

Connaught kingdoms

‘ The history of the county of Mayo to the close of the sixteenth century ’

Hubert Thomas Knox
(1908)

— ‘ all Irish history turns on tribal relations ’ p.3

No credit can be given to the ancient history of invasions of Ireland by Parthalon, Nemed, Firbolg, Tuatha De Danann, and Milesians. At most these invasions represent vague legends of early Celtic migration. Examination shows that they deal with events which occurred when the Gael had been long established in the land, and were broken up into clans as in the historical period, and that those events were of local rather than national importance.

The Fomorians were northern families who took their name from an ancestor named Fomor. The name appears in the pedigree of the Irian race of Ulster. They are the same as the Uladh of later legend. The Tuatha De Danann were clans of Meath and Connaught, ancestors of the Delbna, Cianachta, Luighne, and Gailenga of later times. They were acknowledged to be related to the Domnonians by descent from Nemed, who descended from Partholan's brother.

The Domnonians are called Firbolg, a name of obscure meaning which comprises Danonians, though it came to be restricted to the Firdomnonn, Firgaileoin, and Firbolg. I cannot find that the last named had any distinct existence, unless the general name stuck to a clan of the Domnonians, being abandoned by others in favour of new names, the usual course in subdivision of Irish royal families. The only trace I find of it is in the Bolg Tuath of Badgna. D. MacFirbis tells us that the Bolg Tuath, the Gabry of the Suck, the Cathry, and the Cruithne of Croghan were descendants of Genann, son of Dela.[1] The Firgaileoin are identified without doubt as Tuatha De Danann of Meath and as Cruithne.

If I am right in recognising the Delbna, Luighne, and Gailenga as Danonians, their distribution in Meath and Connaught, the traditional descent of Danonians and Domnonians, and the evidence of the legends combine to prove that they were two great clans of the Gael, who fought with each other and with the Fomorach for supremacy in these provinces and in Leinster, and that there was no more difference between them than between Hy Neill, Hy Briuin, and Hy Fiachrach of history.

All these tribes are of the same great Cruithne race, which includes the Irian race of Ulster, and is the Gael of Ireland. In later times the Milesians arrogated to themselves the name of Gael.

The Milesian pedigree before the fourth century is untrustworthy. It is likely that a man of the Domnonian royal family of Connaught or Meath went to Spain, and acquired distinction and the name of Miled of Spain in the wars between the Celts and the Romans, or between the Celts themselves. Miled is an Irish form of Miles, and translates Galam, his Irish name. His sons may have returned to Ireland. So far there is nothing improbable. He has been utilised in making up Milesian genealogies, largely fictitious, but probably made up of names of real persons available in tradition. The true ancestry of Eochy Feidhlech is Domnonian. Tuathal Techtmar was a scion of one of the branches of the Domnonian royal family of Connaught. When it acquired pre-eminence a pedigree was worked up, and many of the great families which maintained their position were in course of time grafted on it, and so lost their real and greater connection. The quarrels of the three great tribes having ended in Domnonian supremacy, the Domnonians themselves were partly turned into Eremonians, and partly disavowed and stigmatised as Firbolgs and Attacots.[2]

Mayo seldom appears in these legends. But it was a large part of the kingdom of Irrusdomnonn, which, as defined by Keating, extended from the River of Galway to the River Drowse, and seems to have been the dwelling-place of the Gamanry clan.

Though the stories of invasions of Ireland and the dates assigned by Irish historians must be set aside, I see no reason to doubt that the main events are generally accurately marshalled according to relative dates, and that they embody some historical facts.

Partholan killed in battle Cical Grigencosach, great-grandson of Uadmor, who is said to have landed at Inver Domnonn, now Broad-haven Bay, twenty years after Partholan according to some historians, to have been in Ireland before him according to others. He and his people are called Fomorach, but I take that to be because the historians found no tribe name but that of Fomorach in the earliest legends, and did not recognise Clann Umoir as then in existence. We may take Cical to have been a king of Irrusdomnonn, a MacUmoir.

Named next appears fighting with Fomorach, whom he defeated in three battles, one being at Ros Fhraochain in Connaught, said by O'Donovan to be Rosreaghan in Murrisk in this county, a place which I cannot identify. There he slew Gann and Genann, two of their chiefs. Afterwards the Fomorach got the better of the Nemedians, whom they cruelly oppressed. Rivalry may be inferred between the clan of Nemed and that of Umoir for the sovereignty of Connaught, or perhaps for that of Ireland, which the latter now held for a time. It does not appear who Partholan and Nemed were. The indications point to chieftains of a great family living to the east of Irrusdomnonn, probably the ruling family in Connaught and Meath, from which came the Tuatha De Danann.

It is impossible to give any kind of date to these legends except that they are a shadow of events which occurred before the battles of Moytura, which may be dated as not long before the beginning of the Christian era.

The Nemedians appear again as the Firbolgs, who invade Ireland under the command of the five sons of Dela and divide all Ireland among themselves, Connaught falling to Genann. The fact is that they appear as settled in Ireland, in Meath and Connaught, and that members of the family are said to have held the chief sovereignty for thirty-seven years. Their last High King, Eochaidh MacErc, made Tara the residence of the High King of Ireland. The other branches of the clan of Nemed, the Tuatha De Danann, appear and challenge the supremacy. The Danonians, having landed on the coast of Sligo according to the legend, encamped on Slievanierin. When the Firbolg under King Eochaidh prepared to meet them, they went to the west and took up a position in front of Mount Belgadan, now called Benlevi, that is at Cong, to the west of Magh Nia, the Plain of Heroes, now called Moytura. It is a curious feature that they are given as an ally Aengabha, King of Iruaithe, which has always been translated Norway, the usual meaning of the word. He played a distinguished part in the battle. In this case Iruaithe did not mean Norway, but the Irish kingdom of Herota or Hirota, which was about Galway,[3] where we find in later days two Delbhna clans.

The battle began on midsummer day. On the second day Eochaidh left the field with 100 men to get water. The three sons of Nemed, son of Badrai, and 150 men chased him to the Strand of Ballysadare, where Eochaidh and the sons of Nemed were killed in fight. Eochaidh was buried where he fell, and a great monument was raised over him, which existed until the nineteenth century. The sons of Nemed were buried at the west end of the Strand, where the flagstones of the sons of Nemed were set up over them.

After four days' battle the Firbolg were reduced to 300 men under Sreng, son of Sengann. Being outnumbered, they accepted peace, which left them the province of Connaught. Thus the Danonians acquire the sovereignty of Ireland.

Though the monuments of Moytura Cong have been assigned to various persons slain in this battle, and Moytura Cong has been accepted as the site, there are good reasons for believing that the battle was fought in Coillte Luighne, near another Cong, a denomination of land discovered by Col. Wood-Martin in an old survey. That site agrees with the position of the Carn of Eochy and the flagstones of Nemed's sons, and the explanation of the name of L. Key given by Gilla Isu Mor Mac Firisigh in the beginning of the fifteenth century. His opinion deserves great respect, and the Cong site does not fit in with these incidents and traditions. Unfortunately we cannot place much reliance on identification of monuments, but it is a matter of some significance that the writer of the Tale of the First Battle accepted the Strand of Ballysadare as the scene of his death. Yet on the whole the matter must remain in doubt, for a king who ran away from Cong may have been followed up and killed near Ballysadare.

The second battle of Moytura does not concern Mayo directly. It was between Danonians and Ulster men called Fomorach, aided by some Domnonians, who are called Firbolg ancestors of the Clann Umoir. No doubt some Clann Umoir men were concerned, but the legend does not give their names.

The Danonian supremacy is said to have lasted 197 years. It must have lasted long, as so many families which I class as Danonian were settled in Meath and Connaught, but it may have been before as well as after the first battle of Moytura.

The sons of Miled and their cousins, the sons of Ith, now appear, called collectively Clanna Breogain, and the Tuatha De Danann disappear as ruling families, but survive in legend as fairies.

The Milesians spread quickly over all Ireland except Connaught, whose Domnonian kings acknowledged the supremacy of the High King of Tara. They were divided into four great branches, called the races of Eremon, Ir, Eber, and Ith. The Irish genealogists of later times called all the families whose pedigrees they did not carry up to one of these races by the names of Firbolg and Attacot.

What seem to me to be the true relations between the Domnonians, Eremonians, Milesians, Firbolgs, and Attacots are set out in Appendix I., but for practical purposes of history it is convenient to call the tribes by their well-known names, and to accept the tribal grouping which accords with their relations among themselves, though the supposed origins be not true.

Our knowledge now becomes more definite. Connaught is recognised as comprising three divisions, without very distinct boundaries, and under three ruling families, whose history can be traced for three hundred years, and even to this day if they have been transformed into Milesians as I suppose.

Fidach, son of Fiach, was King of the Fir Craibe, whose kingdom was South Connaught from Limerick, that is from the mouth of the Shannon, to the Palace of Fidach. O'Flaberty mentions the "Palace of Fidach," Keating only "Fidach," as the boundary. The place is not known, but as it was a boundary between the Fir Craibe and the Tuatha Taiden, we shall not be far wrong if we take it to have been a place near the northern and eastern border of Aidhne.

Eochaidh Allat was King of the Gamanry, over the kingdom of Irrusdomnonn, comprising Clann Umoir tribes north of Aidhne, in the kingdom of the Hy Briuin Seola, and the lands afterwards of the Conmaicne in the county of Galway, all the counties of Mayo and Sligo, with the lands of the Gregry and Calry in the counties of Roscommon and Leitrim, according to the bounds given, from the River of Galway to the rivers Duff and Drowse. But we must believe that most of the minor clans gave but slight allegiance to the Gamanry in the period now opening, as so great a kingdom would have always predominated in Connaught if its tribes had acted together. The bounds are likely to have been handed down by very ancient

tradition, and I should take it to have been really the county of Mayo and the countries of the Calry at this time.

Tinni, son of Curaidh, was King of the Tuatha Taiden, whose kingdom comprised the Plain of Sanb, not identified, and the lands of the Tuatha Taiden, from the Palace of Fidach towards Tara. It seems to represent what was afterwards the great kingdom of Hy Many in its largest extent, and may have included the country afterwards called the Three Tuatha and most of Magh Ai.

The Fir Craibe are the chief family of the Clann Umoir, who occupied nearly all their kingdom and part of that of Irrusdomnonn. From this family came Brian, ancestor of the Hy Briuin of Ai, who has been given a false pedigree, and the Conmaicne and Ciarraige tribes of Connaught, except the Conmaicne of Moyrein and Annaly, who were not in Connaught as known in early times.

The Gamanry and the Clan Morna branch I believe to be the ancestors of the northern Hy Fiachrach, whose Fiachra ancestor has been wrongly identified with the Fiachra ancestor of the Hy Fiachrach Aidhne, who have been made descendants of his grandson, Eochaidh Breac. The Hy Fiachrach Aidhne seem to be of the Clann Umoir race from which Brian sprang. In O'Conors, O'Dowdas, O'Kellys, and O'Heynes, we may recognise these ancient families.

Fir Craibe, Gamanry, and Tuatha Taiden are called Olnegmacht, whence the early name of the province of Connaught.

The detailed reasons for these views will be found in the Appendix, and an explanation of the manner in which the royal families changed their tribal names, and developed fresh territorial groups, is set out in an article in the *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, vol. iv. p. 99.

Some probably historical facts relating to Mayo in this period may be gleaned from legends and references in the poems recounting the exploits of the Red Branch Heroes and the great wars between Ulster and Connaught. The wars seem to be historical, and the principal persons may be taken to have existed, though there is great doubt regarding their relations with each other.

Eochaidh Feidhlech and his brother, Eochaidh Airemh, who succeeded him as King of Ireland according to the poets and annalists, seem to have been kings of Meath and Teffa, a branch of the Domnonians of Connaught which sank about this time, but revived under Tuathal Techtmar.

Eochaidh Allat, King of the Gamanry, was King of Connaught at this period, and is reputed to have built Rathcroghan, which was called from him Rath Eochaidh. This must refer to the great Rath of Croghan, as the place seems to have been for many ages held by the Domnonian kings of Connaught, as the earliest Milesians and some of the Danonians are said to have been buried in the Releg of Croghan.[4]

Tinni, son of Curaidh, King of the Tuatha Taiden, killed Eochaidh Allat, and became King of Connaught.

Eochaidh Allat was succeeded by Ailill Finn as King of the Gamanry — that is, of Iriusdomnonn. Their relationship does not appear. Ailill is said to have married Flidais, daughter of Ailill Dubh, son of Fidach, son of Fiach. Ailill's ancestry is uncertain, except that his mother was Magu of Murrisk. Her pedigree is equally unknown. She is stated to have married Ailill, son of Cairbre Fir da Loch,[5] and Cairbre Cennderg.[6] Her seven sons were men of note, namely, Ailill Finn, Cet, Anluan, Mogcorb, Toca, Scandal, Anfind, Fergal. There is much confusion in pedigrees from identity of names. Magu may have been the name of many other women. Her daughter, or the daughter of a Magu, by name Mata, was mother of Cairbre

Niafer and of Finn File and of Ailill, King of Leinster, who has been confused with Ailill, the husband of Queen Meave. Fergal is said to have married a daughter of Eochaidh Feidhlech.

Tinni married the celebrated Meave, Medb, daughter of Eochaidh Feidhlech, who after his death married Ailill Mor, King of the Tuatha Taiden, who succeeded Tinni as King of Connaught. In their time occurred the Tain Bo Cuailgne. Several Ailill Mors of this period have been confused.

Fergus MacRoigh, having been driven out of Ulster, was received by Ailill and Meave, and played a principal part on behalf of Connaught in the War of the Tain. He comes into Mayo history only if the Tale of the Tain Bo Flidais be based on fact, according to which Fergus started from Croghan to attack Ailill Finn's dun, which was in the country of Cairbre in the north of the Ciarraige, and was reached immediately after passing over Ath Feni. The situation answers to that of Ailech Mor at Castlemore Costello. Fergus killed Ailill and his sons, and carried off Flidais and her cattle.

Though Ailill of the Gamanry was in that dun, it does not follow that it was the heritable property of the Gamanry clan. He may have occupied it only as King of Irrusdomnonn.

Ferdiad was a warrior of distinction, second only to Cuchulain, who was his greatest friend since the days when they Avere together in Scathach's military school in Scotland. Meave induces him, much against his will, to engage in duel with Cuchulain, who is defending the ford. Cuchulain kills him after a long fight, and the ford is called after him Ath Firdiad, Ardee to-day. He is called MacDaire MacDaman, chief of the clan Dega, a branch of the Gamanry. In Mr. O'Grady's "History of Ireland in the Heroic Period," he is said to have lived at Moytura, described as the seat of the kings of Irrus-domnonn, "where they held their games and solemn assemblies and interred their kings." If Mr. O'Grady has found this distinctly stated in a legend, it follows that some of the Gamanry were settled in the country afterwards occupied by Conmaicne, and the fair of Ballinchalla may have originated in those games.

The Clann Umoir appear in these legends in a curious way. The story handed down thus is that they are Firbolg who went to the Western Isles of Scotland after the first battle of Moytura, and about this time returned to Ireland and were allowed by Cairbre Niafer to settle in the best parts of Breg upon agreements to pay rent, Conall Cearnach and Cuchulain of Ulster, Cet MacMagach of Connaught, and Curoi MacDare of Munster or Leinster being their sureties. They throw up their tenancies, and are allowed by Queen Meave to settle in Connaught, where they built the great drystone forts. Their sureties, being called upon by Cairbre, attack them and kill each a chieftain. This seems to point to a real event, that before Cairbre Niafer's time the Clann Umoir — that is, the race of Fiach or Fir Craibe — had been for a time dominant in Breg and had settled some families there, who in his time were driven out or subdued, as I have suggested more fully in Appendix I. These stories evidently were invented after the growth of the Milesian legend to explain the presence of MacUmoirs in Breg and in Westmeath. The attack on them is useless, as it leaves matters as they were. But the stories show their presence along the western seaboard of Connaught at this very early period.

A Medon of this clan is supposed to have given his name to Inishmaine, and I suppose to Mag Medoin, or the country about Inishmaine and Kilmaine.

At the death of Ailill Mor a war of succession ensued. His son Maine Aithremal, supported by the people of Croghan, the Tuatha Taiden, the Fir Craibe, and others, defeated Sanb, son of Cet MacMagach, supported by the descendants of Magach, the Clann Umoir, and others. The Fir Craibe were of the Clann Umoir, but I take them to be a tribe of that race which had developed into a group of clans like the Silmurray, and that a number of the old clans retaining the old tribe name supported Sanb. We know that in later times Clann Umoir occupied much of Sanb's kingdom of Irrusdomnonn. Maine reigned for thirty-four years.

Sanb succeeded him as King of Connaught. For these events in Connaught, O'Flaherty's "Ogygia" is my chief authority, considered with extant legends and tales, and modified in accordance with my own interpretation.

The events known as the Attacottic Revolutions fell out in the period between the death of Meave and the accession of Tuathal in A.D. 130. In my opinion, much of the confusion and obscurity of the accounts of these events is due to the attempts of the Irish historians to reconcile Eremonian genealogy and legend with facts which they could not ignore, that Firbolg kings reigned at this period in countries which Eremonians should have held. Tuathal Techtmar merges as king of a new and great kingdom of Meath, and history becomes less obscure.

The Attacots of Irish history are not the Attacots of Roman history. Attacotti seems to represent the Irish words Aitec tuata, which O'Curry transhxtes, "rent-paying tribes." I prefer "tributary tribes," as O'Curry's explanation does not restrict the meaning to rent in our sense of the term. The Roman Attacotti seem to have been Celtic clans dwelling south of the wall of Antoninus, who submitted to the Roman Empire, and in the period of its weakness in the fourth century made raids on the Empire in company with the Picts, who were the Gael or Cruithne of Alba living north of the wall, and the Scots, who were ruling families of the Irish. Aitec tuata distinguished them from the free tribes of the same race to north of the wall.

The Irish writers called all clans not descended from Breogan by this name, and applied it to members of the Clanna Breogain who had lost rank in various ways. According to this classification all the Domnonian kings were Attacots, and so were all the provincial kings during the revolutionary period except the kings of Ulster.

Cairbre Cinnchait, who was made King of Ireland on the first occasion, seems to be Cairbre, son of Maine, King of the Tuatha Taiden.

On the second occasion, Sanb, King of Connaught, is said to have taken part in setting up Elim, King of Ulster, as King of Ireland.

Tuathal Techtmar now appeals, alleged to have taken refuge with his grandfather, the King of Alba, and to have landed in Irrusdomnonn with a large force from Alba. Fiachaidh Caisinn, who had been levying war against Elim, joined him. This Fiachaidh is called a Son of Donn Desach — that is, an O'Conmaic. They killed Elim near Tara, and afterwards killed Sanb at Duma Selea in Mag Ai, when Sanb was in extreme old age. Eochy, son of Cairbre, was made King of Connaught in his place. Eochy is the last of the Tuatha Taiden, or Hy Maine race, who is recognised as King of Connaught. Tuathal is said to have fought battles in Ceara and Umall and Cruachan Aigle, among 133 battles fought all over Ireland in subduing Attacots.

He seems to have revived the power of the Domnonian or Firbolg clans of Meath. Those clans I suspect to have been those called Delbhna and Luighne and Cianachta, or cognate tribes. Unless all known facts of Irish history are disregarded, he must have been head of a group of clans. I take him to have been the representative of the Danonian kings, the head of the Tuatha De Danann branch of the Domnonian or Firbolg race in Meath. He died about the year A.D. 160.

He is said to have transplanted Attacottic tribes about Ireland. This also is not easy to believe. The Book of Ballymote and Duaid MacFirbis give lists of forty-six Free Tribes who were extinguished by the Rent-paying Tribes, and of forty-seven Rent-paying Tribes, and the positions occupied by the latter, whereof I give so much as concerns Irrusdomnonn and the adjoining countries, from O'Sullivan's Introduction to O'Curry's "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish," I. p. xxvii.

"The Rent-paying Tribes were distributed throughout all Eriu, and the bondage rule of the lords of Eriu was established over them after they had distributed them, *ut est hic*. . . .

“ Tuath Sen Cheneoil in Northern Ui Maine. The Tuath Concobarni and of the Sons of Uomor upon Ui Briuin, and around Loch Cimé, and in Cluain Fuiche. Tuath Resen upon the Conmaicni, from Ath Mogho to the sea. The Tuath Mic Timor in Umall. Tuath Fer Domnann in the country of Ceara and in Ui Amalgad, and in Ui Fiachrach North, from the Rodb to the Congnaig in Carpri of Dromcliabh. Tuath Cruithnech in Magh Aei, and Magh Lurg, from Loch Ce to Brogail, and to the Shannon.

“ Tuath Crecraighe in Luighni of Connacht and around Loch Techad, and about Corann and about Bernas of Tir Oililla, as far as Magh Turedh.”

Tuath Resen appear in another part of the list as Tuath Resent Umoir.

The allegation that conquered tribes were moved shows us that Cromwell’s policy of transplantation into Connaught was an attempt to govern Ireland according to Irish ideas, though he did not adopt the policy for popularity’s sake, and does not appear to have absorbed other Irish ideas of government.

After Sanb the kings of Irrusdomnonn disappear from the list of kings of Connaught until Aid, son of Garad, who is the last recognised Domnonian king.

After the death of Eochy, son of Cairbre, five generations of kings of Connaught of the Fir Craibe race are recognised.

Irrusdomnonn and Mayo drop out of sight for a time.

Conn Cedcathach set up Crimthann Culbuide as King of Leinster. Cumall deposed him. Conn called in Conall Cruachna (K.C.), and Aedh MacMorna, the chief of the Gamanry. They defeated Cumall and his Munster allies in the battle of Cnucha, where Aedh killed Cumall, but lost an eye, whence he was called Goll.

Eogan Mor, *alias* Mogh Nuadhat, and his father, Mogh Neid, King of Munster, attacked Conn, who was joined by the same allies. In a battle in Magh Siuil, in Northern Eile, Goll killed Mogh Neid. They followed Eogan to Carnbuide, supposed to be near Cork, where Eogan was defeated again by Goll and Conall, whom he tried to surprise in camp. Eogan fled to Spain, and Munster was divided between two kings, Conaire and MacNiadh.

After nine years Eogan came again with 2000 Spaniards. The kings of Munster submitted to him. The King of Leinster joined them. The two kings of Ulster attacked Conn, who abandoned Tara and joined his allies in Connaught. Eogan came by Athlone into Magh Ai. Conn and his allies encamped at the Mound of the Well of Tulsk, opposite to Eogan. Conn there made peace by accepting Eogan’s terms, that he should have half of Ireland. Thus originated the division of Ireland into Leath Cuinn and Leath Mogha.

Eogan’s Spaniards wanted to go home. Eogan feared that without them he could not make head against Conn, so picked a quarrel by making extortionate demands, denounced the peace, and assembled his forces at Magh Leana, round Tullamore in King’s County. Eochy Muinderg, King of Ulster, attacked Tara. Conn returned from Connaught with Conall Cruachna’s sons, Eochy Whiteknee and Fiachaidh Whitehand, sons of Crimthann Culbuide, King of Aichill and Umall, and of Gairech, daughter of Criomall, and other allies, and saved Tara by defeating and killing Eochy. Thence they marched to Magh Leana. Eogan’s force was so much the larger that Conn asked for terms and offered to surrender Ulster and keep only Connavight and Teffa and the profits of Tara.

Lest it should seem like suing for peace, he made the offer not by poets but by the two sons of Crimthann, King of Umall. Eogan asked them if they came as hostages. They said no, and that they did not believe that Conn meant the terms to be accepted. Thereupon Eogan hanged them.

Conn heard of this in the evening and prepared a night attack, as his forces were small. Goll MacMorna refused to join, as he was under vow never to make a night slaughter or attack, but promised to help Conn if Eogan pressed him.

At dawn Conn surprised Fraoch's camp and killed him before he could put on his armour. Fraoch was Eogan's brother-in-law and leader of the Spaniards. Eogan made a furious attack on Conn. Goll, supported by his thirty brothers, came forward and covered Conn. Eogan wounded Conall Cruachna so that Conall died within a year. Conn and Eogan wounded each other. Other kings rushed in upon Eogan, who was fighting with Goll, and raised him aloft on their spears. Then his army fled. Conn could not pursue. His losses were said to have been greater than Eogan's.

The sovereignty of Munster was again divided between Conaire and MacNiadh, and Conn was for twenty years undisputed King of Ireland. He is allowed a reign of thirty-four years, ending about A.D. 157 or 212, according to different computations; the latter is probably the more accurate. This important battle may be dated about A.D. 190.

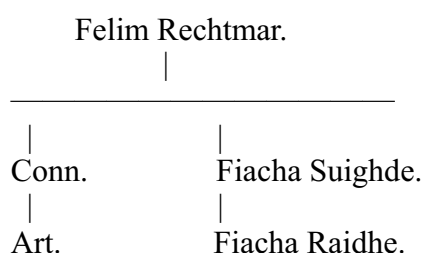
In all these events we find Conn, and afterwards we find his descendants, relying on Connaught to support their pretensions to be kings of Ireland. Here Conn has the support of his foster-father, Conall of the race of Fiach, who is recognised as the King of Connaught.

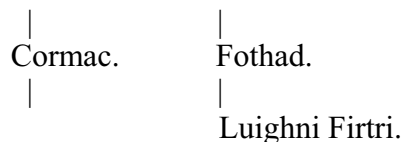
But Aedh or Goll MacMorna is the greater figure in the legends. At this time appear the Fianna, who are said to have been three organised bodies in Leinster, Connaught, and Munster. No such body is ascribed to Ulster. The descriptions show that they were organised bodies of soldiers, and it is supposed that they were an imitation of the Roman Legion. But they existed, by the name of Fianna, for only a short time.

The Connaught Fianna were called the Gamanry, and were commanded by Goll MacMorna. Also they were called Clann Morna, but these terms apply only to their commanders. As the only Connaught force is under the kings of Irrusdomnonn, we should expect that the sovereignty of Connaught would be held by those kings during the period in which they made much show in legend. So also in Leinster their commanders, Cumall and Finn, were not kings of Leinster. It seems stranger still that there were no Fianna of Meath. The explanation which commends itself to me is that they were bodies of Gallowglasses such as appeared in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but then under command of adventurers who were not inhabitants of the province, Free Companies who sold their services to any one who could raise their wages. I take the Fianna to have been similarly drilled and trained as professional soldiers under permanent commanders, but raised by each chieftain out of his own people. All maintained them in some form or other — at least the great chieftains would do so — but some made more show than others, and have survived in legend because of the distinction of their commanders and the events in which they were concerned.

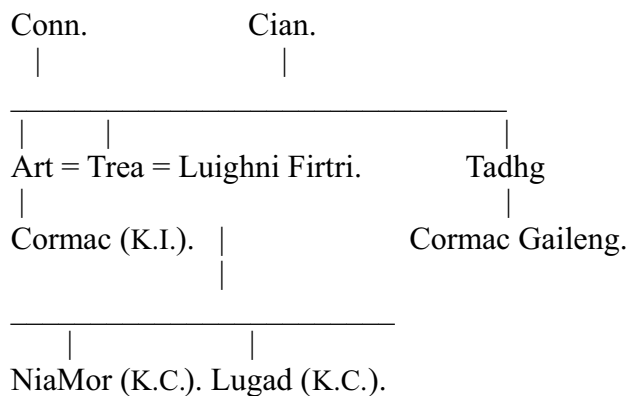
In the third century the King of Corann or Gailenga or Luighne appears. King Cormac MacArt was closely connected with Corann, so that he bore the name of Cormac of Corann. He is said to have been born there and to have been brought up by his stepfather. The persons now mentioned in connection with this country are supposed to be closely related as follows

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Thus O'Flaherty gives the descent of Luighi Fertri, " Ogygia," p. 333. According to another account, Luighni was son of Dermot. There is another connection between those families and the Clann Coin in the person of Trea, who was mother of Cormac MacArt and married Luighni, called from her Firtri, after the death of Art.



From Luighni Firtri the Corco Firtri of Corann, from Cormac Gaileng the O'Garas and O'Haras, are made to descend. From Cian also the Gailenga and Luighne of Meath and the Cianachta of Meath and Ulster are supposed to descend. We may believe that Luighni Firtri and his sons and Cormac Gaileng did exist about this period, and that they helped and were helped by Cormac MacArt. The Gregry, who occupied all this territory and all or part of Tirerrill in Tuathal Techtmar's time, and who appear again in St. Patrick's time, seem to have been now eclipsed by the Corcofirtri. But I think that no credit need be given to the alleged descent of the Corcofirtri from Felim Rechtmar, or to that of Clann Cein from Oilioll Olum.

Cormac attacked Aid, who was King of Connaught, and put up Nia Mor in his place. Aid killed Nia Mor, whereupon King Cormac came again and killed Aid, making Nia Mor's brother Lugad King of Connaught. This Aid is the last King of Connaught of the race of Fiach mentioned by O'Flaherty.

Cormac MacArt's son, Cairbre Liffeachair, King of Ireland, quarrelled with the Fianna of Leinster under Finn MacCumal, who defeated him. After Finn's death they took service with Moghcorb, King of Munster, and gave battle to Cairbre and the Clann Morna at Gabhra in A.D. 284. The victory was with Cairbre, though he was killed. The Fianna on both sides were almost exterminated, and were not formed again. Aid, son of Garad Glunduff, King of Connaught, commanded the Clann Morna. Aid followed Moghcorb and killed him in the battle of Spaltrach in Muskerry. Aid is succeeded by Condeus (a Latinised name) of the Corcofirtri. Thus the Olnegmacht kings of Connaught disappear from history, and their place is taken by the Milesians. Cian, son of Garad, King of the Sencheneoil, is mentioned in the legend of the Hy Maine. He seems to have been king of the old kingdom of the Tuatha Taiden. But we have no further indications regarding him. Thus closes what I may call the Olnegmacht or Firbolg period of Connaught's history.

The Early Milesian Period

CONNAUGHT history is broken in the middle of the fourth century, Muredach Tirech, of the Eremonian race of Meath, appears as King of Connaught after Condeus of the Corcofirtri, and is succeeded by his son, Eochaidh Muighmhedhoin. Both are recognised as kings of

Meath and of Ireland. Neither seems to have had any local connection with Connaught, except that the latter is called "of Mag Medhoin," which may be the country about Kilmaine. In their times the ancient kingdoms of the Fir Craibe and of the Gamanry disappear from view. On Eochy's death his son Brian Orbsen is King of Connaught, and his son Fiachra is king of the territories of the Fir Craibe and of the Ferdomnonn.

Fiachra transfers the Fir Craibe kingdom, except Aidhne, to Munster, as an eric for the murder of Crimhthann Mor by his sister, mother of Brian, Fiachra, and Ailill ; or in his time Conall Echluath conquered it, unless Conall's father, Lughaidh Menu, had done so already. These transactions and the transformations of Connaught clans are discussed in the *Journal of the R. S. A. I.*, vol. xxx. I am inclined to think that the kingdom of Fir Craibe did not include more of the county of Clare than the eastern part along the Shannon occupied by Clann Umoir tribes in the Attacottic list, and that the conquest was no more than the establishment of supremacy of the king of the Ua Cathbharr and Ua Corra tribes over them. It is quite likely that O'Flaherty's and Keating's extents of the Fir Craibe kingdom are based on the same authority, and that the Fir Craibe territory did not really extend south of Aidhne, that the error is due to the identification of Fiachra of Magh Tail with the Fiachra of the north.

In Ulster a like state arises. Muredach Tirech became King of Ireland by driving out Colla Uais and his brothers, who retire to Scotland. After three years they return and are well received by Muredach, who advises them to conquer for themselves a settlement in Ulster. With his help, and that of a large force from Connaught, they destroy Emain Macha and settle themselves in Ulster about A.D. 331, and develop into the tribes of the Oirghialla.

If these changes are taken to have occurred, we must admit that conditions existed in Ireland in the fourth century which have no parallel before or after. As far as we can judge from the legends of earlier and from the historical records of later centuries, the political conditions of Ireland were the same from the time of Queen Meave to the twelfth century. Christianity only softened manners and got rid of some savage customs.

No one could be king of a province, or of a main division thereof, without the support of a large group of families closely related to each other, and forming the foundation of their chief's power over other tribes. The descendants of kings spread over the land, indeed, but by very slow degrees, encroaching on less powerful clans.

Ulster suffers soon another conquest. After the death of Niall of Nine Hostages, his son Laegaire is King of Meath and King of Ireland in succession to Dathi, but his sons Eogan and Conall Gulban are settled in North Ulster, where they leave dominant clans. That the Oirghialla clans of the north would have submitted quietly is incredible, and Meath could not have imposed them violently on that distant part of Ulster. After the fifth century, when the High Kings were of Meath and Connaught alternately, the Hy Neill of Ulster provided almost all the High Kings for 150 years. If Niall of Nine Hostages is the Niall who was buried at Ochainé, it follows as almost a certainty that he was a King of Ulster, and was not son of a King of Meath and Connaught.

In Munster a somewhat similar condition is found, where the King of Munster is generally of the Eoghanacht and only occasionally of the Dalcais race.

In Connaught the chief kings come from Hy Briuin and Hy Fiachrach, north and south, until the former establish a supremacy.

In no case is there satisfactory evidence of the alleged origin of the rival families. In that of Ulster we should infer from analogy that Eogan sprang from the Oirghialla, the tribe of Ulster which had grown strong enough to drive the Dal Araidhe from Emain. In that of Munster we should infer that Lugaid Menn and Conall Echluath were kings of the ancient Ua Cathbharr and Ua Corra tribes who occupied nearly all Thomond.

The confusion of this and of earlier periods seems to have arisen when the Milesian genealogy was framed some hundreds of years later. The spread of Christianity over all Ireland during the fifth century must have made the use of letters general. To bring great families together whose real origin had been lost for ages, the genealogists had to go back to times before written record, when they could nail a branch on a convenient place in the tree. Thus, I take it, they brought the principal kings of Meath and Ulster and Connaught together in the person of Eochy Moyvane in the fourth century.

It has been so long accepted, and, subject to these considerations, so well expresses the relationships of the tribes of each province towards each other, that it must be used for the historical period.

The case of Connaught has to be set out as we find it at the close of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century, when a fairly accurate history begins.

As the Fir Craibe kings had for several generations eclipsed the Gamanry and Tuatha Taiden kings in the sovereignty of Connaught, so now the kings of Irrusdomnonn, afterwards called the kings of the Hy Fiachrach, predominate in Connaught, holding the sovereignty of Ireland alternately with the kings of Meath, and sharing that of Connaught with the Hy Briuin during the fifth century. During the first half of the sixth century, when they no longer attain to the sovereignty of Ireland, they keep the sovereignty of Connaught in the line of Ailill Molt. After that time their power declines quickly.

At this time their power seems to have been based upon their immediate possessions of great extent, which were in my opinion the countries of Carra and Tirawley and Erris, inhabited by Ferdomnonn clans, whose names do not appear, save that of the Corcu Temne in the north of Carra, and a clan of Calry about Magh Eleog, now represented by Moylaw in Crossmolina parish, and the mass of Calry who occupied Coolcarney in Mayo and all Tireragh and Carbury in Sligo, and the baronies of Rossclogher and Dromahaire in Leitrim, and the country of Moylurg in Roscommon, and a part of Corran.

The power of Fiachra, Dathi, Ailill Molt, and their immediate successors seems to have been based upon the support of the Calry, as the royal tribe which had grown up during their period of obscurity. As the O'Conors left the Silmurray and began to settle in other parts of the country, so I suppose these kings, while resting on the great mass of their own tribe, moved into Carra and Tirawley and began to settle their relations upon the older clans in those regions. Their loss of power after the middle of the sixth century may be due to various causes. The tribes forming the foundation of their power were very much scattered. The rising power of the Hy Neill of Ulster at this time enabled them to impose themselves upon Carbury, while the tribe from which O'Rourks and O'Reillys came imposed itself upon the Calry of the County Leitrim. They dropped a clan in Corran, whose position I cannot ascertain. The Calry of Moylurg were of some importance, as they are recorded to have been fighting in 751 and 811 (A.U.) with the Hy Briuin of Ai, who eventually suppressed them.

The Gregry are still a great race. The Cailenga and Luighne have not yet come into sight as tribes. The Gailenga and the Hy Aillello are mentioned in the Annals of Ulster for the first time in the note of the battle of Lorg in 742. But the Hy Aillello appear from Tirechan's notes to have borne that name in St. Patrick's time. The Luighne first appear in 770 (A.U.) in a note of the death of a chieftain. The Hy Aillello disappear after 791 (A. U.), when they are defeated by the Ui Briuin. Their previous appearances are fights with Gailenga, Gregry, Luighne, in 752, 788, 789 (A.U.). The name Gailenga seems to have been the most general name, denoting that they belonged to the Fir Gaileoin race. This eventually adhered rather to the Muintir Gadhra division. Gregraigne denotes a clan descended from Greg or Grec, which held supremacy. Corcofirtri is another section, Luighne yet another, which was used to denote the whole kingdom when the O'Haras gained ascendancy. As we know that the Gregry once extended over Tirerrill, and as we find the Hy Aillello there at this time, and cannot regard their alleged descent from a son of Eochy Moyvane as deserving credit, it is, I think, safe to

take them to have been a section of the Gregry. At some time a split occurred in the tribe of the Gregry, which divided itself into two independent kingdoms of Gregry and Luighne, whom we find in the Book of Rights paying tribute in the proportion of two to five. If we take the kingdom of the Gregry to have comprised the baronies of Coolavin and Tirerrill or thereabouts, and that of the Luighne to have comprised the rest of the territory, the tributes are fairly apportioned.

Umall was the baronies of Murrisk and Burrishoole or thereabouts, inhabited by Clann Umoir families, from whom came Clann Maille, whose alleged descent from Brian Orbsen is contradicted by the Book of Rights. With such a descent the King of Umall would not have paid tribute. His full title was once "King of Aicill and Umall," i.e. of Highland and Lowland.[7]

The Partraige were of the Clann Umoir. According to O'Flaherty they were in three divisions : —

1. Of Odba Ceara, who in historical times are known only in the parish of Ballyovey, Baile Odhbha. They may have been in those of Ballintubber and Ballyheane in St. Patrick's time.
2. Of the Mountain, from Croaghpatrick to Lough Corrib. Here I think O'Flaherty took Aicill to be only Croaghpatrick, or the country immediately round it. From Aicill to Lough Corrib would be the barony of Ross.
3. Of the Lake. Cong was in their country.

Thus they occupied country possessed first by Tuath Resent Umoir and afterwards by Conmaicne, but shrank much from their early importance. The Book of Rights puts their king on an equality with the kings of Silmurray, Hy Briuin, and the Hy Fiachrachs, as he receives a stipend but pays no tribute.

Next comes a group of three tribes, the Conmaicne, the Ciarraige, and the Corcamoga, the original Connachta, who have given their name to the province. These I take to have sprung from the Fir Craibe kings of Connaught, and the Conmaicne to be more especially the tribe over which Brian Orbsen and his immediate successors presided until the growth of the Silmurray afforded a fresh base of power.

The barony of Clanmorris, excepting the parish of Balla, which was in Carra, cannot be ascribed to any of the early tribes. The descendants of Nechtan and Enna, sons of Brian Orbsen, were settled here. This country appears very late in legend and history, and then only as Tir Nechtain and Tir Enna. From MacFirbis's Great Book of Genealogies we learn that Tir Nechtain took its name from Brian's son Nechtan, and that the Cinel Enna came from Enna.

The Conmaicne were in three divisions : —

1. Conmaicne of Cuil Tolad, in the barony of Kilmaine, south of the Robe, and in the barony of Ross.
2. Conmaicne Mara, in the barony of Ballynahinch.
3. Conmaicne of Dunmore, or Cinel Dubain, in the barony of Dunmore and part of Ballymoe, and at least the parish of Belclare.

The Corcamogha made no show in history. In late days they were in the parishes of Clonbern and Kilkerrin. Their alleged descent from Fergus MacRoigh places them among the Connachta. I am now of opinion that they are the Corca of the Woods, that they are the Sencheneoil, and that they come from the Tuatha Taiden.

The Ciarraige were in four divisions : —

1. Ciarraige Ai or of Magh Ai, in the barony of Castlereagh except the parish of Ballintubber.
2. Ciarraige of Artech, which was the parishes of Kilnamanagh and Tibohine in Roscommon, and those of Kilcolman and Castlemore in Roscommon and Mayo.
3. Ciarraige of Loch na nAirneadh, Maiinin Lake, or Ciarraige Iochtar, in the eastern and southern part of the parish of Aghamore, and in Began and Annagh.
4. Ciarraige Uachtar, in the rest of Aghamore, and in Knock.

The county of Mayo therefore consisted of fragments of kingdoms and tribes, whereof the Hy Fiachrach were the principal. The events affecting it are mainly those in connection with their kings, and are generally connected with the quarrels between them and the Hy Briuin kings.

The Hy Briuin, as already observed, were immediate kings of the Connachta, but where they lived when not in power in Croghan does not appear. If they did not live among the Conmaicne, and if Brian was in truth an ancestor of the O'Flaherties, which is by no means certain, the barony of Clare may have been their usual abode.

This view has in its favour the Book of Rights, which mentions the Hy Briuin among the royal tribes as distinct from the Silmurray, and suggests that the general name clung to them when Silmurray grew up.

The Three Tuaths, Hy Briuin na Sinna, Corcachland, and Oinel Dobhtha, claimed descent from Erc Derg, son of Brian. But the Book of Armagh and the Tripartite Life make it clear that they came from Erc, son of Bron, of the Corca Chonluain. Descendants of the Erc from whom they came seem to be the Maicne Erc, sons of Heric, who were in Moylurg in St. Patrick's time. These appear to be the Hy Broin, who were distinguished from Hy Briuin by Tirechan, who calls them [Fili] Briuin and Fili Broin. Though they do not descend from Brian, it is not unlikely that the Corca Chonluain had a common ancestor with the Conmaicne, and so being of the royal race, were not under tribute, being included in the direct dominions of the King of Silmurray, as the Calry are omitted because immediately under the Hy Fiachrach kings, as I suppose. Beyond this we know not who were in possession of the rest of Magh Ai and of the Three Tuaths.

Next south of Magh Ai came the Delbhna of Sid Nenta, or Delbhna Nuadat, who occupied the country southwards from Fairymount to Maghfinn between the Suck and the Shannon.

Delbhna Tire Da Loch occupied the barony of Moycullen, and Delbhna Guile Fabhair the country adjoining them and to the east of Galway. It is not now possible to say which of these groups was meant in the Book of Rights, probably the Roscommon group. The latter are likely to have been treated as in Hy Briuin territory.

The Delbhna Nuadhat and the Corcamogha are included within the traditional bounds of the kingdom of Hy Many, which, like those of the kingdom of Irrusdomnonn, seem to have been handed down from a very early time. Though the Delbhna and the Corca are placed separately under tribute to the King of Connaught, they may have been politically bound to the King of Hy Many.

Taking the Corca, as suggested above, to be representatives of the Tuatha Taiden and of the Sencheneoil, and taking into consideration the heavy tribute assessed on them in the Book of Rights, I suppose them to have occupied the Corcamogha and Sodhan territories of later

times, and a good deal more, the northern part of the kingdom of Hy Many, and I take O'Mainnin, King of Sodan, to be their representative.

The Hy Many occupied lands in the southern part of their kingdom at this time, but details are not clear. They certainly settled clans in Moenmagh at a very early date in the fifth or sixth centuries. Gaela, which O'Donovan considered to be near Loughreagh, was their chief dwelling. They settled themselves in the old Cathry territory.

In the Book of Rights their tribute is least of all, but the stipend is like that of other kings. The small tribute may be due to their being so powerful that they could not be made to pay more than a trifle when they lost the position of a tribe which might aspire to provide a King of Connaught.

Aidhne was the country between the Hy Many or Cathry and the sea as far north as the neighbourhood of Athenry. The inhabitants were Clann Umoir tribes at this time, even if Eoghan Aidhne was not of that race, tacked on to Eochaidh Breac, son of Dathi. These Hy Fiachrach kings were powerful, and in the sixth and seventh centuries were often kings of Connaught.

The historical kingdom of Brefne had not yet come into existence. It was included in the kingdom of Meath, except the Calry of Dromahaire and Dartry or Rossclogher. When the ancestors of the O'Rourks and O'Reillys formed it with the help of the Conmaicne, they attached themselves to Connaught, and eventually were strong enough to make four O'Rourke kings of Connaught in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The alleged descents of Hy Briuin of Brefne and Conmaicne from Brian Orbsen and from Conmaicne of Dunmoi-e must be regarded as fictitious.

These are approximately the conditions of Connaught kingdoms about the year a.d. 400, from which grew slowly those which will be found in the year a.d. 1200.

A.U. = Annals of Ulster. Rolls Series.

[1] "Hist, of Firbolgs." Quoted by Borlase, "Dolmens of Ireland," iii. 117.

[2] For reason, see Appendix.

[3] Professor Bury in *English Hist. Review*, April 1902, p. 264.

[4] The name of Cruachan seems to be drawn from the high mound which formed a kind of citadel within the great rath, the Little Peak or Rick. From such a citadel Cruachan came to be used as a name for a king's fort (*Jl. R.S.A.I.*, xxxi. p. 35).

[5] O'Flaherty, "Ogygia," p. 269.

[6] "Death of Sons of Usnech," *Irische Texte*, 2nd series, Pt. II.

[7] "Battle of Magh Leana," p. 87.

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