

Correspondence

HISTORICAL CRITICISM OF THE SONG OF DERMOT AND THE EARL

MR. M. J. DE C. DODD writes:

1. With reference to Prof. O'Doherty's paper under the above heading in your first number (pp. 4-20), the kernel of Prof. O'Doherty's case against Orpen's view of the authorship and date of the Song (a view which, by the way, Orpen himself leaves quite open) seems to lie in the following:

All this (Orpen's view), however, seems to be impossible; for Dermot MacMurrough was not the subject of the section of which our eleven lines are the conclusion. The subject of this section has been the 'bachelor'; for our composer announces in ll. 10, 11, that he will 'now leave off about the bachelor' and tell us of another character, King Dermot.

2. Now, it seems to me that the text itself provides a complete answer to this argument. We have, in lines 22-39 of the Song, just such another section with the same transition of subject at the end. If we suppose lines 22-32 to have been lost, we should, according to Prof. O'Doherty, have to conclude that Melaghlin was the subject of that section. But, there are other subjects, viz. O'Rourke and his wife. So, lines 10-11 do not vouch that the 'bachelor' was the *only* subject of the opening section. If this be so, Prof. O'Doherty's reasons for excluding Dermot seem quite inconclusive.

3. Prof. O'Doherty is unquestionably right in concluding that the 'bachelor' was the chief subject of lines 1-11, and, we are told, I think quite plainly, that Maurice Regan was the 'bachelor', which, in its most usual sense, meant the follower of a great knight or lord. Lines 10-11 could therefore be freely translated:

Let us leave off about the Man,
And return to the Master—King Dermot

4. The further support, which Prof. O'Doherty finds for his argument in the 'intolerable repetition within a short space', that Maurice Regan was 'latimer' to MacMurrough, is also demolished by the section (ll. 22-39) just referred to, in which we are twice told, all in the space of six lines, that O'Rourke's wife was a daughter of Melaghlin, and that Melaghlin himself was lord of Meath.

5. The matters dealt in the remaining sections of Prof. O'Doherty's paper, have all, I think, been already dealt with by Orpen, who, in most of them, takes a different view to your contributor. Weight naturally leans

one way or the other according as we believe, or do not believe, that the author of the Song had been in literary touch with a well-informed contemporary actor in the events described, such as Maurice Regan was. I may be mistaken in my view, but I cannot see in Prof. O'Doherty's arguments any evidence strong enough to shake the case made by Orpen to the contrary.

PROFESSOR J. F. O'DOHERTY replies:

1. It can hardly be fairly maintained that Orpen leaves the questions of authorship and date of the Song 'quite open'. He wrote: 'we must, I think, conclude that Morice Regan supplied the writer with a written chronicle of the events which had already been put into metre', and 'we must fix upon some time very soon after 1225, or assuming the allusion to St. Lawrence to be an interpolation, some time earlier in the thirteenth century, as the probable date of the poem in its present form'.

The words ('Orpen's view') do not occur in my sentence. The words, 'All this', do not refer, grammatically or syntactically, to Orpen's view: they refer to certain grammatical and literary requirements mentioned in the immediately preceding sentence.

2. In the absence of lines 22-32, my logic, as I applied it to lines 1-11, would have deduced (a) that Melaghlin was the subject of the lines immediately preceding line 33; and (b) above all, that King Dermot was not the subject of those lines. The lines, so happily preserved, show this conclusion to be completely sound as regards King Dermot; while, as for Melaghlin, lines 22-7 deal with O'Rourke, and 28-32 deal with Melaghlin's daughter and with Melaghlin himself. Similarly, while the missing lines may have contained some subject other than the 'bachelor', he was the subject of the lines immediately preceding line 1 of our present text; and that is sufficient for the purpose of my argumentation.

3. The contention that 'we are told, quite plainly, that Maurice Regan was the "bachelor"' has no foundation that I can see in the text of the Song. My essay suggested that Strongbow may have been the 'bachelor'; and it is not impossible that Regan became Strongbow's 'latimer' after King Dermot's death. But the text appears to me to rule out, 'quite plainly', the possibility that Regan was himself the 'bachelor'.

The translation offered for lines 10-11 is not merely free, but unjustified as well: such a translation is possible only when the problem under discussion has already been solved.

4. The repetitions which Mr. Dodd finds in lines 22-39 do not appear to be at all so intolerable as the repetition to which I drew attention in lines 1-11. A glance at the text will show that, in lines 22-39, the writer varies his mode of expression from 'daughter' to 'of the stock of', and from 'to whom Meath was subject' to 'Melaghlin was lord of Meath'. No such variation occurs in lines 1-11, the same word 'latimer' being repeated: it is precisely this repetition that appeared to me 'intolerable'.

5. I have no hesitation in leaving it to readers of my essay to decide

whether my criticism of the Song (above, pp. 8-20) depends or does not depend on whether 'we believe, or do not believe, that the author of the Song had been in literary touch with a well-informed contemporary actor in the events described, such as Maurice Regan was'.

DR. M. A. O'BRIEN'S REVIEW OF MR. S. PENDER'S 'GUIDE TO IRISH GENEALOGICAL COLLECTIONS'.

MR. PENDER writes :

1. With reference to Dr. O'Brien's review of my *Guide to Irish Genealogical Collections* (pp. 195-198, above), I should like to point out that it is not, nor do I anywhere claim it to be, an index to Irish genealogies. Its title, both on cover and on title-page, is *A Guide to Irish Genealogical Collections*; the opening sentence of my introduction commences: 'In the compilation of this introductory Guide . . .', whilst the running-title throughout, from page 6 to the end of the volume, is 'Genealogical Guide'. I do not see how, on those facts, the volume can be considered in any way as an index to Irish genealogies. Dr. O'Brien, however, appears to have misunderstood its title, aim and scope and so to have looked in it for things which, quite naturally, he did not find.

2. The plan followed by me with regard to the spelling of proper names has been concisely stated in my introduction: 'As the material excerpted covers a period ranging from . . . the eighth century to the eighteenth and nineteenth . . . I have, for the sake of consistency, adopted an arbitrary, if not always philologically correct, system of orthography'. Hence *Úi Briain* and *Úi Briúin* are given under the latter heading, and rouse all Dr. O'Brien's outraged feelings; he has omitted to note that I give a cross-reference from the name *Úi Briain* to the name *Úi Briúin*. Similarly with *Úi Fiachach*. The confusion of *Fiacho* and *Fiachra* is a common-place of Irish genealogies and annals from the twelfth century onwards: BB has, for example, *Úi Fiachach Arda Sratha*, whilst the same list appears in O'Clery headed *.h. Fiachrach Arda Sratha*. I am not in a position to determine whether the eponymous ancestor was *Fiacho* or *Fiachra*. I postulated *Fiacho* with genitive *Fiachach* to cover all entries; were I the scribe of the annals wrongly attributed to Tigernach, who probably possessed a somewhat close acquaintance with the Irish language and with the niceties of Irish nomenclature, I should also have entered *Fiachna* under the *Fiacho* heading, (see *Fiachna m Demmáin* entries in ATig.).

3. Dr. O'Brien takes me to task for my failure to collate the several MS. versions of the genealogical tracts, and quotes, in support, the *cenél Lóegaire* as occurring in BLec. and BB under the heading of *Úi Caindelbain*. Apart from the fact that his references to the two MSS. by folio, column and line, are not as meticulously accurate as their detailed minuteness would

suggest, the scientific collation of various MS. recensions is not, in my opinion, within the scope of an introductory guide. Besides, a serious student of the *cenél Lóegaire* genealogies would be cognisant of the fact that the *Úi Caindelbain* were one of their most important branches. Referring to my *Guide*, he would find their genealogies listed, a point glossed over by Dr. O'Brien. The same remarks apply to *Gabrighe* and *Gubrighe*; no worker on the *-rige* communities could afford to neglect Dr. O'Brien's paper on them in *ZCP*, wherein he would find all their variant forms listed and analysed. But, to repeat, I cannot be considered as the director of studies for present and future genealogical students. I have simply listed the genealogies in order to tell students where they may be found.

4. A much more serious charge laid at my door is that I have omitted to list an 'enormous' number of references to genealogical lists. Dr. O'Brien gives a few examples 'taken at random' from his own collections. At the risk of making this note unduly long I propose to examine in turn each of the alleged omissions:

(i) *Aes trí muigi*, BB, 186 d 49; 187 a 22. The first reference reads [*Cáirthend find*] *a quo sunt . . . aes trí muighi*; the second, *Rongal . . . is uad-side aes trí muighi*. I have yet to learn that either entry constitutes a genealogy.

(ii) *cenél mBindig thelcha óg*, Rawl. B 502, 146 c 1. This appears in my *Guide* under the heading *cenél mBindig*; the MS. does not read *telcha óg* but what seems to me to be *tilcha og*; Meyer, in the index, reads it simply as *ticha*.

(iii) *cenél Callide*, Rawl. B502, 150 b 45. This appears in the MS. under *cland Lóegaire*, and is so given by me.

(iv) *Cerdrige thulcha gossa*, Rawl. B 502, 150 b 52. This is given by me under the heading *Cerdrige*.

(v) *Cianachta breg*, Rawl. B 502, 154 a 12. There is no mention whatsoever of the *Cianachta breg* in the MS. at this place.

(vi) *Cianachta glinde gemin*, Rawl. B 502, 145 c 30; given by me under *Cianachta*.

(vii) *Cianachta mide*, Rawl. B 502, 145 c 14. The MS. has *Ciannachta*, and makes no mention of *mide*; reference given by me under *Cianachta*.

(viii) *cl Brethemon m Chomgaill*, BB, 190 b 48. I admit to having omitted this reference.

(ix) *cl Chernaig*, BB, 117 b 43; likewise omitted by me.

(x) *cl Chlothchon m Chomgaill*, Rawl. B 502, 145 d 40. The MS. reads *Genelach Delbna more*, and the reference is given by me under *Delbne*.

(xi) *cl Chonrói*, BB, 86 a; omitted by me.

(xii) *cl Chuiléin*, Rawl. B 502, 153 b 6. There is no mention of the *cl Chuiléin* here; ll. 5-8 form portion of the genealogy of the *úi Chassine*, which commences on 153 a 53, and to which I have given a reference.

(xiii) *cl Fogartaig m Folachtaig*, BB, 142 f 52; given by me under *cl Fogartaig*; I give the reference as 142 b³.

(xiv) *cl Lugán*, Rawl. B 502, 146 g 1, BB 115 d 38; Rawl. reference omitted by me; BB reference contains no mention of the *cl Lugán*, line 38 being portion of the *Meg Guidhir* genealogy.

(xv) *crích na Cédach*, BB, 80 a 18, Rawl. B 502, 144 c 47. The BB reference reads *lucht chrichi na Cedach*; on referring to my *Guide*, p. 81, we read 'lucht

Críche na Cédach, aliter cl Cholmán bicc, q.v. ' ; and on consulting page 27 of the *Guide* we find ' cl Cholmán bicc, aliter lucht críche na Cédach, BB 80 a³ '. It is indeed, difficult to understand how any one claiming to have critically examined my *Guide* can seriously allege an omission in this instance. The alleged omission from Rawl. reads *Conaille fallomain*, and is given, likewise, on page 56 of my *Guide*.

(xvi) *Delbne bethre*, Rawl. B 502, 145 d 19 : given by me under *Delbne*.

(xvii) *Delbne mór*, Rawl. B 502, 154 d 40. This reference is to the *Ciarrige*, and is given by me ; it may, however, be an error on the part of the printer for 145 d 40 ; if so, this reference is also given by me under *Delbne*.

(xviii) *fir Chera*, BLec., 177v a 23, Rawl. B 502, 145 f 30. BLec. reads *.h. Fiachrach in tuaisceirt*, and is given by me (*Guide*, p. 148) ; the same remark applies to the Rawl. reference which has, also, *.h. Fiachrach in tuaisceirt*, and is given by me on page 148.

(xix) *fir Manach*, Rawl. B 502, 146 g 1. This is the same reference as *cl Lugán*, above, the MS. reading *Genelach cl Lugain .i. fer Manach* ; like *cl Lugán*, it is omitted by me.

Taking *cl Lugán* and *fir Manach* as covering one entry, we find that Dr. O'Brien has given 18 alleged omissions, comprising 23 MS. references. Of these, I admit *cl Brethemon m Chomgaill* (BB 190 b 48), *cl Chernaig* (BB 117 b 43), *cl Chonrói* (BB 86 a), *cl Lugan .i. fir Manach* (Rawl. B 502, 146 g 1). The remaining examples either are given by me in my *Guide* or else do not occur in the MSS. indicated by Dr. O'Brien. He accuses me of omitting relevant information concerning the *Úi Uiginn* ; this is an unfortunate example for him to choose, as a reference to my *Guide*, p. 166, and to Dr. E. Knott's definitive edition of Tadhg Dall's poems will show.

There are still many points on which I should like to answer Dr. O'Brien. However, this note has, I fear, outgrown its bounds. Had my list of sources been considered and my introduction noted, I imagine he would not have misapprehended the object I had in compiling the *Guide*.

DR. O'BRIEN replies :

1. Mr. Pender reproaches me for calling his work an index. I know it is entitled a guide, but even a cursory survey reveals the fact that it consists merely of a list of family names arranged in alphabetical order. If this is not an index, pray what is an index? I have looked at ten different works entitled *guides* in the library of Queen's University, and not a single one consists merely of one index and of nothing else.

Regarding the work therefore as an index to the family names in our genealogical collections, I naturally expected to find all names listed or, alternatively, a statement as to the principles which guided the author in the selection or omission of names. The list of names is not complete and there is no such statement. I am accused of looking in the work ' for things which, quite naturally, he did not find '. If I had taken the author at his word and regarded it as a *guide* to Irish genealogical collections, I certainly would have looked for much more than a mere list of family names. I have looked for nothing else but family names.

2. I quite understand Mr. Pender's adoption of an 'arbitrary, if not always philologically correct, system of orthography'. It certainly would have been preferable to have adopted a consistent system, but as the amount of material which had to be excerpted is so vast, the author's method was probably the only feasible one to adopt. This authorises us quite correctly to write the older form *Oengusso* for the later form of the same name, *Aonghusa*; but it does not authorise us to write *úi Briúin* for *úi Briain* in the case of the Dalcassian family, since in their case the oldest form of the name was never *úi Briúin* but always *úi Briain*. As Meyer (*Eriu*, iv. 68) pointed out, *Brión* and *Brian* are two entirely different names. As *Brión* later on became *Brian* it might be correct to index all the *úi Briúin* and *úi Briain* names under *úi Briain*, but not vice versa as the author has done.

I am well aware of the constant confusion of the names *Fiachu*, *Fiachra* and *Fiachna* and if the author had somewhere stated that he was adopting *Fiachach* as a standardised spelling of the genitive of all these names, I would not have referred to this as a MS. misreading; though I still think that where only one MS. reference is given, the exact spelling of the MS. should be recorded.

I notice that Mr. Pender does not object to any of the other cases where I stated that 'the form of the Irish names is inaccurate'. When writing the review, I had a long list of similar inaccuracies before me, but in order to keep it of the proper size I omitted many instances such as the following: *Galeng* (six entries), the form of the genitive plural for correct *Galenga*; *Gillachán* for *Gillacán*; *Branachán* for *Branacán*; *cenél nGulbain*, *cenél Conaill Gulbain*, though the correct form is *Gulban*; *Cendédech*, an impossible form for *Cendétig*; *Cíaróg* (*passim*) for *Caeroc*, an entirely different name; *cl. Cholla mend* for *cl. Cholla mind*; *cl. Choncodaig* see *cl. Chonchathaig*, although these are two entirely different names, one being *Cú Chotaig*, the other *Conchathach*. In addition to these and many other similar cases, the mark of length is omitted in, as far as I have counted, about forty cases, e.g. *cl. Dimma*; *cl. Dimmosaig*; *cl. Echtgaile*; *cl. Echtgusa*; *cl. Elathaig*; *cl. Ronchon* etc.

3. I still maintain that a proper guide or index to the genealogical tracts should be a guide or index to the actual contents of the tracts and not merely to the headings provided without any consistency by the scribes and compilers. Take, for example, the instance cited by Mr. Pender—*cenél Lóegaire*. On looking up this name in his *Guide* (p. 17), one finds references to LL. and Rawl. B 502 with cross references to *úi Eogain cheniúil lóegaire* (sic), *cl Lóegaire $\frac{t}{m}$ Lóegaire*, *úi Lóegaire*. I suggest that this seemingly complete list of references would produce on anyone the impression that neither BLec. nor BB. had the genealogy in question.

4. Mr. Pender states that I accused him of omitting an enormous number of 'references to genealogical lists'. I said nothing of the kind in my review. I merely stated that 'the number of omissions in the *Guide* is enormous' and further I spoke of 'the family names referred to' and 'names of families whose genealogical relations, etc. are given'.

I propose here to examine Mr. Pender's remarks on each of the alleged omissions.

(i) 'I have yet to learn that either entry constitutes a genealogy.' I never said that this was a genealogy; I merely referred to it as an omission of a family name referred to.

(ii) I know that this name appears in the *Guide* under *cenél mBindig*; but as there is a special heading *cenél mBindig thelcha óg*, why not put it under the latter? Why are not the references to B Lec. and BB. also put under *cenél mBindig*? I know that the MS. reads *tilcha oc* (not *og* as Mr. Pender states in his letter), but I naturally have given the spelling of the *Guide* when referring to entries in it. This comment applies equally to (iii), (iv), (vi), (xiii) and (xvi).

(v) I regret to state that in my reference 'Rawl. B 502, 154 a 12', '12' is an error for '21', where Mr. Pender will find the genealogy referred to.

(vii) Here I am again following the principle that it is the genealogy which is to be indexed, not the visible heading in the MSS. Rawl. has only *Gianachta* as heading, but the genealogy is the same as that headed *Cianachta Midi* in BLec., 222v a 13, and as it is in fact a genealogy of the latter family, I still think it proper to have it entered under the latter heading.

(viii) and (ix) Admitted as omissions by Mr. Pender.

(x) Here again, though the heading is merely *Genelach Delbna More*, it is at the same time a genealogy of *cl Chlothchon m Chomgaill*. It would have been sufficient to have put a cross-reference to *Delbna Mór*.

(xi) Admitted as an omission by Mr. Pender.

(xii) Again, I repeat that it is not merely the visible headings that should be indexed, but the actual genealogies. Rawl. B 502, 153 b 6, has a genealogy commencing *Menma m. Aeda* + 3 names + *m. Cuilen* + 6 names + *m. Caissin*. BB, 186 a 20 (col. 2) has exactly the same genealogy with the exception of one additional name. Now in BB, this genealogy is preceded by the words: *ba dibsidhe Menma mac Aedha 7 Clann Cuilen airchena .i.* Mr. Pender gives a reference to this place in BB as a genealogy of the *cl. Chuiléin*. The only reason I can see for not giving a reference to exactly the same genealogy in Rawl. B 502 is that in Rawl. there is no visible heading.

(xiv) The latter part of the genealogy in BB is the same as that referred to in Rawl. B 502 and BLec. As Mr. Pender is no doubt aware, *Clann Lugán* is an older name for the family later called *Meg Uidhir*.

(xv) Here there is no real omission, except that to make things clear there should have been a cross-reference under *crích na Cédach* to *lucht críchi na Cédach*. The genealogy in Rawl. B 502, 144 c 47, is exactly the same as that in BB, 80 a 18 (col. 3), though with different headings. How Mr. Pender (both in his letter and *Guide*) manages to misread as *Conaille Fallomain* the well-known (and in Rawl. clearly written) name *Caille Fallomain*, I cannot understand.

(xvii) My reference is, as suggested in Mr. Pender's letter, a misprint for '145 d 40'. As the genealogy is headed *Delbna Mor*, and as there is such a heading in the *Guide*, why put it under *Delbne*?

(xviii) Here it is simply a question of identical genealogies with different headings. BLec., 70 r. (as also *Tribes and Customs of Hy Fiachrach*, p. 14) has the heading *Fir Chera* while BLec., 177 v. and Rawl. B 502, 145 f have the heading *Hui Fiachrach in Tuaiscirt*. As the genealogies are the same, they should all have been put under one heading in the *Guide*, with, of course, the necessary cross-references.

(xix) I cannot see what Mr. Pender means by saying that *fir Manach* and *cl Lugáin* are the same reference. Anyone using his *Guide* would, on reading the heading *Fir Manach*, be under the impression that there was no corresponding genealogy in Rawl. B 502. Or ought the user of the *Guide* to know that *cl Lugáin* was an alternative name for *Fir Manach*?

Mr. Pender concludes by saying that I accuse him of omitting relevant information concerning the *úí Uiginn*, and perhaps my words are open to this interpretation. What I meant was that numerous names of families who, like the *úí Uiginn*, only rise into prominence later on, and whose genealogies are not given but whose genealogical relations are indicated in the MSS. were omitted from his *Guide*. There is no reference in the *Guide* to the passage in BLec. containing a reference to the *úí Uiginn*, published by Miss Knott in *The Poems of Tadhg Dall O hUiginn*, ii. 303. This very passage and the use made of it (*ibid.*) by Eoin Mac Neill show how extremely valuable such isolated references without any actual genealogy can be.

ARCHIVES OF MALTA

MR. G. PARSLOE, hon. editorial secretary, Historical Archives of Malta Committee (c/o Institute of Historical Research, University of London), writes :

May I ask for the help of any of your readers who have knowledge of manuscripts in Ireland relating to Malta?

Three or four years ago a number of persons interested in the history of the island formed in London an Historical Archives of Malta Committee, of which Professor F. M. Powicke of Oxford is the chairman. With the approval of the Malta authorities, and the Institute of Historical Research in Malta, the committee is compiling a list of manuscripts relating to the island in public and private repositories of the British Isles.

Inquiries have been addressed to a number of librarians in Ireland who are known to possess collections of manuscripts, but it is probable, in view of the many links between the two islands, and especially those formed by Irish members of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, that important historical documents survive, unknown to any but their owners, in family muniments and private libraries. I write, therefore, to say that the committee would be very much obliged if anyone who knows of such material would send particulars to me, for inclusion in the list.