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The Dalcassians.

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It is hardly necessary to point out that this article is not designed to be a full discussion of Dalcassian history. The problems connected with that most interesting people would occupy much more space than could be offered by the editor of any periodical.⁽¹⁾ I must, then, content myself with asking some questions of general significance and suggesting the answers that might be made to them.

THE TERM DÁL CHAIS.

How far back can the term Dál Chais (earlier Dál gCais) be traced? The name is so familiar to us that our first reaction is to think of its origin as lost in the mists of antiquity. That instinct, in a sense, is sound, for the group of population names in Dál is very ancient. The Venerable Bede, who died in 735, explained that in such people-names the meaning of Dál was *pars*, a part. He became interested in the form because of Dál Réte (Dál Riada), Réte's division of the Érainn, who established a little state in north-east Antrim, and from that geographical point of vantage moved to Scotland, where their rule over the Irish colonists was extended later until it embraced the whole country. The foundation of the state bearing the name Dál Réte antedated the conversion of Ireland to Christianity. Names of the same type were compounded with Corcu, e.g. Corcu Loegde, Corcu Duibne. Another early form had the termination *ríge* rígeion (this *ríge* became *ríge* in pronunciation) e.g. Osraige (Osseirge), Múscraige. For long these forms were interchangeable. Adamnan refers to Dál Réte as Korku Rete. The Múscraige are also known as Dál Músca. The Cianachta were called occasionally Dál Céin or Corcu Chéin. What is important about all such forms is that they belong to a period certainly prior in date to 400. From that time forward sept-names in Uí became customary, Uí Néill, Uí Cennselaig, Uí Briúin, Uí Fidgente. Niall of the Nine Hostages had many sons, who left behind them descendants of distinction. These again bore the sept-names Cenél nEogain, Cenél Conaill, Cenél Loiguire, Cenél Maine, Cenél Fiachach, Cenél nÉndai. Forms compounded with Cland and Síil appear in the sixth century, Cland Cholmáin (Colmán died in 587) Síil nAeda Sláine.

Not to pursue this discussion too far, I proceed without more ado to the conclusion. Dál Chais, as the name of a people, belongs to a period not later than the 3rd century A.D. In an old list of the *saertuatha Érend*, (in e.g. H.3.17, p. 790), it appears as one of twelve such groups whose origin is pro-

1. For MSS. dealing with Dál Chais and general bibliography, see T.J. Westropp, P.R.I.A., Types of Ring Forts in E. Clare. June, 1911, p. 191, n. 2.

bably much earlier, and certainly not later, than the date mentioned.⁽²⁾ If, then, we take the name *Dál Chais* at its face value the people so-called would appear to have had a distinguished place of their own long before St. Patrick came to Ireland.

Doubts, however, arise. From the 5th century onwards the chief peoples of Ireland have their doings recorded in the Annals and other sources. If *Dál Chais* were numbered among these prominent peoples they, too, would have had their share of publicity. Now the first reference to *Dál Chais* in AU. is in 1053 (MacLochlainn and the men of Mag Itha slew Cúmacha, son of Clairchén, moer *Dáil Chais*, apparently in Cenél mBinnig, Derry) In the Annals of Inisfallen (a Munster compilation) there is a reference to the death of a King of *Dál Chais* in 934 (Rebachan son of Mothlae, abbot of Tomgraney, and king of *Dál Chais*). It must be remembered that these Annals were written by a scribe of a period later than 1092 (where his hand ends); yet the mention of *Dál Chais* may have been in the original which he copied. (This is Section C of MacNeill, *Introd.*, p. 26, and its dates are the mid-seventh to the mid-tenth century). It is not, however, found in a document of slightly earlier date, the *Vita Tripartita* (900-930), though the people soon to be known as *Dál Chais* are actually mentioned in that work (I, 198). In the *Chronicon Scotorum* (Cluanense), a Clonmacnoise compilation, Cennédig, son of Lorcán, is called king of *Dál Cais* (rí *Dáil cCais*) at his death in 951. The plundering of *Dál Cais* by Fergal O Ruairc is mentioned again under the year 963. In the *Book of Rights*, which seems to have taken its present form about the year 1000, the *Dál Chais* occupy a prominent position. From the days of Brian Borama onwards *Dál Chais* is the common generic term for the O Briens and their cor-relatives. From all this it may be concluded that the term was almost (if not absolutely !) unknown until the 10th century, that is to say, until the occupation of the Shannon estuary (Limerick) by the Norse, or Danes, and their establishment on a permanent basis at the point where the city of Limerick came to stand. Whether the expression really goes back to the 3rd or 4th century, or is an invention of some scholar of Dalcassian origin in the early 10th century, is not easy to determine. The latter is, perhaps, the more likely alternative.

THE TRUE ORIGIN OF DÁL CHAIS ; AND THE BEGINNING OF THEIR POWER.

The epoch-making date in the history of the Dalcassians (as we may agree to call them) was 964, when Mathgamain, son of Cennédig, marched on Cashel and overcame the quarrel-ridden Eoganachta, thus becoming at a single stroke King of Munster and one of the most powerful princes in the country. When the fortunes of the state progressed still further two false twists were given to history to bolster up the new position. The first of these was the assertion that the Eoganachta and the *Dál Chais* shared in a common descent from Oilell Olom, father of the eponymous ancestors Eogan and (Cormac) Cas. The second statement was that the kingship of Munster was held, in virtue of an ancient arrangement, alternately by the two peoples, Eoganachta and *Dál Chais*. In the *Laud 610* synchronisms (ZCP., IX, 478-9), which give a list of the Christian kings of Munster down to 760, and which themselves date from about that period, there is no trace of such a legend. In the *Cogadh Gaedhel*

2. In *Leth Moga*, among others, *Dál nEogain* (*Eóganachta*), *Dál Fiachach* (= *Dési Muman*), *Dál Céte*, *Dál mBairdene*.

re Gallaibh, however (p. 59, cf. p. 53), the official panegyric of the Dál Chais (it dates probably from before 1100) both assertions are to be found. In the Laud Genealogies (Laud 610, 75a. ff., ZCP., VIII, 302) and in similar great mediæval collections (LL., 319a.; BB., 171a.; Lec., 224 va.) of which the earliest in date is Rawl. B. 502 (147a.)⁽³⁾ the common descent of the two historically most prominent Munster peoples is the "accepted doctrine." Needless to say, it is repeated *ad infinitum* in documents of the later centuries.

The "lie agreed upon" was not, however, allowed undisputed sway. Side by side with the more popular teaching (from the Dál Chais standpoint) there was transmitted in the genealogical collections (e.g. LL. 319c5, 171b39; BB. 172c29, 174a18, Lec. 458; Cf. MacNeill, *Ériu*, XI, 35ff.), the older and more reliable account of Dalcassian origins. To Eóin MacNeill belongs the credit of being the first to interpret this material and demonstrate its bearing on Munster history. He showed that the Dál Chais were of Déisi origin; cognate, therefore, with the people who occupied Co. Waterford and a large part of South Tipperary (the part now contained in the diocese of Waterford). In the Genealogies all the Déisi, including those near Tara in Meath, are taken as descendants of a common ancestor. *Déisi*, however, in the Ancient Laws, is the generic term for a community subject to the rule of a lord, and thus might be applied to any number of peoples unrelated one with another, provided that they were all of subject status. To me, it must be said, it does not seem likely that the bond between these Déisi groups in Munster was just casual. Whether they were of common descent or not they were closely allied in the field of politics and ranked among contemporary peoples as a single entity.

The ancient tradition of the Déisi represents them as "nobody's darlings," driven from post to pillar in Ireland, and hard put to it to exist, for a couple of centuries. Then came a wonderful turn for the better in their fortunes. The occasion was the struggle between the Eoganachta and the men of Leinster for control of the great Munster plain—*clár machaire na Muman*. Siding with the Munster dynasts, the Déisi played no inconsiderable part in driving the Leinstermen back to the present Tipperary-Kilkenny boundary. As a reward for their exertions they were given wide grants in Waterford and South Tipperary. To these lands again there was added a considerable strip of territory in east Limerick and the adjoining portion of north Tipperary, where the old peoples settled on the soil were the *Múscraige*, *Uaithne* and *Arada*.

The statement of Déisi claims in this area of Munster is interesting. To them belonged the lands from the top of *Sliab Cláire*, near Ballylanders, to *Berna Trí carpat* at Carn Feradaig, Cahernarry, two miles south of the present city; and from *Cenn Febrat*, south of Ardpatrik, to *Fothormag* or *Dún Eochairmaige*, identified with Bruree; thence by the east side of the Maigue northwards to the Shannon estuary; and from *Temair*, that is *Temair Érann* near *Sliab Cláire* and *Cenn Febrat*, to *Fert Sceinide* (not identified); and from *Fochormag* eastwards to *Dún Echlais* at *Imblech Iubair*, and from *Emly* northwards to *Cathair Chairn Riabaig* (not identified, but about Murroe), and thence northeastwards over *Sliab Eblinne* to the *Gaethech*, the river which divides the *Múscraige* (*Tíre*, Upper and Lower Ormond) from *Arai*, and enters *Loch Derg* at *Youghalarra*, a couple of miles on the Limerick side of *Nenagh*.⁽⁴⁾ It is obvious, therefore, that Déisi territory in this region was taken to extend from

3. This was composed after 1119. O'Brien pedigree begins with Muirchertach, who died in that year. Cf. Laud Geneal. ZCP. XIX, 85-95.

4. From what is said of Déisi territory north of the Shannon in Clare I now prescind.

the Galtees to the Shannon, and to include Ballylanders, Ardpatrick, Kilmallock, Knocklong, Bruff, Croom, Fedamore, the Limerick lands along the Shannon from Carrigogunnell to Castleconnell (including the site of the present city), the Tipperary lands from beyond O'Brien's Bridge by Ballina and Portroe to Youghalarra, and the whole stretch of territory inland now comprised in the baronies of Coonagh and Ownneybeg in Limerick and Ownney and Arra in Tipperary. That, as I say, was the claim. In fact the Uaithne and Arada (Ownneybeg, Coonagh, Ownney and Arra) refused to be absorbed, and the great Eoganachta people called the Uí Fidgente in west and mid-Limerick restricted Déisi expansion along the Maigue. Thus the strip which they succeeded in occupying between Ballyhoura Hills and Limerick was comparatively narrow. Ath na nDéisi (Athaneasy) and Brugna nDéisi (Bruff) recall their occupation of that territory. Ambitions over the border in Tipperary were left unrealized.

IN DÉIS BECC.

In comparison with the large Déisi settlement in south Tipperary and Waterford this settlement in Limerick was indeed small, and so we are not surprised to find it known in ancient sources as *In Déis Becc*. It was organized probably from the beginning in two sections, a northern, based on Cahernarry, called *In Déis Tuaiscirt*, and a southern, which may originally have had its centre in Bruree, called *In Déis Descirt*. Worthy of notice is the fact that legend connects the burial of Cormac Cas, reputed ancestor of all the "Dalcassians," with Dún tri liacc, Duntryleague, near Galbally.⁽⁵⁾ In other words the origin of the Déisi north of the Shannon in Clare from a warrior group that was settled south of the Shannon in Limerick is clearly recognised.

From time immemorial down to the 4th century A.D. the Shannon at Curraghower Falls (Leac Easa Lománaig) had been the southern boundary of Connacht. The loss of what is now Co. Clare by that state is connected in romantic story with the assassination by poisoning of the great Eoganachta king, Crimthand Mór Mac Fidaig. According to the tale, Crimthand's sister, Mongfind, was wife of Eochu Mugmedón, King of Tara. When Eochu died Crimthand succeeded him as King of Ireland. He set out on a royal visitation from Tara to Leinster, from Leinster to Munster, from Munster to Connacht, from Connacht to Ulster, from Ulster to Alba. While he was absent in Scotland Mongfind's sons, his nephews, laid violent hands upon his domain. He returned and brought a great host into Connacht to expel his sister's sons from the Kingdom. Mongfind sued for peace and invited her brother to a feast. There she put poison in his cup. It did not take effect at once, but on his way back to Munster he took ill and died and was buried on the Cratloe Hills, where the place name thereafter recalled his sad end, *Sliab Oideda in Ríg*. Mongfind's hopes were destined to be disappointed, for it was not her son, Brión, but her stepson, Niall of the Nine Hostages, who became the new King of Ireland. Brión, however, became King of Connacht, and his brother Fiachra ruled that section of the Connacht kingdom which extended from Mag Mucrim, near Galway, to Carn Feradaig, south of Limerick city.

So far the story.⁽⁶⁾ History, as far as it can be reconstructed, takes a slightly less romantic course. It is very likely that the Munster attack on Connacht was initiated by the Eoganachta under their great king, Crimthand

5. Westropp : *Earthworks and Ring Forts in Co. Limerick*, 477, P.R.I.A.

6. Cf. Silva Gadelica, I, 327 ff; II, 373 ff.

Mór Mac Fidaig. Before it was complete Crimthand died⁽⁷⁾ and was buried on the imposing Cratloe height. The campaign was not dropped, but it was carried on chiefly by the Déisi of *In Déis Becc*. Their fortress in the north was Carn Feradaig, to which Connacht domination did not then, or ever, extend. At this time the ruler at Carn Feradaig was Lugaid Mend, son of Oengus Tírech, son of Fircorb, son of Mogcorb, son of Cormac Cas. He crossed the Shannon at some ford at or near Thomond Bridge and after a number of encounters occupied the land to Belach na Luchaide (Lowhid Bridge, near Kilmacduagh). The men of Connacht under Fiachra made a determined effort to eject him. According to the story they did drive his forces back across the Shannon and defeated them in Caenraige, the name of an old people that survives in Pallaskenry. But the whole story at this point is full of fantastic features. A branch of the Caenraige lived in what is now South Galway, round Kilmacduagh. It may well be that the Connachtmen won a victory there, and so put a stop to the triumphant progress of Lugaid Mend. Be that as it may, the Déisi were not driven south, in the final reckoning, beyond Belach na Luchaide, which to this day marks the boundary between Clare and Galway. Two older peoples in what came to be known as West Clare were left undisturbed. These were the Corca Baiscinn in the south,⁽⁸⁾ and the Corcumdruad in the north. Their lands, and those won by the Munstermen—generally known as the *Gairbhfhearann Luighdeach*, “the rough-land (mountainous country) of Lugaid (Mend)” —gained at the sword point, passed permanently into Munster keeping.

In this manner the very small Déisi state south of the Shannon became immensely enlarged. That the Déisi in their original conquest received help from their overlords of the Eoganachta is suggested by the fact that distinguished Eoganachta septs and families are found north of the Shannon in the newly acquired Munster land. Such were the branch of the Eoganachta called Eoganachta Arand or Eoganachta na nArand, the Eoganachta who ruled the Aran Island (for these were regarded until recent times as belonging to Clare) the Eoganachta Niniusa, and the families of O Hehir, O Meehan and Mac Daibidh, Devitt. These three families were said to be of the same ancestry as the Uí Fidgente of Co. Limerick.⁽⁹⁾ There is not the smallest likelihood that they were late migrants, so the conclusion is that their forbears participated in the conquest with the Déisi. It is obvious again that Eoganachta aid was on a small scale, for the conquered land of old Connacht became almost wholly a Déisi possession.

IN DÉIS TUAISCIRT ; IN DÉIS DESCIRT.

The connection between the Déisi north and south of the Shannon remained intimate. As I have said, the Déisi Tuaiscirt were in Cahernarry before they crossed the great river, and they continued to hold that Limerick fortress. South of them lay the Déisi Descirt. According to the old genealogical material (BB. 174b10, etc.) “This is the arrangement of the two divisions of Dál Chais among themselves, that is to say, the Déisi Tuaiscirt and the Déisi Descirt : all that is common between them. When the Kingship of Cashel is from the north his place on the right hand and his right (dliged) to the king of In Déis

7. If slain, this would be recorded.

8. Genealogically connected with the Múscraige.

9. Such also is the descent of the great legal family of O Duibhdábhoireann, O Davoren.

Descirt, that is to say,⁽¹⁰⁾ 30 incalf heifers from each estate every three years to him. When neither In Déis Tuaiscirt nor In Déis Descirt holds the kingship of Cashel, the horse and the raiment of the king from the north to the king from the south." As the kingship of Cashel⁽¹¹⁾ came to In Déis Becc through Mathgamain of In Déis Tuaiscirt for the first time in 964, it is obvious that an older arrangement on terms of equality between the two sections of In Déis Becc is suggested by this passage.⁽¹²⁾ Indeed it may well be that the kingship of Déis Becc (the common state) was held alternately by the king of each section. When *In Déis Descirt* disappeared and the O Briens and the MacCarthys disputed between them the kingship of Munster it was easy for the Dál Chais propagandists to claim that in earlier centuries the Dál Chais had shared, not merely the kingship of *In Déis Becc*, but the incalculably more important kingship of all Munster with another dynasty. To make the tale more plausible they were given then the founder of the Eoganachta, Eogan Taidlech, as their own progenitor also.

In Déis Descirt is mentioned as a commonplace name familiar to readers in the *Vita Tripartita* (900-930). Thus we are justified in supposing that it maintained itself until the year 900 or later. Originally it seems to have comprised (at least in theory) the whole south-east of Co. Limerick, that is to say, the barony of Coshlea (Kilfinane, Ballylanders, Knocklong, Galbally), the part of the barony of Coshma east of the Maigue (Kilmallock, Bruff, Bruree, Croom), as well as the barony of Small County (Hospital, Knockainey, Herbertstown, Fedamore). St. Patrick in the *Tripartite Life* is brought into Déisi territory at Ardpatrik. But the expansion of the Uí Fidgente caused loss to the southern Déisi. There was, too, apparently, an early period when the good relations between the Uí Fidgente and Déisi led to a certain intermingling of the two peoples, especially near the Shannon, which the two had crossed together as allies bent on conquest. Thus Uí Fidgente in the *Tripartite Life* are found ruling at Knockea (Mullach Cae) a short distance from the Déis Tuaiscirt stronghold at Carn Feradaig; whilst the chief line of the Déis Descirt, the Uí Duib Rosa or Uí Rosa, had a strong settlement far west of the Maigue, among the Caenraige.

In the genealogies⁽¹³⁾ the three brothers of Lugaid Mend are together the ancestors of the Déis Bheag, which is there equated with the Déis Descirt. As I have already said, however, the more obvious conclusion from the two terms Déis Tuaiscirt and Déis Descirt is that the two combined gave In Déis Becc, as distinct from the far greater group of Déisi known as Déisi Muman.

Lugaid Mend is thus the common ancestor of all septs of In Déis Tuaiscirt. His great-grandsons, Blod, Caisin, Aengus Cendnatrach and Aengus Cendaitin became ancestors of the leading septs of the later centuries, the Uí Bloid, Uí Caisin, Cenél Fermaic and Cland Ifernáin. Another generation brings us to Carrthend,⁽¹⁴⁾ who is stated to have been King of Tuadmuma in St. Patrick's day; and to have had a brother named Cairthend Find. Their place of rule was Sangel, Singland, on the Limerick side of the Shannon. Into the chronology

10. This is the definition or explanation of *dliged*.

11. That is to say, of Munster.

12 Cf., MacNeill, *Eriu*, XI, 36 f.

13. Cf. *Leabhar Muimhneach*, p. 294.

14. His epithet is Dub(drongach).

of these statements it would serve no purpose to go.⁽¹⁵⁾ I shall confine my attention, therefore, to some points of greater importance in the development of In Déis Tuaiscirt.

RULERS OF IN DÉIS TUAISCIRT.

One of these I have just indicated. Cairthend Find, ancestor of all the later dynasts, is said to have lived where Limerick later came to stand. Three of his sons were reckoned among the kings of Tuadmuma, which may be interpreted to mean *In Déis Tuaiscirt*, for their rule over all In Déis Becc, including In Déis Descirt, is uncertain. Two of these sons of Cairthend Finn were Oengus and Eochaid Ballderg (Redspot). The latter was ancestor of the O Briens and their correlatives. Now it is remarkable that the kingship of *In Déis Tuaiscirt* came to this branch at a very late date. For centuries it was held, not by their ancestors but by the descendants of Oengus.⁽¹⁶⁾

In the official list of the kings of Thomond (L.Lec., 229r; cf. L.M., 321ff) ten of the descendants of Oengus are said to have succeeded to that office of dignity. The line was called generally the Cland Oengusa. In later times there were two chief branches, the Uí Cernaig and Uí Echtigern. Cernach was king of the Déis Tuaiscirt, and son himself of Andlid, who was king of the Déis Tuaiscirt in 697, as we know from the *Cáin Adomnáin*. Cratloe and Sixmile-bridge would represent the heart of their territory. The Bunratty river, in its Irish form, still retains their name, Abha Ua gCearnaigh. Thus they reached the Shannon to the south, whilst their lands must have stretched to the north a long by Kilkishen to near O'Callaghan's Mills. The family of O hEchtigern (Aherne) were descended from the last princes of this line who were kings of In Déis Tuaiscirt. These Ahernes retained aristocratic status as chiefs about Kilkishen in the Middle Ages. Down to A.D. 900, as is apparent from what has been said, their ancestry was far more distinguished than that of the O Briens and their correlatives.

O'Donovan restricted, in my opinion unduly, the territory of the Uí Cernaig, giving a large portion of it to the Uí Aimrit. These were a people of much less importance domiciled in Uí Cernaig lands. Their genealogical connections were not with the Déisi at all, but with the Cianachta, in Éile, North Dublin and Derry.

Round the present city of Limerick was apparently the region called Triucha Céd an Chalaíd. It may have included to the north the parishes of Cill Cuain (Parteen), St. Munchin's and Kileely. South of the Shannon it seems to have reached Patrickswell. It was occupied by the Aes Cluana Findabar,⁽¹⁷⁾ who are carried in the genealogies back to Ferdomnach, son of Blod. They would thus be independent of the Uí Cernaig and other northern Déis groups. O h-Uidrin in his topographical poem, gives their chief as O Cédfada, anglicised Kadey, Katey, Keating. There is, however, a rival line of descent for this Aes Cluana. The Book of Ballymote (p. 185) traces their ancestry back to Toirdelbach, founder of the Uí Toirdelbaig sept, from which the O Briens and others sprang. Another branch of this Uí Toirdelbaig line was represented by the

15. Lugaid Mend is made contemporary with Niall of the Nine Hostages. It is possible that there were great-great grandsons of both before the death of St. Patrick.

16. See Genealogical Table.

17. Thus in L.L., 343. The Book of the Uí Maine and other sources read Finnbrach. Lec., 436, carries their ancestry back to Cairthend Dub, son of Blod.

family of O hEanna.⁽¹⁸⁾ Members of the Ua Cétfada family are mentioned as outstanding in the Annals under 1033, 1045 (Domnall Ua Cétfada, cend Dáil Chais ocus ordan Muman), 1084 (Conchobar Ua Cétfada, ordan agus oireachus Muman eise),⁽¹⁹⁾ 1087 (Cathal Ua Cétfada slain by the Leinstermen). Thus the O Cétfada were held in the highest respect by the Dál Chais rulers generally in the 11th century. From the Caithréim Toirdelbaig it is clear that they retained something of their importance in the 14th century also. As for the O hEanna family, the exceptionally important role played by Domnall Ua hEanna, "chief anmchara and noble bishop, head of the wisdom and piety of the Gaedhil, fountain of charity in the West of Europe, a learned man in both Irish and Latin scholarship," in the ecclesiastical reform supported so powerfully by Muirchertach O'Brien, has been emphasized recently by Father Gwynn. In his work for reform Domnall was the leading Irish bishop of his day. When he died in 1098 his place was taken by the *Mide* bishop Maelmuire Ua Dunáin, who was largely responsible for the epoch-making synod held at Rath Breasail in 1111.⁽²⁰⁾ I suspect that the Aes Cluana were not originally connected with the Uí Toirdelbaig, save possibly in the very remote past (Uí Bloid), and that the ancestors of the Uí Cétfada and Uí Eanna families were introduced into that territory as overlords when the Uí Toirdelbaig power had grown out of all proportion to what it had been in the old Déis Tuaiscirt or Dál Chais state.

In Agallamh na Senórach (Silva Gad., I. 116) a journey of St. Patrick through Cratloe, Sliab Oideda in Ríg, Sliab Echtge to Uí Maine is mentioned. This is in direct contradiction to the evidence of the Tripartite Life and has thus absolutely no authority.

To return for a moment to the Uí Cernaig. Of the same descent were the Uí Rongaile (BB. 186,7).⁽²¹⁾ According to O h-Uidrin the chief family of this sept in mediaeval times was O Sencháin (O Shanahan). Others mentioned in the genealogies are O Loingsigh, O Néill, O hUainide and O Brénainn. Yet more interesting is the fact that the Aes Trí Muige on the Limerick side of the Shannon are of the same descent in the genealogies as the Uí Cernaig. These, as you may remember, were part of the Cland Oengusa, sprung from Oengus, son of Cairthend Find, who ruled at Saingel, Singland. We may suspect, then, that his descendants settled on both sides of the Shannon, on the Limerick side from the Maigue to the Limerick-Tipperary border below O'Brien's Bridge; and on the Clare side to Bunratty and northwards towards Bodyke. The Aes Cluana,⁽²²⁾ therefore, are likely to have been under the Uí Cernaig rulers until these were elbowed aside by the Killaloe group called the Uí Toirdelbaig. The last-mentioned in time, too, profited by their increase in strength to place their own representatives over the Aes Trí Muige, whose territory, as I have already said, reached from the Maigue to O'Brien's Bridge and inland to the Déis Descirt and Arada boundaries.⁽²³⁾ In a raid into Munster by Congalach, son of Maelmíthid, King of Ireland, in

18. See genealogy in Seán O hOgáin, *Conndae an Chláir*, p. 30.

19. The phrase suggests that he was an ecclesiastic. He died, however, while with the Munstermen on a military expedition in *Mide*.

20. Domnall Uaine Ua hEanna was son of Murchad, son of Muirgeas, so. Enda, so. Conall, so. Eochu, so. Toirdelbach. A more correct genealogy is probably to be derived from BB., 185, where the line of descent is: Toirdelbach—Eochu—Anmchad—Finachta—Mugron—Conaéd—Maelduin—Cétfaid, *unde* Ua Cétfada. Lec., 433 mentions Gillapátric Ua hEanna, espuc Cille-dalua and Comarba Bárri.

21. Their territory would lie in the region of Broadford, O'Callaghan's Mills, Bodyke.

22. Including probably the Tuath Luimnig, just north of the city, mentioned by O hUidrin, with ruling families O Cadhla (Kiely) and O Máille.

23. Part—we know not how much—of Pubblebrien and Clanwilliam baronies.

950 two older brothers of Brian Boroma were slain. One of these, Donnucuan,⁽²⁴⁾ left a memory evidently very dear to Brian, for his sons and grandsons have a prominent place in the story of the great king's reign. Five of Donnucuan's sons were the ancestors of well-known families, Conaing, of the O Conaing, Riagan of the O Riagáin, Longargan of the O Longargáin, Cennédig of the O Cennédig, and Célechar of the O Céilechair, O Kellehers. The process is not related, but it is obvious that the O Conaing were placed, at least with the connivance, more probably with the help, of the O Briens, as lords over Aes Trí Muige. Carrig Ua gConaing (Carrigogunnell) and Caisleán Ua gConaing (Castleconnell) recall the days of their power in these regions. When Edru Ua Conaig fell by the people of Emly in 1032 he is called in the Annals *rígdamna Muman*, no empty title, as he was first cousin of Donnchad, son of Brian, then the ruling King of Munster. Cennédig O Conaing died as archinnech of Killaloe in 1125, and Domnall O Conaing as bishop of Killaloe in 1195. The importance of the family thus continued to be marked, and their connection with Killaloe and with the O Briens intimate. In the Wars of Turlogh (14th century) they are still mentioned as one of the great Dál chais families.

LUIMNECH IN TERRITORY OF IN DÉIS TUAISCIRT.

The moral from all this does not take long to draw. When the Norse made their settlement at that spot on the Shannon estuary, Luimnech, which became Luimnech *par excellence*, about 922, they found the lands on both sides of the river in possession of *In Déis Tuaiscirt*. Not only this, but the rulers of that state—the Uí Eichtigern—were settled at no great distance from the new city's site. The city of Limerick thus arose in Dál Chais territory. When the O Briens grew strong they regarded its ownership—or at least full lordship over it—as their natural right. Muirchertach O'Brien, therefore, when he made Limerick more or less his capital, was not acting in his own eyes as a conqueror or usurper, but as a prince recovering a site that belonged from time immemorial to his own people. The occupation of land on the Limerick side of the Shannon by the Aes Trí Muige, a branch of *In Déis Tuaiscirt*, explains also the placing of Castleconnell at the synod of Rath Bresail in 1111 in the diocese of Killaloe, where it has remained ever since.

By that time the growth of the Danish town had driven a wedge into the old territory of the Aes Trí Muige, and the Papal Legate, Gilbert of Limerick, was able at Rath Bresail to secure that the Mulcair should be fixed as the boundary beyond which the Killaloe diocese might not go. Historically, however, the claim of the Killaloe diocese to the whole of Aes Trí Muige could be regarded as indefeasible. Hence the efforts made later to penetrate beyond the Mulcair to Donaghmore, with a view, no doubt, to advancing further afield. As this would mean the isolation of the city, centre of the Limerick diocese, the claim of Killaloe was strenuously and successfully resisted. In the compromise thus effected by the rude expedient of partition the section east of the Mulcair—the parishes of Castleconnell and Ahane—was severed from the section west of the Mulcair, the unit to which it had belonged since the beginning of documentary evidence.

During the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th centuries the main stream of Irish history flowed with little reference to the Déis Tuaiscirt. Only the single mention of them in 697 (Cáin Adomnáin) shows that they were not completely forgotten. In 712 a battle was fought at Cahernarry in which they were victorious

24. The name of the other was Eichtigern.

over the King of Cashel, Cormac, son of Maenach, who fell in the encounter. Their King at this time would be Dubdúin, or his nephew, Cernach, ancestor of the Uí Cernaig sept. Carn Feradaig, the battlefield, would be in the hands then of the Aes Trí Muige, themselves, as has been said, a sept of the northern Déis, closely related to the Cland Aengusa (Uí Cernaig). In 743 the Northern Déis won a victory over the men of Corcumruad. Early in the 9th century Viking ships began to arrive in the Shannon, and in 835 the northern Déis suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the Norse. Soon afterwards, in 840, the Uí Cormaic (O Hehirs) were in difficulties with the Corcu Baiscinn, and appealed to the King of Cashel, not their immediate overlords, the Northern Déis (then ruled by the immediate neighbours of the Uí Cormaic, the Uí Echtigern), but to the King of Cashel, Féidlimid, son of Crimthand, for help. It must be remembered, however, that the Uí Cormaic were themselves of Eoganachta descent. During all this period the relations between the Northern Déis and the Southern Déis are obscure. The latter had kings of their own⁽²⁵⁾ but how many of these, if any, ruled over the Northern Déis as well is nowhere stated.

In the fifth century Cairthend Find, in the 5th generation of descent from Lugaid Mend (conquerer of East Clare) is still given as living at Saingel, Singland. The descendants of his son Aengus became prominent soon north of the Shannon (Uí Cernaig, Uí Echtigern, Uí Rongaile), though some also remained on the Limerick side of the river (Aes Trí Muige). From another son of Cairthend, Eochaid Ballderg, sprang a grandson, Aed Caem, who is called Aed of Craig Liath, beside Killaloe. He may have been the first of the race to settle on that spot. Aed's descendant was Toirdelbach, ancestor of the Uí Toirdelbaig. From his son Mathgamain this group was called also the Cland Mathgamna. A brother of Mathgamain was St. Flannan, whose flourish would be about the middle of the 8th century, for he died, according to the Annals of Inisfallen, in 778. The rise of the Uí Toirdelbaig was obviously occasioned in no small degree by the coming of the Norse. Operating from the Shannon and the Fergus, these made life difficult for the Uí Cernaig, exposed, as they were, to attack on and from the great plain between the Fergus and the Cratloe Hills. The Uí Toirdelbaig, in their great natural fortress at Killaloe, were better able to resist the invaders. Probably because of his success in this respect Lorcán, fifth in descent from Toirdelbach, founder of the sept,⁽²⁶⁾ secured the kingship of the northern Déis, the first of his line to do so since the shadowy Aed of Craig Liath, and probably since Eochaid Ballderg, son of Cairthend, or Cairthend himself. Lorcán lived in the years around 940.

The Uí Cernaig, of course, did not allow themselves to be ousted without a struggle. A generation earlier the question of succession must have led to acute controversy, to which an end was finally made by compromise. For the person elected was an ecclesiastic, Rebechán, son of Mothla, abbot of Tomgraney.⁽²⁷⁾ He is reckoned in the genealogies among the Uí Cernaig,⁽²⁸⁾ but as his descent is not traced from the main line of rulers of that dynasty he either belonged to an obscure branch of the sept or did not belong to it at all. In Cashel itself, long before and at this period, if my reading of Munster his-

25. Cf. Lec., 228vb. Fourteen kings of the Uí Rosa ruled over them.

26. A couple of generations may be missing in the genealogies.

27. This, I feel certain, was the chief church in Northern Déis territory at the time. It is mentioned in the Annals, 739.

28. O hOgáin, op. cit., p. 21.

tory is right, dynastic disputes were occasionally solved in this way by promoting a prominent ecclesiastic to the throne. Such were the famous Cormac Mac Cuileannáin and his successor, Flaithbertaich, abbot of Inis Cathaig.⁽²⁹⁾ Rebachán, son of Mothla, died in 934 (A.I.).

SUPREMACY OF THE UÍ TOIRDEALBAIG.

By this time the Danes had settled permanently astride the Shannon at Limerick, with unhappy consequences for the Uí Cernaig. The way was thus open for the Uí Toirdelbaig, and Lorcán's son Cennédig became the next king of the northern Déis. His "home" territory was the region now comprised in the four parishes of Killaloe, Bridgetown (or O'Brien's Bridge), Killokenedy (Glenomra) and Clonlara (Cill tSenáin Léith). As king of the Northern Déis it would be the task of Cennédig to defend his whole kingdom against the intruders, and his kingdom included the site where the Danes had established themselves at Limerick, and the land around it to Cahernarry and to Castleconnell and Carrigogunnell. Since his home lands at the Blackwater, near Clonlara, reached so near to the Danes' doors it was a matter of life and death for Cennédig and the Uí Toirdelbaig to prevent the growth of Danish strength in Limerick. Hence the bitter struggle waged from the natural fastnesses at Killaloe and from the hills overlooking the Shannon by the Uí Toirdelbach against the Limerick settlers. In the course of this ruthless war Cennédig fell (951). His successor is given as his son Lachtna, who built the Grianán Lachtna on Craig Liath. After three years Lachtna was succeeded by his brother Mathgamain, who not only overcame the Danes (954-64) but overthrew the Eoganachta as well and became thus King of Munster. When he was trapped and killed by the Eoganachta—naturally incensed by so bare-faced an usurpation—his brother Brian succeeded and carried the standard of the Northern Déis not merely to Cashel but to Tara.

Let me emphasize once again that Inis Ibtón, where the Danes settled, was part of Aes Trí Muige, part of the Northern Déis, and beside the fortress at Saingel, that had been the home (according to tradition) of Caerthend Find, ancestor of all the dynasts of the Northern Déis. The Danes were therefore intruders on Northern Déis soil, and it was a point of honour to expel them, or at least to render them innocuous on it.

SEARCH FOR A MORE DISTINGUISHED ANCESTRY.

When the O'Briens became one of the greatest and most powerful of Irish families the knowledge of their rather modest antecedents naturally irked. A welcome sop to their pride was the theory of common ancestry and of alternate succession with the Eoganachta in Cashel. In the same strain, if in a modified form, was the claim to independence of Cashel. Lugaid Mend's conquests, it was held, were at the point of the sword, and in a region that had never belonged to Munster; hence there could be no question of paying tribute for it to the Eoganachta king. This was subtle but not very far-reaching. After all, In Déis Descirt and that part of In Déis Tuaiscirt which lay on the Limerick side of the Shannon had been conferred on the Déis by the Eoganachta and was Munster territory in a very full sense. When Clare was added to Munster its obligations would arise as a matter of course. We may take it then that In Déis Tuaiscirt, like all other minor states, paid tribute to Cashel.

29. He belonged to the Múscraige, not to the Eoganachta.

For this there is an unexpected line of proof. The two chief Uí Toirdelbaig fortresses were Cenn Córaid and Béal Boruma. To these there was added in the 10th century the Grianán of Lachtna on Craig Liath. When Flann Sinna, the High King, invaded Munster in 877 he ravaged that kingdom from (Béal) Boruma to Cork. Brian, son of Cennédig, took his epithet or nickname from the fort. Now Boruma means "a tribute in cattle." It was customary, therefore, for cattle collected in tribute to be driven across the Shannon at the ford beside which the fortress stood. The all-important question is whether the cattle were brought from the Tipperary side as tribute to In Déis Tuaiscirt, or from the Clare side as tribute on their way to Cashel. It is absurd to suggest that the movement was from Tipperary to Clare, for the Arada in north Tipperary opposite Béal Boruma were not subject to Dál Chais in 877 or earlier; still less were the Eoganachta or other people in Tipperary so situated. The movement, therefore, must have been of cattle from Dál Chais on their way to Cashel. This would be normal; and would, no doubt, be a common sight on the Shannon for centuries. Brian Boruma's very name, then, tells against the later claim of the Dál Chais to independence of Cashel.

GREAT SEPTS WHO NEVER HELD THE KINGSHIP.

It is interesting to find that the Kingship within In Déis Tuaiscirt was held from very early times (according to the *Senchas*) by the Uí Cernaig. Their near relatives, the Uí Rongaile and the Aes trí Muige did not share in it. When it passed to Brian's ancestors of the Uí Toirdelbaig they did not share it with the Tuath O gCongaile (Ogonnelloe; family, O Dubhraic, Durack), or the Tuath Eachtaoi (Feakle) or others of Uí Bloid stock. Excluded from the kingship at all times were the two great Dál Chais septs, the Uí Caisin (supposed to derive from a brother of Blod), and the Cenél Fermaic (supposed to be descended from another brother of Blod, Aengus Cennnathrach). The Uí Caisin were in three chief sections, the Clann Chuiléin (chief family Mac Conmara), the Uí Dungaile (chief family O Gráda), the Uí Dobarchan—chief family O Lideadha, Liddy. The Cenél Fermaic occupied the lands west of the Fergus. They were in various sections, under the general rule of the O Deas. To the west at Cill na Móna and Inagh (Eidhneach) were the Cenél Baoith, whose traditional ruler was O Maolmeadha (O Mulvey, O Molloy); nearby were the Cenél Cuallachtaig, ruled by O Duibhginn (O Deegan); north of Dísert Tola (Dysert O Dea) were the Uí Flaithrí under O Cathail; further north at Killnaboy, near Corofin, the Clann Ifernáin, under O Cuinn, O Quinn; and yet further north near the Galway border the Uí Flamchadha, under a branch of the O Hehirs of Uí Cormaic, an Eoganachta sept. West Clare, Boirenn and Corcumruad in the North, and Corcu Baiscinn in the south, remained independent of the Dál Chais down to the extraordinary rise of that people under Brian and his descendants. Corcumruad, indeed, never succumbed completely to its powerful eastern neighbour. Its own see at Kilfenora bears witness to-day to its successful struggle against absorption. Corca Baiscinn, ruled in early mediaeval times by its own chiefs, O Baiscinn and O Donnell, was overrun later by the MacMahons, descended from Mathgamain, son of the great Muirchertach O'Brien (+1119), son of Toirdelbach, son of Tadg, son of Brian Boruma. Before 1200 a section of the MacGormáin (O Gormans) of Uí Bairrche in Leinster settled in (Cill Muire) Uí Breacáin.

O BRIEN SETTLEMENTS OUTSIDE OF CLARE.

A feature of Dál Chais history in mediaeval times was the movement of the O'Briens across the Shannon into Limerick and Tipperary. In the *Journal*

of the Society I described recently the fortunes of Donnchad, son of Brian Boruma, from Clontarf to his deposition from the kingship of Munster in 1063. He died as a pilgrim in Rome. From his grandson Brian (Glinne Magair), who was killed at Glanmire near Cork in 1118, descended the O Briens of Coonagh in East Limerick (Arada territory) and the O Briens of Aherlow. From Conchobar O Brien, called the Slapar shalach (dirty slipper) who died at Killaloe in 1142⁽³⁰⁾ descended the Clann Chonchabair, who ruled over Arada⁽³¹⁾ till elbowed out by the Clann Briain Ruaid and the Clann Domnaill Chonnachtaig, who were banished from Clare after the wars of Toirdelbach (described in the *Caithréim Toirdelbaig*). Brian Dub, founder of the line of O Briens at Carrigogunnell (Pobal Briain) in the 14th century was great-great-grandson of Toirdelbach na Caithréime. From Brian Dub's uncle, Brian catha an aonaigh, descended Síol mBriain na gCumrach, the O Briens of the Comeraghs. It will be noted—and the point is most interesting—that the O Briens in Arada Tíre (Mac Uí Bhriain Arad), the O Briens in Coonagh (Uí Cuanach—a part of Arada Cliach), and the O Briens in Pobal Briain actually came to occupy lands included in the ancient claim of In Déis Becc.⁽³²⁾ They might thus contend that in marching out into Limerick and Tipperary they were doing no more than occupying their rightful patrimony. The land of Ormond, on the other hand, into which the family of the O Kennedys transferred themselves (c.1100) from Gleann Omra (Killokennedy) was never included in the Déis Becc Bill of Rights. The struggle between the O Kennedys and the Butlers of Ormond in that area (Múscraige Tíre) is told in the most able and fascinating manner by Dr. Dermot Gleeson in his book called "The Last Lords of Ormond." The O Briens likewise laid claim to superiority over the lands of Éile. Brian an tSléibe (i.e., of Slieve Bloom) O Briain (brother of Domnall Mór) is called by the Four Masters *rí Muman agus an dá Éile*⁽³³⁾ at his death in 1169. This explains why one of the Éiles (Éile Uí Cherbaill, Kings' Co., Birr, Kinnity) belongs to the diocese of Killaloe. The other Éile resisted absorption by the O Briens. Further claims over the Uí Echach Muman and the Corcu Loegde in Co. Cork were formulated. These are based on the unscrupulous abuse of history, and in general belong to the realm of pure fantasy.⁽³⁴⁾

The relation between the O Briens and other chieftains of Dál Chais is not always easy to trace. At the defeat of Móin Mór in 1152, when Toirdelbach O Connor was the victor, the O Kennedys, O Deas, O Shanahans, O Quinns, O Gradys, O Hogans, O Hehirs, O Neills of Tradraige, O Lynchs and O Aherns fell in numbers on the O Brien side. O Conaing, king of Aes Trí Muige (Castleconnell, Limerick, Carrigogunnell) is given as king of Aes Gréine as well in 1175. This was in the Arada territory of Uí Cuanach, but it had been ruled apparently for centuries by a branch of the Eoganachta of the same descent as the Eoganachta of Loch Léin, Kerry. In this very year the O Briens had a house in Castleconnell, and their representative in that strong position

30. He was son of Diarmuid, king of Munster, who was brother of Muirchertach Mór, and son of Toirdelbach, who died in 1034 at Kincora, son of Tadg, slain 1023, son of Brian Boruma.

31. Duharrow, Duithche Arad, between Birdhill and Nenagh. Cill Mastulla was their church and cemetery.

32. Supra, p. 191.

33. Éile Uí Cherbaill agus Éile Uí Fógarta.

34. LM. 92 ff.

must have been a man of consequence, for he was blinded by a rival relative.⁽³⁵⁾ It looks then as if the Uí Conaing prepared the way for O'Brien expansion in East Limerick. The O'Briens, of course, did not abandon Clare.⁽³⁶⁾ One remarkable result of their activities outside their native county (rather than of their squabbles among themselves) was that the overlordship of Uí Bliod passed to the Uí Caisin after 1318. Thus it came about that by the 16th century the McNamaras, rather than the O'Briens, were by far the strongest family in County Clare.

DÁL CHAIS FAMILIES IN LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY.

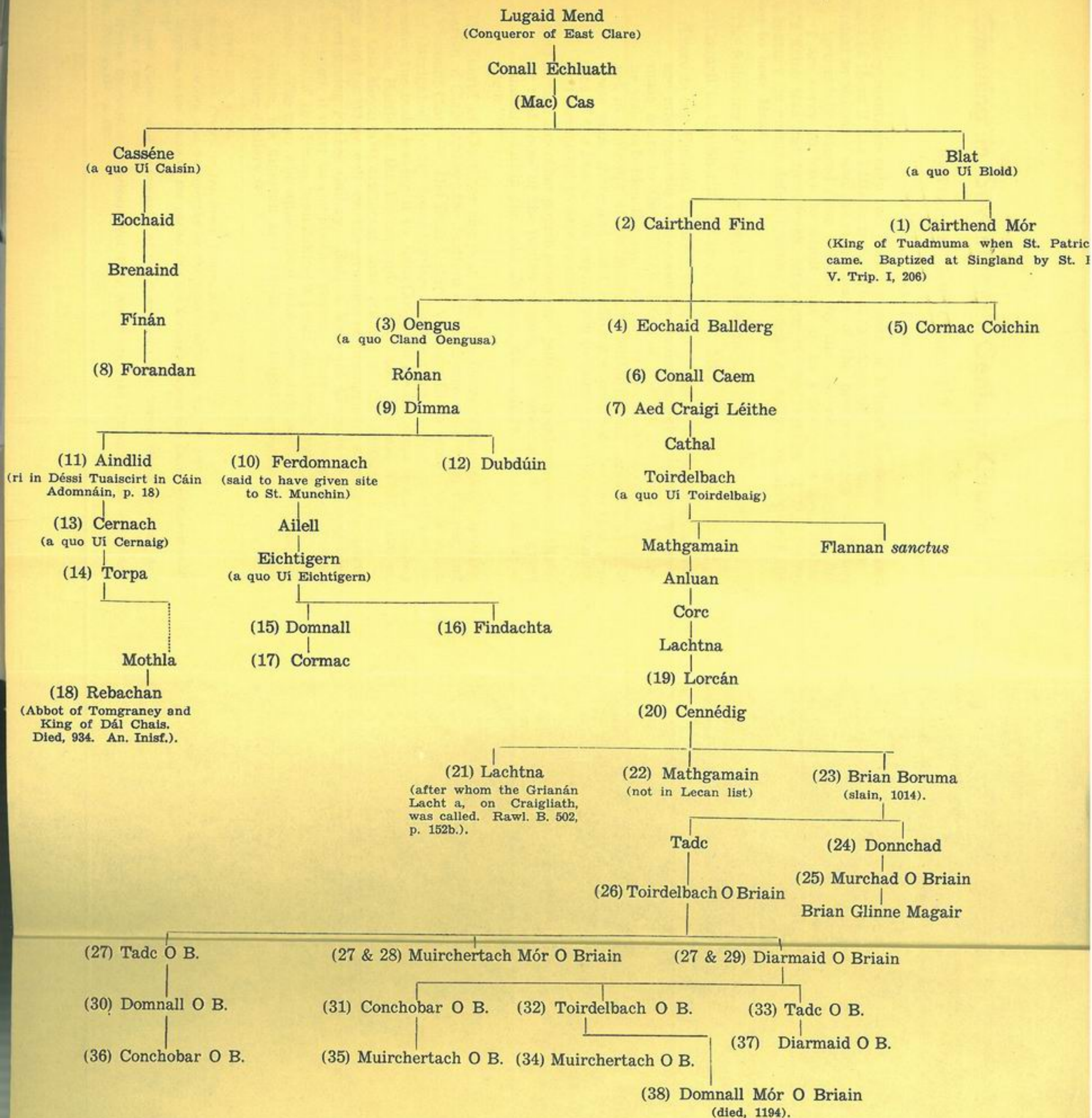
With the O'Briens a host of families of Dalcassian origin came into Limerick and Limerick county. Some of these were officials like the Hickeys (doctors), the Clancys, MacFlannchada (brehons), and the Mulqueens (O Maolcaoine), (ollams).⁽³⁷⁾ I have already mentioned the Aherns, O Deegans, O Shanahans, O Malleys, O Neills, O Liddys, MacMahons, MacNamaras, O Gradys, O Lonergans, O Lynchs. There were also the O Reidys (Ua Riada), of the same race as the Uí Cernaig, the MacInerneys, descended from Donnchad, son of Domnall, son of Cúmara *a quo* MacConmara (O H., 132), the O Doyles, a branch of the O Deas, the O Griffeyes or Griffins, the Galvins, O Hallorans (Uí Allmuráin), O Hartigans, O Sheedys, O Slatterys, O Hurleys, O Scanlans, O Tubridys, O Sheehans, Arthurs (Uí Artur), O Spillanes, O Moloneys, O Kearneys, O Maras, O Toomeys, O Hennesseys, O Duffys, and the Hayes family of Clare.

In other words, no small proportion of the population of Limerick city and Limerick county—east Limerick in particular—is of Dál Chais origin. These families, when they moved south to the Shannon, might justly contend that they were but returning to the home of their ancestors. For Limerick, notwithstanding the foreign origin of its original settlers, was an integral part of the old Déis Tuaiscirt inheritance, and East Limerick was as integral a part of the old state of Thomond as was east Clare. Limerick, therefore, once the Danes had been brought to heel, was as natural a capital for the O'Briens as Killaloe. Instinctively they felt this to be true, and Muirchertach, before the 11th century ended, had made the town his second home, if not indeed the chief seat of his rule. But for the Norman Conquest his successors would probably never have deviated from that line of policy. Their interest in Limerick, city and county, certainly did not lessen with the centuries.

35. AFM., s.a.

36. We have but to think of the place in that county of the Earl of Thomond, Baron of Inchiquin, Sir Domnall of Carrigaholt, the O'Briens of Glencolmcille, etc., etc.

37. Cf. O Maolcain, ollam Dál Chais, AFM., 1086. This family was a branch of the McNamaras, O H., 132.



(The numbers represent the order of succession to the kingship. The first eight names are shadowy).