reflection of a particular political constellation, prevailing at a particular period. A further source of information are the Clonmacnois chronicles. The *Chronicum Scotorum* in particular has a number of additional remarks, which, although fragmentary in character, give some background information about the relation between secular powers and Clonmacnois not contained elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> A substantial body of tales is preserved in late medieval collections of hagiographical saga tales, scattered in various manuscripts.<sup>7</sup> The Book of Uí Maine preserved the memory of the friendship between Cairpre, the ultimate ancestor of the Uí Maine and S. Ciarán.<sup>8</sup> Further material seems to have been incorporated by Mageoghagan,<sup>9</sup> and by the Four Masters in their seventeenth century compilations from earlier annals.<sup>10</sup> No original documents, such as foundation charters or grants by secular lords have come down to us. In the reconstruction of the political history of Clonmacnois we have therefore to rely on these

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<sup>5</sup> To the best of my knowledge the only more detailed attempt to date the various versions of Ciarán's Life is that by Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 1-14, see also annotations 98-171; compare Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 291-92, 391, who doubts Macalister's results.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. CS 904 (recte 900) the apparition of the spirit of Máel Sechnaill, son of Máel Ruanaid; CS 827 the installation of an external vice-abbot from Munster.

<sup>7</sup> See for example BL MS. Egerton 92; Royal Library Brussels, O'Clery MSS 5057-5059.

<sup>8</sup> R. A. S. Macalister (ed), *The Book of Uí Maine otherwise called "The Book of the O'Kelly's"*, facsimile edition (Dublin 1942) fol. 126c.

<sup>9</sup> *AClon*, p. 10. In his preface Mageoghagan mentions amongst 'the authors wch I have taken for this booke' two members of the community of Clonmacnois, 'Gillernew Mac Conn ne mboght, archpriest of Clonuickenos, Keilachar Mac Con als Gorman'. See Sanderlin, *PRLA* 82 (1982) 111-123 for a discussion of the manuscript tradition of Mageoghagan's translation.

<sup>10</sup> *AFM*, vol 1, p. Lxiv - Lxv.



traditions, which, accumulative in character, are preserved in highly stratified textual sources.

### 3.1. Clonmacnois and its western neighbours in the early period, from the seventh to ninth centuries.

The first securely datable historical evidence indicating expansion of Clonmacnois' ecclesiastical sphere of influence into Connacht, dates from the late seventh century. They are contained in Tírechán's collections for a Life of S. Patrick, who complains about the expansionist policy of Clonmacnois in Connacht, by claiming authority over churches there.<sup>11</sup> Apparently many of the churches which at one time belonged to Armagh, sought affiliation with Clonmacnois in the later seventh century. In any case Tírechán's complaints clearly imply that Clonmacnois had dependent houses in Connacht at the time. This statement is confirmed by annalistic evidence for the eighth century, during which the promulgation of the *lex Ciaráni* in Connacht is mentioned repeatedly. On the other hand, influence from the western regions of Ireland is traceable in Clonmacnois, as we can see from the fact that abbots from Connacht clearly predominated amongst S. Ciarán's successors from the second half of the seventh to the early years of the ninth century.<sup>12</sup>

There is evidence which suggests that S. Ciarán's authority in Connacht grew together with the power of the Uí Briúin, the up and coming dynasty in the west. During the reign of King Indrechtach mac Muiredaig (707 -723) their position as the dominant dynasty in Connacht was established.<sup>13</sup> He was the first king of the dynasty mentioned in the annals as having died in Clonmacnois.<sup>14</sup> Forgus, son of Cellach, one of his successors to the kingship of Connacht, and also of the Uí Briúin, enacted the *lex Ciaráni et lex Brendain* in Connacht for the first time in the year 744.<sup>15</sup> As K. Hughes pointed out the enactment of a saint's law, often associated with the carrying round of his relics, was an act by which ecclesiastical jurisdiction was exercised. It went hand in hand with the

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<sup>11</sup> Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 160-1, §47.4 and 154-5, §39.8 for the church of 'Cellola Toch'; 142-43, §25.2 for 'Tamnuch' and 'Dumech'. See above, chap. 2.

<sup>12</sup> See above, 39.

<sup>13</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 248-253; 300 for their genealogy.

<sup>14</sup> *AT* (722).

<sup>15</sup> *AU* 744.9.

collection of the ecclesiastical fees and tithes.<sup>16</sup> The Uí Briuin king thus actively supported the consolidation of Clonmacnois' ecclesiastical authority in Connacht. The *lex Ciaráni* was again proclaimed in Connacht in the years 775 and 788, and for the last time promulgated at Ráth Cruachan in 814 under King Muirgius, son of Tomaltach.<sup>17</sup> It seems that during this early period the greater part of the churches and lands subject to S. Ciarán's ecclesiastical jurisdiction was situated in the western regions; only there is Ciarán's law said to have been promoted.

Apart from the Uí Briúin, the people of Uí Maine, the territory adjacent to the western bank of the river Shannon, played a dominant part in the history of Clonmacnois during the early period. Already during the seventh, and increasingly from the middle of the eighth century, several Uí Maine men appear in the abbacy of Clonmacnois. This tradition was continued until the end of the ninth century.<sup>18</sup> With at least six, but possibly nine, candidates they supplied more abbots of Clonmacnois during this period than the Uí Fiachrach and the Uí Briúin, the two leading Connacht dynasties, taken together.<sup>19</sup>

The Uí Maine are traceable in Connacht from the middle of the sixth century as one of the subject tribes to the Uí Fiachrach Aidne.<sup>20</sup> By the time of the late seventh century their territory, situated west of the river Suck reached out to county Mayo, if we give credit to Tiréchan's *collectanea*, who at one occasion describes Findmag, in the former barony of Carra, as being part of the territory of Uí Maine.<sup>21</sup> In the middle of the eighth century the Uí Maine under the leadership of the Clann Cremthainn conquered the neighbouring territory to the east, the land between the river Suck and the Shannon, from the tribe of the Delbna Nuadat in the battle of Belach Cró (756).<sup>22</sup> Herewith they

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<sup>16</sup> K. Hughes, 'The church and the world in early Christian Ireland', in K. Hughes, *Church and society in Ireland A.D. 400-1200*, ed. David Dumville (London 1987) chap. VIII, 99-116, here 103. See also K. Hughes, *The church*, 167-169.

<sup>17</sup> *AI* 775; *AU* 788.9; *AU* 814.

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix 1, A5(d.614), A10 (d.665), A17 (d.724), ?A21 (d.747), ?A23 (d.762), ?A26 (d.770), A29 (d.784), A38 (d.850), A44 (d.885).

<sup>19</sup> For the Uí Fiachrach abbot see A31 (d.789) plus one scribe S5 (d.789); for Uí Briúin abbots see A27 (d.771), A34 (d.799), A36 (d.816).

<sup>20</sup> John V. Kelleher, 'Uí Maine in the Annals', *Celtica* 9 (1971) 61-112, here 65-67; as an appurtenance of Connacht they played a decisive role in the succession struggles for the kingship of Connacht. Kelleher suggested that the domination of Uí Maine in the eighth and ninth century was necessary to any claimant for the kingship of Connacht. Compare Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 92-93, 237, 250-52.

<sup>21</sup> Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 154-55, §41. For Slán Findmag see *ibid*, 152-153, §39.2, and above, 69 n.226. Tirechán also mentions 'Fidarta', i.e. Fuerty in county Roscommon, as one of the churches in Uí Maine, *ibid*, 146-47, §28.1-2.

<sup>22</sup> *AT* (755); *AFM* 751; Kelleher, *Celtica* 9 (1971) 70-71; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 237.

became immediate neighbours of S. Ciarán, separated from his church only by the river Shannon.

During the latter part of the eighth century and in the early ninth century repeated victories by the up and coming Uí Briúin dynasty of Connacht over the Uí Maine are recorded in the annals especially during the reign of Muirgius, son of Tomaltach, indicating significant resistance to Uí Briúin overlordship amongst the Uí Maine.<sup>23</sup> It seems their traditional alliance with the Uí Fiachrach Aidne resulted not only in hostility towards the Uí Briúin kings but possibly also in a temporary opposition to Clonmacnois, as the ecclesiastical ally of the Uí Briúin. One of the battles fought by Muirgius, son of Tomaltach against the Uí Maine, namely that in the year 814, was supported by a certain Fairceallach. The only person named Fairceallach appearing in the annals at the time was the abbot of Clonmacnois, and it has been suggested that he was supporting the Uí Briúin king in battle against the Uí Maine.<sup>24</sup>

The king of Uí Maine at the time was Cathal, son of Murchad, of the Clann Cremthainn; he was defeated and killed by Diarmait, son of Tomaltach (the brother of Muirgius and his successor to the kingship of Connacht) in the year 818. His successor Cathal, son of Ailill (818-846) was of the Cénél Cairpre Cruim. Under him the Uí Maine, gave up their traditional alliance with the Uí Fiachrach Aidne and joined the up and coming Connacht dynasty of the Uí Briúin Aí. In the year 822 the Uí Maine supported Diarmait, son of Tomaltach in the battle of Tarbga, in gaining supremacy over the whole of Connacht.<sup>25</sup>

With the succession of Cathal, son of Ailill to the kingship the Cénél Cairpre Cruim had replaced the Clann Chremthainn as the dominant force in Uí Maine. King Cathal became famous as the one who violated S. Ciarán's sanctity by not only attacking the church of Clonmacnois, but also killing the vice-abbot of Clonmacnois at the time.<sup>26</sup> The early ninth century, the period of his reign, has therefore been characterized as a period of apparent hostility between the Uí Maine and Clonmacnois.<sup>27</sup> The traditionally

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<sup>23</sup> *AU* 775.8 battle of Athleague. See also *AU* 778.10, 802.8, 814.6, 818.9.

<sup>24</sup> *AU* 814.6; Kelleher, *Celtica* 9 (1971) 74 suggested the campaign was performed in revenge for (a speculative) raid on the termon of Clonmacnois by the Uí Maine; Byrne assumes a different connection. The bishop and *airchinnech* of the church of Aughrim (Echdruim) in Uí Maine was killed earlier in the year 814 (*AU*). Byrne speculates, that it was a dependent church of Clonmacnois, that the Uí Maine had killed the *airchinnech* there, and that the secular and the ecclesiastical overlords together undertook a revenge campaign, Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 252.

<sup>25</sup> *AU* 822.6.

<sup>26</sup> *CS* 823; *AFM* 834 (recte 835).

<sup>27</sup> See for example Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 222; Ryan, *Clonmacnois*, 43; P. Harbison, 'The inscription on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois, county Offaly', *PRIA* 79 (1979) 177-188; C. Hollo, *MA Thesis*, University College Cork, 180-181; Kelleher, *Celtica* 9 (1971) 76-77.

good relations between Clonmacnois and the Uí Maine, as well as the political constellation in the early ninth century suggest, however, a different interpretation of the evidence. The relevant entry in the *Chronicum* under the year 823 reads as follows:<sup>28</sup>

"Ronan, Ab Cluana muc Nois do rágaibh a abdaine. Saruccadh Cluana muc Nois do Cathal mac Aililla, Rí H. Maine, for secnabad Muman .i. Flann mac Flaithbertaigh, do Uib Forga, contard isin Sinainn contorcair. Dligedh .vii. cell ind. Maidim ria Cathal mac Oililla for Fedlimid mac Crimthain a Maig Hí ubi multi cediderunt."

"Ronan, Abbot of Cluain-muc-Nois, left his abbacy. The profanation of Cluain-mic-Nois by Cathal son of Ailill, king of Uí Maine, against the Munster vice-Abbot, viz. Flann, son of Flaithbertach of the Uí Forga, whom he threw into the Shannon, so that he was drowned. Seven churches were adjudged in atonement. A victory was gained by Cathal, son of Ailill over Feidhlimidh, son of Crimthann in Magh Aí, in which many fell."

The dishonouring of Ciarán's church by the king of Uí Maine is only reported in the *Chronicum*. The *Annals of Tigernach* are not preserved for the period, and Mageoghagan's annals do not comment on the matter. The problem is that the installation of the vice-abbot from Munster according to the same source, i.e. the *Chronicum*, took place in the year 827, four years after his supposed death! Clearly there must have been a later glossator at work. Due to the uncertain nature of this evidence one might doubt the whole story. Thus Kelleher suggested the entry to be a late insertion by the Clonmacnois chroniclers with the intention of showing the danger of the cost of violating churches.<sup>29</sup>

However, there is evidence to support a historical core to the tale, which had its background in the hostilities which existed between the leading forces in Connacht, the Uí Briúin Aí, their allies the Uí Maine and the king of Munster, Feidlimid mac Crimthainn.<sup>30</sup> The contemporary annals agree that the king of Munster plundered the Cenél Cairpre Cruim (i.e. the dynasty of Cathal, son of Ailill) in the year 837. The deed was immediately revenged by the Uí Briúin Aí, who plundered the men of Munster in the very same year.<sup>31</sup> Feidlimid counted as their enemy at least from the year 830 when he had invaded the southern parts of their kingdom.<sup>32</sup> Finally Clonmacnois itself appears as another target of Munster aggression in the region, during the period. Moreover was the Munster vice-abbot Flann from a branch of the Muscraige Tire who were settled in the northern parts of Munster right in the neighbourhood of Birr - a church not on very

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<sup>28</sup> CS 823.

<sup>29</sup> Kelleher, *Celtica* 9 (1971) 77.

<sup>30</sup> For Feidlimid see Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 220-29.

<sup>31</sup> AU 837.7+8.

<sup>32</sup> AU 830.6.

friendly terms with Clonmacnois.<sup>33</sup> According to the principle that my enemy's enemy is my friend one might deduce, that the king of Connacht, the royal family of the Uí Maine and the monastic centre of Clonmacnois joined their forces against their common foe.

Feidlimid, king of Munster, was renowned for his close association with the church. Earlier in his reign he had made friends with S. Patrick.<sup>34</sup> Presumably S. Ciarán's monastic settlement at the Shannon originally appeared to him as another potential ally. However Clonmacnois' allegiance at the time was with Connacht. Moreover S. Ciarán's successors were competing for ecclesiastical supremacy with S. Patrick, who with the support of Feidlimid had extended his authority over Munster. In this context it was more or less impossible for the king of Munster to win the support of Clonmacnois. Nevertheless Feidlimid somehow managed to impose his man Flann as vice-abbot, presumably sometime around 830 after he had successfully damaged the forces of the southern Uí Briúin in Connacht. Flann was able to hold his position for some time but had to deal with constant resistance from inside his community. Feidlimid's repeated military actions against Clonmacnois in the years 832 and 833, in the course of which even people were killed, might have been interventions in support of his man Flann. When Diarmait, son of Tomaltach, king of Connacht of the Uí Briúin Aí died in the year 833 the church of S. Ciarán lost its most powerful secular patron. It was in this particular political constellation, that Cathal, son of Ailill, king of Uí Maine, took it on himself to defend S. Ciarán against Munster infiltration. He interfered on behalf of the opposition party in Clonmacnois and in a skirmish inside the monastic city he drowned the vice-abbot from Munster. The attack on the Cenél Cairpre Cruim, the royal dynasty of Uí Maine, by the king of Munster appears as a revenge campaign for the affair in Clonmacnois.

Still there remains the problem of chronology. Clearly the killing of the vice-abbot from Munster must have happened prior to 837, when Feidlimid took revenge on Cathal. Also, needless to say, his installation must have preceded his being killed. If the violent attacks on Clonmacnois by the king of Munster in the years 832 and 833 were in fact the response to increasing opposition to the vice-abbot from Munster, the interference of the king of Uí Maine must have happened sometime afterwards, between the years 833 and

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<sup>33</sup> In 823 he burnt Gallen (*CS* 823), three years later he plundered the territory of Delbna Ethra (*CS* 823). In 830 the annals report that he burnt 'Faire' in Mide, possibly the monastery Fore, which at the time had close relations with Clonmacnois (The place is called 'Faire' in *CS*, 'Foire' in *AU*, and has been doubted as being identical with Fore by Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 221). Delbna Ethra was again devastated three times in a row in 832. The termon of Ciarán, the land immediately subject to the abbot of Clonmacnois, was burned on that occasion (*CS* 832). The following year we read of the 'jugulatio' of the family of Clonmacnois by the king of Munster, in which the termon of Ciarán was again burned right to the very church doors, and members of the community of Clonmacnois were put to death (*CS* 833, *AU* 833.7.). For Flann son of Flaithbertach see Appendix 1, vA4.

<sup>34</sup> *AU* 823.5.

837. Possibly the Clonmacnois source used by the Four Masters was chronologically more correct. They inserted the episode in an entry for the year 835.<sup>35</sup>

The assumption that the king of Uí Maine acted in agreement with the community of S. Ciarán, but against the interests of their common enemy, the king of Munster, is confirmed by the fact that the Clonmacnois chronicles are extremely hostile to Feidlimid. According to the *Chronicum* he, who was otherwise known as a pious anchorite, and sometime abbot of Cork, died in consequence of a mortal stroke by S. Ciarán after he had again plundered Ciarán's church in the year 846.<sup>36</sup> The report on King Cathal's murder of the Clonmacnois vice-abbot in comparison reads almost like a panegyric, expressing unconcealed sympathy for the offender, who after all was generous and inflicted a defeat on the evil king of Munster.<sup>37</sup> The claim that Cathal gave seven churches to Ciarán might therefore very well rely on an actual donation resulting out of the friendship which existed between Clonmacnois and its neighbours across the Shannon during the later eighth and early ninth centuries.

The entry reporting on the affair in the *Chronicum*, in its present form, appears as the work of an eleventh-century glossator. He probably had the information about the affair from the now lost Clonmacnois chronicle. He gave a slightly different twist to the incident, by interpreting the data according to the needs of his own times, when the Uí Maine were one of Ciarán's foremost enemies.<sup>38</sup> The same seems to apply to a story known from the Book of Lecan, where Diarmait, son of Tomaltach is said to have rewarded the king of Uí Maine for his support in battle, with the abbot's chair in Clonmacnois.<sup>39</sup> Again the king of Uí Maine appears as the villain, who forced the

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<sup>35</sup> *AFM* 834 (recte 835). Ryan argues for 823 as the correct date of the attack, which he assumes was followed by the (possibly forced) resignation of abbot Rónán, see Ryan, *Clonmacnois*, 47; see also Harbison, *PRIA* 79 (1979) 177-188, who offers a similar interpretation and dating.

<sup>36</sup> *CS* 846. The story is told in charming detail by Mageoghagan under the year 844. According to *AU* 847 Feidlimid died as a 'scribe and anchorite, and the best of the Irish'. Compare *AFM* 845, where a laudatory poem for Feidlimid is included, stating that 'slaughter spread through sacred Ireland from the hour that Feidhlimidh died'.

<sup>37</sup> *CS* 823.

<sup>38</sup> Compare below, 99-100 n.130.

<sup>39</sup> The story is cited by Ryan, 'Abbatial Succession', 506. Diarmait, son of Tomaltach of the Uí Briúin Aí, the brother of Muirgius and his successor to the kingship, was about to engage the men of Bréifne in battle and came to the king of Uí Maine to seek help. The latter agreed, on condition that his half-brother would be given the abbot's chair in Clonmacnois in the event of victory. Accordingly after their combined forces had defeated the men of Bréifne, Ailgile, the sitting abbot of Clonmacnois, was expelled from his office, to vacate the position for the Uí Maine candidate. In return Ailgile cursed Diarmait and prophesied that none of his descendants would succeed to the kingship. Ryan suggested that this story reflected the circumstances of the resignation of abbot Ronan, recorded in the *Chronicum Scotorum* under the year 823. The version of the story, as it is now preserved, must be the result of a later rewriting of the tale, from the time when the Meic Dhiarmada were rivals to the Uí Chonchobair for the kingship of Connacht. The descendants of

expulsion of the sitting abbot in Clonmacnois. But the tale might have been less hostile to the Uí Maine in an earlier version. The historical background to the original version of the tale was possibly the succession of a Uí Maine man to the abbacy of Clonmacnois after the death of Rónán in the year 844.<sup>40</sup>

The saga material, as well as the hagiographical tradition, confirm the importance of the Uí Maine as allies of S. Ciarán in the early period. They figure as the most prominent of the Connacht tribes in Clonmacnois. According to Mageoghagan S. Ciarán, like his father, was a Connachtman.<sup>41</sup> The Lives of Ciarán, which agree that the saint was from the Latharna, maintain, however, that he was conceived and born in Connacht.<sup>42</sup> The story goes that Beoit and Darcea, the parents of Ciarán, originally lived in the kingdom of Mide until Ainmire, the king of Tara at the time, imposed a heavy tribute on his subjects. Like Joseph, the earthly father of Christ, Beoit took his family and fled from the country to the province of Connacht, where a more benevolent king reigned. Thus it came about that Ciarán was born and brought up in Connacht, namely in the plain of Mag nAi, i.e. the plain of Roscommon, near a place called Ráth Crimthainn.<sup>43</sup> A certain Deacon Justus is named as Ciarán's baptizer and teacher during his youth. He is said to have lived in the church of Fuerty, in the north of the plain of Mag nAi. This place is named amongst the churches in Uí Maine by Tirechán.<sup>44</sup> This information taken together clearly implies that Ciarán was brought up in Uí Maine, since their territory at the time when Tirechán wrote expanded as far north as Fuerty, and therefore must have included the whole of the plain of Mag nAi, where S. Ciarán spent his youth.

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Diarmait were the O'Concannons and the O'Fallons, lords of Meic Dhiarmada since the eleventh century. The men of Bréifne would then have replaced what in the original story might have been the men of Munster. See *The Book of Lecan. Leabhar Mór Mhic Fhir Bhisigh Leacain*. Facsimile edition (Dublin 1937) fol. 67v. c.d., fol. 68r. a.

<sup>40</sup> Appendix 1, A37, A38.

<sup>41</sup> *AClon*, p. 81.

<sup>42</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 200, "Cum autem ipse Beonedus artifex tributis Ainmereach, regis Temorie, ualde premeretur, devitans grauitatem tribute, exiit a regione sua, id est a finibus Midhi in regionibus Conactorum; habituitque ibi in Campo Aei apud Crimthanum regem"; Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 78, "Post hec, cum pater eius sub tributis regis Anmerci, id est Ainmirech, premeretur, relinquens patriam suam, abiit in regionem Conactorum, ibique in campo Ay genuit fillium ..."; Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 119, "Bai, tra, rí ecrabhdhdech intansin i Crich hua-Neill .i. Ainmiri mac Colgan a ainm-sidhe. Noordaighedh-sidhe na tuatha ocus na cenela fo chiss rotrom. Luidh didiu Beoid for teiched in righ-sin i crich Connacht cu Cremthann mac Lugdach meic Dallain .i. ri Eirenn, co Raith Cremthainn a Muigh Ai."

<sup>43</sup> Ráth Crimthainn is placed in Mag nAi here, and might possibly be identical with Ráth Cruachain, see Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 110.

<sup>44</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 201, §4; Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 128, §7.2. and 146-7, §28.1-3, the church is named 'Fidarta'.

The name of the king of Connacht at the time when Ciarán was born, according to his Irish hagiographer was Crimthann, son of Lugaid, son of Dallan.<sup>45</sup> He is anachronistically called 'ri Érenn' by the author. We might doubt his aspirations to the kingship of Ireland. But the Latin version already acknowledges him as the ruler of the territory to which Ciarán's parents migrated. No king of Connacht bearing this name is known. There is however one Crimthann, son of Lugaid listed in the genealogies of the Uí Maine as the eponymous ancestor of the Clann Cremthainn. These were a branch of the Uí Maine, who provided kings of Uí Maine during the eighth and again in the early tenth century.<sup>46</sup> Possibly the hagiographers had this king in mind, when writing the story of S. Ciarán's youth in Connacht. If so, the fact that they claim a local king of the people in their neighbourhood, to have been king of Connacht, might be interpreted as a reflection of the high status held by the Uí Maine at the time of the original composition of the saint's Life. Most likely it has to be dated sometime in the mid-eighth century when the Clann Cremthainn were at their height. During this period they conquered the territory of Delbna Nuadat, between the river Suck and the Shannon, thus becoming direct neighbours of S. Ciarán. In the ninth century Clann Cremthainn power was overthrown by the forces of an expansive Uí Briúin.<sup>47</sup>

The links between Clonmacnois and the Uí Maine are reflected in another literary product of the period. There is a tale belonging to the Ulster cycle, known as 'The Feast of Bricriu and the exile of the sons of Dóel Dermait' (*Fled Bricremn ocus Loinges mac nDúil Dermait*). A certain Eochu Rond, king of Uí Maine, figures as an antagonist to Cú Chulainn in the text, preserved in a copy extant in the the Yellow Book of Lecan.<sup>48</sup> The text contains not only a magnificent description of the king, Eochu Rond, as a splendid warrior, but also what could be read as a rather ludicrous account of the way he is defeated by Cú Chulainn. Dr. Kaarina Hollo, who has been working on the text, interprets this passage as a rather negative portrayal of the king of Uí Maine. Moreover she deduces hostility between the Uí Maine and the place of composition of this version

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<sup>45</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 200, 'habitauit ibi in Campo Aei apud Crimthanum regem; ibique genuit sanctum Kyranum, cuius est hec vita'; Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 119, ll. 4001-4005 'Cremhthann mac Ludhdach meic Dallain .i. ri Eirenn'.

<sup>46</sup> *The tribes and customs of Hy-Many, commonly called O'Kelly's Country*, ed. and transl. John O'Donovan (Dublin 1843) 14; J. Kelleher, *Celtica* 9 (1971), 61-112, here 109. Thanks to Dr. Colmán Etchingham who drew my attention to this.

<sup>47</sup> In the battle of Forad in 818 (*CS, AClon*, p. 130, *AU, AFM*). Three more kings of this branch of the Uí Maine are mentioned for the late ninth and early tenth century, when their genealogies come to an end. The very last king of Uí Maine from among the Clann Cremthainn died in 938. Kelleher, *Celtica* 9 (1971) 77-79.

<sup>48</sup> An edition of the text is in preparation by Dr. Kaarina Hollo, who kindly supplied me with the relevant passages of the text. It has been edit ed once before by Ernst Windisch in *Irische Texte*, zweite Serie, I. Heft, ed. W. Stokes and E. Windisch (Leipzig 1884) 164-216.



of the tale, for which a *scriptorium* in Clonmacnois appears to her as the most favourable candidate. On linguistic grounds the text has been dated to the ninth century. On grounds of historical evidence Hollo suggests the early decades of the ninth century as a more precise date of composition. She follows Ryan, Byrne and Kelleher in identifying this period as a time of apparent hostility between Clonmacnois and the Uí Maine.

The reading of the text as an expression of apparent hostility towards the Uí Maine is ambiguous. There are merely two textual indications supporting the assumption of hostility. One is the contrast between the glamorous description of Eochu Rond as a warrior and his subsequent defeat by Cú Chulainn, while the second is the mere fact that the king of Uí Maine figures as an antagonist of the hero of the tale. It seems to me that it is much more significant that we find mention of the Uí Maine, who do not otherwise figure in the Ulster cycle, in this tale. They are portrayed as a warriorlike and grand people, whose approach towards the camp of Cú Chulainn can be heard from afar and compares to a great thunder from the sky. Also the daughter of the king has enough good taste to fall in love with Cú Chulainn. The implications are that these people, in the eyes of the compiler of the text, were powerful enough to meet Cú Chulainn and his men, to defend the honour of their women and to compete in fame and rank with the other peoples figuring in the Ulster cycle. Their inclusion in the story does not so much express hostility as reflect the position and importance the Uí Maine had in local politics in the surrounding world of the place of composition of the tale.

I would be inclined to maintain the characterisation of the time from the later seventh through most of the ninth century as a period of close relations and friendship between Clonmacnois and the neighbouring Uí Maine. Only in the later ninth century, when the kings of Mide gradually gained the leading position as patrons of S. Ciarán's settlement on the Shannon, was the former friendship neglected, eventually giving way to open hostility, apparent from the annals for the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Another hagiographical remnant from this period is the story of the donation of seven churches to S. Ciarán by the king of Uí Maine. It is briefly mentioned in the eleventh century gloss in the *Chronicum*, which reports about the events said to have happened in Clonmacnois in the year 823. An extended version of the donation survived in the seventeenth century document known as the Registry of Clonmacnois.<sup>49</sup> It found an even more spectacular elaboration in the later period, preserved in a fragment of the Book of Uí Maine and the Book of Lismore, where Cairpre Crum, the acclaimed fore-father of the Cenél Cairpre Cruim is portrayed as a contemporary and close friend

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<sup>49</sup> See below, 182-186.

of S. Ciarán himself.<sup>50</sup> The story is told how Cairpre, well known as a notorious evil doer, was attacked and killed at night after another act of plundering. His head was cut off from his body on this occasion. However, just before his death Cairpre had made submission to S. Ciarán, and so the saint and his monks, hearing about the killing, came towards Cluain Burren, where the body lay, and rang their bells and walked with them around the dead man's body. Afterwards he was brought to Clonmacnois where the head was rejoined to the body and, at the word of Ciarán, Cairpre was recuscitated from the dead. Unfortunately there was a twist in his neck from the stone pillow where his head was placed, which gave Cairpre his surname, the Crooked. Thus restored to life, Cairpre granted seventeen townlands to the monastery of his benefactor. The story bears all the characteristics of later medieval propaganda literature, which has little to do with historical reality, but even propaganda needs some material to draw on. It seems likely that this material was the genuine literary outcome of the eighth or early parts of the ninth century, possibly as an extended version of an actual donation made by king Cathal, sometime during his reign.

Another Connacht tribe connected by saga tradition with Clonmacnois are the Uí Fiachrach Aidne. The most famous king of Connacht of this dynasty was Guaire Aidne, who according to tradition died and was buried in Clonmacnois in the year 663.<sup>51</sup> Tradition styles him the incarnation of unbounded hospitality and munificence, the Lebor na hUidre preserved the memory of his generosity in a tale, according to which the king many years after his death and burial in Clonmacnois, turned sand into gold.<sup>52</sup> Even though later tradition seems to have interfered with Guaire's fame and greatness,<sup>53</sup> close links existed between this dynasty and Clonmacnois also around the eighth century, prior

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<sup>50</sup> The story is printed from British Library MS Egerton 92 (a fragment of the Book of Fermoy) by John O'Donovan (ed), 'The Registry of Clonmacnoise', *Jn. Kilk. SE. Irel. Arch. Soc.* 1 (1856-57) 453-454 n.2. An edition from the Book of Uí Maine fol. 126 was made by Kuno Meyer (ed), 'Wunderbare Geschichten von Corpre Cromm mac Feradaig', *Archiv für Celtische Lexikographie* 3 (1907) 224-226. A third version of the story is contained in the Book of Lismore; see W. Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, xvi - xviii.

<sup>51</sup> *CS* 659, *AFM* 662. His death in Clonmacnois is mentioned in other sources, such as the anonymous poem on the kings and chieftains buried in Clonmacnois, ed. M. Stokes in George Petrie, *Christian inscriptions in the Irish language*, ed. M. Stokes, 2 vols (Dublin 1872) I, 76-78. See also the list of the kings of Connacht transcribed by an Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh in 1664, ed. John O'Donovan in O'Donovan (ed), *The genealogies, tribes and customs of Hy-Fiachrach* (Dublin 1844) 312-313; for the saga tradition around this king see Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 239-246, 316.

<sup>52</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 358 mentions the story according to the Lebor na hUidre, fol. 117b, 13-18.

<sup>53</sup> Áed Sláine, king of Tara, happened to be the ancestor of the Síl nÁedo Sláine branch of the southern Uí Néill, who likewise claimed S. Ciarán's friendship, most likely some time in the tenth century. The Clonmacnois chronicles unanimously preserved the memory of how Guaire was defeated by Áed Sláine in the battle of Carn Conaill in the year 649, with the support and prayers of the abbot, prelates and clergy at Clonmacnois. *CS* 646, the record of the battle is preserved as a gloss in the original hand here, *AT* (648), *AClon* 642, p. 103-104.

to the rise of the Uí Briúin. At that time an apparently very prominent member of Guaire's offspring, Connmach son of Muirmid, *nepos Guaire Oidni*, was active as a scribe in Clonmacnois.<sup>54</sup> It also seems that the fame of the ultimate king of the Uí Fiachrach was much fostered in Clonmacnois under the impact of Uí Maine historiographers and hagiographers, since he was their most powerful ally prior to the allegiance with the Uí Briúin Aí in the early ninth century.

Finally there are the Uí Briúin who receive surprisingly little attention from S. Ciarán's hagiographers, at least during this early period. Presumably their status as patrons of Clonmacnois was too soon outshone by the kings of Tara of the Southern Uí Néill, who seem to have monopolized the patronage of S. Ciarán's church from the latter part of the ninth century.

### **3.2. Clonmacnois and the kings of Tara of the Southern Uí Néill.**

Clonmacnois was founded in the territory subject to the kings of Mide.<sup>55</sup> Whereas the Latin Lives of Ciarán simply report about the construction of a building at the place which S. Ciarán had recognized as the place of his resurrection,<sup>56</sup> the Irish Life adds to the tale by introducing Diarmait mac Cerbaill, the ultimate ancestor of the royal dynasties of the Southern Uí Néill, as co-founder of S. Ciarán's church:<sup>57</sup>

"Then Ciarán set up the first post in Cluain and Diarmait mac Cerbeil along with him. Said Ciarán to Diarmait when they were planting the post, 'Warrior, suffer my hand to be over thy hand and thou shalt be over the men of Ireland in the high-kingship (ard-ri Erenn).' 'I permit it', said Diarmait, 'only give me a token thereof.' 'I will' said Ciarán, 'though thou art solitary to-day, thou shalt be king of Ireland this time tomorrow.' That was verified, for Tuathal Moel-Garb, King of Ireland was slain that night and Diarmait took the kingship of Ireland on the morrow, and he bestowed a hundred churches on Ciarán."

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<sup>54</sup> See Appendix 1, S5 (d.798).

<sup>55</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 87-90; Paul Walsh, 'Meath in the Book of Rights', in J. Ryan (ed), *Féil-scribhinn Eóin Mhic Néill. Essays and Studies presented to Professor Eoin MacNeill* (Dublin 1940) 508-521.

<sup>56</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 211-12, §28; Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 180, §17; the Salamanca version ends after S. Ciarán's time of studies in Clonard.

<sup>57</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 130-1, ll. 4379 - 4398. See Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 91, for the translation.

The same story, with a slightly more dramatic emphasis is retold by Mageoghagan in his translation of the Annals of Clonmacnois.<sup>58</sup> Finally the story is also contained in the Tripartite Life of Patrick, and apparently was so popular that it even found its way in non-Ciaránian hagiography.<sup>59</sup> The tale gives the impression that the fortunes of Clonmacnois were closely linked to the royalty of the Southern Uí Néill from its very foundation. The tale bears two implications. First of all Diarmait became king of Tara with the help of S. Ciarán; the killing of the former king, Tuathal Máelgarb, is interpreted as an immediate result of the saint's blessing.<sup>60</sup> The second implication is that Diarmait mac Cerbaill supported S. Ciarán and his church from the very start. Moreover he acknowledged Ciarán's ecclesiastical supremacy in his kingdom.<sup>61</sup>

King Diarmait reigned according to the Annals of Ulster as king of Tara from 544 to 565. The Clonmacnois chronicles give his obit and add that after his death his head was brought to Clonmacnois and buried there.<sup>62</sup> He was the father of Colmán Mór, Áed Sláine and Colmán Becc, thus the ultimate ancestor of the Clann Cholmáin, the Sil nÁedo Sláine and the Caille Follamain.<sup>63</sup> The Sil nÁedo Sláine were the kings of Brega,

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<sup>58</sup> "King Twahal hauing proclaimed throughout the whole K.dom the banishment of Dermot mc Kervel (as before is specified) with a great Reward to him yt would bring him his hart, the said Dermot for feare of his life lived in the desert of Cluonvicknose (then called Ardtibra) and meeting with the abbot S. Cieran in the place where the Church of Clonvickenose now standes, who was but newly come thither to live or dwell from Inis Angin & having noe house or place to Reside & dwell in, the said Dermot Gave him his assistance to make a house there, & in thrusting down in the earth one of the peeces of the timber or wattles of the house, the sd Dermot took S. Queran's hand & and did put it ouer his one head or hand in sign of Reverence to the St., whereupon the saint Humbly besaught God of his great Gookness that by that time tomorrow ensuing that the hands of Dermot might have superiority over all Ireland, which fell out as the S. Requested." (*AClon*, p. 79-80). The same story is preserved as a part of the lost 'Book of Sligo', known from the fifteenth century manuscript Egerton 1782. See St. H. O'Grady (ed), *Silva Gadelica* I, 72-73; see also introduction vol. II, viii-ix.

<sup>59</sup> Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, 88.

<sup>60</sup> According to the Annals of Ulster Diarmait became king in 544, and Clonmacnois was only founded in 548. The Clonmacnois annals, possibly as a result of the tenth century revision, agree that the foundation of Clonmacnois, the death of S. Ciarán and the beginning of the reign of Diarmait as king of Tara happened in one year (*AT* (548), *CS* 544). For the chronology see J. J. McNamee, 'The chronology of the Life of S. Ciarán of Clonmacnois', *Ardagh and Clonmacnois Ant. Soc. Jn.* 2, no. 10 (1945) 3-16; see also Appendix 1, A1.

<sup>61</sup> The *Aided Dhiarmada*, the death tale of King Diarmait, enforces the same claim. There, a story is included of how Ciarán, whilst present with King Diarmait at the royal assembly at Uisnech, performed a miracle to bring on rain over the country after a long period of drought. It is stated that 'In the presence of the men of Ireland there Dermot made obeisance to Kieran, and settled on him his own service and his children's forever.' St. H. O'Grady (ed), *Silva Gadelica* I, 74, transl. cited from vol II, 78. See below, 98-99.

<sup>62</sup> *AClon* 569, p. 88-89; *CS* 565; *AT* (564); *AFM* 558; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 94-105, for the saga material about Diarmait Cerbaill.

<sup>63</sup> *Corp. Gen. Hib.*, 159 (143 bc 53) Genealogies of the Clann Cholmáin according to Rawlinson B 502, p. 425 (335 d 46) Genealogies of the kings of Mide according to the Book of Leinster. Seamus

the eastern kingdom in Mide, the Clann Cholmáin dominated the western parts of the province. The two branches were rivals for the kingship of Tara. From the second half of the eighth century the Clann Cholmáin successfully dominated the title, with the exception of a brief period in the tenth century when the Síl nÁedo Sláine supplied the king of Tara during the years 944 to 956. The Caille Follamain finally ruled a territory corresponding to the former barony of Fore. They were excluded from the kingship of Tara from the early period.

The Clann Cholmáin took the leading part in Mide politics from the eighth century onwards. During the early part of their career the kings of the Clann Cholmáin clearly favoured the Columban community as their most important ecclesiastical allies.<sup>64</sup> The battle of Argaman, in the year 764, between the communities of Clonmacnois and Durrow has been interpreted as the outcome of rivalries between the two churches for the position as leading church in Mide.<sup>65</sup> It seems indeed plausible that inter-ecclesiastical tensions, eventually resulted in open hostility and an armed conflict.<sup>66</sup> However the battle might also point to the fact that the two churches were actively involved in the succession struggles for the kingship of Tara, after the death of Domnall Midi.<sup>67</sup> Diarmait Dub, son of Domnall fought and died alongside the men of Durrow. The army of Clonmacnois on the other hand won the battle with the support of Bresal son of Murchad. Diarmat Dub might have been a son of the former king, and Bresal his grandson (Murchad was the name of one of King Domnall's sons).<sup>68</sup> Both would thus have been potential contenders for the vacant kingship, mobilising ecclesiastical forces, and taking advantage of the hostilities resulting from the ecclesiastical policy of the deceased king. However, despite the support of the saints and their armies neither of the two parties won the kingship. Niall Frossach, the candidate provided by the Northern Uí Néill became king of Tara for the following years.

The battle of Argaman testifies to the involvement of Clonmacnois in the political career of the Clann Cholmáin kings of Mide as early as the later eighth century. Further evidence can be found in the Clonmacnois annals, in an entry for the year 838, where the death of Ruaidrí son of Donnchad, as *secundus Abbas Cluana Iraird, tanaisi Abb Cluana muc Nois* is commemorated. He seems to have been a brother of Conchobar son

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Pender (ed), 'The O'Clery Book of genealogies', *Anal. Hib.* 18 (1951) 1-194, here 57-58, §§763-764; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 87, 90.

<sup>64</sup> See above, 45-47.

<sup>65</sup> *AU* 763.6, *AT* (763).

<sup>66</sup> Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 66.

<sup>67</sup> He died in 763 (*AU*).

<sup>68</sup> *AU* 765.5 Murchad fell in the battle of Fiachach against his brother Domnall (Bresal might also have been a brother of Domnall Mide, whose father was also named Murchad [*AU* 763]).

of Donnchad, king of Mide of the Clann Cholmáin at the time. His obituary is not mentioned in the Annals of Ulster, who otherwise record most of the vice-abbots from Clonmacnois. Ruaidrí as the brother of King Conchobar would have been an uncle of King Flann Sinna, who ruled from 887-916.<sup>69</sup> It is possible that his obituary was a subsequent insertion made by the Clonmacnois chroniclers in the early tenth century, during the reign of King Flann.<sup>70</sup> The claim that a brother of King Conchobar was involved in the government of Clonmacnois and Clonard seems nevertheless plausible. The king actively supported Artrí, who may have been a son of his, in his claims to the abbacy of Armagh, and there is no reason why he should not put his brother in a leading position in the churches of his own kingdom.<sup>71</sup> Whether Ruaidrí was actually vice-abbot or just known as an influential man in Clonard and Clonmacnois remains open.

By the time of the early tenth century the position of Clonmacnois, together with Clonard as the most important ecclesiastical allies of the kings of Mide seems to have been firmly established. During the reign of King Flann Sinna members of the community in Clonmacnois interfered in politics on behalf of their secular overlord. In the year 899 Cathal, son of Conchobar, the king of Connacht, submitted to King Flann Sinna. The Clonmacnois annals report that the king of Connacht came into the house of Flann (i.e. made submission to him) under the protection of the clergy of Ciarán, implying that the clergy of Ciarán took a leading part in the talks which led to the peace treaty.<sup>72</sup>

In the year 904, Clonmacnois and Clonard came under the joint rule of one abbot, Colmán Conaillech, who although not a member of the royal dynasty appears to have been a close friend of the king. In Clonard a grandson of King Flann held the position of vice-abbot for a time.<sup>73</sup> In Clonmacnois royal patronage manifested itself in a huge stone church sponsored by Flann Sinna together with the abbot Colmán Conaillech in the year 909.<sup>74</sup> This church was and still is the largest amongst the buildings in Clonmacnois; the annals refer to it as the great stone church (*damhliag mór*). Later it is often called the cathedral of Clonmacnois, and from the later middle ages it became known as 'Temple Mc

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<sup>69</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 282.

<sup>70</sup> See Appendix 1, vA6.

<sup>71</sup> King Conchobar died in 833 (*AU*); Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 72; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 124-5, 282; P. Byrne, *Peritia* 4 (1985) 170-71.

<sup>72</sup> *AFM* 896, *CS* 899. Earlier in the same year the men of Connacht had been plundering Inis Ainghin, and the shrine of S. Ciarán there. Possibly the obligation to submit to the king of Mide was part of the compensation demanded, by the community of Ciarán.

<sup>73</sup> He died in 923 (*CS* 923); P. Byrne, *Peritia* 4 (1985) 171.

<sup>74</sup> *CS* 908 (recte 909); *AFM* 904, 924; *AClon* 901, p. 144.

Dermot'.<sup>75</sup> On the west side of the church, opposite the main entrance a beautiful high cross was erected, which became known as the 'Cross of the Scriptures'. One of the carvings on it shows two men planting a pole, which is generally interpreted as representing Ciarán and king Diarmait mac Cerbaill, or possibly their tenth century successors, jointly founding Clonmacnois. It also bears an inscription asking a prayer for King Flann, son of Máel Sechnaill and abbot Colmán.<sup>76</sup> The two monuments witness to the close ties which existed between the secular lord of Mide and the powerful abbot of Clonard and Clonmacnois as the leading ecclesiastical figure in his kingdom. The king's generosity towards Clonmacnois might have been an act of thanks-giving for the victory over the forces of Munster in the battle of Belach Mugna, won in the year 908.<sup>77</sup> The donation could function as a status symbol emphasizing royal greatness both to his defeated enemy and to his subjects. The fact that Clonmacnois and not Clonard this time benefited from the king's generosity might possibly be linked with its geographical location. Clonmacnois was situated at the border of the kingdom of Mide. The position at the Shannon made it an obvious target for the Munster army on its way for campaigns and raids into Mide. A huge stone building in a place so much exposed to hostilities from neighbouring peoples might also have had military and strategic relevance. Since churches repeatedly functioned as shelter for the ecclesiastical communities in case of military attacks, King Flann's generosity also went towards the fortification of his befriended ecclesiastical settlement (possibly in consideration of its potential function as a supportive stronghold in case of another attack by a king of Munster).

Furthermore, as the founder of a church in Clonmacnois King Flann Sinna secured his influence and a say in the ecclesiastical affairs of Clonmacnois. Traditional church law acknowledged and in fact guaranteed certain rights to the builder of a church regardless

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<sup>75</sup> C. Manning suggested that the name 'Temple McDermot' derived from the Meic Dhiarmada of Magh Luirg, who probably restored the church in the later middle ages (private conversation). See Westropp, *JRSAI* 37 (1907) 282-85; C. Manning, *Archaeology Ireland* 8, no. 1 (1994) 18-20; C. Manning, *Clonmacnois* (Dublin 1994) 23-24.

<sup>76</sup> The cross referred to as the highcross in 957 (*AFM*) and as the Cross of the Scripture in 1060 (*AFM*). According to the latest rubbings taken of the cross the inscription on the West face reads: 'OR DO RIG FL. IND M MA...N...ROIT DO RIG HERENN OR...' (Pray for king Flaínd son of Ma[elseachlainn]...pray for king of Ireland) and on the East face: 'DO COLMAN DORRO AN CROSSA AR RIG FL.ND' (For Colmán who made the cross ... on king Flann). See D. Ó Murchada, 'Rubbings taken of the inscriptions on the Cross of the Scriptures, Clonmacnois', *JRSAI* 110 (1980) 50; compare Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 42-44, fig. 86-88; P. Harbison, *PRIA* 79 (1979) 177-188; F. Henry, 'Around an inscription: the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois', *JRSAI* 110 (1980) 36-46, she suggests that abbot Colmán himself might have been the architect of the stone church as well as the sculptor of the cross, *ibid*, 44; N. Edwards, *The archaeology of early medieval Ireland*, 167 and fig. 36.

<sup>77</sup> Flann made expeditions into Munster in 905 and 906, and was defeated by the king of Munster in the battle of Mag Léna the following year. *AU* 905, 906, *CS* 906 (recte 907). For the battle of Belach Mugna see *CS* 907 (recte 908); D. Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin 1972) 116.

of whether he was a layman or in ecclesiastical orders.<sup>78</sup> The *edificator* would have the right to give advice in ecclesiastical matters, a say in the choice of the priests, or, in case the church was presided over by a bishop, in the episcopal elections, and also he was entitled to a share of the income of his church.<sup>79</sup> Those rights were hereditary, so that with the foundation of a church in Clonmacnois Flann Sinna laid the ground for himself and his successors to rights which would safeguard a share in ecclesiastical government as well as in the income of one of the main churches in his kingdom.

Changing ecclesiastical alliances in the kingdom of Mide, during the reign of Flann Sinna, are reflected in the hagiographical writings of S. Ciarán. It seems highly plausible that the Irish Life of Ciarán was originally composed in the early tenth century, possibly during the reign of Flann Sinna. A comparatively friendly light is shed in it, on S. Colum Cille, the founder of Durrow, which despite the increasing importance of Clonmacnois and Clonard, continued to enjoy the patronage of King Flann.<sup>80</sup> Another literary product of the time appears in the form of a saga tale dealing with Máel Sechnaill, son of Máel Ruanaid, the father of Flann. Anticipating Shakespeare, the author tells us that the spirit of the king's father appeared at night to a member of the community in Clonmacnois, namely to bishop Cairpre. He had to suffer pains in hell, since during his life time Máel Sechnaill had failed to have an *anmchara*, a spiritual confessor. The purpose of his visit was to ask the bishop and his priests to pray for the redemption of his tormented soul. Bishop Cairpre took pity, and set out to pray, to the end that the soul of Máel Sechnaill might be relieved. Eventually after reciting prayers for over a year the work of redemption was completed. The king thanked his benefactors by pointing out a place where he once hid some treasures, gained on a raid against the Vikings. The story comes to us as a religious tale, contained at the earliest in a fifteenth century manuscript.<sup>81</sup> It might be dismissed as a late medieval ghost story. There is, however, a note in the *Chronicum Scotorum*, inserted under the year 904, in the obituary of bishop Cairpre, stating that it was this bishop, to whom the spirit of Máel Sechnaill, son of Máel Ruanaid appeared.<sup>82</sup> Of course the note might have been inserted in the text by Mac Fhirbhisigh,

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<sup>78</sup> See below, 118-119; Peter Landau, *Ius Patronatus*, in L. Buisson, M. Heckel e.a. (eds), *Forschungen zur kirchlichen Rechtsgeschichte und zum Kirchenrecht*, vol 12 (Cologne 1975).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> See above, 45-47.

<sup>81</sup> MS Egerton 92, fol. 28b. Now in the British Library. Other copies are known from the Lebor Brecc, p. 259, col. 2; and from Brussels MS 5100-5104, fol. 76b. See Flower, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts II*, 514-515, article 52. In the Martyrologium of Donegal bishop Cairpre is wrongly given the pedigree of Cairpre Crum, mythological king of Uí Maine, an alleged friend of S. Ciarán. The tale about the spirit of Máel Sechnaill is told here in an abbreviated version, Todd & Reeves (eds), *Martyrology of Donegal*, 66-67. A Latin version of the tale is contained by Colgan, *Acta Sanctorum*, 508-599 (recte 508-509).

<sup>82</sup> CS 904. The Annals of Tigernach are lost for the period (A.D. 768 to 973).



who probably knew about the tale, when transcribing the annals. However, further evidence points to an early date of composition of the tale. First of all the tale supplies an explanation for the fact that Máel Sechnaill, and his descendants, were much obliged to the church in Clonmacnois, which of course neatly fits into the political context of the reign of Flann Sinna. The insistence on the *annchara*, the confessor as an absolute 'prerequisite' for every Christian king, clearly promotes the interests of the Céili Dé movement, pointing to a time of composition when they were very influential in the Irish church.<sup>83</sup> In the ninth century, when the rule of the monastery of Tallaght was composed, they propagated that one should see a confessor at least once a year.<sup>84</sup> It seems therefore very plausible that the story was a genuine product of Clonmacnois under Clann Cholmáin patronage. It was possibly composed during the reign of Flann Sinna, by a member of the Céili Dé community in Clonmacnois.

The successors to Flann Sinna in the kingship of Tara were, at first his rival and son-in-law, Niall Glúndub of the Northern Uí Néill (916-919),<sup>85</sup> followed by Donnchad Donn, a son of Flann (919-944). In his ecclesiastical policy Donnchad seems to have given priority to the Columban churches in his kingdom. He appears to have enjoyed the special friendship of Kells, where in his youth he once found sanctuary, when rebelling against his father Flann Sinna.<sup>86</sup> This situation was to change under Donnchad's successor, Congalach mac Máel Mithig (950-956). He was of the Sil nÁedo Sláine of Brega, a dynasty which had been excluded from the kingship of Tara for more than two centuries.<sup>87</sup> It seems the king made great efforts to guarantee for himself the support of Clonard and Clonmacnois, at the same time neglecting the Columban houses, under the headship of Kells.<sup>88</sup> Like during the reign of Flann Sinna, Clonard and Clonmacnois were again under the rule of one abbot Céilechair son of Robartach (d.954). In the year 951 King Congalach granted freedom from taxation (*soere*) to the community of Clonard.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Gwynn & Purton (eds), *PRIA* 29 (1911) 115-179, §§2, 23, 44, 54, 78, 79; see also Hughes, 'Sanctity and secularity in the early Irish church', in K. Hughes, *Church and society in Ireland A.D. 400-1200*, ed. David Dumville (London 1987) chap. IX, 22-23.

<sup>84</sup> Gwynn & Purton (eds), *PRIA* 29 (1911) §86. This source contains an anecdote bearing a very similar character to Colgan's tale; there a layman, who lived under the spiritual guidance of Eocha Ua Tuathail from Louth, was murdered by his enemies. The confessor, as well as the layman's wife and son were ordered by abbot Dublithir to pray and fast for seven years. They obeyed the order and eventually the spirit of the layman appeared to them to thank them for his redemption from hell.

<sup>85</sup> Niall's wife Gormlaith is said to have been the daughter of Flann. *AClon* 905 (recte 916), p. 145.

<sup>86</sup> *AU* 904.2.

<sup>87</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 87; here 281-282 for the pedigree of the two dynasties. For the genealogy of the Sil nÁedo Sláine see *Corp. Gen. Hib.*, 161 (144 b 44).

<sup>88</sup> M. Herbert and P. Ó Riain (eds), *Betha Adamnáin* (London 1988) 8-20, where the compilation of the *Betha Adamnáin*, as an outcome of Congalach's hostility towards Kells, is discussed.

<sup>89</sup> *CS* 950, *AFM* 949; see Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 158, 170.

The Irish Life of Adamnán, written during the period, seems to suggest that other churches, such as Armagh and Clonmacnois, likewise benefited from the privilege. Kells, however, up to then unique in enjoying freedom from secular impositions, was not mentioned at all. Instead it had been plundered by the king's army in the preceding year.<sup>90</sup> Clonmacnois and its allies were also clearly perceived as a church on the side of Congalach mac Máel Mithig, by the king's enemies. In the year 950 Congalach went on a raid into Munster, seemingly in revenge, Clonmacnois and its neighbouring ally Gallen being plundered in the following years.<sup>91</sup>

The Life of Adamnán, written between the years 956 and 964, with unconcealed antipathy for the king, appears as the Kells comment to Congalach's biased church policy. His short reign and his violent death are interpreted as the immediate result of him having violated the rights of the church, i.e the rights of Kells.<sup>92</sup> A kind of counter statement, the state of affairs according to the view of those who profited from royal power during Congalach's reign, comes to us in a number of tales, apparently written in Clonmacnois around this time. First of all there is the account of the battle of Carn Conaill, as preserved in the Clonmacnois annals. The battle, in which the king of Mide defeated Guaire Aidne, the king of Connacht, took place in the year 649.<sup>93</sup> The king of Mide in question here was Diarmait, son of Áed Sláine, the ancestor of the *Sil nÁedo Sláine*, which was the dynasty of Congalach mac Máel Mithig. The Annals of Tigernach seem to have originally reported on the event in Latin. In a gloss, written in Irish, we are further told that

"...Guaire fled and Diarmait, son of Áed Sláine, was victor. Now Diarmait had marched to that battle through Clonmacnois. The community of Clonmacnois made supplication to God that he might come back safe by virtue of their guarantee. So after the return of the king he offered Tuaim n-eirc - Erc's Mound - with its subdivision of land - Liath Mancháin is its name to day - as a 'sod on altar' to God and to saint Ciarán. And he bestowed three curses on the king of Meath if any of his people should consume even a draught of water therein. Wherefore Diarmait demanded to be buried in Clonmacnois".<sup>94</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Herbert & Ó Riain (eds), *Betha Adamnáin*, 13-16, 43. compare Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 177-178.

<sup>91</sup> Gallen and Delbna Ethra were plundered in 952 (*AFM* 949), Clonmacnois in the year 953 (*AFM* 951).

<sup>92</sup> Herbert & Ó Riain (eds), *Betha Adamnáin*, 8.

<sup>93</sup> *AU* 649, *AFM* 645.

<sup>94</sup> "Cath Cairn Conaill in die Pentecostes, ubi da Cuan ceciderunt .i. Cuan mac Amalgaid maic Enda, rí Muman, + Cuan mac Conaill, rí Hua Fi[d]gheinte, + Folamnach rí hua Liathain, + Guaire fu[g]it, + Diarmaid mac Aeda Slane uictor erat. *Is edh doluidh Diarmuit don cath sin .i. tria Cluain maic Noiss. Dorindsead sámadh Ciarain étla fri Dia fair co tissadh slan dia n-inchaib a coraigecht[a] som. Iar sódh in rig iarom roidbair Toim n-E[i]rc cona fodlaib feraind .i. Liath Mancháin indiu a ainm [amail] fód fo[r]altoir do Dia + do Chiaran, + dobert teora trisste for righ Midhi dia*

The probability that this gloss was added in the annals sometime in the reign of King Congalach is very high indeed. The story, claiming that an ancestor of Congalach, who lived in the seventh century, granted lands and freedom from taxation to the church of Clonmacnois, appears as a projection into the past of contemporary politics in the mid-tenth century.

A second tale, possibly also commenting on ecclesiastical affairs in Mide under King Congalach is a tale about the reciprocal relations between Diarmait mac Cerbaill, S. Ciarán and S. Colum Cille. We are told that King Diarmait mac Cerbaill, hearing the news of S. Ciarán's death lost his hearing out of grief so that none of the physicians in Ireland could heal him. He went to Colum Cille to seek recovery. The saint, unable to heal the king, sent him to Clonmacnois instead. He advises that earth from S. Ciarán's grave be put onto the king's ears as the medicine most likely to cure his disease. Diarmait obeyed the saintly order and found release and the recovery of his health in Clonmacnois. The tale comes to us in a seventeenth-century manuscript.<sup>95</sup> It was translated and included by Mageoghagan in his version of the Annals of Clonmacnois.<sup>96</sup> The message seems straightforward: Colum Cille is unable to help the king, who therefore relies on the one who is more powerful, i.e., Clonmacnois. Clearly such a tale, with unconcealed trace of gloating, could only have been written in Clonmacnois at a time when there was no need to conceal existing rivalries, since the king at the time was entirely on one's side.

Furthermore the ecclesiastical dynasties who apparently rose to power in Clonmacnois in the course of the tenth century, under the patronage of the kings of Mide, were linked to their secular patrons by hagiographical saga tales. Thus the 'Conaillech'-family, for example, appears in a decisive role in the Clonmacnois version of the foundation story of Clonmacnois. S. Ciarán according to tradition was the one who, through his blessing, helped Diarmait mac Cerbaill to the kingship of Tara. Another helper, a certain Máelmor finds mention in the same story, who as Diarmait's half-brother killed Tuathal Máelgarb, the reigning king of Tara. He was, according to the Clonmacnois annals, of the Conaille Muirthemne.<sup>97</sup> It seems likely that this tradition had

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*caithedh neach dia mundtir cidh digh n-uisce and, conidh desin dorogart Diarmuid a adnacol a Cluain maic Nóis.*" *AT* (649); the same version is preserved in *CS* 646, and *AClon* 642, p. 104.

<sup>95</sup> O'Clery Manuscripts in the Royal Library in Brussels, MS 5057-5059, fol. 37r-37v. Edited and translated by Paul Grosjean, 'Notes d'hagiographie Celtique. No. 17: Un miracle posthume de S. Ciarán de Cluain en faveur du roi Diarmait mac Cerrbéoil', *Analecta Bollandiana* 69 (1951) 96-102.

<sup>96</sup> *AClon*, p. 82-83.

<sup>97</sup> *AT* (548), *CS* 544. The version contained in the *Aided Dhiarmada* preserved Máelmor's origin of the Conaille Muirthemne, see O'Grady (ed), *Silva Gadelica* I, 73 and II, 554 for note and translation; see Laurence P. Murray, 'The Pictish kingdom of Conaille-Muirthemne', in John Ryan

its origin in Clonmacnois itself, where two *fer léigim* were supplied by the 'Conaillech' family in the tenth century.<sup>98</sup>

Similarly the Uí Máeldúin, prominent as hereditary vice-abbots in Clonmacnois during the eleventh century, were linked to the kings of the Southern Uí Néill by genealogical ties.<sup>99</sup> They were of Mide origin and are mentioned as a Clonmacnois dynasty in the genealogies contained in the Book of Lecan.<sup>100</sup> According to a tradition preserved in the O'Clery genealogies they claimed direct links with the secular rulers, by postulating, apart from Colmán Mór, Colmán Becc and Áed Sláine, an additional son of Diarmait mac Cerbaill, called Máeldúin. He was, so we are told, the ancestor of the Uí Máeldúin from Clonmacnois.<sup>101</sup> Since this fourth son of Diarmait mac Cerbaill is otherwise unknown, he must have been either a very late, or only a locally known discovery, made by the genealogists at work in Clonmacnois.

Finally it seems that in the course of the tenth century, under the patronage of the kings of Tara of the Clann Cholmáin and the Sílnáedo Sláine the salvation-bringing function of the graveyard of Clonmacnois, its establishment as an attractive place of burial for Irish dignitaries was much developed. The Irish Life of Ciarán lays the foundation of the tradition, in an anecdote concerning S. Ciarán's famous cow. In a prophecy we are told that, even though many lived on her milk, even more should be succoured by her hide, because every soul that would part from its body on the hide of the cow would not be tormented in hell (*Cech ainim raghus asa churp do sheichid na hUidhre nocha pianfaider a n-ithfrenn*).<sup>102</sup> It seems more than right that the kings of the Southern Uí Néill should be the first to profit from this miracle. In logical conclusion their ancestors, in an act of *post mortem* redemption, were declared to have been buried in Clonmacnois, in subsequent insertions in the Clonmacnois annals. Thus the head of Diarmait mac Cerbaill, is said to have been brought to Clonmacnois after his death to be buried there;<sup>103</sup> king Diarmait, son of Áed Sláine, is said to have ensured the right to be buried in Clonmacnois, for himself and his descendants, after his victory in the battle of Carn Conaill.<sup>104</sup> Máel Sechnaill, the father of king Flann, was also declared to have died

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(ed), *Féil-scribhinn Eóin Mhic Néill. Essays and studies presented to Professor Eoin MacNeill* (Dublin 1940) 445-453.

<sup>98</sup> For the ecclesiastical dynasty, see Appendix 1, A49.

<sup>99</sup> See Appendix 1, vA18, vA21, vA23.

<sup>100</sup> *Book of Lecan*, fol. 178v, the family is mentioned as 'Uí Máeldúin chluana m. Nois'.

<sup>101</sup> S. Pender (ed), *Anal. Hib.* 18 (1951) 58, §764, 'ocus Maelduin (o fuilit muintir Maileduin a ccluin mac Nois)'. Compare *Corp. Gen. Hib.*, 159 (143 bc 53).

<sup>102</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 127.

<sup>103</sup> *AT* (565), *CS* 565, *AClon* 547, p. 79-80.

<sup>104</sup> *CS* 646, *AT* (648).

in Clonmacnois by later tradition.<sup>105</sup> Flann Sinna himself did apparently not profit from the blessing, but died and was buried in Kinneigh (*Cind eich muintire Cluana*), a church near Tara, which was, according to the Clonmacnois chronicler, a dependency of Clonmacnois.<sup>106</sup> His daughters, however, are listed amongst those who were buried in Clonmacnois. Muirgal died as an 'old and rich woman' in Clonmacnois,<sup>107</sup> and Ligach, another daughter of Flann, is said to have been buried there as well.<sup>108</sup>

During the reign of Máel Sechnaill Mór (980 -1022) interaction between royal power in Mide and the settlement of S. Ciarán was again very close. Like under Flann Sinna, and Congalach mac Máel Mithig, Clonmacnois and Clonard were again under the joint rule of one abbot, Flaithbertach, son of Domnall, most likely the brother of Máel Sechnaill Mór. He ruled in Clonmacnois since the year 1003, and assumed the headship of the church in Clonard in the year 1008. He died in 1014, and was succeeded in Clonard by one of Máel Sechnaill's sons.<sup>109</sup> King Máel Sechnaill also made a precious donation to the church of Clonmacnois in the year 1007:

"The Eneclar of the great altar of Cluain muc Nois was purchased by Maelsechlainn, son of Domnall and a hide (was given) from each fort in Midhe on account thereof."<sup>110</sup>

The nature of the object is not quite clear. It is elsewhere mentioned as '*cairrecan*' of Solomon's temple, sometimes interpreted as a model of the temple.<sup>111</sup> It seems to have been a very precious object, made of wood or metal. The incident clearly demonstrates how donations to the church worked. The king, who appears as the noble donor, commissioned an object to be made, and paid for it with a tax especially levied on that occasion from his subjects, the men of Mide. Since this generous donation was made in the same year in which Máel Sechnaill revived the celebration of the fair of Tailten, it seems to have been part of the royal programme to demonstrate power and wealth.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> He died in 862 (*AU*). He was buried in Clonmacnois according to the 'Poem on the chiefs and kings buried in Clonmacnois', ed. M. Stokes in Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 76-78, verses 15-16.

<sup>106</sup> *CS* 915; *AFM* 914, give Tara as the place of death.

<sup>107</sup> *CS* 927; *AClon* 923, p. 148.

<sup>108</sup> *CS* 922; *AClon* 919, p. 147. She was the wife of Máelmithigh, Lord of Brega, and mother of Congalach, of the *Sil nÁedo Sláine*, who was to reign as king of Tara from 944-956.

<sup>109</sup> See Appendix 1, A60.

<sup>110</sup> 'Eneclar altoire moire Cluana muc Nois do cennac la Maolseclainn mac Domnaill ocus seche cech Lis a Midhe da cinn'. *CS* 1005 (recte 1007), the respective folio in *AT* is missing.

<sup>111</sup> *AT* (1129); *CS* 1125; *AFM* 1129 when the object was stolen from the altar in Clonmacnois.

<sup>112</sup> *AU* 1007.10; *CS* 1005.

### 3.3. The eleventh century

With the slow but steady decline of central royal power in Mide and the shrinking of the territory traditionally ruled over by the kings of Tara in the course of the eleventh century, the nature of the relation between Clonmacnois and the kings of Mide of the Southern Uí Néill was bound to change.<sup>113</sup> After the death of Máel Sechnaill Mór in the year 1022, violent succession struggles for the kingship followed out of which Conchobar, son of Domnall, a grandson of Máel Sechnaill Mór emerged as the victor. He held the kingship in Mide for more than forty years from 1030 to 1073.

Conchobar was closely linked to the main ecclesiastical centres in his kingdom by family ties. His great uncle Flaithbertach had been abbot of Clonard as well as Clonmacnois for the years 1008 to 1014. His father Domnall was coarb of Clonard from 1014 to 1019.<sup>114</sup> Flann, a brother of Conchobar, whom he blinded in the course of the rivalries to the kingship of Tara, had married into the Clonmacnois aristocracy.<sup>115</sup> His wife Cantigern was the daughter of Guaire Ua Lachtnáin, a scribe in Clonmacnois. Their two sons, Domnall and Murchad were both future kings of Mide.<sup>116</sup> Murchad later became the murderer of his uncle and succeeded to the kingship in the year 1073.<sup>117</sup> Despite his ecclesiastical family background Conchobar was not particularly friendly with the churches in his kingdom. In 1039 he plundered Clonard, the main ecclesiastical ally of his predecessors, which at the beginning of the century had been ruled by his own father.<sup>118</sup> Clonmacnois apparently was not involved in the conflict and when Conchobar was killed in 1073, he was buried in Clonmacnois, indicating that some kind of alliance, if only the keeping of the tradition of his forefathers, existed. He appears once as the benefactor of Clonmacnois, namely as soon as he was dead. According to a saga preserved by Mageoghagan the dead king's head was stolen by the king of Munster shortly after the burial. A sickness befell the thief so that he brought the head back only

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<sup>113</sup> F. J. Byrne, 'The trembling Sod: Ireland in 1169', *NHI* II, 1-42, here 19-21, for the borders and tribes of Mide in the eleventh century; Paul Walsh, 'The Ua Máelsechlainn kings of Meath', *IER* 57 (1941) 165-183, here 169-171.

<sup>114</sup> P. Byrne, *Peritia* 4 (1985) 165-166.

<sup>115</sup> *AFM* 1037.

<sup>116</sup> Guaire, ferleigind of Clonmacnois died in 1054 (*AD*), for his daughter Cantigern see: M. C. Dobbs (ed), 'The ban-Shenchus', *Revue Celtique* 48 (1931) 163-234, here 190.

<sup>117</sup> *AFM* 1073; *CS* 1070; *AClon* 1070, p. 180-181; *AT* (1073); Murchad himself was killed in Kells by the lord of Gailenga three years later, see *AT* (1076).

<sup>118</sup> *AT* (1038).

three days later. As a little gift he added two rings of gold to reconcile the community of Clonmacnois, who thus ultimately had made a profit from the head of the dead king.<sup>119</sup>

Conchobar's son Máel Sechnaill appears as the active military defender of S. Ciarán's church. In 1080 he plundered the men of Tethba, which according to Mageoghagan was God's revenge on them for having plundered Clonmacnois earlier in the year.<sup>120</sup> Again in the following year, when Máel Sechnaill killed the lord of Calraige, the annalist interprets the event as a punishment by God and Ciarán on him, he having earlier robbed the goods of the church in Clonmacnois.<sup>121</sup> However Máel Sechnaill was killed by the men of Tethba in 1087.<sup>122</sup> Domnall, another son of Flann, became king of Mide after his cousin. He was slain by his own subjects, the men of Luigne, in the year 1094.<sup>123</sup> Mide was divided between two rival candidates and none of the successors to the kingship was able to restore the power once held by their ancestors in the tenth and early eleventh century.

The changing fortunes of the Ua Máelsechlainn dynasty in Mide found reflection in the way in which their ancestor Diarmait mac Cerbaill was reviewed in the saga tradition of the eleventh century. This tradition is preserved in the *Aided Dhiarmada*, the death tale of king Diarmait mac Cerbaill, a text written in Middle Irish which has been dated roughly to the eleventh century.<sup>124</sup> In the story, he, who was otherwise known as the first Christian ruler, the friend of S. Colum Cille, the co-founder of Clonmacnois, is portrayed as the last pagan high king, in conflicts with many saints, whose curse on Tara eventually led to the decline of his power and brought about his most violent but classically pagan threefold death.<sup>125</sup> Even his relation with S. Ciarán, otherwise known as his intimate friend and promoter to the kingship, becomes ambiguous. At one occasion we are told how the king once gave a piece of land to S. Ciarán. Since his enemy lived on the land Diarmait promptly burned him within his house. Ciarán in consequence refused the gift and prophesied his threefold death (Of course, this

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<sup>119</sup> CS 1070; *AClon* 1070 (recte 1073), p. 180-181.

<sup>120</sup> *AT* (1080); *AFM* 1080; *AClon* 1078, p. 182.

<sup>121</sup> *AClon* 1079, p. 182; *AFM* 1081.

<sup>122</sup> *AFM* 1087; *AClon* 1084, p. 183.

<sup>123</sup> CS 1083 (recte 1087); and CS 1090 (recte 1094).

<sup>124</sup> Kenneth Jackson, 'The Motive of the threefold death', in John Ryan (ed), *Féil-scribhinn Eóin Mhic Néill. Essays and Studies presented to Professor Eoin MacNeill* (Dublin 1940) 535-550, here 535 n.1. The story comes to us from the lost book of Sligo in a fifteenth century manuscript in the British Library, MS Egerton 1782, see O'Grady (ed), *Silva Gadelica* II, viii -ix.

<sup>125</sup> See Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 95-100; O'Grady (ed), *Silva Gadelica* I, 78; K. Jackson, 'The motive of the threefold death', 535-536; Joan Newlon Radner, 'The significance of the threefold death in Celtic tradition', Patrick K. Ford (ed), *Celtic folklore and christianity. Studies in memory of William W. Heist* (Los Angeles 1983) 180-199.

prophecy had it been fulfilled, would have undermined the otherwise attested Clonmacnois tradition, that the head of King Diarmait was buried in Clonmacnois).<sup>126</sup>

An anti-Ua Máelsechlainn bias is also apparent in the Annals of Mageoghagan. Not only do we find no mention of the apparition of the spirit of Máel Sechnaill son of Máel Ruanaid, but neither is there any mention of the great gift which Máel Sechnaill Mór made to Clonmacnois in the year 1007. Whereas the *Chronicum Scotorum* portrays the battle of Clontarf as a fight of the foreigners against the combined forces of Brian and Máel Sechnaill, the Annals of Clonmacnois have but a critical comment on Máel Sechnaill's unchivalrous behaviour. It is stated that Máel Sechnaill not only refused to fight on Brian's side, but also that 'he was content rather to lose the field than win it.'<sup>127</sup> There is the obvious problem of dating any of Mageoghagan's stories. The critical attitude towards Diarmait, king of Ireland expressed in them is however very close to that found in the *Aided Dhiarmada*. It can also be said that the stories must have been compiled at a time when Clonmacnois' sympathy for the kings of Mide was fading.

Mageoghagan maintains that after the death of Máel Sechnaill Mór, Ireland was governed as a 'free state, & not like a monarchy' by the two leading poets of Ireland.<sup>128</sup> We may doubt his romantic seventeenth century perception of an idyllic medieval Irish poet-state. It seems instead that with the decline of a central power the smaller kingdoms, formerly vassals of the kings of Tara gained increasing importance, under local lords who were able to establish their authority to a considerable degree.<sup>129</sup> Those of them situated in the neighbourhood of Clonmacnois became involved in the politics of that church. The annals report on these developments mainly in terms of an increasing number of plunderings and raids of their church, by its various neighbours. Those raids however appear as an integral part of the struggles for power in the region, in which Clonmacnois seems to have been directly involved and often took sides.<sup>130</sup> The peoples

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<sup>126</sup> O'Grady (ed), *Silva Gadelica* I, 73-74; CS 565 for the burial of king Diarmait's head in Clonmacnois.

<sup>127</sup> *AClon*, p. 167.

<sup>128</sup> *AClon*, p. 173.

<sup>129</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 268-271.

<sup>130</sup> Between the years 1015 and 1115 a total of thirty of these supposed raids on the settlement in Clonmacnois are recorded in the annals.

1. 1016 (*AU*, CS 1014) Burning by unnamed people.
2. 1019 (*AClon*, *AFM*) Domnall, son of Tadhg Ua Ceallaigh plundered the shrine of Ciarán.
3. 1020 (*AU*, *ALCé*, *AFM*) Burning by unnamed people, together with Clonard and Swords.
4. 1021 (*AFM*) The 'reachtaire' (chief lawgiver) of Máel Sechnaill Mór, together with Branacán Ua Máeluidir, plundered S. Ciarán's shrine.
5. 1023 (*AT* 1023, *AFM*) Plundering by Gadra Ua Dúnadaigh.
6. 1034 (*AT* (1034), CS 1032) A fight in Clonmacnois between the men of Munster and the men of



foremost concerned, and most often mentioned for having violated the church of Clonmacnois were the Delbna, the Uí Maine, the men of Tethba, the Conmaicne, the Calraige as well as tribes from North Munster such as the Uí Fógartaig.

In connection with Clonmacnois the annals most frequently mention families from Tethba, a subkingdom of the southern Uí Néill, covering the area from Durrow to Lough Ree and the river Inny.<sup>131</sup> Since the later tenth century Tethban activities in Clonmacnois can be traced. Agda, the son of the lord of Tethba died after a good life in Clonmacnois

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Tethba.

7. 1038 (*AU, ALCé, AT* (1038), *CS* 1036) Battle between the Delbna and the Uí Maine.
  8. 1044 (*AT* (1044), *CS* 1042, *AClon* 1044) Plundering by the Conmaicne.
  9. 1044 (*AFM, AClon*) Plundering by the men of Munster.
  10. 1050 (*AU, AT* (1050), *CS* 1048) Clonmacnois was thrice plundered in the same quarter of the year, once by the Síl Anmdacha and twice by the Calraige under Ua Catharnaigh.
  11. 1050 (*CS* 1048) Plundering by the Conmaicne.
  12. 1060 (*AT* (1060), *CS* 1058, *AClon* 1060) Plundering by those from Éli and by Ua Fógartaig.
  13. 1065 (*AT* (1065), *CS* 1062) Plundering by the Conmaicne and the Uí Maine.
  14. 1077 (*AT* (1077), *CS* 1074) Burning by unnamed people.
  15. 1080 (*AT* (1080), *AFM*) Plundering by the men of Tethba.
  16. 1081 (*AFM*) Plundering by the Calraige.
  17. 1082 (*AFM*) The cemetery of the nuns in Clonmacnois was burned.
  18. 1089 (*AT* (1089), *AFM*) Attempted plundering by an army from Munster.
  19. 1092 (*AT* (1092), *CS* 1088, *AFM*) A fleet of the men of Munster plundered Clonmacnois.
  20. 1094 (*AClon* 1094) Plundering by an army from Bregmaine (represented by the former barony Brawny, county Westmeath).
  21. 1094 (*CS* 1090) Plundering by the Delbna.
  22. 1095 (*AT* 1095), *CS* 1091) Plundering by the Conmaicne.
  23. 1095 (*CS* 1091) Great persecution from evil men.
  24. 1098 (*AFM*) Burning of the oratory by the 'muintir Tlamain' (from Tethba) under Cucaille, son of Áed.
  25. 1101 (*AT* (1101), *CS* 1097) Encounter between the Muintir Tadgáin and the Muintir Cinaeith.
  26. 1106 (*AFM*) Plundering by unnamed people.
  27. 1111 (*CS* 1107) Forcible refection by Áed, son of Domnall Ua Ruairc.
  28. 1111 (*CS* 1107) Plundering by the Dál Cais.
  29. 1115 (*CS* 1111) Plundering by the men of Munster.
  30. 1115 (*AT* (1114)) Desecration of the bell of Ciarán through Ua Loingsigh, king of Dál nAraide.
- Compare the tenth century, where some nine raids are recorded
1. 922 (*AU, CS* 921, *AFM* 920) The foreigners of Limerick.
  2. 936 (*AU* 936, *CS* 935) The foreigners of Dublin.
  3. 936 (*CS* 935) The men of Munster.
  4. 942 (*AU, CS* 941) The heathens of Dublin.
  5. 946 (*AU, AFM* 944) The foreigners of Dublin.
  6. 953 (*AU, CS* 952, *AFM* 951) The men of Munster with the Foreigners of Limerick in their company.
  7. 959 (*AU* 959, *CS* 958, *AFM* 957) The men of Munster.
  8. 962 (*AFM* 960) The men of Ossory.
  9. 986 (*CS* 984, *AFM* 985) Burning by unnamed people.

<sup>131</sup> Liam Cox, 'Historic Moyelly - Home of Colonel Richard Grace', *Jn. of the Old Athlone Society* 1, no. 4 (1974/75) 238-241, here 238; M. C. Dobbs, 'The territory and People of Tethba', *JRSAI* 68 (1938) 241-259; vol 71 (1941/42) 101-110.

in the year 980;<sup>132</sup> another prince of Tethba was killed in Clonmacnois in the year 999.<sup>133</sup> The men of Tethba seem to have had their own habitations within the settlement, which was raided in the year 1034.<sup>134</sup> It is therefore not surprising to find an increasing number of Tethban families active in the government of Clonmacnois.

The Uí Lachtnáin, named after Lachtnan, lord of Tethba who died in the late ninth century, supplied a prominent *fer léiginn* in the eleventh century.<sup>135</sup> The Uí Tadhgáin cherished a tradition as priests and artists in the settlement since the later tenth century.<sup>136</sup> Ua Catharnaig, a branch of the Muintir Tadhgáin who became famous under their nickname 'na Sionnaig', the Foxes, became the leading force in Tethban politics in the eleventh century. One branch was settled in Clonmacnois, their most outstanding member being Muirchertach the cleric, a nephew of Muiredach mac Catharnaig, king of Tethba. He died in the year 1105 as a learned senior in Clonmacnois, and left three sons behind.<sup>137</sup> Obviously close links, even blood ties existed between the Clonmacnois aristocracy and the leading dynasty in Tethba. In this context it can be understood that in the late eleventh century, the abbot of Clonmacnois retired to Mag Eli (Moyelly), which were the mensal lands of Uí Chatharnaigh co-extensive with the parish of Kilmanaghan.<sup>138</sup> Another branch of the Uí Tadhgáin were the Ua Conghaile, who became hereditary guestmasters in Clonmacnois in the latter half of the eleventh century.<sup>139</sup> Finally a member of the Tethba family, Ua Muirecán, was amongst the first diocesan bishops of Clonmacnois in the early thirteenth century.<sup>140</sup>

The predominance of Tethban families in Clonmacnois seems to be contemporary with the rise of the former petty kingdom to a significant power in Mide. It apparently led to the direct involvement of Clonmacnois in the political rivalries within the kingdom.

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<sup>132</sup> *AFM* 979. He is said to have died in '*imdheidh Chiaráin*', the bed of Ciarán, which was probably located in *Eglais Beag*, the church where Ciarán himself is said to have died. See above, 33-34.

<sup>133</sup> *CS* 997.

<sup>134</sup> *CS* 1032.

<sup>135</sup> *AFM* 889; see Guaire Ua Lachtnáin (S23, d.1054 *AI*, *AFM*).

<sup>136</sup> See Appendix 1, P6 (d.996); P14 (d.1168); Dúnchad Ua Tadhgáin of the family was the artist who made the shrine of the Stowe Missal in the mid eleventh century. George F. Warner, *The Stowe Missal* (London 1906) vol 2, Introduction, xLvi.

<sup>137</sup> *AFM* 1105, M. C. Dobbs, 'The Genealogies of the Southern Uí Néill', *ZCP* 20 (1936) 9, 11. See Appendix 1, Sen9.

<sup>138</sup> Abbot Ua Flaithéin retired to Magh Eli, and was plundered by the 'Muintir Tlamain' a local Tethba branch, subject to Ua Catharnaigh in the following year (1098). Possibly in consequence he moved further east to Aghadboe, where he died in the year 1100. *CS* 1096; *CS* 1092; *AFM* 1100; *AFM* 1098. Compare Appendix 1, A69.

<sup>139</sup> *AFM* 1093; *AFM* 1116; *AFM* 1166. See Appendix 1, G2, ?G4, G5, G6.

<sup>140</sup> See Appendix 1, B26.

Thus the settlement of Clonmacnois was often plundered by the various parties involved in Tethban politics, and the Uí Chatharnaigh plundered S. Ciarán's foundation just as well as their neighbouring enemies the Calraige of Western Mide.<sup>141</sup> The Tethban army fought their enemies from Munster within the ecclesiastical settlement.<sup>142</sup> At the turn of the eleventh to the twelfth century the two leading Tethban dynasties had an armed conflict in Clonmacnois itself.<sup>143</sup> The close association between the rulers of Tethba and the church of Clonmacnois found reflection in a little contemporary poem. It cites a scholar from Clonmacnois who when asked how things are in his monastic school, replies, that it is all invaded by Foxes.

"Canastíc mac leghind, ticim o chluain chelbind

iar leghadh mo leghind, teghím sis co sord.

índis scela cluana, índisfet nacuala

Sinnaigh imahuadha, etait bruana bolg".

"Whence are you, learning's son? From Clonmacnois I come.

My course of study done, I'm off to Swords again.

'How are things keeping there?' Oh things are shaping fair,

Foxes round the churchyards bare, gnawing the guts of men".<sup>144</sup>

### 3.4. The Ua Conchobair kings of Connacht as patrons of Clonmacnois since the later eleventh century.

In the final part of this chapter the rise of the Ua Conchobair kings of Connacht to the position as the most powerful secular allies of Clonmacnois shall be discussed. Throughout the eleventh century Connacht was dominated by the rivalries between Ua Ruairc and Ua Conchobair. Tadhg an eich gil (Tadhg of the White Steed) Ua Conchobair killed his rival Áed Ua Ruairc in 1015.<sup>145</sup> Tadhg was murdered in 1030,<sup>146</sup> and succeeded

<sup>141</sup> *AU* 1050.7; *AT* (1050); *CS* 1048.

<sup>142</sup> *AT* (1034); *CS* 1032.

<sup>143</sup> *AT* (1101); *CS* 1097.

<sup>144</sup> R. Thurneysen, 'Mittelirische Verslehren', W. Stokes and E. Windisch (eds), *Irische Texte mit Übersetzung und Wörterbuch* (Leipzig 1891) 93-94, §142. Translated by Frank O'Connor, *Kings, Lords and Commons* (London 1961), 46. See also Caitlín Ní Maol-Chróin, 'Macalla as Cluainmhac-Nóis A.d. 1050', *Galvia* 1 (1954) 15-17, who dates the poem to the mid-eleventh century, as a direct comment on three raids of Clonmacnois performed by the Foxes in the year 1050 (*AI, AU*). Thanksto Dr. Katharine Simms who helped me to trace the poem and pointed out to me the article by C. Ní Maol-Chróin.

<sup>145</sup> *AU* 1015 probably in revenge for the murder of his brother Domnall the year before (*AU* 1014).

<sup>146</sup> *AT* (1030); *AU* 1030.12.

by Art Uallach Ua Ruairc.<sup>147</sup> Áed Ua Conchobar, surnamed Áed an-ga-bearnaigh, i.e. Áed of the gapped Spear, successfully established his power in Connacht after Art's death in 1046. But like his predecessors he was killed eventually by his arch rival, Áed Ua Ruairc in 1066. According to the Annals of Tigernach Áed Ua Ruairc took the kingship of Connacht in that year.<sup>148</sup> However Ruaidrí, the son of Tadhg (surnamed Ruaidrí na Soige Buide, Ruaidrí of the Yellow Bitch), was the more successful candidate for the kingship and eventually killed Áed Ua Ruairc in a battle in the year 1087.<sup>149</sup> Despite the fact that Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair was blinded some five years later<sup>150</sup> and therefore lost the capacity to be king, the kingship in Connacht was monopolised by the Uí Chonchobair dynasty from his time onwards throughout the twelfth century. Domnall, one of the sons of the blinded Ruaidrí, gained the kingship after his father. According to the Clonmacnois chronicles he was dethroned in 1106 and his eighteen-year-old brother Toirdelbach was elected and inaugurated instead.<sup>151</sup> Under this king (1106 -1156) the power in Connacht was finally consolidated as a property of the Ua Conchobair dynasty which brought the internecine rivalries of the eleventh century to an end. The Uí Ruairc consolidated their power as lords of Bréifne and Conmaicne.

Both the Ua Conchobair kings as well as the Ua Ruairc dynasty become increasingly prominent in the Clonmacnois chronicles from the latter half of the eleventh century onwards. Whereas the Ua Ruairc lords of Conmaicne figure as one of the most persistent enemies of Ciarán, their rivals receive a very sympathetic review. Clonmacnois' alliance with the Ua Conchobair dynasty is first apparent in the battle of Corann (A.D. 1087) in which Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair won the decisive victory over the Conmaicne under Áed Ua Ruairc. According to the *Chronicum Scotorum* the victory was brought about with the active military support of S. Ciarán. We are told that Cormac Ua Cillín, an official in Clonmacnois stood in front of the Connacht army during the battle with the staff of Ciarán in his hands.<sup>152</sup> As *aird secnab Sil Muiredaig*, he seems to have been vice-abbot in Clonmacnois with special jurisdiction for the Síil Muiredaig territory in Connacht. In any case he functioned as mascot-bearer in battle and made use of S. Ciarán's relics in support of the Uí Chonchobair king of Connacht. When king Ruaidrí, five years after his military success was blinded by one of his vassals,

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<sup>147</sup> AT (1046) Art was killed by the Cenél Conaill.

<sup>148</sup> AT (1066); CS 1064; AFM 1066.

<sup>149</sup> AT (1087); CS 1083; AU 1087.

<sup>150</sup> He was blinded by two of his sub-chiefs, Ua Fógartaig and Ua Flaithbertaig. AT (1092); CS 1088). Áed Ua Flaithbertaig king of the west of Connacht had been killed by Ruaidrí more than ten years before. AT (1079). His avenger was blinded himself by the Síil Muiredaig in 1097. AT (1097, 1098).

<sup>151</sup> AT (1106); CS 1102. AU 1088.6, gives as the year of birth for Toirdelbach.

<sup>152</sup> CS 1083; ALCé 1087; AT (1087) does not mention the involvement of Ua Cillín from Clonmacnois.

he seems to have retired to Clonmacnois where he died as chief senior, noble and repentant in the year 1118.<sup>153</sup>

His son Toirdelbach continued the tradition of his father, and cherished the alliance with S. Ciarán. In the year 1115 he made a huge donation of precious golden altar implements to Clonmacnois.<sup>154</sup> The donation was made right after a victory over Murchad Ua Maelsechlainn, king of Mide, the former overlords and patrons of Clonmacnois. Toirdelbach was also involved in the building of a *cloictheach*, a belfry in Clonmacnois in the year 1124.<sup>155</sup> Like his father he died in Clonmacnois and was buried there. In his obituary in the Annals of Tigernach he is praised as the 'Augustus of the West of Europe, the splendour and glory of Ireland and a benefactor of the churches and monasteries'. The author also adds that he was buried under the altar of Ciarán, and that he gave 160 ounces of gold and 60 marks of refined silver, and all his treasures except for his sword, drinking horn, shield and weapon to the churches.<sup>156</sup>

Ruaidrí, the son of Toirdelbach, famous as the last 'High-king of Ireland' was certainly less effective than his father in promoting his authority over Connacht. Nevertheless he appears as the one who defended Clonmacnois against the army of Hugh de Lacy, when they plundered the settlement in the year 1178.<sup>157</sup> Ruaidrí died in the abbey of Cong in 1198. The annals explicitly state that his body was transferred to Clonmacnois to be buried there.<sup>158</sup>

Donations, building activities in the monastery, as well as military support, were the features of Ua Máelsechlainn patronage over Clonmacnois during the tenth and early eleventh century. All three domains were taken over by the Ua Conchobair kings of Connacht from the later eleventh century. Under their patronage Clonmacnois assumed the function as the exclusive burial ground of the Connacht nobility. All of the twelfth-century kings of Connacht died and were buried in Clonmacnois. Other Connacht families seem likewise to choose Clonmacnois as their place of burial, and the Annals of Loch Cé record that in 1181 some twenty Connacht nobles who were killed in the battle

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<sup>153</sup> *AT* (1118); *CS* 1114; *ACott* 1118. He was blinded in the year 1092 according to *AT* (1092).

<sup>154</sup> *AT* (1115); *CS* 1111. "He offered three jewels to Saint Ciarán in Clonmacnois, to wit a drinking horn inlaid with gold (corn co n-ór), a goblet inlaid with gold (bledhe co n-ór) and a paten of copper inlaid with gold (mullóc uma co n-ór)."

<sup>155</sup> *CS* 1120 (recte 1124). This was probably the same tower which later became known as O'Rourkes tower in Clonmacnois, see Macalister, *Memorial slabs of Clonmacnois*, 141ff.

<sup>156</sup> *AT* (1156); see also *AClon* 1153, p. 200, where Clonmacnois as his burial place is not mentioned.

<sup>157</sup> *AT*, *AFM*.

<sup>158</sup> *AFM* 1198; Ruaidrí had resigned his kingship and retired to Cong in 1183 (*ALCé*).

of Mag-Dingba were 'conveyed after their deaths, to Cluain-mic-Nois, and interred in the sepulchre of the nobles of their ancestors'.<sup>159</sup>

From the foundation of Clonmacnois onwards members of Connacht families had held various offices, including that of the abbot in Clonmacnois. It seems that as an outcome of renewed Ua Conchobair patronage in the latter part of the eleventh century one particular family, the Ua Máeleoin, presumably linked with the royal dynasty, rose to power in Clonmacnois as the exclusive holders of the abbacy for most of the twelfth century.<sup>160</sup> At the same time the Ua Neachtain family from Uí Maine became the leaders of the Céili Dé community in Clonmacnois.<sup>161</sup>

### **3.5. Conclusions: Secular patronage - a reassessment.**

The teaching of the church concerning the relation between secular and ecclesiastical power, relies in the first place on S. Augustine, who primarily defined secular power as the institution which was to defend the church against its enemies, i.e. the enemies of God. The prime task of a Christian ruler therefore was to protect, with his military forces, the churches and monasteries in his realm, members of which were by definition not allowed to bear arms. Obviously this theory no longer holds ground, once the church disposes of its own army. The nature of what is generally referred to as secular patronage, therefore, needs to be re-defined. From the example of Clonmacnois we might deduce some of the features of the interaction between secular power and an ecclesiastical estate. An important aspect, still, was that of military protection, provided by the secular lord for his church. This seems to have been the view underlying the promulgation of S. Ciarán's law in Connacht with the support of the king, as it happened in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Ecclesiastical authority was exercised and expanded in agreement and with the support of the secular rulers at the time. However, the concept of the church as a neutral entity, a helpless protégé of a powerful king is totally inadequate, since we know that right at the same time the ecclesiastical army participated in battles and got involved in the succession struggles to the kingship of Tara, after the death of Domnall Midi.<sup>162</sup> More often, it seems, the ecclesiastical protégé got involved in battles as the guarantor of supernatural support. This notion seems to underlie the tenth century account of the battle of Carn Conaill, which is said to have

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<sup>159</sup> *ALCé* 1181.

<sup>160</sup> See below, 122-123.

<sup>161</sup> *CS* 1128 (recte 1132); *AFM* 1170; *AFM* 1200.

<sup>162</sup> *AU* 765.5.

been won by the king of Mide through the prayers of S. Ciarán's community.<sup>163</sup> Similarly, in the later eleventh century, the king of Connacht gained the decisive military victory over the Conmaicne due to the assistance of S. Ciarán's deputy, who functioned as a kind of mascot-bearer in battle, by carrying the staff of Ciarán before the Connacht army.<sup>164</sup> However, direct military support for a secular patron seems to have remained the exception. There were other more peaceful means of interference in secular politics. The leading churchmen of Clonmacnois, for example, apparently functioned as mediators between their patron, the king of Mide and his potential vassal, the king of Connacht, when they brought about the latter's submission to the overlordship of the king of Mide.<sup>165</sup> Such direct involvement of the church with secular politics seems to have functioned on the basis that secular lords had their allies, or even close family members placed in leading positions in the churches concerned. The abbot of Clonmacnois would thus often have been a member of a loyal branch of the leading secular dynasty. When in the course of the eighth century the Uí Briúin rose to power in Connacht, this would lead to the appearance of Uí Briúin churchman in the abbacy of Clonmacnois.<sup>166</sup> Likewise the Uí Maine, who supported the community in Clonmacnois in their opposition to the king of Munster in the early ninth century, supplied two of the abbots of Clonmacnois thereafter. Contemporary with the rise of King Flann Sinna as the most prominent of S. Ciarán's secular friends, was the rise of a family from the Conaille Muirthemne, allies of the Clann Cholmáin kings of Mide, in leading positions in Clonmacnois. The king, on the other hand, might have often recruited his ministers from the monastic schools within the churches, which probably functioned as training colleges for royal officials. Thus the *aird-rechtaire* (chief-lawgiver, or steward) of Máel Sechnaill Mór came most likely from Clonmacnois, as a member of the leading dynasty of the settlement, closely allied with their secular patrons from Mide.<sup>167</sup>

This close interaction on a personal level meant that the king could directly interfere in ecclesiastical politics. The lay ecclesiastical rulers of the church, on the other hand, as the friends and advisors of the king would have a decisive vote in secular affairs. It seems in fact that the rights of the church to interfere with secular politics were also promoted with spiritual means. Thus the Céili Dé movement seems to have made loud propaganda for the *anmchara*, the confessor, as an absolute requirement of every Christian king in the ninth and tenth centuries. Obviously the spiritual well-being of the

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<sup>163</sup> *AT* (649); *CS* 646; *AClon* 642, p. 103-104.

<sup>164</sup> *CS* 1083 (recte 1087).

<sup>165</sup> *CS* 899; *AFM* 896.

<sup>166</sup> Forbasach (d.771), Anaile (d.799), and Suibne (d.816) were abbots from the Uí Briúin. See Appendix I, A27, A34, A36.

<sup>167</sup> *AFM* 1021.

king was the foremost concern of his confessor. However, in his position as the closest spiritual friend of a king, the *ammchara* might have functioned as the centre of coordination between secular and ecclesiastical power. Furthermore, as a man of the church, invested with spiritual authority by God, the salvation of the king's soul stood and fell with the confessor's benevolence. This of course was a very effective means by which to control royal decisions, i.e. secular politics.

Finally there is, what is usually the most prominent aspect of patronage, namely that of donations and gifts to the church made by a secular ruler to his protegee. These deeds find most attention in the chronicles, and were apparently perceived as most spectacular events by contemporaries. Thus it made headlines in the annals when King Flann Sinna paid for the building of a great stone church in Clonmacnois. It seems that, comparable to the meaning of sacraments for a believer, those donations were perceived as visible signs of the grace of one particular patron. They were, however, at the same time, one of the main sources from which a patron could draw his right of interference within ecclesiastical affairs, since his spiritual friends would always be greatly obliged to their powerful and generous benefactor.

Secular patronage, the relation between the ecclesiastical world and secular power, could therefore be described as a friendship between magnates within a particular territory, which functioned on the basis of mutual advantage. In a closely knit network of interaction on a personal as well as political level the two partners, the secular patron and his ecclesiastical protégé, cooperated towards their common good. All the individual aspects, which could be worked out in the case of the relation between Clonmacnois and its secular neighbours, seem to be general features of the exercise of power in the middle ages, indicating that politics in medieval Ireland worked in exactly the same way as in the rest of Europe.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Politics of the German realm for example functioned on the basis of this kind of personal bond. The king exercised and expanded his power mainly by relying on either close relatives or members of loyal dynasties. Bruno, a brother of Otto I, was archbishop of Cologne and one of his strongest and most reliable supporters. Otto's natural son William became archbishop of Mainz, after the previous rebellious archbishop Friederich, had died in 954. William was followed by Otto's nephew Hatto. Otto's niece Gerberga, was abbess of the important abbey of Gandersheim. See Boyd H. Hill, *Medieval monarchy in action* (London 1972) 27-28, 32, 40.



#### **4. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY.**

##### **CLONMACNOIS UNDER THE IMPACT OF CHURCH REFORM AND THE ANGLO-NORMAN INVASION.**

The moral conduct of its clergy and monks had always been an important issue for the church. With the Gregorian Reform in the eleventh century the idea of celibacy as a requirement for every man of the church was promoted and eventually became obligatory church law. Inside the Irish Church reformers with the same concern had been active as early as the eighth century. They were known as the Céli Dé movement, and strictly objected to the ever-increasing number of lay-abbots in Irish monasteries.<sup>1</sup> However, laymen continued to dominate in leading positions in the Irish church. Their children also assumed ecclesiastical offices or succeeded to their fathers' position. Thus families established themselves in the churches, who over generations held various offices and are generally referred to as lay ecclesiastical dynasties. The traditional concept of the monastic *familia* assumed increasing reality in a literal sense. Thus by the eleventh century the main ecclesiastical centres in Ireland were dominated by families, the Clann Sínaich ruled in Armagh, Uí Fallomain in Clonard, Uí Chathail in Glendalough, Uí Uchtáin and Uí Robartaig in Kells.<sup>2</sup>

#### **4.1. The condition of Clonmacnois on the eve of the church reform.**

##### **4.1.1. The Meic Cuinn na mBocht**

In Clonmacnois the most prominent lay ecclesiastical dynasty was known as the Meic Cuinn na mBocht, the sons of Conn na mBocht. The annals provide a detailed pedigree of the family documenting their presence in Clonmacnois as early as the mid-eighth century. According to the Annals of Tigernach, Gormán, their ultimate ancestor, a scribe and abbot of Louth came to live for a year as an anchorite on the waters of

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<sup>1</sup> Peter O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé - Spiritual reform in Ireland 750-900* (Dublin 1981), 192.

<sup>2</sup> T. Ó Fiaich, *Seanchas Ardnhacha* 5 (1969) 75-127; P. Byrne, *Peritia* 4 (1985) 166-167, nos. 41, 43, 45, 47; A. S. Mac Shamhráin, *JRSAI* 119 (1989) 85-86; Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 89-90, 98-99.

Fingén's well in Clonmacnois where he died in 758.<sup>3</sup> His son Torbach was abbot of Armagh, his grandson Áedacán, another abbot of Louth, also died on pilgrimage in Clonmacnois in the early ninth century. This tradition of the anchorites was cherished in the family for the following three generations;<sup>4</sup> along with the connection with Armagh, it links the family with the monastic reform movement of the Céili Dé, active in the Irish church since the eighth century. From the latter half of the ninth century onwards the descendants of Gormán are found in various other positions in their monastic home. They provided lectors, guardians of the mortuary chapel, bishops and seniors as well as leaders of the Céili Dé community in Clonmacnois.<sup>5</sup>

As far as their tribal origin is concerned two alternative versions are preserved in the annals. Repeatedly kinship with the Uí Cheallaigh of Brega is claimed,<sup>6</sup> at other occasions they are said to belong to the Airgiallan tribe of the Mugdorna Maigen.<sup>7</sup> Since the latter were situated in the immediate neighbourhood of Louth (the monastery whence the family originally came and which one would not forge a link since they were rather insignificant), it seems the more plausible version.<sup>8</sup> The Uí Cheallaigh instead were a branch of the Sil nÁedo Sláine of the Southern Uí Néill, in the eastern parts of Mide, who produced several kings of Mide during the ninth, and one in the mid-tenth centuries. Most likely the claim to be related to the Uí Cheallaigh of Brega was the later version of the Meic Cuinn na mbocht pedigree, which had its origin in the attempt to establish a genealogical link with the Southern Uí Néill kings (maybe dating from the mid-tenth century when Congalach mac Máel Mithig of the Sil nÁedo Sláine was king of Tara).

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<sup>3</sup> *AT* (757). For a summary of the family history see John V. Kelleher, *Ériu* 22 (1971) 125-126. He assumes that the Conaillech clan also belonged to the Meic Cuinn na mBocht, since the Conaille Muirthemne were neighbours of the Mugdorna Maigen. There is however a lack of evidence to support this suggestion. For the family background in Louth and their connection with Armagh see Charles Doherty, 'The cult of St. Patrick and the politics of Armagh in the seventh century', in Jean-Michel Picard (ed), *Ireland and Northern France A.D. 600-850* (Dublin 1991) 53-94, esp. 56-57.

<sup>4</sup> For the anchorites of Clonmacnois provided by the family see Appendix 1. An2 (d.758), An3 (d.835), An4 (d.847), An5 (d.865), An8 (d.1006), An11 (d.1022), An14 (d.1060).

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 1. Offices holders provided by the family:  
Lectors: S9 (d.865), S18 (d.1006), S31 (d.1106).  
*Airchinnech of Eglais Beag*: AE1 (d.898), AE3 (d.949), AE9 (d.1097).  
Bishops: B9 (d.949), B10 (d.954), B17 (d.1011), B19 (d.1060), B20 (d.1067).  
Seniors: Sen10 (d.1134), Sen11 (d.1180).  
Head of the Céili Dé: C1 (d.1060), C2 (d.1079).

<sup>6</sup> Claimed for Torbach (*AFM* 807), Áedacán (*AClon* 832, p. 136), Dúnadach (*AClon* 950, p. 156) and Céilechair (*AFM* 1067).

<sup>7</sup> Óenacán (*AFM* 947), Conaing (*CS* 1011), Céilechair (*AFM* 1067, where he is called Céilechair Mugdornach of the Uí Cheallaigh of Brega) and Cormac (*CS* 1099).

<sup>8</sup> Kelleher, *Ériu* 22 (1971) 126.

The family is occasionally referred to as Muintir Gormán or Cinél Torbaig, after the seventh-century founders of the dynasty.<sup>9</sup> However, the name Meic Cuinn na mBocht derives from an eleventh-century personality. Conn, the eponymous family member, died in the year 1060. Five of his sons are commemorated in the annals: Céilechair, who died as bishop in 1067 and was the father of Máel Muire the famous scribe of *Lebor na hUidre*;<sup>10</sup> Máel Chiaráin, whom the Four Masters style *comarba Chiaráin*; also Máel Finnén, Gilla Christ and Máel Íosa, mentioned in the annals without any special title but simply as the sons of Conn.<sup>11</sup>

Conn na mBocht himself according to the Four Masters was head of the Céili Dé in Clonmacnois, and anchorite.<sup>12</sup> The Clonmacnois annals simply call him Conn na mBocht, Conn of the poor.<sup>13</sup> Brian Ó Cuív suggested that the Irish 'boicht', i.e. the poor, stood for a group of monastic dwellers who were either identical or closely associated with the Céili Dé, the two groups together formed the actual community of the religious within the settlement. The term appears first in a monastic context in the eleventh century.<sup>14</sup> He proposes that Conn was head of the poor and the Céili Dé community of Clonmacnois.<sup>15</sup> He passed the office on to his son who held it up to the year 1079.<sup>16</sup> The fact that the head of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht family in the eleventh century assumed the office as head of the poor, *cenn bocht*, appears therefore as the continuation of the family's tradition as anchorites and members of the Céili Dé.

### Íseal Chiaráin - the dynasty's residence

In his capacity as head of the poor in Clonmacnois Conn once gave a splendid party, which made headlines in the annals. He is said to have catered for his guests with twenty of his cows. The feast was given at Íseal Chiaráin, a place which appears to have been the residence of the poor and the community of the Céili Dé.<sup>17</sup> However a series of events later in the century suggests that this church gradually became family property of

<sup>9</sup> *AClon* 832, p. 136; *AFM* 807.

<sup>10</sup> *AT*, *AFM* 1067, *CS* 1064. See Best & Bergin (eds), *Lebor na hUidre*, xiv.

<sup>11</sup> For the sons of Conn see Appendix 1: B20 (d.1067), A66 (d.1079), O4(d.1056), O6 (d.1085), O7 (d.1103).

<sup>12</sup> *AFM* 1031.

<sup>13</sup> *CS* 1057; Conn's obituary is not preserved in *AT* and *AClon*.

<sup>14</sup> See Brian Ó Cuív, *Celtica* 18 (1986) 105-111, using evidence from the Aislinge Meic Con Glinne, an eleventh century text.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 107. He translates the title given to Conn by the four Masters, 'cend Celedh ndhé, + ancoiri Cluana mic Nóis', as 'the person responsible for the Culdees and anchorites of Clonmacnois'.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 107; *AU* 1074.4; *AU* 1077.6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 109.

the Meic Cuinn na mBocht. Íseal Chiaráin is situated in the eastern neighbourhood of Clonmacnois and was according to tradition one of the churches where Ciarán stayed before the foundation of Clonmacnois.<sup>18</sup> In a poem in praise of Conn na mBocht, inserted by the Four Masters under the year 1031, Íseal Chiaráin is referred to as the church of Conn, implying that it was regarded as intimately associated with him.<sup>19</sup> However, as a member of the *paruchia* of Clonmacnois the church was liable to pay services and taxes to the successor of Ciarán. Moreover, the king of Mide as the secular overlord had a share in Íseal Chiaráin. The royal rights were strenuously resisted by the monastic familia, when in the year 1076 the king's son tried to exact certain services from his church. In the course of the monastic resistance the overseer of the poor in Íseal Chiaráin was killed.<sup>20</sup> Again the notion of the church as family property is implied in the account of the events by Mageoghagan who talks of the inhabitants of Íseal Chiaráin as the 'family of Moylekyeran mc Con ne mboght in Isellkyeran'. Eventually in the year 1093 Cormac, a grandson of Conn, bought the church from the king of Mide and from the abbot of Clonmacnois.<sup>21</sup> This purchase meant exemption from secular and ecclesiastical authority and taxation for the *familia* in Íseal Chiaráin, a term which in this context should probably be understood in the literal sense. Moreover this was the final step to the transformation of Íseal Chiaráin, once in the possession of S. Ciarán, into an independent church run by a lay ecclesiastical dynasty. Despite the fact that the Meic Cuinn na mBocht themselves came from Clonmacnois, the purchase obviously meant the final alienation of Íseal Chiaráin from the authority of the abbot of Clonmacnois. At the same time the influence of the family in Clonmacnois itself persisted. When three years after the purchase abbot Ua Flaithéin went on pilgrimage, Cormac, a grandson of Conn na mBocht succeeded him as head of Clonmacnois.<sup>22</sup>

### Internal factions in Clonmacnois - opposition to the Meic Cuinn na mBocht.

Such an accumulation of power and wealth in the hands of one family was bound to attract opposition. Evidence for hostility towards the Meic Cuinn na mBocht can be

<sup>18</sup> *AFM* 1031. For Íseal Chiaráin see above, 55-57.

<sup>19</sup> *AFM* 1031, "A Chuinn Chluana, atclos tú a hErind i nAlban, | A chind ordain, nochan usa do chill dargain."  
(O Conn of Cluain! thou wert heard from Ireland in Alba; | o head of dignity, it will not be easy to plunder thy church).

<sup>20</sup> *AClon* 1069, p. 180; *AFM* 1072.

<sup>21</sup> *CS* 1089; *AClon* 1087, p. 184; *AFM* 1089.

<sup>22</sup> Ua Flaithéin died in 1100, but went on pilgrimage to Aghaboe four years before he died. It seems plausible that Cormac took the abbacy during his absence. Thus he was abbot from 1096 to 1103, when he died (*CS* 1092, *CS* 1099). See Appendix 1. A69, A70.

traced in the hagiographical works dealing with S. Ciarán. The Irish Life, in what appears to be an eleventh century redaction, comments rather critically on the relation between Clonmacnois and the community in Íseal Chiaráin.<sup>23</sup> The story goes that the brethren there asked Ciarán to leave since they could not endure his generosity towards the poor. Ciarán abided by their wish and left the place with a blessing, more precisely a curse:

"Although lowly, it were high,  
Had not censure come me nigh;  
Had I not been censured so,  
It were high though it be low."<sup>24</sup>

This story expresses first of all the opinion of the writer (presumably at Clonmacnois), that the brethren in Íseal Chiaráin were greedy. Moreover the name of the church, Íseal Chiaráin, 'the low place of Ciarán', is used to make a pun and thus turned into a curse, prophesying lack of fame and honour to the place. It certainly was not composed by someone who lived in Íseal Chiaráin and is indeed very hostile to the *familia* there. The anecdote could be interpreted as the literary outcome of what we might call the 'anti- Meic Cuinn na mBocht faction' in Clonmacnois. The brothers in Íseal Chiaráin, i.e. the descendants of Conn na mBocht, were not only accused of lack of generosity but also blamed for the expulsion of Ciarán from their monastery, which is one way to complain about the alienation of Íseal Chiaráin from the authority of the abbot of Clonmacnois. The position of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht in Clonmacnois in the late eleventh century, when Íseal Chiaráin became their private domain, seems a very plausible background for the composition of such a tale. The fact that linguistic evidence also points to the late eleventh century as the time of a further redaction of the Irish Life of Ciarán, makes this suggestion even more likely.<sup>25</sup> In this case we owe the tradition of the anecdote in the Latin Life of S. Ciarán to the thirteenth century redactor of the Dublin collection, who seems to have added a translation of the story to his compilation.<sup>26</sup>

So far we have established evidence for the suggestion that the tale discussed above was the work of someone writing in favour of the 'anti-Meic Cuinn na mBocht'

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<sup>23</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 128-129; the story is also contained in the Dublin version of the Life of Ciarán, Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 209-210, §§23-25; see above, 16-17.

<sup>24</sup> "Ciarsa isiul robadh ard | mina thisedh in fodhard: | in fodhard mina thisedh | robadh ard gersa ísel." Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 129. I cite here Macalister's translation, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 88.

<sup>25</sup> See above, chapter 1.2.1.

<sup>26</sup> See Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 391 for the thirteenth century redactor's contribution to the Dublin version of Ciarán's Life. Compare above chap. 1.2.1.

faction in Clonmacnois. On the other hand, it is well known that the family themselves had a big share in the literary productions of the time; several members of the family were known to have held the office of the *fer léiginn*, i.e. in leading positions in the monastic school. Máel Muire, son of Céilechair Mac Cuinn na mBocht, who was killed by raiders in Clonmacnois in the early twelfth century, was the chief scribe of *Lebor na hUidre*.<sup>27</sup> The family's impact on the annalistic compilation can be traced especially for the eleventh century, when cases of death in the family are recorded even if the person concerned had never held an office in the church. Possibly this was also the period in which the detailed genealogy of the family was copied into the Clonmacnois chronicle from some kind of family album. It might well be that their acknowledged influence on contemporary literature and chronicle keeping in the monastery, was the main source for the family's fame amongst later historians. They were probably but one of several families who combined monastic life with wealth, learning and power and ruled the monastic establishment.

#### 4.1.2. The ecclesiastical aristocracy of Clonmacnois

Marc Bloch defined the aristocratic ruling class in medieval society in terms of two main characteristics, one being an independent legal status, the second being the hereditary right by which the status was transmitted over the generations.<sup>28</sup> The hereditary nature of the position of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht in Clonmacnois is obvious. Their legal status they derived from a tradition as anchorites, associated with the Céili Dé. We therefore seem to be talking about an aristocracy who had established their power in an ecclesiastical context, over an estate which happened to be monastic in its origin. We might therefore talk of the family as an ecclesiastical dynasty, a member of the ruling class in Clonmacnois, alongside other families who also participated in the government of the estate. None of them is as well documented as the family of Conn. They are only known through the obituaries of their members. Sometimes the same surname reappears, often with a whole century's intermission, but these entries highlight the presence of a particular family in Clonmacnois over generations. We already discussed the 'Conaillech' family, who supplied abbots, scribes and priests from the early tenth, and the Ua Máelduin who were hereditary vice-abbots of Clonmacnois throughout the eleventh century. The Ua Flaithéin from the Cuircne in Western Mide held the abbacy in Clonmacnois twice during the eleventh century. The Ua Ruadáin from Uí

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<sup>27</sup> See Appendix 1, S31 (d.1106). It has been suggested that a prototype of the *Lebor na hUidre* belonged to the family and was brought by them from Louth in the early ninth century. See Kelleher, *Ériu* 22 (1971) 126.

<sup>28</sup> Marc Bloch, *Feudal society*, transl. L. A. Manyon (Padstow 1961, reprint 1989) 283.

Maine supplied an abbot and a vice-abbot. Members of the Ua Cillín and the Ua Braoín are found repeatedly amongst the abbots and vice-abbots of Clonmacnois. Not unlike the Meic Cuinn na mBocht who had a second base in Íseal Chiaráin, these ecclesiastical dynasties often had links with other churches. The Conaillech family in the tenth century had connections with Clonard.<sup>29</sup> The Uí Flaithéin and the Uí Chillín had a share in the government of Roscommon and Tuamgraney.<sup>30</sup> The Uí Braoín had another family base in Roscommon, which became their main residence in the twelfth century.<sup>31</sup> Apparently the government of Irish churches in the eleventh century was held by a group of families in possession of wealth and power in at least one but often two or three different ecclesiastical centres. They transmitted ecclesiastical offices by hereditary right to their offspring, and claimed authority in right of their traditional status as men of the church in the service of S. Ciarán, since time out of mind, best documented in the case of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht. It seems therefore appropriate to talk of an ecclesiastical aristocracy, in the leadership of the church of Clonmacnois in the eleventh century.

A further question relates to the economic sources of this ruling class. Their wealth is fragmentarily documented in the annals. Thus Conn na mBocht had sufficient means to provide for his guests with twenty cows. His son could afford to have a new causeway built in Clonmacnois, his grandson had enough wealth to pay for a church, a ransom which was certainly a handsome amount of money.<sup>32</sup> An accumulation of wealth, natural goods and cattle as well as precious relics in the settlement can also be deduced from the annals at the time. Clonmacnois' wealth was certainly one of the causes for the increasing number of raids on its church recorded in the annals for the eleventh century. Cows are regularly mentioned as the prey of the raiders. According to the Annals of Tigernach many hundred cows were carried off in the year 1023.<sup>33</sup> Even the church with the shrine of S. Ciarán attracted the attention of plunderers. One can see why when reading a description of S. Ciarán's riches hidden under the main altar in the church, which included gold and silver goblets, several drinking horns, chalices and a silver cup, as well as the precious model of Solomon's temple.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Colmán Conaillech (A49, d.926).

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix 1, Cormac Ua Cillín (A54, d.966); Conall Ua Cillín died as *comarba Crónáin* in 1026 (AT); Loingsech Ua Flaithéin (A63, d.1042); Macrait Ua Flaithéin (A69, d.1100).

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix 1, Dúinchad Ua Braoín (A56, d.989) was *comarba Chiaráin*, Tigernach Ua Braoín (A67, d.1088) was *comarba Chiaráin and Comáin*; for the twelfth century members of the family who were abbots of Roscommon see AFM 1187, 1232, 1231, 1234.

<sup>32</sup> AFM 1031; AFM 1070, CS 1089 (recte 1093).

<sup>33</sup> AT (1023).

<sup>34</sup> The shrine was plundered in 1021 (AFM). and again in 1129 (AT; CS 1125), where the description is given.

The source of these riches were first of all donations, gifts from secular rulers, like the above-mentioned altar vessels. There were also donations from the ordinary folk, as well as the payments for spiritual services such as baptism, marriage and burial. Moreover it seems that Clonmacnois had an additional source of income through selling the ground in its graveyard to those who wanted to avoid the torments of hell.<sup>35</sup>

Finally *manchine*, a term denoting the equivalent of vassalage in the ecclesiastical context added to the monastic economy. *Manchine* included all kinds of services, from farm labour to military service, performed by the ecclesiastical tenants living in the monastic surroundings. Through offering *manchine* to a saint one assumed the status of a monastic vassal.<sup>36</sup> The Irish version of the Life of Ciarán contains reference to the services due to Clonmacnois. There is for example a childless couple who offered their *manchine* to S. Ciarán.<sup>37</sup> The arrangement implies that the church of Clonmacnois cared for the couple in old age, and in return became their lawful heir. At another occasion Ciarán ordered Cluain, a farm labourer living in the neighbourhood of Clonmacnois, to come and help in the harvest on the monastic fields. Cluain promised to come, but, waking up the following morning, did not feel like labouring all day. He stayed in bed pretending to be sick, when S. Ciarán's messengers came to look for him. The saint, hearing this story, of course saw through the game and caused the malingerer to die on the spot. Cluain's family, after discovering the unexpected death, started to weep and went to Ciarán promising their labour and services to the saint for ever, if only he would resurrect the boy. Ciarán took pity on them and caused Cluain to rise from the dead, who without delay went to Ciarán and promised obedience as well as his *manchine* for ever to the saint.<sup>38</sup> This story is clearly designed as a warning to the ecclesiastical tenants never to neglect their duties or refuse their services to the monastery. A very similar message is transmitted in a tale contained in the *Aided Dhiarmada*, which has also been classified as an eleventh century compilation.<sup>39</sup> *Manchine* as a form of ecclesiastical punishment became increasingly popular in the eleventh century. In the year 1044 the Conmaicne performed a raid on Clonmacnois. The compensation paid by them to S. Ciarán included amongst other things the *manchine* of the son of their chief and the sons of twelve other Conmaicne nobles.<sup>40</sup> Clearly the labour performed by these people formed a solid base for the economy of the monastic estate. The stress on *manchine* in

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<sup>35</sup> See above, 95.

<sup>36</sup> Charles Doherty, *Peritia* 1 (1982) 313-321.

<sup>37</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 144.

<sup>38</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 126.

<sup>39</sup> O'Grady (ed), *Silva Gadelica* I, 74; see II, 78 for translation. See above, 98 n.124.

<sup>40</sup> *AFM* 1044.



particular in eleventh-century sources points not only to the increasing importance of manual labour in the service of an ecclesiastical landlord, but also to a growing tendency to refuse it, which made exhortations necessary.

Interaction between the monastic and the secular aristocracy is another important aspect of ecclesiastical government in the eleventh century. It happened on different levels, one being that of intermarriage. Thus Cantigern, a daughter of the scribe Guaire Ua Lachtnáin, married Flann Ua Máelsechlainn, the brother of the king of Mide.<sup>41</sup> Her two sons both succeeded their uncle in the kingship. Domnall the younger was king of Mide at the time when Cormac M<sup>ac</sup> Cuinn na mBocht bought Íseal Chiaráin in the year 1093. The purchase was thus a transfer between two nobles, who were both associated by family links with the ecclesiastical settlement of Clonmacnois. Moreover Ua Flaithéin, the abbot of Clonmacnois at the time, came from the Cuircne in Western Mide, who were allies of the Ua Máelsechlainn dynasty. There are also apparent inter-dynastic relations between the Clonmacnois aristocracy and the rulers of Connacht. The victory gained in the battle of Corann, by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair over the Conmaicne in the year 1087, was brought about with the assistance of Cormac Ua Cillín from Clonmacnois.<sup>42</sup> The Uí Chillín were a Connacht family, allied with the Uí Chonchobair, and later became leading officials of Roscommon, which was the family church of the royal dynasty. Tigernach Ua Braoín, abbot of Clonmacnois at the time, was himself of the Uí Briúin Aí, which gives him common ancestry with the ruling Uí Chonchobair dynasts. The battle of Corann, therefore, appears as the joint victory of the Connacht nobility, regardless of whether it was secular or ecclesiastical in origin, over their opponents in the northern parts of Connacht.

In this context the increasing use of relics in battles, in the course of the eleventh century, can be understood. They were carried in front of the army and functioned as a kind of mascot. According to the eleventh century hagiographers of S. Finchú, for example, the crozier of this saint is said to have brought about a victory over the Vikings in the battle of Ventry.<sup>43</sup> The contemporary annals testify to a similar use of S. Ciarán's relics. The *Bernán Ciaráin*, the bell of Ciarán, for example was used as a powerful weapon against the lord of Tethba who in consequence was killed soon afterwards.<sup>44</sup> In the year 1052 a victory was won by the Conmaicne over the Calraige *per uirtutem scrine Ciaran*, through the virtue of S. Ciarán's shrine, which presumably was carried in the

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<sup>41</sup> M. C. Dobbs, *Revue Celtique* 48 (1931) 190.

<sup>42</sup> *AT* (1087), *CS* 1083; see above, 103.

<sup>43</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 95; see K. Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 243-244.

<sup>44</sup> *AT*(1043); *CS* 1041.

battle.<sup>45</sup> In 1087, in the above-mentioned battle of Corann, it was the crozier of S. Ciarán, *mada Chiaráin* which was carried before the Connacht army and brought about the victory.<sup>46</sup> Even S. Ciarán himself is said to have made use of his relics to defend his property. In the year 1129 he prevented a ship in Limerick from leaving the harbour with his staff, since the thief of the altar vessels of Clonmacnois was on board.<sup>47</sup> It seems relics were increasingly understood as tools to be employed in the service of S. Ciarán and his friends. Of course a victory won in this way, would be seen as the outcome of cooperation between the military forces of the secular lord and the spiritual power of the ecclesiastical leaders, demonstrating a further aspect of interaction between the secular and the ecclesiastical aristocracy.

A final noteworthy characteristic is a number of entries reporting on attempts to do away with secular taxation of the churches belonging to Clonmacnois during the eleventh century. In the year 1044 an army from Munster raided the settlement. In return the community demanded perpetual freedom from taxation by the king of Munster. Similarly the eleventh-century gloss reporting on the king of Uí Maine as the murderer of a vice-abbot in Clonmacnois makes allusions to the freedom of seven churches as well *manchine*, which was imposed on the king as punishment.<sup>48</sup> Towards the end of the century Íseal Chiaráin, one of the churches of S. Ciarán's paruchia, was successfully ransomed from Domnall Ua Máelsechlainn, and gained perpetual freedom from secular taxation. Some fifteen years later the monks of Ciarán undertook a similar request, and fasted against the king of Mide, with the aim of gaining freedom for the church of Kilmore in Mag Enir.<sup>49</sup> In the *Aided Dhiarmada* Clonmacnois' aspirations for freedom from their secular overlord find expression when Diarmait mac Cerbaill is said to have given one hundred churches to Ciarán as a little acknowledgement to the saint who had helped him to the kingship of Tara.<sup>50</sup>

The story of Íseal Chiaráin is the best known case of these efforts to gain freedom from secular domination. It shows however, that the struggle for freedom from secular taxation was not at all a struggle for ecclesiastical liberty, but much more a strife for financial advantages of the lay-ecclesiastical ruling class.

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<sup>45</sup> AT(1052); CS 1050.

<sup>46</sup> CS 1083.

<sup>47</sup> CS 1126 (recte 1130); *AClon* 1130, p. 190-191; AT (1130).

<sup>48</sup> CS 823; *AFM* 834 (recte 835). Compare above, 79-82.

<sup>49</sup> AT (1108) where the name of the church is given as 'Cilli Moire i Muig in fhir', i.e. Cell mor in the plain of the man. See also CS 1104 (recte 1108). Probably the same as 'Ceall Mor Muighi Ainir', Kell Mór of Mag Enir, mentioned elsewhere in *AU* 874.5.

<sup>50</sup> O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, I, 74.

## 4.2. Clonmacnois in the Age of Reform

### 4.2.1. Condition of the Irish church in comparison with the situation in the continental church.

This was the condition of the Irish church on the eve of the church reform: it was dominated by laymen, who lived with their concubines and ruled by a lay aristocracy who transmitted ecclesiastical honours to their children by hereditary right. However, the immoral condition of its clergy was only one of many evils. There was the influence of secular rulers, who were not only entitled to certain services and taxes from the churches in their kingdoms, but also frequently put their own candidates into leading ecclesiastical positions, thus impeding the principle of the free election of abbots and bishops. Another problem was the absence of a diocesan structure in the Irish church, indicative of its supposed lack of episcopal authority. This was not because there were no bishops, who of course formed a steady part of the monastic equipment since the early days of Irish Christianity. The problem was that those bishops seemed to rule without clearly confined diocesan boundaries over a number of churches and subjects who might be scattered in different parts of the country.<sup>51</sup> Since the diocese, as an administrative unit under the authority of the bishop, was the core of the centralized system of papal power promoted in the eleventh century reform on the continent, the Irish church in the eyes of a continental reformer must have appeared as a comparatively federal and decentralized system. The rise of lay ecclesiastical dynasties as rulers of the churches in the course of the tenth century, meant a further degree of decentralization. In short, the Irish church seemed to lack the kind of hierarchical structures which would enable its absorption into the ecclesiastical concept of omnipotent papal authority, so popular amongst the reformers of the Roman church since the eleventh century.

Of course Ireland was in no way singular as regards the condition of its church. In the Frankish realm under the Carolingian rulers churches were held as quasi private property by laymen, mostly by the owner of the land on which the church was founded.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See C. Etchingham, *Ériu* 44 (1993) 139-162, for a reassessment of the meaning of *paruchia* in the Irish context. He comes to the conclusion that as elsewhere in Christian Europe the term denoted in the first place a area under the pastoral jurisdiction of a bishop. However as Etchingham himself pointed out the actual rulers of most Irish churches were not bishops, but laymen, which certainly complicated the matter.

<sup>52</sup> Ulrich Stutz, *Die Eigenkirche als Element des mittelalterlich- germanischen Kirchenrechts* (Inauguralvorlesung, Basel 1894), transl. Geoffrey Barraclough, 'The proprietary church as an element of medieval Germanic ecclesiastical law', in G. Barraclough, *Medieval Germany 911-1250. Essays by German Historians* (Oxford 1967) vol 2, 35-70. For a general survey of the development of the diocesan organization on the continent see: Hubert Jedin (ed), *Handbuch der*

With the restriction that he was not to divert the church from its religious purpose the lay owner had full civil rights over his church. He could sell or exchange it, he could pass it on by hereditary right to his heirs, also he had the right to appoint the priest. Obviously such a system totally undermined episcopal authority. The diocese of Chur, now in Switzerland, in the early ninth century is a well documented example. There the bishop possessed thirty-one, the king and other laymen more than two hundred of the total number of churches in the bishopric.<sup>53</sup> Contemporary reform efforts show that the system was perceived as a threat to episcopal power; however, the Emperor and the secular magnates were themselves the largest lay owners of churches. Carolingian legislation therefore was designed to maintain and defend the concept of the proprietary church. The problem of subversion of episcopal authority was solved by assimilating the bishops as private churchowners within the system, in their authority as secular magnates.

Lay abbots were another constant feature of the Frankish realm.<sup>54</sup> Einhard, the biographer of Charlemagne as abbot of S. Peter in Ghent, is the earliest example attested in the sources. In contrast to lay ownership of churches, the appointment of a layman to an abbacy was not even perceived as an abuse. The discussion about reform in contemporary synods does not even mention the problem.

Lay authority over churches and monasteries far outlived the Carolingian empire. A case study for Lucca in Northern Italy shows that still in the tenth and down to the twelfth century the rural parishes, including the parish churches, were completely absorbed in the North- Italian feudal system, i.e. they were held by the local landlords.<sup>55</sup> Likewise lay domination over monasteries survived the pressure of the reformers. Despite the fact that royal authority over the monasteries was restricted in the course of the eleventh century, local dynasts could maintain power over 'their' monasteries. They safeguarded their influence by associating themselves with the monastic reformers, who were likewise in opposition to the king. They also supported the establishment of a *Vogt*, an advocate or administrator, as a permanent institution in the reformed monastery, a position which was regularly filled by a member of the local dynastic family.<sup>56</sup>

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*Kirchengeschichte* (Freiburg 1969) vol 3: *Die mittelalterliche Kirche*; Karl Schäferdiek, 'Das Heilige in Laienhand', Henning Schröer and Gerhard Müller (eds), *Vom Amt des Laien in Kirche und Theologie. Festschrift für Gerhard Krause* (Berlin 1982) 122-140.

<sup>53</sup> U. Stutz, 'The proprietary church', 46.

<sup>54</sup> Franz J. Felten, *Äbte und Laienäbte im Frankenreich* (Stuttgart 1980) esp. 47-52, 280-304.

<sup>55</sup> Katherine E. Boyd, *Tithes and parishes in medieval Italy* (Ithaca, New York 1952) 87-102.

<sup>56</sup> H. Hirsch, 'Die Verfassung der Reformklöster des Investiturstreits', in H. Hirsch (ed), *Untersuchungen zur Verfassungsgeschichte des deutschen Reiches und der deutschen Kirche* (Weimar 1913) 26-65 [transl. G. Barraclough, *Medieval Germany 911-1250. Essays by German Historians* (Oxford 1967) vol 2, 131-173]. The Zähringer in the Black Forest were one of the

Even after the fundamental changes in the continental church, brought about in the eleventh century reform, lay authority over churches and monasteries survived. The twelfth century canonical collections still make provision for the rights of a patron over his church.<sup>57</sup> The *Decretum Gratiani*, compiled around 1130-40, rejects secular jurisdiction over churches in general, but makes special provision for the founder of a church. The *fundator* or *edificator* of a church or monastery is still allowed certain rights. He has a say in internal church affairs (*ius providendi et consulendi*) and the right of presentation, which means that he was allowed to present the candidate for the office to the local bishop (*ius inveniendi sacerdotem*). Moreover, provision is made for him to be entitled to a share of the revenues of the church in case of emergency, known as the right of alimention.<sup>58</sup> Of course these regulations apply equally to ecclesiastical and secular patrons. For the latter, even the hereditary nature of patronage was acknowledged by the twelfth century canonists.<sup>59</sup>

On the continent in the course of the eleventh century the various issues of the reformers were eventually superseded by the spectacular conflict between Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV, known as the Investiture Contest.<sup>60</sup> The problem of the relation between secular and ecclesiastical authority was more or less absorbed by the rather technical question of royal participation in the filling of higher ecclesiastical offices in the German realm. In Ireland royal rights as regards the investiture of bishops were not at stake. Instead, the eleventh century saw the advent of Norman claims to authority over the Irish church, in the person of Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, who made the Norse towns in Ireland his suffragan sees.<sup>61</sup> Secular interference in ecclesiastical affairs was not perceived as a problem, as long as the kings interfered on behalf of the papal ideas of reform. Thus one of the main forces behind the Irish church reform were

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earliest examples for a dynasty who established their position against the emperor by such a close association with the reformed monasteries, namely that of St. Blasien and St. Georgen. For studies in other regions see for example Joachim Wollasch, 'Reform und Adel in Burgund', and Karl Schmid, 'Adel und Reform in Schwaben', both essays are contained in Joseph Fleckenstein (ed), *Investiturstreit und Reichsverfassung* (Sigmaringen 1973) 277-294 and 295-320.

<sup>57</sup> P. Landau, *Ius Patronatus*.

<sup>58</sup> For Gratian see *ibid.*, 3-7, "Hic autem distinguendum est, quid iuris fundatores ecclesiarum in eis habeant, vel quid non? Habent ius providendi, et consulendi, et sacerdotem inveniendi, sed non habent ius vendendi, vel donandi, vel utendi tamquam propriis."

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>60</sup> Auguste Fliche, *La réforme grégorienne*, 3 vols (Louvain, Paris 1924, 1926, 1937, reprint Geneva 1978); Johannes Laudage, *Gregorianische Reform und Investiturstreit* (Darmstadt 1993).

<sup>61</sup> For Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury and his claims to supremacy over the bishoprics of Dublin, Waterford and Limerick, see John A. Watt, *The church and the two nations in medieval Ireland* (Cambridge 1970) 5-9; Marie Therese Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship. Interactions in Ireland in the late twelfth century* (Oxford 1989) 12-55; Aubrey Gwynn, 'Lanfranc and the Irish Church', in A. Gwynn, *The Irish church in the eleventh and twelfth centuries*, ed. Gerard O'Brien (Dublin 1992) 68-83.

the Uí Briain kings of Munster, most prominent amongst them Muirchertach Ua Briain (1086-1116), under whose supervision the first two reform synods in the twelfth century were held. The main impetus of the Irish reformers went towards:

1. The abolition of lay domination over churches and monasteries - which meant a struggle against the lay ecclesiastical dynasties.
2. The establishment of a hierarchical diocesan church structure in accordance with that of the continental Roman catholic church.
3. The assimilation of the Irish church into the hierarchical system of the papal church.

#### 4.2.2. Changes in the governmental structures of Clonmacnois in the twelfth century

War was declared against the lay ecclesiastical dynasties in leading positions in the Irish church at the first reforming synod in Cashel in the year 1101. There it was decreed that no layman should be abbot and no abbot should be married.<sup>62</sup> A decree is generally a declaration of intent, and might or might not be implemented. It appears that the hereditary principle not only persisted in the Irish Church, but was even adopted by some of the newly invented diocesan bishops. The Uí Dhubthaigh, as bishops of Connacht are one example of an ecclesiastical dynasty, members of which were present at many a reforming synod, whilst at the same time episcopal honours were passed on in the family by hereditary right. Muiredach Ua Dubthaigh died as bishop of Connacht in 1150.<sup>63</sup> He was the son of Domnall, bishop and also *comarba* of Clonmacnois, and father of Bishop Cadla, who died in the year 1200.<sup>64</sup>

As far as the Meic Cuinn na mBocht in Clonmacnois are concerned, the family lost its prominent position with the advent of the reforming century. Cormac Mac Cuinn na mBocht died as *comarba Chiaráin* in 1103. Members of his family can be traced in the annals down to the end of the twelfth century; the family supplied a priest and two

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<sup>62</sup> Eight decrees of the Synod of Cashel are preserved in the genealogies of the Uí Brian family, 'Senchas Sil Bhriain', ed. St. H. O'Grady, *Irish Text Society* 26, 174-175, transl. *ibid*, vol. 27, 185. See Aubrey Gwynn, 'The first synod of Cashel,' *IER* 66 (1945) 81-92; and a revised version of the article in Gwynn, *The Irish church*, 155-179, here 158ff. The third and fifth decree state that no layman should become *airchinnech* of a church, and that no *airchinnech* should be married.

<sup>63</sup> *AT*.

<sup>64</sup> *AFM* 1136, *AFM* 1200. That Cadla was a son of Muiredach is evident from a letter by Innocent III, see: Aubrey Gwynn, 'Tomaltach Ua Conchobhair coarb of St. Patrick', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 8 (1977) 231-274. here 235.

seniors of Clonmacnois, but does not appear again in leading offices. They even lost their status as leader of the Céili Dé community in Clonmacnois.<sup>65</sup>

The successor of Cormac to the abbacy was Flaithbertach Ua Loingsigh, also a member of a traditional Clonmacnois dynasty. It seems that with his death in the year 1109 the principles of abbatial succession in Clonmacnois changed. Before, especially since the tenth century, the abbacy appears as an office, in the hands of an aristocratic ruling class, filled according to a more or less rotating system by candidates from the various families. In the twelfth century this policy was to change drastically. The names of the leading Clonmacnois families, familiar from the tenth and eleventh century, disappear from the records. They were replaced by newcomers to the governmental scene in Clonmacnois, most dominant amongst them the Uí Mháeleoin.

Gilla Chríst Ua Máeleoin, abbot of Clonmacnois from 1109 to 1127, ruled over Clonmacnois during the reforming synods in Ráth Bresail and Uisnech in the year 1111. The Annals of Ulster praise him as *comarba Ciarain Cluana M. Nois sonus + sobarthu airchinnech chell nErem*, 'successor of Ciarán of Clonmacnois, happiness and prosperity of the superiors of the churches of Ireland'.<sup>66</sup> In the *Chronicum Scotorum* he is commemorated as the builder of the bell tower in Clonmacnois.<sup>67</sup> Then there was Áed Ua Máeleoin, who died in the year 1153, and was followed in the abbacy by Tigernach, his kinsman.<sup>68</sup> Abbot Tigernach as well as his son, Gilla Chríst died in the year 1172.<sup>69</sup> For the following nine years the abbacy went to the Ua Fidabra family, who might have been related to the Ua Máelsechlainn dynasty and possible came from Louth.<sup>70</sup> However the next abbot of Clonmacnois mentioned in the annals was again an Ua Máeleoin, namely Máel Muire, the 'great and worthy house keeper' who died in the year 1230. He was succeeded by Máel Chiaráin Ua Máeleoin, who held the abbacy until his death in 1263 and is the last abbot of Clonmacnois mentioned in the annals.<sup>71</sup> In the thirteenth century members of the Ua Máeleoin family also assumed episcopal honours: bishop

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<sup>65</sup> See Appendix 1. Máel Íosa son of Conn na mBocht (d.1103); Máel Muire son of Céilechair son of Conn (d.1106); Máel Chiaráin son of Cormac (d.1134); Céilechair (d.1134); Máel Muire (d.1180). See Appendix 1, O7, S31, P13, Sen10, Sen11.

<sup>66</sup> *AU* 1127.9.

<sup>67</sup> *CS* 1120 (recte 1124).

<sup>68</sup> *AFM* 1153; *AU*, missing for these years gives 1098 as his date of birth.

<sup>69</sup> *AT*(1172); *AU* 1172.

<sup>70</sup> In the early thirteenth century the family supplied an abbot of Louth. Brendan Smith, 'The Armagh-Clogher dispute and the 'Mellifont conspiracy': diocesan politics and monastic reform in early thirteenth century Ireland', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 14 (1991) 26-38, here 32. See below, 135-136.

<sup>71</sup> *AU* 1230, *ALCé* 1263.

Cathal Ua Máeleoin died in 1208, bishop Áed Ua Máeleoin drowned in 1220, and his namesake retired to Kilbeggan in the year 1236.<sup>72</sup>

The Ua Máeleoin family first appears on the records in the early days of the twelfth century, in the course of which they assumed almost exclusive rights to the abbacy of Clonmacnois. As an ecclesiastical dynasty they not only survived the church reform, but also the Anglo-Norman invasion for nearly a century. Some notes concerning the tribal background of the family are contained in an eighteenth-century manuscript, now in the Royal Irish Academy.<sup>73</sup> The author claims that the family was a branch of the Uí Chonchobair of Connacht, who settled in Bregmaine in the western parts of Mide and were first active as private benefactors of the neighbouring monastery of Clonmacnois, which they eventually took over and ruled as abbots and bishops for over a century. The document appears to be a late eighteenth-century compilation of an anonymous author, possibly an Ua Máeleoin himself. His notes continue with the history of some noble gentlemen of that family down to the eighteenth century. Where he got his information from is obscure, but the alleged Connacht origin of the Uí Mháeleoin, as well as their being related to the Uí Chonchobair dynasty of Connacht, seem highly plausible, since the family came to power when Clonmacnois enjoyed the patronage of the kings of Connacht. In addition some of the Christian names of members of the family, like Áed or Cathal, bear strong Connacht connotations and were common amongst the Ua Conchobair dynasty at the time.<sup>74</sup>

Since Gilla Chríst Ua Máeleoin, in the early twelfth century, did not come from one of the traditional ecclesiastical dynasties of Clonmacnois it is possible that he was initially appointed to the abbacy as the candidate of the reform party. Still under the impact of the first reform synod of Cashel, the hereditary principle in regard to the abbatial succession was broken. Gilla Chríst Ua Máeleoin might have been elected as an external candidate, with no connections to the traditional Clonmacnois aristocracy. Also the handiwork of Toirdelbach Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht, might be recognized in the abbatial appointment in 1109. In 1106 Toirdelbach assumed the kingship of Connacht (1106-1156). His father Ruaidrí had enjoyed the active support of the Clonmacnois clergy in the battle of Corann.<sup>75</sup> Toirdelbach himself, later in his reign, had a belltower built in Clonmacnois. When he died in 1156 he was buried under the main altar of the great church in Clonmacnois. Moreover the Annals of Tigernach list a large

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<sup>72</sup> *AClon* 1206, p. 221; *AConn* 1220; *AConn* 1236.

<sup>73</sup> *R. I. A. MS 14. B 4*, contained as the last but one of the MSS transcribed in the volume: 'Notes relative to the O Malone family of Westmeath.'

<sup>74</sup> Most prominent bearer of the name was Cathal Crobderg (d.1224), who had a brother and a son named Áed (d.1228).

<sup>75</sup> *CS* 1083 (recte 1087).



donation of silver cups and gold and other riches which he gave to Clonmacnois, emphasising his role as the most prominent patron of Ciarán at the time.<sup>76</sup> It is therefore highly plausible that in the early years of his career he took an active part in the abbatial election in Clonmacnois, which was the largest ecclesiastical establishment in his sphere of influence. He forwarded his own interests by promoting his candidate, presumably from Connacht, to the office. The expulsion of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht from their traditional status as leaders of the anchorites and the Céili Dé in Clonmacnois might also have happened under Ua Conchobair impact. The position was instead filled with Uaireige Ua Nechtain, a man of the Uí Maine in Connacht, who were allies of King Toirdelbach. Under the patronage of a common secular lord, the Ua Máeleoin abbot as well as the Ua Nechtain head of the Céili Dé were both successful in reserving their offices for their descendants.<sup>77</sup>

Another family prominent in Clonmacnois in the twelfth century was Ua Dubthaigh from Connacht. In the context of the synod in Brí maic Taidg in the year 1158 the annals of Tigernach talk of the bishop of Clonmacnois and the bishop of Connacht as two successors of Ciarán, *dá comurba Ciarain*. Mageoghagan's translation of the annals of Clonmacnois also makes mention of '2 of the cowarbs of St. Queran', whereas the Four Masters simply omit the relevant part of the entry.<sup>78</sup> The bishop of Clonmacnois at the time was Muirchertach Ua Máeluidir, who was present at the synod of Kells, and died in 1187.<sup>79</sup> The most likely candidate for the bishop of Connacht in question here appears to be Flanucan Ua Dubthaigh, who died a bishop and sage in Cong, in the year 1168.<sup>80</sup> The family dominated the episcopate in Connacht. They generally held the title 'bishop of Síil Muiredaig', which corresponds to the bishopric of Roscommon, and later that of Elphin.<sup>81</sup> However, most likely the title should be understood in the not yet strictly diocesan-organized church of Connacht as 'bishop of the territory and people under the authority of the Uí Chonchobair'. After 1152, when four archbishoprics were erected at the synod of Kells, the family also supplied the archbishop of Tuam. The entry in the annals of Tigernach suggests that the leading ecclesiastical dynasty of the Connacht church was also involved in Clonmacnois affairs. Earlier in the twelfth century Domnall

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<sup>76</sup> *AT* (1156).

<sup>77</sup> For the Uí Nechtain see *CS* 1128 (recte 1132); *AT* (1170); *AFM* 1200. Appendix 1, C3, C4, C5. See also Kelleher, *Celtica* 9 (1971) 94-95.

<sup>78</sup> *AT* (1158); *AClon* 1158, p. 204; *AFM* 1158.

<sup>79</sup> *AFM*.

<sup>80</sup> *AT* (1168); *AU* 1168; MS B and C style him 'epscop na tuath', the explanatory 'Síil Muiredaig' is added in MS A. 'Coblach Síil Muiredhaigh + na Tuath', the fleet of the Síil Muiredaig and the Tuatha is mentioned in *AT* (1145).

<sup>81</sup> Gwynn, *The Irish church*, 230-231.

Ua Dubthaigh was bishop of Elphin and *comarba Chiaráin*. Muirchertach, also a bishop of the same family had apparently a share in the church yard of Clonmacnois.<sup>82</sup> It seems plausible that Flanucan, like his relatives and predecessors had connections with Clonmacnois and was the bishop of Connacht, referred to here in the annals of Tigernach as the second *comarba Chiaráin*.<sup>83</sup> Clearly members of the Ua Dubthaigh dynasty, who monopolized episcopal offices in Connacht, had a power base in the monastery of Clonmacnois, which apart from Roscommon was the main monastic ally of the Ua Conchobair dynasty. Finally the Uí Fidabra, a third family, until then unknown, appears in the abbacy of Clonmacnois, in the years after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans.<sup>84</sup>

#### 4.2.3. The development of the ecclesiastical estate under the impact of the church reform

Various possibilities are conceivable for the development of an unreformed ecclesiastical establishment with monastic traditions, under the impact of the reformers. It could be a) reformed and brought under the authority of the local bishop, as for example Derry; b) dissolved; c) there was the possibility that it would be transformed into a bishopric, which was the case for Lismore, and temporarily for Clonard and Kells; finally, d) it could continue to exist as a subdivision within the diocese, as for example Kells, which became an archdeaconry of the diocese of Meath in the early thirteenth century.<sup>85</sup>

#### Reform orders in Clonmacnois?

It is generally assumed that Augustinian Canons were introduced into Clonmacnois under the auspices of Toirdelbach Ua Conchobair sometime around 1144.<sup>86</sup> Apart from very general grounds like the fact that Toirdelbach is known to have supported the Augustinians, this assumption relies on Archdall who in his turn cites Ware as his source. However, Archdall in an introductory account to the *Monasticon Hibernicum* explains

<sup>82</sup> *AClon* 1135, p. 194.

<sup>83</sup> Gwynn, *The Irish church*, 231-232 for Ua Dubthaigh.

<sup>84</sup> See below, 135-136.

<sup>85</sup> See J. A. Watt, *The church and the two nations*, 60-65, 81-82. Compare also the traditional monastic foundations of Bury St. Edmunds (dio. Norwich) or Glastonbury (dio. Bath) in England, which survived the English church reform as archdeaconries. Jane Sayer, 'Monastic Archdeacons', in C. N. L. Brooke (ed), *Church and government in the middle ages* (Cambridge 1976) 177-204; other examples are Westminster and St. Alban's. D. A. Watkin (ed), *The great Chartulary of Glastonbury* (London 1947-52) 3 vols; V. H. Galbraith, 'The East Anglian See and the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds', *English Historical Review* 40 (1925) 222-228.

<sup>86</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 165; M. Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum* (Dublin, London 1786) 300-391

his understanding of 'Augustinian Canons' as a merely linguistic result of the church reform in Ireland,<sup>87</sup> disqualifying himself as an authentic source for monastic history in the twelfth century. Ware, the stated source of Archdall's knowledge, in his account of the monastic orders in Ireland, does not list Clonmacnois amongst the Augustinians.<sup>88</sup> Only Walter Harris, the editor of Ware's works in the eighteenth century, maintains that Clonmacnois was a monastery of regular Canons of the Order of St. Augustine. According to Harris, the same applied to the Nunnery in Clonmacnois.<sup>89</sup>

There is contemporary evidence to support the suggestion that the nuns in Clonmacnois were reformed according to the Arrouaisian rule. In the year 1144 the church of the nuns in Clonmacnois was granted by Murchad Ua Máelsechlainn to the Arrouaisian nuns in Clonard.<sup>90</sup> Later in the century Dearbhforgaill had the church of the nuns in Clonmacnois rebuilt.<sup>91</sup> She was the daughter of Murchad Ua Máelsechlainn and the sister of Agnes, abbess of the nuns in Clonard, and therefore clearly supported reform interests as well as family policy.

### **The development of the bishopric of Clonmacnois**

However, even if the religious community in Clonmacnois adopted a new monastic rules, it never assumed particular fame as a reformed community. The more lasting status, in which Clonmacnois survived the reorganization of the Irish church, was as that of a bishopric. The evidence as regards the diocese of Clonmacnois in the course of the

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<sup>87</sup> Archdall, *Monasticon*, Introd. xvii-xciii. He declares, that "The Irish clergy had for many centuries preserved an independant hierarchy, and resisted every attempt of the Roman Pontiff to subject them to the Papal See; but in the late 12th century the Popery had broke in on the liberties of the Church; her legates were received, and her various orders found protection and support. It was natural therefore to expect, that our ancient orders, from a change of times, now esteemed heretical, should no longer be called by their old titles, but by new and fashionable names. And hence it is, that of the numerous monasteries founded by Columba, not more than the names of three or four are handed down to us, the rest were ranked as Augustinians, and continued to be recorded, as such by succeeding writers."

<sup>88</sup> Ware, *De Hibernia* (1654) 160-162, for the Augustinian foundations in county Offaly (King's county).

<sup>89</sup> W. Harris (ed), *The whole works of Sir James Ware concerning Ireland* II, part I: *The antiquities of Ireland* (Dublin 1745) 263, 269.

<sup>90</sup> W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Caley and H. Ellis (London 1830) vol vi, part II, 1144-1145. Also included in the grant was the convent of nuns in Drumalgach. See Gwynn & Hadcock 316, and 413 for the Arrouaisian nuns in Clonard. Compare Marie Therese Flanagan, 'St. Mary's Abbey, Louth, and the introduction of the Arrouaisian observance into Ireland', *Clogher Record* 10 (1979-81) 223-234.

<sup>91</sup> *AFM* 1167.

twelfth century is rather ambiguous.<sup>92</sup> The decrees issued at the synod of Ráth Bresail in 1111 do not make provision for a diocese of Clonmacnois. Two episcopal sees were established in Mide, Clonard becoming the centre of a diocese comprising the western parts of Mide and Duleek being chosen as the bishop's seat in the east.<sup>93</sup> Only at the synod of Uisnech, which took place later in the year, were the arrangements of Ráth Bresail revised. Clonmacnois was promoted to the status of seat of the bishop of West Mide and Clonard became the centre of the diocese of East Mide. Duleek lost its status as a bishopric.<sup>94</sup> Forty years later at the synod of Kells, two more archbishoprics, Tuam and Dublin as well as some further suffragan dioceses were established.<sup>95</sup> A bishop of Clonmacnois, namely Muirchertach Ua Máeluidir, was at the synod according to Keating's list of those present.<sup>96</sup> The bishopric of Clonmacnois is however not mentioned in the most authentic source about the arrangements made in 1152, namely the list of the bishoprics created at the synod of Kells which survived in a Cistercian manuscript found in Montpellier.<sup>97</sup> Eventually, another twenty two years later, in 1174, the author of the Annals of Tigernach reports that in this year the diocese of West Mide was annexed to the city of Clonmacnois. However this information is at variance with earlier evidence concerning the diocese. According to the *Chronicum Scotorum*, already in the year 1111

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<sup>92</sup> Compare Padraig L. Ó Maoleachlainn, 'Clonmacnois and the XII century Synods', *Teathba* 1 (1973) 195-201, which to the best of my knowledge is the only comparatively detailed discussion of Clonmacnois and the twelfth century reform synods.

<sup>93</sup> John Mac Erlean (ed), 'The synod of Ráith Bresail. Boundaries of the dioceses of Ireland [A.D. 1110 or 1118]', *Archivium Hibernicum* 3 (1914) 1-33. The decrees of the synod were preserved in the annals of Clonenagh which are now lost. Keating copied this passage in his *History of Ireland* in 1635. Geoffrey Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn: The history of Ireland*, ed. D. Comyn and P. S. Dineen, 4 vols (London 1902-14), here vol 3, 298-307.

<sup>94</sup> The Cottonian Annals under the year 1111 have an entry reporting 'Senad Usnig ac clerib Érend.' (*ACott* 1111). In the *Chronicum* the entry reads: "The great synod of Uisnech was held in the same year and it was at this synod, that the diocese of Fer-Midhe was divided into two parts, between the bishop of Cluain-Muc Nois and the bishop of Cluain-Iraird viz from Clochan-an-imrim west to the bishop of Cluain-Muc-Nois and from the same Clochan eastwards to the bishop of Cluain-Iraird, by Murchadh Ua Maoil Seachlainn and by Eochaidh Ua Ceallaigh, and the congregation of Ciarán with Gillachrist Ua Maoileoin, abbot of Cluain." (*CS* 1107). However two bishops of Duleek are mentioned in the annals, one died in 1117, the other in 1160 (*AFM*).

<sup>95</sup> For a discussion of the exact place and date of the synod as well as the sources see Aubrey Gwynn, 'The Synod of Kells, 1152', in A. Gwynn, *The Irish church*, 218-234.

<sup>96</sup> Keating, *Foras feasa an Éirinn*, vol 3, 314-316.

<sup>97</sup> Edited by Dean Lawlor, 'A fresh authority on the Synod of Kells', *PRIA* 36 (1921) 16-22; see Gwynn, *The Irish church*, 223, 246-249. The list is full of errors as regards the spelling of placenames. Two of the suffragan bishops of the archbishop of Tuam are listed as 'episcopum de aicbal' and 'episcopum de conairi'. Aicbal appears as a corrupted form of Achad, here standing for Achonry. Ware assumed that the second, Conairi stood for Cluanensis. The assumption was dismissed by Lawlor as a bold impossibility. Since Achad Conairi (Conaire) is the Irish spelling for Achonry, it seems that the scribe (or someone else) made two bishoprics out of one. Gwynn suggested that through the fact that the bishopric of Achonry filled two lines in the manuscript there was simply no space left for Clonmacnois, which is therefore missing in the list.

the western half of Mide, apparently reaching as far as Castlekieran, in county Meath near Kells, was given to the bishop of Clonmacnois.<sup>98</sup>

Likewise the evidence for the bishops of the supposed see of Clonmacnois is ambiguous. Bishop Ua hEchtigern died in 1104.<sup>99</sup> He was bishop of Clonmacnois as well as *airchinnech* of Ardagh, but certainly not a diocesan bishop in the eyes of the reformers.<sup>100</sup> As the first bishop mentioned in the annals in connection with Clonmacnois after the synod of Ráth Bresail there is Domnall Ua Dubthaigh, who died in the year 1136.<sup>101</sup> In the Annals of Tigernach he is called *in t-espoc .i. comurba Ciarain*, the bishop, a *comarba* of Ciarán. As we have seen earlier, in his family a tradition as bishops of Connacht, combined with the headship of Roscommon, was cherished. Domnall died in Clonfert and it seems that in his authority as bishop of Connacht he had a share in the government of Clonmacnois, which was after all one of the most prominent churches under Toirdelbach Ua Conchobair's patronage. Domnall was clearly not bishop of the diocese of Clonmacnois. The first man who held that position appears rather late in the century. It is Muirchertach Ua Máeluidir mentioned amongst those present at the synod of Kells in 1152. He died in 1187 as bishop of Clonfert and Clonmacnois.<sup>102</sup> Obviously there is a huge gap between the death of bishop Ua Echtigern in 1104, and the time of activity of Ua Máeluidir, as the first diocesan bishop of Clonmacnois. Nevertheless the *Chronicum Scotorum* makes explicit mention of the bishop of Clonmacnois as early as the year 1111, when the creation of the diocese of Clonmacnois was decided at the synod of Uisnech.<sup>103</sup> Since we know of no bishop of Clonmacnois during the reign of Gilla Chríst Ua Máeleoin (1109 - 1127), one might conclude that the abbot himself had or at least claimed episcopal authority over the territory outlined as the diocese of Clonmacnois in Uisnech. In this context the concept of the diocese, namely as the territory in Mide under the authority of the head of Clonmacnois might have been understood as a slightly transformed version of the traditional *paruchia* of S. Ciarán in Mide.

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<sup>98</sup> Mac Erlean, *Archivium Hibernicum* 3 (1914) 26.

<sup>99</sup> *AT* (1104); *CS* 1000; *AFM* 1104.

<sup>100</sup> There is also Muiredach Ua Máeldúin styled 'bushop of Clonvickenos' by Mageoghagan. However the Four Masters give him the probably more correct title *secnab*, which was the hereditary office held by his family; see *AClon* 1105, p. 189; *AFM* 1106.

<sup>101</sup> *AT* (1136); *AFM*; *AClon* 1136, p. 194.

<sup>102</sup> *AFM* 1187; G. Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, vol 3, 314-316. Gwynn doubts the statement of the Four Masters that Muirchertach was bishop of Clonfert as well, see Gwynn, *The Irish church*, 249-250.

<sup>103</sup> *CS* 1107 (recte 1111).

The diocese of Clonmacnois in its 'modern' sense and in the shape it existed down to the sixteenth century, when it was united with the diocese of Meath, was first established in the latter half of the twelfth century, even after the synod of Kells. Possibly 1174, the year in which the diocese of Western Mide was annexed to the city of Clonmacnois demarcates the date in which it was established. From now on episcopal succession at Clonmacnois can be traced in the sources.<sup>104</sup> An episcopal residence in Clonmacnois is first attested in the annals around that time.<sup>105</sup>

### Why had the reform so little effect on Clonmacnois?

The importance of Clonmacnois as an ecclesiastical centre in Ireland prior to the twelfth century is entirely at variance with the insignificant role it played in the course of the church reform, of which its being omitted as a bishopric in the synod at Ráth Bresail is indicative. Why did Clonmacnois remain at the periphery of the new developments, and why was it originally ignored by the diocesan reorganization of the Irish church? It has been suggested that the ecclesiastical division of Mide between Duleek and Clonard resulted from the fact that both houses enjoyed the patronage of Murchad Ua Máelsechlainn, whereas Clonmacnois as a larger church was politically more independent.<sup>106</sup> Aubrey Gwynn seems to suggest that Clonmacnois, as the bastion of the 'stout defenders of the Old Irish tradition', was in opposition to the modern diocesan arrangements and therefore excluded as a bishopric at Ráth Bresail.<sup>107</sup>

The lack of adequate secular patronage as well as a certain element of conservatism seem indeed two decisive factors concerning Clonmacnois' position in the Irish church during the reform in the twelfth century. The most powerful secular forces in support of the Irish reform movement in the twelfth century were the Uí Briain and the Meic Carthaig kings in Munster, the Meic Lochlainn kings of Cenél nEógain, together with Diarmait Mac Murchada of Leinster and Murchad Ua Máelsechlainn of Mide. The ecclesiastical leaders were the Columban community under Ua Brolcháin, the reformers from Armagh, the Cistercians and the Arrouaisian order. None of these, neither the secular nor the ecclesiastical patrons of the reform, were amongst the allies of Clonmacnois. In the foundation of bishoprics, rural deaneries and parishes in Ireland in the twelfth century the boundaries of pre-Norman kingdoms and lordships were in many

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<sup>104</sup> *AFM* 1187; *AU* 1214; *AU* 1220; *AClon* 1236, p. 235; *AFM* 1253; compare W. H. Grattan Flood, 'The episcopal succession in Clonmacnois', *IER*, 4th series 32 (1912) 76-82.

<sup>105</sup> The house of the bishop of Clonmacnois is mentioned by the Four Masters, as having been spared by Hugh de Lacy when he plundered the monastery, *AFM* 1178.

<sup>106</sup> K. Simms, 'The origins of the diocese of Clogher', *Clogher Record* 10 (1980) 180-198; see *AFM* 1123 and 1131.

<sup>107</sup> Gwynn, *The Irish church*, 188-189.

cases maintained.<sup>108</sup> Clonmacnois, lacking adequate secular patronage, was bound to be left over, since, at the time it could not claim ecclesiastical authority over the territory of one particular king or lord, but over parts of various medieval Irish kingdoms, such as Uí Maine and Bréifne in Connacht, and Tethba and Delbna in Mide.

A comparison with Derry as another traditional Irish church might be helpful.<sup>109</sup> There reform ideas were first promoted by its secular patron, Domnall Mac Lochlainn (1083-1121). Rivalries with Muirchertach Ua Briain, paragon of the reformers in Munster, seems to have inspired reform efforts on the part of the Cenél nEógain king. He chose Derry as his ecclesiastical power base near Cenél Conaill, and it has been suggested that Derry's aspirations to the headship of the Cenél Conaill diocese at the synod of Ráth Bresail, was part of Mac Lochlainn's strategy to dominate that territory.<sup>110</sup> Links between Derry and Armagh, the leading ecclesiastical reform force, were intensified after the death of the reform abbot Cellach in 1129. Malachy succeeded, but resigned in 1137 and nominated Gilla Mac Liag, previously abbot of Derry, to the headship of the church of Armagh. In 1150, when the abbacy of Derry fell vacant, the association between the two churches was further enforced, when Flaithbertach Ua Brolcháin, who came from an ecclesiastical family in Armagh, possibly the son of a former bishop of Armagh, became head of the Columban *familia* in Derry.<sup>111</sup> These close personal links with Armagh together with the political fortunes of the Cenél nEógain in the twelfth century were decisive. The ascendancy of the Meic Lochlainn kings since the end of the eleventh century, their double role as promoters of the reform as well as political supporters of Derry was an essential pre-condition for the development of Derry throughout the church reform. Derry's neat assimilation into the Irish reform movement culminated in the creation of a singular position for Ua Brolcháin, the abbot of Derry, who as head of all the Columban churches in Ireland was given the same status as a diocesan bishop at the synod of Brí maic Taidg in 1158.<sup>112</sup> Eventually, in the late twelfth century, the monastic settlement became the episcopal seat of the diocese of Cenél nEógain.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> See for example the diocese of Kildare encompassing the territory of Uí Fáeláin and Uí Failge, Marie Therese Flanagan, 'Henry II and the kingdom of Uí Fáeláin', in John Bradley (ed), *Settlement and society in medieval Ireland. Studies presented to F. X. Martin* (Kilkenny 1988) 229-239, here 234-235; or the bishopric of Cenél nEógain, K. Simms, *Clogher Record* 10 (1980) 180-198.

<sup>109</sup> Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 109-123. Compare also Killaloe, for example, which was turned into a bishopric under the patronage of the Dál Cais, see D. Ó Corráin, 'Dál Cais - church and dynasty', *Ériu* 24 (1973) 52-63.

<sup>110</sup> Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 110; Simms, *Clogher Record* 10 (1980) 187-188.

<sup>111</sup> Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 115.

<sup>112</sup> *AU* 1158; Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 116.

<sup>113</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 68.

Clonmacnois in comparison was, to put it bluntly, situated in the wrong place. Central secular power in Mide had been gradually declining since the mid eleventh century. The role of the Uí Mháelsechlainn kings as the traditional patrons of Clonmacnois became ambiguous in the light of the ever growing Uí Chonchobair influence. Obviously Murchad Ua Máelsechlainn actively promoted reform in his kingdom. This, however, resulted in support of the reform order in Clonard, rather than Clonmacnois. In fact his patronage over the churches of Clonard was at the expense of Clonmacnois. In 1144 he granted the nuns' church in Clonmacnois to the house of Arrouaisian canonesses in Clonard, where his daughter Agnes was abbess.<sup>114</sup>

On the other side of the river, in Connacht, political power was centralized in the hands of Toirdelbach Ua Conchobair. Even though he was known as a pious supporter of the churches, even of the new monastic orders and in particular the Augustinians, the west of Ireland lagged behind in the developments taking place in the Irish church. Still in 1179 church assemblies were held to take action against married clergy, where seven bishops were deposed because they were laymen.<sup>115</sup> Due to Ua Conchobair patronage and influence Clonmacnois was assimilated into the Connacht church system. This role was difficult to combine with its aspirations to the position as a bishopric for Mide. The first diocesan bishop of Clonmacnois, Muirchertach Ua Máeluidir, was a Mide man.<sup>116</sup> Possibly the attempt to erect a bishopric in Clonmacnois was primarily the work of what we might call the Mide faction in the settlement. At the synod of Uisnech they had the support of the Ua Máelsechlainn king of Mide as well as that of the newly installed Ua Máeleoin abbot, whose election in 1109 was originally a success of the reform party. It was decided to make Clonmacnois the seat of the bishop of the West of Mide, but the decision had little effect, since the abbot interpreted the new diocesan arrangements according to the traditional concept of the *paruchia*. It is possible that he himself was claiming episcopal authority over the alleged diocese of Clonmacnois. Moreover, his family, with the support of their royal patron from Connacht, turned the abbacy of Clonmacnois into a family property, sought assimilation into the Connacht church system, and eventually left the problems of bishops and dioceses to the reformers. Since secular support on the Mide side of the Shannon was weak, the bishopric as well as the bishop of Clonmacnois was little more than a formality. Power was in the hands of the Ua Máeleoin abbots. Only towards the end of the twelfth century were the two functions successfully combined. The Ua Máeleoin family adapted to the changes in the national ecclesiastical landscape and became bishops of Clonmacnois. One Cathal died as the first

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<sup>114</sup> See above, 126.

<sup>115</sup> This was the synod of Clonfert, *AClon* 1170, p. 213-214. (*recte* 1179).

<sup>116</sup> The Uí Máeluidir were lords of a subkingdom in Mide and supplied royal officials in the eleventh century. See *AU* 1021; *CS* 1019.



Ua Máeleoin bishop in Clonmacnois in the year 1208. He was 'arch Bushop with the O'Neales and Connaught men', according to Mageoghagan, a title which probably should be read as 'high bishop of the Southern Uí Néill and of Connacht'. Cathal could claim to be bishop of the Southern Uí Néill since the diocese of Clonmacnois was a Mide bishopric. His aspirations to episcopal authority in Connacht resulted from the family's tradition as abbots of a Connacht monastery. The former lands of Clonmacnois in Connacht, probably considered to be family property, were claimed as a part of the diocese of Clonmacnois, so that they would not be lost to the Ua Máeleoin family. Still the title with its claim to archiepiscopal honours is rather pretentious. It might express the wishful thinking of an ecclesiastical dynasty who had failed to join in with the reformers, whereas the latter eventually turned out to be those in power in the Irish church.

### 4.3. The Anglo-Norman invasion

#### 4.3.1. The immediate effects of the Anglo-Norman invasion.

The final formation of the diocese of Clonmacnois seems to have happened only in end of the twelfth century. In the year 1169 the first Anglo-Normans arrived in Ireland. One of the formal reasons given by Henry II's in coming to Ireland was his concern for the Irish church, which to his mind was still in need of reform. It seems indeed that the Anglo-Norman invasion gave a new impulse to the Irish reform movement, in particular in the western parts of the country. In the year 1179 a synod was held in Clonfert, opposing layman in offices in the church of Connacht, and reinforcing episcopal authority instead. The decree may also be interpreted as having decided on the reformation of the Connacht cathedral chapters, since until then canonries and prebends were apparently often detained by married churchmen.<sup>117</sup> It seems highly plausible that Clonmacnois, as one of the Connacht churches, was one of the main targets of the reformers, who had gained new strength. Two years after the synod of Clonfert the Ua Máeleoin family, if only temporarily, was deposed as hereditary abbots of Clonmacnois. The bishop on the other hand seems to have gained additional authority. Another two years later, in 1174, lands in Westmeath were attached to the bishopric of

<sup>117</sup> *AClon* 1170, p. 213-214; <sup>recte 1179</sup> "it was laid down by them by a Constitution that noe layman should have the rule of any Church or Church matters from thence forth, that noe portion Canons should be sought of women there husbands liveing, that Holy Orders should not be given to bushopp nor Priests sonnys, and for example of these their Constitutions, they tooke the livings of seven bushoppys that had Bushopricks and were laymen."

Clonmacnois.<sup>118</sup> It therefore seems a reasonable assumption that Anglo-Norman pressure eventually settled matters concerning the final formation of the diocese of Clonmacnois. This suggestion is supported by the fact that the episcopal residence was spared by the Anglo-Normans when they raided the settlement of Clonmacnois in 1178.<sup>119</sup> When in the early thirteenth century an Anglo-Norman castle was built, the rights of the bishop of Clonmacnois at the time were apparently respected.<sup>120</sup>

Clonmacnois, as an ecclesiastical settlement, with monastic features apparently continued to exist even after the dramatic changes which took place in the twelfth century. This is best documented through the fact that chronicle-keeping in Clonmacnois apparently continued down to the thirteenth century. The Annals of Tigernach reflect on the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland in a laconic entry under the year 1169, stating that 'a large body of knights came oversea to Mac Murchada'. News of the military campaigns by the foreigners in the following years rapidly reached Clonmacnois and was carefully recorded in the Annals of Tigernach. Plundered territories, especially the churches and monasteries therein, are frequently mentioned.<sup>121</sup> Clonmacnois, however, lay outside the areas afflicted through Anglo-Norman warfare. Eventually in the year 1178 'The Foreigners of Dublin, including Hugo went on a raid against the Fir chell, and Hugo de Lacy came with a great and strong battalion to plunder Clonmacnois'. According to the annalist the foreigners soon took to flight out of fear of the men of Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair.<sup>122</sup>

In the very year of the first Anglo-Norman attack on Clonmacnois the Annals of Tigernach break off in the middle of an entry. The *Chronicum Scotorum* had finished long before, with the year 1150.<sup>123</sup> Mageoghagan in his translation of the Annals of Clonmacnois has a brief lacuna beginning with the year 1173.<sup>124</sup> It might seem as if chronicle keeping came to an end in Clonmacnois at the latest in the year 1178. However, the Annals of the Four Masters for the time between 1172 and 1200 supply

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<sup>118</sup> *AT*.

<sup>119</sup> *AFM* 1178.

<sup>120</sup> See below, 140.

<sup>121</sup> Ossory and its churches in 1169, Mide with Clonard and Kells in 1170, the monastery of Fore in 1172, Clonard, Durrow and the whole of Mide from Athlone to Drogheda in the year 1175, Glendalough in 1176, Downpatrick in 1177, the churches of the plain of Munster in the year 1177.

<sup>122</sup> *AT* (1178); the raid is also recorded in *ACott* 1178, and *AFM* 1178.

<sup>123</sup> There exists a possible continuation for the years 1141 to 1153, see *CS*, Introduction, xLi.

<sup>124</sup> He states that "King Henry hearing of the good success the said englishmen had in Ireland, the kings majesty in his owen person came over, who made a final end of an entire conquest in Ireland in the year of our Lord God 1173. - Finis- " *AClon*, p. 208.

some additional information on Clonmacnois.<sup>125</sup> They also state that their 'Booke of Cluain', one of the sources they used, was carried to the year 1227.<sup>126</sup> Moreover, Mageoghagan's annals of Clonmacnois do continue after their few years' intermission. A summary of events for the years 1170 to 1190 is given, at the end of which the translator complains about the 'many leaves lost or stolen out of the ould Irish book which I Translate, that I doe not know how to handle it.'<sup>127</sup> His source was obviously in a poor state by the time he made the translation and it seems the lack of entries after the year 1172 results out of his defective copy rather than the end of the chronicle he used. Mageoghagan takes up continuous chronological recording with the year 1200.<sup>128</sup>

The writer of the copy he translated shows familiarity with the localities around Clonmacnois. He mentions placenames such as 'snamh da en', a place a little north from Clonmacnois, up the Shannon,<sup>129</sup> or 'Liseanabbey', the abbot's fort, as the exact location of a fire in Clonmacnois.<sup>130</sup> The whole town of Clonmacnois, except the churches and the bishop's house, are said to have been plundered in 1178.<sup>131</sup> Twice a precise number of buildings burnt down is given: 105 houses in 1179 and 45 houses in 1206.<sup>132</sup> The writer also gives very precise dating for events happening in Clonmacnois. An attack in the year 1203 is said to have happened on the 'feast day of St. Gregory', and the raiders are said to have come back the 'next Friday'.<sup>133</sup> The death of bishop Cathal Ua Máeleoin is dated to the precise day, the 8th of the Ides of February, in the year 1206 (recte 1208). Uaireirge Ua Nechtain, head of the community of the Céili Dé, died on the 10th of March in the year 1200, according to the copy the Four Masters used. Several of his descriptions of raids on the monastic settlement are so detailed and vivid that we must take them as eyewitness accounts.<sup>134</sup> Clearly the nature of the surviving annalistic

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<sup>125</sup> *AFM* 1179, *AFM* 1200.

<sup>126</sup> *AFM* I, Introduction, Lxv.

<sup>127</sup> *AClon*, p. 215.

<sup>128</sup> *AClon* 1199 (recte 1200), p. 215.

<sup>129</sup> *AClon* 1201 (recte 1203), p. 218. The place is also mentioned in *AT*(1159). This was also the place where S. Patrick crossed the Shannon to proceed from Mide into Connacht according to Tirechán, where it is mentioned as 'Vadum Duorum Auium'. See Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 138, §19.1; see also the Tripartite Life of Patrick, Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, 92. Compare the treatise about the history of the place and its name in the Dindsenchas, E. Gwynn (ed and transl), *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, Todd Lecture Series (Dublin 1903-1935, reprint in 5 vols, Dublin 1991) vol. IV, 350-367.

<sup>130</sup> *AClon* 1205, p. 221. The abbot's fort is mentioned earlier in *AFM* 918 and *AClon* 1135, p. 194. See below, chapter 7, for the ecclesiastical lands belonging to Clonmacnois.

<sup>131</sup> *AFM*.

<sup>132</sup> *AFM* 1169; *AClon* 1206, p. 221.

<sup>133</sup> *AClon* 1202 (recte 1203), p. 219.

<sup>134</sup> See for example the account of de Burgh's plundering of Clonmacnois in 1203, *AClon*, p. 218-219.

accounts strongly suggests that contemporary history in Clonmacnois was still recorded even after the Anglo-Norman invasion, perhaps down to the year 1227, as the Four Masters state, or at least somewhere around then.<sup>135</sup>

Apart from the *scriptorium* in Clonmacnois, which apparently remained intact, other traditional ecclesiastical institutions need to be looked at. The abbacy of Clonmacnois had been held by members of the Ua Máeleoin family for most of the twelfth century, disregarding the reform efforts and the various decrees opposing lay abbots. Only towards the end of the twelfth century, did the family lose its status as hereditary successors of S. Ciarán, seemingly as one of the consequences of the reform synod held in Clonfert in the year 1170. The synod, mentioned earlier, was in particular designed for the needs of the church in Connacht, where lay authority over churches was still very common. In Clonfert it was decided that 'no layman should have the rule of any Church or Church matters from thence forth'.<sup>136</sup> In 1172, Tigernach Ua Máeleoin, the abbot of Clonmacnois died. The vacant abbacy was now, most likely under the influence of the synod of Clonfert given to Máel Mocht Ua Fidabra. His promotion to the headship over the community of Clonmacnois was also made possible, through the fact that the son of Tigernach, as his expected successor in office, had died the same year as his father.<sup>137</sup> Máel Mochta Ua Fidabra survived his promotion to the abbacy for only one year. In his obituary in the annals of Tigernach he is styled 'ardab Cluana maic Nois', testifying to the high esteem in which the first reformed abbot of Clonmacnois was held.<sup>138</sup> Another member of the family, Máel Chiaráin Ua Fidabra, held the abbacy of Clonmacnois from the year 1173 to 1181. The Uí Fidabra appear as a Mide family and were possibly a branch of the Uí Máelsechlainn, which is given as their alternative surname in the Annals of Ulster and by the Four Masters.<sup>139</sup> They were active in the reform during the twelfth century, and remained successful in the Irish church even after the reform was completed. The most successful member of the family being

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<sup>135</sup> Possibly the end of chronicle keeping was connected with a raid on the settlement in the year 1223, where Clonmacnois and two of its churches were burned and many jewels (and books?) taken away (*ALCé* 1223, p. 266). Dumville and Grabowski concentrate on the early period in their study of the Clonmacnois chronicles. They did however find out that annalistic recording continued in Clonmacnois even after the break off of the *Chronicum* in the year 1150! Dumville & Grabowski, *Chronicles and annals*, 175n. Mac Niocaill comments briefly on the close relation between *AClon*, *CS* and *AT* in the twelfth century. He also points to the possibility to reconstruct the incomplete text of Mageoghagan's annals with the aid of the material transmitted by the Four Masters. Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals*, 28-29. It seems that such completion confirms the suggestion that these two Clonmacnois sources contained entries as far down as the early thirteenth century.

<sup>136</sup> *AClon* 1170, p. 213-214.

<sup>137</sup> *AU* 1172.

<sup>138</sup> *AT* (1173).

<sup>139</sup> *AU* 1173; *AFM* 1173.

Donatus Ua Fidabra, who was abbot of Louth, bishop of Clogher and subsequently archbishop of Armagh from the year 1227 to 1237.<sup>140</sup> However after the death of Máel Chiaráin Ua Fidabra the Uí Mháeleoin reclaimed their traditional position. They retained the abbacy of Clonmacnois down to the second half of the thirteenth century, even though the precise nature of the community they presided over remains unclear. The community of the Céili Dé in Clonmacnois disappears from the records with the beginning of the thirteenth century.<sup>141</sup> The guesthouse of Clonmacnois, as another traditional institution of the settlement, was still in existence around the year 1200.<sup>142</sup> The Ua Máeleoin abbots of the thirteenth century appear therefore as the rulers of an ecclesiastical estate which was drastically reduced in size as well as in its power. There is evidence to suggest that the family survived on the former abbatial lands west of the Shannon, which they turned into family property. In the late thirteenth century the bishop of Clonmacnois claimed these lands for himself, and declared the abbot deposed, which meant simply that he deprived the abbatial family of their hereditary portion of churchland.<sup>143</sup> The deposition of the abbot of Clonmacnois in the year 1268 is the last written piece of evidence testifying to the existence of the settlement in its traditional sense, which after that date, at the latest, ceased to exist.

#### 4.3.2. Clonmacnois' role in the restoration of Ua Conchobair power in Connacht under Cathal Crobderg.

A most striking feature of Mageoghagan's annals, when they restart recording in the year 1200, is an unmistakable Connacht bias. The succession struggles for the kingship of Connacht, after the death of Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair in 1198, are mainly reflected in terms of raids which in the process were inflicted on the settlement of Clonmacnois. The annalist also reveals an undisguised sympathy for Cathal Crobderg, whereas his rival, Cathal Carrach and his allies, appear as S. Ciarán's enemies who repeatedly raided Clonmacnois.<sup>144</sup> Cathal Carrach's death in the year 1202, is interpreted

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<sup>140</sup> B. Smith, *Seanchas Ard Mhacha* 14 (1991) 32-34.

<sup>141</sup> *AFM* 1200.

<sup>142</sup> See *AClon* 1199 (recte 1200), p. 215, where for the last time in the annals a guestmaster of Clonmacnois is mentioned.

<sup>143</sup> Archdall, *Monasticon*, 390. Compare further down, 146-147.

<sup>144</sup> Cathal Carrach together with William de Burgh expelled Cathal Crobderg out of Connacht. Together they took hostages in their territory and raided the guesthouse in Clonmacnois in the year 1200 (*AClon* 1199, recte 1200, p. 216). The following year Clonmacnois served as a meeting place for Cathal Carrach and Meiler fitz Henry, the king's justiciar, and the settlement was plundered on this occasion (*AClon* 1200, recte 1201, p. 216-217). The Four Masters refer to the meeting as a battle between Meiler and Cathal Carrach; but the latter was the king's candidate at that time, so the

as a miracle performed by Ciarán himself.<sup>145</sup> His ally De Burgh is made responsible for the violation of all the churches of Connacht in the year 1203, Clonmacnois being the most severely affected one.<sup>146</sup> We are told that God himself together with all the Connacht saints, including S. Ciarán, caused him to die in consequence of a horrible disease in the following year. The Four Masters thought the illness 'too shameful to be described' whereas Mageoghagan, less prudish here, describes in detail an illness which especially affected the victims 'privie place'.<sup>147</sup>

In contrast to his deceased opponents, Cathal Crobderg is portrayed as the grand king of Connacht, who never seems to have raided or spoiled one single church.<sup>148</sup> Obviously such a flattering portrayal points to cordial friendship between the king and a Clonmacnois-based writer of the history of Connacht. This friendship became most apparent when in the year 1208, after the final consolidation of Cathal's power the body of King Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, the king's predecessor and brother was elevated and enshrined in a stone shrine in Clonmacnois.<sup>149</sup> The elevation of the remains of a former king in medieval times was not only an act of veneration for one's ancestor, but also an expression of the present king's political ambitions. A comparable event was the elevation of the remains of Charlemagne in Aachen under Frederick Barbarossa the 29th of December 1165. The purpose was to demonstrate a political intention, namely to

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Four masters probably slightly mistranslated here (*AFM* 1200). Compare F. X. Martin, 'John, lord of Ireland, 1185-1216', *NHI* II, 131.

<sup>145</sup> *AClon* 1201 (recte 1202), p. 217-218.

<sup>146</sup> *AClon* 1202 (recte 1203), p. 218-219. The passage reads like an eyewitness account: "The Englishmen of Milick and Sile Anmchye accompanied with the 2 families of Moyntyr Kenay, and Moyntyr Milchon came to Clonvicknose upon the feast day of Saint Gregory, preyed and spoyled the church, Sanctuary, and towne of Clonvicknose; the next friday the said company came to Clonvicknose and tooke the like spoyles from thence, and though the first spoyles were much, yett the second were farr greater. Some of Delvin were at the taking of the said spoyles, they took from out of the church the holy vestments, books, chalices, cloth, Linnen, and corn, and all other things they could finger soe that they left the croftes, gardens, and houses of the town wast and voyde, like an empty chaos without any manner of thing but their empty and foot-troden grounds. After doing of which William Burke returned again to Milick, and from thence marched to Limerick and left a good company to guard the castle of Meelick." The men of Delbna apparently fought in de Burgh's army. Compare *ALCé* 1203, p. 228.

<sup>147</sup> *AFM* 1204; *AClon* 1204, p. 220.

<sup>148</sup> When in 1190 on one occasion Clonmacnois served as a gathering place for his army, this incident is nowhere in the sources related to the plundering of the monastery, which certainly would be the most natural thing to do in such a case; compare *AClon* 1200, p. 216; *AFM* 1190; *ALCé* 1190.

<sup>149</sup> *AFM* 1207 (recte 1208). Probably Ruaidrí, who had died in 1198 in the abbey of Cong, but was buried in Clonmacnois (*AFM* 1198). There is, however, also the early twelfth century king of Connacht, Ruaidrí who won the battle of Corann (1118). He as well was said to have died and been buried in Clonmacnois.

restore the power of their imperial predecessor.<sup>150</sup> Similarly the political programme of Cathal Crobderg was to restore the former glory of his dynasty as well as that of his kingdom. Clonmacnois in its function as a burial ground played a central part in this antiquarian revival.

A number of literary works in praise of Uí Chonchobair power in Connacht, composed at the time have come down to us.<sup>151</sup> The Ua Máelchonaire family was prominent amongst the men of learning in support of Cathal's policy. Their best known contribution towards royal propaganda is the prose tract on the inauguration of the kings of Connacht, together with a poem of praise on the same topic.<sup>152</sup> It seems highly plausible that Conaing Buide Ua Máelchonaire on this occasion composed the poem which celebrates Clonmacnois as the cemetery of the heroes from Connacht.<sup>153</sup> The work is basically an enumeration of the kings of Connacht buried in Clonmacnois. Guaire Aidne, of the Uí Fiachrach Aidne as well as his rival Ragallach mac Uatach, of the Uí Briúin, are mentioned.<sup>154</sup> There follows Fergus (d.654), Muiredach Muillethan (d.702), Indrechtach (d.723), Tomaltach (d.774) and Muirgius (d.815) all being of the Uí Briúin Aí, and each king being the son of his predecessor. Other kings of Connacht, such as Cellach (d.705), from who the Sil Ceallaigh claim descent, or Cathal (d.735) the ancestor of the Sil Cathail, find no mention at all. The poem obviously tries to suggest that the kingship of Connacht was a property of the Uí Briúin Aí, as early as the seventh century. This of course was the Connacht branch from which the Uí Chonchobair dynasty came.

<sup>150</sup> Compare Bruno Gebhardt, *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte*, ed. Herbert Grundmann (Stuttgart 1973) vol 1, 399.

<sup>151</sup> See for example two poems, preserved in the Book of Uí Mhaine, edited by Brian Ó Cuív, 'Tairnic in sel-sa ac Sil Néill', *Ériu* 34 (1985) 157-174.; also Brian Ó Cuív, 'A poem of prophecy on Ua Conchobair kings of Connacht', *Celtica* 19 (1987) 31-54.

<sup>152</sup> Ed. M. Dillon, 'The inauguration of O'Conor', J. A. Watt, J. B. Morrall, F. X. Martin (eds), *Medieval studies presented to Aubrey Gwynn* (Dublin 1961) 186-202. Dillon dates the tract to the year 1310. This date has been corrected by K. Simms, "'Gabh umad a Fheidhlimidh" - a fifteenth-century inauguration ode?', *Ériu* 31 (1980) 132-145. She suggests an archetype of the prose tract may have dated to the early thirteenth century, whereas the poem is addressed to Feidhlim Ó Conchobair Ruad (d.1490).

<sup>153</sup> 'A reigleag laoch leithe cuinn', ed. M. Stokes in Petrie, *Christian inscriptions I*, 79-81; MS preserved in TCD (MS H.1.17); there in another edition by R. I. Best (ed), 'The Graves of the Kings at Clonmacnois', *Ériu* 2 (1905) 161-171, from MS Rawl. B 512 in which four additional stanza are preserved.

<sup>154</sup> CS 642, AFM 645 (recte 649); CS 662, AFM 662 for Guaire's death. Compare J. O'Donovan (ed), *The genealogies, tribes and customs of Hy-Fiachrach* (Dublin 1844) 312-313, for a list of kings of Connacht transcribed by Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhígh in 1664, which mentions Clonmacnois as Guaire's burial place after thirteen years in government. See Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 248-253, for the Uí Briúin.

The composition seems to have been modelled on earlier examples of this species. Thus a very similar poem, attributed to Torna Éices, the mythical fosterfather of Niall of the Nine Hostages, exists which gives an account of the pre-historic Connacht aristocracy who found their rest at Ráth Cruachan, the ancient inauguration site of the kings of Connacht.<sup>155</sup> The poem forms part of the Clonmacnois manuscript, *Lebor na hUidre*, and seems to represent a very popular tradition of adding to the fame of a place by stressing its function as the burial place of Irish celebrities.<sup>156</sup> Similar lists of the graves of pre-historical heroes exist for Tara, as well as for New Grange, alias Brug na Bóinde. The latter of the two for example is praised for having covered 'many a true prince of the race of every king that has possessed thee'.<sup>157</sup> Clonmacnois in this context seems to function as the successor institution of these early pagan ritual sites. Under the patronage of Cathal Crobderg, it assumed a decisive role in the programme of restoration of royal power in Connacht. As such the ecclesiastical settlement in its traditional sense survived the early years of the Anglo-Norman invasion, still outside the immediate sphere of influence of the foreigners.

With the visit of King John to Ireland in 1210 the Anglo-Norman advance into Connacht began.<sup>158</sup> By now the effects of the Anglo-Norman presence were much in evidence in Clonmacnois at the borders between Mide and Connacht. Land in Connacht was granted to Anglo-Norman nobles by the king already in the early years of the thirteenth century.<sup>159</sup> The building of the castle of Athlone was commenced in 1210 and caused a major emergency by falling down the following year.<sup>160</sup> In Clonmacnois a royal castle, a little south of the walls of the settlement, was built in the year 1214.<sup>161</sup> Thus the settlement assumed some importance as a royal stronghold. The castle presumably

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<sup>155</sup> H. d'Arbois de Jubainville (ed), 'Le poème de Torna-Éices sur le cimetière de Croghan', *Revue Celtique* 17 (1896) 280-285.

<sup>156</sup> I wish to thank Dr. K. Simms, who examined the poem, and reported that on linguistic grounds there is no need to date the work much earlier than its earliest MS source *Lebor na hUidre*, c. 1100 A.D.

<sup>157</sup> E. Gwynn (ed), *The Metrical Dindshenchas* I, 14-27 for Tara; II, 10-17, here 11 for New Grange.

<sup>158</sup> For the conquest of Connacht see Helen Walton, *The English in Connacht* (Ph.D Thesis, TCD 1980).

<sup>159</sup> The cantred of Tir Maine, between Athlone and Roscommon, was granted to Geoffrey de Costentin in 1201. Dungleave, land around Galway, was given to Richard Tyrel, *Cal. Doc. Irel. 1171-1251*, 25 no. 153; six cantreds in Connacht adjoining Mide were granted to Hugh de Lacy in 1203, *Cal. Doc. Irel. 1171-1251*, 37 no. 241; Gilbert Mac Costello (alias Nangle) was granted the cantred of Maenmagh, in Connacht in 1207, *Cal. Doc. Irel. 1171-1251*, 46, no. 311; compare Helen Walton, *The English in Connacht*, 34-35.

<sup>160</sup> *ALCé* 1210, 1211. See Goddard H. Orpen, 'Athlone Castle: its early history, with notes on some neighbouring castles', *JRSAI* 37 (1907) 257-276.

<sup>161</sup> *ALCé* 1214.



functioned to guard the bridge over the Shannon near Clonmacnois.<sup>162</sup> Also it had some importance in the fight against Ua Máelsechlainn power in Mide. Cormac Ua Máelsechlainn was eventually killed by the Foreigners in Clonmacnois together with his wife, fosterfather and steward whilst he "lay at a certaine house at Clonvicknose".<sup>163</sup>

The building of the castle in Clonmacnois was carried out with some respect for ecclesiastical property in the area. In a royal letter dating from 1216 the king commands the justiciar to compensate the bishop of Clonmacnois 'for his land occupied in fortifying the castle of Clonmacnois, for his fruit trees cut down, his cows, horses, oxen and household utensils taken away.'<sup>164</sup> It is significant that the abbot of Clonmacnois is not mentioned at all here, whereas episcopal rights and property are listed in detail, and compensated for. We may conclude, that the bishop's position was strengthened in Clonmacnois under Anglo-Norman impact, whereas the former leaders of the church, the Ua Máeleoin abbots lost their influence. There is evidence pointing to the fact that by the later half of the thirteenth century the bishop of Clonmacnois in his authority as head of a royal bishopric made infringements of the former abbatial rights, to the end that the abbot lost both his position as well as his possessions, to the bishop of the diocese of Clonmacnois.<sup>165</sup>

#### 4.4. Summary

It seems the ecclesiastical settlement in Clonmacnois survived both the church reform as well as the Anglo-Norman invasion. With the beginning of the church reform the traditional ruling class in Clonmacnois lost its governmental functions. The abbacy of Clonmacnois became the property of the Ua Máeleoin family, who came to power under the secular patronage of Toirdelbach Ua Conchobair, possibly with the support of a reform party in Clonmacnois itself. Throughout the twelfth century Connacht influence is evident in Clonmacnois at both secular and ecclesiastical levels. Toirdelbach Ua Conchobair as well as his son Ruaidrí were most prominent as secular patrons of the church of S. Ciarán, while the Ua Dubthaigh family had a share in government. In the early thirteenth century Clonmacnois played an important part in the political revival of Ua Conchobair power under Cathal Crobderg, when its traditional function as royal

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<sup>162</sup> For the bridge called Cuirr Cluana see *AT* (1158), *AClon* 1158, p. 204.

<sup>163</sup> *AClon* 1226, p. 231-232; see also *ALCé* 1214 for Cormac, son of Art Ua Máelsechlainn who with his people 'carried off a prey of cows from the castle of Cluain and defeated the Foreigners of the castle.

<sup>164</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel. 1171-1251*, 107, no. 694 (30. May 1216).

<sup>165</sup> See below, 146.

burial ground was revived. Only towards the end of the thirteenth century, with the death of the last abbot, does Clonmacnois, in its shape as a traditional ecclesiastical settlement, disappear from the records.

The formation of the diocese of Clonmacnois was a gradual process which came to completion only towards the end of the century, apparently in consequence of the Anglo-Norman impact on Irish church affairs. It seems that the lack of secular support in Mide caused the delays and the ignoring of the bishopric of Clonmacnois at various reforming synods. In the early thirteenth century the bishopric assumed, if only temporarily, a supportive function for Anglo-Norman control in the area, when a castle was built in Clonmacnois in the year 1210.

## 5. THE HISTORY OF CLONMACNOIS IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

Most of the great Irish churches which had become bishoprics in the twelfth century reform lost their episcopal status in the course of the reorganization of the arrangements under Anglo-Norman impact in the early thirteenth century. Clonard ceased to be the diocesan centre of Meath, when the see was transferred to Trim during the episcopate of Simon Rocheford. Likewise Kells, which held diocesan status for some time after 1152, became one of the two archdeaconries in the diocese of Meath. The see of Glendalough was united with Dublin in 1216. Inis Cathaig, or Scatterry Island lost its episcopal authority to the bishops of Killaloe already in the late twelfth century. Lismore, however, survived the often violent infringements from Waterford in the first decades of the thirteenth century as an independent bishopric, down to the year 1363, when the two dioceses were eventually united.<sup>1</sup> The history of the reluctant origin and rise of the bishopric of Clonmacnois in the course of the twelfth century has been discussed in the preceding chapter. Here things seem to have happened the other way round. It was suppressed as a bishopric by the reformers, and it was only as a result of the Anglo-Norman impact on Irish church affairs in the latter parts of the twelfth century that it was eventually acknowledged as a bishopric.

### 5.1. The Extent of the diocese of Clonmacnois

Little is known about the diocesan boundaries in the late twelfth century, the only information being the fact that the lands of West Meath, what ever their exact extension might have been, were under the authority of the bishop of Clonmacnois from 1174.<sup>2</sup> They were also the lands of Athlone on the east side of the river Shannon. According to the Four Masters the Franciscan Friary of Athlone, which they claim was founded by

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<sup>1</sup> J. A. Watt, *The church and the two nations*, 60-65, 81-82. For Inis Cathaig see A. Gwynn, *The Irish church*, 239-240.

<sup>2</sup> *AT* (1174); compare John D. Dalton, 'Ancient boundaries of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise dioceses', *Ardagh and Clonmacnois Ant. Soc. Jn.* 1 (1926) 9-70; 2 (1929) 1-73; John Monahan, *Records relating to the diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise* (Dublin 1886); James Joseph McNamee, 'Clonmacnois as a diocese', *Ardagh and Clonmacnois Ant. Soc. Jn.* 10 (1945) 27-36.

Cathal Crobderg in the year 1224, was situated in the diocese of Clonmacnois.<sup>3</sup> The precise number and the names of the churches belonging to the bishopric of Clonmacnois is clear only from the royal taxation list of the churches in Ireland, drawn up in the early fourteenth century. Apart from the parish church of Clonmacnois itself, the document mentions the rectory of 'Loghloch', i.e. Ballyloughloe, comprising the vicarages of Ballyloughloe, Athlone and Kilcleagh. Furthermore there was the priory of 'Galyn', now Gallen, the 'community of nuns de Kelbyguneth', the vicarage of 'Tethsaran', now Tisaran or Ferbane alias Wheery parish, and the vicarage of 'Lieth', now represented by Lemanaghan parish.<sup>4</sup> Ballyloughloe with its three vicarages, forms part of county Westmeath and it seems plausible that this was the territory united to the diocese of Clonmacnois in 1174. Already prior to the formation of the diocese of Clonmacnois the lands in question here had links with the monastic predecessor institution of the bishopric. Ballyloughloe parish itself was the site of the church of Íseal Chiaráin, which, as the seat of the Céili Dé community and later that of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht, was a daughter house of Clonmacnois.<sup>5</sup> Lands in Athlone parish were held by S. Ciarán's successors according to the writer of Mageoghagan's chronicle.<sup>6</sup> Lemanaghan, says the eleventh century commentator of the Clonmacnois chronicle, was in possession of S. Ciarán from the seventh century when it was donated to the saint by the king of the SílnÁedo Sláine.<sup>7</sup> The church of Gallen appears as the ally of Clonmacnois since the early ninth century, when it first attracted the hostility of the king of Munster, the arch-enemy of S. Ciarán at the time.<sup>8</sup> Obviously the area in the immediate neighbourhood of S. Ciarán was bound to be under the jurisdiction of the nearby ecclesiastical overlord. The diocese of Clonmacnois was thus the successor institution of a drastically diminished *paruchia* of S. Ciarán.

The diocese of Clonmacnois existed down to the mid-sixteenth century, when it was united with Meath. 'A Certificate of the State and Revennewes of the Bishopricke of Meath and Clonemackenosh', taken in 1622, was preserved amongst the works of James Ussher, bishop of Meath at the time. There the above mentioned parishes are still

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<sup>3</sup> *AFM* 1224. Gwynn & Hadcock, 243, strongly question the early date of foundation, preferring a year, or two before the consecration of the friary's church in 1241 (*AFM*). The fact that the friary was situated in the diocese of Clonmacnois would however not be affected by the alternative dating.

<sup>4</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* V, 216. The parish church of Ballyloughloe was divided into the three vicarages in 1451, *Cal. Pap. Let.* X, 541-542 (15. Jan. 1451-52).

<sup>5</sup> Liam Fox, *Jn. of the Old Athlone Soc.* 1 (1969) 6-14.

<sup>6</sup> *AClon* 1210, p. 224.

<sup>7</sup> *CS* 646; *AClon* 642, p. 103-104; *AFM* 645.

<sup>8</sup> *CS* 823; see above, 79.

listed as the lands of the former diocese of Clonmacnois.<sup>9</sup> However the 'Certificate' also mentions 'lands in the Countie of Roscommon belonging to the said B<sup>p</sup>rick', also 'two quarters of land lying neere vnto Galloway' and 'Fower quarters of land in the Countie of Mayo called Killshamy'. The writer refers to a then lost church register for details concerning Clonmacnois' lands in Connacht.<sup>10</sup> We are told that all the lands in Roscommon belonging to the bishopric of Clonmacnois were held in fee farm by Anthony Brabazon from 1592. This man died in 1597, and fortunately a *post mortem* inquisition of his possessions, taken by the exchequer at Roscommon in the year 1604 has come down to us. The deceased was seised of

"the ruined Castle of Tuam Srower and of the quarter of the same name upon which the said castle is built, and also of a 1/2 villata of land called the half Towne of Clonburrin, and of 1 quarter called Coylagh, and of 1 other quarter called Kylbeglagh, and of 1 quarter called Ardneglogg, and of 2 quarters called Kylcashel and Kyly, and of a quarter called Tullagh and Skehernagh, and a 1/2 quarter called Tyrnedarrowe and of 1 cartron called Dyrry McChy. He held the aforesaid 9 quarters with 3 cartrons ... and the moiety of all the tithes from the Lord Bishop of M[eath] and Clonmacnois in fee farm by an annual rent."<sup>11</sup>

Here we have the details about the bishop's possession in Connacht. All of the lands mentioned can be identified through a comparison with the documentation of the lands in Connacht according to the report of the Survey commissioners from around 1641.

'Tuam Srower' is Tuaimsruithra, otherwise known as Ashford townland in Creagh parish, county Roscommon. In 1641 it was still held by the Brabazon family.<sup>12</sup> 'Clonburrin' i.e. Clonburren was situated on the west side of the Shannon right opposite Clonmacnois, and also included three islands on the river. It belonged to Moore parish, bordering Creagh to the North East. In the early fourteenth century 'Clouyn in Bernan', possibly standing for Clonburren was part of the diocese of Elphin.<sup>13</sup> In the seventeenth century, according to the Survey report from 1641, the lands of Clonburren were in joined possession of the bishop of Clonfert and Clonmacnois. One quarter of Clonburren was held by the bishop of Clonfert, the other by the bishop of Meath, 'having no certaine Mear betwixt them.'<sup>14</sup> In 1407, prior to the union of the diocese of Clonmacnois with that of Meath, the bishop of Clonmacnois is said to have held half of the lands in

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<sup>9</sup> C. Elrington (ed), *The whole works of the Most Rev. James Ussher* (1864), vol 1, Appendix V, Liii - Cxxv, here cxxii-cxxiv.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, Lviii - Lix.

<sup>11</sup> Edited in an Appendix by Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe* (Dublin 1960) 304.

<sup>12</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 60.

<sup>13</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* V, 223.

<sup>14</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 64.

Clonburren.<sup>15</sup> 'Coylagh' seems to be Culliagh townland, also in Moore parish. 'Kylbeglagh' is Kilbegley, also in Moore parish and also in possession of the bishop of Meath in 1641.<sup>16</sup> 'Ardneglogg' alias Ardnaglog was part of Creagh parish, again in possession of the bishop of Meath in 1641.<sup>17</sup> 'Kylcashel' appears to be Kilcashell in Moore parish.<sup>18</sup> 'Kyly' could be the anglicised version of Cuillen, in the north-eastern parts of Creagh parish, also known as Culleenmulronee, which in 1641 was in possession of the dean of Clonmacnois.<sup>19</sup> 'Tullagh and Skehernagh' seems to be Tullaghanmore and Skeagh in Moore parish.<sup>20</sup> 'Tyrnedarrowe' is Tirnedarne.<sup>21</sup> and finally 'Dyrry McChy' appears as Derrymackie.<sup>22</sup> Again these lands were all situated in Moore parish.

The greater proportion of the lands in Roscommon, claimed as belonging to the bishopric of Clonmacnois, were situated in the parishes of Moore and in the northern parts of Creagh. These parishes covered land west of the Shannon, opposite Clonmacnois, expanding southwards. The parish of Moore appears as the rectory of Moycarn or Moycarnan in late medieval papal documents. Together with the vicarages of Clonburren and Drumalgach it formed an enclave of the diocese of Tuam, within the borders between the dioceses of Clonfert and Elphin.<sup>23</sup>

It is somehow surprising to find the bishop of Clonmacnois holding land in the diocese of Tuam. However, it is even more surprising to find lands adjacent to the river Shannon, far removed from Tuam, and totally isolated from the actual diocese, belonging to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the bishop of Tuam. Reasons for such peculiar diocesan boundaries must be sought in the history of their development.

According to a royal letter dating from the year 1255, the bishop of Clonmacnois was in dispute with the archbishop of Tuam over certain lands in Connacht.<sup>24</sup> The bishop of Clonmacnois at the time was the Franciscan Friar Tomás Ua Cuinn (1251-1279), notorious for his claims to authority in Connacht, beyond the boundaries of his

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<sup>15</sup> Namely the part of it called Raghra, according to the rental list of the bishop of Clonfert, dating from 1407, see Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1979) 130-157, here 139.

<sup>16</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 62.

<sup>17</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 60; Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 14.

<sup>18</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 62.

<sup>19</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 60.

<sup>20</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 62.

<sup>21</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 63.

<sup>22</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 62.

<sup>23</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, *Map of monastic Ireland*; Watt, *The church and the two nations*, 53. See also for the rectory of Moycaranan *Cal. Pap. Let.* VII, 228; X, 410-11; XI, 206-207; for the vicarage of Clonburren *Cal. Pap. Let.* VIII, 564.

<sup>24</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* II, 73, no. 456.

diocese.<sup>25</sup> The lands in question here are nowhere specified, but the case becomes clearer in the context of another quarrel settled during the episcopate of Tomás. According to Archdall the bishop was also fighting with the abbot of Clonmacnois (amongst others) over the possession of former ecclesiastical lands. Archdall gives an enumeration of the lands concerned. He lists

"five carucates and a half, and forty acres of land in Nagylt, Clonbonnyn, Clonfada, Kulletha, Kilbegalla, Arnaglog, and Tesaya; he also sued Phillip Mc YWard for a carucate and a half in Bothkeran; William de Pendergast for a carucate in Coathyn, John Dolfyn for a carucate in Glonmolydun, and Gilbert...for a carucate and a half in Killesobotha; and Donethud O'Donechada for a carucate in Karthyn."<sup>26</sup>

Most of the placenames listed here appear as holdings on the Connacht side of the river Shannon. A number of them sound very familiar indeed. There is 'Clonbonnyn' standing for Clonburren; Clonfada is a townland in Moore parish.<sup>27</sup> Kulletha seems to be Culliagh in Moore parish.<sup>28</sup> Kilbegalla, is Kilbegley, alias Killvegley, also in Moore parish. 'Arnaglog' is the townland Ardneglog in Creagh parish.<sup>29</sup> These holdings are identical with the lands in Connacht belonging to the bishopric of Clonmacnois, according to early seventeenth-century evidence.<sup>30</sup> Apparently, in the thirteenth century, the Clonmacnois lands in Connacht were in possession of the abbot of Clonmacnois, who was then accused by the bishop of unlawfully detaining them.

This problem was a very common one in the churches of Connacht. Former ecclesiastical lands were claimed as private possession by the traditional coarbial families. They were alienated from the bishop's authority, and held back from integration into the diocesan system. Earlier in the century, in the year 1210 a synod, especially concerned with the conflicting interests between abbatial claims to authority and episcopal rights, was held before the archbishop of Tuam. A number of coarbial families were dispossessed and their lands assigned to the respective bishopric.<sup>31</sup> The 'cowarb of St. Queran' was present, and it seems plausible that on this occasion the lands of S. Ciarán west of the Shannon, represented by the rectory of Moycarnan and the vicarages of Clonburren and Drumalgach, were assigned to the bishopric of Tuam. Possibly the Ua Máeleoin family who claimed the lands as their property preferred affiliation to the

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<sup>25</sup> See below, 149-150.

<sup>26</sup> Archdall, *Monasticon*, 390.

<sup>27</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 63.

<sup>28</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 62.

<sup>29</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 60.

<sup>30</sup> See above, 144.

<sup>31</sup> *AClon* 1210, p. 224.

distant bishopric of Tuam, rather than to come under the authority of the nearby bishop of Clonmacnois.

Moycarnan, Clonburren and Drumalgach remained part of the diocese of Tuam throughout the middle ages. However, it seems the bishop of Clonmacnois regained authority as the largest land owner in the area. The Ua Máeleoin family on the other hand, who lost their lands in terms of property rights to the bishop of Clonmacnois, reappear in ecclesiastical offices in the parishes and dominated the rectory of Moycarnan.<sup>32</sup>

The case of Moore parish appears as a very well documented example of the claims to authority by the bishop of Clonmacnois over land outside his diocese. There is evidence that other lands in Connacht were also associated with the bishopric of Clonmacnois. There is for example a vicarage in the diocese of Clonfert, which bears the name 'Killespucmalone'. It seems to date from the early thirteenth century, when the Ua Máeleoin family temporarily held the bishopric of Clonmacnois, and presumably claimed these parts of the former ecclesiastical estate as part of the episcopal lands. The tradition of churchland was preserved when the former cell of the bishop Ua Máeleoin became part of the diocese of Clonfert and was transformed into a prebend of that church.<sup>33</sup> The lands in Galway, referred to in the 'Certificate', might have been identical with the Clonmacnois property situated in Killerean parish, in the former barony of Dunmore, in county Galway. According to the 'Compossicion Booke of Connought' four quarters there were in possession of the Bishop of Clonmacnois in 1585.<sup>34</sup>

It seems those claims to land outside the diocesan boundaries derived from former ecclesiastical rights in the areas concerned. Thus the lands in Moore parish, the best documented case, apparently represented the former abbatial lands within the church of Clonmacnois.

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<sup>32</sup> See below, 160-161.

<sup>33</sup> P. K. Egan (ed), 'The royal visitation of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh 1615', *Galway Arch. Hist. Soc. Jn.* 35 (1976) 68, 69; Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 138.

<sup>34</sup> *Compossicion Booke of Connought 1585*, ed. A. M. Freeman (Dublin 1936) 80-81. The land is specified as 'the third of Walter Bermingham scept consisting of 70 qrs whereof belongeth to the Bishop of Clon mc Dnosy 4 qrs'. The 4 qrs are not mentioned by name. However in the survey report from 1641 we find the townland 'Caronkilleene' in Dunmore parish and barony, which was then in possession of 'Ld Birmingham'. *Books of Survey III*, 294.



## 5.2. The history of the bishopric of Clonmacnois

### 5.2.1. The see of Clonmacnois in the sphere of Anglo-Norman influence during the thirteenth century. The bishopric under royal control.

The Anglo-Norman castle, built in Clonmacnois in the year 1214, was a visible sign of royal control over the settlement, as well as the bishopric of Clonmacnois.<sup>35</sup> However, little is heard about the castle once the initial building phase was over. In 1221 the castle was given into the custody of Geoffrey de Marisco.<sup>36</sup> Three years later, in 1224, it was taken over by Richard Tuite,<sup>37</sup> who in the following year received more land in the neighbourhood.<sup>38</sup> The last mention of the castle in Anglo-Norman administrative documents is in the year 1233, when Richard de Burgh was ordered by the king to deliver the castles of Connacht, amongst them Athlone and Clonmacnois, to the justiciar Maurice fitz Gerald.<sup>39</sup> It seems the castle soon lost its importance as a military stronghold.

In contrast, royal control of the see of Clonmacnois apparently only started around the year 1236, when for the first time the bishop of Clonmacnois was elected with royal consent, and was afterwards invested with the temporalities by the king's justiciar. Both his predecessors were of the Ua Máeleoin family who had supplied abbots of Clonmacnois throughout the twelfth century. Bishop Áed Ua Máeleoin drowned in the year 1220.<sup>40</sup> His namesake and successor in office resigned in the year 1235, and retired to the Cistercian house of Kilbeggan, where he died the following year.<sup>41</sup> It seems that in the earlier thirteenth century the traditional coarbial family of Clonmacnois attempted to continue their tradition as successors of S. Ciarán by assuming episcopal honours. The attempt failed. According to a papal letter, indicating the resignation of Áed to the archbishop of Armagh, the last Ua Máeleoin bishop of Clonmacnois resigned because his church was placed 'in the midst of a perverse nation'.<sup>42</sup> It seems possible that racial conflicts in the church of Clonmacnois were the background to the resignation of the Irish

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<sup>35</sup> Compare above, 139.

<sup>36</sup> *Cal. Pat. Rolls Henry III 1216-25*, 316.

<sup>37</sup> *Cal. Pat. Rolls Henry III 1216-25*, 433.

<sup>38</sup> This was land near Athlone *Cal. Doc. Irel. I*, 191, no. 1261 (21. April 1225).

<sup>39</sup> *Cal. Pat. Rolls Henry III 1232-47*, 9.

<sup>40</sup> *AU*.

<sup>41</sup> *AClon 1236*, p. 235.

<sup>42</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let. I*, 145 (5. Kal May 1235)

bishop. Tomás, the successor of Áed was elected to the bishopric with royal consent.<sup>43</sup> We also know that later in his episcopate he travelled to England, under the protection and at the expense of the king.<sup>44</sup> This perhaps suggests the Anglo-Norman affinities of bishop Tomás, and that the resignation of Áed might have been the consequence of Anglo-Norman interference.

Bishop Tomás must have died in 1253 or sometime before. In that year the Franciscan Tomás Ua Cuinn was appointed to the see of Clonmacnois, whilst in Rome. He held the bishopric until his death in 1278.<sup>45</sup> His appointment to Clonmacnois happened with the consent of the king.<sup>46</sup> The Franciscan Friar before his career as bishop, was Guardian of the Franciscan custody of Drogheda. This was the most English amongst the five Franciscan custodies in Ireland and the appointment of an Irishman to the position is quite remarkable.<sup>47</sup> He was, however, likewise familiar with the Irish parts of the church, and we know of his sermons against superstition, preached to a congregation in Connacht, which are preserved in a Franciscan preacher's book of the time.<sup>48</sup> He was a man of the church active on both sides, in Anglo-Norman domains as well as in the church of the Irish.

His episcopate in Clonmacnois saw a series of latent conflicts with the Irish archbishops of Tuam, mostly concerning episcopal authority about lands in Connacht lands formerly in possession of the church of Clonmacnois.<sup>49</sup> In this context it seems an unusual affair, that the archdeacon of Clonmacnois succeeded in his claims to the see of Elphin. Archdeacon Milo Corr, alias Máel Sechnaill Ua Conchobair, was promoted to episcopal honours and held the bishopric of Elphin from 1260 to 1262, against the will of the archbishop of Tuam, who refused consecration.<sup>50</sup> Instead the archbishop of Armagh, only recently confirmed in his claims to primatial authority over the whole of

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<sup>43</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* I, 344, no. 234 (8. April 1236); *Cal. Doc. Irel.* I, 344, no. 2318 + 2319 (18. April 1236).

<sup>44</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* I, 470, no. 3166 + 3167 (8. July 1252).

<sup>45</sup> *ALCé* 1253, 1278; *AConn* 1253.11, 1278.7; *AFM* 1253, 1278. See Watt, *The church and the two nations*, 180.

<sup>46</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* II, 23, no. 151, (20 Feb. 1252-53).

<sup>47</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* I, 281 (6 Kal Dec. 1252).

<sup>48</sup> John A. Watt, *The church in medieval Ireland* (Dublin 1972) 76-77; A. G. Little (ed), *Liber exemplorum ad usum praedicatorum* (London 1966) 85-86, §142 'De fide'.

<sup>49</sup> See above, 145.

<sup>50</sup> According to the letter of royal assent 'this grace was granted to the elect on the prayer of the Archdeacon of Besancon, brother of G. de Geneville'. *Cal. Pat. Rolls Henry III 1258-66*, 116 (30. Jan. 1260); *Cal. Doc. Irel.* III, 105, no. 647.

the Irish church, confirmed Milo in the year 1260.<sup>51</sup> Both the dispute over lands in Connacht, as well as the claims of a Clonmacnois clergyman to the see of Elphin, point to the fact that Tomás Ua Cuinn as bishop of Clonmacnois claimed ecclesiastical authority beyond his diocesan boundaries, in particular in Connacht. The Clonmacnois clerk in his claims to the see of Elphin was operating not only with the support of the archbishop of Armagh, but also with that of an Anglo-Norman noble, William de Geneville, the brother of the justiciar Geoffrey, who was vicar of Ardnurcher.<sup>52</sup> We also know that together the two were involved in trade with London, which testifies to the peaceful interaction between the Irish and Anglo-Norman aristocracy in the church of Clonmacnois during the episcopate of Tomás.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, the episcopate of bishop Tomás brought about the dispossession of the traditional coarbial family, the Ua Máeleoin. They had settled on former monastic lands, west of the Shannon, which apparently they regarded as their possession. However, the bishop of Clonmacnois claimed jurisdiction over these lands, possibly attempting to integrate them into his diocese. In the course of the conflict he simply declared the abbot deposed.<sup>54</sup> Nothing more is heard of an abbot of Clonmacnois henceforward and we may take the episcopate of Tomás Ua Cuinn as bringing to an end the few remains of the traditional community which outlived the twelfth century.

Tomás died in 1278. The chapter of Clonmacnois elected as his successor Gilbert, up to then dean of Clonmacnois. Again the election was held without getting royal licence beforehand. The failure was explained by the chapter two years later by the fact that the messenger sent to the king had died on his way to England. Royal assent to the election was therefore only given in 1280.<sup>55</sup> Obviously the royal purse profited from these kinds of delays, since during vacancy the king had the custody of the see and received the temporalities.<sup>56</sup> Bishop Gilbert resigned his office in 1288.<sup>57</sup> As is apparent

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<sup>51</sup> *Cal. Pat. Rolls Henry III 1258-66*, 125 (8. Nov. 1260). The 'ius primatie' of archbishop of Armagh was confirmed by the pope in 1255, see Watt, *The church and the two nations*, 113-114.

<sup>52</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* III, 105, no. 647; *Cal. Pat. Rolls Henry III 1258-66*, 116 (30. Jan. 1260); *Cal. Doc. Irel.* III, 105 no. 648; *Cal. Pat. Rolls Henry III 1258-66*, 120 (3. Feb. 1260).

<sup>53</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* II, 105, no. 645 (Hilary 1259-60).

<sup>54</sup> Archdall, *Monasticon*, 390.

<sup>55</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* II, 351, no. 713 (20. July 1280); *Cal. Doc. Irel.* II, 397, no. 1849 (27. July 1281).

<sup>56</sup> 'Account of the escheator, Pipe Roll X. Ed. I.', *Appendix to the 36th report of the deputy keeper* (Dublin 1904) 61, Account of John de Sandford, escheator of the issues of certain bishoprics in the hands of the king and in John's custody. Clonmacnoys bishopric: He accounts for the period from Friday after the feast of St. Martin a.r. VII after the death of Tomás Ocyn or Ocuyn, the late bishop, to the 18. Feb. a.r. X when the temporalities were delivered to Gilbert formerly dean of Clonmacnois, provided to the said church by J. archbishop of Armagh.

<sup>57</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* III, 177, no. 401 (17. June 1288). *Cal. Doc. Irel.* III, 182, no. 414 (12. July 1288).

from a royal letter to the archbishop of Armagh he was blinded by 'some sons of perdition'.<sup>58</sup>

His successor, William Ua Dubthaigh, again a Franciscan, was invested by the king's justiciar two years later in 1290.<sup>59</sup> The temporalities for the time between 1288 and 1290 went again to the king.<sup>60</sup> Bishop William is said to have died of a fall from his horse in the year 1298.<sup>61</sup>

William Ua Finnáin, Cistercian abbot of Kilbeggan, succeeded Ua Dubthaigh in the year 1298.<sup>62</sup> The Annals of Ulster state that he took the bishopric of Clonmacnois in the year 1294, four years prior to the death of his predecessor. This irregularity in the sources might be read as an indication that Ua Dubthaigh's fall from a horse was not merely an accident.<sup>63</sup> In the year 1302 another Franciscan, Domnall Ua Bruyn (O Beirne?) was elected by the chapter of Clonmacnois. This time licence from the king was given beforehand.<sup>64</sup> Domnall was guardian of the Franciscans of Killeigh, in county Offaly. Apparently the archbishop of Armagh was reluctant to consecrate, since a royal order advises him to perform his duty immediately in the year 1303.<sup>65</sup> The see of Clonmacnois was again vacant in 1324. In that year a royal pardon was granted to the chapter of Clonmacnois for electing without the king's licence.<sup>66</sup> This is the last documented sign of royal interference with ecclesiastical affairs in the bishopric of Clonmacnois.

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<sup>58</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* I, 501 (13 Sept. 1289).

<sup>59</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* III, 343, no. 726 (15. July 1290); *Cal. Doc. Irel.* III, 433, no. 735 (18. July 1290).

<sup>60</sup> 'Account of the escheator. Pipe Roll a.r. XVIII, Ed. I', *Appendix to the 37th report of the Deputy keeper* (Dublin 1905) 40.

<sup>61</sup> *ALCé* 1297; *AConn* 1297.5; *AU* 1297. In a nineteenth century description Thomas Cooke, describes a cross found in Banagher, county Offaly, formerly known as Kill-Regnaighe, now Reynagh, in the diocese of Clonmacnois. This cross shows a deer, hunted after by dogs. According to Cooke this was bishop Ua Dubthaigh's cross. See Thomas L. Cooke, 'The ancient Cross of Banagher, King's county', *Transactions of the Kilkenny Arch. Soc.* 2 (1853) 277-280. The cross, now known as the Banagher cross is infact closely related with the Bealin Cross (found in Twyford, Ballyloughloe) and the North Cross in Clonmacnois. One seems to agree that it should be dated to the early period, rather than to the late thirteenth century. See P. Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland*, 2 vols (Bonn 1992); C. Hicks, *JRSAI* 110 (1980) 5-35; N. Edwards, *Medieval archeology of Ireland*, 64.

<sup>62</sup> *ALCé* 1298, 1302; *AConn* 1298.8, 1302.10; *AU* 1294 (recte 1298?); *AClon* 1302, p. 259; *Cal. Doc. Irel.* IV, 204, no. 429 + 430 (5. Aug. 1297); for Kilbeggan see *AClon* 1236, p. 235.

<sup>63</sup> *AU* 1294, p. 393.

<sup>64</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* V, 50, no. 121 (27. Aug. 1302); *Cal. Doc. Irel.* V, 53, no. 130 + 131 (12. Oct. 1302); *Cal. Doc. Irel.* V, 67, no. 171 (14. Jan. 1303).

<sup>65</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* V, 72, no. 193-196 (14. April 1303).

<sup>66</sup> *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edward II 1324-27*, 45-46 (11. Nov. 1324).

At the beginning of the fourteenth century the see of Clonmacnois fell outside the sphere of the Anglo-Irish administration, which is indicative of the decline of Anglo-Irish influence in the area. Up to then administrative formalities, such as the king's licence to elect a new bishop, his assent to the elected candidate and the investiture with the temporalities of the see by the royal justiciar, were generally respected as a necessary requirement for a new episcopal appointment, although the chapter of Clonmacnois persistently failed to fulfil this obligation. As was the case for most of the bishoprics in Ireland under royal control, the king's assent to the election of the bishop of Clonmacnois and his investiture was generally performed by the justiciar or his deputy, in lieu of the king. The see of Clonmacnois during the period figures in the accounts of the excheator, indicating that the temporalities during vacancy went regularly to the king. However, already towards the end of the thirteenth century, in 1289 according to the account of Walter de la Haye, the escheator of Ireland, the royal demesne in Clonmacnois could no longer be taxed 'because they lay uncultivated among the Irish.'<sup>67</sup>

Towards the end of the thirteenth century the number of Franciscans amongst the episcopal candidates increased. The first Friar appointed to the see was Tomás Ua Cuinn (1253-1268), then William Ua Dubthaigh (1290-1297) and Domnall Ua Bruyn (Beirne) (1302-1324). By the end of the thirteenth century the Franciscans were already perceived as a political risk by the Dublin government, and repeatedly accused of racism.<sup>68</sup> Their repeated success in securing appointment to the see of Clonmacnois indicates its gradual alienation from royal authority.

### 5.2.2. The see of Clonmacnois in the course of the Gaelic revival in the fourteenth and fifteenth century.

Due to the meagre documentation of the Gaelic areas in royal administrative documents, and comparatively fragmented communication with the papal curia, little information concerning the small diocese of Clonmacnois is preserved for the fourteenth century. Lugaid Ua Dálaigh died as bishop of Clonmacnois in 1337.<sup>69</sup> One Henry, a Dominican Friar, is named as late bishop of Clonmacnois in a papal letter from the year

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<sup>67</sup> 'Account of the escheator. Pipe Roll a.r. XVIII, Ed. I', *Appendix to the 37th report of the Deputy keeper* 40. Account of Walter de la Haye, escheator of Ireland of bishoprics in the kings land: "Clonm'noys bishopric: He accounts for 25L issues of temporalities in the kings land from the feast of nativity of St. John baptist a.r. XVI to 6 Oct. a.r. XVIII, when the temporalities were delivered to brother William Oduschy, clerk there. Sum: 25 L. No extent could be made of the demesnes because they lay uncultivated among the Irish." Thanks to Dr. Katharine Simms who pointed this reference out to me.

<sup>68</sup> Watt, *The church and the two nations*, 181-183.

<sup>69</sup> *ALCé* 1337; *AConn* 1337.13; *AClon* 1337, p. 235-236; *AFM* 1337.

1349.<sup>70</sup> Simon, a Friar preacher of Roscommon, sought appointment to the see of Clonmacnois from the pope in the year 1349.<sup>71</sup> He got the see, but was later in the same year transferred to Derry, since the death of bishop Henry turned out to have been only a rumour.<sup>72</sup> One Hugh is named as bishop of Clonmacnois in the year 1383, when together with the bishop of Killala he was accused by the papal curia in Avignon of supporting the Roman pope Urban VI.<sup>73</sup>

In the year 1388 the Friar Minor Milo Corr (Máel Sechnaill Ua Conchobair) was appointed to the see of Clonmacnois by Pope Urban IV.<sup>74</sup> Henceforward complaints about the poverty of the see of Clonmacnois become very frequent. The diocese of Clonmacnois was exempt from communal tax in 1391, since it was gravely impoverished.<sup>75</sup> After the death of Milo in the year 1397,<sup>76</sup> Philip Nangle, who had been abbot of the Cistercians in Abbeylara, alias Granard for fourteen years, was elected to the see of Clonmacnois. According to the papal confirmation of his appointment the value of the see at the time was but 20 marks. Philip therefore got papal dispensation to hold certain lands belonging to his former monastery of S. Mary's in Granard as well as a rectory in the diocese of Ardagh, besides his episcopal lands 'to the end that he may not on account of the slender revenues of his see be compelled to beg, to the shame of the pontifical dignity'.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, towards the end of the episcopate of Philip, in the year 1410, the monks of Granard did their best to further reduce the already slender revenues of the see of Clonmacnois. In a petition to the pope they claimed the lands of the diocese of Clonmacnois as their property, in the name of their thirteenth century founder Richard Tuite.<sup>78</sup> Around the same time the Ua Fergail family intruded into the abbacy of Granard. The sitting abbot William was deposed in the year 1411 and Richard Ua Fergail

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<sup>70</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* III, 290 (5. Id May 1349).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* III, 339 (15. Kal Jan. 1349-50).

<sup>73</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* IV, 245 (16. Kal Feb. 1383).

<sup>74</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* IV, 336 (9. Nov. 1389).

<sup>75</sup> *De Annatis Hiberniae. A calendar of the first fruits' fees levied on papal appointments to benefices in Ireland A.D. 1400 to 1535*, ed. M. A. Costello (Dundalk 1909) I, 153 (20. Dec. 1391).

<sup>76</sup> *Misc. Irish Ann.* 1397.7, p. 159. The editor corrected the printed 'Gallchorr', which should be read 'Corr'. *Ibid.*, Corrigenda, 221.

<sup>77</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* V, 154-155 (16. Kal Dec. 1397).

<sup>78</sup> In a petition to the pope dating from the year 1410 they claimed a number of lands including 'the parish churches of Lochlocha, Lyach, Faygri, Galingy, Thechsaran or their rectories with all their chapels and appurtenances...', *Cal. Pap. Let.* VI, 234-235 (1410). See also *Cal. Pap. Let.* IX, 29-31 (17. Kal Sept. 1438) for the papal confirmation of the charter. According to the letter the Cistercians of Abbeylara had the patronage of these churches, which included the right of presentation of the parish clergy, as well as the moiety of the tithes, from the early thirteenth century on.

assumed the headship over the monks. Richard himself was accused of 'notorious fornication' and abuse of the fruits of his office in the year 1422. He temporarily lost his job in Granard only to be promoted to the see of Ardagh instead. As bishop he was again appointed to the abbacy *in commendam* in the year 1435. Until shortly before his death in the year 1444 he was bishop of Ardagh as well as abbot of Granard.<sup>79</sup> During his abbacy, in the year 1438, the lands of the diocese of Clonmacnois were again confirmed by the pope as the possession of the monks of Granard. It seems that the expansionist claims of the Cistercian house went back mainly to the initiative of the political ambitions of the Uí Fhergail, who built up their power in the area from the early fifteenth century on, when they built a castle in Granard.<sup>80</sup> Their antagonists, at least in the ecclesiastical sphere, appear to have been a family variously named 'O Mael', 'O Moyl', 'Omaild' or 'O Mayl', perhaps standing for Ua Máelmuaid, lords of the neighbouring Fera Cell. One 'Philip Ó Mael' was provided with the see of Clonmacnois in 1411 and held it until his death in 1422.<sup>81</sup> 'John Omayl', dispensed as the son of a Cistercian monk and priest, was promoted to a canonry of Clonmacnois in 1414.<sup>82</sup> Later he was admitted as a monk to Granard, and it was he on whose initiative the Ua Fergail abbot was removed from the abbacy in the year 1422. In 1434 John himself was accused of the same abuses which he had brought against his opponent in 1422. This time John lost his position.<sup>83</sup> Also there is 'Gregory Omayl', the son of bishop Philip, who was a clerk of the diocese of Clonmacnois as well as a monk in Granard. The vicarage of Wheery (i.e. Ferbane, alias Tisaran), in the diocese of Clonmacnois, was assigned to him in 1426.<sup>84</sup> His successor to the vicarage was 'Niger Omaild', again a Cistercian monk from Granard.<sup>85</sup> Finally there is 'James Yamyl' who claimed the vicarages of Wheery later in the century.<sup>86</sup> It seems that during the first half of the fifteenth century the political rivalries in the area dominated the fortunes of the bishopric of Clonmacnois. Granard eventually came under the domination of the Ua Fergail family, whereas Clonmacnois bishopric became largely absorbed into the political fortunes of the Meic Cochláin.

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<sup>79</sup> *AConn* 1444.7.

<sup>80</sup> *Misc. Irish Ann.* 1405.5, p. 175.

<sup>81</sup> Ware, *De Praesulibus Hiberniae* (1665) 173. He is mentioned as late bishop of Clonmacnois in a papal letter from 1422, *Cal. Pap. Let.* VII, 243-244 (8. Id Nov. 1422).

<sup>82</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* VI, 456 (12. Kal Jan. 1414).

<sup>83</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* VII, 233-234 (4. Kal Nov. 1422). *Cal. Pap. Let.* VIII, 506 (4. Kal Dec. 1434). See Patrick Kearney, 'The Cistercian Abbey at Abbeylara A.D. 1205-1540,' *Teathbha* 1 (1969-1973) 202-205.

<sup>84</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* VII, 455 (11. Kal June 1426).

<sup>85</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* IX, 403 (14. Kal Nov. 1443).

<sup>86</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XIII, 49 (9. Feb. 1475-76).

For a brief period after the death of 'Philip O'Mael' in 1422 the bishopric of Clonmacnois was held by David Pendergast. Since he was again a Cistercian we might assume he also came from Granard.<sup>87</sup> His successor was Cormac Mac Cochláin, provided with the see of Clonmacnois by the pope in 1426. Dispensed as the son of a priest he had held the deanery of Clonmacnois since the year 1421.<sup>88</sup> Ware styled him a 'Man of Liberality, and a Patron to the learned.'<sup>89</sup> The bishop was killed in battle in the year 1444. With the episcopate of Cormac members of the Mac Cochláin family appear in diocesan offices in Clonmacnois. James, the son of bishop Cormac, was provided with the archdeaconry of Clonmacnois some time after the year 1426.<sup>90</sup> James was succeeded as archdeacon by Troleus 'Mechoclan', another member of the family.<sup>91</sup> Likewise the deanery of Clonmacnois for some time after 1475 was held by a Mac Cochláin, namely 'Eugenius Macholayn'.<sup>92</sup> A grandson of bishop Cormac, also named Cormac, was a member of the cathedral chapter of Clonmacnois towards the end of the century.<sup>93</sup> In 1486 he was in Rome, seeking provision of the see of Clonmacnois as well as that of the priory of St. Mary's Gallen.<sup>94</sup> He died in the year 1498. Finally there was Cahir Mac Cochláin who died as erenagh of Clonmacnois in the year 1539.<sup>95</sup>

It seems that bishop Cormac governed spiritual affairs in his diocese much to the liking of the secular dynasts, who were of course of his own clan. During his episcopate he sanctioned the divorce between Donat, alias Donnchad Mac Cochláin and his wife 'Una Ó Melaghlin', Most likely this was Donnchad, later lord of Delbna Ethra.<sup>96</sup> It appears, however, that after the death of Toirdelbach, lord of Delbna, the bishop himself showed aspirations to secular power, which led him into opposition to his former ally.<sup>97</sup> Donnchad now appeared as the expected successor to the lordship. He had the support of David and Felim, two sons of Toirdelbach. His claims to the overlordship were contested by the bishop and his people. In a decisive battle in the year 1444 bishop

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<sup>87</sup> Ware, *De Praesulibus Hiberniae* (1665) 173, lists him as 'David Brendog'.

<sup>88</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* VII, 440 (8. Id July 1426); *Cal. Pap. Let.* VII, 164 (3. Id March 1421).

<sup>89</sup> Ware, *De Praesulibus Hiberniae* (1665) 173.

<sup>90</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* IX, 430-431 (6. Id. Oct. 1444)

<sup>91</sup> He resigned in 1463, *Cal. Pap. Let.* XI, 480-481 (21. May 1463).

<sup>92</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XIII, 521 (24. Feb. 1475-76).

<sup>93</sup> That he was the grandson of bishop Cormac is apparent from his obit in the annals of Ulster, *AU* 1498 (vol 3, 430).

<sup>94</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XIV, 168 (27. March 1486-87).

<sup>95</sup> *AFM* 1539.

<sup>96</sup> As apparent from the later revision of the case under his successor John Dálaig. See *Registrum Johannis Mey*, ed. W. G. H. Quigley and E. F. D. Roberts (Belfast 1972) 128, 213-214.

<sup>97</sup> *AConn* 1444.4.



ordered by the archbishop to appear at the provincial synod at Drogheda.<sup>105</sup> Since John did not appear and did not even respond to the letters sent to him concerning the case, he was suspended from office and fined.<sup>106</sup> The abbot and monks of Granard won the case and were admitted as true rectors of Ballyloughloe in the year 1460.<sup>107</sup> John remained in office and acted again as bishop in the year 1463. He is again referred to as the late bishop of Clonmacnois, who died outside the Roman curia, in a papal letter written in 1487.<sup>108</sup>

During the episcopate of John Ua Dálaigh several other bishops of Clonmacnois are mentioned in the papal documents. It seems they were not exactly rival bishops but perhaps absentees, who were provided with the see but never took possession of it. There is bishop Thomas, who in 1449 complained in a letter to the pope that the fruits of his episcopal mensa, were so diminished due to wars and other calamities, and had been so neglected (presumably by those supposed to collect it for him) that he could not live from it. The letter states also that there is no place belonging to the episcopal mensa where the bishop could go and stay; this clearly points to the fact that he was an absentee. Tomás prayed the pope to be presented to an additional benefice during his time as bishop of Clonmacnois.<sup>109</sup> A certain Robert is mentioned as 'late bishop of Clonmacnois' in the year 1458.<sup>110</sup> The problems of these absentee bishops are best documented by the case of his successor William, prior of Brinkburn, an Augustinian house in the diocese of Durham in England. Papal provision of the see of Clonmacnois was made to him in July 1458.<sup>111</sup> Two or three months later he sent a letter to the pope stating that he was not able to obtain possession of the see nor to receive any of its fruits, in fact he thinks it very unlikely that he would ever be able to do so. He therefore

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<sup>105</sup> Anthony Lynch (ed), 'A calendar of the reassembled register of John Bole, Archbishop of Armagh, 1457-1471', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 15 (1992) 113-185, here 150 (Oktavian Register no. 27, see also no. 43, 44). See also National Library MS. No. 2691, Canon Leslie Collection: Typescriptcopy of Bishop W. M. Reeves calendar of Primate Octavian, with an index by Rev. J. B. Leslie, c.1935, no. 27; Bishop Reeves' transcript of Primate Octavianus Register TCD MS 557/9, 73-77. To the 'rectory of Ballylagh alias Lura' is added in margin 'de Luetha Mór'.

<sup>106</sup> 'A calendar of the reassembled register of John Bole', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 15 (1992) 153 [Octavian, no. 42].

<sup>107</sup> 'A calendar of the reassembled register of John Bole', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 15 (1992) 153-154 [Octavian, no. 44]. The document is undated and incomplete, beginning is missing. (probably June 1460).

<sup>108</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XI, 480-481 (21. May 1463), when the archdeacon resigned his office to bishop John; *Cal. Pap. Let.* XV, 88, no. 190 (26. March 1487) mentions John as late bishop of Clonmacnois. Ware doubts the identity of the two: 'I do not suppose that he was the same John, with the former John Oldais', Ware, *De Praesulibus Hiberniae* (1665) 173.

<sup>109</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* X, 53 (27. Oct. 1449).

<sup>110</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XI, 359 (21. July 1458).

<sup>111</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XI, 359 (21. July 1458).

asked papal permission to continue to hold his priory, despite his promotion to the see in Ireland.<sup>112</sup> Apparently William never got possession of the see of Clonmacnois, and remained active as a suffragan bishop in Durham until he died in 1484.<sup>113</sup>

A final attempt to restore Mac Cochláin power in Clonmacnois was made after the death of John Ua Dálaigh. In 1486 Cormac Mac Cochláin, a grandson of bishop Cormac reclaimed the bishopric of Clonmacnois. The pope did not provide him with the see but instead with the priorship of Gallen.<sup>114</sup> One Walter Blake received the bishopric of Clonmacnois.<sup>115</sup> He died in the year 1508.<sup>116</sup> The Mac Cochláin family was still present in the diocese. They did not have possession of the see, but nevertheless seem to have dominated church affairs, reviving the position of the early medieval *airchinnech*. Cahir Mac Cochláin died as 'erenagh' of Clonmacnois in the year 1539.<sup>117</sup>

The following sixteenth-century bishops of Clonmacnois are mentioned by Ware: Thomas O'Mullally, Conal O'Higgin, Richard O'Hogan, Florence Kirwan, Peter Wall.<sup>118</sup> However, during this period 'Roderic Ó Malone', the bishop of Ardagh, acted as representative of the bishop of Clonmacnois and we might assume the actual bishops of Clonmacnois were no longer resident in their bishopric.<sup>119</sup> The final destruction of the settlement happened in the course of the reformation, when in the year 1552

"Clonmacnoise was plundered and devastated by the English of Athlone, and the large bells were taken from the bell tower. There was not left, moreover, a bell, small or large, an image, or an altar, or a book, or a gem, or even glass in the window, from the wall of the church out, which was not carried off. Lamentable was this deed, the plundering of the city of Kieran, the holy patron."<sup>120</sup>

In the aftermath of the reformation, after the death of Bishop Peter Wall in 1568, the diocese of Clonmacnois was united to the bishopric of Meath.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XI, 371-372 (7. Oct. 1458).

<sup>113</sup> Flood, *IER*, 32 (July 1912) 81.

<sup>114</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XIV, 168 (27. March 1486-87).

<sup>115</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XV, 88, no. 190 (26. March 1486-87).

<sup>116</sup> Walter died in the year 1508, *AConn* 1508.5; *AFM* 1508. James Hardiman (ed), *A chorographical description of West or H-Iar Connaught written A.D. 1684 by Roderic O'Flaherty* (Dublin 1846) 224-225, *ibid* 213, for the pedigree of the Blake family, William was the brother of Geoffrey Blake.

<sup>117</sup> *AFM* 1539.

<sup>118</sup> Ware, *De Praesulibus Hiberniae* (1665) 174.

<sup>119</sup> *AFM* 1540.

<sup>120</sup> *AFM* 1552.

<sup>121</sup> Ware, *De Praesulibus Hiberniae* (1665) 174. In the seventeenth century the arrangements were again changed and Clonmacnois diocese was annexed to the bishopric of Ardagh, as it is still today; compare Patrick F. Moran, 'The see of Clonmacnois in the 16th century', *IER* 1 (1865) 153-159.

This brief historical account of the history of Clonmacnois diocese shows that, in the first place the bishopric became the successor institution of S. Ciarán's church in so far as its diocesan boundaries included a significant part of the former church lands. Parts of the early pre-reform ecclesiastical estate, which were not assigned to the bishopric, were at least temporarily, in the thirteenth century, claimed as part of the diocese by the bishop. These were lands on the west side of the river Shannon. Possibly their annexation to the diocese of Tuam, as an isolated enclave, in between Elphin and Clonfert dioceses, resulted from the fact that the Ua Máeleoin family, as the hereditary abbots of Clonmacnois, claimed the lands in question as their private property by right of succession to S. Ciarán, and tried to withhold them from episcopal authority.

The fortunes of the bishopric of Clonmacnois in the later middle ages were determined by the respective political constellations at the time. Thus, in the course of the expansionist policy of the Uí Fhergail in Angaile (co. Longford) for example, land in the diocese of Clonmacnois was claimed as the property of the Cistercians in Granard, which of course had assumed the status of being the Uí Fhergail home monastery. Later on the Meic Chochláin dominated the see, down to the first half of the sixteenth century. Throughout this period several bishops of Clonmacnois, who were appointed but seemingly never took possession of the see, appear in the papal letters. In one case we know for certain that the supposed bishop of Clonmacnois was an English prior from Durham. It seems these bishops were absentees, who received the bishopric of Clonmacnois as an additional ecclesiastical benefice in Ireland.

### **5.3. The history of the former ecclesiastical aristocracy in the later middle ages.**

The gradual dissolution of Clonmacnois as a traditional ecclesiastical estate, from the end of the twelfth century onwards, must have caused grave changes in the population structure in the area. In modern terms we would talk of a surplus of labour set free by increasing unemployment, caused through the breakdown of a major employer in an area. What did those, who had traditionally ruled the settlement, or the people who lived in its surroundings as farm labourers do? Obviously there is very little we can know about the latter category, since those people tend not to appear in contemporary records. However, a number of the ecclesiastical dynasties which were active in higher governmental positions can be traced beyond the dissolution of S. Ciarán's church, down to the later middle ages. In general it seems that some of them remained active in ecclesiastical offices in the area around Clonmacnois, in some cases these were churches which used to be part of S. Ciarán's *paruchia* in the old days. Other

families can be traced as priests or priors in churches formerly associated with the settlement of Ciarán by bonds of fraternity. Again others seem to have moved away from the Clonmacnois area altogether but held on to a tradition as hereditary church officials.

We already mentioned the fortunes of the Ua Máeleoin family, who as hereditary abbots lost their job in Clonmacnois with its decline in the course of the thirteenth century. They withdrew to church lands west of the Shannon, which they held in the capacity of abbot of Clonmacnois down to the end of the thirteenth century, when their estate was claimed by the bishop of Clonmacnois. Nevertheless they remained active in the churches of the area. The best documented period for ecclesiastical affairs in Gaelic areas is the fifteenth century, when a vivid correspondence between the papal curia and the parish churches was maintained, and a high proportion of conflicts and rival claims to ecclesiastical offices were brought before the pope. During that period the Ua Máeleoin family appears in various ecclesiastical positions in the diocese of Clonmacnois and its near surroundings. There were several canons of Clonmacnois supplied by the family.<sup>122</sup> In the latter half of the fifteenth century the family was in possession of the vicarage of Killeagh in Clonmacnois diocese.<sup>123</sup> The alternative names of Killeagh parish 'Killeomilenyn', alias 'Kyllomyleon' seem to derive from an original 'Cell Ua Máeleoin' the church of Ua Máeleoin.<sup>124</sup> Their memory is also preserved in the name of a townland in the parish called 'Boggaghmalone'.<sup>125</sup> The family held major parts of the land in the parish in the later middle ages. Still at the time of the surveys in the early seventeenth century 'Edmond and Richard Malone', and 'Katherine Malone alias Pettit', appear as the largest land owners in Killeagh parish.<sup>126</sup> One 'Gilatius Ó Malone' was vicar of Kilkerrin and rector of Corco Moga, in the diocese of Tuam during the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>127</sup> Most enduring was Uí Mháeleoin domination in the rectory of Moycarnan, which represented parts the former abbatial lands of Clonmacnois. One 'Marianus Ó Malone' was rector of Moycarnan in the early years of the fifteenth century. His successor in 1422 was John Ua Máeleoin, the son of a priest and himself priest of the diocese of Tuam.<sup>128</sup> John, the rector, was famous enough to deserve an obituary in the

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<sup>122</sup> Marianus: *Cal. Pap. Let.* V, 180; Eugenius: *Cal. Pap. Let.* X, 542; XII, 40; XIII, 49; Christinus: *Cal. Pap. Let.* XIV, 146, 236-237; XV, no. 687; XVI, no. 733.

<sup>123</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* X, 541-552 (15. Jan. 1451-52); XIII, 66; XIV, 146-147 (13. March 1486-87).

<sup>124</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* X, 541-542 (15. Jan. 1451-52). James Joseph McNamee, 'Identification of certain placenames', *Ardagh and Clonmacnois Ant. Soc. Jn.* 2, no. 8 (1942) 3-27, here 15-16.

<sup>125</sup> *One-Inch Ordnance Survey Map of Ireland* (Phoenix Maps, Dublin) sheet 108.

<sup>126</sup> *Book of Survey, co. Westmeath*, 121-125.

<sup>127</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* VI, 427 (5 Kal Jan. 1413). He died in 1449 at Viterbo on his way to Rome. *Cal. Pap. Let.* X, 377 (3. Dec. 1449).

<sup>128</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* VII, 228 (Id Oct. 1422).

Annals of Connacht.<sup>129</sup> After his death in 1439 the rectory was held for some time by another Marianus Ua Máeleoin, also from Clonmacnois diocese. He was accused of detaining the rectory and removed from it in 1448. The rectory was then assigned to 'Dermot Odonelean', clerk of the diocese of Clonfert.<sup>130</sup> When he died in 1455 the rectory was again assigned to Marianus Ua Máeleoin, who seems to have held it down to the end of the century.<sup>131</sup> Members of the family were also prominent in high positions in the church of Clonmacnois itself. Odo Ua Máeleoin was dean of Clonmacnois during the episcopate of John Ua Dálaigh.<sup>132</sup> He acted as vicar general of the bishop during absence.<sup>133</sup> At the same time he held the rectory of the church of Ballyloughloe, which he vigorously defended against claims of the monks from Granard.<sup>134</sup> In the course of this conflict he, together with bishop John, was suspended from his office by John Bole, archbishop of Armagh, and accused of being the 'self-styled' dean of Clonmacnois.<sup>135</sup> This happened in the year 1460. In the following year dean Odo died. According to the Four Masters he was 'the most learned man in all Ireland'.<sup>136</sup> The power held by this man in the church of Clonmacnois is also apparent from the impressive northern doorway of the cathedral built during his time in office. It shows S. Francis, S. Patrick and S. Dominic, and in an inscription Odo himself is commemorated as the builder of the monument.<sup>137</sup> In the early half of the sixteenth century there was Ruairi Ua Máeleoin who became bishop of Ardagh. His function as vicar general, or representative of the bishop of Clonmacnois, certainly resulted from his family's background in the church of S. Ciarán.<sup>138</sup>

A branch of the Ua Braoín, a Connacht family related with the Uí Chonchobair dynasts, active in Clonmacnois from the late eleventh century onwards, had traditional

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<sup>129</sup> *AConn* 1439.4.

<sup>130</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* X, 410-411 (5. Sept. 1448).

<sup>131</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XI, 206-207 (20. Aug. 1455). Only in the year 1507 the rectory was again disputed over. 'Bernard O Celaig' is mentioned as late rector, his successor was 'Donald Ocynyd', again a cleric of the diocese of Clonmacnois; *Cal. Pap. Let.* XVIII, no. 678 (29. Jan. 1507).

<sup>132</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XI, 501; XIII, 521; Odo died in 1461 (*AFM, AConn*).

<sup>133</sup> *Registrum Johannis Mey*, 213-214, no. 215, 20. Dec. 1451.

<sup>134</sup> 'A calendar of the reassembled register of John Bole', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 15 (1992) 153-154 [Oct. no. 44], undated and incomplete, beginning is missing. (probably June 1460).

<sup>135</sup> 'A calendar of the reassembled register of John Bole', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 15 (1992) 150 [Oktavian, no. 27]. Mandate of Archbishop John Bole, from the provincial synod at Drogheda, dated 14. June 1460. *Cal. of Archbishop Bole's Register*, p. 153 [Oct. no. 43], undated (probably 9.-14. June 1460).

<sup>136</sup> *AConn* 1461.16; *AFM* 1461.

<sup>137</sup> Westropp, *JRSAI* 37 (1907) 285-286.

<sup>138</sup> *AFM* 1540.

links with Roscommon, which became their main ecclesiastical seat in the course of the twelfth century. The family tradition as an ecclesiastical dynasty was continued throughout the period of the church reform, and the tradition of monastic learning, extended to secular knowledge, was further cherished in the family.<sup>139</sup> Another branch of the family was settled in Brawny in county Westmeath, i.e. Bregmaine, a territory now represented by St. Mary's parish Athlone. The Ua Braoín dominated the area from the mid-twelfth century down to the later middle ages. It seems the area formed part of the diocese of Clonmacnois from the year 1174, when it was united to the bishopric as one of the parishes of Westmeath. According to the Clonmacnois chronicler it used to form part of S. Ciarán's lands.<sup>140</sup> It therefore seems plausible that we have here an example of an ecclesiastical dynasty which made parts of the former paruchia of S. Ciarán their patrimonial lands and held them down to the later middle ages.<sup>141</sup>

The fortunes of the Uí Chillín are more difficult to trace in the surviving material. It seems one branch of the family settled in the monastic lands in county Galway. Still in the late sixteenth century there were lands in Killerean parish near Dunmore, in county Galway, in possession of the bishop of Clonmacnois.<sup>142</sup> They are named in the survey report from 1641 as 'Caronkilleene' then in possession of Walter Birmingham, who also held the surrounding lands.<sup>143</sup> Caronkilleene, i.e. carton of Killin possibly took its name from the Ua Cillín family, who presumably settled on the land, holding it from the bishop of Clonmacnois down to the late sixteenth century. The family name also appears in Moore parish, and we know of Granina, the daughter of Ua Cillín who was married to one 'Dermot Domnallan', most likely the same person who in 1448 claimed the rectory of Moycarnan against the Ua Máeleoin candidate.<sup>144</sup> Finally another branch of the family settled on Inis Ainghin, an island in Lough Ree, where a daughter house of Clonmacnois used to exist in the old days. The 'Killen' family still lived on the island in the nineteenth century when O'Donovan investigated the localities in the area.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Gilla Íosa, son of Ailill Ua Braoín, *sechnap Uí Mhaine*, a historian, scribe and poet died in 1187 (*AFM* 1187); Tiobraide Ua Braoín, *comarba Commáin* is praised for his knowledge in theology, history and law (*AFM* 1232); Gilla na Naemh, son of Art Ua Braoín, erenagh of Roscommon died in 1234 (*AFM* 1234). Bran Ua Braoín died as tympanist in the year 1364 (*AU* 1364).

<sup>140</sup> According to the Clonmacnois chronicler the castle of Athlone was built on S. Ciarán's land, which might have been part of what later became S. Mary's parish. *AClon* 1210, p. 224.

<sup>141</sup> See John Pinkman, 'Placenames of St. Mary's Parish, Athlone', *Ardagh and Clonmacnois Ant. Soc. Jn.* 2, no. 10 (1945) 37-47, here 37-38.

<sup>142</sup> *Compassicion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freeman, 80-81.

<sup>143</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 294.

<sup>144</sup> In the year 1430 the two got dispensed for fornication by marriage in the double third degree *Cal. Pap. Let.* VIII, 162; for 'Dermot', the rector of Moycarnan see *Cal. Pap. Let.* X, 410-411.

<sup>145</sup> For Inis Ainghin see above, 57; O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, co. Westmeath* I, 12. In a letter from Athlone written the 1.9. 1837 O'Donovan mentions one Rose Killen, whom he

The Ua Loingsigh, prominent in Clonmacnois since the latter parts of the tenth century, apparently withdrew to the western extremities of the former *paruchia* of Clonmacnois. They were active in the diocese of Killaloe and reappear in the early fifteenth century as priors and vicars in the church of S. Senán, in Inis Cathaig, Scatterry island, which is said to have been associated with S. Ciarán's church by a contract of fraternity.<sup>146</sup>

There is also the Ua Lachtnáin family who continued the ecclesiastical tradition seemingly without any interruption throughout the twelfth century. They adapted to the requirements in the changing ecclesiastical landscape. Already in the mid-thirteenth century Máel Muire Ua Lachtnáin had obtained a degree in canon law, and became archbishop of Tuam in 1237. He held the archbishopric as *airchinnech* of Tuam, according to the annals of Connacht, pointing to the unproblematic way in which old-style family traditions were applied to the only recently reformed church.<sup>147</sup> Other members of the family held various episcopal sees in Connacht in the fourteenth century.<sup>148</sup> The family name also frequently appears in lesser ecclesiastical offices in the dioceses of Tuam and Clonfert.<sup>149</sup>

A branch of the Ua Neachtain family from Uí Maine, who held the headship over the Céili Dé community in Clonmacnois continued to cherish an ecclesiastical career. They reappear as churchmen in lesser ecclesiastical offices in the diocese of Clonfert.<sup>150</sup>

The Ua Cearnaigh family in Clonmacnois were of the Luigne of Connacht, in Sligo and parts of Mayo. Perhaps the family returned to their original territory, and assumed ecclesiastical offices in their home church. This would explain the frequent appearance of the name Ua Cearnaigh, alias Ó Cearnaid or Okearnaig in the diocese of Achonry, largely identical with the former territory of Luigne. There is a particularly high proportion of Uí Chearnaig amongst the vicars of Kilmacteige parish, in the diocese,

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interviewed about the antiquities of Inis Ainghin, alias Hare Island. According to this lady's statement 'herself and her father and his family before lived on the island.'

<sup>146</sup> See above, 54-55. *Pap. Cal. Let.* VI, 313 (2. Kal. Dec. 1411); VIII, 571-572 (3. Non. July 1427).

<sup>147</sup> *AConn* 1249.14.

<sup>148</sup> *AConn* 1307.3; *AConn* 1326.4; *AConn* 1354.10.

<sup>149</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* IX, 556 for Nigel, vicar of Killeluane and Addergoole; *ibid.* IX, 395 for William, vicar of Inisrobe; *ibid.* X, 408, 639-640 for Nicholas, vicar of Kilmoylan; *ibid.* XI, 491 for William priest of Tuam; *ibid.* XII, 71, 72, 385, 431 for Nicholas canon of Tuam and vicar of Clonburren, dio. Tuam, later Kilosolan, dio. Clonfert; *ibid.* XIII, 461 + 497 William, canon of Tuam; *ibid.* X, 409 for William, vicar of Killeenadeema, dio. Clonfert.

<sup>150</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* IV, 420 for John Oneachtayn; *ibid.* XIII, 86 for Cornelius, prior of Athlone; Nicholls (ed), 'Visitations', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 148, where 'Cornelius O Nectayn' appears as vicar in the diocese of Clonfert.

which as a prebend was united to a canonry of that church.<sup>151</sup> The family name is also very frequent amongst the clergy in the neighbouring archdiocese of Tuam.<sup>152</sup>

Ua Cuinn, possibly the late medieval version of the family name Meic Cuinn na mBocht, turns up frequently in the diocese of Clonmacnois itself. There was Tomás Ua Cuinn, bishop of Clonmacnois in the middle of the thirteenth century. One 'Cornelius Ó Quinn' was canon of Tuam and of Clonmacnois, who held the prebend of Drumalgach, together with the vicarage of Moycarnan in the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>153</sup> The name Ua Tomaltaig also reappears amongst church officials the area around Clonmacnois. In the thirteenth century William, a Cluniac monk, became prior of the only Cluniac foundation in Athlone, on the west side of the Shannon, in the diocese of Elphin.<sup>154</sup> Reginald was vicar of Tuachmna (possibly Tawnagh, in county Sligo) also in Elphin diocese.<sup>155</sup>

Amongst the families who left the general neighbourhood of Clonmacnois but continued an ecclesiastical career in other churches were the Ua Fidabra. They appear as a family closely related with the reform party in the Irish church, and came possibly from the area around Armagh, where they reappear in the early thirteenth century.<sup>156</sup> It seems possibly that the Uá Máelchiaráin family, who was likewise active in the area around Armagh at the time,<sup>157</sup> were also originally from Clonmacnois.<sup>158</sup>

Others who had lived in S. Ciarán's church might have sought spiritual guidance and life under a monastic rule. They found admission into other communities, mostly those of the newly established orders. It seems that the Cistercians in particular appealed to the religious of Clonmacnois. A drift towards Cistercian houses can be observed from the second half of the twelfth century. Máel Íosa Ua Máelchiaráin, seemingly the offspring of an ecclesiastical dynasty in Clonmacnois, became abbot of Mellifont in 1177. The Cistercian house Kilbeggan in Meath, founded in the mid-twelfth century by a Mac Cochláin, seems to have functioned as a kind of retreat centre for retiring or frustrated

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<sup>151</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* IX, 393; X, 427-428; X, 395; XI, 587.

<sup>152</sup> See for example *Cal. Pap. Let.* V, 169; VI, 422, 425, 426, 436, 477; VII, 226; 143; IX, 149, 150, 190; XI, 454.

<sup>153</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XVI, 698, 741.

<sup>154</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* V, 572; VI, 202, 394. See Gwynn & Hadcock, 110-111.

<sup>155</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* VII, 47-48.

<sup>156</sup> See above, 135-136. Donatus Ua Fidabra was bishop of Clogher and subsequently archbishop of Armagh; *AConn* 1237.3.

<sup>157</sup> Máel Íosa Ua Máelchiaráin was Cistercian abbot of Mellifont and, after 1193 bishop of Airgialla. He died in 1197. See C. Conway (Fr. Colmcille), *The story of Mellifont* (Dublin 1958); B. Smith, *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 14 (1991) 29-30.

<sup>158</sup> Ailill Ua Máel Chiaráin, was master of the mortuary chapel, his son Congalach, mentioned as the son of Gilla Chiaráin, was guest master in Clonmacnois.



Clonmacnois clergy from the late twelfth century. In the year 1196 Ua Catharnaigh, a priest of Clonmacnois, died as a novice in Kilbeggan.<sup>159</sup> Áed Ua Máeleoin, ex-bishop of Clonmacnois, member of the traditional abbot's family, withdrew to Kilbeggan after his resignation in 1235, and died there the following year. Possibly these links provided the background for the appointment of the abbot of Kilbeggan to the bishopric of Clonmacnois at the end of the thirteenth century. Links with the Cistercian house in Knockmoy, founded by Cathal Crobderg in the early thirteenth century,<sup>160</sup> are also attested in the sources. The dean of Clonmacnois appears regularly as witness in the late medieval charters of Knockmoy abbey.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> *ALCé* 1196.

<sup>160</sup> *ALCé* 1224. Hubert Thomas Knox, *Notes on the early history of the dioceses of Tuam, Killala and Achonry* (Dublin 1904) 265-292, for Knockmoy, Ballintobber and Kilcreevanty, all monasteries which are said to have been founded by Cathal Crobderg.

<sup>161</sup> A medieval abstract of charters of the abbey of Knockmoy survived fragmentarily (between the years 1235 and 1326). Martin Blake, 'Knockmoy Abbey. The monastery of the "hill of victory". Notes on its history and some ancient charters relating to it', *Galway Arch. Hist. Soc. Jn.* 1 (1901) 65-84. It mentions C. Dean of Clonmacnois in Chart. no. 3, 4, 11. D. Dean of Clonmacnois Chart. no. 7; Philip Dean of Clonmacnois Chart. no. 6.

**6. THE REGISTRY OF CLONMACNOIS - A POTENTIAL  
SOURCE FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FORMER  
ECCLESIASTICAL LANDS OF CLONMACNOIS. THE  
HISTORY OF THE TRANSMISSION OF THE DOCUMENT.**

Little is known about the possessions of S. Ciarán from contemporary records. Obviously the various powerful friends of his church appear as benefactors, making donations, including those of land, to their ecclesiastical ally. However, details about the names or locations of these donations are rarely given. We owe our knowledge about the lands of S. Ciarán primarily to incidental references, such as for example the mention of two churches belonging to S. Ciarán's *paruchia* by Tirechán, when complaining about the expansionist policy of Clonmacnois in Connacht. Despite the fact that in the eleventh century references to lands of Clonmacnois become slightly more frequent, it is very surprising to find so little about the lands under the authority of S. Ciarán in his hagiography. With the exception of Inis Ainghin there is no single church claimed as a Ciaránian foundation by his hagiographers. This leads us to suppose that separate books, let us say instruments of ecclesiastical accountancy, were kept in Clonmacnois, as an inventory of its lands, which would have been periodically updated by new acquisitions. However, there is no contemporary medieval evidence, or surviving fragments of such a list. The only hint dates from the early seventeenth century, when in the course of the union of the diocese of Clonmacnois with that of Meath, the lands of the church were registered anew. In the report of the visitation, taken under the supervision of James Ussher, then bishop of Meath, the surveyers state that there existed a register of the lands belonging to the church of Clonmacnois, 'but the originall booke hath lately beene conveyed away by the practize of a leude fellow whoe hath thereyppon fled the Countrey'.<sup>1</sup> From around the same period, amongst the papers of James Ware, a curious account of churches and lands in possession of S. Ciarán is preserved.

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<sup>1</sup> C. R. Elrington (ed), *The whole works of the Most Rev. James Ussher* I, Appendix V, p. Lix.

## 6.1. The Manuscript

The document known as the 'Registry of Clonmacnoise' is basically an enumeration of lands which were granted to Clonmacnois by various Irish kings and lords in return for the right to be buried in S. Ciarán's churchyard. The list, translated into seventeenth century English, is now preserved in the British Library (BL Add. MS 4796, 36r-43v). It was published by O'Donovan in the year 1857.<sup>2</sup>

The MS volume BL Add. 4796 forms part of the Milles collection, 49 manuscript volumes presented to the British Library by the Rev. Jeremiah Milles, Dean of Exeter, in May 1766. It is one of the sixteen volumes in the collection which were formerly in the possession of James Ware.<sup>3</sup> The small quarto volume, consisting of 144 folios, written on seventeenth century paper, contains material both in English and Latin chiefly relating to Ireland.<sup>4</sup> The so-called 'Registry of Clonmacnoise', not known as such in the manuscript, covers sixteen pages of the volume. The rather short document bears no heading in the original. It seems as if it was written very quickly and rather carelessly, though the hand is easy to read. Since O'Donovan's edition of the document it has gone unquestioned that it was An Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh who made the transcript for Ware. Nollaig Ó Muraile has however shown that this idea is totally unfounded and probably originated in the fact that O'Donovan himself never saw the original manuscript, or at least never examined it in any detail, but published it from a transcript made for him by Daniel Mac Carthy. In any case the hand which appears in the original manuscript is simply not that of Mac Fhirbhisigh.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> John O'Donovan (ed), 'The Registry of Clonmacnoise; with notes and introductory remarks', *Jn. Kilk. SE. Irel. Arch. Soc.* 1 (1856/57) 444-460.

<sup>3</sup> For Milles' collection (BL Add. 4755-4802) see *British Library Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts 1756-1782, Additional Manuscripts 4101-5017* (British Museum Publications, London 1977) 201-220. The MSS formerly in Ware's collection are those numbered as Add. 4783-4801 in the BL; Milles was also known as the executor of Richard Pococke, bishop of Meath (d.1765), whose MSS collection (sixteen vols, two of which were formerly in the collection of James Ware) he also transmitted to the British Library in 1767. See *BL Catalogue of Add. to the MSS 1756-1782, Add. MSS 4101-5017*, p. 222-230.

<sup>4</sup> St. H. O'Grady, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol I (London 1928) 63.

<sup>5</sup> Many thanks Dr. Nollaig Ó Muraile, Queens College Belfast, who very kindly sent me the relevant parts of his doctoral dissertation, N. Ó Muraile, *The background, life and writings of Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh*, 2 vols (Ph.D Thesis, National University Ireland, Dublin 1991) vol 1, part II, chap. 11, p. 269-270 and part III, chap. 12, p. 458, where he discussed the presumed authorship in detail. O'Donovan himself states that his edition is printed from 'copies of Mac Firbis's translation, recently made from Mac Firbis's autograph in the British Museum by Daniel Mac Carthy, Esq., and William John O'Donnovan, Esq., of the Inner Temple London, who has carefully compared it in proof. Registry, 448. The handwriting of the scribe of the Registry appears again in a commentary to a plan of Clonmacnois in another of Ware's manuscripts in the British Library (BL MS 4784, f20).

Apart from Ware, who must have known about the document in his possession, Thomas Crofton Croker in the early nineteenth century is the first who comments on the Registry. In his 'Researches in the South of Ireland' published in 1824 he mentions the Registry as 'a very curious account of the ancient celebrity of Cloyne as a place of sepulchre...'.<sup>6</sup> He could not, however, identify the 'Cloyne' in question here. Petrie's work on the Round Towers of Ireland (1845) contains the first relatively detailed account of the Registry.<sup>7</sup> As Ó Muraíle pointed out, the passage is almost identical with the introductory remarks on the first page of O'Donovan's edition of the Registry and there can be little doubt that he supplied Petrie with the relevant information.<sup>8</sup> O'Donovan again quotes the Registry in his edition of 'Tribes and Customs of the Hy-Many' in the year 1843,<sup>9</sup> and eventually edited the text in the years 1856-57.<sup>10</sup> John Ryan mentions the existence of a church registry of Clonmacnois in his historical summary.<sup>11</sup>

## 6.2. The content of the Registry

The document opens with a kind of prologue where the origin of S. Ciarán's riches and land-holdings is explained as the result of the salvation-bringing function of his graveyard. The fact that whoever was buried under the earth of Clonmacnois would not see damnation at the day of judgement caused the Irish nobility to divide the graveyard amongst them, each paying for the right of burial with a land donation to the saint. Then follows an account of the various noble families who gained the right of burial in Clonmacnois. Their respective donations are listed individually.

First amongst them are the Uí Mháelsechlainn of the Southern Uí Néill. Máel Sechnaill himself, probably their ninth-century eponymous ancestor, is said to have made

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Crofton Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland* (London 1824) 242n and 246n.

<sup>7</sup> G. Petrie, *The ecclesiastical architecture of Ireland. An essay on the origin and uses of the Round Towers in Ireland* (Dublin 1845, reprint Shannon 1970) 265-266.

<sup>8</sup> Ó Muraíle, *The background, life and writings of Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh I*, 269-270.

<sup>9</sup> O'Donovan (ed), *The tribes and customs of Hy-Many*, 15, 80, 98, 188.

<sup>10</sup> He worked from a copy of the manuscript in the British Library, made for him by Daniel Mac Carthy; only a few minor corrections are necessary. (Minor mistakes like punctuation or those like the spelling of bishop as bushop are not considered here; the numbers in [] refer to the pagenumbers of O'Donovan's edition of the text): f38v for 'Kilchronagh'[450] read 'Killchaeragh?' (smearred ink); f38v for 'Bella Athanurchoir' [450] read 'Bellathanurchoir'; f39r for 'three Dunta, wch signifieth 3 houses, or els three places of building...' [453] read 'three Dunta, wch signifieth 3 houses, or els three stillocks or steep places of building!'; 39v for 'Kill Coirill'[455] read 'Killgoiril!'; f40r 'Disiort' is corrected to 'Dysyort'[455] by a second (Ware's?) hand; f40r for 'Creagha'[455] read 'Creagga!'; f42? for 'Coill Belacha'[457] read 'Coill Belatha!'

<sup>11</sup> Ryan, *Clonmacnois*, 69.

over to S. Ciarán thirteen holdings in his kingdom of Mide, which are listed by name. Two obviously late-medieval episodes follow. The first of them explains that the 'O Molmoy', probably Ua Máelmuaid had failed to pay for their right of burial in Clonmacnois. One 'Cosney Duff' presumably head of the family, made up for it by donating lands to and building a church for Clonmacnois. The second story concerns an otherwise unknown 'sonn of Senimnyn McColmain' who, we are told, entered the church and gave his hereditary portion of the family possessions, seven individual grants, to the church of Clonmacnois.

The succeeding paragraph deals with the lands of Clonmacnois in Connacht. First of all there are six donations, which according to the claims in the Registry, were given to Clonmacnois by king Cathal, presumably the early thirteenth century King Cathal Crobderg Ua Conchobair. Ua Ruairc is said to have bought the burial right by granting to Clonmacnois seven churches in Bréifne. Again a brief anecdote follows explaining how S. Ciarán came to possess a large amount of lands in county Leitrim. The story goes that Mac Ragnaill and Mac Shamhradháin, when building the church in the service of Ua Ruairc in Clonmacnois, suddenly stopped working and refused to take up work again until they also got the right of burial in Clonmacnois. Their wish was granted and Mac Ragnaill gave parts of his land in Kiltoghert to Clonmacnois in return. The obligations of Ua Ruairc towards the church of Clonmacnois are further specified, namely to maintain the chapels and to re-build the road leading from west to east via Clonmacnois. Three donations of the Meic Dhiarmada, also a Connacht dynasty, are listed, followed by a very extensive grant to S. Ciarán made by the early medieval ancestors of the Uí Cheallaigh. Here a passage about the rights of the Uí Dhubhagáin, who are said to have been employed to preserve the memory of the possessions of the church of Clonmacnois, is inserted. One Siacus Mór, another member of the Ua Ceallaigh family, is mentioned as having slain a child and by way of repentance making a donation to Clonmacnois. Finally there is Lochlainn Ua Ceallaigh, who received from the bishop a portion of the church lands, which are again individually named. The list of the noble dynasties buried in Clonmacnois comes to an end with the Mac Carthaigh family, who are said to have donated nine churches to Clonmacnois. A dispute over the burial rights between the Meic Charthaigh and the Geraldines is mentioned which was settled through a compromise, allowing the Geraldine family to participate in the Mac Carthaigh's share of the graveyard.

A third part of the document is concerned with the ecclesiastical income. The rent due to Clonmacnois from an otherwise unknown church of S. Grellan in Leinster is defined, followed by an enumeration of the lands belonging to the abbot of Clonmacnois and those in possession of the nuns of Clonmacnois. Finally the rights of 'O Kyllin, the

chiefe water cleark', i.e. Ua Cillín are set down. These include a living from the churchlands as well as the tenth of the total of the tithes.

Perhaps the original document came to an end here, since a concluding, though severely distorted, passage indicates to the reader that the possessions bestowed to the church of Clonmacnois mentioned in the document are also engraved, allegedly in Hebrew, on a stone monument in the graveyard.

In an additional section several late medieval families, the Ó Cobthy, Ó Floinn, Ó Hidersgoil ... Ó Tressey, Ó Cynnydhe and Ó Cuaghan' are commemorated for having donated various altar utensils to Clonmacnois. In the epilogue finally the 'auncient life of S<sup>t</sup> Kyran' and an otherwise unknown 'Red booke' are mentioned as the sources from which the translation was made.

### **6.3. Dating of the document**

The epilogue of the Registry also talks about the time of compilation, stating that 'it was the Bushop Muirchertagh O'Muridhe that caused this to be written ... when the yeare of the Lord was 20, three hundred and a thousand yeares'. We are also told that Muirchertach was 'Bp of Clone, Head of all Meth', and that his fosterbrother Slanan had a gravestone in Clonmacnois erected for him and engraved with this title.<sup>12</sup>

Obviously there are a number of inconsistencies here. Ware, the owner of the document, himself pointed out that the year 1320 is impossible as the date of the final composition on internal evidence.<sup>13</sup> First of all the document mentions the friary in Kilconnell, which was only founded in the late fourteenth century,<sup>14</sup> and also there was no bishop Muirchertach in Clonmacnois in the early fourteenth century. Another problem concerns the person of the bishop himself. The claim that the bishop of Clonmacnois was head of all the churches in Meath is rather pretentious. The only time such a title would be justified would be after the year 1568 when Clonmacnois was united to the bishopric of Meath. There are, however, two earlier bishops of Clonmacnois whose names come close to the corrupt anglicised form of the Irish name given in the Registry. One is Muirchertach Ua Máeluidir, bishop of Clonfert and Clonmacnois, who died in the year 1187, the other is Ua Muirecán, his successor, who

<sup>12</sup> *BL ADD. MSS 4796*, fol. 43v; Registry, 460.

<sup>13</sup> *BL ADD. MSS 4796*, fol. 44r; see Registry, 460 n.1.

<sup>14</sup> See below, 175; also Brendan Jennings, 'The abbey of Kilconnell', *Galway Arch. Hist. Soc. Jn.* 21 (1944/45) 184-189; Francis Joseph Bigger, 'The fanciscan friary of Kilconnell, co. Galway', *Galway Arch. Hist. Soc. Jn.* 1 (1901) 145-167; 2 (1902) 3-20; 3 (1903) 11-15.

died as bishop of Clonmacnois in the year 1214. Ware, who apparently had the Registry at hand when compiling his work on the Irish episcopate, thought that the latter was the bishop in question here.<sup>15</sup>

### 6.3.1. The early forerunner of the Registry: The 'Red booke' - The book of the ecclesiastical accountancy.

The document is said to have been compiled at the instigation of the bishop of Clonmacnois. The 'successor of Kyran' is mentioned as the one who was supposed to preserve the records about the land possessions. As the 'comharb or corbe' he appears to have been in charge of the exaction of taxes from the churches belonging to the bishop. The extent of his lands, the abbatial lands in Clonmacnois, is also outlined in detail in the final section of the Registry.<sup>16</sup>

The underlying pattern of jurisdiction seems very close to the way in which the Irish churches in the earlier middle ages were organized. The bishop functioned as the authority by which the lands were held; the abbot was the administrator of the temporalities of the church. As the one in charge of the collection of the ecclesiastical rents, he was also responsible for the keeping of the books of accountancy in the estate. It seems therefore very plausible indeed, that the 'Red booke', mentioned as one of the sources of the Registry, represented a book of ecclesiastical accountancy, and was a genuine outcome of the administration of the church of Clonmacnois prior to the church reform.<sup>17</sup> The 'Red booke' might have been the original copy, which would then have been revised subsequently in various redactions, when material of later date was also included. The result, a document consisting of several different strata, reflecting the various stages of redaction, comes down to us in an English seventeenth-century translation. The latest revision of the original Irish copy must date at least to the later parts of the fourteenth century, some time after the foundation of Kilconnell.

There is one more argument in favour of the authenticity of the 'Red booke' as a genuine document dating from the pre-reform period. It is mentioned as one of two sources by the seventeenth-century scribe of the Registry. The other source was the 'auncient life of St. Kyran'. In the prologue of the Registry the origin of the miraculous

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<sup>15</sup> He mentions Ua Muirecán as 'Mureachus O-Murrechan vir doctus, vitam cum morte commutavit anno 1213. Hic videtur idem cum eo, quem alii Muriertacum O-Murry vocant, & sepultum asserunt Clonmacnoisae, sub monumento, quod illius memoriae erexerat Slamanus collactaneus ejus.' Ware, *De Praesulibus Hiberniae*, 97. The same is said about O'Muridhe, the bishop of the Registry in the epilogue. *Registry* 460.

<sup>16</sup> *Registry* 460, 459, 452, 458.

<sup>17</sup> Compare the early monastic 'rental' books discussed by Doherty, *Peritia* 1 (1982) 321-326.

powers of S. Ciarán's graveyard are explained. We are told that S. Ciarán was such a holy bishop, 'that what soules harboured in the bodies buried under that dust may neuer be adiudged to damnation.' This appears as an almost literal translation of a passage in the Irish Life of Ciarán, where the hide of the Dun Cow is mentioned in the same context: 'Cech ainim raghus asa churp do sheichid na hUidhre nocha pianfaider a n-ithfrenn'.<sup>18</sup> It has been said earlier that the Irish Life of Ciarán probably dates in its original to the tenth century, and was again revised in the late eleventh century, and it could well have been used here for the compilation of the Registry. It seems we can trust the bibliography of the sources, added in the document, and the 'Red booke' was not simply an invention of its seventeenth-century transcriber.

### 6.3.2. The history of transmission of the Registry - various later redactions of the 'Red booke'.

At first we will look at the possible date and authorship of the seventeenth-century English translation of the Registry. It is one of various medieval documents relating to church possessions preserved in copies made for Ware.<sup>19</sup> The handwriting of the scribe of the Registry, who could not be identified, appears again on a sketch plan of Clonmacnois, also amongst the Ware manuscripts in the British Library (BL MS 4784, f 20).<sup>20</sup> This plan seems to be a copy of another plan of Clonmacnois (BL MS 4787, f. 276), which, since it bears the date 1621, might have been drawn up on the occasion of the visitation of the ancient diocese of Clonmacnois by the surveyers of bishop Ussher in 1621-22.<sup>21</sup> It seems this sketch plan of Clonmacnois, was copied and commented on by the same person who copied and perhaps translated the church registry, which originally was thought missing by Ussher. Possibly Ussher later got to know the Registry himself, since it seems to be annotated by him as well as Ware.<sup>22</sup> It seems therefore plausible that

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<sup>18</sup> Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 127.

<sup>19</sup> Like for example the rentals of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh, preserved amongst the Ware manuscripts BM Add. MS 4787; Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 130-143.

<sup>20</sup> The passage in question is almost identical to the epilogue of the Registry, giving an account of the sources and purpose of the document. Compare *Registry*, 459-460.

<sup>21</sup> 'Certificate of the State and Revennewes of the Bishoppricke of Meath and Clonemackenosh', ed. C. R. Elrington, *The whole works of the Most Rev. James Ussher I*, Appendix V, Liii -cxxv.

<sup>22</sup> I wish to thank Mr. William O'Sullivan, formerly keeper of Manuscripts in Trinity College Dublin, who kindly looked at a copy of the original manuscript. He pointed out to me a reference in the handwriting of Ussher, towards the identification of 'Killmanachan' as being situated in Westmeath (BL MS Add. 4796, fol. 39r). He confirmed the idea that the document was written or translated around 1622, in the course of the preparations for the survey of the property of the bishopric of Meath and Clonmacnois.



the document was re-discovered, and translated in the 1620's, in the course of the stock-taking of the churchlands in Clonmacnois.

### **The early thirteenth-century redaction**

So far we discussed the very final stage of the redaction of the Registry in the first half of the seventeenth century. The earliest feasible period for a revision of the church registries appears to be the early thirteenth century, when the ancient ecclesiastical records on land-holding were re-written according to the needs of the newly established episcopal church. In the early phase of the diocese of Clonmacnois, from the late twelfth century down to the year 1236, when episcopal elections in the church came under Anglo-Norman control, the affairs of the new bishopric were closely knit into the pattern of its early medieval predecessor church. Ua Máeleoin, the hereditary abbatial family, dominated the church of Clonmacnois including the bishopric.<sup>23</sup> At the same time the boundaries of the diocese were not yet definitely set up, and were still in dispute in the late thirteenth century.<sup>24</sup> It seems plausible that the extent of the former church lands was outlined in detail in a document extracted from the 'Red booke', with a view to justify an expansion of the territory under the bishop's authority.

The first two decades of the thirteenth century seem a very suitable time for the writing of such a document, when the Uí Chonchobair dynasts of Connacht became prominent once more as patrons of Clonmacnois. In the year 1208 the remains of king Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair were elevated and enshrined in Clonmacnois at the instigation of King Cathal Crobderg.<sup>25</sup> With such a ceremony the function of S. Ciarán's graveyard as the burial place of the Connacht nobility was publicly revived. The possibility that the poem on the chiefs and kings buried in Clonmacnois, by Conaing Buidhe Ua Máelchonaire, was composed on this occasion has been considered earlier.<sup>26</sup> The celebrations in the year 1208, as a revival of the former glory, might also have given rise to the compilation of a document which outlines in detail the boundaries of the church lands of Clonmacnois. As in the Ua Máelchonaire poem, the right to be buried in the graveyard of Clonmacnois is central to the Registry, and was the motivation for the noble families to make donations to Clonmacnois. The presumed instigator of the Registry, 'bishop O'Muiride' would thus be Ua Muirecán, bishop of Clonmacnois at the

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<sup>23</sup> They supplied the bishops of Clonmacnois between the years 1214 and 1236. See chap. 2 on church reform.

<sup>24</sup> See above, 142-147.

<sup>25</sup> *AFM* 1207 (recte 1208).

<sup>26</sup> See above, 138.

time.<sup>27</sup> Apart from him, as ecclesiastical authority, the secular patron Cathal Crobderg Ua Conchobair had a share in the compilation of the document. This would explain why a high proportion of the nobles listed as benefactors of Clonmacnois were from Connacht. Five of a total of seven were close allies of Ua Conchobair: Ua Ceallaigh, Ua Ruairc, Mac Diarmada and Mac Ragnaill had actively taken part in Toirdelbach Ua Conchobair's expansionist policy during the twelfth century. During Cathal's fights for the kingship of Connacht, Fingen Mac Carthaigh with his men was fighting in the army of Cathal Crobderg.<sup>28</sup>

All in all it seems plausible that in the early thirteenth century the ancient ecclesiastical records concerning landholdings were revised in order to document the extension of the churchlands of Clonmacnois. The compilation might have been inspired by the intent to document the extent of the land which should be under the authority of the bishop of Clonmacnois.

### **Rewriting of the Registry in the fourteenth century**

A most striking element in the Registry is the disproportionate extent of the land donations made to S. Ciarán by the alleged ancestors of the Uí Cheallaigh from Uí Maine. First there is 'Cairpre Crum', who is said to have granted seventeen townlands to S. Ciarán, which in the actual text is extended to thirty-three individual donations. Another seven donations are ascribed to 'Kellagh Mc Finachta Mc Oillille', so that the total of the Uí Cheallaigh endowments to Clonmacnois amounts to the respectable number of forty separate donations.

The second benefactor, Ceallach, son of Finacht, son of Ailill, is the eponymous ancestor of the Uí Cheallaigh. He is said to have given seven churches to S. Ciarán. The same claim is made in the *Chronicum Scotorum* in regard to Cathal, son of Ailill, king of Uí Maine in the early ninth century, who supported the community in Clonmacnois in defending it against the king of Munster.<sup>29</sup> The memory of him seems to have got lost in the later middle ages. He does not appear on the list of the lords of Uí Maine, in a poem addressed to Eogan Ó Madden, composed in the fourteenth century.<sup>30</sup> Instead Ceallach, son of Finacht appears as king of Uí Maine during the mid-ninth century. Cathal, as the son of Ailill, would have been the uncle of Ceallach, the grandson of Ailill. It seems likely that by the fourteenth century the memory of king Cathal had merged with that of

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<sup>27</sup> He died in 1214 (*AFM*).

<sup>28</sup> *ALCé* 1202.

<sup>29</sup> See above, 79.

<sup>30</sup> O'Donovan (ed), *The tribes and customs of Hy-Many*, 14-16.

king Ceallach, the alleged eponym of the Uí Cheallaigh dynasty. It is therefore plausible that a gift of seven churches to S. Ciarán by the Uí Maine dates back to an original ninth century grant, when friendly relations between S. Ciarán and his neighbours to the west prevailed.

The other Ua Ceallaigh benefactor is Cairpre Crum. As the eponymous ancestor of the Cenél Cairpre Cruim, he lived several hundred years before Cathal, alias Ceallach. However, little is known about him as a historical figure. The annals do not mention him at all, and S. Ciarán's hagiographers are silent about this alleged friend of the saint. Only in a fragment of the Book of Uí Maine, compiled in the late fourteenth century under the aegis of archbishop Muirchertach Ua Ceallaigh, are the adventures of Cairpre Crum and the background to his friendship with S. Ciarán recorded.<sup>31</sup> The story of how he was once resuscitated from the dead seems to supply the reason for the large donation he made to S. Ciarán's church. It seems possible that the elaboration of the donation, its extension to thirty-two individual grants, was fabricated in the same school and together with the Uí Maine version of the tale of Cairpre Crum's resurrection.

Other hints in the Ua Ceallaigh section of the Registry also point to the late fourteenth century as the date of a revised edition of the document. A whole paragraph deals with the rights of the Ua Dubhagáin family, as chroniclers of the Uí Cheallaigh. As a witness to a contract between them and Tadhg Ua Ceallaigh, one Ua Breslean of Dunbeg is mentioned. Both families, as hereditary poets and historians, became prominent in the fourteenth century. The Uí Cheallaigh part of the Registry also contains the passage about the friars in Kilconnell, who are said to have received 'ten days out of the churchland belonging to the bishop of Clonmacnois'. The Franciscan house in Kilconnell was a late medieval foundation, built alternatively either in 1353 or 1414.<sup>32</sup>

The postulated fourteenth century revision of the text seems to combine the interests of the Ua Dubhagáin family, and those of the Uí Cheallaigh, with the alleged territorial possessions of the bishop of Clonmacnois. Furthermore the Sliocht Lochlainn, a particular branch of the Uí Cheallaigh who apparently lived on former church land near Clonmacnois, finds special mention. If we look for a time when the fortunes of these

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<sup>31</sup> See above, 84-85; Book of Uí Maine, fol. 126v. This corresponds to fol. 69v in the description of the MS by K. Mulchrone, 'Book of Hy Many. R. I. A. MS no. D.ii.1 [no. 1225]' *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy. Fasciculi XXVI-XXVII* (Dublin 1942/43) 3314-3356. See K. Meyer (ed), *Archiv für Celtische Lexikographie* 3 (1907), 224-226. The other version is preserved in BL, Egerton 92, fol. 29b, col. 2, edited and translated by O'Donovan, *Registry*, 453-454, which originally formed part of the Book of Fermoy (not of the Book of Uí Maine as O'Donovan says). See Flower, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts* I, 505-519.

<sup>32</sup> The exact date of the foundation of the friary is unclear. It might be 1353 as the Four Masters say, or 1414 according to Ware. See Bodleian, Rawl. B 484, f 29. The date 1414 is also given in the list of Franciscan houses in *BL Add. MS 4814*, fol. 6, where Uilliam Ua Ceallaigh is mentioned as the founder. See Gwynn & Hadcock, 251.

families were particularly linked we are led to the late fourteenth century, when the Book of Uí Maine was compiled. Its main contributors were members of the Ua Dubhagáin family. The one who instigated its composition was Muirchertach Ua Ceallaigh, as archbishop of Tuam (1392-1407).<sup>33</sup> In his service one John Ua Ceallaigh, of the Sliocht Lochlainn was employed as archdeacon of Tuam.<sup>34</sup>

From the mid fourteenth century on the Uí Dhubhagáin were attached as hereditary historians and poets to the Uí Cheallaigh. Seán Mór Ua Dubhagáin, a poet and historian who died in the year 1372, worked under the patronage of Uilliam Buidhe Ua Ceallaigh.<sup>35</sup> One 'Richard O'Dowagan, chronicler by profession' died, according to the Annals of Clonmacnois, in the year 1379.<sup>36</sup> Cam Cluana Ua Dubhagáin, again a historian and poet, was kept prisoner and killed by the English in the year 1394, when Richard II was in Ireland.<sup>37</sup> The latter's sobriquet, Cam Cluana, i.e. the Crooked of Cluain, indicates apart from a physical handicap, that he came from Cluain. The Registry seems to support the assumption that the Cluain in question here was Clonmacnois, since it portrays an Ua Dubhagáin as the keeper of the records of the church of Clonmacnois.<sup>38</sup> Links between the family and the church of S. Ciarán might have existed earlier. Although the Uí Dhubhagáin do not appear as an ecclesiastical dynasty in Clonmacnois in the old days, they were apparently attached to the church of S. Énda on the Aran islands, which according to S. Ciarán's hagiography was a member of the *paruchia* of Clonmacnois.<sup>39</sup> Giollagori Ua Dubhagáin died as coarb of Énda in the year 1167.<sup>40</sup> It is possible that the late medieval connection between the Uí Dhubhagáin and Clonmacnois were the continuation of earlier links which existed between the family

<sup>33</sup> W. O'Sullivan, 'The Book of Uí Maine formerly the Book of Ó Dubhagáin: Scripts & structure', *Éigse* 23 (1989) 151-166, here 151. He was archbishop already when the genealogies of his family were drawn up in the Book of Uí Maine, since the title *ardeaspac* appears as an integral part of the text. See K. Mulchrone, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, 3316. For the Book of Uí Maine see Macalister (ed), *The Book of Uí Maine*; R. A. Breatnach, 'The Book of Uí Mhaine', *Great Books of Ireland*, ed. Liam de Paor (Dublin 1967) 77-89; Nollaig Ó Muraile, 'Leabhar Ua Maine alias Leabhar Uí Dhuibhagáin', *Éigse* 23 (1989), 167-195; K. Meyer, 'Das Buch der Húi Maine. (Stowe Collection, R. I. A.)', in K. Meyer, 'Neue Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften', *Archiv für Celtische Lexikographie* 2 (1904) 136-146, here 138-146.

<sup>34</sup> O'Donovan (ed), *The tribes and customs of Hy-Many*, 128.

<sup>35</sup> *AConn* 1372.3. He is mainly famous as the author of the topographical poem 'Triallam timcheall na Fódla', which he wrote under the patronage of Uilliam Ua Ceallaigh, lord of Uí Maine (1334-1375) and great-uncle of archbishop Muirchertach. For the poems see: James Carney (ed), *Topographical poems by Seán Mór Ó Dubhagáin and Giolla-na-Naomh Ó hUidhrín* (Dublin 1943).

<sup>36</sup> *AConn* 1372.3; *AClon* 1379, p. 306.

<sup>37</sup> *Misc. Irish Ann.*, 1394.31, p. 153. His title reads 'ollamh of history, eloquence, and poetry'.

<sup>38</sup> *Registry*, 456.

<sup>39</sup> See above, 53-54.

<sup>40</sup> *AFM*. Thanks to Dr. Katharine Simms, who brought this reference to my attention.

settled on Aran islands and Clonmacnois as their ecclesiastical overlord. In any case the family appears in various ecclesiastical positions in the territory west of Clonmacnois, in the diocese of Clonfert and Elphin, in the later middle ages. One David Ua Dubhagáin became archdeacon of Clonfert in the year 1405.<sup>41</sup> The family occupied the vicarage of Killosoolan in the diocese of Elphin for most of the fifteenth century. Malachy Ua Dubhagáin was vicar around the year 1430.<sup>42</sup> His successor was Dermot Ua Dubhagáin, who held the vicarage down to the year 1460.<sup>43</sup> The rectory of Cam, also in the diocese of Elphin and bordering Killasolan, was held by Marianus Ua Dubhagáin in the early fifteenth century.<sup>44</sup> Members of the family also appear in the vicarage of Clonburren, the territory west of Clonmacnois across the Shannon, which belonged to the diocese of Tuam.<sup>45</sup> One John Ua Dubhagáin was a monk in Athlone, claiming the rectory of Killaan, a parish west of Kilconnell in county Galway, belonging to the diocese of Clonfert.<sup>46</sup>

It seems plausible that the keeper of the church records in Clonmacnois came from this branch of the Uí Dhubhagáin, who were more or less neighbours of Clonmacnois and called themselves the Ua Dubhagáin of Cluain, i.e. Clonmacnois. The assumption is confirmed by the fact that although Killosoolan and Killian (as the parish churches held by the Uí Dhubhagáin) belonged to the diocese of Elphin, they were, according to the Registry itself, part of the lands under the authority of the bishop of Clonmacnois.<sup>47</sup> The Registry also states that Ua Dubhagáin received a piece of land called 'Baile an ruan, alias Baile Ua Dubhagáin' in reward for his service to the church of Cluain and to Ua Ceallaigh. O'Donovan identified the place as a townland a little west of the river Suck, in the parish of Ahascragh.<sup>48</sup> The identification seems highly plausible since it is in the area where the Uí Dhubhagáin held ecclesiastical positions in various parish churches. When the surveys were made in the seventeenth century the townland was adjoined to the

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<sup>41</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* VI, 46 (7. Kal. April 1405).

<sup>42</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* VIII, 201-202 (19. Kal Jan. 1430); VIII, 557 (3 Id July 1435).

<sup>43</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XII, 72 (Non Jan. 1459-60).

<sup>44</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* VI, 255, 310.

<sup>45</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* VIII, 564 (5. Id. July 1435).

<sup>46</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* XV, 831. See B. Mitchell, *A new genealogical atlas of Ireland* (Baltimore 1986) 56.

<sup>47</sup> *Registry*, 455 states that 'the town and lands of Killithain, the towne and lands of Killosoaigelean' were in possession of Clonmacnois since the days of Cairpre Crum.

<sup>48</sup> *Registry*, 456n. K. Grabowski attempted to identify the place with Ballinruane in par. Ardrahan, bar. Loughrea, since the Uí Dhubhagáin are usually associated with that area. However the purpose of the passage in the Registry here seems to be to justify the fact that a branch of the family held land not traditionally in possession of the Uí Dhubhagáin, which therefore might well be outside the hereditary family domain. Moreover the Uí Dhubhagáin of Cluain seem to have been a separate branch from those in Loughrea. See K. Grabowski, *The interaction of politics, settlement and church in medieval Ireland: Uí Mhaine as a case study* (D.Phil. Thesis, Cambridge 1988), 415.

parish of Fohinah, bordering Ahascragh. It appears as 'Ballydoogane' in the surveyor's report from the year 1641 and was then in possession of 'Teige o Doogane'.<sup>49</sup>

So far we might conclude that the Ua Dubhagáin who appears in the Registry as keeper of the records of the church of Clonmacnois was a member of the branch of the family which had settled in the area west of Clonmacnois, in the eastern parts of county Galway, where they dominated various parish churches. This was presumably also the Uí Dhubhagáin branch to which Cam Cluana belonged.

Parallel with the rights of the Uí Dhubhagáin the rights of the 'Sliocht Lochlainn', a branch of the Uí Cheallaigh, are documented in the Registry. They claimed descent from Lochlainn, a son of Domnall Mór Ua Ceallaigh (d.1224).<sup>50</sup> The story is told how Lochlainn, the eponymous ancestor, once found a lost life of Ciarán, giving account of the possession of the church of Clonmacnois. He brought his discovery to the bishop who rewarded him with six quarters of his lands. The lands in question are individually named and the rent due for them to be paid by Lochlainn's descendants to the bishop is set down in detail. The passage points to the involvement of a member of the Sliocht Lochlainn in the re-writing of the document. The most likely candidate here is of course Seán Ua Ceallaigh of the Sliocht Lochlainn, the archdeacon of Tuam at the time when Muirchertach Ua Ceallaigh was archbishop.<sup>51</sup> Possibly this episode reflects the circumstances in which the ancient document, from which the fourteenth-century revision was drawn up, came to light. The suggestion that the archdeacon of Tuam discovered the document is possible, and might indicate that a copy of the early version of the Registry was kept in Tuam. Possibly it came into the possession of the church of Tuam in the course of the quarrels about the lands west of Clonmacnois between the bishop of Clonmacnois and the archbishop of Tuam in the thirteenth century.<sup>52</sup>

The Registry itself gives the details about the purpose of its re-edition in the later middle ages. The story is told how Tadg Ua Ceallaigh once had an argument with the bishop of Clonmacnois concerning the property of Ciarán in Uí Maine. To the mind of Ua Ceallaigh the bishop demanded more rent than he was entitled to. In mutual agreement the two contestants decided to employ an Ua Dubhagáin to keep the books of the church of Cluain. Once a year, on Good Friday, Ua Dubhagáin had to come and report on everything bestowed to the church.<sup>53</sup> The Registry was thus the record of the possessions of the church of Clonmacnois, kept by the Ua Dubhagáin in the service of an

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<sup>49</sup> *Book of Surveys and Distribution* III, 134.

<sup>50</sup> O'Donovan (ed), *The tribes and customs of Hy-Many*, 102, 128.

<sup>51</sup> O'Donovan (ed), *The tribes and customs of Hy-Many*, 128.

<sup>52</sup> See above, 145-146.

<sup>53</sup> *Registry*, 456.

Ua Ceallaigh lord. A member of the Ua Dubhagáin family, perhaps Cam Cluana himself, was at work here, re-writing an earlier document, ensuring his own rights on the occasion, by making sure that his pay was also set down in the document itself. 'Baile Ua Dubhagáin', alias 'Baile an ruan', the land given to Ua Dubhagáin for his service, is nowhere mentioned as belonging to S. Ciarán. Apparently Ua Ceallaigh paid for the deal, and we might conclude that it was primarily his concern to protect his lands against the claims by the bishop of Clonmacnois.

This points to the possibility that the Ua Ceallaigh in question here was an ecclesiastical lord in the neighbourhood of Clonmacnois, rather than a secular magnate. In fact Muirchertach Ua Ceallaigh, the archbishop, had been bishop of Clonfert, prior to his promotion to Tuam (1377-1393). He was succeeded by his son Tomás in the year 1405, who despite several irregularities seems to have remained bishop of Clonfert until his death in 1441.<sup>54</sup> The archbishop's family had a firm grip on the bishopric of Clonfert, as is apparent from the fate of the two direct successors of Muirchertach. One, William Ua Cormacáin, was simply removed after five years in office, the other, Enrí Ua Conmhaigh, was translated to Kilmacduagh, to make way for Tomás in the year 1405. From the time of bishop Muirchertach, the family also held former churchland of the diocese of Clonfert in private possession.<sup>55</sup> It seems possible therefore that the Uí Cheallaigh of the Registry refer to the family of bishop Muirchertach Ua Ceallaigh, who dominated the bishopric of Clonfert from the latter part of the fourteenth down to the middle of the fifteenth century.

If we take the Registry by its word, the lands given to Ua Dubhagáin in reward for his service, should therefore have been formerly in possession of the bishop of Clonfert. A place called 'Lisdhughain' is listed amongst the possessions of the bishop of Clonfert in the rental list from 1407. It is stated that the bishop used to get one mark from his lands in Lisdhughain, but more recently he has let it for nothing, simply by his grace.<sup>56</sup> This would perfectly suit the transfer of property described in the Registry, where we are told that Ua Dubhagan received some land from Ua Ceallaigh, i.e. the Ua Ceallaigh bishop of Clonfert. The memory that the bishop used to get rent for the piece of land in question was still alive in 1407, but clearly even though it still counted as bishop's land it had fallen into other hands, namely into the possession of the Uí Dhubhagáin, from whom it took the name. 'Lisdhughain' in the diocese of Clonfert would therefore be

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<sup>54</sup> W. O'Sullivan, *Éigse* 23 (1989) 152.

<sup>55</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 134n.

<sup>56</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 138, 'Lisdhughain olim una marca sed modo in gratia Ep scopi'.

identical, or lie somewhere in the vicinity of Baile Ua Dubhagáin, in Ahascragh, mentioned in the Registry as the payment to Ua Dubhagáin.

The Registry of Clonmacnois in its late medieval redaction therefore seems to be a piece of work commissioned by the Ua Ceallaigh bishop of Clonfert, carried out by a member of the Uí Dhubhagáin of Cluain. He transformed the document into an Ua Ceallaigh eulogy, by stressing the generosity of the ancestors of his lord and at the same time ensuring his own rights to certain lands in Uí Maine. It is possible that the document, as an Ua Dubhagáin compilation, was intended to form part of the Book of Uí Maine. In the manuscript the story of Cairpre Crum and his resurrection by S. Ciarán is followed by blank space and three cancelled leaves.<sup>57</sup> This seems to support the assumption that the Registry of Clonmacnois was supposed to be copied here, as an extended commentary on the preceding saint's legend.

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<sup>57</sup> The story appears on pages 126v, running from the last quarter of col. 1 to the first third of col. 2, as part of a passage filled in by a hand, different from that of scribe C (Adam Cuisin), who wrote the preceding pages. Then follows a blank space with a note by the eighteenth century owner of the book: 'This book Belongs to Laughlin Kelly of Tonelig. Left him by his Father Edmond Kelly Deceased in 1754.' The folio is part of quaternion no. 13, now incomplete since its last three leaves were cancelled. O'Sullivan, *Éigse* 23 (1989) 159, 164.



## 7. THE EXTENT OF S. CIARÁN'S POSSESSIONS ACCORDING TO THE REGISTRY OF CLONMACNOIS.

In the preceding chapter, the Registry of Clonmacnois as a potential source for the reconstruction of the former ecclesiastical lands belonging to Clonmacnois has been discussed. We came to the conclusion that the document, which in its present form dates from the seventeenth century, probably goes back to a genuine account of S. Ciarán's lands, as they existed prior to the church reform. This account, which might have been identical with the 'Red booke', would have been kept in the church of Clonmacnois as an instrument of accountancy for the ecclesiastical estate.

The majority of the lands mentioned in the Registry, can be traced in the seventeenth century surveys.<sup>1</sup> Most of them have a tradition as churchlands. The presence of ecclesiastical ruins for example, or the existence of an ancient burial ground might attest to an ecclesiastical past. In addition these sites are often connected by local tradition with one particular saint. In other cases references in administrative documents point to the church tradition of a piece of land. A method of working for the identification of former churchland was first introduced by bishop Dawson in the seventeenth century. He undertook the same task as we do in the present study by trying to identify the former possessions of his church (he of course did so to restore them to his see of Clonfert). The bishop gave three criteria towards the identification of churchlands: first of all he goes through the 'ancient rentall', the still extant records of the churchlands; secondly he identifies churchlands according to the 'generall knowne marke, that where the Deane or any of the Chapter have the tythes there the land did bellowe to the Bishopp'; finally he says that the lands which paid rent to the bishop or were supposed to do so, were churchlands.<sup>2</sup> I will basically rely on this method in the following analysis of the lands claimed for Clonmacnois.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Simington (ed), *Books of Survey and Distribution*, vol I, *Roscommon* (Dublin 1949); vol II, *Mayo* (Dublin 1956); vol III, *Galway* (Dublin 1962); vol IV, *Clare* (Dublin 1967).

<sup>2</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 132.

### 7.1. The Ua Ceallaigh donations to Clonmacnois.

The first section to look at will be the Ua Ceallaigh part of the Registry, which seems to form the late medieval appendix to the document, fabricated in the service of the bishop of Clonfert. The lands listed can all be located in county Roscommon and Galway. With the exception of Tuamgraney, in the very southern extremity of county Galway, at the southern end of Lough Derg the lands comprise a self contained area, roughly reaching from Clonfert in the south, to Roscommon in the north, and from Tuam in the west to the Shannon in the east.

For most of the lands a tradition as churchland can be established.<sup>3</sup> Examples here are 'Tomcattry' in Clontuskert parish (6), where a burial ground is situated; in Kilcloony parish (8) S. Griollan, the patron saint of the Uí Maine, is said to have built his church; 'Tuaimsruithra' (23) has been identified as the church of S. Raoillin, now in Creagh parish, county Roscommon; Tuamgraney (26) has been the site of a church since the sixth century; Fuerty (30) is the place where Deacon Justus, who baptized S. Ciarán, used to dwell; the townland Kilkenny (35) in Taghmaconnel houses a church and burial ground; 'Bellaneany' (36) also in Taghmaconnel parish was the site of a Franciscan Abbey; Cuillen, in Creagh parish (37) finally, used to house a convent of nuns.

In some cases there is unmistakable evidence that the lands were still in possession of the church of Clonmacnois in the seventeenth century. The diocese was then united with the bishopric of Meath, so that the bishop of Meath and Clonmacnois appears as the proprietor of these lands in the records. The holdings of Clonmacnois west of the Shannon, in Roscommon, represented by the medieval rectory of Moycarnan were discussed earlier. According to the survey of the former diocese, taken in 1622 they were leased to Anthony Brabazon by the bishop. The details about Brabazon's holdings in Roscommon can be found in the Exchequer inquisition taken after his death in the year 1604.<sup>4</sup> Most of the lands which he held from the bishop of Clonmacnois, appear in the Registry as Clonmacnois' possession. There is 'Dun Beglaitt' (2), Kilbegley a townland in Moore parish which appears as 'Kylbeglagh' in the inquisition and was still in possession of the bishop of Meath and Clonmacnois in 1641.<sup>5</sup> 'Coillin Molruany' (37) is Cullenmulrony, or Cuillen in Creagh parish, referred to as 'Kyly' in the inquisition. In 1641 the lands in Cuillen were still in possession of the dean of Clonmacnois, who had

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<sup>3</sup> The numbers in brackets refer to Appendix 2.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Brabazon died in 1597, the inquisition was taken seven years after his death only. See 'Exchequer inquisition post mortem taken at Roscommon, 23 October, 1604 before John Crofton', ed. P. K. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 304.

<sup>5</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 62.

leased it to Edward Brabazon.<sup>6</sup> Also there is 'Tuaimsruthra' (23), alias Ashford townland in Creagh parish, which appears as 'Tuam Srower' in the the Exchequer inquisition. 'Tuaim-taghar'(38) finally has been identified by Egan as the townland Ardnaglog in Moore parish. It was formerly in Creagh parish and was also held by Anthony Brabazon from the bishop of Meath and Clonmacnois.<sup>7</sup> It seems possible that Kilkenny alias 'Kill Killchuynne' (35) in Taghmaconnel parish was also still in possession of the church of Clonmacnois in the seventeenth century, since it was also held by Edward Brabazon when the surveys were made. It is not stated from whom he held it: it is possible, that like in the case of the neighbouring Cuillen, the proprietor was the dean of Clonmacnois.<sup>8</sup> Apart from the church lands right opposite Clonmacnois across the Shannon there is also 'Killiarainn' (32), possibly a townland in Killererin parish, bordering Dunmore in county Galway. It seems to have formed part of Dunmore parish in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Four quarters of land there still belonged to the bishop of Clonmacnois in 1585.<sup>9</sup> 'Killmeas' (34), finally, is Kilmass in Rahara parish, county Roscommon. Part of Rahara belonged to the bishop of Clonmacnois according to an early fifteenth century rental.<sup>10</sup>

So far, in the case of these six, maybe seven donations, the Registry seems to be confirmed by other independent sources, as a reliable account of the property of the church of Clonmacnois. However, it appears from further material that the bishop of Clonfert was the proprietor of many of the presumed Clonmacnois possessions. This evidence is preserved in the episcopal rental list of Clonfert, which dates from around the same period as the posited late fourteenth century revision of the Registry of Clonmacnois. The rental list, like the Registry, was copied for Ware in the early seventeenth century, and bears the date 1407.<sup>11</sup> It lists in detail the lands paying rent to the bishop of Clonfert, amongst them many of the supposed Clonmacnois possessions: There is 'Gortacharn' (5) which as a townland in Clontuskert parish, is possibly 'Gort an chuill' and according to the rental list ought to be in the hand of the bishop of Clonfert.<sup>12</sup> 'Kill Tormoir' (10), a townland in Kiltormer parish, paid one mark rent to the bishop of Clonfert. 'Killorain' (11) paid half a mark a year to the bishop.<sup>13</sup> 'Killmolonog' (12) is

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<sup>6</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 60.

<sup>7</sup> Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 14, 304.

<sup>8</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 104.

<sup>9</sup> *Composicion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freeman, 80-81.

<sup>10</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 139.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 130-143.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

Kilmalinoge townland in the parish of the same name and paid forty pence rent to the bishop.<sup>14</sup> 'Killchuirin' (21) is Kilkerrin, a townland and parish in county Galway, also known as 'Kyllcaryn, alias Corkomaga' in the papal documents. This might be 'Corramore' which was bought with his own money by archbishop Muirchertach Ua Ceallaigh.<sup>15</sup> All these lands are situated in county Galway. Furthermore there is 'Dundonnaill in Maghfinn' (22), Dundonnell townland in Taghmaconnell parish in county Roscommon. In 1407 one part of 'Taghmconayle' was belonging to the church of Clonfert, paying one mark rent to the bishop.<sup>16</sup> Finally there is 'Tuaimsruithra' (23), or Ashford, a townland in Creagh parish, county Roscommon. According to the rental list the bishop of Clonfert received 'ex terris de Tuaymsrura duae marcae'.<sup>17</sup>

Other lands listed as appurtenances of Clonmacnois in the Registry were also in possession of the bishop of Clonfert according to later sources. There is 'Dunanoght' (1), i.e. the small parish of Donanaghta near Clonfert, which was a benefice belonging to the church of Clonfert according to a visitation report from 1565.<sup>18</sup> 'Dunmeadhain' (3) seems to be 'Kilmeadain' alias Kyllcomeddan, which was held by Anthony Brabazon from the bishop of Clonfert in the late sixteenth century.<sup>19</sup> 'Tuaim Catrighe' (6) is Tomcattry in Clontuskert parish. According to the Headford set of the Books of Survey and Distribution, it was held in the seventeenth century by the son of the dean of Clonfert.<sup>20</sup> 'Grainsey' (8) is Grainseach or Grange, in Kilclooney parish. Parts of it were held by the dean of Clonfert in the seventeenth century.<sup>21</sup> 'Kill Coirill' (13) is Kilgerrill, a townland and parish in county Galway. The surveyors in 1640 state about Kilgerrill townland that 'this qur payes 4 li p Annu. to ye Bpp of Clonfert'.<sup>22</sup> 'Killuir Beg' (15) in Kilgerrill parish was held by Anthony Brabazon from the bishop of Clonfert in the late sixteenth century.<sup>23</sup> The same might have applied to Killuir Mor (14), also held by Anthony Brabazon, even though it is not explicitly stated that he held it from the bishop of Clonfert.<sup>24</sup> Finally 'Killithain' (17), is Killane or Killian townland and parish; the tithes of

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 139. *Cal. Pap. Let.* IV, 426.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>18</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Visitations', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 146.

<sup>19</sup> 'Exchequer inquisition taken at the hill called Backe, 7th November 1604', *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 304-305.

<sup>20</sup> Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 44n.

<sup>21</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 128.

<sup>22</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 132.

<sup>23</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 131; Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 304-305.

<sup>24</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 131.

the vicarage belonged to the community of the church of Clonfert according to a papal letter from 1448.<sup>25</sup>

Clearly we have here an apparent contradiction in the sources: Two documents apparently dating from around the same period, and the same region, make entirely opposite statements concerning the ownership of land in the area. A brief recapitulation of the history of the origin of the fourteenth century re-edition of the Registry might supply a possible explanation towards a better understanding here.

It has been suggested that the bishop of Clonfert, possibly Muirchertach Ua Ceallaigh or Tomás, his son and successor to the see, instigated the re-writing of the Registry of Clonmacnois in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. The purpose of the document was to avoid the situation whereby the 'Bishop [i.e. the bishop of Clonmacnois] challenged more than he ought' out of the lands of Ua Ceallaigh.<sup>26</sup> It seems the Ua Ceallaigh in question here was the Ua Ceallaigh bishop of Clonfert, who instigated the compilation of a register of the lands held by the bishop of Clonmacnois in his diocese of Clonfert. A member of the Ua Dubhagáin family was entrusted with the task of investigating the ancient records of the church of Clonmacnois and finding out about the extent of the church lands. Since he worked in the service of the bishop of Clonfert, the purpose of his researches and documentation would not have been to exemplify the greatness of the church of Clonmacnois, but to confine the territorial authority of the bishop of Clonmacnois in Connacht to a limited number of lands. It might be that the bishop in the end was not very pleased with the results of Ua Dubhagáin's research, since it proved too many lands to belong to the church of Clonmacnois. Ua Dubhagáin foreseeing this, wisely included in his compilation the passage about the agreement concerning his pay.

If this be true, it seems plausible that the episcopal rental of Clonfert was a kind of counter-declaration by the bishop of Clonfert, to the results of Ua Dubhagáin's research. Thus it could be explained that a considerable number of the lands, which were in possession of the bishop of Clonmacnois according to the Registry, appear in the rental list as paying rent to the bishop of Clonfert. The two documents would thus express rival claims to lands in the late fourteenth century. 'Tuaimsruthra' (23), in possession of Clonmacnois according to the Registry, but paying rent to the bishop of Clonfert according to the rental, was still held by the bishop of Clonmacnois in the seventeenth century. This obviously confirms the suggestion that the bishop of Clonmacnois not only had actual possessions in Connacht, but also that he was able to defend them against the bishop of Clonfert.

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<sup>25</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* X, 393-396.

<sup>26</sup> *Registry*, 456.

However there are many cases where the opposite was true. The lands held by the bishop of Clonmacnois according to the Registry had come in the possession of other churches by the sixteenth century. Most prominent here was the bishop of Clonfert who held 'Dunanoght' (1), 'Dunmeadhain' (3), 'Tuaim Catrighe' (6), 'Grainsy' (8), 'Kill Tormoir' (10), 'Killorain' (11), 'Kill Coirill' (13), 'Killuir Beg' (15), possibly also 'Killuir Mor' (14), and 'Killithain' (17). 'Killchuirin' (21) came partly into the possession of the bishop of Clonfert, the other part was held by the bishop of Tuam in the seventeenth century. Also there is the bishop of Elphin, who took over lands of Clonmacnois situated in his diocese. He held four quarters in 'Killosaigelean' (18) from at least the late sixteenth century onwards.<sup>27</sup> 'Dysyort' (24) alias 'Comyn in Disert', a townland in Dysert parish, was also in his possession in the year 1641, when the surveys were made.<sup>28</sup> At that time he also held 'Killtuma' (27), in the parish of Kiltoom.<sup>29</sup>

It appears therefore that those lands claimed as lands of S. Ciarán in the name of Cairpre Crum (nos. 1 - 33) were, with the exception of Tuaim Sruthra (23), no longer in possession of the bishop of Clonmacnois in the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

## 7.2. The grant of 'Ceallach mac Finachta'

In contrast, more than half of the lands claimed as donations by 'Kellagh Mc Finatacha Mc Oillille' have a continuous tradition as lands in possession of Clonmacnois: 'Coillin Molruany' (37) in Creagh parish, 'Kill Killchuynne' (35) alias Kilkenny, in Taghmaconnell parish, 'Tuaim-taghar' (38) alias Ardnaglog in Moore parish, and 'Killmeas' (34) in Rahara parish. Father Patrick Egan, who examined the churchlands in this area in detail, pointed out that practically the whole south-western half of the parish of Taghmaconnell was churchland, and the same applies to the parishes of Creagh and Moore, south of Taghmaconnell. He assumes that the area was mainly controlled by Clonmacnois in the early period, but was then transferred to the bishops, or to the canons and canonesses of Aughrim, Clontuskert and Kilcreevanty in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Compossicion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freeman, 169; *Books of Survey* III, 280.

<sup>28</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 107.

<sup>29</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 98.

<sup>30</sup> Patrick K. Egan, 'The Carmelite cell of Bealaneny', *Galway Arch. Hist. Soc. Jn.* 26 (1954/55) 19-25, esp. 23.

We are talking here about the lands situated between the river Suck and the Shannon. They were conquered by the Uí Maine in the middle of the eighth century.<sup>31</sup> Henceforward the Uí Maine were the immediate neighbours of S. Ciarán, west of the Shannon. The story about the donations of seven churches to Ciarán by Ceallach, alias Cathal, king of Uí Maine has its historical background in the early ninth century. The political setting of this period seems to provide the perfect constellation for a donation, since, as Professor Ó Corráin has pointed out, a land grant to the nearby church or monastery in a newly conquered territory was a characteristic practice in pre-Norman Ireland.<sup>32</sup> It seems therefore a reasonable assumption, that the seven donations by Ceallach mac Finachta, listed in the Registry, elaborate on a genuine grant, made by the king of Uí Maine to Clonmacnois in the first half of the ninth century. The lands formed part of the ecclesiastical estate henceforward. In the thirteenth century the bishop of Clonmacnois attempted to include these lands into his diocese. Around the same time the abbot's family had withdrawn to the lands west of the Shannon and claimed them as their possession. Despite the fact that they were eventually assigned to the bishop of Tuam, the bishop of Clonmacnois could maintain authority on other levels, and appears as one of the most important landowners in the area in the later middle ages.<sup>33</sup> This part of the U Ceallaigh section in the Registry might have formed part of the original 'Red booke', which Ua Dubhagáin used for his compilation.

### **7.3. Ua Máelsechlainn**

The Ua Máelsechlainn donations are situated in counties Offaly and Westmeath. They are distributed in the parishes of Clonmacnois (47, 48, 51), Kilmanaghan (54), Lemanaghan (45, 46), Tisaran (49, 53) and Gallen (50) in county Offaly. The parishes of Ballyloughloe, which in medieval times included Killcleagh as well as St. Mary's Athlone (42, 43, 55, 59), Horseleap, or Ardnurcher parish (58), Kilcumreragh (41) and Ballymore (57) are the parishes in county Westmeath. Altogether the lands comprise an area reaching from the river Shannon in the west to Ardnurcher parish in the east, and from Gallen in the south to Ballymore in the north.

Some of the lands here have well established traditional links with S. Ciarán and his church. Lemanaghan, alias Tuaim n-Eirc was given to the saint by the ancestor of the

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<sup>31</sup> *AT* (755); *AFM* 751; see above, 77-78.

<sup>32</sup> D. Ó Corráin, 'Nationality and kingship in pre-Norman Ireland', in T. W. Moody (ed), *Nationality and the pursuit of national independence* (Belfast 1978) 1-36, here 25.

<sup>33</sup> See above, 144.

Síl nÁedo Sláine, according to the Clonmacnois annals.<sup>34</sup> Lands in Athlone are claimed as S. Ciarán's possession in Mageoghagan's annals.<sup>35</sup> Archaeological finds, together with annalistic evidence, point to a connection between Clonmacnois and the neighbouring church of Gallen.<sup>36</sup> The hill Knockasta in Kilcumreragh parish is mentioned as the eastern boundary of a donation to Ciarán by Feradach mac Duach, king of western Mide.<sup>37</sup> Ballyloughloe parish contains the site of the church Íseal Chiaráin, where the brothers of Ciarán are said to have lived, and which seems to have been the residence of the Céili Dé at Clonmacnois. When the rights of the church were violated by the son of Conchobar Ua Máelsechlainn in the late eleventh century, 'Magh n-úra' was granted to the Céili Dé in compensation. This was the name of the plain extending eastwards from Athlone in the direction of the modern town of Moate, at the border between the former parishes of Ballyloughloe and Kilcleagh. Another independent tradition confirms these lands as S. Ciarán's property. According to the tale of the hostel of Da Choga, S. Colum Cille scattered the clay (úir) of Ciarán in the plain, to banish the devils out of it - therefore, from the times of S. Colum Cille, it is called the plain of the clay, 'Magh n-úra'.<sup>38</sup> Ardnurcher parish houses the graves and remains of S. Ciarán's father and his sisters.<sup>39</sup> Mag Eli, or Moyelly, roughly coextensive with Kilmanaghan parish, was the place where in the late eleventh century an abbot of Clonmacnois retired to. The territory formed part of the mensal land of the Uí Chatharnaigh (also nicknamed na Sionnaigh, the Foxes) lords of Tethba.<sup>40</sup> They became most prominent in Clonmacnois in the eleventh century which was probably the time when the lands of Kilmanaghan came under S. Ciarán's authority.

The claimed Ua Máelsechlainn donations in the Registry cover the entire diocese of Clonmacnois,<sup>41</sup> plus four parishes east of it, namely Ardnurcher, Kilcumreragh, Kilmanaghan and Ballymore (alias Lochseudi) which were part of the diocese of Meath in the later middle ages. According to the Annals of Tigernach the diocese of Westmeath

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<sup>34</sup> *CS* 646; *AClon* 642, p. 103-103; *AFM* 645. See above, 93-94.

<sup>35</sup> *AClon*, 1210, p. 224.

<sup>36</sup> T. D. Kendrick, 'Gallen priory excavations 1934-5', *JRSAI* 69 (1939) 1-20, here 9; Dumville & Grabowski, *Chronicles and annals*, 224 - 226.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Walsh, *The placenames of Westmeath* (Dublin 1957) 280-284; Liam Fox, *Ardagh and Clonmacnois Ant. Soc. Jn.* 12 (1951) 52-65, here Appendix, 64-65; the grant is mentioned in the Book of Ballymote 61 and by Mac Firbis in the Book of Genealogies.

<sup>38</sup> Walsh, *The placenames of Westmeath*, 5-6, n.3.

<sup>39</sup> *Féilire Óengusso Céili Dé. The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*, ed. Whitley Stokes (London 1905, reprint Dublin 1984) 203; Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 119.

<sup>40</sup> Liam Cox, 'Historic Moyelly - Home of Colonel Richard Grace', *Jn. of the Old Athlone Society* 1 (1974/75) 238-241.

<sup>41</sup> Compare above, 142-147.



was annexed to the city of Clonmacnois, at the synod of Birr in the year 1174.<sup>42</sup> The territory in question here was possibly that represented by these parishes in county Westmeath. They formed part of the diocese of Clonmacnois for a limited time only. It is generally assumed that Simon Rochfort, as the first Norman bishop of Meath, extended the territory of his diocese at the expense of Clonmacnois, as early as the late twelfth century.<sup>43</sup> The Registry here might supply a valuable source about the original diocesan boundaries, which would have included parts of Ballymore, as well as the parishes Kilcumreragh, Ardnurcher and Kilmanaghan. Claims by the Anglo-Norman bishop of Meath would thus have reduced the diocese of Clonmacnois to the area in the immediate vicinity of the former ecclesiastical settlement, plus the lands of the medieval parish of Ballyloughloe, including Kilcleagh and the eastern half of Athlone parish. There is evidence that even this part of the diocese was at risk of being alienated from the bishop of Clonmacnois under the impact of Anglo-Norman church policy. All of the parish churches which constituted the diocese of Clonmacnois are said to have been granted by their founder Richard Tuite, to the Cistercians of Abbeylara. It seems they could not take possession of their endowments, possibly due to the fact that, since a castle was built in Clonmacnois, the bishop there had Anglo-Norman support to defend his diocese.<sup>44</sup>

#### 7.4. Ua Conchobair

All of the presumed Ua Conchobair donations were known either as churchland in the later middle ages, or as early ecclesiastical sites. 'Toberelly' (no. 60) in Baslick parish was an early foundation, associated with Armagh in the old days, later becoming the site of a Franciscan cell.<sup>45</sup> 'Tamhnagh' (no. 61) in county Sligo was a church once under the authority of Armagh, but then assigned to Clonmacnois, according to the witness of Tirechán.<sup>46</sup> 'Kilmurihy' (no. 62) seems to have been situated in Baslick parish and housed Dominican friars in the later middle ages.<sup>47</sup> Kilmacteige (no. 63) also in county Sligo is

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<sup>42</sup> *AT* (1174).

<sup>43</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 65; J. Brady, 'Origin and growth of the diocese of Meath', *IER* 72 (1949) 1-13, 166-176; Gwynn, *The Irish church*, 189.

<sup>44</sup> See below, 153 + 202.

<sup>45</sup> Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life* I, 108. 'A list of monasteries in Connacht 1577', ed. K. W. Nicholls, *Galway Arch. Hist. Soc. Jn.* 33 (1972/73) 28-43, here 38.

<sup>46</sup> Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 142-143, §25.2.

<sup>47</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'A list of monasteries', 38, n.94.

associated with S. Ciarán according to local tradition.<sup>48</sup> In Tulsk (no. 64) Dominicans were settled in the later middle ages,<sup>49</sup> and 'Killogealba' (no. 65), probably Ogulla parish, might have been a monastic foundation of S. Brendan.<sup>50</sup>

Tawnagh and Kilmacteige fall out of the geographical centre of the majority of Ua Conchobair donations. They are situated rather far away in the north west in county Sligo; however links with Clonmacnois and these two churches are best documented in the sources. We know for certain, that already in the late seventh century, Tawnagh belonged to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Clonmacnois. In Kilmacteige a well dedicated to S. Ciarán of Clonmacnois existed down to the nineteenth century and family names formerly associated with Clonmacnois are very frequent amongst its parish clergy in the later middle ages.<sup>51</sup>

The remaining four donations are located in the area around Tulsk, in the parishes of Ogulla and Baslick, all in the immediate vicinity of Carn Fraích, the traditional inauguration site of the Uí Chonchobair kings of Connacht since around the twelfth century.<sup>52</sup> It seems plausible that an original part of the claimed Ua Conchobair donations dates back to the early period, when Clonmacnois had ecclesiastical jurisdiction over considerable parts of Connacht. The lands situated around Tulsk, near Carn Fraích might have come into the possession of Clonmacnois some time after the late eleventh century, when the kings of Connacht became once more prominent as S. Ciarán's patrons and friends. The lands might have been granted to Clonmacnois by the kings of Connacht out of the royal mensal lands near their inauguration site.

### **7.5. Ua Ruairc**

The Uí Ruairc, lords of Conmaicne were the ruling family in Bréifne, a subkingdom in Connacht, between the tenth and the twelfth centuries. The lands claimed by the church of Clonmacnois in their territory are situated at the border between the counties of Roscommon and Leitrim, along the river Shannon, north of Lough Boderg.

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<sup>48</sup> T. O'Rourke, *History of Sligo town and country* (reprod. Sligo 1986) vol 2, 152-153.

<sup>49</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 230-231.

<sup>50</sup> *Books of Survey I*, 76-79; *Compossicion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freeman, 153-154; the Compossicion Book of Connought does not mention Ogulla parish by name, but the bishop of Elphin appears as holder of land in 'Cowrin mc Brenan', in the barony Roscommon, which might stand for the former property of the monastery of S. Brenan in Ogulla? Gwynn & Hadcock, 400.

<sup>51</sup> See above, 163-164.

<sup>52</sup> *AConn* 1225.5, 1228.4, 1310.7, 1315.7, 1407.9. M. Dillon, *Medieval studies presented to Aubrey Gwynn*, 186n.

Cloone (no.67), Kilmore na Sinna (68), Annaghduff (70) and Kiltoghert (72) have all a tradition as ecclesiastical sites from the early period. None of them is directly associated with S. Ciarán. There are, however, two of the early abbots of Clonmacnois who seem to have come from the territory of Bréifne.<sup>53</sup> There is also hagiographical evidence for links between Bréifne and Clonmacnois. In the Dublin Life of S. Maedóc, the founder saint of Drumlane and Rossinver, the two main ecclesiastical settlements of Bréifne, we are told that the saint once went to Clonmacnois to bind his allegiance and covenant with Ciarán.<sup>54</sup> It seems possible that this passage preserved a genuine tradition concerning the early affiliation of S. Maedóc's churches in Bréifne with Clonmacnois. The churches in Bréifne, belonging to Clonmacnois according to the Registry, could therefore well have been members of S. Ciarán's *paruchia* in the early period and formed an original part of the pre-reform church registry, the 'Red booke'.

It is, however, difficult to trace the Uí Ruairc dynasty as benefactors of Clonmacnois in the sources.<sup>55</sup> Quite the opposite seems to have been the case, since throughout the eleventh century they appear as the lords of Conmaicne amongst the most notorious of the enemies of S. Ciarán.<sup>56</sup> The conflicts leading to their repeated raids on Clonmacnois seem to have resulted out of the political rivalries with the Uí Chonchobair kings of Connacht. Things changed when in the twelfth century, under king Tigernán Ua Ruairc they formed an alliance with Murchad Ua Máelsechlainn, the king of Mide. Tigernán married the daughter of his ally, and hence forward directed his political ambitions towards the declining kingdom of his father in law. Possibly in this context tentative approaches towards Clonmacnois were made. Ua Ruairc's wife Dearbhforghaill, Ua Máelsechlainn's daughter, sponsored the building of the church of the nuns in Clonmacnois in the year 1167.<sup>57</sup> Also there is the so-called Ua Ruairc's tower in Clonmacnois. It seems to have been originally associated with the Uí Chonchobair kings of Connacht, but later tradition assigned the building of the tower to Ua Ruairc.<sup>58</sup> Another curious tradition has it that one Fergal Ua Ruairc, chief of Bréifne, was buried

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<sup>53</sup> Abbot Ceallach mac Secnde (d.740) was of the Conmaicne; possibly abbot Snéidriagail (d.786) was of the Calraige Droma Cliab in north county Leitrim. See Appendix 1, A20, A30.

<sup>54</sup> Plummer (ed), *Bethada Náem nÉreann* I, 251. See above 68.

<sup>55</sup> For the Uí Ruairc of Bréifne see K. W. Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland in the middle ages* (Dublin 1972) 151-153; Micheál Ó Duígeannáin, 'Notes on the history of the kingdom of Bréifne', *JRSAI* 65 (1935) 113-140; K. Simms, 'The Ó Reillys and the kingdom of East Bréifne', *Bréifne* 5 (1979) 305-319, esp. 305-307.

<sup>56</sup> *AT* (1044); *CS* 1048 (recte 1050); *AT* (1065, 1095); *CS* 1111 (recte 1107).

<sup>57</sup> *AFM* 1167.

<sup>58</sup> The Round Tower was originally built, or finished in the early twelfth century by the then abbot of Clonmacnois together with Toirdelbach Ua Conchobair. *CS* 1120, *AFM* 1124. Only later tradition associated its building with Ua Ruairc. Petrie, *The ecclesiastical architecture of Ireland*, 391-393.

in Clonmacnois. A poem survives, lamenting him which is said to have been written by Erard Mac Coisse.<sup>59</sup> Twice the death of a poet of this name is recorded in the annals, once in an entry for the year 991, the second time in 1023.<sup>60</sup> The only Fergal Ua Ruairc who lived around that time had died in the year 966.<sup>61</sup> Since the poem mentions the battle of Clontarf the poet's grief would appear as a rather delayed lamentation over a fifty year old corpse. It therefore should possibly be understood as the poetic expression of later friendship between the descendants of Fergal Ua Ruairc and Clonmacnois, which strictly speaking one might have to call a forgery. The remaining problem would then be to date the period of friendship, which I would suggest was a time in the latter part of the twelfth century. The poem satirizes a certain Ua Maelchiaráin in Clonmacnois for his lack of hospitality. This was an ecclesiastical dynasty in Clonmacnois, which first appears in the records in the eleventh century. There would be no need of, and no point in, such a satire if it would not make sense to the contemporary listeners. It seems likely, therefore, that the poem was originally composed at a time when the ecclesiastical settlement was still functioning, in any case not later than the thirteenth century.<sup>62</sup> Towards the end of the twelfth century the Uí Ruairc came under increasing pressure from the Uí Raigillig, who then rose to power in Bréifne. The Uí Ruairc in consequence sought friendship with the Uí Chonchobair. As the allies of Cathal Crodberg they found admission amongst those who had the right of burial in Clonmacnois.

The lands mentioned as Uí Ruairc donations were situated in the territory of their vassals the Meic Ragnaill. They were lords of Muintir Eolais and, so the Registry claims, gave some additional lands in Killtoghert parish to S. Ciarán.<sup>63</sup> The territory of the Muintir Eolais comprised the south of county Leitrim. Ecclesiastical authority in the area was held, or claimed by S. Caillin, the founder saint of Fenagh. In the thirteenth or fourteenth century compilation, known as the Book of Fenagh, an impressive curse on

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<sup>59</sup> Edited by J. O'Donovan, 'Elegy of Erard Mac Coise, chief Chronicler of the Gaels, pronounced over the Tomb of Fergal O'Ruairc, chief of Brefny, at Clonmacnois', *Jn. Kilk. SE. Irel. Arch. Soc.* 1 (1856-57) 314-356. It has been suggested that the poem might be an eighteenth century forgery, see C. Ó Lochlainn, 'Poets on the battle of Clontarf', *Éigse* 3 (1942) 211-212, 216; many thanks to Dr. Katharine Simms, who enquired about the language of the poem for me, and confirmed the assumption that it might be a genuine medieval compilation.

<sup>60</sup> *AT* (990); *AFM* 1023.

<sup>61</sup> *AU*.

<sup>62</sup> For Ua Maelchiaráin see Appendix 1, AE7. Compare M. Ní. Mhaonaigh, 'Bréifne bias in Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib', *Ériu* 43 (1992) 135-158, esp. 142-150, who suggests that one version of the 'Cogad' was revised in the mid-twelfth century with an obvious Ua Ruairc-Bréifne bias.

<sup>63</sup> Joseph Meehan, 'Notes on the Mac Rannals of Leitrim and their country: Being introductory to a diary of James Reynolds, Lough Scur, county Leitrim for the years 1658-1560', *JRSAI* 35 (1905) 139-151.

those who fail to be buried in Fenagh is contained.<sup>64</sup> It seems to preserve a memory that Fenagh, at one stage the central burial place of the Conmaicne, was deserted for the sake of an apparently more attractive churchyard. Even though this might have concerned the neighbouring church of Cloone in the first place,<sup>65</sup> it seems plausible that the fame of S. Ciarán's church yard in Clonmacnois also spread in the territory of the Muintir Eolais and deprived S. Caillin of a substantial part of his income. Possibly this was the case in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, when propaganda for the salvation-bringing function of S. Ciarán's earth was much enforced. At that time the Muintir Eolais also supplied a famous *scriba* in Clonmacnois.<sup>66</sup>

### 7.6. Mac Diarmada

The Meic Dhiarmada were a branch of the Síil Muiredaig of Connacht. They rose to power as the lords of Mag Luirg in the twelfth century and dominated the area around Boyle, comprising parts of the counties Roscommon north, Sligo and Mayo. The lands donated to S. Ciarán, Knockvicar (73), Killaraght (74) and Rahallon (75) are all situated in Mag Luirg. Knockvicar was the location of a Franciscan house in the later middle ages, while Killaraght is said to have been a Franciscan foundation. There is evidence for early links between Clonmacnois and the peoples settled in the northern part of Connacht, in the extended area of Mag Luirg. Amongst them were the Gailenga, the Gregraike, the Luigne and the Dairtraige Coininnse, who from the seventh to the ninth centuries supplied several abbots of Clonmacnois.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore an accident which happened in the tenth century, testifies to the fact that Clonmacnois exercised ecclesiastical authority in the territory which later became Mac Diarmada's country. In the year 931, so we learn from the *Chronicum*, the staff of Ciarán got lost in Lough Gara, and twelve men drowned in the accident.<sup>68</sup> The precious relic certainly did not get

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<sup>64</sup> W. M. Hennessy and D. H. Kelly (eds), *The Book of Fenagh* (Dublin 1875) 190-193; see also 204-205.

<sup>65</sup> Cloone seems to have been the graveyard for the Meic Ragnaill in the later middle ages, see e.g. *AFM* 1378.

<sup>66</sup> This was Odran Ua hEolais (*AFM* 994). See Appendix 1, S16 (d.995).

<sup>67</sup> Abbot Aedlug (d.652) was of the Gailenga of Corann, north of Lough Gara; Abbot Cuiméne (d.665) was of the Cregraike of Loch Teched, i.e. Lough Gara; abbot Colmán (d.683) was from Airtech, seemingly the Crich Airtig near Lough Gara. The same region seems to have been the home of abbot Máeltuile Ua Cúana (d.877), who came from the branch of the Luigne of Connacht, seated near Lough Gara; Abbot Martan (d.869) was of the Dartraige, possible the Dartraige Coininnse. See Appendix 1, A8, A11, A12, A43, A40. According to Tirechán the territory of the Gregraike in the late seventh century extended as far east as Lough Key, see Nicholls, *Dinnseanchas* 5 (1973) 116.

<sup>68</sup> *CS* 930, *AFM* 930.

lost on a picnic of Clonmacnois clergy at Lough Gara, but would have been brought to the Gregraike on a circuit, in order to collect the taxes and exercise supervision in the churches belonging to the *paruchia* of Ciarán in the region. The Clonmacnois abbot at the time was Tipraide mac Ainnsine of the Uí Briúin.<sup>69</sup> His family background is not further specified, but it is possible that he was of the Uí Briúin in the north of Connacht, and therefore intensified the ecclesiastical authority of Clonmacnois in his home country. There is also evidence that the churches in the territory of the Gregraike were at some stage under the ecclesiastical authority of Armagh. According to a tradition, preserved in the Tripartite Life of S. Patrick, the saint was once in the territory of the Gregraike of Lough Techet, i.e. Lough Gara, and founded a number of churches, one of them being the convent of nuns in Killaraght.<sup>70</sup> The Gregraike are portrayed as rather hostile to S. Patrick, and are said to have thrown stones at him when he entered their territory from the Uí Fiachrach over the river Moy.<sup>71</sup> It seems possible that this hostility originated from, or led to rival claims for ecclesiastical authority between Armagh and Clonmacnois.

The Registry's claim that the lands of the churches of Knockvicar, Killaraght and Rahallon once belonged to Clonmacnois could very well be founded on actual ecclesiastical authority which was exercised by the bishop of Clonmacnois in the northern parts of Connacht, around Lough Gara, in the early period.

### 7.7. Mac Carthaigh

In a final section, the Registry names the claimed possessions of S. Ciarán in Munster. Mac Carthaigh is said to have given several churches in his kingdom to the church of Clonmacnois. Only three of them were readable in the copy used by the seventeenth-century scribe. However, evidence for links between Clonmacnois and Munster, and in particular the Mac Carthaigh family is very meagre indeed. Scattery island, Tuamgraney and Roscrea seem to have been the most southern boundaries of S. Ciarán's sphere of influence according to hagiographical evidence.<sup>72</sup> There is, however, a twelfth century church in Clonmacnois, known as Mac Carthaigh's church or 'Temple

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<sup>69</sup> Tipraide seems to have died shortly before the accident happened. See Appendix 1, A50.

<sup>70</sup> Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life I*, 108.

<sup>71</sup> Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life I*, 138.

<sup>72</sup> See above, 54, 64.

Finghin'.<sup>73</sup> It might have originally taken its name from a saint named Fingen, to whom a church yard and a well in Clonmacnois was dedicated.<sup>74</sup> Later tradition associated the church with the Mac Carthaigh family, who in fact also had a special liking for the name Fingen. We suggested earlier that in the course of the compilation of the Registry in the thirteenth century under Cathal Crobderg, the allies of this king of Connacht found preferential treatment. Amongst them was one Fingen Mac Carthaigh, who fought in Cathal Crobderg's army in the course of the succession struggles for the kingship of Connacht.<sup>75</sup> He apparently in his youth was destined for an ecclesiastical career but had left the church to usurp the kingship of Desmond from his brother Domnall. For a brief period only, between the year 1206 and 1209 he could claim the title as king of Desmond.<sup>76</sup> It seems plausible that the donations in Munster, claimed in the name of the Mac Carthaigh family, went back to some hasty grants made by this claimant to the kingship, in the course of his alliance with the powerful king of Connacht in the early thirteenth century. The lands therefore might never have been under the ecclesiastical authority of Clonmacnois. They found admission in the Registry due to the very circumstances of the time of its thirteenth-century revision.

The same seems to apply to the Geraldine family, who are an exception as the only Anglo-Irish lords who appear in the Registry. They on their part might owe their status as benefactors of S. Ciarán to the circumstances of the late fourteenth century re-edition of the Registry. At that time the lord of Desmond acted as deputy to the king for Máel Sechnaill Ua Ceallaigh. It seems he was, like archbishop Muirchertach Ua Ceallaigh directly involved in the submission of the king of Uí Maine to Richard II. Part of their mission was to safeguard the lands of Ua Ceallaigh in Uí Maine against claims from the Butler lords of Ormond.<sup>77</sup> It seems plausible that for his merits the Geraldine family found mention in the Registry, and received the right to be buried in Clonmacnois, seemingly still an attractive reward in the later middle ages.

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<sup>73</sup> Macalister, *Memorial slabs of Clonmacnois*, 145-150; Petrie, *The ecclesiastical architecture of Ireland*, 269-271; Manning, *Clonmacnois*, 30.

<sup>74</sup> CS 1013 (recte 1015) when the great oak of Fingen's churchyard was prostrated by a storm. For Fingen's well see AT (757, recte 758).

<sup>75</sup> ALCé 1202.

<sup>76</sup> AI 1292; ALCé 1202; AI 1206; AI, ALCé 1209.

<sup>77</sup> E. Curtis, *Richard II in Ireland 1394-5* (Oxford 1927) 122-123, 127-128, for the letters to the king by Máelsechlainn Ua Ceallaigh and the archbishop. For Uí Maine as part of the Butler lordship for some time, since the late thirteenth century see C. A. Empey, *The butler lordship in Ireland 1186-1515* (Dublin Ph.D. Thesis, TCD 1970) 55-60; also *ibid*, Appendix II, xvi.

### 7.8. The abbatial lands

A further section of the Registry lists the livings belonging to the abbot of Clonmacnois. They consisted of half of the nun's land in Clonmacnois; five days in the nearby hill of Clonmacnois, possibly that on which the castle was built in the thirteenth century; half the income of the house of the dead, possibly Eglais beg, formerly the mortuary chapel of the monastery; half the tithes of Clonburren, the vicarage opposite Clonmacnois across the Shannon; lands situated in Moore parish plus the lands of Ath Chiaráin, situated in Clonigormican parish, south of Tulsk (88-93). It seems very plausible indeed, that the abbatial lands in Clonmacnois should have been in the immediate surroundings of the ecclesiastical city. Moreover the list here finds confirmation through the lands named by Archdall as having been claimed by the Uí Mháeleoin, the former abbots of Clonmacnois, in the late thirteenth century. Like the present enumeration they comprised Clonburren as well as lands in Moore parish.<sup>78</sup>

There is also Ua Cillin (O Killyn) mentioned as the 'chiefe water cleark belonging to Cluain'. He secured his rights to two holdings in the parishes of Clonfert and Athlone (94-95).

Finally in what appears to be a seventeenth-century appendix to the Registry several families, the "O'Cobthy, O'Floinn, O'Hidersgoil, ... together w<sup>h</sup> O Tressey, O Cynnydhe and O'Cuaghan" are mentioned for having given alms to Clonmacnois.<sup>79</sup> These might simply have been families living in and around the late medieval parish of Clonmacnois, possibly still in the seventeenth century.

### 7.9. The lands of S. Ciarán - an attempt to reconstruct the extent of the ecclesiastical estate.

For the greater proportion of the lands listed in the Registry, there seems to be enough historical ground on which to base the assumption that they were, in the early period, genuinely part of the territory under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Clonmacnois. With the exception of the Cairpre Cruim proportion of the Ua Ceallaigh grant, the Mac Carthaigh and the Geraldine section, definite links between the respective benefactors and Clonmacnois can be established. On the basis of the evidence contained

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<sup>78</sup> Archdall, *Monasticon*, 390. See above, 146.

<sup>79</sup> *Registry*, 459.



in the Registry we might therefore attempt to draw a picture of the extent of the lands in possession of the church of Clonmacnois prior to the church reform.

First of all there were the ecclesiastical lands very near Clonmacnois which seem to have formed part of the estate as agricultural acreage under cultivation. These were the fields in the vicinity of the church or monastery (*agellulis monasterio uicinis*) mentioned by Adamnán, when he talks about S. Colum Cille's visit to Clonmacnois.<sup>80</sup> These lands might have represented the '*termon Ciaráin*', the lands belonging to the abbot, very near his church.<sup>81</sup> The whole area was possibly confined by the endpoints of the causeways mentioned repeatedly in the Registry as well as in the annals. There is the road from 'Cluainlaigean to Cluain Finnlogh', which is said to have been kept in repair by the Ua Máelseachlainn kings.<sup>82</sup> Also there was the causeway leading from Clunburren to the 'Cruaidh of Failte' which still existed in O'Donovan's time, leading from the graveyard of the nunnery of Clunburren to Faltia townland in Moore parish. It is said to have been maintained by the Ua Ceallaigh lords of Uí Maine.<sup>83</sup> The road between 'Cruan-na-Feadh to Iubhar Conaire, and from Iubhar to ye Logh' was to be maintained by Ua Ruairc.<sup>84</sup> This seems to have been a road leading west from Faltia, in Moore parish to 'Iubhar Conaire', the yew tree of Conor at the western borders of Moore parish.<sup>85</sup> The Registry might reflect a genuine tradition, concerning the maintenance of roadway, which is otherwise mentioned in the law tracts as a public obligation.<sup>86</sup> It can be very well understood when we take into consideration the physical environment of Clonmacnois, which was basically situated in the middle of bogland. In fact, most recent excavations in the boglands around Clonmacnois brought to light a number of wooden causeways, leading through the bogs, which could well have represented the roads mentioned here.<sup>87</sup> We might deduce the approximate east-west extension of the ecclesiastical estate from

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<sup>80</sup> Anderson (ed), *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, 24.

<sup>81</sup> CS 832, 833. Compare Hughes, 'Introduction to *A history of medieval Ireland*', in Hughes, *Church and society*, chap. I, 20.

<sup>82</sup> *Registry*, 450.

<sup>83</sup> *Registry*, 457 n.3 and 4. Compare O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, co. Roscommon I*, 54-58, Letter from Ballinasloe, 18.6.1837.

<sup>84</sup> *Registry*, 452.

<sup>85</sup> *Registry*, 452 n.4; 459 n.3-5.

<sup>86</sup> Dr. Colmán Etchingham pointed this out to me, and kindly promised to provide me with the relevant reference.

<sup>87</sup> The excavations were carried out by Aenghus Maloney in Black Water Bog, and near Clonfinlough, as well as in Clonfert Bog and Columba Bog on the west side of the river Shannon. A report on the excavations will be published around Christmas 1994, by Aenghus Maloney, who presented his work in a paper, given at a conference in and on Clonmacnois, the 23rd of September 1994.

these landmarks, reaching from Clonfinlough in the east to the western borders of Moore parish.

Apart from that there were streets within the 'city' of Clonmacnois, which apparently were to be maintained by the respective abbots. There was the heap of the three crosses, 'Ulaidh na tri cross' as the central point from where the roads led in the various directions. This is a little mount, to the right hand side on the esker way, leading from Clonmacnois to the nuns church in the east. There are three wooden crosses there today, which originally might have been stone crosses, each standing at the road leading east, north and south from Clonmacnois which would have been in the west of the junction.<sup>88</sup> In the year 1026 the road from the junction to the garden of the abbess, presumably towards the nunnery was repaired by the abbot.<sup>89</sup> Another road led from the junction to Cross Chomgall, and a third one to the western entrance of the settlement. Also there was a road from the 'Cross of bishop Etchen' to 'Irdom Chiarain', the sacristy of Ciarán which might have been the ecclesiastical treasury. All these roads were repaired by the son of Conn na mBocht in the late eleventh century.<sup>90</sup>

Some of the lands in the city and its near surroundings are known by name. There is *Lios nabaidh*, the Abbot's fort, which seems to have been the name of an urban district within the settlement.<sup>91</sup> It has been suggested by Raighnall O'Floinn and others, that the house of the abbot was originally situated at the place where later the Anglo-Norman castle was built. It also seems possible that a bridge over the Shannon started off from here, since large stone and timber finds were made in the river, possibly the remains of a bridge. This might have been the bridge called *Cuirr Cluana*, which is mentioned in the Annals of Tigernach as having existed in the mid-twelfth century.<sup>92</sup> There was also the field of the milk cow (*Gardha na gamhmaighe*),<sup>93</sup> the fort of the gospel, *Lios-an-tsoiscela*,<sup>94</sup> the garden of Muiredach Ua Dubthaigh,<sup>95</sup> or the churchyard of S. Fingen.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Heather A. King suggested to me in a very helpful discussion that this might have been the original location of the three huge stone crosses now situated inside the walls of the church yard, still known as the South Cross, the North Cross and the East Cross.

<sup>89</sup> The paved way from 'Garrdha-in-bhainbh to hUlaidh na ttri ccross' (explained by Mageoghagan as the pavement from the garden of the nuns to the heap of stones where the three crosses stand) was repaired by Bresal Conaillech in the year 1026. *AFM* 1026; *AClon* 1026, p. 175.

<sup>90</sup> *AFM* 1070.

<sup>91</sup> In 918 it is mentioned for the first time, as having been flooded by the Shannon (*AFM* 918). In the year 1135 it was plundered (*AClon* 1135, p. 194). According to Mageoghagan's annals forty seven hoses at 'Liseanabby' were plundered in the year 1205 (*AClon* 1205, p. 221).

<sup>92</sup> *AT* (1158); *AFM* 1158; *AClon* 1158, p. 204. R. O'Floinn made the suggestion, when giving a paper on 'Art and Patronage in Clonmacnois' at the conference, held the 23rd of September 1994. The suggestion was confirmed by Heather A. King.

<sup>93</sup> *AFM* 1150.

<sup>94</sup> *AFM* 1155; *AClon* 1153, p. 200, talks of 'Lisan Tosgelty'.

Other claimed lands were situated at a further remove from the monastic centre and seem to have originally belonged to churches which had come under the ecclesiastical overlordship of Clonmacnois. These churches in hagiographical language enjoyed the friendship of S. Ciarán, meaning they acknowledged him as their ecclesiastical overlord and paid their taxes. The Registry specifies this relationship in the case of S. Ciarán's churches in south county Leitrim. The taxes are set down in detail, as three cows and three pigs from the church of Kiltoghert, two cows and one pig out of the other five churches belonging to S. Ciarán in the area. The tax was payable once a year at S. Martin's day to the *comarba*, who would come as the bishop's deputy and collect the rent.<sup>97</sup>

Thus according to the evidence of the Registry, the land possessions of Clonmacnois further removed from the settlement itself, seem to have included holdings in Uí Maine, south county Roscommon, an area around Tulsk, in north county Roscommon, lands in the neighbourhood of Lough Gara, west of Boyle forming part of the counties Sligo and Mayo. Also there were lands in south county Leitrim, in the territory of Muintir Eolais, and finally the territory east of the Shannon, in counties Offaly and Westmeath, consisting of what later became the diocese of Clonmacnois, plus lands in Ardnurcher, Kilmanaghan and Kilcumreragh parish.

The focus of attention in the Registry is drawn to S. Ciarán's lands in Connacht, and the immediate vicinity to the east in counties Offaly and Westmeath. There might have been other parts to the original 'Red booke', which in the course of the two late medieval redactions of the document got lost. It seems, for example, plausible that the fourteenth-century scribe employed by an Ua Ceallaigh should omit the section concerning lands in a part of the country which was totally out of the sphere of interest of his patron. A similar Connacht bias might obviously have dominated the early thirteenth-century revision under the patronage of Cathal Ua Conchobair. Hagiographical material suggests that apart from the areas mentioned in the Registry, Ciarán had also authority over churches and their lands in county Louth, in the area around Devenish in county Fermanagh, in the territory around the churches of Fore, Roscrea, as well as on Scatterry island and on the Aran islands.

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<sup>95</sup> *AClon* 1135, p. 194.

<sup>96</sup> *AFM* 1013.

<sup>97</sup> *Registry*, 452.

## 8. 'THE HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL' OF CLONMACNOIS - CONCLUSIONS

Why was Clonmacnois, as one of the most important and powerful churches in pre-Norman Ireland, reduced to the episcopal seat of one of the smallest dioceses in late medieval Ireland? What formerly was a most powerful ecclesiastical estate dwindled into a comparatively insignificant church which in the later middle ages had but local fame.

Based on the results of the present study we might conclude that most decisive for this development were the changes in organization in the Irish church, brought about in the course of the twelfth century church reform, followed up by the reorganization under Anglo-Norman impact. We came to the conclusion that the ecclesiastical aristocracy in Clonmacnois refused to join the reformers, that the reform party in Clonmacnois was in lack of adequate secular support and therefore remained an insignificant minority. The final formation of the diocese of Clonmacnois was only made possible with Anglo-Norman support, which was further enforced once Clonmacnois had become the site of a royal castle in the year 1214. The church, and probably a religious community within it, continued to exist but became increasingly a family business run by the Uí Mháeleoin, who had dominated the abbacy since the early twelfth century. It seems in the early thirteenth century the ecclesiastical dynasty made a final attempt to continue their tradition as successors of Ciarán, by dominating the see of Clonmacnois. The attempt failed and the family eventually withdrew to the remaining parts of the former abbatial lands of Clonmacnois.

It remains to assess possible reasons for the decline of the Clonmacnois as a powerful ecclesiastical centre. In the preceding chapters Clonmacnois has been described as an estate, from which power was exercised in terms of ecclesiastical overlordship. This seems to have meant in the first place money in return for friendship, possibly including pastoral care, the provision with a priest as well as protection for the members of the *paruchia* of Clonmacnois. Evidence from the Registry of Clonmacnois, completed by the study of the family background of the ecclesiastical officials, the saga material on the respective benefactors of Clonmacnois plus the saga and hagiographical traditions about S. Ciarán has been used to establish the approximate extent of the church lands. It seems that the taxes paid from these churches constituted a major part of the income of the ecclesiastical estate. The mechanisms of dependency by which power was exercised, was paralysed by the rearrangement of Irish diocesan structures in the course of the

church reform. The individual churches came under the authority of the respective local bishop. Inis Cathaig on Scattery Island, for example, claimed itself episcopal status for a brief period, but later came under the jurisdiction of the bishops of Killaloe. The churches in the northern parts of Connacht, like Tawnagh, Killaraght or 'Cellola Toch' became incorporated in the diocese of Achonry, Devenish and Inishmacsaint were eventually assigned to the authority of the bishopric of Clogher and S. Ciarán's lands in Uí Maine went to the bishop of Clonfert. In short it seems that, at least in the case of Clonmacnois, the reorganization of the Irish church in the twelfth century meant the gradual dissolution of the network of dependencies in which the bishop of Clonmacnois could claim ecclesiastical authority, and from which the successors of S. Ciarán drew their income.

Another factor which worked towards the dispossession of the traditional ecclesiastical ruling class was the introduction of the new monastic orders in Ireland. Thus we know, for example, that the nuns of Clonmacnois adopted the Arrouaisian rule in the mid twelfth century. Together with the church of the nunnery in Drumalgach (in Moore parish) they were granted to Clonard, the mother house of the Arrouaisian nuns in Ireland, by king Murchad Ua Máelsechlainn around the year 1144.<sup>1</sup>

Further evidence for the granting away of S. Ciarán's lands to newly established houses dates from the time after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans and concerns the ecclesiastical lands east of the Shannon, in the territory which then became the diocese of Clonmacnois. Ballyloughloe parish belonged to the lands of John de Verdun in Meath and was held from him by Richard Tuite.<sup>2</sup> According to Ware, Richard Tuite also founded the Cistercian house of Abbeylara at the site of the former church of Granard a year before he died in 1211, and settled Cistercians from Dublin there.<sup>3</sup> No foundation charter of Abbeylara survived. However, as apparent from later sources, Richard Tuite endowed his new foundation with parts of his lands in the area around Ballyloughloe,

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<sup>1</sup> "Ecclesiam S. Maria de Cluaynmacnois, ad orientem cum villa de Kellogainechan, cum suis pertinentiis"; the papal confirmation of the grant from 1195 also mentions a church west of Clonmacnois, "Ecclesiam S. Maria ad occidentem cum villa Drumalgach, cum suis pertinentiis" which might have belonged to Clonmacnois as well; see Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vol VI, part II, 1144-1145. Compare Gwynn & Hadcock, 413 for the nuns in Clonard, 316 for Drumalgach in Moore parish. The nun's church in Clonmacnois became later an appurtenance of Kilcreevanty, H. T. Knox, *Notes on the early history*, 280-285.

<sup>2</sup> Anglo-Norman presence in that area is testified by the royal castles built in Ardnurcher, Ballyloughloe and Clonmacnois, *AFM* 1192; *ALCé* 1214. A. J. Otway-Ruthven, *A history of medieval Ireland. With an introduction by Kathleen Hughes* (London 1968) 199; *Cal. Doc. Irel.* I, no. 612 (July 1215); A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The partition of the de Verdon lands in Ireland in 1332', *PRIA* 66 (1967/68) 401-455, see p. 414 for the identification of Laghelacon as Ballyloughloe; *Cal. Doc. Irel.* I, no. 970 (24. Sept. 1220), the document talks of 'Richard Tuite's castle in Delvin', which seems to stand for the castle in Ballyloughloe; *Cal. Doc. Irel.* I, no. 1173 (30. March 1224).

<sup>3</sup> Ware, *De Hibernia* (1654) 171; Gwynn & Hadcock, 124.

which the monks of Abbeylara in late medieval times claimed from the bishop of Clonmacnois in the name of their thirteenth century founder.<sup>4</sup> Obviously one might doubt such claims as a late medieval invention, fabricated in the course of the Gaelic revival. However, it has been suggested by A. Otway-Ruthven that the parishes held or claimed by Anglo-Norman abbeys can provide a valuable index of the extent of Anglo-Norman domination and of the possessions of particular grantors. It seems plausible, therefore, that the whole group of parishes claimed by the monks of Abbeylara in the diocese of Clonmacnois represents an original grant by Richard Tuite to his Cistercian protégés in Abbeylara.<sup>5</sup>

A second Anglo-Norman foundation which benefited from the former ecclesiastical lands of S. Ciarán was Greatconnell, a house of Augustinian canons in the diocese of Kildare. The lands concerned here were those in Ardnurcher parish, which was under the patronage of S. Ciarán in pre-Norman times. According to the 'Song of Dermot and the Earl' the cantred of Ardnurcher, as a part of Meath, was granted by Hugh de Lacy to Meiler fitz Henry.<sup>6</sup> He was also known as the founder of Greatconnell, a dependency of the Welsh abbey, Llanthony I, dedicated to S. Mary and S. David, which he seems to have endowed with lands in Ardnurcher.<sup>7</sup> Probably during this period the Welsh saint David was introduced as the local patron of the parish, replacing S. Ciarán down to the present day. The lands of Ardnurcher parish were soon claimed back from the prior of Greatconnell by Matilda, daughter and heiress of Walter de Lacy as part of her share of the lands in Meath,<sup>8</sup> so that the monks of Greatconnell probably never really profited from their lands in Westmeath. However, the case demonstrates how the former ecclesiastical lands were alienated from the authority of the head of the

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<sup>4</sup> See above, 153-154.

<sup>5</sup> A. J. Otway-Ruthven, *A history*, 121; see also P. Kearney, *Teathbha* 1 (1969-73) 202-205, says Richard Tuit founded Abbeylara in 1205 and granted 18 cartrons of land for the purpose. He gives however no sources.

<sup>6</sup> G. H. Orpen (ed), *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* (London 1892) 228-229.

<sup>7</sup> In 1205 king John confirmed the possessions granted to Greatconnell by Meiler, amongst them lands in 'Atornorohor', *Cal. Doc. Irel.* I, 41, no. 273 (10. Sept. 1205). Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vol VI, part 2, 1138.

<sup>8</sup> For the partition of Meath between the two daughters of Walter de Lacy, i.e. between their respective husbands see G. J. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans 1169-1333* (Oxford 1911-20, reprint 1968) vol 3, 260-261; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, *PRLA* 66 (1967/68) 409-411 for the lands of de Geneville and de Verdun. Already in 1250 Matilda was involved in a dispute with the prior of Greatconnell, concerning land in 'Arnurch', *Cal. Doc. Irel.* I, 459, no. 3083 (1. Sept. 1250). It remains unclear how the conflict was settled, but we do know from a royal letter written in 1282 that by that time Matilda was in firm possession of the manor of 'Arnorchor'. *Cal. Doc. Irel.* II, 455, no. 1988 (soon after 23. Oct. 1282). Matilda's brother in law William de Geneville, archdeacon of Besancon was rector of the church of 'Arthinurchir' in the second half of the thirteenth century, *Cal. Doc. Irel.* II, 105, no. 645. The letter is dated in the year 1260 and calls William a brother of 'G. Geineville'. Compare above, 150.

church of Clonmacnois and granted to new monastic houses. For Ardnurcher this had further consequences as far as its affiliation to a bishopric is concerned. It could well have been one of the parishes of Westmeath, annexed to the bishopric of Clonmacnois in the year 1174, but later on, presumably in the course of the efforts of Matilda de Lacy to gain the lands, the parish church was assigned to the bishopric of Meath.<sup>9</sup>

The question of the impact of the Anglo-Normans on the Irish church has been the subject of a very controversial discussion. Contemporaries often held them responsible for the impoverishment of the Irish Church.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand there is lots of evidence clearly showing that the Anglo-Norman nobles were active not only in promoting the reform in Ireland but also in founding monasteries, supporting the new monastic orders and endowing existing churches with new lands and rights.<sup>11</sup> Church land was generally respected, and not granted away by the king, so that most recent research comes to the conclusion that the possession of the Irish church under the influence of the Anglo-Normans not only remained intact but the newcomers even added to it.<sup>12</sup> Such a statement speaks, of course, of the church in general, as an entity which exists detached from the local political circumstances, characterized mainly by its being different from secular power. The church as a whole is treated in an abstract way, primarily as the counterpart of the secular world. In this regard it is of no importance whether church land belongs to a monastery in Ireland or Wales, as long as it remains in the possession of the church as such.<sup>13</sup> Likewise changes inside a local church or parish itself, such as

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<sup>9</sup> For the diocesan boundaries see Gwynn & Hadcock, *Map of monastic Ireland*; B. Mitchell, *A new genealogical atlas*, 116.

<sup>10</sup> Geraldus Cambrensis for example, asserted that the Anglo-Norman nobles were mean to the Irish church and stole its land. See Giraldus Cambrensis, *Expugnatio Hibernica: The conquest of Ireland*, ed. A. B. Scott, F. X. Martin (Dublin 1978), 154-157; 242-243, 263-264. The great remonstrance, a petition by the Irish lords to Pope John XXII, dating from the year 1317 contains, amongst others, charges against the Anglo-Norman nobility, concerning their treatment of the Irish church who they deprived of her land and restricted in her liberty. See Edmond Curtis and R. B. McDowell (eds), *Irish historical documents 1172-1922* (London 1943, reprint 1968) 38-46, for the translation of the text, here 39-40 "And it was they [i.e. the Irish kings], not the English nor others of any nation, who eminently endowed the Irish Church with lands, ample liberties and many possessions, although at the present time she is for the most part, sadly despoiled of those lands and liberties by the English - For by them [i.e. king Henry and the wicked and crafty English ministers] the bounds of the Church have been so far restricted, curtailed and cut down that some cathedral churches have been forcibly despoiled of a half of their lands and possessions and even more, while nearly every liberty of the church has been by these same persons cast adrift."

<sup>11</sup> See for example Kells, in the diocese of Meath, which received rich grants from Hugh de Lacy *before* 1186. Charter preserved in an inspeximus of 14. Richard II, printed by Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1830) vol VI, part 2, 1143 (wrongly printed under Kells in Kilkenny) another example is St. Mary's Dublin, see A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The medieval church lands of county Dublin', in John A. Watt, J. B. Morrall, F. X. Martin (eds), *Medieval studies presented to A. Gwynn* (Dublin 1961) 54-73; Columcille Conway, 'The lands of St. Mary's abbey Dublin', *PRIA* 62 (1962) 21-25.

<sup>12</sup> Kevin Down, 'Colonial society and economy in the high middle ages', *NHI* II, 450-453.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 451. Down cites Llanthony priories as an example here.

the introduction of a new patron saint, or changing structures in the organization of individual churches, go unobserved.

It seems that in the case of Clonmacnois the developments in the twelfth and thirteenth century, the consequences of the church reform, Anglo-Norman interference and the establishment of new monastic orders in Ireland, resulted in the dissolution of the ecclesiastical estate, ultimately caused by the alienation of the lands formerly under the authority of Clonmacnois.



## APPENDIX 1. CATALOGUE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY OF CLONMACNOIS, FROM THE SIXTH TO THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

Abbreviations: A - Abbot, vA - vice-abbot, B - Bishop, P - Priest, S - Scribe, An - Anchorite, Sen - Senior, AE - *Airchinnech Eglaisi Bige*, G - Guestmaster (*airchinnech tige Oiged*), C - Head of the Céile Dé, O - Others.

### Appendix 1.1. List of monastic officials

#### Abbots (A)<sup>1</sup>

- A1. **Ciarán mac in tsáir.** Precise dates for the foundation of Clonmacnois or the death of Ciarán are not available. In the tenth century, at the time when the Clonmacnois chronicles were compiled or revised independently from the other annalistic compilations, it was apparently a well established fact that Ciarán, the founder saint of Clonmacnois died in the year in which Diarmait mac Cerbaill, the ultimate ancestor of the Southern Uí Néill kings of Mide, came to power.<sup>2</sup> The accession of Diarmait to the kingship is generally dated some time around the year 544, which would thus have been the year of Ciarán's death.<sup>3</sup> Ciarán is said to have been thirty-three years of age when he died and survived the foundation of the church of Clonmacnois for only a brief period (seven months or seven years?).<sup>4</sup> Tigernach and the *Chronicum* add that Ciarán was of the

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<sup>1</sup> For the abbots of the sixth to the eighth centuries see J. Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 490-507.

<sup>2</sup> *AT* (548); *CS* 544; *AClon* 547, p. 81; *ACott* 549; compare *AU* 549.1; *AI* 548. The same tradition, in a further elaborate version is preserved by S. Ciarán's Irish hagiographers, who claim that Ciarán help Diarmait mac Cerbaill to the kingship of Ireland. Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 130-131; *AClon* 569, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> *AU* 544; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 90-91.

<sup>4</sup> *CS* 544; Ryan uses the Irish Life of Ciarán to identify the year of Ciarán's death. There we are told that the saint died on a Saturday. The 9th of September, Ciarán's day of death, apparently fell on a Saturday in the year 545. Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 491-493, §1. However Macalister, using the same way of argumentation came to the conclusion that 556 must have been the year in which the ninth of September was a Saturday, Macalister, *Latin and Irish Lives*, 159.

Latharna Molt, a branch of the Dál nAraide, a ruling dynasty in Ulster.<sup>5</sup>

According to the Dublin Life of Ciarán, however the Latharna were a people in Mide.<sup>6</sup> Mageoghagan, finally maintains that S. Ciarán's father was a Connachtman.<sup>7</sup>

- A2. **Aenu** [abb, *AU*; ab, *AT*; Ab, *CS*; second abott, *AClon*; abb, *AI*; abbas, *ACott*; abb, *AFM*] died in 570. Tigernach and the Chronicum add that he held the abbacy for twenty six year and was the son of Eógan of the Loígis Rete, a tribe in Leinster.<sup>8</sup>
- A3. **Mac Nisi** [abb, *AU*; abadh, *AT*; Ab, *CS*; third abbot of Clonvicknoise, *AClon*; abb, *AI*; abbas, *ACott*; abb, *AFM*] died in 585. According to the Chronicum he was from Ulster.<sup>9</sup>
- A4. **Ailither** [ab, *AU*; ab, *AT*; Abb, *CS*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 599. Tigernach and the Chronicum add that he was of the Múscraige from Munster.<sup>10</sup>
- A5. **To-Lua the Tall** [abb, *AU*; abb, *AT*; Ab, *CS*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AI*] died in 614.<sup>11</sup> Tigernach has it that he was of the Corco Moga in Uí Maine.<sup>12</sup>
- A6. **Colum son of Bairdéne** [abb, *AU*; abbadh Cluana, *AT*; Abbad Cluana, *CS*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 628. Tigernach adds a note

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<sup>5</sup> Bannerman, *Studies in the History of Dalriada*, 1-8; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 217, 109-110.

<sup>6</sup> Plummer (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum* I, 200.

<sup>7</sup> *AClon*, p. 81.

<sup>8</sup> *AU* 570.2; *AT* (569); *CS* 570; *AClon* 569, p. 89; *AI* 570; *ACott* 570; *AFM* 569; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 493, §2.

<sup>9</sup> *AU* 585.1; *AT* (584); *CS* 584; *AClon* 587, p. 90; *AI* 587; *ACott* 585; *AFM* 589; his death is again recorded under the year 591; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 493-494, §3 'Ulaid' here is the territory now represented by the diocese of Down.

<sup>10</sup> *AU* 599.1; *AT*(598); *CS* 599; *AClon*, 598, p. 97; *AI* 602; *AFM* 595; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 494, §4.

<sup>11</sup> *AU* 614.1; *AT* (613); *CS* 614; *AI* 615; *AClon* 617, p. 99; Mageoghagan makes two persons out of this abbot, one Lucaill whom he styles a brother of Ciarán, the other Folva who was abbot of Clonmacnois. Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 494, §5.

<sup>12</sup> This was a subject tribe of the Uí Maine, settled in county Galway, in the area situated between Mount Talbot, in the east and Kilkerrin parish to the west, O'Donovan (ed), *AFM* II, p. 666, note n.; see also O'Donovan (ed), *The tribes and Customs of Hy-Many*, 84 note a.; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 230, 234-235.

concerning his origin of the Dál mBairdéne Ulaid, a people from Ulster settled in the area now represented by county Down.<sup>13</sup>

- A7. **Crónán moccu Laegde** [abbas, *AU*; ab, *AT*; Abb, *CS*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AFM*] died in 638. Tigernach has it that he was of the Corco Loigde.<sup>14</sup> This was a tribe at the south western coast of Munster, from which S. Ciarán of Saigir is said to have descended.<sup>15</sup> Abbot Crónán is sometimes thought to be identical with Crónán the founder saint of Tuamgraney, in county Clare, a church which in the tenth and eleventh century had close links with Clonmacnois.<sup>16</sup>
- A8. **Aedlug son of Camán** [abas, *AU*; ab, *AT*; Abbas, *CS*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*] died in 652. According to Tigernach and the *Chronicum* he was of the Gailenga of Corann, settled in county Sligo, north of Lough Gara.<sup>17</sup>
- A9. **Baetán moccu Cormaicc** [abb, *AU*; ab, *AT*; Abb, *CS*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 664. The scribe of the *Chronicum* adds that he was of the Conmaicne Mara, who gave their name to Connemara in the very west of Connacht.<sup>18</sup> His origin is also given by the Four Masters but not in the *Annals of Tigernach*.
- A10. **Colmán Cas** [abb, *AU*; ab, *AT*; Ab, *CS*; abbott, *AClon*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 665. Tigernach and the *Chronicum* give his origin of the Corco Moga of Uí Maine; his father's name Fulascach is added by Tigernach and the *Chronicum*.<sup>19</sup>
- A11. **Cuiméne** [abb, *AU*; ab, *AT*; Ab, *CS*; abbott, *AClon*; abb, *AFM*] died in 665, the same year as his predecessor, possibly of the plague in this year (*Buidhe Conaill*). According to Tigernach and the *Chronicum* Cuiméne was of the Gregraiqe of Loch Techet in Connacht, i.e from the area of Lough Gara in county Sligo.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *AU* 628.4; *AT* (628); *CS* 628; *AClon* 627, p. 100; *AFM* 623; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 495, §6.

<sup>14</sup> *AU* 638.2; *AT* (637); *CS* 637; *AClon* 637, p. 102; *AI* 640, where he is styled *abb Cille Dara*, *AFM* 637; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 495-496, §7.

<sup>15</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 170-173, 180-181.

<sup>16</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 46; for Tuamgraney see under A52.

<sup>17</sup> *AU* 652.1; *AT* (651); *CS* 649; *AI* 652; *AFM* 651; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 496, §8.

<sup>18</sup> *AU* 664.5; *AT* (660); *CS* 660; *AFM* 663; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 496-497, §9.

<sup>19</sup> *AU* 665.6; *AT* (664); *CS* 661; *AClon* 664, p. 107; *AFM* 664; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 497, §10; for the Corco Moga compare A5.

<sup>20</sup> *AU* 665.6; *AT* (664); *CS* 661; *AClon* 664, p. 107; *AFM* 664; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 497, §11; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 233-236.

- A12. **Colmán** [ab, *AT*; Abb, *CS*; abbot; ab, *AFM*] died in 683. He is the first abbot of Clonmacnois not listed in the Annals of Ulster. According to Tigernach and the *Chronicum* he was from Artech.<sup>21</sup> Mag nAirtig, south of Lough Gara, in the modern counties Roscommon and Sligo was, according to the *Tripartite Life of Patrick*, some time under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Armagh.<sup>22</sup>
- A13. **Forcron** [ab, *AT*; Ab, *CS*; abb, *AFM*] died in 686. Like his predecessor Forcron is not mentioned in the Annals of Ulster.<sup>23</sup>
- A14. **Crónán Becc** [abb, *AU*; ab, *AT*; Ab, *CS*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AFM*] died in 694. Tigernach and the *Chronicum* add that he was of the Cuailgne. They were a branch of the Uí Méith, an Airgiallan tribe settled in what is now north county Louth, neighbours to the Mugdorna Maigen in county Monaghan.<sup>24</sup>
- A15. **Oiséne, son of Gallust** [ab, *AU*; ab, *AT*; Abbad, *CS*, abb, *AFM*] died in 706. According to a gloss in the *Chronicum* and the annals of Tigernach he was 'from Fremhain, in Calraige of Tephtha'.<sup>25</sup> Ryan assumes that Fremhain was Dún Fremainne, west of Lough Owel, in the vicinity of Cró Inis, near Mullingar in modern county Westmeath, the ancestral lands of the Clann Cholmáin dynasty.<sup>26</sup>
- A16. **Fáilbe Bec** [abb, *AU*; espoc, ab, *AT*; Ab, *CS*; abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*] latinized Failbeus Modicus, died in the year 713. Tigernach says he was a bishop and of the Gailenga Corann, settled in county Sligo north of Lough Gara. Abbot Aedlug came from the same branch (A8).<sup>27</sup>
- A17. **Cuinnles** [abb, *AU*; abb, *AT*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AI*] died in the year 724. He was of the Sogan in Uí Maine, according to Tigernach. During his abbacy, in

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<sup>21</sup> *AT* (679); *CS* 679; *AClon* 678, p. 109; *AFM* 681; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 497, §12.

<sup>22</sup> Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, 108; compare Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 234-235 map.

<sup>23</sup> *AT* (685); *CS* 682; *AFM* 684; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 497, §13.

<sup>24</sup> *AU* 694.1; *AT* (693); *CS* 690; *AClon* 689, p. 110; *AFM* 692; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 498, §14; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 115, 118, in the early time they were vassals of the respective highking of the Uí Néill federation, in the first half of the eighth century (the reign of Áed Allán) they came under the domination of the Cenél nEógain.

<sup>25</sup> *AU* 706.1; *AT* (705); *CS* 702; *AFM* 704; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 498, §15.

<sup>26</sup> Donnchad Midi, king of Tara (d.797), ancestor of the kings of Mide, of the Clann Cholmáin is also called Donnchad Fremhann, in a poem added to his obituary by the Four Masters (*AFM* 792). Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 143n, 282.

<sup>27</sup> *AU* 713.2; *AT* (712); *CS* 709; *AI* 713; *AFM* 711; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 498-499, §16. He is the first abbot of Clonmacnois who is said to have been bishop as well; see also A49, A54, A55, A73.

the year 723 Indrechtach mac Muiredaig, king of Connacht of the Uí Briúin is said to have died in Clonmacnois as a pilgrim.<sup>28</sup> The entries in the *Chronicum Scotorum* from the years 718 (recte 722) to 804 are lost.

- A18. **Flann Sinna (aui Colle)** [ab, *AU*; ab, *AT*, abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AFM*], the grandson of Colla, died in the year 732.<sup>29</sup> Tigernach gives his name as 'Flaind Chualand', Flann of Cualu which associates the abbot with a territory south of Dublin in Leinster. However, Tigernach also states that Flann was of the Uí Chremthainn, an Airgiallan tribe settled quite a distance from Cualu, in the area of the modern counties Fermanagh and Monaghan.<sup>30</sup>
- A19. **Conmal (nepos Locheni)** [ab, *AU*; ab, *AT*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*], the grandson of Lóchéne died in the year 737. The Four Masters state that he was of the Ciannachta Breg, a vassal state of the Southern Uí Néill settled on both sides of the river Boyne, in the area of what is now south county Louth.<sup>31</sup> The appearance of Ciannachta churchmen in offices in Clonmacnois has been interpreted as the result of links which existed between Clonmacnois and Inishkeen, the church of S. Daig mac Cairill.<sup>32</sup> The Ciannachta Breg, like the Uí Chremthainn of the Airgialla, were under pressure from the Cenél nEógain in particular during the reign of the highking Áed Allán (d.743).<sup>33</sup> This might have been an additional reason for the migration of churchmen from the north eastern parts of Ireland to the midlands.
- A20. **Cellach son of Secnde** [ab, *AU*; ab, *AT*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 740. According to Tigernach he was from the Conmaicne 'Buidemnaigh', very likely a branch of the Conmaicne in Connacht.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *AU* 724.4; *AT* (723); *AI* 724; *AFM* 720; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 499, §17. See *AT* (722) for king Indrechtach.

<sup>29</sup> *AU* 732.1, repeat the obituary in 733.9; *AT* (731); *AClon* 729, p. 114; *AFM* 726.

<sup>30</sup> For Cualu see *AU* 819.1; the 'ale of Cualu' was one of the symbols of power of the early kings of Leinster, see Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 132, map, 152-153, for the Uí Cremthainn see *ibid*, 115.

<sup>31</sup> *AU* 737.3; *AT* (736); *AClon* 734, p. 116; *AI* 737; *AFM* 732; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 500, §19; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 68-69, 89, 118.

<sup>32</sup> This has been suggested by Dr. C. Etchingham in unpublished material on the *paruchia* of Armagh, which he kindly allowed me to read. Daig is sometimes referred to as 'bishop of the Ciannachta Breg', see Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 389, §1; see also §§4,7,16 for links between S. Daig and S. Ciarán. Monastic officials from the Ciannachta Breg dominate in offices in Inishkeen during the ninth and tenth centuries.

<sup>33</sup> In the year 742 Conaing, son of Amalgaid, king of the Ciannachta was killed by Áed Allán (*AU*).

<sup>34</sup> *AU* 740.5; *AT* (739); *AClon* 737, p. 117; *AFM* 735; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 500, §20 thinks Conmaicne Buidemnaigh might be a mistake for Conmaicne Dúine Móir, who were settled in the area of the former barony of Dunmore in north county Galway. There were however other branches

- A21. **Comán** [Pausatio Comani relegiosi, *AU*; Dormitatio Comain relegiosí, *AT*; Coman the Religious Died, *AClon*; Comanus Rosíe uir sanctissimus in Christo quieuit, *ACott*; Comman ind Rois, + ba habb Cluana mic Nois esidhe, *AFM*] died in the year 747. He was abbot of Roscommon and Clonmacnois according to his obituary in the Annals of the Four Masters only. *AU* and *AT* give no information concerning the church which he belonged to. Tigernach adds that Comán was of the Sogan of Uí Maine.<sup>35</sup> In the year 744, the '*lex Ciaráni*' together with the '*lex Brendani*' was for the first time enforced in Connacht by King Fergus son of Cellach (d.751), which would support the idea that a Connacht man was abbot of Clonmacnois at the time.<sup>36</sup>
- A22. **Luchraid** [ab, *AU*; ab, *AT*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 753, he was of the 'Corcelig' according to the Annals of Tigernach, which could be a contracted form of Corco Loígde, settled in the very south west of Munster, or Corco Roide in Westmeath.<sup>37</sup>
- A23. **Cormac** [ab, *AU*; ab, *AT*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*] died in 762. The annals of Tigernach give the Sil Cairpri as his family background, rendered by the Four Masters the Cenél Cairpre Chruim, who were the up and coming dynasty in Uí Maine at the time.<sup>38</sup> During the abbacy of Cormac, the battle of Móin Choise Blae was fought between the community of Clonmacnois and the community of Birr.<sup>39</sup>

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of the Conmaicne, settled in Mide, northern Tethba, and in south county Leitrim. See Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 236.

<sup>35</sup> *AU* 747.12; *AT* (746); *ACott* 747; *AFM* 742 for Comman of Ross, styled abbot of Clonmacnois, *AFM* 746 for Comman the founder of Roscommon. The other alleged founder of Roscommon was the sixth century personality Comman, one of the disciples of Finnian; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 500, §20.a.

<sup>36</sup> *AU* 744.9; see Hughes, *Church and society*, chap. viii, 103-104 for the enactment of saint's laws in a territory, which was usually connected with the collection of a certain tax or tribute. Ciarán's law was promulgated in Connacht four times altogether in the eighth and early ninth century, namely in the years 775 (*AI*); 788 (*AU*); 814 (*AU*).

<sup>37</sup> *AU* 753.3; *AT* (752); *AI* 753; *AFM* 748; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 501-502, §21; compare A7 for Corco Loígde.

<sup>38</sup> *AU* 762.3; *AT* (761); *AI* 762; *AFM* 757; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 502-503, §22; Indrechtach mac Dlúthaig, of the Cenél Cairpre Chruim was king of Uí Maine from 750-755, see J. V. Kelleher, 'The Uí Maine in the annals and Genealogies to 1225', *Celtica* 9 (1971) 61-112, here 69ff. However 'Sil Cairpri' could also refer to the Cenél Cairpri, a branch of the Northern Uí Néill situated at the border to Connacht, see Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 248-249.]

<sup>39</sup> *AU* 760.8; *AT* (759).

- A24. **Rónán** [ab, *AU*; ab, *AT*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 764.<sup>40</sup> Tigernach says Rónán was of the Luaigne,<sup>41</sup> which might be a mistake for the Luigne, that at least is what the Four Masters thought.<sup>42</sup> They probably had the Luigne of Connacht in mind. Since from that area several Clonmacnois officials were recruited this seems quite a plausible assumption.<sup>43</sup> In the year of abbot Rónán's death the battle of Argaman between the community of Clonmacnois and that of Durrow took place. According to the Annals of Ulster a certain Bresal, son of Murchad with the community of Clonmacnois was the victor.<sup>44</sup> The Annals of Tigernach are lost for the following two hundred years from 766 to 973, so that for the forty years between 766 and 804, when the *Chronicum* takes up continuous recording again, we have no 'original' Clonmacnois chronicle.
- A25. **Ua Miannaigh** [ab, sruithi Cluana M. Nois, *AU*], Miannach's grandson, abbot and senior of Clonmacnois died according to the Annals of Ulster in 768.<sup>45</sup> The title seems ambiguous and maybe should be read as 'abbot of the seniors of Clonmacnois' (see Sen2).
- A26. **Folachtach of Tech Tua** [ab, *AU*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 770. Tech Tua is Taghadoe, near Maynooth, in county Kildare. Kelleher thinks that Folachtach was of the Uí Chormaic Maenmaige, in Uí Maine and perhaps related with Fachtna, the abbot of Clonfert of who had died in the year 729.<sup>46</sup>
- A27. **Forbasach (nepos Cernaigh)** [ab, *AU*; abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*], a grandson or descendant of Cernach, died in the year 771. The Four Masters say that Forbasach was of the Uí Briúin in Connacht.<sup>47</sup> They rose to power in Connacht in the course of the eighth century, defeating their neighbouring tribes, the Uí

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<sup>40</sup> *AU* 764.2; *AT* (963); *AFM* 759.

<sup>41</sup> 'do Luaignib do', *AT* (763).

<sup>42</sup> 'do Luighnibh do', *AFM* 759. For the difference between the Luigne and the Luaigne see Eoin Mac Neill, *Celtic Ireland* (Dublin 1981) 20, 57-58, 86; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 503, §23 assumes the Luigne here were those of Mide, in the counties Cavan and Navan; for the Luigne see also Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 67-69, 248-249.

<sup>43</sup> S8 (d.857), S26 (d.1063). Their neighbours were the Gregraigne and the Gailenga who likewise contributed to the provision of Clonmacnois officials.

<sup>44</sup> *AU* 764.6.

<sup>45</sup> *AU* 768.3.

<sup>46</sup> *AU* 770.6; *AFM* 765; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 503, §24; J. V. Kelleher, *Celtica* 9 (1971), 69, 71.

<sup>47</sup> *AU* 771.5; *AI* 771; *AFM* 766; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 504, §25. Links with the 'mac Cernaig', hereditary 'oeconomí' in Armagh since the second half of the eighth century seem an attractive assumption, are however not possible since their eponymus ancestor 'Cernach' died thirteen years after Forbasach in the year 784; see T. Ó Fiaich, *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 5 (1969) 78.

Fiachrach (749), the Conmaicne (761) and the Uí Maine (770).<sup>48</sup> It is significant that during this period the Uí Briúin also provided the abbot of Clonmacnois for the first time (see also A34).

- A28. **Collbrann** [ab, *AU*; Abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AFM*] died in 776.<sup>49</sup> In the last but one year of his abbacy the '*lex Ciaráni*' was again promoted in Connacht.<sup>50</sup>
- A29. **Rechnia** [ab, *AU*; abbott, *AClon*; abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*] died in 784, the Four Masters say he belonged to the Cenél Cairpre Chruim (see A23).<sup>51</sup>
- A30. **Snéidriagail** [ab, *AU*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AFM*] died in 786, he was of the Calraige of 'Aelmhagh' according to the Four Masters, which O'Donovan thought to be identical with the Calraige an Chalad, in county Westmeath. Ryan suggests Calraige Droma Cliab, in north county Leitrim.<sup>52</sup> In the year of his death the Annals of Ulster report a horrible vision in Clonmacnois, which caused the whole of Ireland to do penance.<sup>53</sup>
- A31. **Murgal** [ab, *AU*; abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*] died in 789, he was of the Uí Fiachrach, the most influential dynasty in Connacht before the Uí Briúin gained power in the course of the eighth century.<sup>54</sup> During Murgal's abbacy the '*lex Ciaráni*' was promulgated in Connacht for the third time.<sup>55</sup>
- A32. **Saerberg** [ab, *AU*; abbott, *AClon*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 791.<sup>56</sup>
- A33. **Ioseph (nepos Cernae)** [ab, *AU*; abbott, *AClon*; abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*], a grandson or descendant of Cerna, died in the year 794. The Four Masters say he belonged to the Ciannachta Breg, a branch subject to the Southern Uí Néill, settled in the territory of what is now south county Louth (see A19).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 248-253.

<sup>49</sup> *AU* 776.4; *AClon* 769, p. 123; *AFM* 771; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 504, §26.

<sup>50</sup> *AI* 775; see above A21 (note) for S. Ciarán's law.

<sup>51</sup> *AU* 784.1; *AClon* 781, p. 126; *AI* 784, names him Rechtabrat; *AFM* 779; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 505, §27.

<sup>52</sup> *AU* 786.1; *AClon* 783, p. 126; *AFM* 781; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 505, §28.

<sup>53</sup> *AU* 786.3.

<sup>54</sup> *AU* 789.1; *AI* 789; *AFM* 784; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 505, §29; J. Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 231-233.

<sup>55</sup> *AU* 788.9. See above A21 (note).

<sup>56</sup> *AU* 791.1; *AClon* 787, p. 127; *AFM* 786; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 506, §30.

<sup>57</sup> *AU* 794.2; *AClon* 791, p. 127; *AI* 794; *AFM* 789; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 506, §31. There was Forbasach, another grandson of Cernach abbot of Clonmacnois, who died in 771. He was however



- A34. **Anaile** [ab, *AU*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 799. He was of the Uí Briúin, according to the Four Masters.<sup>58</sup>
- A35. **Faircellach Fobair** [*abbas, AU*; Abb, *CS*; abb, *AFM*] died in 814.<sup>59</sup> He was of the Gailenga Mor according to the *Chronicum*, which resumes continuous reporting with the year 804. They were possibly a branch of the Gailenga of Connacht, seated at the river Moy, west of Lough Gara, neighbours of the Luigne and the Gregraike, who also supplied several officials in Clonmacnois.<sup>60</sup> In the year of Faircellach's death the '*lex Ciaráni*' was exalted in Connacht by Muirgius, son of Tomaltach, king of Connacht.<sup>61</sup> Again in the same year the annals record a joint campaign against the Uí Maine, by king Muirgius and Faircellach. It has been suggested that Faircellach here was the abbot of Clonmacnois, since he is the only person of this name mentioned in the annals at the time. The entry has been interpreted as an expression of hostility between Clonmacnois and the Uí Maine in the early ninth century.<sup>62</sup> Faircellach was from Fore, the church of S. Fechin, north of Lough Lene, in Westmeath. Several officials in Clonmacnois came from Fore during the ninth and early tenth century.<sup>63</sup>
- A36. **Suibne (mac Cuanach)** [ab, *AU*; Ab, *CS*; abb, *AFM*], the son of Cuanu, died in the year 816. The *Chronicum* adds that Suibne died only thirty days after the great fire, in which half of Clonmacnois was burned. There it is also stated that

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of the Uí Briúin - so we have either a mistake by the Four Masters here or two different grandfathers with the same name. See A27 for Forbasach.

<sup>58</sup> *AU* 799.7; *AFM* 794; Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 506, §32; compare A27 for the Uí Briúin.

<sup>59</sup> *AU* 814.7; *CS* 814; *AFM* 809.

<sup>60</sup> Gregraike: A11 (d.665), A43 (d.877). Luigne: ?A24 (d.764), S8 (d.857), S26 (d.1063).

<sup>61</sup> *AU* 814.11; see A21.

<sup>62</sup> *AU* 814.6; Kelleher suggested the campaign was performed in revenge of (a speculative) raid on the termon-lands of Clonmacnois by the Uí Maine. See Kelleher, *Celtica* 9 (1971) 74; Byrne assumes a different connection. The bishop and *airchinnech* of the church of Aughrim (*Echdruim*) in Uí Maine was killed earlier in the year 814 (*AU*). Byrne speculates, that it was a dependent church of Clonmacnois, moreover that the Uí Maine had killed the *airchinnech* there, and that the secular and the ecclesiastical overlord together undertook a revenge campaign, Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 252.

<sup>63</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 36. Máel Mide, d.871 (vA9); Cormac, d.891 (vA11); Flann Fobair, d.922 (vA15); also possibly Cumuscach, d.835 (vA5). Mageoghagan tells the legend of S. Lorna, who after the death of the saint, carried S. Ciarán's bell to Fore, where it was kept henceforth (*AClon* 547, p. 83). A slab stone in Clonmacnois bears the inscription 'or do fechnach'. Petrie takes it that this was the grave stone of Fechnach abbot of Fore, who died in the year 776 (*AFM*). G. Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 41, fig. 83. The slabstone inscriptions found and described by Petrie, which refer to members of the community will be cited henceforward, even though Macalister in a letter to R. Allen maintains that 'Petrie's pictures are all wrong in each case', BL MS Add 37589, no. 370-388.

the abbot was from Connacht of the Uí Briúin Seola, the southern branch of the Uí Briúin seated in the former barony Clare in county Galway.<sup>64</sup>

- A37. **Rónán** [ab, *AU*; Ab, *CS*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AFM*] resigned his abbacy in the year 823, but was back in office when he died in the year 844.<sup>65</sup> According to the *Chronicum* he was of the 'Laicchnibh Rois tethrach' possibly the Laigne of Ros Temrach settled in Navan.<sup>66</sup> It has been suggested, that Rónán resigned his office under pressure from the Uí Maine, since the *Chronicum* records the profanation of Clonmacnois by Cathal, son of Ailill, king of Uí Maine in the year of Rónán's resignation.<sup>67</sup> However, the entry reporting the violation of Clonmacnois by the king of Uí Maine appears to be a later insertion in the annals.<sup>68</sup> Moreover the attack was directed against the king of Munster, more precisely against his man in Clonmacnois, who was vice-abbot Flann. It seems more likely that the reason for abbot Rónán's resignation was linked to pressure from Munster, exercised increasingly during the reign of Feidlimid mac Crimthann. Eventually, after the king of Uí Maine had interfered in the conflicts on behalf of the community of Clonmacnois, Rónán resumed his office (see vA4, A38).

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<sup>64</sup> *AU* 816.5; *CS* 816; *AFM* 811. See K. W. Nicholls, *Dinnseanchas* 5 (1973) 116 n.12.

<sup>65</sup> *AU* 823.6, reads 'Ronan abbas Cluana M. Nois, reliquit principatum suum'; *CS* 823, 844; *AClon* 840, p. 139; *AFM* 842. Petrie found a cross in Clonmacnois with the inscription 'Ronan', which he dated to the ninth century. Petrie, *Christian inscriptions*, I, 49, fig. 99.

<sup>66</sup> According to Hennesey, editor of the *Chronicum Scotorum*, *CS*, p. 144 n.1.

<sup>67</sup> *CS* 823; Ryan, *Clonmacnois - a historical summary*, 43; also Ryan, 'Abbatial succession', 506, where he cites a story from the Book of Lecan which he thinks to be comment on Rónán's resignation (Bk of Lec., 67v., c.d., 68 r.a.): Diarmait son of Tomaltach, the brother of Muirgius and his successor to the kingship of Connacht, was about to engage the men of Bréifne in battle and came to the king of Uí Maine for help. The latter agreed, on condition that his half-brother would be given the abbot's chair in Clonmacnois in the event of victory. After their combined forces had defeated the men of Bréifne, Ailgile, the sitting abbot of Clonmacnois, was expelled from his office, to vacate the position for the Uí Maine candidate. In return Ailgile cursed Diarmait and prophesied that none of his descendants would succeed to the kingship. Ryan suggests that this story reflects the circumstances of the resignation of abbot Rónán, and takes its setting from the political reality in the early ninth century. The version of the story, as it is now preserved, must be the result of a later rewriting of the tale, from the time when the Clann Diarmaida were rivals to the Uí Conchobair for the kingship of Connacht. The men of Bréifne replaced what in the original story might have been the men of Munster.

<sup>68</sup> The attack, in the course of which the vice abbot from Munster was drowned in the Shannon, is said to have happened in the year 823. However it is said to have been installed in Clonmacnois in the year 827 (*CS* 827). the Four Masters report about the attack in an entry referring to the year 835 (*AFM* 834).

- A38. **Cétadach** [ab, *AU*; Ab, *CS*; Abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*] died in 850, he was of the *Ui Chormaic Maenmaige* in *Ui Maine*, and possibly got the abbot's chair with the support of *Cathal*, son of *Ailill*, king of *Ui Maine*.<sup>69</sup>
- A39. **Connmach** [abbas, *AU*; Ab, *CS*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 868. The *Chronicum* give the '*Cenél Echach Gall*' as his origin, which should perhaps be read as '*muintir Echar Gabul*' or '*Etar Gabul*', an unidentified monastic foundation in *Leinster*, attributed to *S. Columba* of *Terryglass*.<sup>70</sup>
- A40. **Martan** [ab, *AU*; Ab, *CS*; abb, *AFM*] died one year after his predecessor in 869.<sup>71</sup> The obituary in the *Annals of Ulster* reads '*Martan abbas Cluana Moccu Nois + Daiminnsi, scriba, Niallán episcopus Slane dormierunt*', which looks like a joint obituary of three different people, *Martan*, the abbot, *Daiminis*, the scribe and *Niallán* the bishop. In the *Chronicum Daiminnsi*, alias *Devenish* forms part of *Martan's* title, so that he appears as abbot of *Clonmacnois* and *Devenish* at the same time. The scribe also adds that *Martan* was of the *Dartraige* of *Devenish*, near *Lough Erne* in *Fermanagh*.<sup>72</sup> A double abbacy in *Clonmacnois* and *Devenish* seem quite plausible since links between the two settlements are also attested otherwise.<sup>73</sup>
- A41. **Ferdomnach** [prin, *AU*; Princeps, *CS*; abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*] died in 872. He is the first abbot of *Clonmacnois*, who bears the title *princeps* instead of *abbas*,

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<sup>69</sup> *AU* 850.1; *CS* 850; *AI* 850; *AFM* 848 adds the following poem to his obit: 'All have heard it,/both uncommon and common,/that an abbot at Cluain like Cedadach /will never again be seen'; O'Donovan (ed), *The tribes and customs of the Hy-Many*, 37, 76, 77, 90, 91; Kelleher, *Celtica* 9 (1971) 77. See A37 for *Cathal mac Ailella*.

<sup>70</sup> *AU* 868.2; *CS* 868; *AClon* 866, p. 142; *AI* 868; *AFM* 866; according to O'Donovan they are identical with the *Fine Gall*, who descended from *Eochaid*, the father of *Ailpin*, who was King of *Dublin* in the days of *S. Patrick* and were seated at *Dublin* and in the east of the kingdom of *Brega*. O'Donovan (ed), *AFM* I, p. 475, note b, p. 504, note z. For *Echar Gabul* see Heist (ed), *Vitae Sanctorum*, 228, §12; Gleeson & Gwynn, *A history of the diocese of Killaloe*, 37.

<sup>71</sup> *AU* 869.1; *CS* 869; *AFM* 867; there is some confusion in *AU* here, where '*Daiminnsi*' is (mis)taken as the name of a scribe.

<sup>72</sup> O'Donovan thinks this to be a mistake for *Dartraige Coininnsi*, which was the ancient name of the people settled in *Dartry* in county *Monaghan*. O'Donovan (ed), *AFM* I, p. 510, note x.

<sup>73</sup> *Máel Achaid*, vice-abbot of *Clonmacnois* was also abbot of *Devenish* later in the ninth century (vA13). The houses are also linked according to evidence in the *Life of Laisren*, Plummer (ed), *Vita Sanctorum* II, 139, §32. There are three stones, referring to *Martan* or *Marton*, found in *Clonmacnois*. I suppose one of them must be the gravestone of abbot *Martan* here. Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 26, fig. 40, 'marthine'; 22, fig. 25, 'martini' and 50, fig. 103a, 'or do martanan'.

- according to *AU* and *CS*.<sup>74</sup> He was of the Mugdorna, an Airgiallan tribe settled near Louth, from which the Meic Cuinn na mBocht claimed descent.<sup>75</sup>
- A42. **Eógan Tobair** [abbas, *AU*; Ab, *CS*; abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 877. He was of the Uí Chremthainn, of Airgialla,<sup>76</sup> who in the first half of the ninth century were competing with the Aithir and the Cenél nEógain for the abbacy of Armagh.<sup>77</sup> Possibly in consequence of this conflict Uí Chremthainn churchmen migrated to the midlands.
- A43. **Máel Tuile (nepos Cuanach)** [abbas, *AU*, Ab, *CS*, abb, *AFM*], grandson or descendant of Cuanu, died also in the year 877.<sup>78</sup> The entry in *AU* reports the death of the two abbots in a joint obituary, giving the impression that Eógan and Máel Tuile were abbots of Clonmacnois at the same time. In the *Chronicum* the two entries are recorded separately. Eógan is said to have died at the end of 876, and Máel Tuile in the beginning of 877. According to the *Chronicum* Máel Tuile was of the Luigne of Connacht, in a gloss is added 'i. do Gretraigib Arda', Ryan assumes these were the Gregraiige of Mag nAirtig, i.e. Artech south of Lough Gara. They were neighbours of the Luigne.<sup>79</sup>
- A44. **Máel Pátraic** [Ab, *CS*; abb, *AFM*] died in 885, he is not mentioned in the *Annals of Ulster*. The *Chronicum* notes that he was of the Uí Maine.<sup>80</sup>
- A45. **Máel Brigte** [ab, *AU*; Ab, *CS*; abb, *AI*; Abb, *AFM*] died in 892. In the *Chronicum* he is surnamed 'na Gamnaidhe', also we are told that he came from

<sup>74</sup> *AU* 872.4; *CS* 872; *AI* 872; *AFM* 870. *AU* talks of the abbacy of Clonmacnois as '*principatum*' in the early ninth century already, at the occasion of the resignation of abbot Rónán, see A37 (*AU* 823).

<sup>75</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 115-116, 128; Kelleher, *Ériu* 22 (1971) 126-127. For Ferdornach's grave stone see Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 30, fig. 51.

<sup>76</sup> *AU* 877.1; *CS* 876; *AI* 876; *AFM* 874. Flann Sinna, abbot of Clonmacnois in the first half of the eighth century was of the same origin (A18).

<sup>77</sup> Earlier in the century the Uí Chremthainn had been defeated by the Cenél n Eógain (battle of Leth Cam, 827) after which Airgialla became tributary to the the victors. The struggles for the abbacy of Armagh were connected with the struggle for the political supremacy between the Airthir, the Cenél nEógain and the Uí Chremthainn. See Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 116-118, 124-125; Hughes, *Church and society*, chap. viii, 107; Ó Fiaich, *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 5 (1969) 78-83.

<sup>78</sup> *AU* 877.1; *CS* 877; *AFM* 874; The wording of the obituary in *AU* reads: 'Eugan + Mael Tuile nepos Cuanach, duo abbates Cluana Moccu Nois in pace dormierunt'. There is a slab stone inscribed 'Máeltuile' found by Petrie in Clonmacnois, which could refer either belong to this abbot, or the lector Máeltuile who died in 922 (S12). Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, p. 32, fig. 56.

<sup>79</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 231-232, 234-235 map.

<sup>80</sup> *CS* 885; *AFM* 883; as a gloss in *CS* is added 'oocig i. Lingaig', which the editor corrects to 'o tig inghine lingaig' signifying 'from the house of Lingach's daughter', *CS* p. 168 n.5. For Máel Pátraic's grave stone see Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 34, fig. 61.

- Gabar, further explained in a gloss as 'Ceall Ula dferaihb Umail'.<sup>81</sup> The men of Umail according to Tirechán were settled near Croagh Patrick, in county Mayo near Westport. Máel Brigte was perhaps from Aghagower?<sup>82</sup>
- A46. **Blamac** [prin, *AU*; Princeps, *CS*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 896. His father's name Tarcedach and his origin from Bregmaine is added in a gloss in the *Chronicum*.<sup>83</sup> Bregmaine, is the territory represented by the barony of Brawney in county Westmeath, at the eastern shores of Lough Ree, neighbouring the Cuircne. An anchorite of Bregmaine died in Clonmacnois in 1007 (*An9*).
- A47. **Dedimus** was Blathmac's successor in the abbot's chair. He is known from the *Chronicum* only, according to which he was deposed in the year 901.<sup>84</sup> In the same year Máel Ruanaid the son of King Flann Sinna, was killed by the Luigne of Connacht. Perhaps the two events were related. Possibly Dedimus, like several of his predecessors, was of the Luigne or their allies. Abbot Dedimus was replaced in office by a certain Ioseph and became vice-abbot of Clonmacnois subsequently. He died in in the year 923 (see vA14).
- A48. **Ioseph** [ab, *AU*; Abb, *CS*; abb, *AI*; abbas, *ACott*; abb, *AFM*] succeeded to the abbot's chair after the (possibly forced) resignation of his predecessor Dedimus. He died in 904. His origin from Lough Conn (co. Mayo), of the Uí Fiachrach an Tuaisceirt is given in *CS* and *ACott*.<sup>85</sup>
- A49. **Colmán son of Ailill** [princeps Cluana Iraird + Cluana M. No(is + scriba) + episcopus, *AU*; Princeps Cluana muc Nois et Cluana Iraird, *CS*; abbot of Clonvickenos and Clonard, a sage doctor, *AClon*; abb Clu[an]a Mac Nóis + Clu[an]a Iraird, *AI*; abb Cluana Ioraird, + Cluana mic Nóis, espucc + doctor egnaidh, *AFM*] died as head of Clonmacois and Clonard, a bishop and a scribe,

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<sup>81</sup> *AU* 892.1; *CS* 892; *AI* 892; *AFM* 888; Gwynn & Hadcock, 393.

<sup>82</sup> Bieler, *Patrician texts*, 152-153, §38.4, where Patrick is said to have founded a church 'in campo Humail' after he had stayed forty days on Croagh Patrick; see also Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, 112. The name Máel Brigte appears twice on slab stones in Clonmacnois. Petrie, *Christian inscriptions I*, 39, fig. 81 and 42, fig. 84. Gwynn & Hadcock, 28.

<sup>83</sup> *AU* 896.1; *CS* 896; *AFM* 891. For Blathmac's grave stone see Petrie, *Christian inscriptions I*, p. 36, fig. 69.

<sup>84</sup> *CS* 901.

<sup>85</sup> *AU* 904.1; *CS* 904; *AI* 904; *ACott* 904; *AFM* 899. The Uí Fiachrach were a leading power in Connacht before the Uí Briúin began to dominate the kingship since the eighth century. See A31 and Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 84, 248-249.

in the year 926.<sup>86</sup> According to the *Chronicum* Colmán was of the Conaille Muirthemne, seated in what is now county Louth, a little north of the church of Louth. They were neighbours of the Mugdorna Maigen, from which the the Meic Cuinn na mBocht dynasty in Clonmacnois came.<sup>87</sup> The family of Colmán, surnamed 'Conaillech' after their tribal origin, can be traced as an ecclesiastical dynasty down to the eleventh century.<sup>88</sup> Colmán's abbacy marks the heyday of Clonmacnois under the patronage of the Clann Cholmáin kings of Mide, during the reign of King Flann Sinna.<sup>89</sup> Close links between Clonard and Clonmacnois prevailed in this period, whereas the traditional links with Fore were no more cherished.<sup>90</sup> A stone church (*daimliag mór*) was built in Clonmacnois by King Flann and Abbot Colmán, in the year 909.<sup>91</sup> Probably around the same time the highcross known as the 'Cross of the Scriptures', standing in front of the main church, was built. In an inscription Abbot Colmán is commemorated as the one who made the cross for King Flann. The inscription is accompanied by carvings, one of them showing two men holding a pole, which tradition interprets to be Ciarán and King Diarmait mac Cerbaill, the ultimate ancestor of the Clann Cholmáin, as co-founders of the church in Clonmacnois.<sup>92</sup> Finally during

<sup>86</sup> *AU* 926.3; *CS* 925; *CS* 908; *AClon* 921, p. 148; *AClon* 901, p. 144 calls the building the 'church of the kings'; *AI* 926; *AFM* 924 adds a quatrain to his obituary: "The tenth year, a just degree, | joy and sorrow reigned, | Colmán of Cluain | the joy of every tower died: | Albdann went beyond the sea".

<sup>87</sup> Kelleher, *Ériu* 22 (1971) 125-126 suggests that the 'Conaillech' of Clonmacnois belonged to the Meic Cuinn na mBocht clann as well. Laurence P. Murray, 'The Pictish kingdom of Conaille-Muirthemhne', 445-453.

<sup>88</sup> Members of the Conaillech family in Clonmacnois: Máel Tuile, son of Colmán, *fer léiginn*, died in 923 (son of the abbot? S12); Diarmait Conaillech *fer leiginn* (d.1000, S17); Bresal, *comarba Ciarain* (d.1030, A62); Ailill, son of Bresal, *sacart* (d.1044, P10). The father of Colmán might have been Ailill, son of Aengus, abbot of Old Kilcullen, east of Kildare (d.898 *AFM*). Many son of Ailill were active in ecclesiastical offices at the time and are listed in the annals: Áed, son of Ailill, died as abbot of Clonfert in 916 (*AI*, *AFM* 914); Máel Poil, son of Ailill, abbot of Inan, a bishop, anchorite and scribe died in the year 922 (*AU* 922.1; *CS* 921, *AFM* 920); finally there was Diarmait, son of Ailill, who succeeded his father as *princeps* of Old Killcullen. He died in old age in the year 937 (*AU* 937.1). It seems possible that the dynasty started the ecclesiastical career in Old Killcullen, and Colmán, son of Ailill became the founder of the Clonmacnois branch of the family.

<sup>89</sup> The story of Cairpre, a bishop of Clonmacnois, who is said to have been visited by the spirit of the father of King Flann (879-944), reflects on the friendship between the Clann Cholmáin kings of Mide and Clonmacnois (see B4).

<sup>90</sup> Compare Byrne, *Peritia* 4 (1985) 164. Flann Fobair (vA16) was expelled as vice abbot in Clonmacnois in 922. Only one more member of the community of Fore is mentioned in connection with Clonmacnois in the late tenth century (B16).

<sup>91</sup> *CS* 908; *AFM* 904

<sup>92</sup> According to the latest rubbings taken of the cross the inscription on the West face reads: 'OR DO RIG FL. IND M MA...N...ROIT DO RIG HERENN OR...' [Pray for king Flaind son of Ma(elseachlainn)...pray for king of Ireland] and on the East face: 'DO COLMAN DORRO AN CROSSA AR RIG FL.ND' [For Colmán who made the cross ... on king Flann], see D. Ó Murchada, *JRSAL* 110 (1980) 50; see also Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 42-44, fig. 86-88. This is the cross

Colmán's abbacy, in the early tenth century, the 'Clonmacnois group of annals' starts to diverge considerably from the Annals of Ulster. Independent chronicle keeping was begun in Clonmacnois.<sup>93</sup>

- A50. **Tipraide son of Ainséne** [com, *AU*; Princeps, *CS*; Abb, *AI*; abb, *AFM*] died in 931. According to the *Chronicum* he was a Connacht man, of the Uí Briúin. The Annals of Ulster henceforward use the title *comarba Ciaráin* for the abbot of Clonmacnois; they add to Tipraide's obituary that he died after long suffering.<sup>94</sup>
- A51. **Ainmire Ua hAdlai** [com, *AU*; Princeps, *CS*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 948. He was of the Uí Mic Uais of Mide, according to the *Chronicum*. The Four Masters and Mageoghagan say he was abbot of Lackan in Mide as well.<sup>95</sup> The Uí mic Uais were an Airgiallan tribe, which became incorporated into the kingdom of Mide under the Southern Uí Néill. They were seated in what is now part of county Westmeath, west of the river Inny, between Lough Owel and Lough Sheelin. The church of Lackan was at the shores of Lough Derravaragh, in their territory.<sup>96</sup> Ainmire's next but one successor was of the same origin (A53).
- A52. **Ferdomnach Ua Maonaigh** [*comarba*, *AU*; Abb, *CS*; abbot, *AClon*; abb, *AFM*] died the year 952. An interlined gloss in the *Chronicum* states that Ferdomnach died in Glendalough and was of the Corco Moga, a subject tribe of the Uí Maine. According to the Four Masters Ferdomnach was abbot of

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referred to as the highcross in 957 (*AFM*) and as the Cross of the Scriptures in 1060 (*AFM*). Peter Harbison suggested that the inscription on the high cross refer to Rónán, the abbot and his alleged friend Flann, the vice-abbot, both active in the early ninth century (see above A37), P. Harbison, *PRIA* 79 (1979) 177-188. The theory has been refuted by F. Henry, *JRS* 110 (1980) 36-46. More recently Harbison revised this opinion, returning to the traditional reading of the inscription, P. Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland* (Bonn 1992) I, 357; see C. Manning, *Clonmacnois*, 36-39 for illustration and photographs. The grave stone inscription of Abbot Colmán has been described by Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 51, fig. 104.

<sup>93</sup> Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals*, 22-23; Dumville & Grabowski, *Chronicles and annals*, 53-56.

<sup>94</sup> *AU* 931; *CS* 930; *AI* 931; *AFM* 929. A cross with a circular design bears the inscription 'Annseni'. This is one of a group of crosses most characteristic for Clonmacnois with a circular expansion at the centre and semicircular expansions at the terminations usually filled with knotwork. Macalister, *Memorial slabs of Clonmacnois*, 25, no. 126; Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, fig 77, read the inscription as 'ANNGENI'.

<sup>95</sup> *AU* 948.3; *CS* 947; *AClon* 943, p. 154; *AFM* 946.

<sup>96</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 89, 117, 120-121; O'Donovan (ed), *AFM* I, 36 note r; Gwynn & Hadcock, 396. In the early twelfth century the Uí Mic Uais of Mide appear as rivals to the Uí Mháelsechlainn kings of Mide. *AFM* 1106; P. Walsh, 'Uí Maccu Uais', *Ériu* 9 (1921-23) 55-60.

Clonmacnois and Glendalough.<sup>97</sup> Rehtabra mac Maonaigh, (the abbot's father?) died as a priest of Clonmacnois in 948 (P4), one Muiredach Ua Maonaigh was abbot of Roscrea in the early eleventh century.<sup>98</sup> The family's surname, Ua Maonaigh, seems to derive from the '*manaig*', the ecclesiastical tenants who lived around the church. It seems very plausible that these people should supply ecclesiastical officials in the church of their ecclesiastical overlord, and apparently even succeeded to assume leading positions in it.<sup>99</sup>

- A53. **Céilechair son of Robartach** [com Ciarain + Finnian, *AU*; comorba Finnain ocus Ciarain, *CS*; abb Cluana M. Nóis + Cluana Iraird, *AI*; comharba Finnéin + Ciaráin, *AFM*] died in 954.<sup>100</sup> Céilechair like his last but one predecessor was of the Uí Mic Uais of Mide (A51). There might be a link with the Uí Robartaigh dynasty in Kells, their eponymous ancestor died the same year as Céilechair.<sup>101</sup> It was during Céilechair's abbacy that Congalach mac Máel Mithig, king of Mide of the Síl nÁedo Sláine granted perpetual freedom (*soere*) to the church of Clonard. Since Céilechair was head of Clonard and Clonmacnois at the same time, it is not unlikely that the privilege applied for both settlements.<sup>102</sup>
- A54. **Cormac Ua Cillín** [comorba Ciaráin ocus Comáin, ocus comarba Tuamagréne, ... Sapiens et senex, et Episcopus, *CS*; comharba Ciaráin, *AFM*] died in the year 966. The *Chronicum* also mentions him as the builder of the main church and a belltower in Tuamgraney.<sup>103</sup> The Uí Chillín were an ecclesiastical dynasty, active in Tuamgraney and Clonmacnois.<sup>104</sup> Several members of the family are

<sup>97</sup> *AU* 952; *CS* 951; *AClon* 947, p. 156; *AFM* 950. A. S. Mac Shamhráin in an unpublished paper pointed out the possibility that Ferdornach's connection with Glendalough according to *AFM* might have resulted from a scribal mistake by the Four Masters, combining two individual entries with similar elements to one single notice. However Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh also mentions a link with Glendalough. Since it differs from the information given by the Four Masters, he must have taken it from somewhere else. It seems therefore possible that the original source they had at hand documented a connection with Glendalough for abbot Ferdornach.

<sup>98</sup> *AI* 1009.

<sup>99</sup> Doherty, *Peritia* 1 (1982) 315ff; Etchingam, *Ériu* 42 (1991) 105ff.

<sup>100</sup> *AU* 954.6; *CS* 953; *AI* 954; *AFM* 952.

<sup>101</sup> Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 82, 86, 91-92, 99. Robartach (*comarba*, d.954), Ferdornach (*comarba*, d.1008), Robartach mac Ferdornach (*comarba*, d.1057), Domnall (*comarba*, d.1098) Máel Muire Ua Robartaigh (*cenn in disirt, ferlegind*, d.1133), Ua Robartaigh, *airchinnech* of Louth (d.1081 *AFM*).

<sup>102</sup> *AFM* 949 (recte 951); Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 161-162, 175.

<sup>103</sup> *CS* 964; *AFM* 964.

<sup>104</sup> Conall Ua Cillín was *comarba Crónain*, died in 1026 (*AI*, *AFM* 1026); Another Cormac Ua Cillín died as *airchinnech* of the guesthouse and vice-abbot of the Síl Muiredaig, in Clonmacnois in the year 1106 (*CS* 1102, see vA24).



commemorated on slab stone inscriptions in Clonmacnois.<sup>105</sup> The family belonged to the Uí Fiachrach Aidne, settled in the west of Connacht. The lord of the Uí Fiachrach Aidne had died in Clonmacnois, earlier in the tenth century.<sup>106</sup>

- A55. **Tuathal** [com, *AU*; comarba Ciarain, oculus Episcop, *CS*; abb, *AI*; comharba Chiaráin, epscop + abb Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in the year 971, in consequence of a three days fast, according to the *Chronicum*.<sup>107</sup> His name was very frequent amongst the Uí Muiredaig, the leading dynasty in Leinster.<sup>108</sup> Like bishop Dúnchad mac Suthainen (B8), abbot Tuathal therefore possibly belonged to the leading royal dynasty in Leinster, and had his ecclesiastical background in Glendalough.<sup>109</sup>
- A56. **Dúnchad Ua Braoín** [comarba Ciarain, optimus scriba + relegiosissimus, *AU*; comarba, *CS*; cowarb of St. Keyeran of Clonvickenois, a holy and Devoute anchorite, *AClon*; comarba Ciarain, *ACott*; abb Cluana mic nóis, sgnaidh + angcoire, *AFM*] died in pilgrimage in Armagh in the year 989. The exact date of his death, the 19th of January is interlined by a second scribe in *AU*. The Four Masters maintain that he was thirteen years in Armagh before his death and had intended to go back to Clonmacnois every year, but stayed in Armagh out of fear of the 'solicitation of the clergy' there. According to the same source he was the last saint who resuscitated the dead in Ireland.<sup>110</sup> The Uí Braoín were an ecclesiastical dynasty in Connacht, based in Roscommon.<sup>111</sup> They were of the

<sup>105</sup> Petrie dates a stone with the inscription 'or do bran u caillen' to the late ninth century, Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 29, fig. 49. Another stone found in Clonmacnois bears the inscription 'or do ...Cillín icaneradin lecs' [pray for Cillín, by whom this stone was made], *ibid*, 72, fig. 165.

<sup>106</sup> Domnall, son of Lorcan, lord of Aidne died at Clonmacnois in 937 (*AFM*).

<sup>107</sup> *AU* 971.4; *CS* 969; *AI* 972.2; *AFM* 969. There are two slabstone inscriptions with the name Tuathal in Clonmacnois, Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 23, fig 29; 25, fig. 35. fig 29.

<sup>108</sup> Tuathal son of Augaire, who died as king of Leinster in 958 was the eponymous ancestor of the Uí Tuathal line. See A. S. Mac Shamhráin, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 25 (1993) 58, 59.

<sup>109</sup> Links between Clonmacnois and Glendalough seem to be confirmed by annalistic evidence, since it has been observed by Mac Niocaill that central Leinster affairs are very prominent in *AT*, since the late ninth century, Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals*, 27.

<sup>110</sup> *AU* 989.1; *CS* 986; *AClon* 981, p. 160; *ACott* 989; *AFM* 974, 987 adds a poem in praise of Dúnchad by Eochaidh O'Flannagain: "The seat of Mach the treacherous, voluptuous, haughty/ Is a psalm-singing house possessed by saints;/ There came on within the walls of her fort/ A being like Dúnchad O'Braein".

<sup>111</sup> see *AFM* 1187; 1232, 1231, 1234 for other members of the family, also A67.

Síl Muiredaig, the branch of the Uí Briúin Ai of Connacht, from whom the Uí Chonchobair kings of Connacht came.<sup>112</sup>

- A57. **Máel Finnia Ua Maenaigh** [com, *AU*; comarba, *CS*; comharba, *AFM*] died in the year 992. According to a gloss in the *Chronicum* he was the son of Spelan and of the Uí Beccon.<sup>113</sup> They formed a kingdom in the northern parts of Mide, situated north of Fore and tributary to the Southern Uí Néill.<sup>114</sup> The surname points to the abbot's descent from an ecclesiastical tenant (compare A52).
- A58. **Ua Beguláin** [Cumsgugadh .H. Begulain i cCluain muc Nois, *CS*] He was deposed, presumably as abbot, in the year 1002.<sup>115</sup> One Máel Pátraic Ua Beguláin died as a priest in Clonmacnois in the year 1028.<sup>116</sup> Possibly this was one and the same person, who after his deposition turned to a life as a priest. The Uí Beguláin were a branch of the Uí Briúin Breífne.<sup>117</sup>
- A59. **Flannchad Ua Ruadáin** [com, *AU*; comorba, *CS*; comharba, *AFM*] died a year after the deposition of Ua Beguláin in 1003.<sup>118</sup> He was from Uí Maine, of the Corco Moga, according to the *Chronicum*.<sup>119</sup>
- A60. **Flaithbertach son of Domnall** [com Ciarain + Finnen, *AU*; comarba Ciaráin, ocus Finniain, *CS*; Comarba Ciarain, .i. Flaithbertach mcDomnaill, *AI*; comharba Ciaráin + Findein, *AFM*] died in the year 1014.<sup>120</sup> He was of the Clann Cholmáin and is commonly regarded to have been a brother of Máel

<sup>112</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 248-253, 234-235 for map. See A. Pinkman, 'Placenames of St. Mary's Parish Athlone', *Ardagh and Clonmacnois Antiqu. Soc. Jn.* 2, no. 10 (1945), 37-47, here 37-38 for Ua Braoín, alias Ua Braeín or O'Breen as the chief family of Breagmuine, alias Brawney in county Westmeath, corresponding to the territory now represented by St. Mary's parish Athlone.

<sup>113</sup> *AU* 992.1; *CS* 990; *AFM* 991.

<sup>114</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 89; O'Donovan (ed), *AFM* II, p. 889, note t.; Paul Walsh, 'Meath in the Book of Rights', 'Abbatial succession', 508 - 521, here 515; a gravestone inscription in Clonmacnois asks for a prayer for Máelfinna, Petrie, *Christian inscriptions I*, 60, fig. 130.

<sup>115</sup> *CS* 1000.

<sup>116</sup> *AFM* 1028. The spelling of the name varies between Ua Begulain (*CS*) and Ua Baoghalán (*AFM*). The diphthong 'ao' changed to 'e' in the middle Irish period. Interchangeable use of the two was frequent at the time. T. F. O'Rahilly, *Irish Dialects Past and Present* (Dublin 1932) 31-34. Many thanks to Dr. Damian MacManus from TCD for this reference and his advice.

<sup>117</sup> Micheál V. Ó Duígeannáin, 'The Uí Briúin Breífni Genealogies', *JRSAI* 64 (1934) 90-137 and 213-256, here 213-214.

<sup>118</sup> *AU* 1003.1; *CS* 1001; *AFM* 1002.

<sup>119</sup> For his grave stone see Petrie, *Christian inscriptions I*, 61, fig. 132, 'or do flannchad'.

<sup>120</sup> *AU* 1014.9; *CS* 1012; *AI* 1014.3; *AFM* 1013; *AU* repeats this entry in 1015.8.

Sechnaill Mór, son of Domnall, king of Mide at the time (980-1022).<sup>121</sup>

Domnall, a son of king Máel Sechnaill, thus a nephew of abbot Flaithbertach, succeeded to the abbacy of Clonard in 1014.<sup>122</sup> The abbot's son Flann married Cantigern Ua Lachtnáin, the daughter of a lector from Clonmacnois (S23).

Their two sons were kings of Mide in the late eleventh century.<sup>123</sup> The Annals of Clonmacnois have no entries for the years 1015-1021.

- A61. **Muiredach son of Mugrón** [com, *AU*; comarba, *CS*; comarba Ciarain, *AI*; comharba Ciaráin + Commáin, *AFM*] was Flaithbertach's successor in Clonmacnois. He died in 1025 according to the Four Masters he was abbot of Roscommon as well.<sup>124</sup> According to the *Chronicum* and the Four Masters he was of the 'muintir Imligh fordeoraigh', which might be Imbleach- Fiae, i.e. Emlagh in Meath,<sup>125</sup> or possibly another designation for 'Imbliuch Sescinn', near Lough Ennel, now in county Westmeath, a church under the authority of Clonmacnois according to the Tripartite Life of Patrick.<sup>126</sup> An anchorite from 'Imlech Fordeorach' had died in Clonmacnois in the year 751 (see An1); also there was an *airchinnech* of 'Imlech Fia', who according to the Four Masters died as a priest in Clonmacnois in the year 948 (see P4).
- A62. **Bresal Conaillech** [com, *AU*; comarba, *CS*; comarba Ciarain, *AI*; comharba Ciaráin, *AFM*] died in the year 1030. He is praised in the annals for having paved the road leading from the garden of the abbess, to the 'heap of the three crosses', in Clonmacnois in the year 1026.<sup>127</sup> His soubriquet 'Conaillech', links him with the Conaille Muirthemne from Ulster, settled in what is now county Louth (see A49). Ailill son of Bresal, (the abbots son?) died as a resident priest of Clonmacnois in 1044 (P10).
- A63. **Loingsech Ua Flaithéin** [com Ciarain + Cronain, *AU*; comarba Ciaráin ocus Cronain, *CS*; comarba Ciarain + Chronain, *AI*; comharba Ciaráin + Cronáin,

<sup>121</sup> P. Byrne, *Peritia* 4 (1985) 165.

<sup>122</sup> He died in 1019 (*AU*).

<sup>123</sup> P. Walsh, *IER* 57 (1941) 165-183.

<sup>124</sup> *CS* 1023; *AU* 1025; *AI* 1025.4; *AFM* 1025. Another Muiredach son of Mugron died as scribe of Clonmacnois in 1076 (S29). A slab stone inscription in Clonmacnois reads 'or do muredthach', Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 75-76, fig. 176.

<sup>125</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 35.

<sup>126</sup> Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, 78; see also the 'Notulae', where it is mentioned as a Patrician foundation, Bieler, *The Patrician texts*, 180, §19; *ibid*, 260 for identification.

<sup>127</sup> *CS* 1028, 1024; *AClon* 1026, p. 175; *AU* 1030; *AI* 1030.2; *AFM* 1030.

*AFM*] died in 1042.<sup>128</sup> According to the *Chronicum* he was of the Cuircne - a subject tribe of the Southern Uí Néill, situated in what is now county Westmeath.<sup>129</sup> The Uí Flaithéin were, like the Uí Chillin, an ecclesiastical dynasty who had one foot in Tuamgraney the other in Clonmancois (see A54, A69).

- A64. **Echtigern Ua hEgráin** [com Ciarán + Coman, *AU*; comarba Ciarain Cluana muc Nois ocus Comáin, *CS*; comharba Ciaráin Cluana mic Nóis + Commáin, *AFM*], abbot of Clonmacnois and Roscommon, died in the year 1052. According to the *Chronicum* he died in pilgrimage in Clonard and was of the Sogan, in Uí Maine.<sup>130</sup>
- A65. **Ailill Ua Airechtaigh** [com, *AU*; comarba, *CS*; ard comharba, *AFM*] died in the year 1070. According to the *Chronicum* he was of the Corco Roíde; the Four Masters maintain that, like his predecessor, Ailill died in pilgrimage in Clonard.<sup>131</sup> The Corco Roíde were a subject tribe of the Southern Uí Néill in Mide, seated in modern county Westmeath in the eastern neighbourhood of the Uí Mic Uais Mide and the Cuircni.<sup>132</sup>
- A66. **Máel Chiaráin son of Conn na mbocht** [m. Cuinn cenn bocht Cluana M. Nois, *AU*; Maolciaráin mac Cuinn na mbocht, *CS*, Maolchiaráin, mac Cuinn na mbocht, comharba Ciaráin, *AFM*] died in 1079. The contemporary sources simply mention him as the son of Conn na mBocht (see C1). Only the Four Masters style him *comarba Chiaráin*. They also state that in the year 1070 he paved two roads in the ecclesiastical settlement.<sup>133</sup>
- A67. **Tigernach Ua Braoín** [airchinnech Cluana M. Nois, *AU*; comarba Ciarain Cluana muc Nois, ocus Comain, *CS*; ardchomharba Chiaráin + Chomáin, *AFM*]

<sup>128</sup> *CS* 1040; *AI* 1042.6; *AU* 1042.2 (the surname 'H. Flaithen' is interlined by a second hand) *AFM* 1042.

<sup>129</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 89; Catasach Ua Garbain of the Cuircni died as lector of Clonmacnois in 1022 (S19).

<sup>130</sup> *AU* 1052.5; *CS* 1050; *AFM* 1052. For the Sogan see Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 230, 234-5; O'Donovan (ed), *The tribes and customs of Hy-Many*, 70-73; 159-165.

<sup>131</sup> *AU* 1070.9; *CS* 1067; *AFM* 1070.

<sup>132</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 69, 89 for map. The Uí Mic Uais of Mide were defeated by the Corco Roide in 807 (*AFM* 807 note c). In post-Norman times the Uí Dalaigh, got control over the territory (*AFM* 1185 note n).

<sup>133</sup> *AU* 1079.1; *CS* 1076; *AFM* 1070, 1079. For a grave stone inscription with his name see Petrie, *Christian inscriptions I*, 66-67, fig. 149, pl. LXII, reads: '[or do ma] elchiarán'.

died in the year 1088.<sup>134</sup> He was a member of an ecclesiastical dynasty in Clonmacnois who came from the Uí Briúin Aí of Connacht (see A56).

Tigernach is sometimes, probably wrongly, assumed to have been the author of the so called 'Annals of Tigernach'.<sup>135</sup>

- A68. **Ailill Ua Niallán** [com Ciarán + Crónán + M. Duach, *AU*; tanaise Abbad Cluana muc Nois, ocus comarba Crónán Tuama greine, et Mic Duach, *CS*; comarba Crónain + Chiaráin, in t-escobb + in sruthsenóir, *AI*; tanaisi abbadh Cluana mic Nóis, Comhorba Crónáin Tuama Gréine, + comharba Colmáin Cille mic Duach, *AFM*] died in the year 1093. He was head of the churches of Clonmancois, Tuamgraney and Kilmacduagh. Like the Uí Chillín from Clonmacnois the family of Ailill was of the Uí Fiachrach Aidne (see A54).<sup>136</sup>
- A69. **Macraith Ua Flaithéin** [comarba Ciaráin ocus Cronain Tuama gréine, *CS*; comhorba Ciaráin + Crónáin Tuama Gréine, *AFM*] died in the year 1100. Four years before he died he went on pilgrimage to the territory of Magh Eli, the mensal lands of the Uí Chatharnaigh in the southern parts of Tethba, now represented by the parish of Kilmanaghan. He was plundered by the Muintir Tlamain, a subject tribe of the Uí Chatharnaigh in 1198, and apparently withdrew to Aghaboe, in what is now county Laois, where he died two years later.<sup>137</sup> Possibly he was forced to go on pilgrimage by ever increasing pressure from the family of Conn na mBocht, who supplied his successor in Clonmacnois. Macraith is the last abbot of Tuamgraney recorded in the annals.<sup>138</sup> The Uí Flaithéin were an ecclesiastical dynasty in Tuamgraney and Clonmacnois, belonging to the Cuircne (see A63).
- A70. **Cormac son of Conn na mBocht** [tanaiste abadh, *AT*; comarba, *CS*; tanaissi abbaidh Cluana mic Nóis, + fer sona, saidhbhir, *AFM*] died in 1103.<sup>139</sup> Cormac was the grandson of Conn na mbocht.<sup>140</sup> Ten years prior to his death, in 1093 he bought Íseal Chiaráin, an appurtenance of Clonmancois, situated in

<sup>134</sup> *AU* 1088.3; *CS* 1084; *AFM* 1088.

<sup>135</sup> Macalister, *IHS* 4 (1944-50) 38-57; Walsh, *Irish men of learning*, 219-225.

<sup>136</sup> *AU* 1093.2; *CS* 1089; *AI* 1093.14; *AFM* 1093. Not to be confused with Uí Nialláin, a branch of the Airthir, situated near Armagh, who supplied several *equonimi* in Armagh since the ninth century, Ó Fiaich, *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 5 (1969) 82; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 118.

<sup>137</sup> *CS* 1092; *CS* 1096; *AFM* 1196; *AFM* 1100. L. Cox, *Jn. of the Old Athlone Society* 1 (1974/75) 238-241; for Aghaboe see Gwynn & Hadcock, 28.

<sup>138</sup> Gleeson & Gwynn, *A history of the diocese of Killaloe*, 31.

<sup>139</sup> *AT* (1103); *CS* 1099; *AFM* 1103.

<sup>140</sup> Máel Finnén, son of Conn na mbocht was the father of Cormac (*AFM* 1056).

Ballyloughloe parish, from Ua Flaithéin, then abbot of Clonmacnois and from Donmall son of Flann, king of Mide.<sup>141</sup> The church at Íseal Chiaráin appears to have been the residence of the Céili Dé in Clonmacnois, which apparently became the family residence of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht in the course of the eleventh century.

- A71. **Flaithbertach Ua Loingsigh** [com Ciarain, *CS*; cowarb of St. Queran and venerable priest, *AClon*; comharba Ciaráin, + saccart mór, *AFM*] died in the year 1109.<sup>142</sup> He is commemorated in the Clonmacnois annals for having finished the roofing of the great church, which had been built by King Flann and Abbot Colmán Conaillech in the early tenth century (see A49). According to Mageoghagan Flaithbertach also finished the building of the tower end of the walls in Clonmacnois. All these works had been started under his predecessor in office, Cormac Mac Cuinn na mBocht.<sup>143</sup>
- A72. **Gilla Chríst Ua Máeleoin** [comarba Ciarain Cluana M. Nois sonus + sobarthu airchinnech chell nErenn, *AU*; Abb Cluana muc Nois, tobar ecna ocus deirce, cenn soma ocus saibriusa na hErenn, *CS*; ardhomarba Ciarain Cluana Muc Nois, cainell eneig + derci Lethe Cuinn, *AI*; abb comharba Ciaráin Cluana mic Nóis, tobar egna + désherce ordain + oireachais Leithe Chuinn, senn sonusa + saidhbhriosa Ereann, *AFM*] died in the year 1127.<sup>144</sup> During his abbacy further reparations were carried out in Clonmacnois. A church called the '*erdamh Chiarain*' was roofed in the year 1113. The renovations of the great church in Clonmacnois, begun during the reign of Abbot Cormac (A70), were finished by Abbot Gilla Chríst with the support of Toirdelbach Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht in the year 1124.<sup>145</sup> Also during his abbacy, the synod of Ráth Bresail, patronized by Muircertach Ua Briain, king of Munster was held in the year 1111. At the synod dioceses were created in Ireland, but Clonmacnois was not chosen as a bishopric. It seems that in response to this apparent injustice a local synod was held at Uisnech in the same year, where, under the lead of

<sup>141</sup> *CS* 1089; *AClon* 1087, p. 184 renders Íseal Chiaráin the 'hospital of St. Queran'; *AFM* 1031 talks of Íseal Chiaráin as the house of Conn na mBocht. Liam Fox suggests, that Donmall, king of Mide might have had some rights to Íseal Chiaráin as the grandson of Guaire Ua Lachtnáin, a scribe in Clonmacnois (S23), L. Fox, 'Íseal Chiaráin, the low place of St. Ciarán, where was it situated?', *Jn. of the Old Athlone Soc.* 1 (1969) 6-14.

<sup>142</sup> *CS* 1105; *AClon* 1108, p. 189; *AFM* 1109.

<sup>143</sup> *AClon* 1100, p. 188; *AFM* 1104.

<sup>144</sup> *AU* 1127.9; *CS* 1123; *AI* 1127.9; *AFM* 1127. See Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 69, fig. 154, and 70, fig. 160 'or do Máel[eo]jain' and 'Máeliohain eps'.

<sup>145</sup> *CS* 1109; *CS* 1120.

Murchad Ua Máelsechlainn and Abbot Gilla Chríst the arrangements of Ráth Bresail were revised and Clonmacnois was appointed as the diocesan centre the west of Meath.<sup>146</sup> The Ua Máeleoin family is sometimes said to have been a branch of the Uí Chonchobair, settled in Bregmaine, now Brawney, in county Westmeath.<sup>147</sup> The dynasty dominated Clonmacnois for the following century and remained active in the church in the area down to the later middleages.<sup>148</sup> Gilla Chríst has sometimes, on dubious grounds been claimed to be the author of the *Chronicum Scotorum*.<sup>149</sup>

- A73. **Domnall Ua Dubthaigh** [arch Bishopp of Connought and cowarb of St. Queran, *AClon*; Elefinensis episcopus, oculus comarba Ciarán Cluana mic Nóis, *AI*; Elfinensis episcopus + comarba Chiaran Cluana Mac Nóis, *ACott*; aird espucc Connacht, + comhorba Ciaráin, cenn eaccna + einigh an chóiccid, *AFM*] died in the year 1137, in Clonfert.<sup>150</sup> His family rose to power as an ecclesiastical dynasty in Connacht during the century of reform.<sup>151</sup> The *Chronicum* comes to an end in the year 1131 (recte 1135).<sup>152</sup>
- A74. **Áed Ua Máeleoin** [comarba Ciarain Cluana Mc.Nois natus est, *AU*; cowarb of St. Queran of Clonvickenos, whoe for his great ritches, charity, and bountyfull hospitallity was called in generall the fountaine of all happiness of Leath Coyne, *AClon*; comharba Ciaráin Cluana mic Nóis, tobar sonusa + saidhresa Leithe Cuinn, *AFM*] died in the year 1153. He was born in 1098 according to the *Annals of Ulster*, which are missing for the years between 1134 to 1153.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>146</sup> *AU* 1111.8; *CS* 1007; *AFM* 1111. Mac Erlean, *Archivium Hibernicum* 3 (1914) 1-33.

<sup>147</sup> *R. I. A. MS 14. B 4*. 'Notes relative to the O Malone family of Westmeath'. In this case the Ua Máeleoin would appear as a close relative of the Ua Braoin (another ecclesiastical dynasty in Clonmacnois, who settled in Breagmuine. The territory corresponds to St. Mary's parish Athlone. See Pinkman, *Ardagh and Clonmacnois Ant. Soc. Jn.* 2, no. 10 (1945) 37-38.

<sup>148</sup> *AConn* 1461.16; *AConn* 1439.4.

<sup>149</sup> One of the manuscripts of the *Chronicum* (*R. I. A. MS 23. O. 8*), has a prefixed title in which Gilla Chríst Ua Máeleoin is named as the author. The most reliable MS copy by an Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh (in TCD MS, no. 1292, formerly H. 1. 18) has however no title page, and gives no author. See Hennessy (ed), *Chronicum Scotorum*, p. xxxix.

<sup>150</sup> *ALCé* 1137; *AClon* 1136, p. 194-195; *AI* 1137; *ACott* 1136; *AFM* 1136.

<sup>151</sup> Domnall died in 1136; Mauricius 'archiepiscopus Connachtie', died in 1150 (his garden in Clonmacnois is mentioned in *AClon* 1135, p. 194); Flannucan, 'episcopus Sil Muiredaig' died in 1168; Muirgius 'primus abbas Buelli' died in 1174; Cadla 'archiepiscopus Connachtie' died in 1201. See Gwynn & Hadcock, 98-99; A. Gwynn, *The Irish church*, 231-232.

<sup>152</sup> A supplement for the years 1141 to 1150 was added to the seventeenth century manuscript of the *Chronicum* by an unknown scribe. See Hennessy (ed), *Chronicum Scotorum*, xLi.

<sup>153</sup> *AClon* 1153, p. 200; *AFM* 1153; *AU* 1098 (gloss in MS C).

- A75. **Tigernach Ua Máeleoin** [comarba, *AU*; comurba, *AT*; comhorba, *AFM*] died in the year 1172. In the same year the death of Gilla Christ, the son of the abbot, is recorded in the Annals of Ulster.<sup>154</sup>
- A76. **Máel Mochta Ua Fidabra (or Ua Máelsechlainn)** [abb, *AU*; ardab, *AT*; abb, *AFM*] died in the year 1173. The Annals of Ulster add Ua Máelsechlainn as alternative surname, which was accepted by the Four Masters.<sup>155</sup> According to the *Chronicum* one Máel Mochta, comarba Chiaráin was plundered by the Síil Anmchadha, and by Conchobar son of Mac Cochláin in the year 1145, in Clonfinlough, near Clonmacnois.<sup>156</sup> This might have been Maél Mochta Ua Fidabra, who held the abbacy in Clonmacnois for a time only, and was again appointed to the position in 1172, when the reformers with Anglo-Norman support eventually resumed strength in Clonmacnois. He must have been a fairly old man by then and survived his appointment to the abbacy for one year only. Another member of his family took over his office (A77) for the following eight years. They might have been related to the Ua Fidabra family in Armagh, who supplied an archbishop of the see in the early thirteenth century.<sup>157</sup>
- A77. **Máel Chiaráin Ua Fidabra** [comarba ciarain, *AFM*] died in the year 1181.<sup>158</sup>
- A78. **Máel Muire Ua Máeleoin** [abb, *AU*; abbot of Clonuicknose, a great and worthy house keeper, *AClon*; comforba Ciaráin Cluana mic Nois, *ALCé*; comarba, *AConn*; chomarba Chiaran Chluana Mac Nois, *ACott*; comarba, *AFM*] died in the year 1230. Mageoghagan styles him 'a great and worthy house keeper' possibly in reminiscence of his ancestor and predecessor in office, Gilla Christ, praised in his obituary as the 'happiness and prosperity of the superiors of the churches of Ireland' (see A72).<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> *AU* 1172; *AFM* 1172; *AT* (1172).

<sup>155</sup> *AT* (1173); *AU* 1173; *AFM* 1173.

<sup>156</sup> *CS* 1141; *AFM* 1141.

<sup>157</sup> Donatus Ua Fidabra was bishop of Clogher and since 1227 archbishop of Armagh (*AConn* 1237.3.) For his attempts to unite the diocese of Louth with Armagh see A. Gwynn, 'Armagh and Louth in the 12th and 13th centuries', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 1, no. 1+2 (1954/55) 1-11 and 17-37, here 32-34; see also B. Smith, *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 14 (1991) 32-34.

<sup>158</sup> *AFM* 1181.

<sup>159</sup> *AU* 1230; *AClon* 1230, p. 233; *ALCé* 1230; *AConn* 1230.14; *ACott* 1230.



- A79. **Máel Chiaráin Ua Máeleóin** [abott, *AClon*; ab, *AConn*; ab Chluana mic Nóis, *ALCé*; ab, *AFM*] died as the last abbot of Clonmacnois mentioned in the annals in the year 1263.<sup>160</sup>
- A80. **Tomás**, abbot of Clonmacnois is mentioned by Archdall, when reporting about a conflict concerning lands, between the abbot and the bishop (Tomás Ua Cuinn) of Clonmacnois in the year 1268.<sup>161</sup>
- [A81. **Paule mc Teige**, according to Mageoghagan died as 'Cwarb or substitute of Clonvicknos' in the year 1384. According to the Annals of Clonmacnois 'Pol Mag Tethechan comurba Cluana' died in the year 1384.<sup>162</sup> Since the family was well established as an ecclesiastical dynasty in Cloone, it looks likely that Mageoghagan mistook 'Cluana' here for Clonmacnois.<sup>163</sup>]
- [A82. **Niall O'Sheridan**, is mentioned in a fourteenth-century poem as late abbot of Clonmacnois.<sup>164</sup>]
- [A83. **Cahir Mac Cochláin** [airchinneach chluana mic nóis, *AFM*] died in 1539.<sup>165</sup>

## Bishops (B)

- B1. **Failbe Becc**, abbot of Clonmacnois was also bishop, according to the Annals of Tigernach. He died in the year 713 (see A16).
- B2. **Tuadcar** [Epscop Cluana muc Nois, *CS*] died in the year 889.<sup>166</sup>
- B3. **Máelodar** [Epscop Cluana muc Nois, *CS*; epscop Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died the following year, in 890.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>160</sup> *ALCé* 1263; *AConn* 1263.11; *AClon* 1263, p. 244; *AFM* 1263.

<sup>161</sup> Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum*, 390-391.

<sup>162</sup> *AClon* 1384, p. 310; *AConn* 1384.8.

<sup>163</sup> Master Nichol Mac Teithechán of Cluain (i.e. Cluain Conmaicne in Leitrim) died in 1374 (*AFM*). Joseph Mac Teithechán bishop of the Conmaicne died in 1230 (*AConn* 1230.11).

<sup>164</sup> Mentioned by Robin Flower, *The Irish tradition* (Oxford 1947, Dublin<sup>2</sup>1994) 83-84. The poem tells of the sorrow of Niall for his friend Murchad, who had in some way violated the solemnities of the Mass. Niall appears in a vision to one of the community of St. Ciarán and asks for intercession for the imperilled soul of Murchad.

<sup>165</sup> *AFM* 1539.

<sup>166</sup> *CS* 889. An inscription on a Clonmacnois slabstone reads 'or ar tuathcharán', Tuathcharán being the diminutive for Tuathchar or Tuadcar. Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 45, fig. 91.

<sup>167</sup> *CS* 890; *AFM* 886.

- B4. **Cairpre Cam** [Epscop, *CS*; epscop, *AFM*] died in the year 904.<sup>168</sup> According to a note in the *Chronicum* the spirit of the father of king Flann, i.e. Máel Sechnaill, son of Máel Ruanaid appeared to bishop Cairpre. The story goes that Máel Sechnaill implored the bishop to make intercession for him, because he had failed to have a confessor during his life-time. No sooner had the poor soul got absolution than he pointed out to the bishop a treasure, which he once gained in a fight against the Norsemen.<sup>169</sup> Apart from this spiritual assistance for King Máel Sechnaill, bishop Cairpre was also involved in temporal affairs, acting as political negotiator on behalf of Flann Sinna, son of Máel Sechnaill, and king of Mide from 879 to 916. Cathal, the king of Connacht is said to have submitted to King Flann at the instigation of the clergy of Ciarán, under the leadership of Cairpre.<sup>170</sup> Close links between Clonmacnois and the king of Mide during the reign of Flann Sinna are also otherwise attested (see A49). The story about the *post-mortem* redemption of the king's father might therefore be a genuine literary product of the early tenth century.
- B5. **Loingsech** [Epscop, *CS*; epscop, *AFM*] died in the year 920.<sup>171</sup>
- B6. **Ferdalach** [episcopus, *AU*; saccart, *AFM*] died in the year 922 (see also P2).<sup>172</sup>
- B7. **Colmán son of Ailill**, *princeps* of Clonmacnois and Clonard is also styled '*scriba et episcopus*' in the *Annals of Ulster*. The letters preceding the title *episcopus* are completed by the editor as reading *scriba*, but possibly the original entry recorded the death of the abbot together with a second person who was a bishop (see A49).

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<sup>168</sup> *CS* 904; *AFM* 899. Cairpre's gravestone, a cross bearing the inscription 'or do corbriv crvm' is preserved in Clonmacnois. Macalister names a whole group of crosses in Clonmacnois the 'Cairpre Crom group'. They seem to be datable to the same period, the late ninth and early tenth century. Macalister assumes they are all cut by the same hand. See Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 47, fig. 96; 49, fig. 98; Macalister, *Memorial slabs of Clonmacnois*, 45, no. 239; also 98-100, for the artist who carved the crosses.

<sup>169</sup> The story is preserved in Irish amongst the religious tales in the fifteenth century MS Egerton 92, in the British Library; another copy is known from the *Leabar Brecc*, p. 259, col. 2; and from Brussels MS 5100-5104, fol. 76b. See Flower, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts* II, 514-515, article 52. In the *Martyrology of Donegal* bishop Cairpre is wrongly given the pedigree of Cairpre Crum, mythological king of Uí Maine, an alleged friend of S. Ciarán. The tale about the spirit of Máel Sechnaill is told here in an abbreviated version, Todd & Reeves (eds), *Martyrology of Donegal*, 66-67. For a Latin version of the tale see Colgan, *Acta Sanctorum*, 508-599 (recte 508-509).

<sup>170</sup> *AFM* 896; *CS* 899.

<sup>171</sup> *CS* 918; *AFM* 918.

<sup>172</sup> *AU* 922.2; *AFM* 920.

- B8. **Dúnchad mac Suthainein** [*episcopus*, *AU*; *Epscop*, *CS*; B. of Clonvickenos, *AClon*; *espscop*, *AFM*] died in 942.<sup>173</sup> The personal name of this bishop has strong Leinster connotations, moreover his father's name is highly unusual and only once recorded in the annals for a king of the Uí Muiredaig lineage of Uí Dúnlainge in the later ninth century.<sup>174</sup> A. Mac Shamhráin suggested therefore, that the bishop here was a son of the Leinster dynast of the Uí Dúnlainge, and attests to links between Glendalough and Clonmacnois.<sup>175</sup> In the year 952 an abbot of Clonmacnois died in Glendalough (A52). Also abbot Tuathal, who died in 971 might have been from the Uí Dúnlainge in Leinster (A55).
- B9. **Óenacán son of Ecertach** died in the year 949. He was *airchinnech* of Eglais Beg in Clonmacnois and like his brother Dúnadach, a bishop as well (see AE3).<sup>176</sup>
- B10. **Dúnadach son of Ecertach** [*Epscop*, *CS*; B. of Clonvickenos, *AClon*; *espucc*, *AFM*] died in the year 955.<sup>177</sup> Dúnadach was the father of Dúnchad (An8), and great-grandfather of Conn na mBocht (C1). He and his brother Óenacán were tutored by Cainchomrac, bishop and *princeps* of Louth, who died in the year 903 (see AE3).<sup>178</sup>
- B11. **Cormac Ua Cillín**, *comarba* in Clonmacnois, Roscommon and Tuamgraney was also a bishop according to the *Chronicum* (see A54).
- B12. **Tuathal**, *comarba* of Ciarán, was also a bishop (see A55).
- B13. **Maenach son of Máel Michil** [*Epscop*, *CS*] died in 971, the same year as the abbot Tuathal.<sup>179</sup> There was a vice-abbot of Clonmacnois, called 'mac Máel Mithil' (son of Máel Michil) in the late ninth century (vA12). His father's name

<sup>173</sup> *CS* 941; *AU* 942.1; *AClon* 935, p. 152; *AFM* 940.

<sup>174</sup> The Four Masters mention Suthenén mac Artúir in an entry for the year 858 (*AFM* 856).

<sup>175</sup> A. S. Mac Shamhráin, in unpublished notes on the covenant between Glendalough and Clonmacnois, which he kindly allowed me to read.

<sup>176</sup> *CS* 948; *AFM* 947; see AE3. See Kelleher, *Ériu* 22 (1971) 125-127, for the Meic Cuinn na mbocht.

<sup>177</sup> *CS* 954; *AClon* 950, p. 156; *AFM* 953; Mageoghagan adds here that Dúnadach was of the Uí Cheallaigh of Brega, whereas his brother Óenacán is said to have been of the Mugdorna Maigen according to the Four Masters (*AFM* 947); for the alternative ancestry of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht see Kelleher, *Ériu* 22 (1971) 125-127. A stone with the inscription 'dunadach' is preserved in Clonmacnois, Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 56, fig. 121.

<sup>178</sup> *AU* 903; *AFM* 898.

<sup>179</sup> *CS* 969. A stone with the inscription 'or ar maina...!', was found in Clonmacnois by Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 30, fig. 50.

might have become the family name of a dynasty in Clonmacnois in the tenth century.

- B14. **Flann son of Máel Michil** [ferleginn Cluana muc Nois, oculus Epscop, oculus aircinnech Cluana Deocra, *CS*; Lector of Clonvickenois, *AClon*; fear Leiginn Cluana mic Nois, epscop + airchindeach Cluana Deochra, *AFM*] died in the year 979.<sup>180</sup> As a bishop he was head of the monastic school in Clonmacnois and head of the church of Cloneogher in county Longford.<sup>181</sup> He came from the same family as his predecessor Maenach son of Máel Michil (B13, vA12).
- B15. **Conaing Ua Cosgraigh** [sui Epscop, *CS*; sui epscop, *AFM*] died in the year 998.<sup>182</sup>
- B16. **Máel Póil** [comarba Feichin, *AU*; Epscop Cluana muc Nois, et comarba Feichin, *CS*; epscop Cluana mic Nóis + comharba Fecheine, *AFM*] died in the year 1001.<sup>183</sup>
- B17. **Conaing son of Óenacán** [Epscop, *CS*; epscop, *AFM*] died in the year 1011.<sup>184</sup> Since according to the *Chronicum* he was of the Mugdorna Maigen, he was possibly another member of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht. His father's name Aodacain might be a variation of Oenagan, who was bishop and airchinnech of Eglais Beg in the mid tenth century (B9).
- B18. **Flaithbertach son of Loingsech** [Epscop, *CS*; Lector and Bushopp, *AClon*; Mc Loingsich, fer legind Cluana M. Nois, quievit in Christo, *AI*; espuc + ferleighinn, *AFM*] died in the year 1038.<sup>185</sup> There was Máel Choluim Ua Loingsigh, possibly a son of Flaithbertach, who was a scribe and priest in Kells, and died in Clonmacnois in the year 1061 (P12). Another member of the family was Flaithbertach Ua Loingsigh, abbot of Clonmacnois in the early twelfth century (A71).

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<sup>180</sup> *CS* 977; *AClon* 972, p. 158; *AFM* 977.

<sup>181</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 32; J. J. Mc Namee, 'Identification of certain placenames', *Ardagh and Clonmacnois Ant. Soc. Jn.* 2, no. 8 (1942) 3-27, he identifies the church as situated in the vicinity of Ballynakill, in county Longford, *ibid.*, 16-20; P. Gray, 'St. Ernan of Cluan Deochra', *Ardagh and Clonmacnoise Ant. Soc. Jn.* 2, no. 9 (1942) 27-32. Compare J. P. Farrell, *Historical notes and stories of county Longford* (Dublin 1886, reprint Longford 1979) 66, 99, who locates Cluain Deochra, alias 'Cloneogherie' somewhere near Clogher.

<sup>182</sup> *CS* 996; *AFM* 997.

<sup>183</sup> *AU* 1001; *CS* 999; *AFM* 1000.

<sup>184</sup> *CS* 1008; *AFM* 1009.

<sup>185</sup> *CS* 1035; *AI* 1038; *AClon* 1038, p. 176; *AFM* 1038; see S22.

- B19. **Conn na mBocht** is sometimes wrongly assumed to have been a bishop (see C1).
- B20. **Céilechair (Mugdornach)** [Epscop, *CS*; *espoc*, *AT*; bushopp; *espug*, *AFM*] died in the year 1067. The Four Masters call him 'Mugdornach' and add that he was of the Uí Chellaigh of Brega.<sup>186</sup> This entry combines the two variant genealogies of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht, one claiming they were a branch of the Uí Chellaigh, a branch of the royal dynasty of the Sil nÁedo Sláine of Brega, the other stating that they were of the Mugdorna Maigen, a people in the immediate neighbourhood of Louth. Céilechair was most likely another son of Conn na mBocht.
- B21. **Gilla Chríst Ua hEchtigern** [Epscop, *CS*; *espoc*, *AT*; *espucc*, *AFM*] died in the year 1104. The Four Masters say he was *airchinnech* of Ardagh as well.<sup>187</sup>
- B22. **Muiredach Ua Máeldúin** who died in 1106 was a bishop according to Magheoghagan. He was *secnab* according to the Four Masters which was the office traditionally held by the family (see vA21).<sup>188</sup>
- B23. **Domnall Ua Dubthaigh** died in the year 1137. He was *comarba Ciarain* and bishop of Elphin (see A73).
- B24. **Muirchertach Ua Máeluidir** [Episcopus Ua Maeludir Cluana Mac Nóis quieuit, *ACott*; *espoc* Cluana fearta, + cluana mic nois, *AFM*] died in the year 1186.<sup>189</sup> This man is said to have been present at the synod of Kells, but according to Ware he afterwards resigned the office.<sup>190</sup> His being bishop of Clonmacnois as well as Clonfert has been doubted.<sup>191</sup>
- B25. **Cathal Ua Máeleoin** [Cahall o'malone arch Bushop with the o'Neales and Connaught men; died the 8th of February, I mean the 8th of the Ides of February, he for his great riches, hapiness, learning, and many other good partes

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<sup>186</sup> *CS* 1064; *AT* (1067); *AClon* 1066, p. 179; *AFM* 1067. See Kelleher, *Ériu* 22 (1971) 126.

<sup>187</sup> *CS* 1100; *AT* (1104); *AFM* 1104.

<sup>188</sup> *AClon* 1105, p. 189; *AFM* 1106.

<sup>189</sup> *ACott* 1186; *AFM* 1187. The *Chronicum* ends with the year 1131, or 1150, the *Annals of Tigernach* finish in 1178, and entries for the time between the year 1182 and 1200 are missing in the *Annals of Clonmacnois*, see *AClonn*, p. 215-216, where Mageoghagan complains about the 'many leaves lost or Stolen out of the ould Irish Book which I Translate'.

<sup>190</sup> Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, vol 3, 314-316; Ware, *De Praesulibus Hiberniae*, 96, gives his name as 'Moriertachus O-Melider'.

<sup>191</sup> Gwynn, *The Irish church*, 249.

was held in great reverence, ended his life with a very happy and commendable end at Clonvicknose, *AClon*] died in the year 1208.<sup>192</sup> The title seems rather pretentious and should probably be read 'high bishop with the Southern Uí Néill and with the Connachtmen'. Cathal's family held the abbacy in Clonmacnois in hereditary succession (see A73, A74, A75, A78, A79). Cathal was the first to assume episcopal honours, and possibly claimed episcopal authority in Mide and Connacht, by right of his family tradition as head of a church which held lands in both k<sup>h</sup>gdoms, on both sides of the river Shannon.

- B26. **Ua Muirecán** [episcopus, *AU*; bushopp, *AClon*; espic Cluana mic Nois, *ALCé*; episcop, *AFM*] died in the year 1214.<sup>193</sup> His family was a royal dynasty in Tethba, and supplied several kings there in the eleventh century.<sup>194</sup> During that time many ecclesiastical dynasties from Tethba are found in Clonmacnois. The bishop's family apparently also cherished links with the Armagh associates Tynan and Antrim. Máel Muire Ua Muirecán was *airchinnech* of Tynan, a house associated with the Céili Dé in Armagh, he died in 1072.<sup>195</sup> Flann Ua Muirecán died as *airchinnech* of Antrim in the year 1096.<sup>196</sup> Ware mentions bishop Muirchertach as 'Mureachus O-Murrechan, a learned man' and supposes that he was identical with 'Muriertacum O-Murry', whose name he says is preserved on a grave stone inscription in Clonmacnois.<sup>197</sup> The so-called Registry of Clonmacnois claims to have been composed in the name of 'bishop Muirchertagh O'Muridhe', possibly referring to this bishop here.<sup>198</sup>
- B27. **Áed Ua Máeleoin** [epscob, *AU*; espuc Cluana, *ALCé*; episcop, *AFM*] drowned in the year 1220.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> *AClon* 1206 (recte 1208).

<sup>193</sup> *AU* 1214; *AClon* 1213, p. 227; *ALCé* 1214; *AFM* 1213. In 1201 William de Burk plundered Clonfert and Clonmacnois, Mageoghagan talks of the 'abbott [abbey?] of Malone and the bushop of Morican', *AClon* 1201, p. 218.

<sup>194</sup> Ua Muirecán, alternatively spelt Ua Muirigán (*AU* 1072), Ua Muirecán (*AU* 1096), Ua Muirigén (*CS* 1091, *CS* 1097), also Ua Muirecáin (*AFM* 1066) and Ua Muireccein. For Ua Muirecean kings of Tethba see: Ua Muireccein, lord of Tethba (*AFM* 1038) Conaing (*AFM* 1066), Tadhg (*AFM* 1066), Áedredan (*AFM* 1071), Domnall (*AFM* 1095, *CS* 1091), Cathal (*AFM* 1101, *CS* 1097).

<sup>195</sup> *AU* 1072; Gwynn & Hadcock, 409.

<sup>196</sup> *AU* 1096, Gwynn & Hadcock, 28.

<sup>197</sup> Ware, *De Praesulibus Hiberniae* (1665) 97.

<sup>198</sup> *Registry*, 459, 460.

<sup>199</sup> *ALCé* 1220; *AU* 1220; *AFM* 1219.

- B28. **Áed Ua Máeleoin** [bushopp pf Clonuicknos, *AClon*] died in the Cistercian house Kilbeggan in the year 1236.<sup>200</sup> A priest from Clonmacnois had chosen the same place for his retirement in 1196 (P16). Ua Finnén, bishop of Clonmacnois in the early fourteenth century was abbot of Kilbeggan before his appointment to the see of Clonmacnois.
- [B29. **Dauit mac Ceallaigh**, archbishop of Cashel who died in 1253 wrongly styled bishop of Clonmacnois in the Annals of Loch Cé.<sup>201</sup>]

#### Vice-Abbots, steward, *equonimus*, *secnab*, *tánaisi* or *prior* (vA)

- vA1. **Ailmedair** [*equonimus*, *AU*; *feirtighis*, *AFM*] died in 797.<sup>202</sup> According to Ryan the *equonimus* was the office out of which the *secnab*, or vice-abbot developed.<sup>203</sup> The Four Masters add that Ailmedair was of the Síil Máel Ruanaid. This was another name for the Mac Diarmada family of Mag Luirg, who became an independent branch of the Ua Chonchobair dynasty of Connacht in the twelfth century; or the name might refer to the descendants of Máel Ruanaid, who lived in the early ninth century, and was the father of Máel Sechnaill, and grandfather of Flann Sinna, king of Mide of the Clann Cholmáin. In both cases the Four Masters' statement appears as an anachronism.
- vA2. **Cú Chiaráin** [*secnabb*, *AU*; *prior*, *AFM*] died in 809.<sup>204</sup>
- vA3. **Congalach son of Irgalach** [*tánaisi Abbad*, *CS*; *prior*, *AFM*] died in the year 823.<sup>205</sup>
- vA4. **Flann son of Flaithbertach** [*secnabad Muman*, *CS*; *prior a Mumhain*] was drowned in the Shannon by the king of Uí Maine, most likely in the year 834. He was a Munsterman, of the Uí Forga, a sept of the Músraige Tíre, settled

<sup>200</sup> *AClon* 1236, p. 235. Kilbeggan was founded in the middle of the twelfth century by Mac Cochláin, Gwynn & Hadcock, 137.

<sup>201</sup> *ALCé* 1253 *Dáuid mac ceallaig .h. Ghillaphadraic airdepsc C[luana mic Nois], quievit*, *AU* 1253 *Dauid Mhag Ceallaig airdepscop Caissil quievit in pace*. See also *AU* 1263; *AFM* 1253. The abbreviation C. in *ALCé* has clearly to be read as Cashel, not as Clonmacnois.

<sup>202</sup> *AU* 797.2; *AFM* 792.

<sup>203</sup> Ryan, *Irish monasticism*, 273; see also 274, where Ryan suggest the *fer tighis* to be the early title for the guestmaster in Clonmacnois, it seem however obvious that it is the term used by the Four Masters for the *equonimus* of the original annals.

<sup>204</sup> *AU* 809.4; *AFM* 804.

<sup>205</sup> *CS* 823; *AFM* 821; *CS* 843 repeats this entry.

east of Lough Derg, in the northern parts of Munster little south of Birr.<sup>206</sup> The *Chronicum* reports with undisguised disapproval, that the vice-abbacy of Clonmacnois was given to a Munster man in the year 827.<sup>207</sup> This seems to have happened under pressure from Feidlimid, king of Munster. In this case his raids on Clonmacnois in the year 832 and 833 were probably the result of Clonmacnois's opposition to his man in such a high office in their church. Eventually the king of Uí Maine interfered on behalf of S. Ciarán's community, killed the Munster vice-abbot and later installed a Uí Maine man as abbot in Clonmacnois.<sup>208</sup>

- vA5. **Cumuscach son of Aengus** [secnap, *AU*; abbot of Clonickenois, *AClon*; prióir, *AFM*] died in the year 835.<sup>209</sup> One Ceallach son of Cumuscach, a learned and most talented young man, died as abbot of Fore in Mide in the year 868. Given the links between the two ecclesiastical settlements at the time, Ceallach might have been a son of the vice-abbot of Clonmacnois here.<sup>210</sup>
- vA6. **Ruaidrí son of Donnchad** [secundus Abbas Cluana Iraird, tanaisi Abb Cluana muc Nois, *CS*; prióir Cluana hIraird + abb cheall noile archena, *AFM*] died in the year 838.<sup>211</sup> His parentage, together with the accumulation of ecclesiastical offices in his hand, suggests that he was the brother of Conchobar son of Donnchad, king of Tara of the Clann Cholmáin who had died in the year 833.<sup>212</sup> Since his obituary, unlike those of most other vice-abbots, is not recorded in the *Annals of Ulster*, it might be a later insertion, made when independent chronicles were kept in Clonmacnois. Ruaidrí, the son of Donnchad Midi, would have been an uncle of Máel Sechnaill, son of Máel Ruanaid, the father of Flann Sinna.<sup>213</sup> Possibly the reign of King Flann, in which Clonard and

<sup>206</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 222, 172-173, map.

<sup>207</sup> *CS* 827. The death of Flann is recorded in *CS* under the year 823, the entry seems misplaced here. *AFM* has the not concerning Flann's death for the year 834 (recte 835).

<sup>208</sup> See A37, also Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 220-223.

<sup>209</sup> *AU* 835.4; *AClon* 832, p. 136; *AFM* 834. There is the inscription 'cumasa' on a gravestone in Clonmacnois, Petrie, *Christian inscriptions I*, 25, fig. 37.

<sup>210</sup> *AU* 868.1. For links between Clonmancois and Fore see A35.

<sup>211</sup> *CS* 838. The words 'secundus abbas Cluana Iraird' in *CS* are written as an original gloss over the name of Ruaidrí (*CS* p. 142 n.2.), see also *AFM* 837.

<sup>212</sup> *AU* 833; *CS* 832. King Conchobar was the father of Artri, bishop of Armagh and seems to have supported him in the struggle against the rival abbot Eógan Mainistreach, see *CS* 827/832, also Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry*, 72; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 282; P. Byrne, *Peritia* 4 (1985), 170-171. For Ruaidrí's name in a gravestone inscription see Petrie, *Christian inscriptions I*, 20-21, fig. 20.

<sup>213</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 282.



Clonmacnois were ruled by one head (see A49), was the time when the entry was inserted in the annals.

- vA7. **Áedán** [abbas Rois Cre, *AU*; prióir Cluana mic Nóis, + abb Rosa Cré, *AFM*] died in the year 839.<sup>214</sup>
- vA8. **Áedacán** [tanaisi abbadh Cluana, + abb cheall niomdha, *AFM*] died in the year 867.<sup>215</sup> He is only known to the Four Masters.
- vA9. **Máel Mide son of Cumuscach** [secnap, *AU*; prióir, *AFM*] died in the year 871.<sup>216</sup> It is possible that he was the son of the vice-abbot Cumuscach son of Aengus (vA5), and thus a brother of Ceallach son of Cumuscach, the abbot of Fore. Given the possible connection with Fore, Máel Mide here might be 'Máel Meadha mall Fhabhrace' (Máel Mide, the mild of Fore), mentioned in the poem by Enoch Ó Gillain, on the bodies interred at Clonmacnois.<sup>217</sup>
- vA10. **Maengal** [tanisi, *AU*; tanaisi, *CS*; prióir, *AFM*] died in the year 875.<sup>218</sup>
- vA11. **Cormac** [princeps Fobair + tanisi abad Cluana M. Nois, *AU*; Princeps Fobair, ocus tanaisi Abbad Cluana muc Nois, *CS*; abb Fobhair, + tanaisi abbaidh Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in the year 891.<sup>219</sup> As head of Fore he was vice-abbot in Clonmacnois at the same time (for links between Clonmacnois and Fore see A35).
- vA12. **Fergus son of Máel Michil** [equonimus, *AU*; ferthighis, *AFM*] died in the year 894.<sup>220</sup> It seems his father's name became the surname of an ecclesiastical dynasty in the tenth century, when the family supplied two bishops of Clonmacnois (B13, B14).
- vA13. **Máel Achaid** [tanusi Cluana M. Nois, + princeps Daminis, *AU*; tanaisi Cluana muc Nois, et princeps Damainsi, *CS*; abb Cluana M. Nóis, *AI*; seacnabb, .i. prióir, Cluana mic Nóis, + abb Daimhinsi, *AFM*] was abbot of Devenish and

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<sup>214</sup> *AU* 839.2; *AFM* 838.

<sup>215</sup> *AFM* 865.

<sup>216</sup> *AU* 871.9; *AFM* 869.

<sup>217</sup> Edited by M. Stokes in Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 6, verse 13.

<sup>218</sup> *CS* 875; *AU* 875.1; *AFM* 873. An inscription reading 'moen', was completed by Petrie to Moengal, Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 45, fig. 92.

<sup>219</sup> *CS* 891; *AU* 891.4; *AFM* 887; see A35 for Fore.

<sup>220</sup> *AU* 894.3; *AFM* 889; Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 35-36, fig. 67, 'fergus'.

vice-abbot of Clonmacnois. He was killed in the year 896, by the Delbna Ethra in an act of revenge, because the son of the king of the Delbna had been slain by the community of Clonmacnois before.<sup>221</sup> Earlier in the century one Martan from Devenish was abbot of Clonmacnois (A40).

- vA14. **Dedimus Ua Foirbten** [tanaisi, *CS*; tanaised abbot, *AClon*] died as vice-abbot of Clonmacnois in the year 923.<sup>222</sup> It seems he was the same man who was deposed as abbot of Clonmacnois in the year 901 (see A47).
- vA15. **Máelmuicheirge** [feirthighis Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in the year 929 according to the Four Masters.<sup>223</sup> *Fer tighis* is the title used by the Four Masters for those officials styled *equonimus* in the annals of Ulster.<sup>224</sup>
- vA16. **Flann Fobair** [Dedmus .H. Foirbten, tanaisi Cluana muc Nois, quieuit; occus Flann Fobair uero anno uno interfuit et oem exprobrauerunt, *CS*] succeeded vice-abbot Dedimus for a year, but resigned apparently due to lack of support in the community.<sup>225</sup> He died happily and in old age as a bishop and an anchorite of Fore in the year 930.<sup>226</sup> Flann is the last of a series of vice-abbots of Clonmacnois who came from Fore.<sup>227</sup>
- vA17. **Murchad son of Riata** [Ab Ruis Comain, et tanaisi Cluana muc Nois, *CS*; abb Rossa Comain + prioir Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*], abbot of Roscommon and vice-abbot in Clonmacnois died in the year 980.<sup>228</sup>
- vA18. **Longarg Ua Máeldúin** [secnab, *CS*] died in the year 1021.<sup>229</sup> His family held the vice abbacy in Clonmacnois in the eleventh and early twelfth century, over three generations and also provided a lector (vA21, vA23, S28). The Uí Máeldúin claim common ancestry with the Clann Cholmáin kings of Mide.

<sup>221</sup> *CS* 896; *AU* 896.8; *AI* 896; *AFM* 891.

<sup>222</sup> *CS* 922; *AClon* 919, p. 147.

<sup>223</sup> *AFM* 927. A slab stone found by Petrie in Clonburren, in the neighbourhood of Clonmacnois, bears the inscription, 'or do Máel m[oich]eirg[e]', Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 52, fig. 108.

<sup>224</sup> See vA1, vA12.

<sup>225</sup> *CS* 922. The MS reads 'u<sup>o</sup> ano uno interfuit et oem expravert'. The abbreviation 'oem' is probably a mistake for omnes. The meaning could be: 'And Flann Fobair came in between for one year and all reproached him'.

<sup>226</sup> *AU* 930.2.

<sup>227</sup> See vA5 (d.835); vA9 (d.871); vA11 (d.891); vA12 (d.894).

<sup>228</sup> *CS* 978; *AFM* 979.

<sup>229</sup> *CS* 1019.

Their ultimate ancestor Máel Dúin is said to have been a son of Diarmait mac Cerbaill, and a brother of Colmán Mór.<sup>230</sup>

- vA19. **Donngal son of Gormán** was *fer léiginn* in Clonmacnois and in Kells, the *Chronicum Scotorum* style him '*tanaise Abbadh*' (see S27).
- vA20. **Cinaoth Ua Ruadáin** [*tanaisi Abbad*, *CS*; *tánaissi abbadh Cluana mic Nóis, senóir + cend athcomhairc*, *AFM*] died in the year 1082.<sup>231</sup> Possibly he was killed in the raid on the Clonmacnois by Donnall son of Flann Ua Máelsechlainn in the year 1082.<sup>232</sup> The Ua Ruadáin family came from the Corco Moga in Uí Maine. Flannachad Ua Ruadáin was abbot of Clonmacnois in the early eleventh century (A59).
- vA21. **Concobar son of Fogartach Ua Máeldúin** [*secnab*, *AFM*] died in the year 1089.<sup>233</sup>
- vA22. **Ailill Ua Niallán** (d.1093) otherwise known as abbot of Clonmacnois is styled '*tanaist abbot*' in the *Chronicum* (see A68).
- vA23. **Muiredach Ua Máeldúin** [*bushop of Clonvickenos*, *AClon*; *secnab*, *AFM*] died in 1106.<sup>234</sup>
- vA24. **Cormac Ua Cillín** [*ard seacnab Sil Muiredaigh, ocus aircinnech tige aiged Cluana muc Nois*, *CS*; *Deane of the house of Clone*, *AClon*; *airchindech Tíge aidheadh Cluana mic Nóis*, *AFM*] died in the year 1106.<sup>235</sup> *Ard seacnab Sil Muiredaigh* seems to stand for the vice-abbot of Roscommon, the central church in the patrimonial lands of the Síil Muiredaig of Connacht. Possibly in his capacity as vice-abbot Cormac was responsible for S. Ciarán's churches in the territory of the Síil Muiredaig. In the battle of Corann, fought in the year 1087, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht defeated the Conmaicne under Art

<sup>230</sup> From the genealogies in *The Book of Lecan*, fol. 178v; S. Pender (ed), 'The O'Clery Book of Genealogies', *Anal. Hib.* 18 (1951) 58, §764.

<sup>231</sup> *CS* 1078; *AFM* 1082.

<sup>232</sup> According to Mageoghagan (*AClon* 1080, p. 182) "Cwickney and others were slain by Donnell mc fflynn o'Melaghlin king of Meath on Loghry, and alsoe the houses in the church yard of the nunns of Clonvicknos together with their church was burnt". The editor here suggests Cwickney to be a district in the former barony Kilkenny West, county Westmeath (*AClon*, p. 182 n.3). But the grammar of the sentence proposes a person rather than a territory; maybe 'Cwickney' here stands for Cinaoth.

<sup>233</sup> *AFM* 1089; for the family see vA18.

<sup>234</sup> *AClon* 1105, p. 189; *AFM* 1106; see vA18 for the family.

<sup>235</sup> *CS* 1102; *AFM* 1106; *AClon* 1105, p. 189.

Ua Ruairc.<sup>236</sup> Cormac Ua Cillín participated in the fight, on the side of Ua Conchobair's army. According to the account of the battle in the *Chronicum* he carried the staff of S. Ciarán in front of the fighting Connachtmen, who, needless to say, were the victors.

- vA25. **Gilla an Coimdead** [Giolla an Coimdeadh mac Cuinn Dealbhnaigh, tanaisi Abbadh Cluana muc Nois, *CS*; Giolla an choimhdhedh, mac Mic Cuinn, tanaisi abbaidh Cluana mic Nóis, *frí ré*, *AFM*] died in the year 1128.<sup>237</sup> He might have been another member of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht. The Four Masters say he was vice-abbot for a time only, which should possibly be read as an indication that with the beginning of the Uí Mháeleoin rule the Meic Cuinn na mBocht were overthrown as a up to then leading dynasty in Clonmacnois (see A72). The original title of Gilla an Coimdead, might have been distorted by the seventeenth-century transcriber of the text. It seems possible that in the original Delbna was part of the vice-abbots title rather than of his name, like for example, *Gilla an Coimdead tanaisi Dealbnach*. If this be true it should be read in analogy to the title of Cormac Ua Cillín as 'vice-abbot of Clonmacnois, responsible for the churches in Delbna' (see vA24, vA26).
- vA26. **Gilla Íosa Ua Braoín** [secnap ua maine senchaidhe sscribhighe, + fear dana, *AFM*] died in the year 1187.<sup>238</sup> No original Clonmacnois annals exists for this period. His connection with Clonmacnois is not explicitly stated by the Four Masters. Since Gilla Íosa came from one of the leading ecclesiastical dynasties in Clonmacnois the assumption that he was an official of the church of Clonmacnois seems justified (see A56, A67). His title *secnab Uí Maine* should possibly be understood in analogy to the title *senap Síil Muiredaig*, assigned to Cormac Ua Cillín (see vA24). Gilla Íosa Ua Braoín would thus have been vice-abbot in Clonmacnois responsible for S. Ciarán's churches in Uí Maine.

## Priests (P)

- P1. **Máel Barrfhinn** [sacardd, *AU*; sagart, *CS*; priest, *AClon*; saccart, *AFM*] died in the year 916.<sup>239</sup>

<sup>236</sup> *AU* 1087.6; *AT*(1087); *CS* 1083.

<sup>237</sup> *CS* 1124; *AFM* 1128.

<sup>238</sup> *AFM* 1187.

<sup>239</sup> *AU* 916.7; *CS* 915; *AClon* 910, p. 145; *AFM* 914.

- P2. **Ferdalach** [*episcopus, AU; saccart, AFM*] died in the year 922 (see B6).<sup>240</sup>
- P3. **Guaire son of Máel Acain** [*sagart, CS; Priest, AClon; sacart, AFM*] died in the year 944.<sup>241</sup>
- P4. **Rechtabra son of Maonach** [*primhsaccart Cluana mic Nois, airchinnech Imbleach Fia .i. Imleacha mBeccáin, AFM*] died in the year 948.<sup>242</sup> The Four Masters explain 'Imlech', to be 'Imlech Fia', i.e. Emlagh in co. Meath (see A61). The abbot of Clonmacnois at the time was Ferdomnach Ua Maonaigh of the Corco Moga (A52) - the two were possibly related.
- P5. **Aengus son of Bran** [*saccart, + sruith senoir Cluana mic Nóis, AFM*] died in the year 948.<sup>243</sup>
- P6. **Dubthach Ua Tadóáin** [*saccart, AFM; priest, AClon*] died in the year 996.<sup>244</sup> His father's name was Dubhfinn according to the Four Masters. The Uí Tadóáin were the leading dynasty in Tethba, to which the Uí Chatharnaigh, the Foxes, belonged as well.<sup>245</sup> Adga Ua Tadóáin, son of Dubcenn, prince of Tethba had died in Clonmacnois in the year 980. Dubthach was possibly a brother of this prince of Tethba.<sup>246</sup> Several of the slab stone inscriptions in Clonmacnois refer to the Uí Tadóáin.<sup>247</sup> The family also provided artists in the monastic community. The '*cumdach*' or shrine to contain the volume of the Stowe Missal,

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<sup>240</sup> *AU* 922.2; *AFM* 920.

<sup>241</sup> *CS* 943; *AClon* 937, p. 154; *AFM* 942. Petrie reads the inscription 'or do hu acan' on a stone in Clonmacnois as 'pray for Ua Acain', and suggests that Ua Acain became a family name, after Guaire's father Máel Acain, Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 20, fig. 19. There is another stone with the inscription 'or do guariu', *ibid.*, 55, fig. 117.

<sup>242</sup> *AFM* 948. Gwynn & Hadcock, 35. The inscription 'rechtar', found on a slabstone in Clonmacnois might be a fragment of the name Reachtabhra, Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 56, fig. 120.

<sup>243</sup> *AFM* 948.

<sup>244</sup> *AClon* 990, p. 163; *AFM* 996.

<sup>245</sup> See M. C. Dobbs, 'The territory and people of Tethba', *JRS* 68 (1938) 241-259; 71 (1941/42) 101-110, here 101-110.

<sup>246</sup> *AFM* 979 (recte 980). '*Duibhfind*' might be a spelling mistake for '*Duibhcenn*'.

<sup>247</sup> The most interesting one amongst them shows two inscriptions: The first reads 'oroit do conaing (or Cathail?) mac conghail' and is obviously contemporary with the carvings on the stone and older than the second, which says 'oroit do dubcen mac thadggan'. Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 48, fig. 98. There is Conaing son of Conghaile, king of Teathba who died in 822 (*AU, AFM* 821, *CS* 823). Other Uí Tadóáin inscriptions in Clonmacnois are '...ggán' (*ibid.*, 42, fig. 85) which is possibly the end syllable of Tadóáin. One stone bears 'or dó thadgan' (*ibid.*, 48, fig. 97) as an inscription. There is also 'tadgg...' (*ibid.*, 50, fig. 103) and 'or do th...gan' (*ibid.*, 64, fig. 144).

was made by a member of the family in Clonmacnois some time before the year 1052.<sup>248</sup>

- P7. **Condmach Ua Tomrair** [sacart, + toiseach ceiliabhartha, *AFM*] died as chief singer and priest of Clonmacois in the year 1012.<sup>249</sup>
- P8. **Fachtna** [ferleighind + sagart Cluana mic Nóis, airchinneach Fiondabhrach abhae, airchindeach indeidhnen, abb na nGaidheal, *AFM*; lector and priest of Clonvickenos arch dean of Ffynnawragh, abbot of Hugh, archdean of Inenen, and abbot of all Ireland, *AClon*] died on his pilgrimage in Rome in the year 1024.<sup>250</sup> The accumulation of titles in the hand of this man seem suspicious, is however mentioned by Mageoghagan as well as the Four Masters. Fennor is a church a little south of Sláine, and Inan is situated about four miles north of Clonard, both in county Meath.<sup>251</sup> Links between Clonmacnois and Inan might have been cherished since the tenth century. One Máel Poil, son of Ailill appears as head of the church of Inan in the early tenth century.<sup>252</sup> He was possibly a bother of Colmán, son of Ailill, abbot of Clonmacois at the time (A49).
- P9. **Máel Pátraic Ua Beguláin** [sagart, *AFM*] died in the year 1028. Abbot Ua Beguláin, who was deposed earlier in the century seems to have become a priest afterwards (see A58).
- P10. **Ailill son of Bresal** [saccart foir Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*], resident priest in Clonmacnois in the year 1044. Possibly he was the son of abbot Bresal Conaillech who had died in the year 1030 (A62).<sup>253</sup>
- P11. **Mac Sluagadaigh** [uasal shagart, *AFM*] died in the year 1051. His name seems to belongs to the Uí Maine.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> It bears the inscription 'OR DO DUNCHAD HU TACCAIN DO MUINTIR CLUANA DO RIGNI' [pray for Dunchad, descendant of Taccan of the family of Cluain, who made it.]. Dunchad is not mentioned in the annals. See G. F. Warner, *The Stowe Missal* II, xLvi.

<sup>249</sup> *AFM* 1011.

<sup>250</sup> *AClon* 1024, p. 174; *AFM* 1024.

<sup>251</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 36-37.

<sup>252</sup> C. Etchingham, 'Bishops in the early Irish church: a re-assessment', forthcoming *Studia Hibernica* 28 (1994).

<sup>253</sup> *AFM* 1044.

<sup>254</sup> *AFM* 1051; see Kelleher, *Celtica* 9 (1971) 104.

- P12. **Máel Choluim Ua Loingsigh** [saoi + sagart Cluana mic Nóis, Ciaráin, ferleighind Cenannsa, eccnaidh derscaighth, *AFM*] died in the year 1061.<sup>255</sup> Donngal son of Gormán, another scribe from Kells was vice-abbot in Clonmacnois at the time (S27). Máel Choluim was possibly related to Flaithbertach mac Loingsigh, lector and bishop of Clonmacnois a generation earlier, who died in 1038 (see B18). The family supplied an abbot of Clonmacnois in the early twelfth century (A71).
- P13. **Máel Chiaráin, son of Cormac son of Conn na mBocht** [uasal shaccart tuir crabhaidhm + eccnae uasal chend Cluana mic Nois, *AFM*] died in the year 1134.<sup>256</sup> He was the son of abbot Cormac (A70), and the grandson of Conn na mbocht (C1). His brother Céilechair died the same year (see Sen10). According to the Four Masters both died in '*Iomdhaidh Chiaráin*' (*imleach Chiaráin*) the bed of Ciarán, which seems to have been the name of a chaple in Clonmacnois, possibly *Eglais Beg*, where S. Ciarán himself is said to have died.
- P14. **Gallbrat son of Duaric Ua Tadgáin** [sagart mor, *AFM*] died in the year 1168 (see P6 for his family).<sup>257</sup>
- P15. **Congalach Ua Tomaltaigh** [ferleighind Cluana-mac Nois + uasalshaccart, *AU*; uasal shaccart, + airdferleighinn Cluana mic Nóis + saoi segna na nGaoidheal, *AFM*], lector and a priest died in the year 1169.<sup>258</sup>
- P16. **Ua Catharnaigh** [...aigh hI Catarnaigh sacart mor Cluana mic Nois, *ALCé*] died as a novice in the Cistercian house of Kilbeggan in the year 1196. The Uí Chatharnaigh, surnamed 'na Sionnaig', the Foxes, were the leading dynasty in Tethba (see P6).<sup>259</sup>

### Scribes, Lectors and Wise men (S)

- S1. **Mac Cú Chumba**, the son of Cú Chumba [scriba, *AU*; sccribhneoir, *AFM*] died in 730.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> *AFM* 1061; see S24.

<sup>256</sup> *AFM* 1134.

<sup>257</sup> *AFM* 1168.

<sup>258</sup> *AU* 1169, see S32.

<sup>259</sup> *ALCé* 1196 the beginning of the name is unreadable in the MS.

<sup>260</sup> *AU* 730.5; *AFM* 724.

- S2. **Dedimus**, grandson of Ligán [Mors Dedimi nepotis Ligain sapientis Cluana, *AU*] died in the year 752.<sup>261</sup>
- S3. **Gallbran Ua Lingáin** [scribhneoir, *AFM*] died in 773.<sup>262</sup>
- S4. **Colgu Ua Duinachda** [ferleighind, *AFM*] died in the year 794. He is described as the one who composed the Scaaip-Crabhaid, the 'Bosom of Devotion'.<sup>263</sup>
- S5. **Connmach son of Muirmid (nepos Guaire Oidni)** [scriba, *AU*; scribhneoir, *AFM*] died in the year 798.<sup>264</sup> According to the Annals of Ulster he was a descendant of Guaire Aidne, king of Connacht of the Uí Fiachrach Aidne. The Uí Chillin family in Clonmacnois came also of the Uí Fiachrach Aidne, who were seated in the south of Connacht at the border to Munster and provided several kings of Connacht prior to the eighth century when the Uí Briúin took the leading part in Connacht politics. King Guaire Aidne was a famous patron of the north-Munster churches such as Inis Celtra, Tuamgraney or Kilmacduagh. Links between these houses and Clonmacnois are attested to especially for the eleventh century. Two eighth century abbots of Tuamgraney appear to have been descendants of this king.<sup>265</sup>
- S6. **Tuathal son of Du-Dubtea** [scriba ocus doctor, *AU*; scribhneóir, egnaidh, + doctor, *AFM*] died in the year 814.<sup>266</sup> Eochu, a grandson of Tuathal(nepos Tuathail) died as an anchorite and bishop-abbot of Louth in the year 822.<sup>267</sup> It is possible that this man, as abbot of Louth was the grandson of a scribe of Clonmacnois.
- S7. **Dubinse** [sgríbhneóir, *AFM*] died in the year 819.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> *AU* 752.13.

<sup>262</sup> *AFM* 768.

<sup>263</sup> *AFM* 789, p. 396 note f, where O'Donovan cites Colgan.

<sup>264</sup> *AU* 798.3; *AFM* 793.

<sup>265</sup> Rehtabra Ua Guaire (*AT* 753, *AFM* 747) and Catnia Ua Guaire (*AFM* 789, recte 794); see Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 84, 242-246.

<sup>266</sup> *AU* 814.2; *AFM* 809. An inscription on a slab stone in Clonmacnois reads 'or do thuathal' dated by Petrie to the ninth century, Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 25, fig. 35.

<sup>267</sup> *AU* 822.9.

<sup>268</sup> *AFM* 814. A stone very similar to that of Tuathal, the scribe (S6) bears the inscription 'Dubinse', Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 25, fig. 36.



- S8. **Máel Aena son of Olbrand** [fear leighinn, *AFM*] died in the year 857.<sup>269</sup> Like abbot Máel Tuile Ua Cuana, who died in 877, Máel Aena was of the Luigne of Connacht (see A43).
- S9. **Luchairén, son of Eógan** [scribhnid, + angcoire, *AFM*] died in the year 865.<sup>270</sup> He is the first scribe, supplied by the Meic Cuinn na mBocht (see An5).
- S10. **Suibne son of Máel Umai** [ancorita + scriba optimus, *AU*; ancorita, *CS*; angcoire, + scribhnidh, *AFM*] died in the year 891.<sup>271</sup> The fame of Suibne's learnedness spread outside Ireland, he is mentioned as 'Swifnch' in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. His tombstone with the inscription 'suibine mac Máelaehumai' is described by Petrie.<sup>272</sup>
- S11. **Scannlan son of Gormán** [Scannal Roiss Cree + scriba Cluana m. Nois, *AU*; eccnaidh, scribhnidh toghaidhe, + abb Rossa Cre, *AFM*] died in the year 920.<sup>273</sup> He was scribe in Clonmacnois who came from Roscrea according to the Annals of Ulster.
- S12. **Máel Tuile son of Colmán** [ferleiginn, *CS*; ferleighthint, *AFM*] died in the year 923.<sup>274</sup> He was the first *fer léiginn* of Clonmacnois.<sup>275</sup> It is possible that Máel Tuile was the son of Colmán Conaillech, abbot of Clonmacnois at the time, and that he took over the leadership of the school in Clonmacnois with the support of his father the abbot (see A49).<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> *AFM* 855. According to Petrie one of the stones in Clonmacnois with the inscription 'Máeloena', can be firmly dated to the ninth century and belongs to this scribe. Petrie, *Christian inscriptions I*, 28-29, fig. 48.

<sup>270</sup> *AFM* 863.

<sup>271</sup> *CS* 891; *AU* 891.8; *AFM* 887.

<sup>272</sup> Petrie, *Christian inscriptions I*, 39, fig. 82. The stone belongs to the 'Coirpre Crom group' of Clonmacnois slab stones, all showing great similarity in style and design, Macalister, *Memorial slabs of Clonmacnois*, 45, no. 237, see also under B4.

<sup>273</sup> *AU* 920.4; *AFM* 918.

<sup>274</sup> *CS* 922; *AFM* 921.

<sup>275</sup> The Four Masters applied the title *fer léiginn* to earlier scribes already (see above). The contemporary annals, however, use the title only from the early tenth century. See Hughes, *Church and society*, chap. XI, here 247-248.

<sup>276</sup> A cross belonging to the 'Coirpre Crom group' of crosses in Clonmacnois was assigned to Máel Tuile by Macalister. The legible parts of the inscription read '...TUI...' - since the date fits, this could well be part of the name Máeltuile. Macalister, *Memorial slabs of Clonmacnois*, 31, no. 156; see B4.

- S13. **Donngal Ua Máelmidhe** [fer leighinn, *AFM*] died in the year 950.<sup>277</sup>
- S14. **Flann son of Máel Michil** was lector as well as bishop. He died in the year 979 (see B14).
- S15. **Loingsech son of Máel Pátraic** [fearleighinn, *AFM*] died in the year 989.<sup>278</sup>
- S16. **Odrán Ua hEolais** [scribhnidh, *AFM*] died in the year 995.<sup>279</sup> As apparent from his family name he came from the Muintir Eolais in Bréifne, the territory now represented by south county Leitrim, later known as Mac Ragnaill's country.
- S17. **Diarmait Conaillech** [Diarmait, .i. Conaillech, fer leighinn Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in the year 1000.<sup>280</sup> He was a member of the Conaillech Clan (see A49).
- S18. **Dúnchad son of Dúnadach** [ferleighind Cluana mic Nóis, + a hangcoire iarsin, cend a riaghla, + a sencais, *AFM*] died in the year 1006.<sup>281</sup> He was of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht (see An8, C1).
- S19. **Catasach Ua Garbáin** [fer legind Cluana Macc Nóis, *AI*; ferleighinn, *AFM*] died in the year 1022. He was, like the Uí Flaithéin, from the Cuircne settled in the western parts of the kingdom of Mide (see A63).<sup>282</sup>
- S20. **Fachtna** was a lector and a priest. He died in the year 1024 (see P8).
- S21. **Aengus son of Flann** [fer legind Cluana, *AI*; fer leighind, *AFM*] died in the year 1034.<sup>283</sup> One Aengus Ua Flainn died as *comarba* of Brendan of Clonfert two years later in 1036.<sup>284</sup> He was possibly related with this *fer léiginn* of Clonmacnois.

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<sup>277</sup> *AFM* 948.

<sup>278</sup> *AFM* 988.

<sup>279</sup> *AFM* 994. A gravestone inscription in Clonmacnois reads 'or do odrán háu eolais', Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 61, fig. 131; Macalister, *Memorial slabs of Clonmacnois*, 29, no. 145.

<sup>280</sup> *AFM* 999; see A49.

<sup>281</sup> *AFM* 1005.

<sup>282</sup> *AI* 1022.5; *AFM* 1022. Possibly related to Tuathal Ua Garbáin, who died as bishop of Old Kilcullen, in county Kildare in 1030 (*AFM*).

<sup>283</sup> *AI* 1034.6; *AFM* 1034.

<sup>284</sup> *CS* 1034; *AFM* 1036. Petrie assumes, that the slab stone in Clonmacnois with the inscription 'or do angus', was that of Aengus Ua Flainn *comarba* of Brenainn of Clonfert. Petrie, *Christian*

- S22. **Flaithbertach son of Loingsech** was lector in Clonmacnois and a bishop. He died in 1038 (see B18).
- S23. **Guaire Ua Lachtnáin** [fer legind Cluana M. Nois, *AI*; ferleighinn, *AFM*] died in the year 1054.<sup>285</sup> The Uí Lachtnáin were from Tethba (compare P6). The daughter of Guaire, Caintigern was the wife of Flann Ua Máelsechlainn, king of Mide (who himself was the son of an abbot of Clonard, see A60). The two sons of Cantigern, Murchad (d.1076) and Domnall (d.1094) became both future kings of Mide.<sup>286</sup> The Uí Lachtnáin produced many prominent ecclesiastics in the church of Connacht after the twelfth century reform.<sup>287</sup>
- S24. **Máel Choluim Ua Loingsigh** died as a priest in Clonmacnois in the year 1061, he was also known to have been *fer léiginn* in Kells (see P12).
- S25. **Ua Miadacháin** [ferléighinn do mhuintir Cluana mic Nois, *AFM*] died in the year 1063.<sup>288</sup>
- S26. **Conaing Ua hEaghra** [ferleighinn, *AFM*] died in the year 1063. His family was the ruling dynasty of the Luigne of Connacht, settled in what is now south counties Sligo and Mayo.<sup>289</sup> The church of Kilmacteige, according to the Registry an appurtenance of Clonmacnois, linked with S. Ciarán by local tradition was situated in their territory.<sup>290</sup>
- S27. **Donngal son of Gormán** [M. Gorman fer leiginn Cenannsa + sui ecna Erenn, *AU*; Donngal mac Gormáin, tanaisi Abbadh Cluana muc Nois, *CS*; Mc

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*inscriptions* I, 39, fig. 79. Another member of the family held the abbacy of Clonfert later in the century (*AI* 1081).

- <sup>285</sup> *AI* 1054.6; *AFM* 1054. There is a grave stone in Clonmacnois with the inscription 'or do guarriu'. Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 55, fig. 117.
- <sup>286</sup> M. C. Dobbs, 'The ban-shenchus', *Revue Celtique* 48 (1931) 190: 'Caintigern ingen Guairi hUi Lachtnain d'airther Thefa (i. fear-leigind Cluana Meic Nois) mathair Da mac Flaínd hUi Máel Eachlaid .i. Murchad + Domnall.' The second son Domnall was the king of Mide from whom Cormac grandson of Conn na mbocht bought Íseal Chiaráin in 1093 (see A70).
- <sup>287</sup> Máel Maith Ua Lachtnáin, anchorite of Killaloe (d.1077.3 *AI*); Máel Muire Ua Lachtnáin, Archbishop of Tuaim and Magister in Canon Law (d.1249.14 *AConn*); Gilla Christ Ua Lachtnáin, abbot of the Trinity in Tuam (d.1251.5 *AConn*); Lurint Ua Lachtnáin, Abbot of Assaroe, sometime abbot of Boyle and then abbot of Knockmoy and lastly Bishop of Kilmacduagh (d.1307.3 *AConn*).
- <sup>288</sup> *AFM* 1063. Etru Ua Miadacháin died as bishop of Clonard in the year 1173 (*AU*, *AFM*); Tomás Ua Miadacháin succeeded to the bishopric of Luigne Connacht, i.e. Achonry in the year 1266 (*AConn* 1266.14).
- <sup>289</sup> *AFM* 1063; Duarcán Ua hEagra, king of Luigne died in the year 1059 (*AU*). See J. F. Byrne, *NHI* II, 35.
- <sup>290</sup> *Registry*, 451 n.7; T. O'Rorke, *History of Sligo Town and Country* (reprod. Sligo 1986) II, 152-153.

Gormain, fer legind Cluana M. Nois + Cenannsa, *AI*; ferlegind Cluana M. Nois + Cenannsa, *AI*; áird ferleighinn Leithe Chuinn, + tánaissi abbaidh Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in the year 1070. The Annals of Ulster know about a son of Gorman who was a scribe in Kells, the Annals of Innisfallen say he was scribe of Clonmacnois as well as Kells; the *Chronicum* finally talks about him as vice-abbot of Clonmacnois (compare vA18).<sup>291</sup>

- S28. **Cormac Ua Máeldúin** [áird fherleighinn + sruith senóir Ereann, *AFM*] died in the year 1073.<sup>292</sup> His family provided three vice-abbots in Clonmacnois in the eleventh century (see vA18).
- S29. **Muiredach son of Mugron** [fer leginn, *CS*; ferleighinn, *AFM*] died in the year 1080.<sup>293</sup>
- S30. **Muirchertach Ua Cearnaigh** [áirdfherleighind na nGaidheal, *AFM*] died after a good life, in the year 1106 in Clonmacnois. His origin of the Luigne of Connacht is also given in his obituary (see S26).<sup>294</sup>
- S31. **Máelmuire Meic Cuinn na mBocht** was killed in the church by plunderers in the year 1106.<sup>295</sup> No title is assigned to him in his obituary. He was the son of bishop Céilechair (B20) and grandson of Conn na mBocht (C1) and became famous as one of the scribes of the *Lebor na hUidre*.<sup>296</sup>
- S32. **Congalach Ua Tomaltaigh** was a lector as well as a priest in Clonmacnois (see P15).

<sup>291</sup> *CS* 1067; *AI* 1070.7; *AU* 1070.10; *AFM* 1070. For links between Kells and Clonmacnois see Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 90 n.12.

<sup>292</sup> *AFM* 1073.

<sup>293</sup> *CS* 1076; *AFM* 1080.

<sup>294</sup> *AFM* 1106.

<sup>295</sup> *AFM* 1106. A grave stone inscription in Clonmacnois asks for a prayer for Máel Muire. Petrie, *Christian inscriptions I*, 68, fig. 152, 'or do mailmaire'.

<sup>296</sup> See Best (ed), *Lebor na hUidre*, Introd. xiv; Best, 'Notes on the script of *Lebor na Huidre*', *Ériu* 6 (1912) 161.

**Anchorites (An)**

- An1. **Aelgal** [ancorita Cluana, *AT*; angcoire, Ó Imlioch Foirdeorach, + o Cluain mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in the year 756.<sup>297</sup> Links between Clonmacnois and 'Imlech' are also otherwise attested (see A61).
- An2. **Gormán** [Gorman comurba Mochta Lugbaidh .i. athair Torbaig comurba Patraig, isse robai bliadain for usci thibrat Fingen a Cluain maic Nois, + adbath a n-ailithri i Cluain, *AT*; Gorman do Mughdhornaibh, a quo nati sunt mic Cuinn; asse ro buí bliadhain for usce Tiprait Fingin; ocus in ailitri a ccluáin adbath, *CS*] abbot of Louth, the father of Torbach, abbot of Armagh, died in Clonmacnois in the year 758. The annals of Tigernach state that prior to his death he lived for a year at the water of Fingen's well in Clonmacnois.<sup>298</sup> In the *Chronicum* his death-note, apparently a copy from Tigernach with additions, is inserted under the year 615. He was the ultimate ancestor of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht (see C1).<sup>299</sup>
- An3. **Áedacán son of Torbach, son of Gormán** [Áedacán Lugmaigh dég in anailitre a cCluain muc Nois, *CS*; Aodhagan, mac Torbaigh, abb Lucchnaidh, décc ina ailethre hi cCluain mic Nóis. Eoghan, mac Áedhagáin, ro ansidhe hi cCluain mic Nóis, conadh uadha ro chiset Meic Cuinn na mbocht innte. *AFM*; Fiegann mcTorvie of Lough died in Pilgrimage in Clonn aforesaid, of whome issued the familye of Conn mboght & Muintyr Gorman, they are of the O'Kellys of Brey. *AClon*] abbot of Louth died on his pilgrimage in Clonmacnois in the year 835.<sup>300</sup>
- An4. **Éogan son of Áedacán, son of Torbach** [ancorita, *CS*; angcoire, *AFM*], died like his father, an anchorite in Clonmacnois, in the year 847.<sup>301</sup>
- An5. **Luchairén son of Éogan, son of Áedacán, son of Torbach** [scribhnidh, + angcoire, *AFM*] died in the year 865.<sup>302</sup> He is the first scribe of Clonmacnois

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<sup>297</sup> *AFM* 751; *AT* (755).

<sup>298</sup> *AT* (757); *CS* 615.

<sup>299</sup> *AU* 808; *AFM* 807 ('Cinel Torbaigh, i.e. the Uí Cheallaigh Breagh'). Torbach is said to have been of the of the royal dynasty of the Uí Cheallaigh Brega, elsewhere (and more likely) the Meic Cuinn na mbocht claim descent from the Mudgorna Maigen seated near the church of Louth; see J. Kelleher, *Ériu* 22 (1971) 125-127.

<sup>300</sup> *CS* 835; *AClon* 832, p. 136; *AFM* 834.

<sup>301</sup> *CS* 847; *AFM* 845.

<sup>302</sup> *AFM* 863.

supplied by the Meic Cuinn na mBocht (see S9). His son Ecertach became *airchinnech* of Eglais Beg, presumably the mortuary chapel in Clonmanois (see AE1).

- An6. **Suibne son of Máel Umai** who died in the year 891, as a famous scribe of Clonmacnois was also an anchorite (see S10).
- An7. **Fingen** [Quies Fingen, anchara di Mumain, i Cluain Meic Nois, *AI*; Fingin, angcoire Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] an anchorite from Munster died in Clonmacnois in the year 900.<sup>303</sup>
- An8. **Dúnchad son of Dúnadach** [ferleighbind Cluana mic Nóis, + a hangcoire iarsin, cend a riaghla, + a sencais, *AFM*] a lector and anchorite, is praised as head of the rule and history of Clonmanois by the Four Masters (see S18). He died in the year 1006.<sup>304</sup> Dúnchad was of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht, the son of bishop Dúnadach (B10), and the grandfather of Conn na mBocht (C1).
- An9. **Robartach Ua hAilgius** [anchara i Cluain Macc Nois quieuit, *AI*; ancoire, *AFM*] died in the year 1007. The Four Masters add that he was of the Bregmaine (see A46).<sup>305</sup>
- An10. **Muiredach Ultach** [anmchara Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*; anchorite of Clonvickenos, *AClon*] died in the year 1017.<sup>306</sup>
- An11. **Joseph son of Dúnchad** [anmcara, *CS*; anmchara, *AFM*] died in the year 1022. He was of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht, the son of Dúnchad, bishop and anchorite (An8), and father of Conn na mBocht (C1).<sup>307</sup>
- An12. **Dubsláine** [prímh anmchara na nGaidheal, + saccart Aird breacain, décc hí cCluain mic Nóis, *AFM*] chief anchorite of the Irish and priest of Ardraccan in Mide, died in the year 1024 in Clonmacnois.<sup>308</sup>
- An13. **Daighre Ua Dubhatáin** [anmchara Cluana, *AFM*], an anchorite of Clonmacnois, died in pilgrimage in Glendalough in the year 1056.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> *AI* 900; *AFM* 895.

<sup>304</sup> *AFM* 1005. For a poem referring to Dúnchad see Ryan, *Clonmacnois*, 17; compare S18.

<sup>305</sup> *AI* 1007.5; *AFM* 1006.

<sup>306</sup> *AClon* 1010; *AFM* 1017.

<sup>307</sup> *CS* 1022; *AFM* 1022.

<sup>308</sup> *AFM* 1024; Gwynn & Hadcock 28-29 for Ardraccan.

- An14. **Conn na mBocht**, anchorite, head of the Céili Dé in Clonmacnois, died in the year 1060 (see C1).
- An15. **Fogartach Fionn** [anchorite and sage, *AClon*; eccnaidh + angcoiri, *AFM*] died in the year 1066. He was from Ulster according to the Four Masters. His name appears on a tombstone inscription in Clonmacnois.<sup>310</sup>
- An16. **Fothud Ua hAille** [ard anmchara Cluana mic Nóis, + Leithi Cuinn, *AFM*] died in the year 1081.<sup>311</sup>

### Head of the Céili Dé, *cenn Chéile Dhé* or *cenn bocht* (C)

- C1. **Conn na mBocht** [Conn na mbocht Cluana M.Nois, *AU*; Conn na mbocht Cluana muc Nois, *CS*; cend Celedh nché ocus ancoiri, Cluana mic Nóis, also: Conn na mbocht ordan + aireachus Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in the year 1060.<sup>312</sup> He became famous as the eponym of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht family in Clonmacnois. He is called Conn na mBocht, 'Conn of the Poor', and 'head of the Céile Dé in Clonmacnois' (for the title see C2). His family can be traced in the ecclesiastical settlement from the eighth century. They cherished a tradition as anchorites associated with the Céili Dé movement. Their appearance as heads of their community in Clonmacnois in the eleventh century seems simply the continuation of this anchorical family tradition. The Céili Dé community was seated in Íseal Chiaráin, an appurtenance of Clonmacnois in what is now Ballyloughloe parish, which in the later eleventh century became family possession of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht (see under Cormac Meic Cuinn na mBocht, A70). In the latter half of the eleventh century members of the family were involved in the writing of literature and contemporary chronicles in Clonmacnois. It seems that during this time the detailed pedigree of the family was included in the annals (see S18, S31).

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<sup>309</sup> *AFM* 1056.

<sup>310</sup> *AClon* 1065, p. 179; *AFM* 1066; Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 65, fig. 146, 'fogarta'.

<sup>311</sup> *AFM* 1081.

<sup>312</sup> *CS* 1057; *AU* 1060.4; *AFM* 1031, 1059. He is sometimes assumed to have been bishop, resulting from a misinterpretation of an entry in the *Chronicum Scotorum*. There the obituary of Óenacán son of Ecertach reads: 'Óenagan mac Egertaig, aircinnech Eglaisi bige, qui fuit germanus atui Cuinn na mbocht, epscop Cluana muc Nois [quievit]' (*CS* 948). The title bishop belongs to Óenacán and not to Conn. A tombstone with the inscription 'or do chunn' was still readable when Petrie visited Clonmacnois, Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 65, fig. 147.

- C2. **Máel Chiaráin son of Conn na mBocht** [cenn bocht Cluana M. Nois, *AU*; Maolciaráin mac Cuinn na mbocht, *CS*; comharba Ciaráin, *AFM*] died in the year 1079.<sup>313</sup> The term 'boicht' appears in the monastic context for the first time in the eleventh century and seems to refer to a group of monastic dwellers who were either identical or closely associated with the Céili Dé. Brian Ó Cuív suggested that Conn and his son Máel Chiaráin were both head of the 'Poor' and the Céili Dé community of Clonmacnois.<sup>314</sup> The *Chronicum* simply refers to Máel Chiaráin as the son of Conn na mBocht.
- C3. **Uaireige Ua Nechtain** [cenn Cele nDé Cluana muc Nois, *CS*; cend chéledh nde Cluana mic Nois, + a sruith shenóir, *AFM*] died in the year 1132. The family was from Uí Maine, of the Uí Fiachrach Finn of Maenmag.<sup>315</sup>
- C4. **Máel Mórda son of Uaireige Ua Nechtain** [cenn chelidh nDé Cluana, *AT*; sruith senóir déshearcach, sonus, + saidhbhres Cluana mic Nóis, cend a Chéled Dé, *AFM*] succeeded his father in office. He died in the year 1170, in the month of November.<sup>316</sup>
- C5. **Uaireige son of Máel Mórda son of Uaireige Ua Nechtain** [uasal sruith do sruithibh cluana mic nóis, fer lán do dhesherc, + dá gach sóalchidh archena, + ceann cele ndé cluana, *AFM*] one of the noble sages of Clonmacnois, a man full of the love of God and of every virtue and head of the Céili Dé, succeeded his father and grandfather in office. He died, according to the Four Masters, the tenth of March in the year 1200.<sup>317</sup>

### Seniors and Wise men (Sen)

- Sen1. **Forgla** [sruithe Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in the year 768.<sup>318</sup>
- Sen2. **Ua Miannaigh** [*abbas*, sruithi Cluana M. Nois, *AU*] also died in the year 768. His title in the *Annals of Ulster* is ambiguous, possibly he was abbot of the

<sup>313</sup> *CS* 1076; *AU* 1079.1; *AFM* 1079.

<sup>314</sup> Brian Ó Cuív, *Celtica* 18 (1986) 105-111, esp. 107 where he translates the title given to Conn by the Four Masters, 'cend Celedh ndhé, + ancoiri Cluana mic Nóis', as 'the person responsible for the Culdees and anchorites of Clonmacnois'.

<sup>315</sup> *CS* 1128; *AFM* 1132; see Kelleher, *Celtica* 9 (1971) 94-95.

<sup>316</sup> *AT* (1170); *AFM* 1170.

<sup>317</sup> *AFM* 1200.

<sup>318</sup> *AFM* 763; the entry reads: 'Forgla sruithe Cluana mic Nóis dég'. O'Donovan translates: 'The most [part] of the religious seniors of Clonmacnois died'. see *AFM* I, p. 366, note g.



seniors (*abbas sruithe Cluana*) rather than abbot and senior in Clonmacnois (see A25).

- Sen3. **Tuathgal** [*abbas sruithe Cluana, AU*], abbot of the elders of Cluain died in the year 811.<sup>319</sup>
- Sen4. **Máel Giricc** [*abb Tighe Sruithe Cluana mic Nóis, AFM*] died in the year 929.<sup>320</sup>
- Sen5. **Máel Choluim Ua Loingsigh** died, a wise man and a priest, in the year 1061 (see P12).
- Sen6. **Cormac Ua Máeldúin** was chief lector and learned senior of Clonmacnois. He died in the year 1073 (see S28).
- Sen7. **Máel Martain son of Ua Certa** [*sruith senóir Cluana mic Nóis, AFM*] died in the year 1077.<sup>321</sup>
- Sen8. **Máel Chiaráin Ua Donnghasa** [*sruith Shenóir Cluana mic Nóis, AFM*] died in the year 1101.<sup>322</sup>
- Sen9. **Muirchertach Ua Catharnaigh** [*sruith tocchaidh do mhuintir Chluana mic Nóis, AFM*] died in the year 1105.<sup>323</sup> The Uí Chatharnaigh, surnamed 'na Sionnaig', the Foxes, a branch of the Muintir Tadhgáin, were the leading dynasty in Tethba since the eleventh century. 'Muirchertach, the Cleric' is mentioned in the Tethba genealogies. He was the nephew of Muiredach mac Catharnaigh, king of Tethba in the mid eleventh century and had three sons, Becc, Fagartaig and Sittric.<sup>324</sup>
- Sen10. **Céilechair Mac Cuinn na mBocht** [*sruith senóir Cluana mic Nois, CS; sruith shenóir, cenn comhairle, + tobar eccna, senchusa cend einigh + coimheda riaghla Cluana mic Nóis, AFM*] was the son of Cormac son of Conn na mBocht,

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<sup>319</sup> *AU* 811.5; *AFM* 806, O'Donovan translates 'abbot of the religious seniors'.

<sup>320</sup> *AFM* 927. A gravestone inscription reading 'Máelcirigg' is preserved in Clonmacnois. According to Petrie it belonged to Máelisa O'Máelgiric, chiefpoet of Ireland who died in Clonmacnois in the year 1088 (*ALCé*), Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 45-46, fig. 93.

<sup>321</sup> *AFM* 1077.

<sup>322</sup> *AFM* 1101. Two gravestones in Clonmacnois bear his name, see Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 67, fig. 151; 66, fig. 149.

<sup>323</sup> *AFM* 1105.

<sup>324</sup> M. C. Dobbs, *ZCP* 20 (1936) 9, 11. Dobbs cites the genealogies from TCD MS H.2.7. p. 169, 170.

and died in the year 1134. The Four Masters style him 'learned senior, head of the counsel and fountain of the wisdom and history, and head of the hospitality and keeping of the rule of Clonmacnois'. They also add a quatrain to his obituary and note that, like his brother Máel Chiaráin, he died in the 'bed of Ciarán', presumably another name for Eglais Beag (see P13).<sup>325</sup>

Sen11. **Máel Muire Mac Cuinn na mbocht** [primhshenóir Erean, *AFM*] died in the year 1180. Clonmacnois is not explicitly mentioned as his church.<sup>326</sup>

### Head of the little church, *airchinnech Eglaisi Bige* (AE)

AE1. **Ecertach** [airchinnech eccailsi bicce, athair Aenacáin + Dunadhaigh, *AFM*] died in the year 898. He was of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht, son of Luchairén, the scribe (S9). He fathered two sons Óenacán and Dúnadach, both bishops.<sup>327</sup>

AE2. **Fiachra** [Fiachra eccailsi bicce, *AFM*], Fiachra of Eglais beag, died in the year 923.<sup>328</sup>

AE3. **Óenacán son of Ecertach** [Aircinnech Egailsi bige, *CS*; aircindech Eccailsi bicce hi cCluain mic Nóis, epscop, + ógh iodhan, *AFM*] was the brother of bishop Dúnadach (B10). He died in the year 949.<sup>329</sup> The two brothers were apparently fostered in Louth, their tutor was Cainchomrac, bishop and princeps of Louth who had died in the year 903.<sup>330</sup> A gloss is added in the *Chronicum* noting that Óenacán was '*germanus atavi*' of Conn na mbocht.<sup>331</sup>

AE4. **Cathasach** [airchindeach Eaccailsi bicce Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in the year 978.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> *CS* 1130; *AU* has entries for the years 1132-1155; *AFM* 1134.

<sup>326</sup> *AFM* 1180.

<sup>327</sup> *AFM* 893.

<sup>328</sup> *AFM* 921. A Clonmacnois stone with the inscription 'or do fiachraich' is mentioned by Petrie. The design on this stone is very peculiar; four heagons arranged in the form of a cross surrounded with a broad circular band and all the interstices filled in with rich ornaments of interlaced bands, spirals and the diagonal form of a Greek fret. Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 46, fig. 95.

<sup>329</sup> *CS* 948; *AFM* 947.

<sup>330</sup> *AU* 903.1; *AFM* 989.

<sup>331</sup> *CS* 948.

<sup>332</sup> *AFM* 977.

- AE5. **Broen Ua hAedha** [airchindech eccailsi bicce, *AFM*] died in the year 987. The name belongs to the Músraige in Munster.<sup>333</sup>
- AE6. **Cairpre mac Rodaighe** [airchindech Eccailsi bicce, *AFM*], the son of Rodach, died in the year 1037.<sup>334</sup>
- AE7. **Ailill Ua Máelchiaráin** [airchinneach Eccailsi bicce, *AFM*] died in the year 1060.<sup>335</sup> One Ua Máelchiaráin is criticized for his lack of hospitality in a poem attributed to Erard Mac Coisse, in which the poet laments over the grave of one Fergal Ua Ruairc in Clonmacnois.<sup>336</sup> The poem seems to date from around the mid-twelfth century when the Uí Máelchiaráin were apparently still around in Clonmacnois.<sup>337</sup>
- AE8. **'Hugh o'Konoyle'**[dean of the little church of Clonvickenos, *AClon*] was *airchinnech* of Eglais Beag according to Mageoghagan and died in the year 1092.<sup>338</sup> He seems to be the same person as Áed Ua Conghaile listed as *airchinnech* of the guesthouse in Clonmacnois by the Four Masters (see G3).
- AE9. **Máelán Ua Cuinn** [airchinneach Eccailsi bicce, *AFM*] died in the year 1097. He might have been another member of the Meic Cuinn na mBocht.<sup>339</sup>

### Guestmaster, *airchinnech tige oiged* (G)

- G1. **Mac Finn** [airchinnech tige aoidhedh Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in the year 1031.<sup>340</sup>
- G2. **Áed Ua Conghaile** [airchinneach Taighe aoidhedh Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in the year 1093.<sup>341</sup> The Uí Chonghaile were a family from Tethba.<sup>342</sup> They

<sup>333</sup> *AFM* 986. Ua hAedha king of Músraige died in 1010 (*AI*).

<sup>334</sup> *AFM* 1037.

<sup>335</sup> *AFM* 1060.

<sup>336</sup> *AFM* 1060; J. O'Donovan, 'Elegy of Erard Mac Coise, chief chronicler of the Gaels, pronounced over the Tomb of Fergal O'Ruairc chief of Brefny at Clonmacnois', *Jn. Kilk. SE. Irel. Arch. Soc.* 1 (1956/57) 341-356, here 348.

<sup>337</sup> See above 192.

<sup>338</sup> *AClon* 1092, p. 185, compare *AFM* 1093.

<sup>339</sup> *AFM* 1097.

<sup>340</sup> *AFM* 1031. O'Donovan translates the 'house of the guests' or 'hospital of Clonmacnois', *AFM* II, p. 822 note m.

<sup>341</sup> *AFM* 1093.

supplied guestmasters of Clonmacnois down to the second half of the twelfth century (see G6, G7). Possibly the Ua Conghaile family in Devenish in Fermanagh was originally from Clonmacnois.<sup>343</sup>

- G3. **Cormac Ua Cillín** [ard seacnab Sil Muiredaigh,ocus aircinnech tige aiged Cluana muc Nois, *CS*; Deane of the house of Clone, *AClon*; airchindech Tighe aidheadh Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in 1106. He was vice-abbot of the Síil Muiredaig in Connacht as well as guestmaster (see vA24).
- G4. **Congalach Mac Gilla Chiaráin** [airchinneach Lis aoidheadh, *AFM*] died in the year 1116. Possibly the Four Masters' version of the name of Congalach's father should be read as a family name, Mac Gilla Chiaráin, or Ua Máelchiaráin (see AE7).<sup>344</sup>
- G5. **Ceinnéittigh Ua Conghaile** [airchinneach lis aoidheadh Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in the year 1128.<sup>345</sup>
- G6. **Céilechair Ua Conghaile** [airchindeach tige aoidheadh Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] died in the year 1166.<sup>346</sup>

### Others (O)

- O1. **Connmach Ua Tomrair** was a priest and chief singer of Clonmacnois according to the Four Master. He died in the year 1012 (see P7).
- O2. **Cernach** [aistire Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] was 'ostiarius' or porter in Clonmacnois. He died in the year 1028.<sup>347</sup>
- O3. **Dubinse** [liachtaire Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*] is mentioned as a bellringer of Clonmacnois. He died in the year 1032.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Congal their ancestor is one of the sons of Tadgan, see M. C. Dobbs, *ZCP* 20 (1936) 1-30, here 8-9 'Congal a quo hUi Congail', one of the sons of Tadgan (according to TCD MS H 2.7. and Book of Ballymote, facs p. 82); see P6 for other Tethba families in Clonmacnois.

<sup>343</sup> Fogartach Ua Conghaile was *airchinnech* of Devenish (d.985 *AU*); Aemann O Conghaile died in 1277 (*AU*) as *airchinnech* of Rossory, right in the neighbourhood of Devenish.

<sup>344</sup> *AFM* 1116.

<sup>345</sup> *AFM* 1128. A fragment of an inscription in Clonmacnois reads '... r ár cen'. Hennessy proposes the reading 'or ár cendig' and ascribes it to this Cennedig Ua Conghaile. See Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 27, fig. 44.

<sup>346</sup> *AFM* 1166.

<sup>347</sup> *AFM* 1028.

- O4. **Máel Finnén son of Conn na mBocht** [athair Chormaic, comharba Chiaráin, *AFM*] is commemorated by the Four Masters as the father of Cormac, *comarba Chiaráin* in the late eleventh century (see A70). Máel Finnén died in the year 1056.<sup>349</sup>
- O5. **Anonymous** [rechtaire na mbocht, *AFM*; the steward of that familie, *AClon*] The superintendent of the Poor in Clonmacnois, was killed at Íseal Chiaráin in the year 1072, in the course of a fight between th community of the Céili Dé and the Poor there, and Murchad Ua Máelsechlainn, the son of the king of Mide. Since the Meic Cuinn na mBocht were the heads of the community, it seems likely that the *airchinnech* of the church was supplied by that family.<sup>350</sup>
- O6. **Gilla Chríst son of Conn na mBocht** [maic cleirigh as ferr baoi in Erinn ina reimher ordán + oirechus Cluana mic Nóis, *AFM*], another son of Conn, died as the best ecclesiastical student in Ireland in his time in the year 1085.<sup>351</sup>
- O7. **Máel Íosa son of Conn na mBocht** [Mac Cuind na mBocht, *AFM*] died in the year 1103 without a title, he is just mentioned as the son of Conn.<sup>352</sup>
- O8. **Gilla Chríst (Ua Máeleoin)**, the son of the *comarba Chiaráin* died in 1172, the same year as his father Tigernach Ua Máeleoin (A75).<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> *AFM* 1032.

<sup>349</sup> *AFM* 1056. Petrie mentions the inscription 'or do Máelfinnia' on one of the Clonmacnois slab stones, Petrie, *Christian inscriptions* I, 66, fig. 148.

<sup>350</sup> *AFM* 1072; *AClon* 1069, p. 180.

<sup>351</sup> *AFM* 1085.

<sup>352</sup> *AFM* 1103.

<sup>353</sup> *AU* 1172.

## Appendix 1.2: Tribes and families represented in offices in Clonmacnois.

(Questionmarks are put when evidence is ambiguous.)

### 1. ULSTER

Ciannachta Breg (co. Louth): A19(d.737), A33(d.794).

Conaille Muirthemne (co. Louth): A49(d.926), ?S12(d.923), S17(d.1000), A62(d.1030), P10(d.1044).

Dál mBairdene Ulaid: A6(d.628).

Dartraige Daimhinsi (Dartraighe of Devenish, co. Fermanagh): A40(d.869).

Latharna Molt, a branch of the Dál nAraide: A1 (d.544?).

AIRGIALLA:

Mugdorna Maigen: A41(d.872).

- Meic Cuinn na mBocht: An2(d.758), An3(d.835), An4(d.847), An5/S9(d.865), AE1(d.898), B8(d.942), AE3(d.949), B10(d.955), An8(d.1006), B17(1011), An11(d.1022), O4(d.1056), C1(d.1060), B20(d.1067), C2/A66(d.1079), ?AE9(d.1097), A70(d.1103), O5(d.1072), O6(d.1085), O7(d.1103), S31(1106), ?vA25(d.1128), P13(d.1134), Sen10(d.1134), Sen11(d.1180).

Ui Chremthainn: A18(d.732), A42(d.877).

Cuailgne (of the Ui Méith of Airgialla): A14(d.694).

### 2. LEINSTER

?Cenél Echach Gall: A39(d.868).

Loígis Rete: A2(d.570).

Ui Dunlainge of the Ui Muiredaig: B8(d.942), ?A55(d.971).

### 3. CONNACHT

Conmaicne

- Conmaicne Mara: A9(d.664).

- ?Conmaicne Dúine Móir (north co. Galway): A20(d.740).

Gailenga

- Gailenga Mór: A35(d.814).

- Gailenga of Corann (co. Sligo): A8(d.652), A16(d.713).

Gregraige

- of Airtech (or Lough Techet), south of Lough Gara: A11(d.665), A12(d.683), A43(d.877).

Luigne (of Connacht): ?A24(d.764), S8(d.857), S26(d.1063).

Ui Briúin: A27(d.771), A34(d.799), A50(d.931).

- Ui Briúin Seola: A36(d.816).

- Ui Briúin Aí:

- Ua Braoin: ?P5(d.948, mac Brain), A56(d.989), A67(d.1088).

- Ua Máeleoin: A72(d.1127), A74(d.1153), A75(d.1172), O8(d.1172), B25(d.1208), B27(d.1220), A78(d.1230), B28(d.1236), A79(d.1263).

Ui Fiachrach: A31(d.789).

- *Ui Fiachrach an Tuaisceirt (near Lough Conn, co. Mayo)*: A48(d.904).
- *Ui Fiachrach Aidne*: S5(d.798, nepos Guaire Aidne).
  - *Ua Cillin*: A54(d.966), vA24/G3(d.1106).
  - *Ua Niallán*: A68(d.1093).

Ui MAINE: A44(d.885), P11(d.1051).

Cenél Cairpre Chruim: ?A23(d.762), A29(d.784).

Corco Moga: A5(d.614), A10(d.665).

- *Ua Ruadáin*: A59(d.1003), vA20(d.1082).
- *Ua Maonaigh*: ?P4(d.948, mac Maonaigh), A52(d.952).
- *Ua Nechtain*: C3(d.1132), C4(d.1170), C5(d.1200).

Ui Chormaic Maenmaige: ?A26(d.770), A38(d.850).

Sogan: A17(d.724), ?A21(d.747), A64(d.1052).

#### 4. MUNSTER

Corco Loigde: A7(d.638), ?A22(d.753, 'Corcelig').

Múscraige: A4(d.599).

- *Ua hAedha*: AE5(d.987).
- *Ui Forga (of the Múscraige Tire)*: vA4(d.834?).

#### 5. MIDE

Bregmaine (co. Westmeath): A46(d.896).

- *Ua hAilgius*: An9(d.1007).

Corco Roíde (co. Westmeath): A65(d.1070), ?A22(d.753 'Corcelig').

Clann Cholmáin: vA6(d.838).

- *Ua Máelsechlainn*: A60(d.1014).
- ? *Ua Fidabra, alias Ua Máelsechlainn*: A76(d.1173), A77(d.1181).
- *Ua Máeldúin*: vA18(d.1021) S28/Sen6(d.1073), vA21(1089), vA23(d.1106).

Cuircne (co. Westmeath):

- *Ua Flaithéin*: A63(d.1042), A69(d.1100).
- *Ua Garbáin*: S19(d.1022).

Delbna: ?vA25(d.1128).

Ui Mic Uais of Mide: A53(d.954).

- *Ua hAdlai*: A51(d.948).

Ui Beccon:

- *Ua Maenaigh*: A57(d.992).

## TETHBA:

- *Calraige of Tethba (Dún Fremainne, co. Westmeath):* A15(d.706).
- *Calraige of 'Aelmhagh', i.e. Calraigh an Chalad, bar. Clonlonan, co. Westmeath, or Calraige Droma Cliab, in north co. Leitrim:* A30(d.786).

Muintir Tadgáin: P6(d.996), P14(d.1168).

- *Ua Catharnaigh:* sen9(d.1105), P16(d.1196).
- *Ua Conghaile:* G2(d.1093), ?G4(d.1116), G5(d.1128), G6(d.1166).
- *Ua Lachtnáin:* S23(d.1054).



**Appendix 1.3:****Churches from which ecclesiastical officials in Clonmacnois came.**

(\* indicates that the person died on pilgrimage in the church concerned.)

*Aghaboe (church of S. Cainnech in co. Laois):* \*A69(d.1100).

*Aghagower (co. Mayo):* ?A45(d.892).

*Ardagh:* B21(d.1104).

*Ardraccan:* An12(d.1024).

*Armagh:* \*A56(d.989).

*Clonard:* vA6(d.838), A49(d.926), A53(d.954), A60(d.1014), \*A64(d.1052), \*A65(d.1070).

*Cloneogher (co. Longford):* B14(d.979).

*Clonfert:* ?A26(d.770), ?S21(d.1034), \*A73/B23(d.1137), B24(d.1187).

*Devenish:* A40(d.869), vA13(d.896).

*Echar Gabul (?Leinster):* A39(d.868).

*Elphin (bishopric):* B23(d.1137).

*Emlagh (Imlech Fia, in co. Meath, near Kells):* P4(d.948).

*Fennor (co. Meath):* P8(d.1024).

*Fore:* A35(d.814), ?vA5(d.835), vA9(d.871), vA11(d.891), vA16(d.930).

*Glendalough:* B8(d.942), \*A52(d.952), ?A55(d.971), \*An13(d.1056).

*Imlech-forderach (possibly another designation for 'Imbliuch Sescinn', at Lough Ennel, in co. Westmeath):* An1(d.756), A61(d.1025).

*Inan (or Indeidnen in the parish of Killyon, bar. Westmeath, co. Meath):* P8(d.1024).

*Inishkeen (co. Louth):* A19(d.737), A33(d.794).

*Íseal Chiaráin (in Ballyloughloe par., co. Westmeath):* C1(d.1060), O6(d.1072), A70(d.1103).

*Kells:* P12(d.1061), S27(d.1070).

*Kilbeggan:* P16(d.1196), B28(d.1236).

*Kilmacduagh (co. Galway):* A68(d.1093).

*Lackan in Mide (co. Westmeath):* A51(d.948).

*Louth:* An2(d.758), ?S6(d.814), An3(d.835), AE3(d.949), B10(d.955).

*Old Kilcullen (co. Kildare):* ?S19(d.1022).

*Roscommon:* ?A21(d.747), A54(d.966), vA17(d.980), A61(d.1025), A64(d.1052), A67(d.1088).

*Roscrea:* vA7(d.839), S11(d.920).

*Saighir (Seirkieran, co. Offaly, the church of S. Ciarán the Elder):* ?A7(d.638).

*Taghadoe (near Maynooth, co. Kildare):* A26(d.770).

*Tuamgraney:* A54(d.966), A63(d.1042), A68(d.1093), A69(d.1100).

## APPENDIX 2. THE LANDS OF CLONMACNOIS ACCORDING TO THE REGISTRY.

### Ua Ceallaigh donations to Clonmacnois (nos.1-40)

1. **'Dunanought'** is Doonanought, now Donanaghta parish situated a little to the south-west of Clonfert, county Galway.<sup>1</sup> As a benefice belonging to the church of Clonfert it is listed in the report on the visitation of the diocese around the year 1565.<sup>2</sup>
2. **'Dun Beglaitt'** is the townland Kilbegley, in Moore parish, in county Roscommon.<sup>3</sup> As 'Kylbeglagh' the land appears amongst the possessions of Anthony Brabazon, according to a post mortem inquisition taken in 1604. He held it together with other lands in the area from the Bishop of Meath and Clonmacnois.<sup>4</sup> In the seventeenth century Kilbegley was still in possession of the Bishop of Meath and Clonmacnois.<sup>5</sup> O'Donovan mentions a tradition according to which the old church in Kilbegley belonged to the seven churches of Clonmancois.<sup>6</sup>
3. **'Dunmeadhain'** seems, together with 'Dunanought' and 'Dun Beglaitt', to form the 'three Dunta, wch signifieth 3 houses, or els three stillocks or steep places of building' given to S. Ciarán by Cairpre Crum.<sup>7</sup> The place might be Kilmeadain,

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<sup>1</sup> *Registry*, 454 n.1; Robert Simington (ed), *Books of Survey and Distribution*, vol I, *Roscommon* (Dublin 1949); vol II, *Mayo* (Dublin 1956); vol III, *Galway* (Dublin 1962); vol IV, *Clare* (Dublin 1967); here III, 195-196.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Visitations', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 146. For maps and the modern designation of counties and parishes used in Appendix 2, see Brian Mitchell, *A new genealogical atlas of Ireland* (Baltimore 1986).

<sup>3</sup> *Registry*, 454 n.2.

<sup>4</sup> 'Exchequer inquisition post mortem taken at Roscommon, 23 October, 1604 before John Crofton', ed. P. K. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 304.

<sup>5</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 62.

<sup>6</sup> O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, co. Roscommon* I, 49.

<sup>7</sup> *Registry*, 453, 454 n.3.

alias Kyllcomeddan, which like Kilbegley was amongst the lands in Connacht held by Anthony Brabazon in the late sixteenth century. He held it from the bishop of Clonfert.<sup>8</sup>

4. **'Suigh Kieran'**. The Registry says there Ciarán received from Cairpre Crum 'three Townes in Suigh Kieran within the Suca from Belalobhar to Rath Catri'. The exact location is not clear.<sup>9</sup> Father Patrick Egan suggests Creagh parish as general location of Suigh Kieran, since the arrangement on the list of lands, places it between Kilbegeley in Moore parish (east of Creagh) and Tuaim Cathraigh, in Clontuskert parish on the other side of the river Suck (west of Creagh).<sup>10</sup>
5. **'Gortacharn'** is a townland in Clontuskert parish, county Galway.<sup>11</sup> It might be the same as 'Gort an chuill' in Clonfert diocese claimed as bishop's land in the episcopal rental list from 1407, but in possession of Thomas 'mc Cynnedigh'.<sup>12</sup> In 1641 the townland was in possession of several Ua Ceallaigh.<sup>13</sup>
6. **'Tuaim Catrighe'** is Tomcattry in Clontuskert parish, county Galway.<sup>14</sup> It is also known as 'Kellysgrove', there is still a children's burial ground in the townland, which probably belonged to Kilclooney parish in earlier times.<sup>15</sup> In 1641 the townland was in possession of the Ua Ceallaigh and the Ua Cobhtaig family.<sup>16</sup> There is however an earlier version, the Headford set of the Books of Survey and Distribution, where Tomcattry is marked as churchland occupied by

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<sup>8</sup> According to the 'Exchequer inquisition taken at the hill called Backe, 7th Nobember 1604', ed. P. K. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 304-305.

<sup>9</sup> O'Donovan identifies the place as 'See Kieran' in barony Moycarnon. However, there is now no such place in the parishes Creagh and Moore. *Registry*, 454 esp. n.4.

<sup>10</sup> Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 19-20.

<sup>11</sup> *Registry*, 454 n.6; Also spelt Gortacarnan or Gortacarnaun, P. W. Joyce, *Irish Names of Places* (Dublin 1869) III, 370.

<sup>12</sup> Nicholls, 'The Episcopal Rentals of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 130-143, here 137.

<sup>13</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 127; 'Kelly, Donogh Mc Owen', from Gortacharne in Clontuskert appears in the Transplantation report from 1654, Robert Simington (ed), *The Transplantation to Connaught, 1654-56* (Dublin 1970) 96.

<sup>14</sup> *Registry*, 454 n.7.

<sup>15</sup> Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 13.

<sup>16</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 128; In the transplantation report from 1654 Daniel Oge Coffy, from Tumcattry - i.e. Tuam-cattrim in par. Clontuskert, appears. Simington (ed), *Transplantation to Connaught*, 95.

'Edward Tully McKivas', who was probably the son of Kyvas Tully, dean of Clonfert at the time.<sup>17</sup>

7. **'Cros Conaill'** appears to be Cross Connell also in Clontuskert parish.<sup>18</sup>
8. **'Grainsy'** is Grainseach or Grange, a townland in the medieval parish Kilclooney, i.e. the parts of the modern parish Ballinasloe, situated in county Galway.<sup>19</sup> The townland is mentioned as 'Granshagh', in the Book of Survey. Parts of it, together with other lands in Kilclooney parish were in possession of the Dean Tully, dean of Clonfert in the seventeenth century. The rest of Grange townland was held by several MacEoghans.<sup>20</sup> Edward, son of Kyvas Tully, the dean was proprietor of Tuaimcattrý in Clontuskert parish.<sup>21</sup> [The MacTully, alias MacMaeltuile were possibly a former monastic dynasty in Clonmancois]. The ancient parish of Kilclooney, or Cill cluaine, is known as the place where S. Grellan, the patron saint of the Uí Maine found his church. A monastery in ruins in Kilclooney can be found on the Ordnance Survey Map. It is said to have been a dependency of Clontuskert.<sup>22</sup>
9. **'Koyll-belatha'** was according to Egan the modern townland Kilmalaw in Kilgerrill parish, county Galway, at the western border of Kilcloony parish, north-west of Grange townland.<sup>23</sup> It seems possible that this was 'Kilbegnata', mentioned as a church in the diocese of Elphin in the early fourteenth century royal taxation list.<sup>24</sup> Today the whole of Kilgerrill parish belongs to the diocese of Clonfert.
10. **'Kill Tormoir'** is a townland in Kiltormer parish in county Galway.<sup>25</sup> According to the rental list of Clonfert from 1407 'Kiltormoyre' payed one mark as a yearly rent to the bishop of Clonfert.<sup>26</sup> It is listed as a benefice of the

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<sup>17</sup> Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 44n. See further down, under Gransagh.

<sup>18</sup> *Books of Survey III*, 127; Simington (ed), *Transplantation to Connaught*, 95.

<sup>19</sup> *Registry*, 454 n.9; Grange or Granshagh (ir.: Grainseach) was usually a place for grain, generally a monastic granary. The Irish word is borrowed from English. P. J. Joyce, *Irish Names of Places*, III, 388; Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Books of Survey III*, 128 (for Mc Rogan read Mc Eagan); Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 308.

<sup>21</sup> According to the Headfort set of the Books of Survey, Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 44n.

<sup>22</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 368.

<sup>23</sup> Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 13.

<sup>24</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* V, 224.

<sup>25</sup> *Registry*, 454 n.11.

<sup>26</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 138.

church of Clonfert in the report on the visitation of the diocese under Roland de Burgo.<sup>27</sup> In 1640 the townland Kiltormer was in possession of the O'Maddens.<sup>28</sup>

11. **'Killorain'**, alias Cill Odrain, now Killoran, i.e. St. Oran's church is a townland in the parish of the same name in county Galway.<sup>29</sup> Killoran paid a yearly rent of half a mark to the bishop of Clonfert according to the repiscopal rental from 1407.<sup>30</sup> The lands were still held in feefarm from the bishop of Clonfert in the seventeenth century.<sup>31</sup> The vicarage of Kilorain in the middle of the sixteenth century was united to the monastery of Clontuskert in Uí Maine.<sup>32</sup>
12. **'Killmolonog'** is Kilmalinoge, the name of a townland and parish in county Galway.<sup>33</sup> It was claimed as bishop's land in the time of Tomás Ua Ceallaig as bishop of Clonfert.<sup>34</sup> Later in the century the vicarage was deserted. In the later sixteenth century 'Willialmus Ó Cormacayn' was vicar of the church of 'Kyllmolonoch'.<sup>35</sup> His family, active in various churches in the area, also held land in Kilmalinog parish in the seventeenth century.<sup>36</sup> It seems the vicars family had got hold of the lands of the vicarage.
13. **'Kill Coirill'**. The correct reading in the MS is Kill Goiril.<sup>37</sup> This seems to be Kilgerrill the name of a townland and parish in county Galway.<sup>38</sup> In the seventeenth century the vicarage of 'Kyllgarell' did belong to the Augustinian

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<sup>27</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Visitations', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 146.

<sup>28</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 196; Kiltormer 1qr in bar. Longford is also named in the *Compossicion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freemann, 72.

<sup>29</sup> *Registry*, 454 n.12; In 1641 this Killoran townland was in joined possession of 'Walter Laurence fitz John fitz Walter, John Bryen fitz Christopher', *Books of Survey* III, 187.

<sup>30</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 136.

<sup>31</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 192.

<sup>32</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Visitations', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 149.

<sup>33</sup> *Registry*, 454 n.13.

<sup>34</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 138.

<sup>35</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Visitations', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 150.

<sup>36</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Visitations', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 150: 'Thadeus, praebendarius de Kyllcuayn, Eugenius, praebendarius de Drochte, Odo praebendarius de Benmore, Johannes vicar of Kyllmoconna, Mauritius vicar of Dunanought, Donatus vicar of Tyrkynesgrech'. In 1640 part of the quarter of Killmolonog was held by 'Erean Mc Erean O Corman' (together with 'John Oge o Dolean, John Horne Mc Edmund, Garret mc Murrogh O Maddin'), *Books of Survey* III, 180.

<sup>37</sup> *BL Add. MS 4796*, fol. 39r.

<sup>38</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.1.

monks in Aughrim.<sup>39</sup> In 1640 the surveyors state about Kilgerrill townland that 'this qur payes 4 li p Annu. to ye Bpp of Clonfert'.<sup>40</sup> ? [There is also Clonkeenkerrill, which formed part of the lands of the bishop of Clonfert, but since the time of bishop Muirchertach Ua Ceallaigh in possession of the bishop's family.<sup>41</sup> ]

14. **'Killuir Mor'**. This is Killuremore, a townland in Killgerrill parish, county Galway.<sup>42</sup> As 'Killownemon' the townland appears in the Books of Survey. Parts of it were in possession of Anthony Brabazon, the rest was held by several Ua Ceallaigh.<sup>43</sup>
15. **'Killuir Beg'**, like Killuir Mor in Kilgerrill parish. Appears as 'Killowrebegg' in the Surveyors report and was also by Anthony Brabazon. According to the Exchequer inquisition taken in 1604 he held one quarter there from the bishop of Clonfert, 'by what right the jurors know not'.<sup>44</sup>
16. **'Kilupain'**, is Killuppane, a townland in Ahascragh parish, county Galway.<sup>45</sup> An Ua Ceallaigh, the son of David son of Domnall Ua Ceallaigh (d.1295), was vicar of Ahascragh around the time when the Uí Ceallaig genealogies in the book of Uí Maine were compiled.<sup>46</sup>
17. **'Killithain'**, is Killyan or Killian, a townland giving name to a parish in county Galway, owned by several Ua Ceallaigh in 1641.<sup>47</sup> As 'Kyllhillayn' this place is listed amongst the lands, the tithes of which belonged to the community of the church of Clonfert according to a papal letter from 1448.<sup>48</sup> The rectory of the vicarage of 'Kylleayn' belonged to the nuns of Kilcreevanty in 1665.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Visitations', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 148.

<sup>40</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 132.

<sup>41</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 134n.

<sup>42</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.2.

<sup>43</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 131.

<sup>44</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 131; Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 304-305.

<sup>45</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.3; *Books of Survey* III, 14

<sup>46</sup> He appears in the last generation, included in the Genealogy. See 'The Genealogies in the Book of Uí Maine', ed. K. Grabowski, *The interaction of Politics, Settlement and Church in Medieval Ireland: Uí Maine as a case study* (D. Phil. Thesis, Cambridge 1988) 594-629, here 650-651.

<sup>47</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.4; *Books of Survey* III, 258-260.

<sup>48</sup> *Cal Pap. Let.* X, 393-396.

<sup>49</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Visitations', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 148.

18. **'Killosaigelean'** is Killosolan, a townland and parish in county Galway.<sup>50</sup> In 1585 four quarters in Killosolan belonged to the bishop of Elphin.<sup>51</sup> In 1641 the townland Killosolan was still in possession of the 'Ld Bpp. Elphin'.<sup>52</sup> The Ua Dubhagáin supplied the rectors of Killosolan for most of the fifteenth century.<sup>53</sup>
19. **'Maoleach'** is Moylough a townland and parish, south of Kilkerrin parish in county Galway.<sup>54</sup> There is also Mylech Sinna. Moylough at the Shannon, a vicarage belonging to the church of Clonfert.<sup>55</sup> However Moylough near Kilkerrin seems more plausible here since it fits better in the geographical arrangements of the lands listed.
20. **'Cluncuill'** has been identified by O'Donovan as a townland in Kilkerrin parish in county Galway.<sup>56</sup>
21. **'Killchuirin'** is Kilkerrin, a townland and parish in county Galway.<sup>57</sup> In the papal documents Kilkerrin appears as the rectory of 'Kyllcaryn, alias Corkomaga' belonging to the diocese of Tuam.<sup>58</sup> The lands of 'Corramore' were amongst the churchlands bought by Muirchertach Ua Ceallaigh sometime around the year 1407.<sup>59</sup> According to the *Compassion Booke of Connought* 5 qr. in the parish belonged to the bishop of Clonfert in 1585.<sup>60</sup> A quarter in Kilkerrin townland is listed as belonging to the Bishop of Tuam in the *Book of Survey* (1641).<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.5.

<sup>51</sup> *Compassion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freeman, 169 Indenture of Hy Many, in bar. Theacquin: "...also Toe [Teagh] nepallice consisting of 15 qrs, whereof belongeth to her Matie as in right of the friory of kilternepallice one qr. and to the Bishopprie of Elphin in killossallone 4 qrs, which is conveyed ouer to state of inheritance to the aforesaid Thomas Dillon of Curraghboy."

<sup>52</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 280

<sup>53</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.*, VIII, 201-202; VIII, 557; XII, 72.

<sup>54</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.6; *Books of Survey* III, 268-272; 170 for Moylachmore tl.

<sup>55</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Visitations', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 146.

<sup>56</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.7; The name does not appear in Kilkerrin parish in the *Books of Survey* III, 174.

<sup>57</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.8.

<sup>58</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* IV, 426 (1413).

<sup>59</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 139.

<sup>60</sup> *Compassion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freemann, 169: '...Corcomoe consisting of 24 qrs, whereof belongeth to the Bishopruck of Clonefert 5 qrs.'

<sup>61</sup> *Books of Survey* III, 174.

22. **'Dundonnaill in Maghfinn'** is Dundonnell townland in Taghmaconnell parish in county Roscommon.<sup>62</sup> In the early fourteenth century the vicarage of 'Theachinaconyll' is mentioned as a part of the diocese of Clonfert.<sup>63</sup> In 1407 one part of 'Taghmconayle' was belonging to the church of Clonfert, paying one mark rent to the bishop. The other part belonged to the church of Tuam.<sup>64</sup> The rectory of Taghmaconnell was, together with Creagh belonging to the monks in Kilcreevanty.<sup>65</sup> Magh Finn, or Moyfinn was a territory roughly corresponding to the parish of Taghmaconnell. The dean of Clonmacnois held a quarter in Moyfinn in 1585.<sup>66</sup> However Dundonnell townland was in possession of 'Edmond mc Collo Keogh' in 1641.<sup>67</sup> The quarter of the dean of Clonmacnois in Moyfinn might therefore rather be Kilkenney in Taghmaconnell parish.<sup>68</sup>
23. **'Tuaimsruthra'** is the name of a townland in Creagh parish, county Roscommon.<sup>69</sup> The modern name is Ashford. The bishop of Clonfert received 'ex terris de Tuaymsrura duae marcae' in 1407.<sup>70</sup> In the late sixteenth century, the 'ruined castle of Tuam Srower and ...the quarter of the same name upon which the said castle is built' was held by Anthony Brabazon from the bishop of Meath and Clonmancois, according to a post mortem inquisition taken by the Exchequer in 1604.<sup>71</sup> One quarter in 'Tuaimsrurra' in the dio. of Clonfert was leased 'in perpetuum to Captaine Brabson of Ballynosloagh', by the bishop of Clonfert in 1615.<sup>72</sup> The land was still in possession of the bishop of Clonfert in

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<sup>62</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.9.

<sup>63</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* V, 221.

<sup>64</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 139.

<sup>65</sup> In 1565-67 the rectory of 'Tymconayll', together with the vicarages of Creagh, Killalaghton and Killoran, was united to the monastery of Clontuskert in Uí Maine; Moyfinn, the rectory of which was also belonging to the monastery of Kilcreevanty, was held from the bishop of Clonfert for a yearly rent of one mark, Nicholls (ed), 'Visitations', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 149. (See also Kilkenney in Taghmaconnell parish which must have been included here as well, no. 35).

<sup>66</sup> *Composicion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freemann, 168.

<sup>67</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 105.

<sup>68</sup> See below, no. 35.

<sup>69</sup> O'Donovan thought this to be Tisara parish, south of Aghleague, bar. Athlone, Co Roscommon. *Registry*, 455 n.11.

<sup>70</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 139.

<sup>71</sup> 'Exchequer inquisition post mortem taken at Roscommon, 23 October, 1604 before John Crofton' (Record Commissioners' Transcripts, Exchequer Inquisitions, Roscommon, P. R. O. I. 1a/48/87, p. 109), ed. P. K. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 304.

<sup>72</sup> P. K. Egan (ed), 'The royal visitation of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh 1615', *Galway Arch. Hist. Soc. Jn.* 35 (1976) 71.



1641.<sup>73</sup> Tuaim Sruthra has been identified by M. Connellan as Templereelan, S. Raoilean monastic foundation. He cites local tradition in the area of Ballinasloe, which connects Tuaim Sruthra with Clonmacnois, claiming that Ciarán at one stage contemplated to built his monastery in Tuaim Sruthra.<sup>74</sup>

24. **'Dysyort'** appears as 'Disiort' in the manuscript and is corrected to Dysort by a second hand.<sup>75</sup> This is Dysart parish in county Roscommon.<sup>76</sup> The vicarage of 'Disert', forming part of the diocese of Elphin is mentioned in the royal taxation list of the churches of Ireland, dating from the early fourteenth century.<sup>77</sup> In 1641 the townland 'Comyn in Disert', was in possession of the Bishop of Elphin.<sup>78</sup> The two parishes of Dysart and Cam constituted the territory of Clann Uadach in the cantred of Tir Maine. Lands in the two parishes were granted to the Cistercians of St. Mary's abbey in Dublin by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, the brother of king Feidlimid.<sup>79</sup> It seems Richard de la Rochelle intended the foundation of a Cistercian abbey here, around the year 1270.<sup>80</sup>
25. **'Habart'** could not be identified.
26. **'Tuaimgreiny'** is Tuamgraney at the southern border of county Galway, belonging to county Clare. This was anciently the southern boundary of Hy Many.<sup>81</sup> Links with Clonmacnois are testified since the tenth century, the times of Cormac Ua Cillin, who was abbot of Clonmacnois, Roscommon and Tuamgraney.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *Books of Survey* I,60.

<sup>74</sup> M. Connellan, 'St. Raoilinn of Teampall Raoileann', *Galway Arch. Hist. Soc. Jn.* 20, no. 3+4 (1943) 145-150; "Shorn of some silly accretions, the story goes, at one time it was contemplated building Clonmacnois' seven churches at Teampall Raoileann. Thwarted here, another attempt was made to build beside the ruins of St. Grellan's church in Kilclooney, two miles further west. The third attempt at Clonmacnois was successfull. The story has this much of a thread in it, that it shows the link between Clonmacnois and Tuaimsruthra was maintained in tradition even till now. ...", *ibid* 149. See also Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 27.

<sup>75</sup> *BL Add. MS 4796*, fol. 40r.

<sup>76</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.12.

<sup>77</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel.* V, 224.

<sup>78</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 107

<sup>79</sup> *Chartularies of St. Mary's abbey, Dublin: with the Registry of its house at Dunbrody, and annals of Ireland*, ed. John T. Gilbert, 2 vols (RS, London 1884) II, 5, 25.

<sup>80</sup> Helen Walton, *The English in Connacht* (Ph. D. Thesis, TCD 1980) 473; see also Gwynn & Hadcock, 144.

<sup>81</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.14; *Books of Survey* IV, 7-12.

<sup>82</sup> He died in 966 (CS).

27. **'Killtuma'** is Kiltoom, a church giving name to a townland and parish in county Roscommon.<sup>83</sup> The townland Kiltoom in the parish was in possession of the bishop of Elphin in 1641.<sup>84</sup>
28. **'Carnagh'** is a townland in St. John's parish, county Roscommon.<sup>85</sup> There is 'Cranagh als Killinecartan',<sup>86</sup> and 'Cranagh als Ballavaney', listed amongst the townlands in the parish. The latter was in 1641 in possession of Loughlin mc Hugh Kelly.<sup>87</sup> It seems Carnagh townland was included in a royal grant of lands in Connacht to Richard de Exeter.<sup>88</sup>
29. **'Cluain acha Leaga'** according to O'Donovan is Cloonakilleg townland in Tisara parish county Roscommon.<sup>89</sup>
30. **'Acha Obhair'** is Aghagower or Gamehill, a townland in Fuerty parish in county Roscommon.<sup>90</sup> Fuerty, alias Fidhard is known as a cell founded by S. Patrick for Deacon Justus, who is said to have, in very old age, baptized S. Ciarán.<sup>91</sup> 'Fidard' is mentioned as one of the churches in the diocese of Elphin in the early fourteenth century.<sup>92</sup> There is of course also 'Achud Fobuir', a Patrician foundation near Croagh Patrick, near Westport. This place would however fall out of the geographical arrangement of the other places mentioned here.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.15.

<sup>84</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 98.

<sup>85</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.16.

<sup>86</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 114.

<sup>87</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 114.

<sup>88</sup> The royal confirmation of a grant of lands in Connacht to Richard de Exeter, dated the 20th of April 1301 includes the 'villata of Lysmoirchethan and Kunathyth', also spelt 'Lysmorechethan and Cownach' in a second version of the document. Helen Walton has identified the placename 'Kunathyth' or 'Cownach' as Carnagh, the townland in St. John's parish in question here. *Cal. Doc. Irel* IV, nos. 802 + 806; H. Walton, *The English in Connacht*, 479.

<sup>89</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.17.

<sup>90</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.18; *Books of Survey* I, 128.

<sup>91</sup> According to Tirechán, see Bieler, *The Patrician texts*, 128, §7.2; 146-147, §28.1-3; Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life*, 104. Gwynn & Hadcock, 385; for the ruins at Fuerty see Denis H. Kelly, 'Account of the inscribed stones at Fuerty, co. Roscommon', *PRIA* 8 (1861-64) 455-458; Henry S. Crawford, 'A descriptive list of early cross slabs and pillars', *JRSAI* 43 (1913) 160; O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, co. Roscommon* I, 100-105, Letter written in Roscommon, dated 29.6.1837.

<sup>92</sup> *Cal. Doc. Irel*. V, 224.

<sup>93</sup> See Bieler, *The Patrician texts*, 150-153, §37.

31. **'Creagha'**, Creagga in the original manuscript was according to O'Donovan Creggs parish in county Galway, in the former barony of Ballymoe. No parish of this name is known there today.<sup>94</sup>
32. **'Killiarainn'** seems to be Killererin parish in county Galway, the northern parts of it forming part of the former barony of Dunmore.<sup>95</sup> The *Compossicion Booke of Connought* describes 4 qrs of land in Dunmore as belonging to the bishop of Clonmacnois: "The office of Ballymoe - also there is a quantitie of land in the Barrony of Dunmore, called the third of Walter Bermingham scept consisting of 70 qrs whereof belongeth to the Bishop of Clon mc Dnosy 4 qrs."<sup>96</sup> The 4 qrs are not mentioned by name. However in the survey report from 1641 we find the townland 'Caronkilleene' in Dunmore parish and barony, which was then in possession of 'Ld Birmingham'.<sup>97</sup> Caronkilleene could well be the 'carton of Killin', the 'quarter of Killin', named after the Killin family of Clonmacnois. Is it possible that 'Killiarainn' at some stage belonged to Dunmore parish ?
33. **'Ruan'** was according to O'Donovan in Creagh parish, near the river Suck.<sup>98</sup> No townland of this name, in Creagh parish is mentioned in the Book of Survey. There is Roan, a townland in Killallaghten parish, county Galway. In 1641 its proprietor was Laughlin Donnellan.<sup>99</sup> The rectory of the vicarage of Killallaghten belonged to the monastery of Clontuskert in 1565.<sup>100</sup>

### Ceallach mac Fintach

34. **'Killmeas'** seems to be Kilmass in Rahara parish, county Roscommon.<sup>101</sup> According to the Clonfert Rental list from 1407, a part of Raghara then

<sup>94</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.19; the MS itself reads 'Creagga' *BL, ADD MS 4796*, f 40. See Mitchell, *A New Genealogical Atlas*, 55-57.

<sup>95</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.20; *Books of Survey III*, 86-89; the parts of the parish Killerean, alias Killererin in the other baronies are not to be found in the Books of Survey, see: bar. Dunmore (p. 285-310), bar. Taiquin (p. 173-176, 267-284, and bar. Bellamoe (*Books of Survey I*, 51-58). Compare Mitchell, *A New Genealogical Atlas*, 56.

<sup>96</sup> *Compossicion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freemann, 80-81.

<sup>97</sup> *Books of Survey III*, 294.

<sup>98</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.21.

<sup>99</sup> *Books of Survey III*, 123.

<sup>100</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Visitations', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 149.

<sup>101</sup> *Registry*, 455 n.23.

belonged to the bishop of Clonmacnois.<sup>102</sup> The townland was in possession of the bishop of Elphin in 1641.<sup>103</sup> According to Joyce Kilmass in Roscommon takes its name from 'Coill-measa', meaning wood of the nut-fruit (for feeding swine, &).<sup>104</sup>

35. **'Kill Killchuynne'** is Kilkenny, in Taghmaconnell parish, county Roscommon.<sup>105</sup> It is described in the Book of Survey as '1 qr of profitable land, a Lough', and was in possession of Edward Brabazon in 1641.<sup>106</sup> Possibly he used to hold it also from the bishop of Meath and Clonmacnois, like Arnaglog and Cuillen in the near vicinity.<sup>107</sup> Taghmaconnell parish comprised more or less the territory known as Moyfinn in the later middleages. Kilkenny might therefore be the quarter in Moyfinn held by the dean of Clonmacnois according to the Compossicion Booke of Connought.<sup>108</sup> The townland Kilkenny, in Taghmaconnell contains a site which is known locally to have been a church site and burial ground.<sup>109</sup>
36. **'Belathnaony'** is the townland 'Bellaneany' of which half a quarter was in Onagh parish and four quarters in Taghmaconnell (county Roscommon) according to the Survey in 1641.<sup>110</sup> Bealaneny is listed as a Franciscan house in the southwestern part of Taghmaconnell by Ware.<sup>111</sup> There is also a tradition that Carmelites were settled in Bealaneny.<sup>112</sup>
37. **'Coillin Molruany'** is Cullenmulrony in Creagh parish, county Roscommon.<sup>113</sup> The modern name of the townland is 'Cuillen' or 'Killin', there was a small convent of nuns. The church of St. Mary's Kyllin, with houses and

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<sup>102</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 139.

<sup>103</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 116 'Killmas' in 'Raharrow' parish.

<sup>104</sup> Joyce, *Irish Names of Places* III, 424.

<sup>105</sup> *Registry*, 456 n.1.

<sup>106</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 104.

<sup>107</sup> See below, nos. 37, 38.

<sup>108</sup> *Compossicion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freemann, 168.

<sup>109</sup> Patrick K. Egan, 'The Carmelite Cell of Bealaneny', *Galway Arch. Hist. Soc. Jn.* 26, no. 1+2 (1954/55) 19-25, here 19.

<sup>110</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 105; O'Donovan translates 'Bellaneeny' as 'vel atha an aonaigh', 'the mouth of the fair,' but did not identify the place. See *Registry*, 456 n.2.

<sup>111</sup> Ware, *De Hibernia* (1654) 225. See Gwynn & Hadcock, 287

<sup>112</sup> Egan, *Galway Arch. Hist. Soc. Jn.* 26 (1954/55) 19-25.

<sup>113</sup> *Registry*, 456 n.3.

other appurtenances was confirmed to the Arroasian nuns of Kilcreevanty in 1223 and again in 1400.<sup>114</sup> According to the surveyor's report from 1641 the lands in 'Killinmulrone' contained good arable pasture and meadow, and were held by the dean of Clonmacnois, who had leased it to Edward Brabazon.<sup>115</sup> Cuillen might be 'Kyly', which appears amongst the land held from the bishop of Meath and Clonmacnois by Anthony Brabazon in the late sixteenth century.<sup>116</sup>

38. **'Tuaim-taghar'**. The rental list of the bishop of Clonfert from 1407 lists 'Tuaim Yctair' as paying two marks rent to the bishop.<sup>117</sup> Father Egan suggests the modern townland 'Ardnaglog' now in Moore parish, formerly, in the seventeenth century in Creagh parish, as location of Tuaim-Taghar.<sup>118</sup> It is listed amongst the possessions of Anthony Brabazon in Roscommon, which he held from the bishop of Meath and Clonmacnois until his death in 1597.<sup>119</sup> Ardnaglog was the place to where Ciarán went, when hearing the news of Cairpre Crum's death. The legend has it that he went to Turlaig nDroma, where his clerics carried their bells around the dead body and rang them. From this incident the place took its later name Ard-na Cloc.<sup>120</sup>
39. **'Kill luain'**. The vicarage of 'Killuayn' appears in the report of a visitation of the diocese of Clonfert in 1565-67. The vicar then was Cornelius Ua Neachtain, it is also stated that the rectory of the vicarage belongs to the monastery of Aughrim, the first fruits go to two Ua Ceallaigh.<sup>121</sup>
40. **'Terman belafeadh'** might be Termon More and Termon Beg townlands in Kilkeevin parish, near Castlerea, county Roscommon.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 31. (Compare St. Mary's Cloonoghil in Taghmaconnell parish, which was also attached to the nunnery of Kilcreevanty. See Egan, *Galway Arch. Hist. Soc. Jn.* 26, no. 1+2 [1954/55] 19-25).

<sup>115</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 60.

<sup>116</sup> 'Exchequer inquisition post mortem taken at Roscommon, 23 October, 1604 before John Crofton', ed. P. K. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 304.

<sup>117</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Episcopal Rentals', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 139.

<sup>118</sup> Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 14. O'Donovan gives no identification; the Books of Survey do not list a townland of this name. *Registry*, 456 n.4.

<sup>119</sup> Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, 304.

<sup>120</sup> K. Meyer (ed), *Archiv für celtische Lexikographie* 3 (1907) 224-226; *Registry* 453-454 n.

<sup>121</sup> Nicholls (ed), 'Visitations', *Anal. Hib.* 26 (1970) 148.

<sup>122</sup> Suggested to me by Dr. Alan Mac Shamráin.

The Ua Máelsechlainn donations (nos. 41 - 60)

41. **'Kyllecruymeryachry'**, now Kilcumreragh parish in county Westmeath.<sup>123</sup> There was an early Christian monastery here founded by S. Fiachra, called Cell-Cruimthir-Fiachrach.<sup>124</sup> Kilcumreragh parish is situated in Feara Cell, the territory of the O'Maelmhuaidh.<sup>125</sup> The townland Kilcumreragh in the parish according to the surveys in 1641 contained 230 acres of Glebeland, i.e. churchland.<sup>126</sup> Knockasta, a hill is situated in the parish, which was also known as Connacosta or Cnoc Bhreacháin, is mentioned as one of the boundary marks of a piece of land granted to Ciarán by Feradach mac Duach, king of Tethba? (d. 582) once when Ciarán stayed in Íseal Chiaráin.<sup>127</sup> There is another story among the tales in the Aided Dhiarmada, according to which the hill was offered to Ciarán by Diarmait mac Cerbeill, the ancestor of the Southern Uí Néill. Ciarán however refused to take the land because the king had burned the house of one of his enemies there without the saint's permission.<sup>128</sup>
42. **'Killcliathagh'** is Kilcleagh parish, near Ballyloughloe in county Westmeath.<sup>129</sup> During the middleages the vicarage of Kilcleagh, also called 'Kyllomyleon' in the papal documents, was with a brief intermission in the fifteenth century, united with the church of Ballyloughloe.<sup>130</sup> The name 'Killomyleon' seems to derive from the Ua Máeleoin family from Clonmacnois who dominated the vicarage of Kilcleagh in the fifteenth century.<sup>131</sup> According to the seventeenth

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<sup>123</sup> *Registry*, 449 n.39.

<sup>124</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 390; the Uí Braoin of Cill Chruimthir Fiachrach are mentioned in TCD MS H. 2. 7., p. 176. See Walsh, *The placenames of Westmeath*, 19 n.1, 280-284.

<sup>125</sup> *ALCé, AConn, Misc. Irish Ann.*, 1401, p. 163 for the Ua Maoilmuaidh at Kilcumreragh.

<sup>126</sup> *Book of Survey, co. Westmeath*, here 68.

<sup>127</sup> Walsh, *The placenames of Westmeath*, 280-284; Liam Fox, *Ardagh and Clonmacnois Ant. Soc. Jn.*, no. 12 (1951), 52-65, here Appendix, 64-65; the grant is mentioned in the Book of Ballymote 61 and by Mac Fhirbhisigh in the Book of Genealogies.

<sup>128</sup> O'Grady (ed), *Silva Gadelica* I, 73-74

<sup>129</sup> *Registry*, 449 n.4.

<sup>130</sup> In the papal documents Kilcleagh appears under a variety of different spellings and names, as Kyllonacon, alias Eyncolman, Killeomilenyn, Kyllomeliol, Killeliach, Killemilchon, Keyneolman, Kyllomyleon. See J. J. Mc Namee, *Ardagh and Clonmacnois Ant. Soc. Jn.* 2, no. 8 (1942) 3-27, here 15-16; M. A. Costello, *De Annatis Hiberniae* (Dundalk 1909) I, 148.

<sup>131</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* X, 541-542 (15. Jan. 1451-52); *Cal. Pap. Let.* XIII, 66 (1. March 1478); *Cal. Pap. Let.* XIV, 67 (29. Jan. 1484-85).

century surveys they were also the chief landholders in the parish.<sup>132</sup> The townland 'Boggagh Malone' in Kilcleagh parish, also testifies to the presence of the family there.<sup>133</sup> The parish was dedicated to S. Manachan.<sup>134</sup> Five castles, Clonlonan, Farnagh, Kilbillaghan, Castletown and Newcastle were situated in Kilcleagh parish, they are all ascribed to the O'Melaghins. A sixth castle there, Ballycahillroe is said to have belonged to the Mac Cochláins.<sup>135</sup>

43. **'Kilbileaghan'** is Kilbillaghan, a townland in Kilcleagh parish, the site of a castle built by Ua Máelsechlainn.<sup>136</sup> In 1641 the townland was in possession of 'Murtagh and John Melaughlin', in 1663 it was held in feefarm by 'Edmond Malone'.<sup>137</sup>
44. **'Killimnimhog'** could not be identified.
45. **'Coillnacurranagh'** is Kilnagarnagh a townland right in the centre of Lemanaghan parish, in county Offaly, about seven miles east of the church of Clonmancois.<sup>138</sup> The rectory of 'Killenecorenaghe' was belonging to the monastery of Granard at the time of the dissolution in 1540.<sup>139</sup>
46. **'Lyahmanachan'** is Lemanaghan parish in county Offaly.<sup>140</sup> A church was founded there in the mid seventh century by S. Manachán.<sup>141</sup> He was according to a popular tradition a brother of Ciarán of Clonmacnois, who lived however

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<sup>132</sup> Namely Edmond and Richard Malone, and Katherine Malone alias Pettit. *Book of Survey, co. Westmeath*, 121-125.

<sup>133</sup> *Ordnance Survey of Ireland, One inch to a mile, 1855-1900*. (Phoenix Maps, Dublin 1989) sheet 108.

<sup>134</sup> Walsh, *The placenames of Westmeath*, 11-12.

<sup>135</sup> Walsh, *The placenames of Westmeath*, 11.

<sup>136</sup> *Registry*, 449 n.5; Walsh, *The placenames of Westmeath*, 11

<sup>137</sup> *Book of Survey, co. Westmeath*, 122.

<sup>138</sup> *Registry*, 449 n.7; *Ordnance Survey of Ireland, One inch to a mile, 1855-1900* (Phoenix Maps Dublin 1989) sheet 108.

<sup>139</sup> 'Fiants of Elizabeth', no. 1401, *Appendix to the 13th Report of the Deputy Keeper*, 209. This detailed list of possession of the former monastery dates from the year 1569; compare Newport B. White (ed), *Extents of Irish monastic possessions 1540-1541* (Dublin 1943) 281.

<sup>140</sup> *Registry*, 449 n.8.

<sup>141</sup> *AFM* 664. For a discussion of the various saints, called Manachán in the Irish hagiographical tradition see James Graves, 'The church and shrine of St. Manchán', *Jn. of the Royal Hist. and Arch. Association of Ireland* 3 (1874) 134-150, here 136-137. Compare O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, King's county I*, 219-221, Letter from Lemanaghan, dated 18.1.1838, who resolves the confusion about the various saints by pointing out that Archdall did not reckonize a printing mistake in Colgan's *Acta Sanctorvm*.

more than a century before his alleged brother.<sup>142</sup> Sometimes Welsh origin is attributed to S. Manchain, his church was a place of pilgrimage in the middleages.<sup>143</sup> S. Manchán is also mentioned as a fellow saint and friend of S. Patrick in the *Additamenta* to Tirechán's *collectanea*.<sup>144</sup> In the thirteenth century the monastery disappears from the record.<sup>145</sup> The shrine of St. Manchain survived his monastery and is now preserved in the National Museum, Dublin.<sup>146</sup> The vicarage of Lemanaghan was a dependency of the Cistercian house in Granard in the later middle ages, down to the sixteenth century when the monastery was dissolved.<sup>147</sup> According to the Clonmacnois annals Lemanaghan, alias Tuaim nEirc was granted to Clonmacnois in the middle of the seventh century by Diarmait son of Áed Sláine, the ancestor of the Síl nÁedo Sláine.<sup>148</sup>

47. **'Cloithrean'** is Cloghran townland in Clonmacnois parish.<sup>149</sup>
48. **'Cluain-Imthyn'** is Cloniffeen townland also in Clonmacnois parish.<sup>150</sup> The name should possibly be read Cluain Afféin and might derive from Affén or Affinus of Glendalough, relecting on the *óentad* between the two settlements.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, co. Westmeath* I, 63, Letter from Athlone, dated 9.9.1837 for S. Ciarán and S. Managhan.

<sup>143</sup> *AClon* 664, p. 107; Walsh, *The placenames of Westmeath*, 12 n.2.

<sup>144</sup> Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 178, §15.2.

<sup>145</sup> *AClon* , 220 s.a.1205; Archdall, *Monasticon* (1786), 401.

<sup>146</sup> Graves, *Jn. of the Royal Hist. and Arch. Association of Ireland* 3 (1874) 134-150; Henry S. Crawford, 'A descriptive list of Irish shrines and reliquaries', *JRSAI* 53 (1923) 14-93, 151-176, here 83-83; Ragnall Ó Floinn, *Irish shrines & reliquaries of the middle ages* (Dublin 1994) 16.

<sup>147</sup> *Cal. Pap. Let.* VI, 201 (18. Kal Sept. 1410); 'Fiants of Elizabeth' no. 1401, *13th Report of the Deputy Keeper*, 209.

<sup>148</sup> *CS* 646; *AClon* 642, p. 104; *AFM* 645. For Áed Sláine see M. A. O'Brien (ed), *Corp. Gen. Hib.*, 161 (144 b 44) brother of Colmán Mor, son of Conaill Cremthainn, ancestor of the Síl nÁedo Sláine.

<sup>149</sup> *Registry*, 449 n.9. For Clonmacnois parish see O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, King's county I*, 166-197, Letter written in Banagher, 15.1.1838, who interviewed Mr. Patrick Molloy about the antiquities of the church. What is believed to have been S. Ciarán's crozier, was sold by some unnamed Irish family in England and bought by W. Frazer, who brought it back to Ireland, see W. Frazer, 'On an Irish Crozier, with early metal crook, probably the missing "Crozier of St. Ciarán"', *PRIA* 17 (1889-91) 206-214; Henry S. Crawford, 'A descriptive list of Irish shrines and reliquaries', *JRSAI* 53 (1923) 169.

<sup>150</sup> *Registry*, 449 n.10.

<sup>151</sup> S. Affén is mentioned in the *Book of Lecan*, fol. 373b. Thanks to Dr. Alan MacShamhráin, who suggested this to me, and also commented very helpfully on other points concerning the identification of the place names.



49. **'Teagh-Sarain'**, Saran's house now Tisaran parish in county Offaly.<sup>152</sup> According to the Registry Tisaran is situated in Kilbeg, where St. Saran built a church and paid tribute for it to Ciarán. He was also obliged to give shelter to those of the Uí Mháelsechlainn who went on pilgrimage to Clonmacnois.<sup>153</sup> It is difficult to trace S. Saran. The late-medieval Irish Life of St. Maedóc of Ferns tells the story how a certain Saran, who was *erenagh* of Temple-Shanbo (one of Maedóc's foundations) killed the king of Leinster. Maedóc, greatly concerned about the killing, not only resuscitated the king but also made the arm of Saran falling off. The later repented and went away from Leinster to built himself a church where he lived further on as a one-armed saint. There is however no hint about the location of his dwelling. Possibly Tisaran here was the house of this Saran from Leinster?<sup>154</sup>
50. **'Killchamin'**, S. Camin's church is Kilcamin townland in the parish of Gallen, or Ferbane, county Offaly.<sup>155</sup> There was an early monastery in Gallen, possibly a Welsh foundation.<sup>156</sup>
51. **'Cluain Laigean Magharetighefinn'**. Cluain Laigean has been identified as Clonlyon townland in Clonmacnois parish.<sup>157</sup> It seems it was situated in 'Magharetighefinn', the plain of the white house, the name is preserved as 'Magheramore', the great plain, the name of the lands, situated at the main road from Clonmacnois to the east.<sup>158</sup> According to the Registry the income from Clonlyon went towards the building of the road from Clonlyon to Clonfinlough, the name of a lake, and some hills in Clonmacnois parish, about one mile east of the monastic settlement.<sup>159</sup> This was a section of the 'great road', one of the main roads of Ireland leading from Dublin in the east to Kiltullagh, Clarinbridge

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<sup>152</sup> *Registry*, 449 n.11. The parish was dominated by the Uí Mháelsechlainn in the later middle ages (*AFM* 1541, 1542). See Henry S. Crawford, 'A descriptive list of early cross slabs and pillars', *JRSAI* 43 (1913) 151-169, 261-265, 326-334, here 265 for a description of the crosses in Tisaran.

<sup>153</sup> *Registry*, 449-450.

<sup>154</sup> Charles Plummer (ed), *Bethada Náem nÉirenn* I, 231-232, §§142-144.

<sup>155</sup> *Registry*, 450 n.1.

<sup>156</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 176; Ware, *De Hibernia* (1654) 161; J. Pinkman, 'The monastery of Gallen, Offaly', *Ardagh and Clonmacnois Arch. Soc. Jn.* 2, no. 10 (1945) 48-51; W. W. Howells, 'The early Christian Irish. The skeletons at Gallen priory', *PRIA* 46 (1940/41) 103-220; T. D. Kendrick, 'Gallen priory excavations 1934-35', *JRSAI* 69 (1939) 1-20.

<sup>157</sup> *Registry*, 450 n.2 and 3.

<sup>158</sup> *Ordnance Survey of Ireland, One inch to a mile 1855-1900* (Phoenix Maps, Dublin, 1989) sheet 108.

<sup>159</sup> *Registry*, 450; see *Ordnance Survey of Ireland, One inch to a mile 1855-1900* (Phoenix Maps, Dublin, 1989) sheet 108.

- in the west, dividing Leth Chuinn from Leth Mhogha.<sup>160</sup> It was maintained by the Uí Mháelsechlainn according to the claim in the Registry.
52. **'Cluainard na cross'** or 'Ardnacross' was bestowed to Clonmacnois by Ua Máelmuaid.<sup>161</sup> This could be a mistaken version of 'Ardnaglog' a townland in St. Mary's parish Athlone, where lands belonging to S. Ciarán are otherwise attested.<sup>162</sup> There is also the possibility that it is Ardnagross townland in Lickbla parish, near Fore in county Westmeath.
53. **'Killcumynn'**, together with the following six donations was given to the church by 'Senimnyn McColmain', as his share of the family lands. 'Killcumyn' seems to be Kilcummin townland in Tisaran parish.<sup>163</sup>
54. **'Killmanachan'** is Kilmanaghan parish east of Kilcleagh, north east of Lemanaghan.<sup>164</sup> The parish is roughly co-extensive with Moyelly, Magh Eli, the mensal lands of the Uí Chatharnaigh, since the eleventh century, who were very prominent in Clonmacnois at the time.<sup>165</sup> The patron saint of the parish was S. Manachán, S. Ciarán's alleged brother.<sup>166</sup> The placename 'Killmanachan' in the original manuscript it annotated in the handwriting of Ussher, as being situated in 'Westmeath, out of the plantation'. Pointing to around 1622, when the survey of the diocese of Meath and Clonmacnois were taken under Ussher, then bishop of Meath, as the time when the transcript and translation of the Registry were made.<sup>167</sup>
55. **'Killchi'** has been identified by O'Donovan as Killachonna townland in the parish of Ballyloughloe, county Westmeath.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Ó Lochlainn, 'Roadways in ancient Ireland', *Féil-scribhinn Eóin Mhic Néill*, 471.

<sup>161</sup> *Registry*, 450 n.7 and 8.

<sup>162</sup> John Pinkman, *Ardagh and Clonmacnois Ant. Soc. Jn.* 2, no. 10 (1945) 37-47, here 39; *AClon* 1210, p. 224.

<sup>163</sup> *Ordnance Survey of Ireland, One inch to a mile 1855-1900* (Phoenix Maps, Dublin 1989) sheet 108. O'Donovan suggested Kilcomin parish, near Roscrea, where a monastery was founded by S. Cumin from Iona in the seventh century. *Registry*, 450 n.10; *AU* 669; Gwynn & Hadcock, 389.

<sup>164</sup> *Registry*, 450 n.11.

<sup>165</sup> *AFM* 1098. Cox, *Jn. of the Old Athlone Society* 1, no. 4 (1974/75) 238-241.

<sup>166</sup> O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, co. Westmeath* I, 60-64, Letter from Athlone, dated 9.9.1837, on Kilcleagh and Kilmanaghan. Compare above, nos. 42, 46.

<sup>167</sup> *BL MS Add. 4796*, fol. 36r; Thanks to Mr. O'Sullivan, who pointed this out to me. See above, chap. 6, for the date of compilation of the Registry.

<sup>168</sup> *Registry*, 450 n.12.

56. **'Killchronagh wch is called Tigh-na-cuarta'**. The reading of the placename in the MS is unclear, the ink is spoilt by water.<sup>169</sup> It seems in O'Donovan's times the passage was still readable, he says that in a modern hand 'Killbeacagh' was written over the original 'Killchronagh'.<sup>170</sup> 'Tigh na Cuarta' might be the 'house of the circuit', a place to stay for the abbot or bishop, whilst on tour in his paruchia.<sup>171</sup> However both places could not be identified.
57. **'Inneoin'** is Dungolman the name of a river and townland in Ballymore parish, county Westmeath.<sup>172</sup> Ballymore, alias Loughseudy was an important Anglo-Irish stronghold in Meath throughout the later middleages.<sup>173</sup>
58. **'Bella Athanurchoir'**. The correct spelling in the MS is Bellathanurchoir.<sup>174</sup> This is Ardnurcher, or Horseleap parish in county Westmeath.<sup>175</sup> There is a townland 'Temple McTyre' in Ardnurcher parish, where there was an old abbey still in O'Donovan's time.<sup>176</sup> This seems to be the same place as 'Tech meic in tsair', where according to tradition Ciarán was brought up and where his father and three sisters were buried.<sup>177</sup> S. Ciarán as the patron saint of the parish was replaced in the post-Norman period by David, a Welsh saint.<sup>178</sup>
59. **'Cluain Ionan'**, is Clonlonan, a townland in Kilcleagh parish in county Westmeath.<sup>179</sup> The castle there was in possession of the Ua Máelsechlainn family.<sup>180</sup> The townland is listed as woodland in the Book of Surveys. In 1641

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<sup>169</sup> *BL Add. MS 4796*, fol. 38v.

<sup>170</sup> *Registry*, 450 n.13 and 14.

<sup>171</sup> Dr. S. Duffy pointed this out to me. For the definition of 'cúairt' as the circuit undertaken by a poet or a churchmen see R. I. A. Dictionary.

<sup>172</sup> *Registry*, 450 n.15; *Book of Survey, co. Westmeath*, 55.

<sup>173</sup> Walsh, *The placenames of Westmeath*, 330-331, 334; *AFM* 1450, 1598.

<sup>174</sup> *BL Add. MS 4796*, f38v. For the various forms of the name Horseleap alias Ath an Urchair, see 'As Cartlann na Logainmneacha. Horseleap', *Dinnseanchas* 2 (1967) 115-117, also vol 3 (1968/69) 22.

<sup>175</sup> *Registry*, 450 n.16.

<sup>176</sup> *Book of Survey, co. Westmeath*, 70; Walsh, *The placenames of Westmeath*, 249-256; Liam Cox, Moate, *co. Westmeath. A history of the town and district* (Dublin 1981).

<sup>177</sup> Stokes W. (ed), *Féilire Oengusso Céili Dé* (Dublin 1984) 203; Stokes (ed), *Lives of Saints*, 119, ll.3999-4000.

<sup>178</sup> Walsh, *The placenames of Westmeath*, 249-256; for Ardnurcher S. David's see for example *Cal. Pap. Let.* XII, 29.

<sup>179</sup> *Registry*, 450 n.17, Compare above no. 2, Kilcleagh parish.

<sup>180</sup> *AFM* 1553.

Upper Clunlunan wood was in possession of 'Sir Luke Ffitz Gerald', Lower Clunlunan wood was in possession of 'Thomas Daly'.<sup>181</sup>

### The Ua Conchobair donations (nos. 60 - 65)

60. **'Tobar Ilbe'**, is Toberelva, or Toberelly a townland and a well in Baslick parish, county Roscommon.<sup>182</sup> Baslick, the church of bishop Sachell in Ciarraige, was according to Tirechán befriended with S. Patrick.<sup>183</sup> There were Franciscans of the third order established in Toberelly in the later middleages, the houses was deserted in the late sixteenth century.<sup>184</sup>
61. **'Tamhnagh'**, seems to be identical with 'Tamnuch' in the territory of Uí Ailella, identified as Tawnagh in county Sligo, some miles north of Lough Arrow near Riverstown. This was one of the churches in Connacht which were under the authority of Clonmancois as early as the seventh century, according to the witness of Tirechán.<sup>185</sup>
62. **'Kilmurihy'** was probably the townland Kilmurry in the parish of Baslick, county Roscommon, which once housed Dominican monks.<sup>186</sup>
63. **'Kilmacteige'** is Kilmacteige, a parish near the Ox mountains, half way, little south of the road between Ballina and Tobbercurry, county Sligo.<sup>187</sup> There was

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<sup>181</sup> *Book of Survey, co. Westmeath*, 121.

<sup>182</sup> *Registry*, 451 n.4; see also O'Donovan (ed), *AFM IV*, 1090, note y.

<sup>183</sup> Bieler (ed), *Patrician texts*, 148-149, §32.5; 146-147, §29.2. See also Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, I, 108.

<sup>184</sup> Archdall mentions the chappel as 'Toberelly in Maghery', identified by Canice Mooney as the townland of Toberelvy in Baslick parish. See Gwynn & Hadcock, 275; 'The chappell of Tobbir oylise, waste and yet valued at 5s' is mentioned in Nicholls (ed), 'A list of monasteries', 28-43, here 38; see also *ibid*, n.93. In the seventeenth century Books of Survey 'Tober Ilvy' is mentioned as 'Crown land whereon standeth an old Chapell & a Well called St. Bridgets Well', *Books of Survey I*, 49.

<sup>185</sup> Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 142-143, §25.2; see also K. W. Nicholls, *Dinnseanchas 5* (1972) 114-118, here 114 n.5. *Registry*, 451 n.5. There is however also the townland 'Tawnagh More', in the parish of Kilmore, county Roscommon, which in the seventeenth century was claimed by the Earl of Westmeath, see *Books of Survey I*, 30.

<sup>186</sup> The list of monasteries in Connacht, dating from 1577 mentions 'The chappel of Kilmurry. Waste and yet valued at 5s', see Nicholls (ed), 'A list of monasteries', 38, n.94. There is also Kilmurry in Kiltullogh parish, in the former barony Ballintobber, county Roscommon, *Books of Survey I*, 19; furthermore there is Killmurrie, in Tagh mac Walter parish in bar. Ballymoe, co. Galway, in possession of the bishop of Tuam in 1585, *Composicion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freeman, 84. This was a Franciscan friary, otherwise known as Killowaine, see Nicholls (ed), 'A list of monasteries', 38 n.65; see also Gwynn & Hadcock, 279.

churchland, belonging to the bishopric of Achonry according to the *Compossicion Booke of Connought*.<sup>188</sup> Local tradition associates a well there, 'Tubber Keeraun', with S. Ciarán of Clonmacnois.<sup>189</sup>

64. **'Tuillsge'** is Tulsk, in county Roscommon, about eight miles north of the town of Roscommon, now in Ogulla parish, county Roscommon.<sup>190</sup> The 'Old Castle 1 qr. & 1/2 Arable and Pasture' there, were part of Ogulla parish and in possession of the Earl of Westmeath in the seventeenth century.<sup>191</sup> A Dominican Priory was founded there in the early fifteenth century by an Ua Conchobair.<sup>192</sup>
65. **'Killogealba'** is Killogulla or Ogulla parish.<sup>193</sup> The bishop of Elphin was in possession of several lands in this parish of Ogulla in the seventeenth century.<sup>194</sup>

### The Ua Ruairc donations (nos. 66 - 72)

66. **'Cluain-clair'** appears to be Cloonclare in county Leitrim, where S. Patrick is said to have found a church.<sup>195</sup>
67. **'Cluain lochuill'** alias 'Cluain leamhchoille', the meadow of the elmwood seems to be Cloonlaughill, in the parish of Cloone, county Leitrim.<sup>196</sup> The church of Cloone, alias Cluain Conmaicne was an early foundation by S. Cruimthir

<sup>187</sup> *Registry*, 451 n.7.

<sup>188</sup> *Compossicion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freemann, 122.

<sup>189</sup> T. O'Rorke, *History of Sligo town and country* II, 152-153.

<sup>190</sup> *Registry*, 451 n.8; *AFM* IV, 793 note m.

<sup>191</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 79; Tilske according to index - Tidske according to text.

<sup>192</sup> 'Annals of Ireland from the Year 1443 to 1468, translated from the Irish by Duald Mac Firbis for Sir James Ware 1666', *Irish Archeological Society Miscellanea*, vol 1, ed. J. O'Donovan (Dublin 1846) 198-302, here 220-221; *Compossicion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freemann, 153, 157; *AClon* p. 327 n.4; Gwynn & Hadcock, 230-231.

<sup>193</sup> *Registry*, 451 n.9.

<sup>194</sup> *Books of Survey* I, 76-79; *Compossicion Booke of Connought*, ed. Freemann, 153-154, where Ogulla parish is not mentioned by name, but the bishop of Elphin appears as holder of land in 'Cowrin mc Brenan', in the barony Roscommon, which seems to stand for the former property of the monastery of S. Brenan in Ogulla. Gwynn & Hadcock, 400.

<sup>195</sup> *Registry*, 451 n.11; Philip O'Connell, *The diocese of Kilmore* (Dublin 1937) 130-131.

<sup>196</sup> *Registry*, 451 n.12. There is also Cloonoghill, a convent of nuns in county Roscommon, little south west of Athlone, but this could hardly be claimed as an Ua Ruairc donation by Clonmacnois. See Gwynn & Hadcock, 315.

Fraech. The urenagh's family in Cloone in the later middle ages were the Mac Tedhechain.<sup>197</sup>

68. **'Kill Imoire'** seems to be Kilmore Tir Bruin na Sinna, near the river Shannon, at the border between county Leitrim and Roscommon. A house of Augustinian Canons was established there in the thirteenth century under the patronage of Feidlimid, son of Cathal Crobderg.<sup>198</sup>
69. **'Kill McCoyril'** now Killmackerrill, but where?<sup>199</sup>
70. **'Eanagh Duibh'** is Annaghduff in county Leitrim.<sup>200</sup> There was an early monastery possibly founded by Cummin, the seventh century abbot of Iona. A hospital, and the termonlands of Annaduff are mentioned by Archdall as having existed in the sixteenth century.<sup>201</sup>
71. **'Magh Anaile near Logh na Giall'** could not be identified.<sup>202</sup>
72. **'Kill Tachuir'** is Kiltoghert, a parish at the Shannon in county Leitrim, near the town of Leitrim.<sup>203</sup> There was an abbey or a hospital there in the later middleages.<sup>204</sup> Kiltoghert was a stronghold of Ua Ruairc in the fifteenth century.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> *Muirgheas Ua Muireadhaigh, airchinnech Chluain Connhaicne* died on his pilgrimage (*AFM* 1101); *Maigistir Niocol Mag Tetheadain, officel cluana do ecc* (*AFM* 1373); *Iosep Mac Teithedan espoc Conmaicne* (*AConn* 1230.11.); *Pol Mag Teithechain comurba Cluana* (*AConn* 1384.8). The *comarba* of Cluana, without a name is again mentioned in *AConn* 1471.17 and 1519.12. Compare Gwynn & Hadcock, 32.

<sup>198</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 39, 183.

<sup>199</sup> *Registry*, 451 n.14.

<sup>200</sup> *Registry*, 451 n.15.

<sup>201</sup> Cummin Fionn, abbot of Iona, died in 669 (*AU*); Archdall says that in 1559 a 'Hospital, Termon-Irrenagh or Corbeship at Annaghyew' was endowed with 1/2 a tl. and 2 qrs of land. See Gwynn & Hadcock, 28, 346; J. J. McNamee, *History of the diocese of Ardagh* (Dublin 1954) 108-109.

<sup>202</sup> *Registry*, 451 n.16.

<sup>203</sup> *Registry*, 451 n.17.

<sup>204</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 353, 366.

<sup>205</sup> *AConn* 1419.21; *AConn* 1442.3.

### The Mac Diarmada donations (nos. 73 - 75)

73. **'Cnocauicarie'**. This is Knockvicar at the river Boyle, near Lough Cé, now included in the parish of Kilmactranny.<sup>206</sup> There was a house of Franciscans of the Third Order here according to the list of monasteries in Connacht in 1577.<sup>207</sup>
74. **'Killeathraght'** is Kill Atrachta, now Killaraght, south west of Boyle, in county Sligo.<sup>208</sup> 'Cella Adrochtae' was according to Tirechán founded by Patrick, Atrachta is said to have received her veil from S. Patrick. Here church was also in possession of patens and a chalice of S. Patrick.<sup>209</sup> The place was also called 'Drummana', or 'Machari'. A convent of nuns still existed in Killaraght at the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>210</sup>
75. **'Rath Salainn'** is Rahallon, which was a well known place also situated in in Magh Luirg in O'Donovan's time.<sup>211</sup>

### The Mac Carthaigh donations (nos. 76 - 79)

76. **'Kyllkyran in Desmond'** would be the church of Ciarán in Desmond. According to O'Donovan this is Kilkerrin, about six miles from Clonakilty, in south county Cork.<sup>212</sup>
77. **'Killcluain'**, the church of Cluain or Clonmacnois could be Kilcloyne near Carrigtuoohill, county Cork.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> *Registry*, 452 n.8; see *AFM* 1361; *AFM* 1595

<sup>207</sup> In 1577 'The Chappell of Cnockenvicare [was found] in the occupation of Teig O Morane, priest and valued at p.a. 5s', see Nicholls (ed), 'A list of monasteries', 37 n.91; compare Gwynn & Hadcock, 273.

<sup>208</sup> *Registry*, 452 n.9.

<sup>209</sup> Bieler (ed), *The Patrician texts*, 148-149, §31.2; see also Stokes (ed), *Tripartite Life* I, 108.

<sup>210</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 352; Benedict O Mochain archdeacon of Killaraght died in 1361 (*ALCé* 1361; *AU* 1361 where he is styled 'erenagh').

<sup>211</sup> *Registry*, 452 n.10.

<sup>212</sup> *Registry*, 457 n.9.

<sup>213</sup> *Registry*, 457 n.10.

78. **'Killtorpain'**, is Kilturpin, county Cork.<sup>214</sup> Possible the alternative name of Temple Dowling in Clonmacnois, which was Temple Hurpan derived from an original Temple Turpain. In fact the plan of Clonmancois in BL MS Add. 4784, f.20 gives Temple Torpain as an alternative version. The two names might have a common name giver.
79. **'Killa Tleibhe'**, was possibly Killatlevy, in county Limerick, near the borders of Kerry.<sup>215</sup> According to the seventeenth century transcriber of the Registry 'the other fiue kills or cells cannot be reade...'.<sup>216</sup>

### Donations by the Geraldines from Desmond (nos. 80 - 87)

80. **'Dun Domnall in Conallaghe'** is now Dundonnell, an old church near the town of Kathkeale, giving name to a parish in bar. Lower Connelloe, co. Limerick.<sup>217</sup>
81. **'Ath Dara'** now Adare, in co. Limerick, the seat of the Earl of Dunraven, where the Geraldines erected three magnificent abbeys.<sup>218</sup>
82. **'Killcluayn'** is Kilcloyne.<sup>219</sup>
83. **'Bregaig'** now Bregogem parish in Bar. Orrery and Kilmore, co. Cork.<sup>220</sup>
84. **'Kill Darire'** now Kildorrery, parish in bar. Condons and Clangibbon, co. Cork.<sup>221</sup>
85. **'Killcyuyl'** Killeagh (?) in bar. Imokilly, co. Cork.<sup>222</sup>
86. **'Kill Drochayle'** Not known.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> *Registry*, 457 n.11.

<sup>215</sup> *Registry*, 457 n.12.

<sup>216</sup> *Registry*, 457.

<sup>217</sup> *Registry*, 458 n.2.

<sup>218</sup> *Registry*, 458 n.4.

<sup>219</sup> *Registry*, 458 n.5.

<sup>220</sup> *Registry*, 458 n.6.

<sup>221</sup> *Registry*, 458 n.7.

<sup>222</sup> *Registry*, 458 n.8.

<sup>223</sup> *Registry*, 458 n.9.



87. **'Croomaigh'** Now the town of Croome, bar. Coshma, co. Limerick.<sup>224</sup>

The living of the abbot of Clonmacnois (nos. 88 - 93)

88. **'half of the Nunns lands'**, seemingly land formerly attached to the nunnery, little east of the main monastic settlement of Clonmacnois. In the twelfth century the nuns church together with some lands were granted to the Arrosian nuns in Clonard, later to the convent in Kilcreevanty.
89. **'Tulaghaitt'**, was still known as the name of a hill at Clonmacnois in O'Donovan's time, possibly the hill where in the thirteenth century the castle was built upon.<sup>225</sup>
90. **'Half the profitt of the house of the dead in Keaf Cass'**, maybe the late medeival designation for Eglais beg, the monastic mortuary chapel.<sup>226</sup>
91. **'Cluanburyin'**, now Cloonburren where a convent of nuns used to be situated.<sup>227</sup> According to the Registry there was the causeway leading from Clonburren to Faltia in Moore parish. This road still existed in O'Donovan's time and a huge stone cross, known as the cross of Cairpre Crum stood in the middle of the road. According to tradition this was the place where Ciarán resucitated Cairpre Crum, king of Uí Mhaine.<sup>228</sup> The vicarage of Clonburren, together with Moycarnan, alias Moore belonged to the diocese of Tuam.<sup>229</sup>
92. **'Ibhar-Conare'** is defined as lying between 'Druymglaisse' and 'the mearing of Muigh Carnan', 'Druymglaisse' is Drumglass, in Moore parish,<sup>230</sup> the 'mearing of Moycarnan', the shores of the Shannon in Moore parish.

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<sup>224</sup> O'Donovan has a lovely comment here: "This place originally belonged to the O'Donovans; but they were driven from thence shortly after the English invasion by the Fitzgeralds of Kildare, from which they took their motto of Crom-a-boo." *Registry*, 458 n.10.

<sup>225</sup> *Registry*, 458 n.15.

<sup>226</sup> See above, chap. 1.

<sup>227</sup> *Registry*, 459 n.2.

<sup>228</sup> O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, co. Roscommon I*, 54-58, Letter from Ballinasloe, dated 18. 6. 1837.

<sup>229</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 315. See chap. 5.

<sup>230</sup> *Registry*, 459 n.4.

93. **'Aithkyran in the Parish of Cluin Ó Cormacan'**, seems to be Aith Kyran or Ahkeeran, in Clonigormican parish in county Roscommon, south of Tulsk.<sup>231</sup> The Ua Cormacan family appears as a dominant ecclesiastical family in Clonfert diocese, occupying many of the vicarages and rectories there.<sup>232</sup>

#### The livings of Ua Cillín (nos. 94 -95)

94. **'Cluain Leamchoill'** could be Cloonloughill, in Cloone parish in south county Leitrim.<sup>233</sup> It seems also possible that it was near the nunnery Cloonoghil, little south west of Athlone.<sup>234</sup>
95. **'Ferrann Ó Killyn in Cluain'** seems to be Farranykenny in Clonfert parish, county Galway.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> *Registry*, 459 n.6 and 7.

<sup>232</sup> See above Ua Ceallaigh donation, Kilmonologe, no. 12.

<sup>233</sup> This place is also claimed as a donation from Ua Ruairc, see above no. 67; *Registry*, 459 n.9.

<sup>234</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, 315.

<sup>235</sup> *Registry*, 459 n.10.

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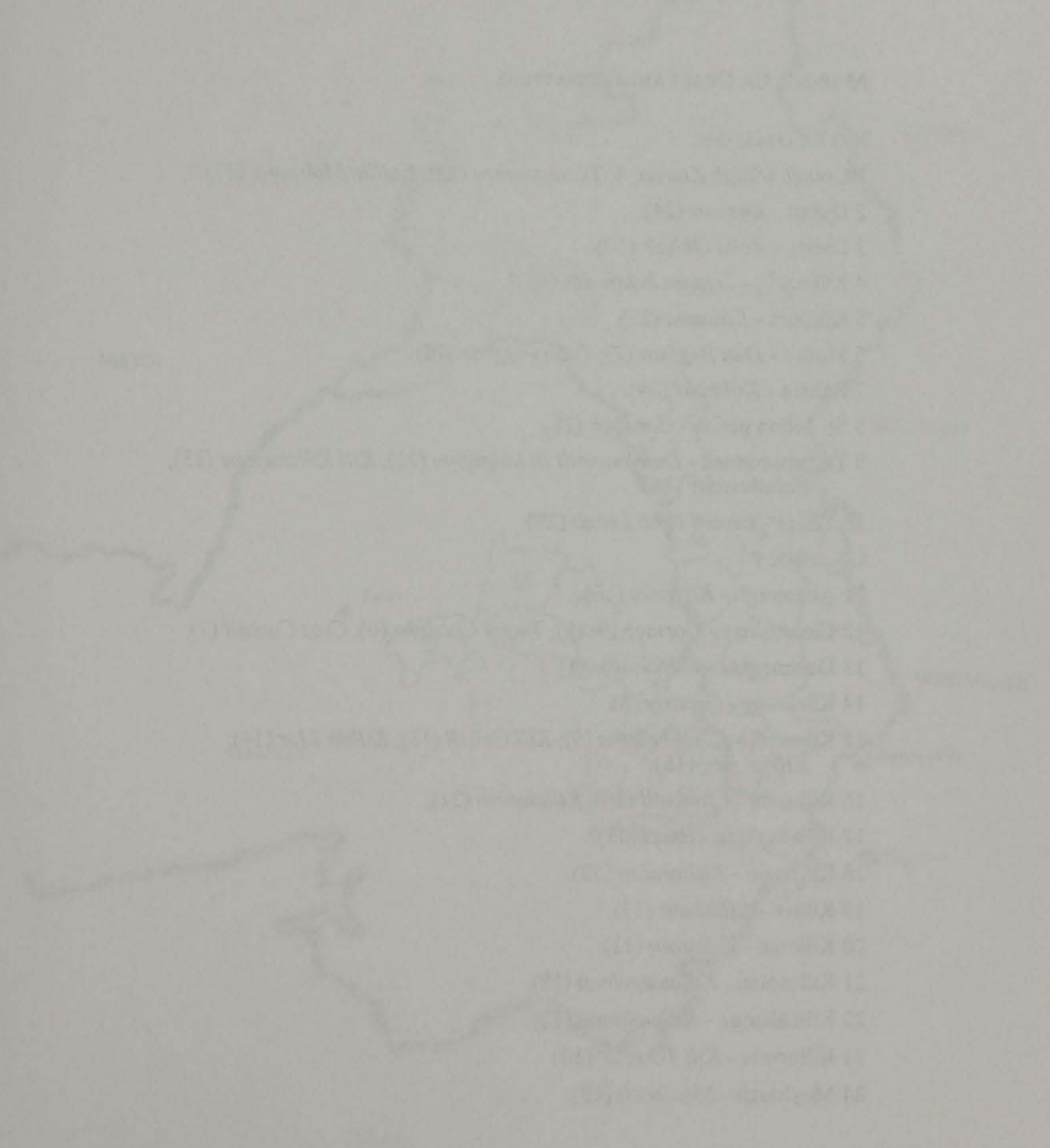
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# MAP 2

TO THE NORTH OF THE TOWN OF  
CLONMEL, COUNTY OF CORK



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## MAP 2. PARISHES IN WHICH THE SUPPOSED LANDS OF CLONMACNOIS WERE SITUATED ACCORDING TO THE REGISTRY

(For the distribution of the parishes see Mitchell, *A new geographical atlas of Ireland*; numbers in brackets refer to Appendix 2.)

### MAP 2.1. UA CEALLAIGH DONATIONS

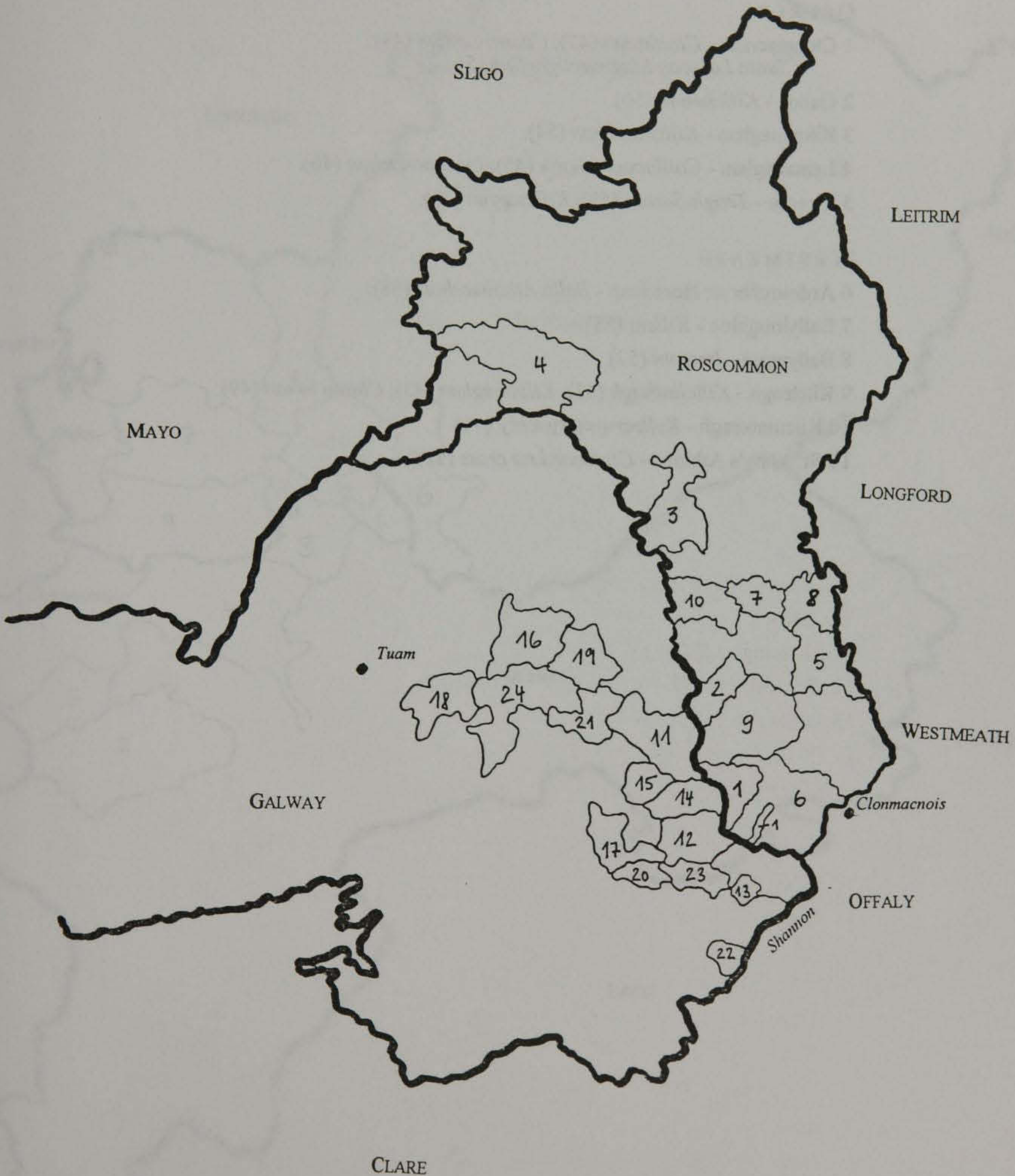
#### ROSCOMMON

- 1 Creagh (*Suigh Kieran*, 4; *Tuaimsruhtra* (23); *Coillin Molruany* (37).
- 2 Dysart - *Dysyort* (24).
- 3 Fuerty - *Acha Obhair* (30).
- 4 Kilkeevin - *Terman belafeadh* (40)?.
- 5 Kiltoom - *Killtuma* (27).
- 6 Moore - *Dun Beglaitt* (2); *Tuaim-taghar* (38).
- 7 Rahara - *Killmeas* (34).
- 8 St. John's parish - *Carnagh* (28).
- 9 Taghmaconnell - *Dundonnaill in Maghfinn* (22); *Kill Killchuyinne* (35);  
*Belathnaony* (36).
- 10 Tisara - *Chuain acha Leaga* (29).

#### GALWAY

- 11 Ahascragh - *Kilupain* (16).
- 12 Clontuskert - *Gortacharn* (5); *Tuaim Catrighe* (6); *Cros Conaill* (7).
- 13 Donanaghta - *Dunanoght* (1).
- 14 Kilcloony - *Grainsy* (8).
- 15 Kilgerrill - *Koyll-belatha* (9); *Kill Coirill* (13); *Killuir Mor* (14);  
*Killuir Beg* (15).
- 16 Kilkerrin - *Chuncuill* (20); *Killchuirin* (21).
- 17 Killallaghten - *Ruan* (33)?.
- 18 Killererin - *Killiarainn* (32).
- 19 Killian - *Killithain* (17).
- 20 Killoran - *Killorain* (11).
- 21 Killosolan - *Killosaigelean* (18).
- 22 Kilmalinoge - *Killmolonog* (12).
- 23 Kiltormer - *Kill Tormoir* (10).
- 24 Moylough - *Maoleach* (19).





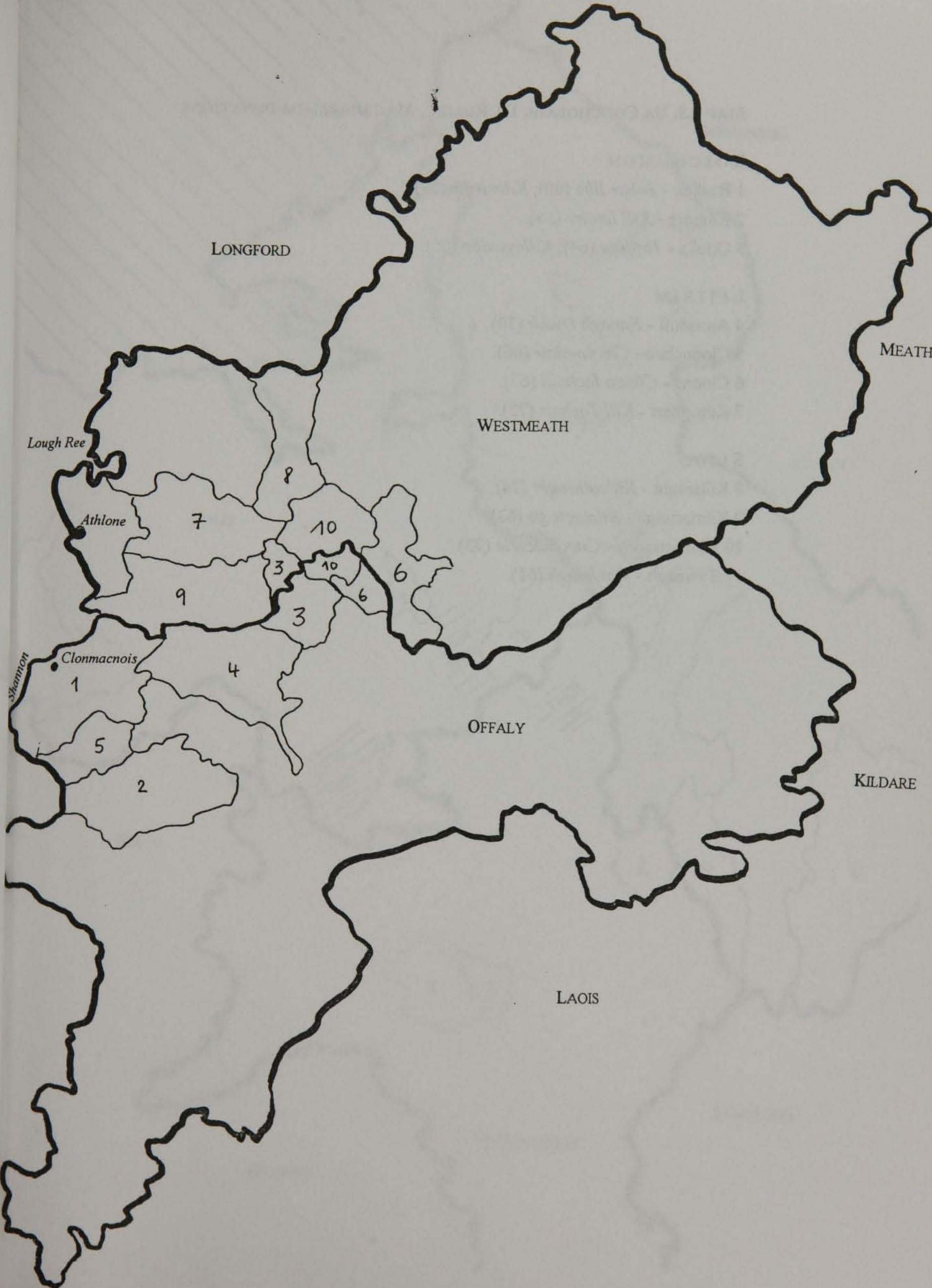
## MAP 2.2. UA MÁELSECHLAINN DONATIONS

### OFFALY

- 1 Clonmacnois - *Cloithrean* (47); *Cluain-Imthyn* (48);  
*Cluain Laigean Magharetighefinn* (51).
- 2 Gallen - *Killchamin* (50).
- 3 Kilmanaghan - *Killmanachan* (54).
- 4 Lemanaghan - *Coillnacurranagh* (45); *Lyahmanachan* (46).
- 5 Tisaran - *Teagh-Sarain* (49); *Killcumynn* (53).

### WESTMEATH

- 6 Ardnurcher or Horseleap - *Bella Athamurchoir* (58).
- 7 Ballyloughloe - *Killchi* (55).
- 8 Ballymore - *Inneoin* (57).
- 9 Kilcleagh - *Killcliathagh* (42); *Kilbileaghan* (43); *Cluain Ionan* (49).
- 10 Kilcumreragh - *Kyllecruymeryachry* (41).
- 11 St. Mary's Athlone - *Cluainard na cross* (52)?.



LONGFORD

MEATH

WESTMEATH

Lough Ree

Athlone

7

10

3

10

9

3

6

6

Shannon

Clonmacnois

1

4

OFFALY

5

2

KILDARE

LAOIS

MAP 2.3. UA CONCHOBAIR, UA RUAIRC, MAC DIARMADA DONATIONS

ROSCOMMON

- 1 Baslick - *Tobar Ilbe* (60); *Kilmurihy* (62).
- 2 Kilmore - *Kill Imoire* (68).
- 3 Ogulla - *Tuillsge* (64); *Killogealba* (65).

LEITRIM

- 4 Annaduff - *Eanagh Duibh* (70).
- 5 Cloonclare - *Chuain-clair* (66).
- 6 Cloone - *Chuain lochuill* (67).
- 7 Kiltoghert - *Kill Tachuir* (72).

SLIGO

- 8 Killaraght - *Killeathraght* (74).
- 9 Kilmacteige - *Kilmacteige* (63).
- 10 Kilmactranny - *Cnocauicarie* (73).
- 11 Tawnagh - *Tamhnagh* (61).



FERMANAGH

5

LEITRIM

CAVAN

SLIGO

Lough  
Allen

11

Lough  
Arrow

10

Lough  
Key

7

MAYO

Lough  
Gara

2

4

6

1

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LONGFORD

ROSCOMMON

GALWAY



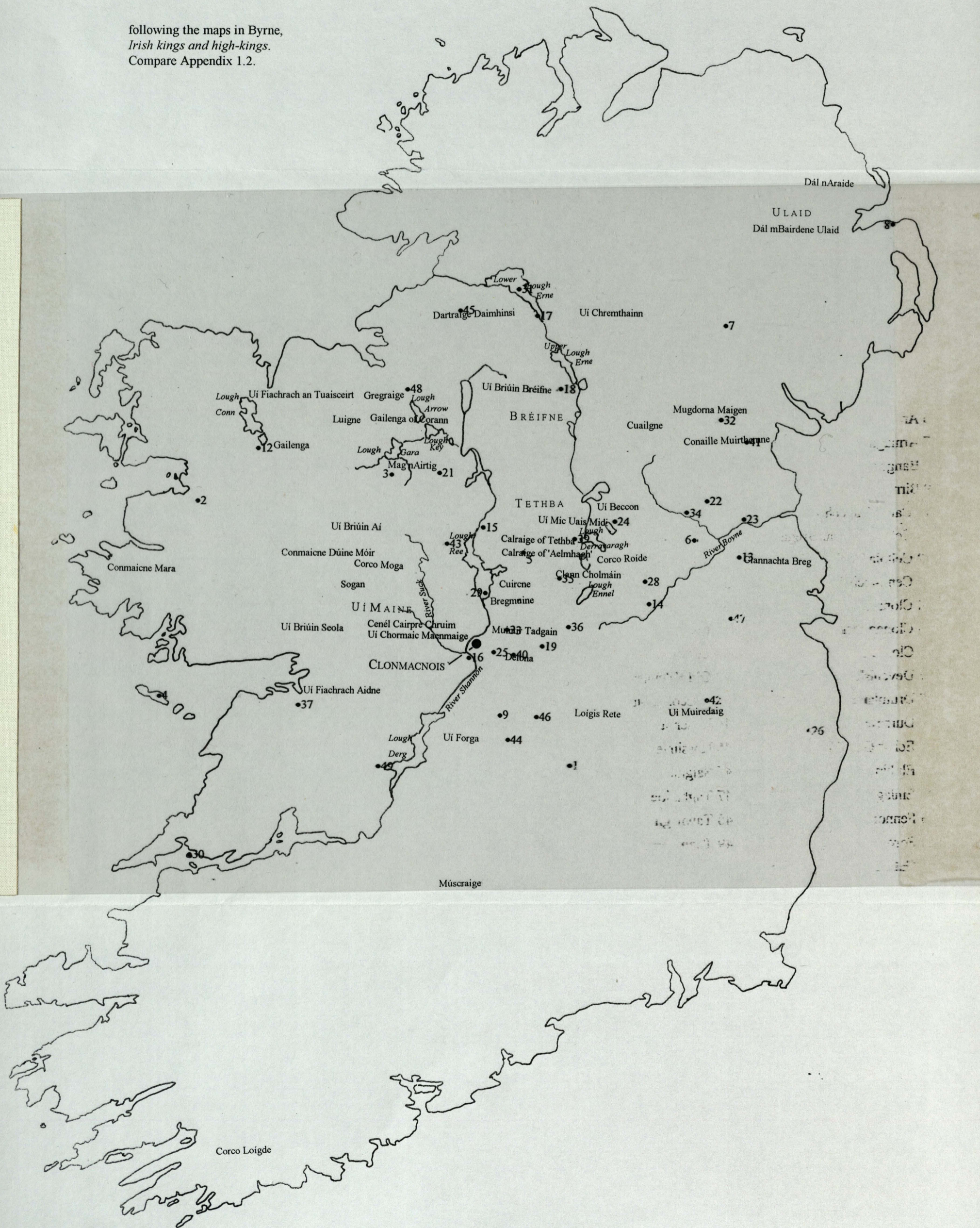






**MAP 1. 1. TRIBES AND FAMILIES  
REPRESENTED IN ECCLESIASTICAL  
OFFICES IN CLONMACNOIS**

following the maps in Byrne,  
*Irish kings and high-kings.*  
Compare Appendix 1.2.



**MAP 1.2. CHURCHES LINKED WITH CLONMACNOIS**  
according to hagiographical evidence and the annals  
(compare above, chap. 1.3. and Appendix 1.3.  
Questionmarks are put behind those churches for which  
identification is uncertain).

- |                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Aghaboe                  | 26 Glendalough        |
| 2 Aghagower                | 27 Imlech Sescinn ?   |
| 3 Ailech Mór ?             | 28 Inan               |
| 4 Aran                     | 29 Inis Ainghin       |
| 5 Ardagh                   | 30 Inis Cathaig       |
| 6 Ardbraccan               | 31 Inismacsaint       |
| 7 Armagh                   | 32 Inishkeen.         |
| 8 Bangor                   | 33 Íseal Chiaráin     |
| 9 Birr                     | 34 Kells              |
| 10 Cailh hUallech ?        | 35 Killare            |
| 11 Cell Lothair in Brega ? | 36 Kilbeggan          |
| 12 Cellola Toch            | 37 Kilmacduagh        |
| 13 Cenn-eich ?             | 38 Kilmore Mag Enir ? |
| 14 Clonard                 | 39 Lackan             |
| 15 Cloneogher              | 40 Lemanaghan         |
| 16 Clonfert                | 41 Louth              |
| 17 Devenish                | 42 Old Kilcullen      |
| 18 Drumlane                | 43 Roscommon          |
| 19 Durrow                  | 44 Roscrea            |
| 20 Echar Gabul ?           | 45 Rossinver          |
| 21 Elphin                  | 46 Saighir            |
| 22 Emlagh                  | 47 Taghadoe           |
| 23 Fennor                  | 48 Tawnagh            |
| 24 Fore                    | 49 Tuamgraney         |
| 25 Gallen                  |                       |

MAP 1

