Book of Ballymote

Codices Hibernenses Eximii • 2 • Edited by Ruairí Ó hUiginn

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Edited by
Ruairí Ó hUiginn

Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Royal Irish Academy

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First published 2018
Royal Irish Academy, 19 Dawson Street, Dublin 2
www.ria.ie

ISBN 978-1-908997-56-2 (HB)
ISBN 978-1-908997-57-9 (pdf)
ISBN 978-1-908997-58-6 (epub)
ISBN 978-1-908997-59-3 (mobi)

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data. A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

The assistance of the School of Celtic Studies, Maynooth University is gratefully acknowledged.

Project manager: Helena King
Copyediting: Brendan O'Brien
Design: Fidelma Slattery
Indexing: Eileen O'Neill
Printed in the UK by CPI Group

Royal Irish Academy is a member of Publishing Ireland, the Irish book publishers' association

Donnchadh Ó Corráin

In Memoriam

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Acknowledgements

This volume, the second in the Codices Hibernenses Eximii series, contains the published proceedings of a conference on the Book of Ballymote held at the Royal Irish Academy, 5–6 February 2015. The editor is grateful to Siobhán Fitzpatrick, the Academy's Librarian, who co-organised the conference with him and took care of all practical matters with her customary efficiency and professionalism. Thanks to all the Library staff and the IT staff at the Academy for their assistance, which helped ensure that the conference was a great success.

The co-organisers are grateful to those who spoke at the conference, both for their lectures at the event and their subsequent written submissions. Furthermore, we thank those who attended the conference, several of whom made valuable contributions to the discussions that followed each paper.

With regard to the production of this volume, we are very much indebted to Helena King of the Publications Office at the Academy, who guided the book through the publication process. We are also grateful to the Academy's graphic designer Fidelma Slattery for her work on the design and layout of the series and this volume, and on the conference poster. Our thanks also to Brendan O'Brien for his editing and Eileen O'Neill for indexing. In addition, the editor and authors are greatly in the debt of two anonymous reviewers for numerous corrections and suggestions. We are also grateful to the School of Celtic Studies, Maynooth University, for assistance with the conference and this publication.

It is with great sorrow that we record the death on 25 October 2017 of Professor Donnchadh Ó Corráin, a key contributor to this volume. Donnchadh had already submitted his essay and corrected a revised draft before his untimely death. For assistance with the editorial work that remained to be done on this chapter, we are grateful to Professor Dáibhí Ó Cróinín of NUI Galway who read it in final proof, and to Mr Daniel Watson of Maynooth University who assisted with referencing. This volume, which contains one of Donnchadh Ó Corráin's final publications, is dedicated to his memory.

Being part of the Ballymote story

At a break in the 2015 conference proceedings an appeal was made to the assembled delegates to 'Be a part of the Ballymote story'.

The Librarian explained that the Book of Ballymote had been curated by the Royal Irish Academy Library since 1785. The manuscript's centrality to scholarship was well recognised, and its broad public appeal was obvious. It had long been one of the most 'in demand' Academy manuscripts and was the first of our flagship manuscripts to be digitised for the Irish Script on Screen project. Whilst the overall condition of the Book of Ballymote was considered excellent—the essential structure had been well protected by its strong boards—the Library wished to commission a customised conservation-quality box to ensure its preservation for generations to come.

Within hours of launching this appeal, the conference delegates had more than covered the estimated costs of producing such a box. The late Professor Ó Corráin was one of the first to make a very generous donation. In all, there were 77 personal donors, in addition to Roinn na Nua-Ghaeilge, Coláiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh, and the Sligo Field Club, which made a very significant donation of €600 that was officially presented by the Club's then president, Mr Leo Leyden, to the Academy president, Professor Mary E. Daly, in May 2015.

Conservator Mr John Gillis was commissioned to construct a dropback box of quarter-sawn Irish beechwood boards with an alum-tawed calfskin spine. Mr Tim O'Neill produced a beautiful vellum scroll listing the donors' names and noting the conservation data. This now resides in the beautiful box that houses one of Ireland's foremost treasures—Leabhar Bhaile an Mhóta.

Introduction

The Book of Ballymote (BB) (RIA MS 536/23 P 12), written towards the end of the fourteenth century, is one of the most extensive and most lavishly illuminated Irish manuscripts we have from the Late Middle Ages. Its surviving 251 folios contain a vast array of prose and verse texts in Irish as well as a very small amount of material in Latin. Among the Irish texts it contains are a copy of the imposing *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, the origin legend of the Irish; tracts and poems on the different ages of the world; pedigrees and lists of the Christian kings of Ireland; and wisdom texts and repositories of traditional lore, such as the *Tecosca Cormaic* ('the Instructions of Cormac'), *Senbríathra Fíthail* ('The Aphorisms of Fíthal') and the Triads of Ireland. These are followed by extensive genealogical tracts on the various population groups in Ireland, which occupy almost 70 folios and represent by far the most extensive section of the manuscript. BB further includes pedigrees and traditions relating to the saints of Ireland, and these are followed by various tales relating to famous kings and other figures of Irish mythological tradition, many of whom also feature in the genealogies. *Lebor na Cert* ('The Book of Rights') lists the rights and tributes due to the kings of Ireland. Further traditions relating to individuals from Ireland's mythical past and to the origins of their names are found in the encyclopaedic *Cóir Anmann* ('Fitness of Names') and the *Banshenchas* ('Lore of women'), while mythological lore relating to the origins of some 145 Irish place-names is found in the *Dindshenchas* tract contained in BB. The manuscript also contains tracts on grammar and prosody, such as *Auraicept na nÉces* (The Scholars' Primer'), a key to deciphering the Ogham alphabet; it concludes with a number of adaptations of classical tales.

Unlike many other medieval manuscripts, BB furnishes us with some information about the place and time of its writing. Three scribes—Maghnus Ó Duibhgeannáin, Solamh Ó Droma and Robertus Mac Síthigh—are named in various notes that they wrote in the codex. One of these notes further informs us that part of the manuscript was written in the house of Tomaltach Mac Donnchaidh at Ballymote, Co. Sligo, during the reign of Toirdhealbhach the son of Aodh Ó Conchobhair as king of Connacht (*RIA Cat. Ir. MSS* 1611). As Tomaltach was head of his name and lord of Tirerril from 1383 to his death in 1397, and Aodh reigned 1384–1403, we can establish that it was written towards the end of the fourteenth century. A further colophon tells

us that another section of BB was compiled at the house of Mac Aodhagáin *i Cepaig Ruittin* (*RIA Cat. Ir. MSS* 1612), a location since identified as the townland of Cappaghrattin in the barony of Clanwilliam, in Co. Tipperary (Ó Concheanainn 1981, 21).

Our knowledge of its subsequent history is quite patchy. It would appear to have remained in the hands of the Mac Donnchaidh family until 1522, for a later note informs us that in that year Aodh Dubh Ó Domhnaill, Lord of Cenéal Conaill, bought it from Mac Donnchaidh *co ced da cloinn* 'with the permission of his people' for the not inconsiderable sum of 140 milch cows (*RIA Cat. Ir. MSS* 1613; Cunningham and Gillespie 2013, 483–5). We do not know how long it remained in the possession of the Uí Dhomhnaill, but by the early seventeenth century Archbishop James Ussher had access to it and in 1639 he cites the Liber Ballitmotensis as a source for his *Britannicarum ecclesiarum antiquitates* of that year (Elrington and Todd 1829-64, vol. vi, 536). It was most likely part of his own collection (*RIA Cat. Ir. MSS* 1614). Writing in his Great Book of Genealogies in 1666, Dubhaltach Mac Fhir Bhisigh mentions *Lebhar Bhaile an Mhuta on Chorann* as one of the great manuscript authorities found at that time in Dublin (*LGen* 1031.7) and we know that by 1686 it was held in the library of Trinity College Dublin (Abbott and Gwynn 1921, xvii), where it quite possibly had been brought with the rest of Ussher's manuscripts after the clergyman's death in 1656 (Ó Muraíle 1996, 194).

Having been borrowed in October 1719 by Anthony Raymond, a noted Irish-language scholar, patron of literature and fellow of the college (Harrison 1988, 77), BB was never again to return to TCD. Through Raymond, the manuscript became accessible to members of the learned circle in Dublin associated with the Ó Neachtain family. Richard Tipper (†1730) and Tadhg Ó Neachtain (†*c.* 1752) transcribed material from it. It is quite likely that BB had been lent to Ó Neachtain and was in his possession at the time of Raymond's sudden and unexpected death in London in 1726, for Ó Neachtain continued to transcribe material from it for many years afterwards, as did Tipper, the latter completing an extensive transcript by 1728.[1] It is not certain if BB was still in Ó Neachtain's possession at the time of his own death, but in the following two decades we find material from BB circulating among scribes and learned circles in Carraig na bhFear, Co. Cork. This may suggest

[1] The partial transcript Tipper made in 1728 is found in TCD MS 1295 (H.2.4). This transcript contains material that has since been lost from the original MS.

that it was physically present there at this time, having most likely made its way south through the scholarly and scribal networks then obtaining, but it is also possible that its contents were transcribed in Dublin by Mícheál Mac Peadair Ó Longáin on a visit there and that this transcript was the exemplar used by the Cork scribes (Ní Úrdail 2000, 195–7). At any rate, by 1769 it was in the possession of a certain Tomás Ó Duirnighin (Ó Doirnín) in Drogheda, Co. Louth, who entered a signed note, and though it was subsequently held by a man named John Finglass in the same town, it was listed among Ó Duirnighin's MSS when an inventory of his books was compiled in 1774 (*RIA Cat. Ir. MSS* 1615). According to Eugene O'Curry, it was acquired in 1777 by the Chevalier Thomas O'Gorman from a millwright's widow in Drogheda for the sum of £20 (Ó Casaide 1932b, 139). While it was in O'Gorman's possession, he engaged the well-known scholar and scribe Muiris Ó Gormáin to transcribe material from the manuscript (Mac Cathmhaoil 2013, 27–33). It was used by Charles Vallancey (1725–1812) and Theophilus O'Flanagan (†1814), associates of O'Gorman and fellow members of the Dublin Society's Committee of Antiquaries, as evidenced by the notes they wrote in it (*RIA Cat. Ir. MSS* 1616). Significantly, it was also borrowed for a period by Charles O'Conor of Bellanagare, who added a description of the manuscript, provided titles in English for various texts in it, and contributed other marginal notes.[2] On the establishment of the Royal Irish Academy in 1785, O'Gorman presented the MS to its library, where it has since remained.

Scholarly and antiquarian interest in the book did not diminish. Notable scholars of the later eighteenth and nineteenth century who transcribed material from BB included Edward O'Reilly (1765–1830), Eugene O'Curry (1794–1862), Owen Connellan (1797–1891), Seosamh Ó Longáin (1817–80) and John O'Beirne Crowe (*c*.1824–74). In addition to transcribing material, Connellan provided a translation of *Lebor Gabála Érenn* from BB (RIA MS 3 C 23 (1023)), while O'Curry compiled a catalogue of its contents (RIA MS 67 E 9–11 (1301–3)). Sections of the manuscript that seem to have attracted most attention and were most frequently transcribed by such scholars were genealogical tracts, *dindshenchas* and the key to the Ogham cipher.

The publication in 1887 by Robert Atkinson of a facsimile, using photographic images of BB together with an introduction, an analysis of its contents and an index, ushered in a new chapter in its history by making it more widely accessible in the nascent world of Celtic Studies. As a pivotal witness in

[2] Now found in the British Library: MS Egerton 127 (Flower 1926, 76).

the transmission of so many texts from the Early Irish period, BB has since provided the basis for many editions in books and learned journals. Our understanding of the manuscript, its background and history has been greatly enhanced by the description and analysis Kathleen Mulchrone provided in her catalogue of its contents (*RIA Cat. Ir. MSS* 1610–55), which appeared in 1936. This foundation has been built on by the work of her former student, Tomás Ó Concheanainn, who subjected its palaeography and historical background to a fresh examination (1981). Finally, the digitisation of BB as part of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies' Irish Script on Screen (ISOS) initiative (1999–) has made high-resolution digital images of the manuscript widely available to an international readership.

The present volume represents the proceedings of a conference on the Book of Ballymote held on 5–6 February 2015 at the Royal Irish Academy. It was our intention with that conference to look afresh at some of the questions relating to the background and contents of BB in the light of research on individual texts from BB in the 79 years since Mulchrone's catalogue description was published, and also to address issues associated with its long history. The availability of BB on ISOS greatly facilitated all the conference speakers in this. In the course of the two days, twelve scholars presented papers on aspects of the manuscript and its history. Revised versions of their contributions are presented here.

Sadly, one of the contributors to this volume is no longer with us, for Donnchadh Ó Corráin died following a long illness on 25 October 2017. It is a matter of great regret that he did not live to see his essay in print. Fortunately, he had revised a first draft of his text and was able to incorporate some corrections suggested by the external readers. In his essay he discusses the extensive genealogies that constitute roughly a quarter of the surviving text of BB. While highlighting and contextualising some archaic aspects of these tracts, he also addresses the wider question of their function in late medieval society, and concludes: 'The genealogies are a conscious attempt at total history—one's place in God's plan of salvation, remote origins, noble and enduring ancestry, claims to status, legitimacy, and the right to rule, and to inheritance in a changing and dangerous world.'

This finds some resonance with the views of other contributors to the volume who likewise emphasise the centrality of history to the book. Thus, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh argues that history writing of all types—Irish, biblical and classical—provides the manuscript's linking thread, and shows how the structuring principles of universal history lend an overall coherence to its

various constituents. A pivotal part of that history—the biblical—is explored in Elizabeth Boyle's chapter, in which she likewise contends that a Christian world view can be seen to pervade all the texts found in BB. Her contribution includes a hitherto unpublished poem on world kingship that she has edited from the manuscript. A further aspect of this branch of learning is examined by Deborah Hayden, who looks at the extensive body of material in BB that deals with grammar and prosody, and the tradition to which it belongs.

The classical narratives that are found in the final section of BB are subjected to close linguistic and stylistic examination by Uáitéar Mac Gearailt, who compares them with other manuscript versions of these tales and contextualises them in the tradition of classical translations and adaptations into Irish. Nollaig Ó Muraíle's detailed comparison of BB with its 'sister' manuscript—the near-contemporary Great Book of Lecan—shows that BB is not unique in its scope and ambition, for the two codices have much material in common, although it is clear that those who compiled them did not always draw on the same exemplars.

The origin and history of BB are discussed in a number of other studies in this volume. Ruairí Ó hUiginn discusses the career of Tomaltach Mac Donnchaidh, addresses the question of the purposes the book may have served and looks at some issues associated with its compilation. In his wide-ranging study, Pádraig Ó Macháin looks at the background and history of the book and the association of later scribes and scholars with it. He also reviews the evidence found in scribal notes, discusses the question of patronage and examines the physical make-up of the book. Its later history and the intellectual and learned contexts in which we find BB form the subject of the study by Bernadette Cunningham and Raymond Gillespie.

The scribal hand assigned to Maghnas Ó Duibhgeannáin, who may have been the instigator and leader of the project, is subjected to close palaeographical examination and re-evaluation by Elizabeth Duncan, who concludes that more than one hand may in fact be represented here. Finally, one of the more noteworthy features of BB—its lavish illumination—is discussed, contextualised and interpreted by Karen Ralph.

While the conference shed much new light on the Book of Ballymote, many new questions have been raised about this work, its background and its place in the cultural and intellectual life of Late Medieval Ireland. It is therefore to be hoped that the published proceedings in this volume will contribute to the further study of this remarkable book, one of the outstanding treasures of the Royal Irish Academy.

.1.

The Book of Ballymote: a Genealogical Treasure

Donnchadh Ó Corráin

> *Hii quaesierunt scripturam genealogiae suae et non invenerunt eiecti sunt de sacerdotio*. (1 Esdras 2:62–3)

Apart from the classical texts of Irish learning on metrics, poetics, literature and law, the Book of Ballymote (BB) contains an invaluable collection of medieval genealogical tracts. Its sister manuscript, the Book of Lecan, has much the same, but each has texts absent from the other.[1] The value of these remarkable documents that contain the names, families and relationships of thousands of individuals—kings, nobles and commoners—has yet to be appreciated by social and cultural historians, indeed by many kinds of historians.

[1] Genealogies from the following MSS are discussed here:
(i) Oxford, Bodleian Lib., Rawlinson B. 502, ff 64r–70v, 74r–87; facsimile: Meyer (1910c, 115a–130b, 135a–162g); s. xii[1]; full listing of the lineages in Ó Cuív (2001, i 189–99); *CGH* 1–333; citations refer to pages of the MS, or to page of *CGH*; siglum R.
(ii) Dublin, TCD, 1339 olim H.2.18 al. Book of Leinster, pp 311a–341a; facsimile: Atkinson (1880); s. xii; citations refer to the MS; siglum LL; diplomatic edition: *BL* vi 1327–1502; *CGH* 1–330 (variants), 334–440 (text).
(iii) Oxford, Bodleian Lib., Laud Misc. 610 ('Saltair mic Ruisdeard'), ff 75r–78v, 93r–111r; s. xv; full listing of the lineages in Ó Cuív (2001, i 83, 85–6); edition: Meyer (1912a); siglum La.
(iv) Dublin, TCD, 1298 olim H.2.7, cols 1–195; s. xiv (*c*.1350); siglum H.
(v) Dublin, RIA, 23 P 12 (536) al. Book of Ballymote, ff 43r–112v; facsimile: Atkinson (1887, 67a–202a); s. xiv^{ex} (AD 1383×1397); full listing of the lineages in *RIA Cat. Ir. MSS* 1625–42; citations refer to the foliation of the MS; siglum BB.
(vi) Dublin, RIA, 23 P 2 (535) also called the Great Book of Lecan, facs. ff 53r–138v, 167r, 176r–83r, 185v, 213r–30; facsimile: Mulchrone (1937); s. xiv^{ex}–xv^{in} (AD 1397–*c*.1418); full listing of the lineages in *RIA Cat. Ir. MSS* 1562–75, 1578–9, 1590–3; citations refer to the foliation of the MS; siglum Lec.

This chapter will treat briefly of three aspects of the genealogies: (i) their organisation; (ii) their possible relationship to Late Antique records; and (iii) the light they throw on differential survival and reproduction in medieval and early modern populations, a preoccupation of Darwinian anthropologists.

Organisation

It may be useful to compare the medieval Irish genealogies with those of the Franks and the Welsh. The entire genealogies of the Merovingian kings in St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, sang. 732, extend from *Primus rex Francorum* to *Dagobertum* and contain thirteen short lines, totalling 49 words (Pertz 1829a, 1829b; see Krusch and Levison 1919–20, 468–516 for the king lists).[2] The genealogies of the Pippinids and early Carolingians are progressively annotated king lists, prepared by clerics who naively fill the text with dynastic bishops and holy women, some martyrs, and miracle-workers.

The emperor Charlemagne has a single line descent of seven forebears, taking him back to Ansbertus (1), said to be of senatorial rank, who married Blitilde, daughter of Lothair I (†561), an early king of the Franks. Their son Arnoldus (2) *inluster uir* (whose two brothers are represented as bishops, one a martyr, and whose sister was a saint) was father of 'the blessed' bishop Arnulfus of Metz (3), who died in 639. He was father of Ansegisel (4), mayor of Austrasia (632–8). He, in turn, was father of Pippin II (5), mayor of Austrasia and Neustria (687–714). Pippin II was father of Charles Martel (6), and grandfather of Pippin III or the Short (7), king of the Franks 747–68. His son was the emperor Charlemagne (king of the Franks 768–814, emperor 800–14). Such is the genealogy of the Carolingians (Pertz 1829c; Reimitz 1999; Waitz 1881a, 1881b).[3]

The earliest Welsh genealogies, composed in the second half of the tenth century, run to about 400 names, divided between 31 lineages (London, BL, Harleian 3859; s. xii[1]).[4]

By any standard, the Irish genealogical record is awe-inspiring. The Book of Ballymote, in its present state, contains 70 large folios of genealogy; folios 69 and 86 are missing, and there is also a chasm in the manuscript. It is very likely that the missing folios contained mostly genealogy. The word-count

[2] King lists: Krusch and Levison (1919–20).

[3] Based on king lists, these are for the most part historicist texts that present a problem-free succession to the kingship from remote antiquity to the time of Louis the Pious and beyond.

[4] These earliest Welsh genealogies occur as attachments to the earliest copy of Nennius, *Historia Brittonum*; Phillimore (1888, 169–83); Bartrum (1966, 9–13).

of fol. 72r, a fairly typical page, is 713. This indicates that there were about 102,670 words of genealogy when the manuscript was intact, perhaps more. The Book of Lecan is about the same size, but it too has lacunae. The twelfth-century manuscripts are significantly abridged: Oxford, Bodleian, Rawlinson B 502 (R), the earliest manuscript (s. xii^{1}) with extensive genealogical texts, contains about 33,200 words of genealogy. Dublin, Trinity College, Book of Leinster (s. xii^{2}) contains about 34,315 words. The combined genealogies in these two latter manuscripts contain the names of about 12,000 individuals, and about 1,960 lineages.

If we look at the Irish genealogies for the early medieval period, the sixth–tenth century, we get the following results for two kingdoms not of the first rank, Cíarraige Lúachra in south-west Munster and Lóegaire in Meath, both relatively small kingdoms with very detailed genealogical records.

The lineages of Cíarraige Lúachra are: Uí Ambrit meic Imchada, 18 lineages; Cland Angáin meic Imchada, 35 lineages; Uí Áine meic Imchada, 9 lineages; Uí Luchta, 15 lineages; Uí Chomraite, 7 lineages; Uí Fherba (the ruling line), 57 lineages; Uí Thorna, 12 lineages. This adds up to 153 lineages (R 83vd24, 85v43–87r33; LL 327c38; *CGH* 254, 287–314, 391; Lec. 117rc1–121rb8; BB 89rc32–91r19). Alltraige, who preceded Uí Fherba as rulers of the territory, are represented as comprising nine lineages (91rb19-91va6 = Lec. 121rb8–d27).[5] If these nine survived as landowners, this would bring the total to 162 lineages. These were not all. The scribes, copying from the same text, write: *Hic plurima praetermitto quamuis Saltair Caisil <tenet>* 'Here I omit many though the Psalter of Cashel contains them' (BB 91va6 = Lec. 121rd38). Just before this is a scribal note on the genealogy of Mathgamain, king of Cíarraige (*c*.1130), son of Mac Bethad (†1086), king of Cíarraige, enough to suggest that these genealogies were copied and the note was entered after that date, that is in the mid twelfth century, but their origin is, of course, much earlier.

What of the size of the kingdom? It is roughly equal to the three modern baronies: Iraghticonnor, 102,017 acres (41,286 ha); Clanmaurice, 120,872 acres (48,916 ha); Trughanacmy, 195,773 acres (79,228 ha). This gives a total of 418,662 acres or 654 sq miles (169,430 ha, 1694 km^{2}). More than half of this is rough land, moorland, marsh, and mountain. If every lineage had an equal share that would be 2,584 acres (1154 ha) for each lineage. This cannot, of course, be the case, since lineage holdings are quite unequal, but it gives a very rough indicator of scale.

[5] For an edition, see Ó Corráin (1969, 1970).

The Uí Néill kingdom of Lóegaire is said to be roughly equivalent in area to the baronies of Upper Navan, 17,651 acres (10,455 ha) and Lower Navan, 25,835 (10,455 ha), in Co. Meath (Walsh 1930, 13–15). This gives a total of 43,486 acres, 40 square miles (10,455 ha, 104.55 km². If each of the 79 lineages had an equal share, it would amount to 550 acres (222.5 ha).

The hypothesis proposed here is that the earliest Irish genealogies consisted of notes so succinct that they are often obscure to us. They also differ, often radically, from the later texts in their account of the relationships between dynasties. Extensive genealogical tracts, with multiple lineages and lengthy pedigrees, begin to be produced in the seventh century, and that work continued into the later middle ages, and indeed the early modern period. My hypothesis, that lengthy genealogies began to be produced only in the seventh century, needs to be tested rigorously.

The pithy earlier texts, often in a mixture of Latin and Old Irish (the older the text, the more latinate), are studded with learned discourse markers: *ut alii*, *alii (quidam, imperiti) dicunt (aiunt)*, *secundam quosdam*, *sed uerius est*, *unde dictum est*, *ut praescripsimus, at-berat araili*—proof that they were recorded in the church's Latin schools. Here are some examples of these early texts.

1.
Rigrennach mac Rui meic Celtchair i rRechae natus est. Di Rechrae Airthir Breg nuncupatur. Aliter. hOirt hEchu mac Neill meic Trichim giallu Conaille Muirthemni i nInis na nGiall ⁊ propter hoc occisus est hEochu rex hUae Trichim apud Conaille. Postea ⁊ Eochu exiit in insolam cui no<m>en est Rechru timens patrem suum Niall ⁊ post exierunt hi fochlae nOsraige. Illi qui nomina<n>tur Richrennaich illic sunt usque hodie ⁊ o Richrenna Rechrannach ortus (H. 157, 29).

'Rigrennach son of Ruí son of Celtchar was born in Rechru. He is named from Rechru Airthir Breg [Lambay Island]. Another version. Eochu son of Níall son of Tríchem killed the hostages of Conaillne Muirthemne in Inis na nGíall and because of that Eochu, king of Uí Thríchim, was killed by Conaillne. Afterwards Eochu went out to the island called Rechru, fearing his father Níall and afterwards they went into the north of

Ossraige. Those who are called Richrennaich are there to this day; and from Richrenn Rechrannach has his origin.'

2.
Gaelraide a quibus Caindeach Droma Fota. Alii dicunt a bęth do Cloind Feidlimthe Gail de Mumo. Do Gaelraide dicitur (*CGH* 278; BB 96ra22–5).[6]

'Gaelraige from whom descends Cainnech Droma Fota (al. Drumḟota). Others say he is from Clann Feidlimthe Gail of Munster. He is said to descend from Gaelraige.'

Some excerpts are wholly translated into Irish from what I believe to have been a mixed Latin and Irish original.

3.
Oengus Fear Gubræ mac Ḟiachach Ḟir Charbaid is uad Gubraide. Is iad saide batar for Ciarraigi Luachra 7 for Tir Maine la Condachta (BB 96rb3–5 = Lec. 129rb7–9).[7]

'Gubraige descend from Óengus Fer Gubrai son of Fíachu Fer Carbaid. They occupied the lands of Cíarraige Lúachra and Tír Maine in Connacht.'

4.
Lodar .iiii. meic Fiachrach meic Airt co hEochaid mac Luchtai i Maig nInis ar oman a ngabala o Ḟomorchaib 7 luid a siur leo, Indeacht. For-ta-laing sidi in ri .i. Eochaid. Inde Corco Fiachrach (BB 96rb6–9 = Lec. 129rb9–14).[8]

'The four sons of Fíachra son of Art went to Eochu mac Luchta in Mag Inis, in fear of being captured by Fomorians and their

[6] (Do forslointib Ua <n>Eathach andso sis). They and their peers are said to have occupied the land *ria tíachtain do Uíb Echach* 'before the coming of Uí Echach', that is before their conquest and subjection by Uí Echach.
[7] H. 157 reads 'Oengus Fir Gabrae mac Fiachrach Fir Charpait, is de Gaborrige'.
[8] The older text in H 157. reads quite differently: *Cethri* meic Fiachach meic Airt; a n-osar is *ed* luide co hEochaid mac Luchtai *uel* .iii. fratres cum filia sorore sua luidir hi Mag nInsi ar omon a ngabala do Fomoirib. To-lluid didiu fer i tech asin insi; for-lin<g> a ingin. Is de con-breth Fer Ceich. Hinc Corco Echreg.

sister Indecht went with them. The king Eochu ravished her. Hence Corcu Fíachrach.'

5

Tri meic Ait<h>mbleithi meic Meadruaid[a] *.i. Conleth, Luigni, Mac Cecht. Gegnatar*[b] *sidi mac Aithmbleithi <.i.> Fear Gai Lethain. Is de longus a n-at<h>ar. Da mac*[c] *Meic Cecht ro gabsat Calatruim. Conle*[*a*]*th 7 Leuigni ro gabsat Alta Męd*r*uide*[d] (BB 91vb41= Lec. 121vb22).
vll. [a]Meadroid, BB. [b]Gęndar, BB, Lec. [c]*om*. BB. [d]Meadruidi BB.

'Three sons of Aithmbleithe son of Me Druí: Conleth, Luigne, Mac Cécht. They killed the son of Aithmbleithe i.e. Fer Gaí Lethain. Hence the banishment of their father. The two sons of Mac Cécht took Calatruim. Conleth and Luigne took Alta Męd*r*uide.'

All these texts are obscure to me and I am not at all sure that I have translated them correctly. Text 1 gives the origin of a lineage called Richrennaig, otherwise unknown, who settled in Ossraige after conflict with Conaillne Muirthemne. Text 2 gives the origin of St Cainnech Droma Fota among the *aithechaicme* of Gaelraige, the rent-paying people subject to Uí Echach of Ulster (*CGH* 278; Lec. 129ra13 = BB 96ra20), but the genealogist is not certain of their origin. Text 3 gives the origin of an early lineage variously called Gubraige, Gabraige, Gaborraige. They may or may not be related to the Gabraige who are made to descend from Óengus mac Nad Fraích, king of Cashel—this merely means that they were subjects and rent-payers to the kings of Éoganacht Chaisil (*CGH* 223–4; R 82r40 = LL 321d21 = Lec. 217rd4 = BB 99vf35). Text 4 is the origin legend of Corcu Fíachrach, of which there are three variants, none in agreement with the others. Text 5 is an extract from the early genealogies of Corcu Modruad that gives the origin of the very obscure Corcu Modruad Allta al. Alta Medruide, a *dóerthúath* or rent-paying community (Dublin, RIA, Stowe, C i 2 (1234), f. 40r).[9]

[9] *At e anso na tuatha thuctha i n-eraic Fergusa Scandail .i. Corco Ele 7 Corco Thened 7 Corca Mruad Allta* 'These are the *tuatha* that were given in compensation for the death of Fergus Scandal, i.e. Corco Ele & Corco Thened & Corca Modruad Allta' (Ó Raithbheartaigh 1932, 138 §19). Corcu Modruad Al(l)ta al. Alta Męd*r*uide may be connected with Altraige. Fergus Scandal mac Crimthainn belonged, it is said, to the early Éoganacht Daurluis Airthir Chlíach (*CGH* 209).

Very few genealogies go back to an explicit god name and stop there (as, for example, happens in the Anglo-Saxon genealogies (Sisam 1953; Dumville 1976a; Moisl 1981), but there are some examples (god names in bold):

> 6
> *Aithechdai m. Mail Anfaid m. Diarmada m. Seltaini m. Gnai m. Meic Eirc m. Daighre m. Luchti m. Nemoingin m. Amhorgin m. Nemoingin m. Ordnigh m. Uathnig m. Lugnai Fir Tri m. Fiachu m. Roibin m. Roibind m. Moraind m. Main m.* ***Lir****. Morond autem ipse est Moronn mac Main. Moin 7 Connla da mucaid Nad Fraich <ut> alii dicunt* (BB 109vc14 = Lec. 224rd7 = Dublin, Trinity College, 1336 olim H.3.17, 761).
>
> 'Aithechdae son of Máel Anfaid son of Díarmait son of Seltaine son of Gnoí son of Mac Eirc son of Daigre son of Luchte son of Nemangen son of Amargein son of Nemangen son of Ordnech son of Úathnech son of Lugna Fer Trí son of Fíachu son of Roiben son of Roibend son of Morand son of Móen son of **Ler**. Morand is identical with Morann son of Móen. Móen and Connlae were two swineherds of Nad Fraích, as others say.'
>
> 7
> C*u Chulaind m. Sualtaig uel Soaltine m. Dubthid m. Caubair m.* ***Lir*** *m. Causantin m. Agadair m. Bothfhota m. Midgnai m. Cais Clothaig m. hUachail m. Cearmada m.* ***In Dagda Indae*** *m. Donaind m. Nomaill m. Ceilli m. Męmnoin m. Sainrith m. Imbuithi m. Thigernmais m. Fheitheir m. Ieir m. Fhollfotha m. Eremoin m. Miled Espaine* (Lec. 131vaa1–26).

Ler is father of Manannán mac Lir, god of the sea. Manannán is famously passed off by bishop Cormac mac Cuilennáin as a great merchant and sailor of the Isle of Man who could predict the weather: *Inde Scoti <et> Brito*[*i*]*nes eum deum uocaverunt maris et inde filium maris esse dixerunt* 'Whence the Irish and the Britons called him god of the sea and they said he was son of the sea' (Meyer 1912b, 78 §896). Fíachu m. Roibin m. Roibind looks like a form, or a corruption, of *Fíachu Sraibtine* of the Uí Néill prehistory and very likely a god name, at least in O'Rahilly's opinion (1946, 52, 228–9). The additional

Morond autem ... dicunt of course contradicts the descent from *Ler*, and is meant to do so. Cú Chulainn is made to descend from *Ler* but also from the *Dagda*, father of the gods, and is finally and conventionally derived from Míl Espáine, fictional ancestor of the Irish in the post-Isidorian schema.

I believe that two developments, both in the seventh century, changed the form of the Irish genealogies: the arrival in Ireland of the *Etymologies* of St Isidore of Seville and the rise of a distinguished Irish school of biblical exegetes. The *Etymologies* came early. St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, sang. 1399a. Nr 1, s. vii, is the oldest extant manuscript fragment of the *Etymologies* (Parkes 1993, 174–5).[10] It was written in Ireland shortly after Isidore's death in 636, proof that Isidore's *Etymologies* had reached Irish scholars. In *Etymologies* 9.2.26–37 one reads the new doctrine:

> 8
> *Item tribus filiorum Iafeth. Filii igitur Iaphet septem nominantur: Gomer, ex quo Galatae, id est Galli. Magog, a quo arbitrantur Scythas et Gothos traxisse originem. Madai a quo Medos existere putant, Iavan a quo Iones, qui et Graeci. Vnde et mare Ionium. Tubal a quo Iberi, qui et Hispani ... Hec sunt gentes de stirpe Iaphet, quae a Tauro monte ad aquilonem mediam partem Asiae et omnem Europam usque ad Oceanum Brittanicum possident, nomina et locis et gentibus relinquentes* (Lindsay 1911, i 348 9.2.26–37; Reta and Casquero 1982–3, i 744–6; Barney *et al*. 2006, 193b; Möller 2008, 328).
>
> 'Now the peoples of the sons of Japheth. The sons of Japheth are seven by name: Gomer from whom descend the Galatians, that is the Gauls. Magog from whom it is thought the Scythians and the Goths have taken their origin. Madai from whom the Medes are thought to originate. Javan from whom are the Ionians, who are also the Greeks. Hence, too, the Ionian Sea. Tubal from whom are the Iberians, who are also the Spaniards. ... These are the peoples from the stock of Japheth who occupy the middle part of Asia Minor from the Taurus mountains to the north, and all of Europe as far as the Brittanic Ocean [Atlantic]. They give their names to places and peoples.'

[10] A reproduction of the plate in E.A. Lowe (1956, §995; with transcription, translation and notes).

Here was an authoritative statement that the Irish were, like the rest of the Europeans, descended from Japheth son of Noah. Evidently, now the biblical genealogy of the patriarchs had to be linked, by a long chain of imaginary ancestors, to the short indigenous genealogical texts, already extant, and these had perhaps to be modified. In fact, a genealogy of the Irish that conjoined all dynasties and kingdoms and an origin legend of the Irish as a people of God was created in the seventh century, and elaborated subsequently (van Hamel 1915; Thurneysen 1915a; Carney 1971; Ó Corráin 1985, 52–5, 61–9, 72–4; 1998, 204–7; 2010, 261–84; Carey 1993, 1994, 1995, 2005; Szerwiniack 1995; Howlett 2005). The scholarly task of producing this fruitful and useful fiction was the work of the Irish school of exegetes. About 30 early biblical commentaries, and biblically based work, such as *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae* (AD 654/5), are extant (*PL* 35, 2149–2200; Simonetti 1979; MacGinty 1987). The exegetes, already familiar with the biblical genealogies, were well qualified, then, to create a biblically based Irish descent. Indeed, some devote attention to genealogy in their technical scholarly work as exegetes, notably Ailerán Sapiens (†*c*. 665) in his *Interpretatio mystica et moralis progenitorum domini Jesu Christi* (Breen 1995; Howlett 1996, 6–11), a detailed commentary on the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1:1–16.

I have argued elsewhere that the Old Testament provided the formal model for the arrangement and layout of the Irish genealogies (Ó Corráin 1998, 204–7). Among the many genealogical and para-genealogical texts in Scripture (Wilson 1977; Johnson 1988; Genesis 5:1–31; 10:1–32; 11:10–26, 11–32; 22:20–24; 25:1–4, 12–18; 36:1–43; 46:8–27; 49:3–28; Exodus 6:14–27; Numbers 1–4, 26:1–51; II Paralipomenon 11:17–22; 1 Esdras 7:1–5; II Esdras 10:1–29; 11–12), the key text is I Paralipomenon 1–9, described by Malamat as 'a unique historiographical genre within the literature of the ancient Near East' (Malamat 1968, 163). (To this we can add I Paralipomenon 23–6.) This is the sole literary model for detailed two-dimensional representations of peoples, dynasties and lineages, showing segmentation, eponyms, multiple lineage and sub-lineage founders, and their descendants, over many generations. Uniquely in early medieval Europe, Irish scholars make extensive use of this genealogical genre from the seventh century. In no sense is this a traditional oral genre. It is the product of clerical scholars working in large religious houses, and bears all the marks of the professional scholarship of those who had mastered Latin grammar, biblical exegesis, patristics, and chronological works such as St Jerome's *Chronicle* (*c*. AD 380).

Though modelled clearly on biblical genealogies, the Irish genealogists improved on the original. First in the use of redundancy. One observes in Irish genealogical tracts what appears to be a high level of repetition. This is neither bad organisation nor waste of precious vellum, but a verification device. Redundancy is part of the theoretical foundation of modern digital communication, rightly associated with the name of Claude Elwood Shannon (1916–2001), 'the father of information theory'. As redundancy verifies the digital text, so it verifies the complex data of the medieval Irish genealogical text, which is never laid out in a visual tabular form in the manuscripts. Genealogy poses tricky communication problems. There are far more people than there are individual names, and names of individuals and lineages recur with a bewildering frequency. Besides, one may have to deal with a very large number of lineages—79 in Lóegaire, 162 in Cíarraige/Alltraige, cited above. One's fundamental need is to attach all lineages and sub-lineages to their correct stems, and all individuals to their proper lineage, forebears and descendants. Otherwise, the genealogy fails of its purpose. So how is it done? By redundancy, applied in four ways.

The first method provides (i) a single-line ascent from the present to the prehistoric founding ancestor (24 generations, in example 9 below). This single-line pedigree may precede, follow, or be inserted in the middle of the detailed prose tract. (ii) Then that single-line ascent is used to attach collaterals (25 in the examples below) in a prose tract that refers to the single-line ascent. This verifies the ascent by deliberate redundancy and adds much new information, but in a checkable context.

9

(i) *Single-line ascent*. Matudán m. Ruadrí m. Cathniad m. Cathaláin m. Catháin m. Dermata m. Óengusa m. Gormgaile m. Flaithim m. Fogartaich m. Donngalaich m. Fothaid m. Tómmáin m. Fínáin m. Fiachrach m. Fintain m. Nad Fraích m. Meic Laisre m. Meic Caille m. Fergusa m. Dalláin m. Fachtnai m. Fothaid Airgtich m. Maicniad (R 84v5 = LL 325d58 = LL 336h13 = Lec. 113vba10 = BB 94ra2 = H. 147b1 = *CGH* 266).

(ii) *Prose tract*. Sé meic Dermata: Grádmaccán et Áebennán, Dub Lenna, Finnechán, Cathán, Láegaire, Findmaccán. Trí meic Óengusa dano: Dermait, Clúmán ⁊ Mac Lachtnai. Dá mac Gormgaile: Cormac ⁊ Óengus. Gormgal ⁊ Caicher dá mac

> Flaithim m. Fogartaich. Fogartach, Forbasach, Aurthuile tri meic Donngalaig. Dá mac Fothaid: Donngalach ⁊ Cathasach. Ailill ⁊ Fergal dá mac Athechdae m. Ailde m. Thómmáin. Mael Colggaich ⁊ Tómmán ⁊ Ailill ⁊ Cenn Fáelad cethri meic Fínáin [m. Fiangalaich]. Berach ⁊ Fintan dá mac Fiachrach m. Fintain. Caíchne ⁊ Mac Caille dá mac Fergusa m. Dalláin m. Fachtnae m. Fothaid Airgdich. Cóic meic Catháin .i. Cathalán ⁊ Cermait, Catharnach, Mac Lachtnai ⁊ Diarmaid (R 84v11 = Lec. 113vbb12 = BB 94ra9 = *CGH* 267).

So well is the present text planned that we can correct *m. Fingalaich* (in square brackets above), an error for *m. Fíachrach*; in fact *m. Fingalaich* is omitted by the judicious transcriber of BB, who evidently saw the error. We can correct *Donngaile* (R) to *Donngalach* (Lec., BB). Otherwise, the text is faultless, whether historical or not. The final sentence in (ii) breaks the chronological sequence and violates the closure in the penultimate sentence (effected by using the ancestral name, Fothud Airgtech), and is therefore an addition.

The second method occurs in prose descent texts that trace multiple lines over five, six or more generations with occasional listing of wives and daughters; remarks on places and events; members who became important kings, churchmen or saints, or persons killed in famous battles, etc. The genealogists call this *peritia* 'historical scholarship', *cróeb coibniusa* 'branch of kinship' and *mínugud senchasa* 'explanation of history'. This is checked by a single-line pedigree, from present to past, to eponym, kindred-founder and beyond, called *genelach*, from Latin *genealogia*. Indeed, the Latin term is often used in purely Irish contexts.[11] The main text is past to present, its checking pedigree is present to past.

The third method occurs in sections of the genealogical text containing multiple pedigrees, usually of related lineages.[12] First the genealogist gives the whole pedigree in full (or almost in full), from the present back to the founding eponyms or ancestors, real or imagined. In the rest of the text, he gives a shortened version of the pedigree of each line, but with two or three extra generations so that one can attach, without any doubt, each shortened

[11] H. 48a12, 50d31, 61b7, 61b21, 61c7, 61ba22 etc.; LL 339a1; La. 324.20, 334.3; 'Alibi scripsi genelogias Scottorum qui sunt de progenie Fergusa', *BL* vi 1449, line 43798. Cross-references in the form *ut antea in genelogia Conaill Cernaig* (*Brenaind*, *Óenu)* occur in the Book of Leinster text of *Genealogiae sanctorum Hiberniae* (*BL* vi 1527–77: 1544, lines 47234–6).

[12] There are good examples of this in the genealogies of the Éoganacht of Caisel (*CGH* 215–8).

pedigree to the whole pedigree. There is, then, no ambiguity about the affiliation. On some occasions, as a precaution, an additional extended text gives the full pedigree back to the founder to ensure that the there is no doubt about the relationship of the lineages.

The fourth method is called *comúammann na ngenelach* 'the stitching together of the pedigrees', from *comúaimm* 'the act of stitching together, seaming, joining'. This is a list of the nodal points of lineages and hyperlineages, that is, the ancestors at which their lines converge. It takes the form of a prose tract with entries in the form:

> 10
> *Ic Diarmait mac Cerbaill condrecat Clann Cholmáin ₇ Síl nÁeda Sláne. Ic Flaithbertach mac Loingsig condrecat Uí Máel Doraid ₇ Uí Chanannáin* (*CGH* 137).
> 'At Díarmait mac Cerbaill Clann Cholmáin and Síl nÁeda Sláne converge. At Flaithbertach mac Loingsig Uí Máel Doraid and Uí Chanannáin converge [i.e. have a common ancestor].'

Then, unlike Paralipomenon and biblical genealogies generally, the Irish genealogists number the sons in each entry. This is an additional cross-check. It can make for some problems. Sometimes, the number given exceeds the number of names. This may indicate an error with roman numerals, or we can assume loss of texts. On occasion, there are more sons than the number given. Sometimes, the name of the additional son is preceded by *mac aile*, lit. 'another son' or *mac aile arna chur cucce* 'another son sent to him'. In this case, we have to do with affiliated sons by women other than the dynast's wives (Nicholls 2015).[13]

The extant Irish genealogies are heavily edited by a long series of copyists and editors. Mistakes do occur, but they are few. Most of the genealogical tracts in the two twelfth-century manuscripts are heavily abbreviated, reordered, edited, and interpolated.

The elaborate tabular pedigrees that one may construct from the major genealogical tracts of historical dynasties suggest that these tracts were drafted (or redrafted) in the mid seventh century in the light of the new verities. Uí Néill place their eponymous ancestor, Níall, in the fifth century. His alleged son, Lóegaire mac Néill (eponym of the lineage Lóegaire) has a fifth-century

[13] This practice is just as common in the early medieval period.

imaginary obit (AD 461; see Byrne 1973, 280–3). The Northern Uí Néill fit the same paradigm. The Munster Uí Ḟidgeinte have a like pattern. Their eponym, Fíachu Fidgenid, is put in the remote past—fourth/fifth century—and the two main segments, represented as springing from him, Uí Chairpre and Uí Chonaill Gabra, are third and fourth in descent from him (R 82v44 = LL 321h23 = Lec. 218ra49 = BB 100re33 = *CGH* 230–4). The genealogies of the Déisi have an elaborate prehistory, and the segmentation of the main lineages (Uí Brigte, Uí Briúin, Uí Ḟir Gair, Uí Ḟothaid, etc.) is represented as taking place in prehistory linking them fictionally to Uí Néill, but the ruling lineage has the same pattern and chronology as other lineages (R 83v11 (*CGH* 253); LL 327g1 = Lec. 100vc15 = BB 85rd21 = *CGH* 394–402). Membership of the significant legal kindred groups—*derbfhine, íarfine, indfhine*, that is four/six generations groups of contending royals and aristocrats—ensures an outline dynastic memory of descent, supplemented by the earlier short genealogical texts. Only extensive and detailed research can establish whether the major genealogical tracts were reorganised in the middle years of the seventh century, as I propose here.

Relationship to late antiquity

The genealogies represent close relationships between Ireland and Britain, as a matter of course, and we can take this to be historical, and indeed it is well indicated by Ptolemy's second-century record. Historical details are quite another matter—and a very difficult one.

1. *Auteini/Úaithne*

Take, for example, the following narrative:

> *Giallsat fir Alban do Rechtaid Rigderg comba ríg Érenn 7 Alban. Is de atá Tuatha Forc 7 Iboth allathair. Do-llotar sé .l. fer ar loṅgais tairis anair. For-gabsat Cluichri 7 ní fortaat. Gabsat crích Maine 7 crích Fiachrach Aidne. Gabsat crích ṁBascind a comarbus a senmáthar hUaithne ingine Echach meic Luchtai. hÉile 7 Uaithne dí ingin Echach meic Luchta. Tír nÉile óthá Sinaind sair 7 fodes. Tír nUaithne óthá Sinaind siar 7 fothuaid co Deirgderc. Conid ó anmannaib na mban sin do-iṅgartar a cenéla 7 a ṅgenelaige* (R 84v40 = BB 93vbb16 = Lec. 113va18).

> ‘The men of Britain subjected themselves to Rechtaid Rigderg and he became king of Ireland and Britain. Hence Túath Orc [Orcades, i.e. Orkney] and Túath Iboth [Ebudae, i.e. the Hebrides] in the east. They came with 300 men in exile back from the east. They conquered Cluichre [Clíach], but they do not rule it. They captured the land of Maine and the land of Fíachra Aidne [Uí Maine and Uí Fíachrach Aidne]. They captured the land of Corcu Baiscind as an inheritance of their grandmother Úaithne, daughter of Eochu mac Luchta. Éile and Úaithne are two daughters of Eochu mac Luchta. The land of Éile is from the Shannon east and south. The land of Úaithne is from the Shannon west and northwards to Lough Derg. Their kindreds and genealogies are called by the names of these women.’

It is quite clear that the genealogists had no idea who Úaithne really were (Lec. 113va1–vb8; *CGH* 264–7).[14] The statement of the genealogists *Tír nUaithne óthá Sinaind siar ₇ fothuaid co Deirgderc* ‘The land of Úaithne is from the Shannon west and northwards to Lough Derg’ is striking: we find that Ptolemy, too, places Auteini, identical with Úaithne, to the north and west of the Shannon (O’Rahilly 1946, 10–11; Freeman 2010, 69, 74), not south and east of the river as they later are, in Limerick and Tipperary. How did the genealogists know what Ptolemy knew? The genealogical text also states that Úaithne occupied, as an inheritance, the kingdom of Corcu Baiscind that stretched along the strategic north shore of the Shannon estuary from Loop Head (Q 664 468) in the far west to the Fergus estuary in the east (R 354 702). Were Úaithne originally a trading people, working the Shannon from its estuary—one point of arrival of Mediterranean/Atlantic imports—to midland markets at Lough Derg, Lough Ree and beyond?

This raises the thorny problem of very early information in the genealogies that seems to fit very well with material from Late Antiquity.

Claudius Ptolemy flourished AD *c*.100–c.180. Therefore, nothing we attribute to him can be later than the latter date. But his geographical work, *Geōgraphikē hyphēgēsis*, is based on the maps and writings of Marinus of Tyre (*c*. AD 70–130), in Syria, writing in Latin and probably using official Roman

[14] Cf. Lec. 113va45–8: Tri meic Nuadad Neacht .i. Gnathaltach sęnathair na Fothad ut poeta dixit ₇ Baiscne sęnathair Find ui Baiscne ₇ Feargus Fairrgi sęnathair rigraide Laigen; Lec. 113vb6–9: Ailiter Clanda Celtchair meic Uitheochair .i. Eogan ₇ Ailill ₇ Sęm & Fear Tlachtga & Druithnia & Uaithnia. Clanda Uaithnia meic Celtchair .i. Uaithni Thiri ₇ Uaithni Cliach quod f*or*tais (*l.* fortasse) uerius est.

records as well as other sources. We do not know what is owed to Marinus, what to his predecessors (Tierney 1976; Toner 2000), what to Ptolemy. Besides, the manuscript transmission of Ptolemy is very poor. Therefore, the date of data preserved by Ptolemy is approximate—what we can somewhat vaguely call the long second century. And some of Ptolemy's (or his predecessors') information was got from merchants and sailors working into Ireland, at unknown dates. It is notable that there is no overlap between Ptolemy and the ogham inscriptions, the earliest form of the Irish language (McManus 1991). Ogham may date to the fourth century AD, the *terminus post quem non*, or possibly earlier, and it was devised in Ireland by scholars familiar with Latin grammarians who spoke, and were learned in, Goidelic (Irish) (McManus 1991, 18–20 §3.2, 23–3 §3.6, 26–31 §3.9–12, 40–1 §3.17).

It is held to be a matter of fact that Ptolemy's geography was unknown in the West until the end of the middle ages. The first translation, that of Manuel Chrysoloras and Jacobus Angelus, was completed in 1409 (Rivet and Smith 1979, 129; Kleineberg *et al*. 2012, 8). Therefore, there cannot be 'leakage' from Ptolemy's geography into the Irish genealogies.

The relationship between the data in Ptolemy and those in the Irish genealogies is a large and troubling question. Here I propose to discuss a small selection of names that occur in one or both.

2. *Dumnonii, Domnainn*

In Ptolemy's Britain, the Dumnonii (> Ir. *Domnain*, later *Domnainn*) occur in southern Scotland and in the Devon–Cornwall peninsula (Rivet and Smith 1979, 242–4). They do not occur in Ptolemy's description of Ireland. Either they had not yet arrived there or they were too insignificant to be noticed. That is to say, the Dumnonii appear in Ireland about the second century, or somewhat later. Their presence is recorded in verse genealogies associated with Leinster that appear to be based on very early records:

> *Māl adrualaid iat<h>u marb mac sōer Sētnai*
> *selaig srathu Fomoire fo dōene domnaib,*
>
> *Dī óchtur Alinne oirt trīunu talman*
> *trebun trēn tuathmar Mis Delmann Domnon* (*CGH* 20 = R with variants from LL and Lec.).

> ‘A hero who has entered the lands of the dead, the noble son of Sétnae; he smote the lowlands of the Fomoire,[15] beneath the worlds of people;
> from the summit of Alenn, he slew the strong ones of the earth;
> a powerful tribune of many kingdoms, Mess Delmann, <king of the> Domnainn’

The tract continues:

> *Ceithri <meic> dano leis de quibus dicitur: Cethri meic Airt Mis Telmann & rl*.
> ‘Four sons of his of whom it is said: “Four sons of Art Mess Telman” &c.’ (a first-line citation of the late syllabic poem in BB 70va23).

The opening statement corresponds to BB 70va19:

> *Meas Delmond cethri meic lais .i. Meas Gheagra ⁊ Mes Rodi, Meas Dana ⁊ Meas Domnond, amail as-bert in fili*
> ‘Mess Delmann has four sons, i.e. Mess Gegra and Mess Rodi, Mess Dana and Mess Domnond, as the poet has said.’

This is followed by eight lines in syllabic verse (BB 70va23) in which the matter is repeated and mention is made of a fifth son, *Meas Datho in brugaid belgach* ‘Mes Datho the plaintive hospitaller’. What significance one may attach to these names is very dubious. What is important is that the text states that all the descendants of Mess Telmann became extinct–another way of saying that the kingdom of the Domnainn in Leinster collapsed.

Mess Telmann (also called Art Mess Delmon) is credited with fortifying Ráith nAlinne (townland of Knockaulin, parish of Kilcullen, barony of Naas, Co. Kildare) by building an enclosure about it: *is lais con-rótacht Múr nAlinne licet antea ciuitas regalis fuit* ‘he built the wall of Alenn though it was a royal site before that’ (*CGH* 20). One notes here (and only in this context) a different name for the site: Múr nAlinne, from Latin *murus* ‘wall’. *Murus*, incidentally, does not have to be a neat stone-built Roman wall: it can even be a turf dyke. Mess Telmann’s title *treban* is from the Latin *tribunus*, literally

[15] We do not know who the Fomoire were. They seem to have been recruited as mythical beings by later writers, but here may represent a real people dwelling in lowlands beside the sea (Gallia Belgica?).

a senior officer in a Roman legion, but here understood as a suitable title for a powerful king. Knockaulin is one of the great royal symbolic sites, like Emain Macha and Tara, the symbolic *caput* of a powerful kingdom. It has had a three-fold occupation, and excavation shows that the final occupation ended in the third century AD. It was not in use after that point (Wailes 1969, 1970a, 1970b, 1971, 1973, 1974, 1976, 1982, 15–18; 1990). The narrative appears to hang together. Elsewhere, Domnainn are widely spread—Inber Domnann is Malahide Bay, Co. Dublin; Irrus Domnann is the baronies of Tirawley and Erris, Co. Mayo, and there are references to Domnainn in other locations.[16]

3. *Coriondi, Corionototae, Dál Cuirind, Cuirinn*

Ptolemy places the Coriondi in Leinster, and we can link these to the British Corionototae, at Hexham, perhaps originally Corbridge (Charles-Edwards 1974, 38; Rivet and Smith 1979, 322). Evidently, they had moved south-westwards from Leinster. The name occurs in a few places, particularly in the great south-coast kingdom of Uí Líatháin that stretches from Cork Harbour to the mouth of the Blackwater, near Youghal, and in varying forms in their genealogies and literary texts.

> *'S iad maic Fiachnai: Onchind, Marcán, Suibne, Mael Dúin la Dal Cuirind hi Feic, Srophán, Mael Umai, Forind la Marthinu* (Meyer 1910a, 62.4–6 = Hull 1947, 903).
>
> 'These are the sons of Fíachnae: Onchind, Marcán, Suibne, Máel Dúin who lives with Dal Cuirind at Féic, Srophán, Máel Umai, Forind who lives with the Martini.'

The warrior Fothud Canainne was slain at the battle at that notable place called Fíac (Féic) (Meyer 1910b, 10). It is identical with Feghbeg and Feghmore, on the Blackwater, in the parish of Clondulane, barony Condons and Clangibbon, Co. Cork (MacCotter 2011/2, 238; Plummer 1910, i 185).

[16] *CGH* 19–20, 334; Dobbs (1916); O'Rahilly (1946, 92–9); Bieler (1979, 134 §14.2 'ab occidentalibus plagis de Campo Domnon' and 156 §42.6 'in totum Campum Domnon'). See Hogan (1910), s. vv. Achad Airthir Domnand, Achall, Clann Moirne, Clann Úmóir, Cúl Domnann, Domnaind, Fir Domnand, Gabraige, Túath Fer nDomnann. See BB 109va42 = Lec. 224rc16 = Dublin, TCD 1336 olim H.3.17, col. 761: ... m. Fidcuiri cu*ius* frater Corp Derg, Nad Corp c*uiu*s fra*ter* Tesca Lai c*uiu*s fr*atres* Cael ₇ Noisa & Mail ₇ Cormac Gailinge. Uí Fidc*h*uiri <₇ Uí Saine> & Uí Cuirp ₇ Uí Teisci ₇ Uí Cail ₇ Uí Noisi ₇ Uí <Mail>. Haec sunt ... .uii. genera ... Gaileng. In regionibus ante (*cod*. año) illos habitauer*un*t Tuatha Domnand ₇ Tuatha Gaileng, de quibus Filii Oseire.

> *Aed mac Eugain in Meschorach di hUib Buirrich focairt do* [*l.* dá] *mac Chuimne issind immairiuc hi Féic, araili hi rroi ind imairic, ind arde occ Áth Da Loarc*
>
> '[It is] Aed mac Eugain in Meschorach of Uí Buirich who overthrew (?) the two sons of Cumman, in the encounter at Fíac, one on the field of the encounter, the other at Áth Dá Loarc' (Meyer 1910a, 61.26–9; Hull 1947, 903).

However, the Cuirin(n) occur in the genealogies of Uí Líatháin, and by giving the variants in the manuscripts the form becomes somewhat clearer:

> 1. Secht meic Liathain: Carpre Coel, Corcc Corb, Ailill Tassach .i. ardtoissech nó Tassach tostach, Mac Brocc (s*ed* Mac Brocc), Bairig quem dicunt Mac hUi [*l.* moccu] Chruind [*l.* Chuirind] fuisse, Fiachu, Crimthan Sleibi, Conall, R
> 2. Bairich quem dicunt mac huí [*l.* moccu] Chuirind fuisse, LL
> 3. [ ] quem dicunt mac hui [*l.* moccu] Crimthaind fusi, Lec.
> 4. Barche quem dicunt mac hui [*l.* moccu] Cuirind fuise, BB (*CGH* 25).

Buirich or Uí Buirich, represented as a lineage of Uí Líatháin and made descend from the lineage ancestor, Eochu Líatháin, are really Cuirinn (*CGH* 225, 227). The date of (Uí) Buirich is quite uncertain.

Whether Cuirinn bear any relationship to others known by an identical or like form of the name is an open question: Cuirennraige (H. 157; *CGH* 133), Mag Coraind, Mag Corainn, Corainn, the barony of Corran, Co. Sligo. In the case of the latter, the dative is Corunn (inde Duma Niad i Corunn hodie, Lec. f. 224rc31).

4. *Manapii, Monaig*

Kleineberg *et al*. (2012, 25) locate Ptolemy's Menapii at 52° 20, 6° 27 (corrected from what they consider to be Ptolemy's 58° 40, 13° 30). This places them in the north of the inner Wexford Harbour, about the parish of Ardcavan (T 058 248), barony of Shelmaliere East, Co. Wexford. They are to be identified with the Menapii of Gallia Belgica, on the coast south of the Scheldt, in the land of the medieval diocese of Tournai—an identification first made

by Eoin MacNeill (MacNeill 1920, 58; Pokorny 1954, 103–5). There appears to be no evidence that they passed through Britain, but this is something we cannot rule out. As Monaig, they are well known to the genealogists—in their original territory in south Leinster and in their northward spread as far as Ulster. They describe their own land as being in south Leinster. Here they were put upon and finally they were expelled from it. We are to conclude that the genealogists knew, as did Ptolemy, that their primary place of settlement was in south Leinster. The genealogists account for their expulsion by creating an origin legend.

> *Is i cuis ros-fogluais as a tir fęsin .i. orguin Enna meic meic Eachach, .i. mac rig Laigen, do Monach mac Ailella Mair, cor facsad Laigin 'man ngnim-sin co ro soichsead co hEochaid nGundad co rig Ulad, uair Eithni ingen Fergusa siur in rig Ulad mathair Monaig co fuair Monach fearand o rig Ulad co ro thall do orba a c<h>land* (Lec. 88vb21).
>
> 'The cause that moved them from their own land was the killing of Énna grandson of Echu, i.e. the son of the king of Leinster, by Monach son of Ailill Már. And they left Leinster because of this deed, and they went to Eochu Gunnat, king of Ulaid, because Eithne daughter of Fergus, sister of the king of Ulaid, was the mother of Monach, and Monach got land from the king of Ulaid, and he [the king of Ulaid] took the land from the inheritance of his own families.'

A second account is attached, in the *Vita tripartita* (s. ix), to St Patrick's missionary journey to south Leinster and to the foundation of the great church of Sleaty (parish of Sleaty, barony of Slievemargy, Queen's County, now Co. Laois).

> *Bátar in tan sin fá ingraim lá ríg Laigen, Cremthan macc Censelaig, co llotar for longais. Is díib in Manaig la Úu Cremthain ⁊ in Manaig la Ultu ⁊ Cenél nĒndai la Mumain. Is díib in Fíacc remierbartmar. .V. fratres: Fíacc, Óengus, Ailill Már, Conall, Etarscéla. Pater eórum Macc Ercae. Tre imthúus Pátraic ra ngab in ríi, for ferand, cóiced imbaire a athar. Is fair conacab Slēibte. Int Óengus hí sin ro ort in ríg íar tain,*

Cremthan macc Censelaig do digail a loiṅgsi (Mulchrone 1939, 116–17, lines 2250–8; Stokes 1887, i, 192–3).

> 'They were at that time suffering persecution from the king of Leinster, Cremthann son of Cennselach, wherefore they went into exile. Of them are Monaig who live in Uí Chremthainn and Monaig who live with the Ulaid, and Cenél nÉndai in Munster. Of them is the [bishop] Fíacc whom we have before mentioned. Fíacc, Óengus, Ailill Már, Conall, Etarscéla were five brothers. Their father was Mac Ercae. Through Patrick's intervention, the king received him [Fíacc] on land, one of his father's five strips (*i.e.* his share, his inheritance). Thereon he built Sléibte. That Óengus slew the king, Cremthann son of Cennselach, to avenge his exile.'[17]

The first appears to be the older tale, though still anachronistic: I do not believe that Uí Chennelsaig (whose kings are also confused here) became a power in south Leinster much before the seventh century. The second narrative has got snarled up in the Patrician hagiography attaching to the church of Sleaty. What lies behind the tales, however, is a clear recollection that Monaig were once dominant in south Leinster, at an early but unknown date.

Their old association with south Leinster and the later knowledge that they were important in Ulster prompted the genealogists to compose a more complex origin legend for them, combining most of the previous elements, and tying them with Uí Chennselaig and Uí Bairrche, both powerful south Leinster dynasties of a later period.

> *In Monaich Ulad di Ara<id>ib doib ut alii aiunt, ut dicitur Maccu Araide Monach. Sed uerius est: tri meic Fec meic Daire Barraig dicuntur ₇ ab eis Monaich Ulad orti sunt ₇ Monaich Lacha hEirne uel is do Cloind Ailella Mair meic Breacain meic Daire Barraich doib .i. Monach mac Ailella Mair meic Cathair Moir o builet Monaig. ... Is i cuis ro gluais <as>sa tir fęn .i. orguin Enda meic ri<g> Laigęn doib, do Eochaid nGunnad do Ultaib tre gael a mathar do bęth d'Ulltaib* (BB 96rb10–19 = Lec. 128rb15–33).[18]

[17] Stokes's translation (1887, 193), with minor changes.
[18] cf. Lec. 84va45–b37.

> ‘The Monaig of Ulaid belong to Dál nAraide, as others say, as one says Maccu Araide Monach. But this is truer: there are said to be three sons of Fíac son of Dáire Barrach and from them the Monaig of Ulster have their origin and the Monaig of Loch nÉirne or they belong to Clann Ailella Máir son of Breccán son of Dáire Barrach i.e. Monach son of Ailill Már son of Cathaír Mór, from whom Monaig descend. ... The reason why he moved out of his own land was their killing of Énda son of the king of Leinster. This was done by Eochu Gunnat of Ulaid, because his [Monach’s] mother was related to the Ulaid.’

The next piece of evidence is literary rather than genealogical, but equally puzzling. In the tale *Tochmarc Emire* (s. viii, but reworked s. x/xi), occurs Forgall Manach. The second and significant part of his name is a form of the eponym of Manapii. He is represented as the father of the heroine Emer and is said to be living in his *bruiden* or palace at Lusk (parish of Lusk, barony of Balrothery East, Co. Dublin, O 214 545). Evidently a powerful figure, his connection with trade is stressed: he disguises himself as a Gaulish wine merchant, bearing wine and treasure, to find out about his daughter’s proposed husband. Drumanagh (< Druim Monach; see Meyer 1901, 231 §9, 245 §53, 260 §86; O’Rahilly 1946, 32–3) is a townland in the parish of Lusk. It is a headland near the village of Loughshinny, surrounded on three sides by the sea. It is a very important Romano-British site—whether military bridgehead or Romano-British trading and manufacturing post. It has rich and abundant artifacts that apparently date from the second half of the first century and the first half of the second century.[19] One may well ask how a literary work, dated conventionally to the eighth century, can record a tradition of the presence of the Monaig (no doubt among others) on an important east-coast trading site in the first and second century AD.

The genealogies convey that the principal later settlements of Monaig are in Ulster. Evidently, they were powerful, and very widely spread in north-east Ulster and they occupied the Erne and its lakes—a position that gave them wide access to southern Ulster. Mag Monaig lay in the kingdom of Dál nAraide (Lec. 129vb9–21) and other branches of Monaig occupied the Ards peninsula, strategically placed, for trading purposes, between Belfast Lough and Strangford Lough (Lec. 132va–b). Naturally, the genealogists attach them as a subordinate kindred to the powerful Dál nAraide of Ulster, to whom they

[19] Eamonn P. Kelly (pers. comm.).

lost power and influence. Their lower status is none too subtly conveyed by the genealogists.

> *Ceithri primthuatha Ceniuil Cridain .... As-bearad araili gid a Muig Monaig beit is di Dal Araidi a mbunad .i. do Sil Eachach Iarlaithi meic Fiachna meic Baedain doib. .i. Eochu Iarlaithe do-rigni in Cridan sin fri Methrig fri banchaic boden conad on Męithrig sin ita Tellach Męithrigi indiu 7 conad on Chritan sin ita Cenel Cridain*.
>
> 'There are four principal *túatha* of Cenél Crítán. ... Others say though they be in Mag Monaig they belong by origin to Dál nAraide, i.e. to Síl Echach Íarlaithi son of Fíachna son of Báedán i.e. Eochu Íarlaithe made Crítán with Methrech his own cook, and from that Methrech descend Tellach Methrigi today and from Crítán descend Cenél Crítáin' (Lec. 132vab9–21 (Lec1) = Lec. 129vb5–21 (Lec2) = Lec. 88vd11–25 (Lec3)).

The sites they chose—Wexford Harbour, Drumanagh, the ports of eastern Ulster, and the Erne and its lakes—appear to be trading posts, and Manapii were traders who, in time, created local kingdoms.

5. *Carbantorigion, Corbetraige*

Ptolemy (ii 3, 6) mentions Carbantorigon as a *polis* in the territory of the Selgovae in southern Scotland (about Kirkcudbright and Dumfriesshire) (Rivet and Smith 1979, 300–1). **Carbantorīgion* would be a better form, and is perhaps the original. An exact equivalent occurs in a very early genealogical fragment, among a list of *aithechthúatha* 'rent-paying communities': *Corbetrige .i. Cruibte mac Cosgaib meic Cruind de Corco hE de Auib Bodamnai* 'Corbetrige i.e. Cruibte son of Cosgab son of Crond of Corcu E of Aui Bodamnai' (H. 162). The notable Fíachu Fer Carbaid, who appears as ancestor of the people called Gubraige (in Cíarraige Luachra and Uí Maine), may represent a periphrastic form of the eponym of Carbantorigion (BB 96rb3–5 = Lec. 129rb7–9).[20] Aui Bodamnai belonged to the dominant Corcu Loígde, who occupied extensive territories in south-west Ireland. I have no other reference to Corco hE, but Aui Bodamnai, later Uí Badamna, were a well-known lineage among Corcu Loígde, in south-west Cork (*CGH* 259–60;

[20] H. 157 reads Oengus Fir Gabrae mac Fiachrach Fir Charpait, is de Gaborrige.

O'Donovan 1849, 36–7; Lec. 112rc20 = BB 110ra8). They gave their name to the barony of Ibane, near Clonakilty Bay (W 385 397). A different form of the same name, Crobetrige, Crobentraige, occurs in the list of rent-paying peoples *Prímforslointe na nDéssi*, a list that goes back to the seventh century.[21] This suggests a second community of Carbantorigion in Munster.

6. *Brigantes*

The Brigantes were a powerful pre-Roman British people who occupied a large part of northern England (Rivet and Smith 1979, 278–80). Ptolemy also locates Brigantes in Ireland, in the south-east, in Co. Wexford. O'Rahilly argues, largely on the basis of a dubious etymology, that these Brigantes are identical with the historical Uí Bairrrche who occupied this territory (O'Rahilly 1946, 34–8; *CGH* 46–54). They appear to have left no successors that can be identified, and it seems reasonable to allow that one British kingdom in Ireland failed.

7. *Voluntii, Voloti, *Uluti, Ulaid*

Ptolemy places a kingdom he calls *Voluntii* in north-east Ireland. O'Rahilly (1946, 7) declares that this form is a corruption of **Uluti,* whom he identifies with the Ulaid of the Irish historical record. Pokorny (1954, 97, 109) also considers this form an error. Both believe the initial to be intrusive.

The following curious text occurs in a section headed *Genelach Gailinga ind Coraind* 'the genealogy of Gailenga of Corann':

> *Uí Fidchuiri <₇ Uí Saine> ₇ Uí Cuirp ₇ Uí Teisci ₇ Uí Cail ₇ Uí Noisi ₇ Uí <Mail> haec sunt (gl*. is iad so) *.uii. genera* (*gl*. cenela) *Gaileng. In regionibus ante* (*cod*. añ̄o) *illos habitauerunt Tuatha Domnand ₇ Tuatha Gaileng de quibus Filii Oseire* (*gl*. dia taid Me*i*c Osere). *ix. genera* (*cod.* cenera; *gl.* cenel) *Corco Fir Tri ista sunt: Ocomon, Cet, Congus, Cerp, Latt, Luc<h>ta, Dece, Cange, Cosgabh. In quorum regionibus habitauit Nia rex .i. Nia Noi Grainni.*[22] *Ipse est qui recepit Lugna Fer Tri de excilio suo in tęmpoiri*[1] *Uolotorum.*[2] *In<de>*[3] *Dumai Niad <i Corunn>*[4]*hodie* (BB 109va50–b25 = Lec. 224rc16–32 = Dublin, TCD, 1336 olim H.3.17, col. 761).

[21] H. 156d; Meyer (1903, 134 §27) second list; from La. The name is absent, however, in the main list of the rent-paying peoples of Déssi.

[22] cf. *Habitauerat Nia Noi Grainni de Viris Bolg*, BB 109vc4–5.

vll. [1]te*m*onpore H, tempoiri Lec. [2]Ulatorum H Ulotoru*m*, Lec. [3]In BB, inde Lec. H [4] a Corunn Lec., a Coran*n* H.

'Uí Ḟidchuiri and Uí Ṡaini and Uí Chaíl and Uí Noísi and Uí Maíl and Uí Chuirp and Uí Theisci: these are the seven kindreds of the Gailenga. In these regions, before them, lived Tuatha Domnann and Tuatha Gaileng, from whom descend Filii Oseire. The nine kindreds of Corcu Fer Trí are: Ocomon, Cet, Congus, Cerp, Latt, Luc<h>ta, Dece, Cange, Cosgab*h*. In their territories lived king Nía i.e. Nía Noí Gráinne. He it is who received Lugna Fer Tri from his exile in the time of Voloti. Hence the Mound of Nía in Corann today.'

The form occurs in a historically very old passage, one that may belong in the fifth century or before. The resemblance between BB and Ptolemy's form may be purely coincidental. BB *Uo-* may be an unusual way of representing archaic Old Irish /u/. In any case, BB is able to give a form very close to the prehistoric reconstruction **Uluti*. I leave the matter as a curiosity.

It appears that the earliest strata of the Irish genealogies contain genuine historical matter bearing on Romano-British kingdoms in Ireland in the second and third century. How are we to account for its transmission?

Evolutionary psychology: the struggle for survival

In early and medieval societies, where arbitrary, even despotic, power was exercised over the lives of others, royal dynasties and aristocrats used their power and resources ruthlessly to gain sexual access to many women and thus to proliferate (Betzig 1986; Summers 2005, 111–12, 119–22, 129). The ancient Near East supplies copious examples of this phenomenon (Betzig 2009). The practices of Old Testament society, patriarchs and kings alike, are merely a regional example of Near Eastern practice (Betzig 2005). Abraham and Nahor were polygynous; Jacob had twelve sons by four women. Judges and kings were polygynous. King David had seven wives before he became king, and many more after. And he had at least ten concubines. Solomon is said to have had 700 wives and 300 concubines. Rehoboam, king of Judah had 18 wives, 60 concubines and 29 sons. Old Testament genealogies have, of course, little or no historical value, but they convey the practice of the writers' times. The same kind of royal and aristocratic privileges were exacted in early