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 con-
temporary 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 argu-
ments 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. Laurence 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 im-
nediately preceding line 33; and (b) above all, that King Dermot was not
the subject of those lines. The lines, so happily preserved, show this con-
clusion to be completely sound as regards King Dermot; while, as for
Melaghlin, lines 22-7 deal with O'Rourke, and 28-32 deal with Melag-
ghlin'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 dis-
cussion 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 Ó Briain and Ó 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 Ó Briain to the name Ó Briúin. Similarly with Ó Fiachach. The confusion of Fiach and Fiachra is a common-place of Irish genealogies and annals from the twelfth century onwards: BB has, for example, Ó Fiachach Arda Sratha, whilst the same list appears in O’Clery headed jh. Fiachrach Arda Sratha. I am not in a position to determine whether the eponymous ancestor was Fiach or Fiachra. I postulated Fiach 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 Fiach 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 Ó 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
Correspondence

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 Gabrige and Gubrige; 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 tri muigi*, BB, 186 d 49; 187 a 22. The first reference reads [Cdirrhend find] a quo sunt . . . aes tri muighi; the second, Rongal . . . is uad-side aes tri muighi. I have yet to learn that either entry constitutes a genealogy.

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

(iii) *cenél Callide*, Rawl. B 502, 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.


(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 Délhna more, and the reference is given by me under Délbne.

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

(xii) *cl Chuilein*, Rawl. B 502, 153 b 6. There is no mention of the cl Chuilein 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 Folchaiteig*, 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
Correspondence

Críche na Cédach, aliter cr Cholmáin bicc, q.v. ’; and on consulting page 27 of the Guide we find ‘ cr Cholmáin 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.


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

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

Taking cr Lugán and fír Manach as covering one entry, we find that Dr. O’Brien has given 18 alleged omissions, comprising 23 MS. references. Of these, I admit cr Brethemone m Chomgaill (BB 190 b 48), cr Chernaig (BB 117 b 43), cr Chonrói (BB 86 a), cr Lugan i. cr 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 Ui 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 úí Briain in the case of the Dallassian family, since in their case the oldest form of the name was never úi Briúin but always úí 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 úí Briúin and úí Briain names under úí 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; Claróg (passim) for Caeroc, an entirely different name; cl. Cholla mend for cl. Cholla mind; cl. Chonocoaidh 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 Lòegaire. On looking up this name in his Guide (p. 17), one finds references to LL. and Rawl. B 502 with cross references to úi Éogain chrenúil lòegaire (sic), cl Lòegaire l_{m} Lòegaire, úi Lòegaire. 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’.
Correspondence

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 og, 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 tilha 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.

(vi) 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 Cianachta as heading, but the genealogy is the same as that headed Cianachta Midi in B Lec., 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 Chlithchon m Chomgail. It would have been sufficient to have put a cross-reference to Delbna Mor.

(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. Aedha + 3 names + m. Cuilen + 6 names + m. Caisin. 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 dibisde Menma mac Aedha 7 Clann Cuilen airchena i. Mr. Pender gives a reference to this place in BB as a genealogy of the cl. Chuiln. 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 B Lec. 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 crich na Cédach to lucht crichi 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. B Lec., 70 r. (as also Tribes and Customs of Hy Fiachrach, p. 14) has the heading Fir Chera while B Lec., 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 Lugán* 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 Lugán* was an alternative name for *Fir Manach*?

Mr. Pender concludes by saying that I accuse him of omitting relevant information concerning the *úi Uiginn*, and perhaps my words are open to this interpretation. What I meant was that numerous names of families who, like the *úi 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 *úi 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.