

Brian Boru Lecture Series

Brian Boru and the provincial kingship of Munster

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An important step in Brian Boru's rise to rule over all Ireland was his control of the provincial kingdom of Munster

WHAT DID THAT KINGDOM
CONSIST OF?

And how did he do it?

What is the “province” of Munster?

- The Old Irish word for a province is a *cóiced* (= fifth) although today there is only 4 provinces.
- The first attested use of *cóiced* is in the *Annals of Ulster* under the year 692 when the king of Ulster **Fergus** m. **Aedain** is called *rex in Choicid* (king of the province).
- The word Munster itself is first attested in the late twelfth century where it appears as *Monestere & Munestare* (in Norman French) . This placename can be translated as Muman’s *tír* and is a mixture of English and Irish – the land belonging to Muman (with English possessive ‘s).
- In Brian’s day, the region was simply called **Mumu** and the people who lived there were **Fir Muman** or the men of Mumu.



The missing Fifth – where was the lost province?

- In the 12th C tale of *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* - the Book of the Takings of Ireland – the provinces were established in the period of the Fir Bolg and the lost fifth is found in Munster which was divided into the territory of Sengann ó *Belach Conglais* [nr Cork] *co Luimnech* and territory of Gann – ó *Chomur* [nr Waterford] *co Belach Conglais*.
- Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales) also says in late 12th C that Munster is divided into Tuath-muma (Nth Munster - Thomond) and Des-Muma (Sth Munster – Desmond) – 1st map.
- **Both these texts are projecting the political geography of a politically powerful Dál Cais (Brian' s family) back into the remote past.**

- People on east coast and in midlands speak rather of missing Fifth (province) being the kingdom of **Mide** from Shannon east to Irish sea. This kingdom was important in 10thC
2nd map



V



The original *cóiced* of Muman

The political centre of Muman – where leading men of the region which gather periodically to pay rents (*císa*) and swear loyalty to an overlord was **CASHEL**.

The overlords or provincial kings were known as *rí Caisil* (king of Cashel) or *rí Muman* (king of Munster).

The dynasties which most often supplied the overlord were the Eóganachta – who had focii in Tipperary, North Cork, and Killarney. Of these various branches the Tipperary Eóganachta (or Eóganacht of Cashel) were most often in charge.



Earlier Brehon laws on Irish kings – provincial kings were often recognised as the highest grade of king

Bretha Déin Cecht – This 8th C lawtract describes 3 subdivisions as:

- *rí túaithe* = king of 1 *túath*
- *rí túath* = king of many *túatha*
- *rí ruirech* = over-king over *rí túath*

Uraicecht Becc (9th C lawtract) states:

A king of one *túath*; 700 warriors with him, 10 milk giving cows his honour price & a month's protection for him. An over-king, three kings with him and protection for three fortnights and 160 cakes/loaves for him....

A master over kings is the *rí Muman* (**King of Munster**), 42 milk-yielding cows his honour price. 2 carcasses of beef & 2 bacon hogs for the 1200 of his company and 200 loaves. A noble bishop is entitled to the same amount.. E.g. such as the bishop of Imlech Ibair (Emly) or Corcach Mór (Cork) of Munster.

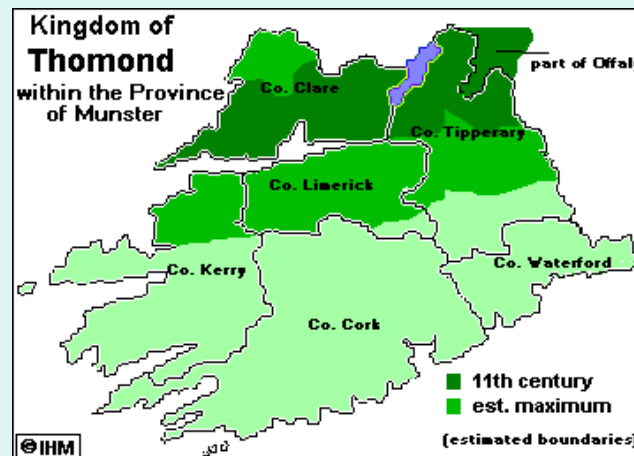
Middle Irish glosses to *Uraicecht Becc* – e.g. glosses dating approximately to the period of Brian Boru

A neneclanna narig-sin .i. uii cumala do rig tuaithi. Da. uii cumal do righ tuath. Da cumail ar dib .uii.aib cumalaib do rig .u.idh. Tri .uii. cumal do rig erenn gan fhrasabra.

- The honour-prices of these kings: that is **21** milk-giving cows (or 7 slave-girls) for a *rí túaithe*. **42** milk-giving cows for a *rí túath*. **48** milk-giving cows for a *rí cóicid*. **63** cows for the king of Ireland without opposition.
- Thus by the time of Brian Boru and his descendants, the provincial kings were falling out of power and the three important divisions had become *rí túaithe*, *rí túath* and *rí Érenn* (king of Ireland). This changeover is largely attributed to the activities of the Dál Cais whose rise changed the status of the old provincial kingdoms.

Kings as warrior-chiefs with *ferann claidib* or sword-land?

- When the Dál Cais rose to power in the 10th C under the leadership of Brian's immediate family, they gradually built up the kingdom of *Tuath-Muman* (north Munster) or Thomond. Thus they broke the mould of the old "provincial kingdoms" and replaced them with an organically growing kingdom, built up through the military and political power of the ruling dynasty who ruled surrounding areas by putting relatives in charge of newly conquered lands.
- Thomond = from Léim Conchulaind (Loop Head) to Slige Dála (around Roscrea) & from Sliabh Echtge (Slieve Aughty) to Sliab Eibhlinne (Slieve Felim). It is often identified with modern diocesan boundaries of Killaloe though this is a simplification; neither the borders of the kingdom nor the diocese remained constant through time.



In 930s, the Irish annals show us 3 major power blocks in operation in mid West Ireland...

- 1) The Uí Néill leader who controlled the northwest (essentially Donegal/Derry and Tyrone) and the eastern midlands (Meath/Westmeath) and ruled from Tara. He was strongest king in Ireland at this date and often claimed the title *rí Erenn* or king of Ireland.
- 1) Old provincial kings of Munster – the ruling family of the Eóganacht of Cashel.
- 3) Dál Cais kings ruling from Killaloe and *Ceann Coradh*/Kincora “Head of the Weir” - the new kids on the block but growing in power all the time.

Cellachán mac Búadacháin: Éoganacht king of Cashel

- In 936, he raids Clonmanoise (to gain wealth? show status? To show that he's in control of Shannon as vital routeway?)
- In 939 as king of Munster, Cellachán collects an army which included as allies, the Vikings of Waterford city (led by *mac Acuind*/Hakon's son) & the native Déise (Waterford county) and with this, the Éoganacht king attacks Uí Néill kingdoms of the east midlands, raiding Clonard in Co. Meath
- The Uí Néill retaliate, taking hostages and bringing Cellachán to Mide as prisoner

Capture of Cellachán of Cashel is part of expansionist efforts of Uí Néill (both eastern – kingdom of Mide- and northern - Ailech)

Annals of Ulster 939: “Donnchad (of Mide) and Muirchertach (of Ailech) led an army to the Laigin (Leinster south of the Liffey) and to Munster and both took their hostages “

Annals of Four Masters 939:

“Muircheartach afterwards assembled the Cénel-Conaill and Cénel-Eoghain, and the people of the North in general, at Ailech, where he selected ten hundred of the chosen heroes, and made a circuit of Ireland, keeping his left hand to the sea, until he arrived at áth-cliath (Dublin); and he brought Sitric, (Viking) lord of Ath-cliath, with him as a hostage. He afterwards proceeded into Leinster, and the Leinstermen began to oppose him but finally agreed to submit to him; and he carried Lorcan, King of Leinster, with him. He then went to the men of Munster, who were in readiness on his arrival to give him battle; but they ultimately resolved to give up *their king Ceallachan, and a chain was put upon him by Muircheartach.* He afterwards proceeded into Connacht, where Conchobhar, son of Tadhg, came to meet him, but no fetter or lock was put upon him. He then returned to Ailech, carrying these kings with him as hostages; and they were for nine months feasting there; and at the end of that time he sent the hostages to Donnchadh (of Mide)”.

Beginnings of Dál Cais kingship by 930s and confrontations with kings of Cashel and with Uí Néill

Annals of Inisfallen 934. “Repose of Rebachán son of Mothla, abbot of Tuaim Gréine and **king of Dál Cais.**”

(First king of Dál Cais to be recorded – not ancestor of Brian’s family but of rival family, Uí Óengusso.)

Annals of Four Masters 942 “A victory was gained by Cellachan of Cashel, over Cennétich, son of Lorcan, at *Mag-dúine* [unknown placename], where many were slain”.

•*According to the genealogies, 3 sons of Cennétich killed in this battle: Find and Dub (Fair and Dark) and Marcán*

Annals of Four Masters 948

“An army was led by Congalach [Uí Néill king of Mide] into Munster; and he plundered West Munster, and slew the two sons of Cennétich, son of Lorcan, namely, Echtighern and Donnchuan.”

Annals of Ulster 951 : Cennétich son of Lorcán, **king of Tuathmuman,** died.

Chronicon Scotorum 951 Cennétiich son of Lorcán, **king of Dál Cais,** dies.

The Vikings on the Shannon were another power: operating in Limerick, Lough Derg and Lough Ree

Annals of Inisfallen 930: A naval encampment [made] by the foreigners of Luimnech at Loch Bethrach in Osraige (Ossory/Kilkenny), and Lough Derg. Ferna in Osraige was ravaged by them

Annals of the Four Masters 935: Amlaíb, son of Gofraid [based in Dublin], lord of the foreigners, came at Lúgnasa from Ath-clíath, and carried off as prisoners **Amlaíb Cenncairech** [of Limerick] **from Loch Ree**, and the foreigners who were with him after breaking their ships.

Annals of the Four Masters 938: Aralt, grandson of Ímar, i.e. the son of Sitric, **lord of the foreigners of Luimnech**, was killed in Connaught by the Caenraighi of Aidhne (area around Kilmacduagh).

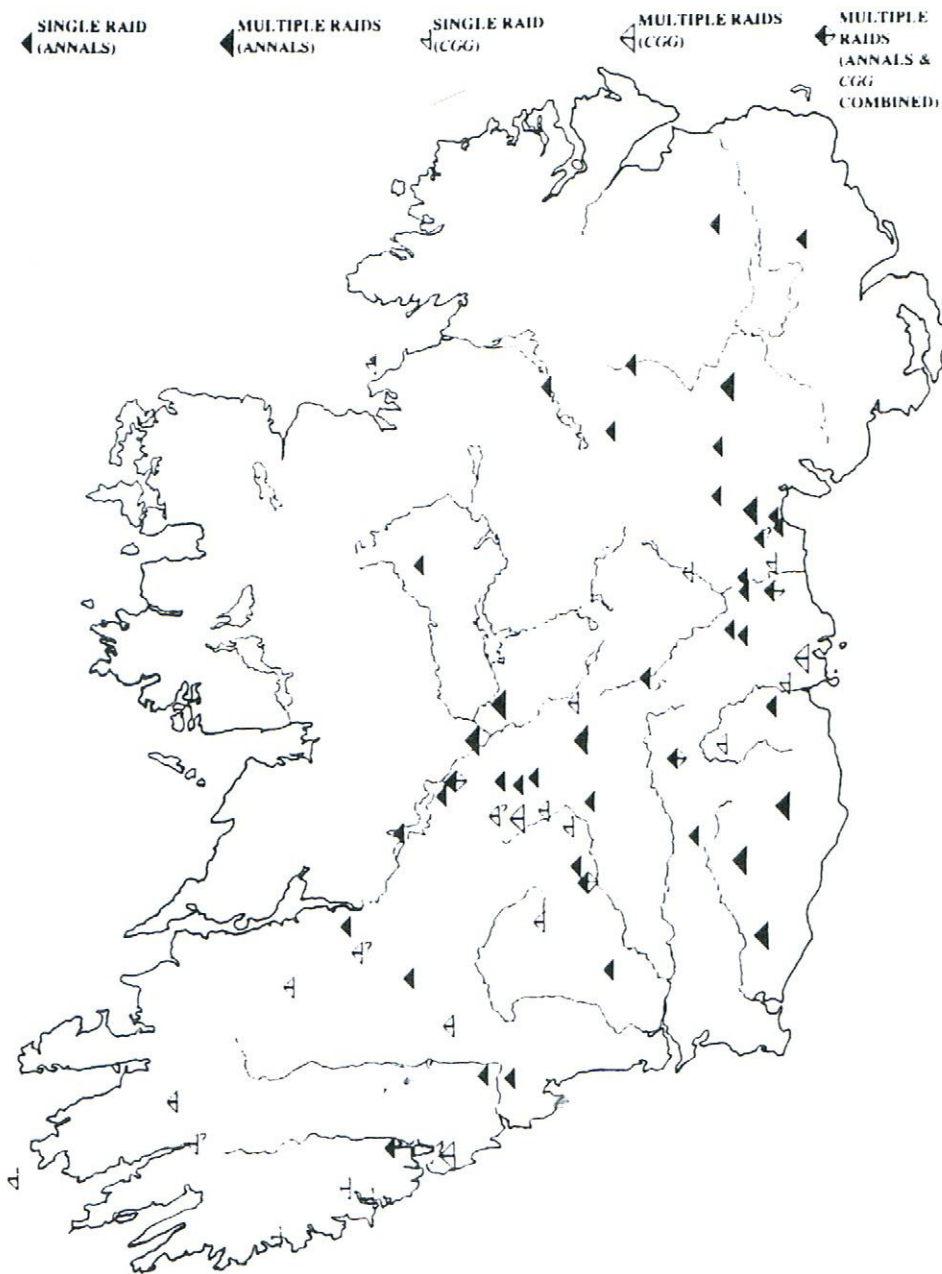
Annals of the Four Masters 949: Congalach, son of Maelmíthigh [king of Mide], with the great fleet of Leth-Chuinn, [northern half of Ireland] was upon Loch Derg. They plundered all the islands of the lake, and obtained the hostages of the Munstermen, over whom they obtained sway, after some opposition

e.g. political action revolves around control of Shannon waterways and thus is probably based around control of shipping – at least in so far as warships carry men.

Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh – the war of the Irish with the foreigners

- The *Cogadh* is an early 12th C saga of Brian Boru's career
- It is an account written by an author paid by Brian's great grandson, Muirchertach Ua Briain (descendant of Brian) who had glorious career as king of Ireland and international power-broker in his own right.
- The author drew on existing annals (some of which are now lost) and contemporary information but he rewrites them to create a literary description of a king who outstrips the Roman Emperor Augustus in his military prowess and his intelligence.
- For most of Brian's career, we use annals and genealogies for the bare bones of information about his conquests but for the colour and incident of his personal life as well as for some events not covered elsewhere, we have to rely on the *Cogadh*.

MAP 2: CHURCHES RAIDED 831–850



Map from Colmán Etchingham's *Viking raids on Irish church settlements in the ninth century* (Maynooth 1996) – showing early raids as recorded in annals supplemented by raids recorded only in *Cogadh*.

The death of Cennétich as a national event – the *Cogadh* account

§XXXVI The battle of Muine Broccain was won by the fleet of Dublin and the sons of Ímar. In that battle was killed Ruairi Úa Canandáin, king of Tír Conaill (Tyrconnell) and king of Ireland according to other people and the nobles of the North alongside him, thirty years after Níall Glúndub was killed by them. Two years after, Lachtín son of Gothfraidh was killed and four years after, Muirchertach son of Niall was killed. This was the year in which the Foreigners plundered Kells of Columcille and carried off from there 1000 captives. This was the year in which Cennétich son of Lorcán was killed, king of Tuadmumu (north Munster > Thomond) and *rídomna Caisil* “capable of being king of Cashel”

Arrival of descendants of Ímar into Shannon estuary – the *Cogadh* account

§XL: “There came after that an immensely great fleet, more wonderful than all the other fleets (for its equal or its likeness never before came to Ireland) with Ímar, grandson of Ímar, chief king of the foreigners and with three sons, viz Dubhcenn and Cú-Allaidh and Aralt (Harold) sons of Ímar. These landed and encamped in *Inis-Sibtonn (King’s Island)* in the harbour of Luimnech. Munster was plundered and ravaged on all sides by them, both churches and kingdoms, and they levied pledges and hostages from all the men of Munster, both Gaill and Gaedhil and they afterwards brought them under indescribable oppression and servitude to the foreigners and the Danes.”

The annals also talk of an Ímar active on Shannon but give no details of his arrival

NB! *Luimnech* at this period could refer either to the Viking settlement of Limerick or to the whole Shannon estuary as far as the tides would reach.

The opposition to Vikings led by Dál Cais – the *Cogadh* account

§XLI: “there was however a certain gracious, noble, high-born, beautiful *cenél* [kindred] of Ireland who never submitted to tyranny or oppression or unwonted injury from any other dynasty in the world, namely the descendants of Lughaid, son of Oengus Tirech, who are called **Dál Cais Borumha**, one of the two pillars of the nobility and one of the two houses that always sustained the rule and sovereignty of Ireland...”

This is a dynasty from whom it was never lawful to levy rent or tribute or pledge or hostage or fostership fee by any one in the world ever, so long as Ireland was not theirs but they were bound to give recognition only and to check aggression and supply numerous forces to maintain the freedom of Cashel against Leth Chuinn (the northern half of Ireland, dominated by Uí Néill).”

The genealogy of Mathgamain – the *Cogadh* account

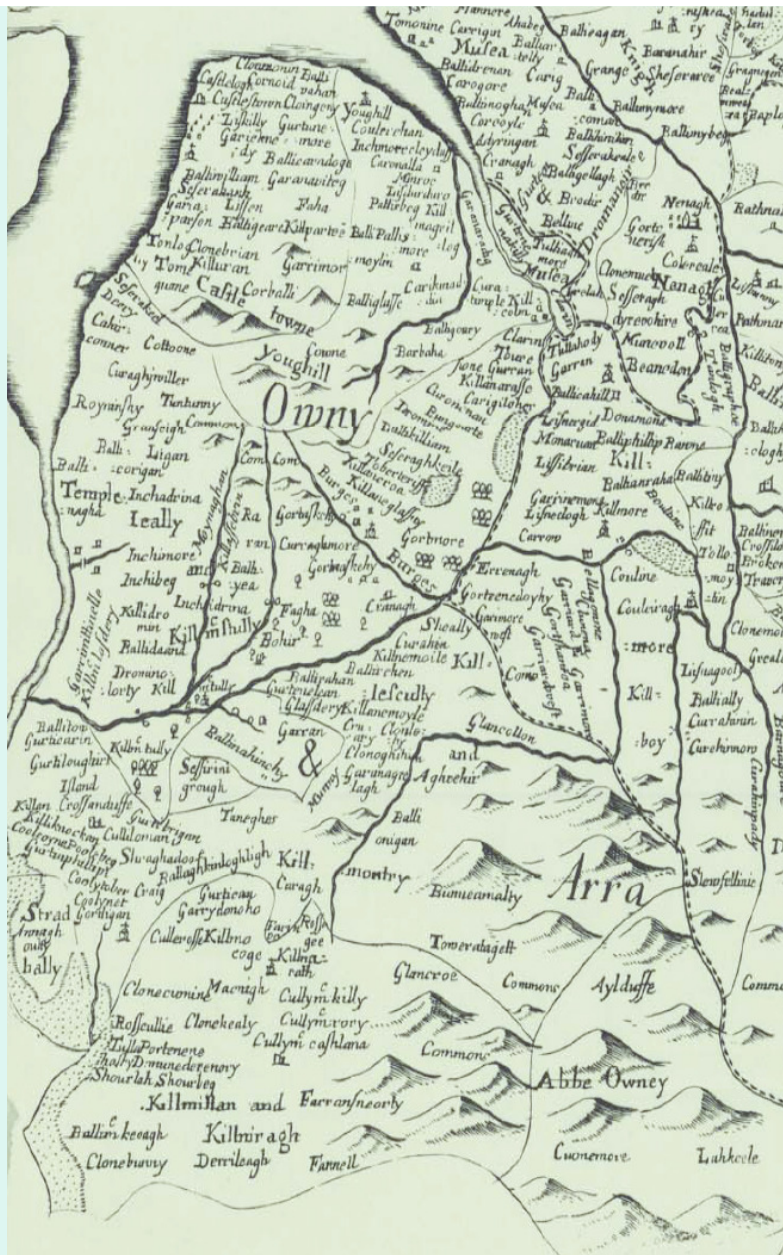
XLIII: There was then governing and ruling this tribe two stout, able, valiant pillars, two fierce, lacerating, magnificent heroes, two gates of battle...viz. **Mathgamain and Brian, two sons of Cennétich** son of Lorcan son of Lachtna, son of Corc son of Anluan, son of Mathgamain, son of Toirdelbach, son of Cathal, son of Aed, son of Conall, son of Eochaid Ball-Derg, son of Cairthinn Finn, son of Blath, son of Cas, son of Conall Echluath, son of Lugaid Menn, son of Oengus Tirech, son of Fercorb, son of Mog Corb, son of Cas, son of Ailell Auloimm, son of Mug Nuadat who divided Ireland with Conn of the hundred battles (Conn Cétchathaig .. King of northern half of Ireland). This was one of the two couples that sustained the rule and sovereignty of Ireland from the time of Eremon son of Miled and Eber his brother and from the beginning of the world.

The *Cogadh*'s view of importance of Dál Cais

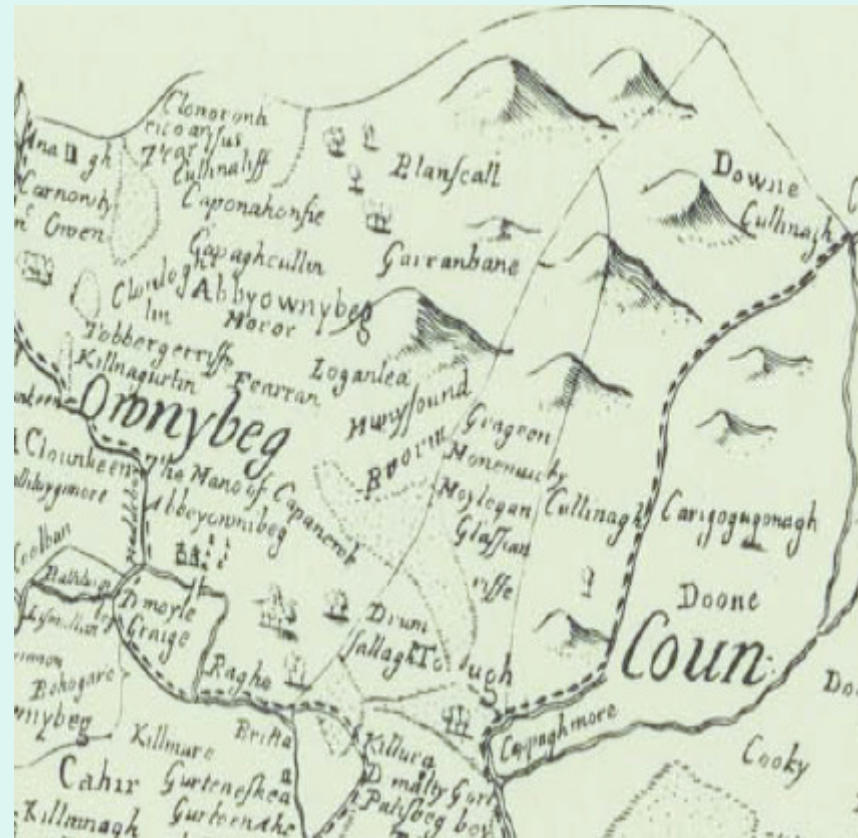
- In the hands of the author of the *Cogadh*, Dal Cais were no longer “new kids on the block” but had an ancestry going back to the first humans in Ireland. Cas, as the ancestor who gave them their name (Dál Cais) is here being described as the grandson of the man who brought humankind to Ireland and founded the ancient provincial kingship of Munster.
- We can also see traces of this PR revamping of the ancestry of the Dál Cais in genealogical sources. In these, Cas's father, Ailell Auloim (Ailell Grazed-Ear) was also remembered as the ancestor of the Eóganacht dynasties so both dynastic groups were said to have had equally prestigious ancestry.

The decision of Brian and Mathgamain to oppose Ívarr – the *Cogadh* account

- Now, when Mathgamain/Brian saw the bondage and the oppression and the misrule that was imposed on Munster and on the men of Ireland in general, the advice they acted on was to avoid it and not submit to it at all. They therefore carried off their people and all their chattels over the Shannon westwards and they dispersed themselves among the forests and woods of the three *Uaithne* (baronies of Owey in Limerick & Tipperary) that were there. – (*i.e. they left Killaloe and went to east side of Lough Derg*), They began to plunder and kill the foreigners immediately after that. ... When at length each party of them became tired of the other, they made peace and truce between them for sometime, viz. Mathgamain son of Cennétig, king of Dál Cais and the chieftains of the foreigners of Munster in general.



Tipperary barony of Owney & Ara



Limerick barony of Owney (beg) – civil parishes of Abington & Tuogh and part of Doon

Brian does not agree to truce: the *Cogadh* account

XLV “But as regards Brian, son of Cennétich, he was not willing to make peace with the foreigners because however small the injury he might be able to do to the foreigners he preferred it to peace; and though all others were silent on that head he would not be so. Brian, however,, after that and with him the young champions of the Dál Cais, went back again into the forests and woods and deserts of north Munster. He began then immediately to plunder and kill and retaliate on the foreigners.”

The country was wasted by him from Lough Derg to the Fergus and from Sliabh Echtghe to Tratraighe. .. Then the foreigners of all north Munster assembled around Tratraighe and they raised a fortifying bank all around Tratraighe and they proposed to render all Tratraighe one garrison and from it to conquer the whole of north Munster and Uí Conaill and make them subject to them

E.g. faced with Brian's attacks, Vikings all gathered in area around Bunratty which they fortified against him.

But opposition costs Brian dear – the *Cogadh* account

- Great were the hardships and the ruin, the bad food and bad bedding which they [the foreigners] inflicted on him [Brian] in the wild huts of the desert on the hard knotty wet roots of his own native country whilst they killed his people and his trusty officers and his companions...for historians say that the foreigners cut off his people so that he had at last no more than fifteen followers
- But when Mathgamhain heard of his being in this condition, he sent a messenger to him for he dreaded his fall by the foreigners for want of troops and forces... (a dispute then develops between brothers as to what to do)

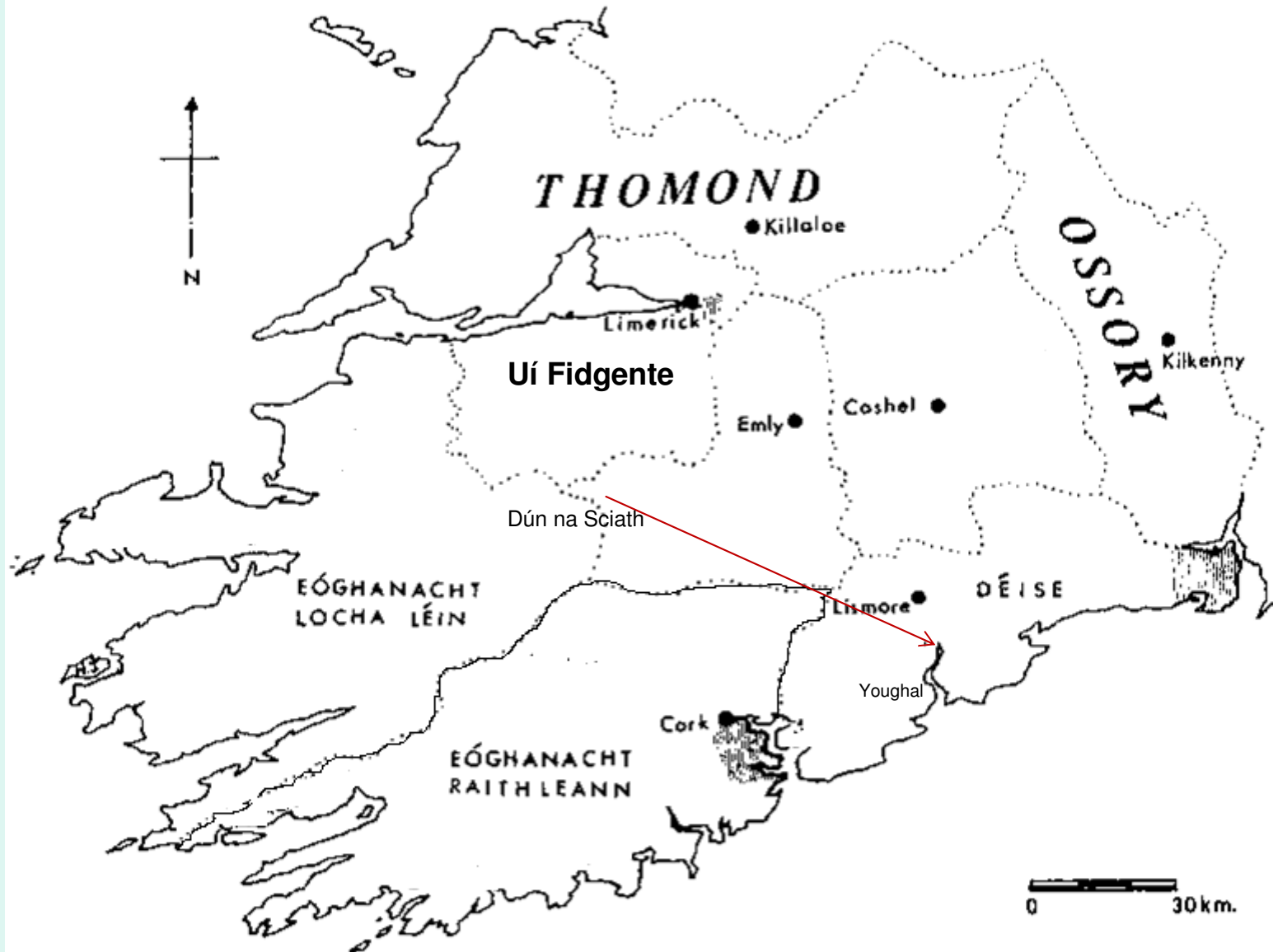
Democratic decision by Dál Cais to attack Cashel- *Cogadh*

XLVIII-XLIX: All the Dál Cais were assembled to one appointed place before Mathgamhain and he asked them what decision they wished to come to, namely whether they would have peace or war with the foreigners and with the Danes. Then they all answered, both old and young that they preferred meeting death.. In defending freedom of their patrimony...

Mathgamhain then said that this was the decision that it was right for them to come to to go to Cashel of the kings and to the Eoganacht for that was the *príimport* or pre-eminent place of Munster..Accordingly...they marched then into the country of the Eoganacht and the Eoganacht and the people of Muscraige (Muskerry) gathered unto them from *Dún na Sciath* (Donaskeagh tl. in Rathlynin parish) to *Belach Accailli* (road between Lismore and Youghal). Mathgamhain went after this to Cashel of the kings and he halted and encamped at Dún Cuirc (the fort of Corc, ancestor of Eoganacht kings of Cashel) the year after the death of Donnchadh son of Cellachán king of Cashel. ...But when Imar, grandson of Imar, chief king of the foreigners of Munster and of the Gaedhil at that time heard of the great ...sons of Cennedigh and the Dál Cais... he determined on making a small angle of Munster the seat of war and conflict....

E.g. the *Cogadh* author describes the two brothers as fighting the Vikings up and down the Shannon estuary BEFORE they decided to attack fellow Irishmen ruling at Cashel. This is not clear from the annals and may be part of the PR revamping of history after Brian Boru had become king.

The kingdoms of south Munster



KEY

..... Diocesan boundaries [Approx.] as laid down at Rathbreasal A.D. 1111.

● Cathedral.

■ Ostmen.

Contemporary annals show Eoganacht power diminishing in Munster as the Dál Cais rise...

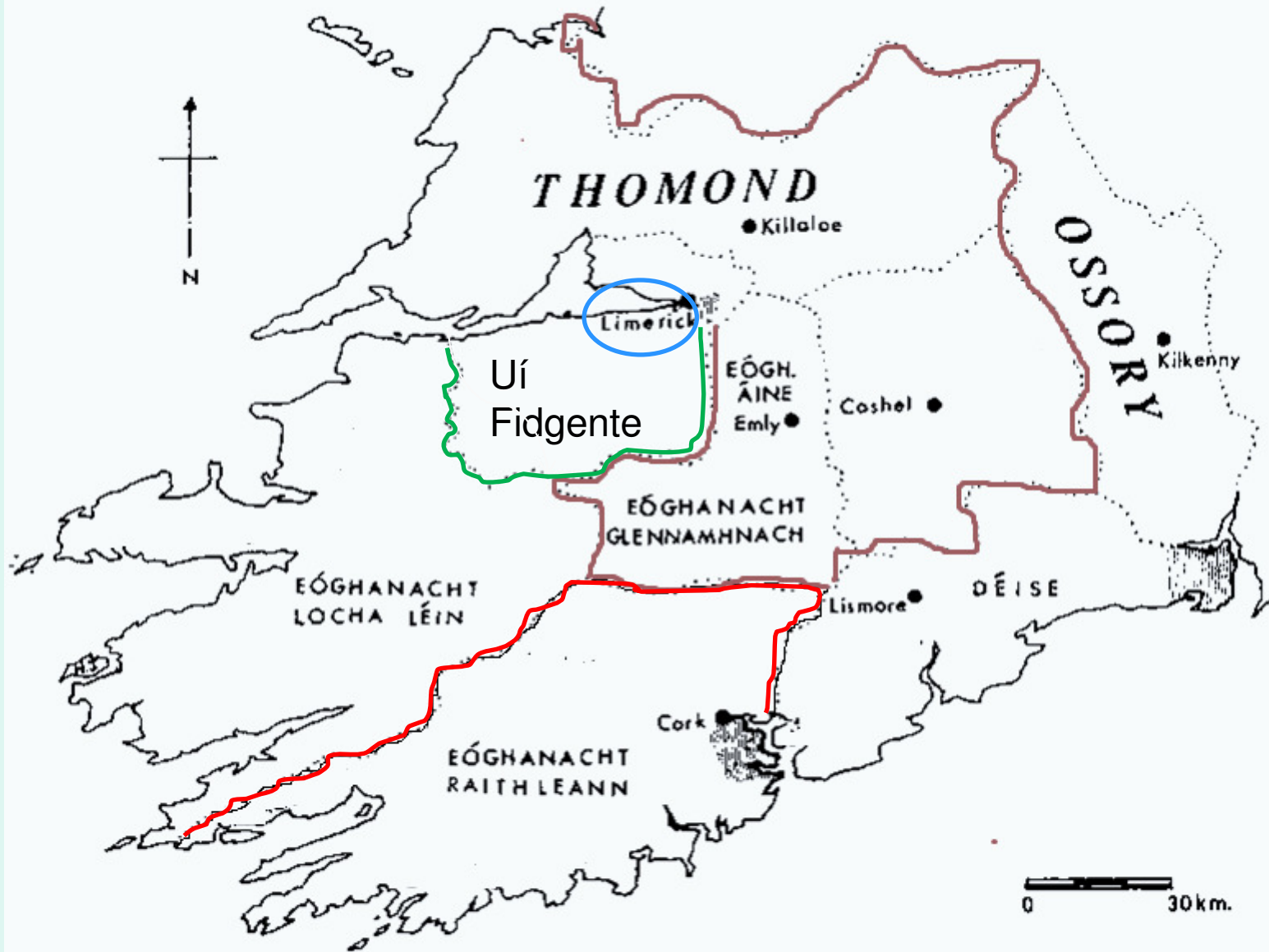
- Cellachán, Eóganacht king of Cashel, died in 954
- His successor Máel Fothartaig was slain by Osraige in 957
- He is succeeded by Dub dá Boirenn mac Domnaill of Éoganacht Raithlind in south Munster – who is slain in 959
- Donnchad son of Cellachán is slain in 963
- By 967, Mathgamain of the Dál Cais and Brian's brother is identified in the *Annals of Ulster* as *rí Caisil* or king of Munster

Down in the south, a new power has appeared – Máel Muad son of Bran of *Deas Muman* – Desmond. His kingdom is based on that of Éoganacht Raithlind in modern Cork

In a context of Eoganacht weakness, the *Cogadh* shows the Dál Cais rising politically and militarily under Mathgamain:

- Mathgamain - supported by Déisi of Waterford and smaller kingdoms located in modern east Limerick – conquers Cashel and Eóganacht Caisil lands
- Máel Muad of *Deas Muman* links up with king of Uí Fidgente – Donnubán son of Cathal - & with Viking city of Limerick against the Dál Cais
- Mathgamain and Brian fight battle of Sulchóid (near Limerick Junction) and Singland – and they burn Viking Limerick

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Annals of Inisfallen 967: A defeat of the foreigners of Luimnech by Mathgamain, son of Cennétig, at **Sulchuait**, and Luimnech was burned by him before noon on the following day

Cogadh §LII: When the Dal Cais, however, arrived at Sulcoit, the foreigners came against them to meet them and there was a fierce, bloody, crimsoned, violent, rough, unsparing, implacable battle fought between them. They were from sun-rise to mid-day striking and slaughtering each other. However the foreigners were at length routed and they fled to the ditches and to the valleys and to the solitary places of that great sweet-flowery plain afterwards. They were followed however, by the others quickly and rapidly throughout the great plain who killed and beheaded from that time until evening.

Battle of Limerick - sacking Viking settlement for its wealth

Cogadh §LIII – When they came together after victory and exultation, they marched that night until morning and they killed them until they had entered the *dún*. They followed them also into the *dún* and slaughtered them on the *sradaibh ocus isna tigibh* (on the streets and in the houses). These were killed by them there viz Carran Laighnech, Stabbal son of Sigmall and Etila Tretel and Ruamand and Somarlid and Manus of Limerick and Tolbarb and Infuit [all Scandinavian names] and 2000 men and the *dún* was sacked by them after that. They carried off their jewels and their best property and their saddles beautiful and foreign; their gold and their silver; their beautifully woven cloth of all colours and of all kinds; their satins and silken cloth, pleasing and variegated, both scarlet and green and all sorts of cloth in like manner. They carried away their soft, youthful, bright matchless girls, their blooming silk-clad young women and their active, large and well-formed boys. The *dún* and their *degbaile* (good town) they reduced to a cloud of smoke and to red fire afterwards. The whole of the captives were collected on the hills of Saingel. Every one of them that was fit for war was killed and every one that was fit for a slave was enslaved.

The Viking settlement at Limerick was an important nexus for foreign trade in Shannon estuary in this period, bringing in furs, foreign weaponry, silver and gold.





Slaves were an important source of wealth in Viking world and Irish leaders often sold off their enemies in the slave markets. The major slave market in this period was Bristol and another was Corduba in southern Spain. Other Irish goods being exported abroad at this period were oak timber and cattle hides.

Cogadh §LVI Great spoils and plunders and ravages were now committed by Mathgamhain in Munster. By him, great spoils were taken from the Uí Enna of Ane [Any and there it was that Cathal son of Feradach, the king-soldier of Ireland, was killed. He took the pledges and hostages of all the men of Munster; he took the hostages of Maelmuad son of Bran having captured him first; he took the hostages of Donnubán son of Cathal, king of the Uí Fidgente; he killed the billeted soldiers (*suartletu Gall*) of the foreigners in every *tír* (land) and he gave 7 defeats to the foreigners in which he made a red slaughter of the foreigners – viz, the defeat of Sean-gualainn (Shanagolden) and the defeat of the *Laeg* in Traraighe (Bunratty) and a defeat on Machaire Mór when the foreigners of Port Lairge and the foreigners of Luimnech united in ravaging Munster, when they plundered Imlech (Emly) and camped there for two days – but Mathgamhain killed and slew them and he burned Luimnech twice and he banished Ímar of Luimnech over the sea so that he was a year in the east and Amlaibh (Ólaf) son of Amlaibh and they attempted the conquest of the *ríge Bretan* – kingdom of the Britons – and Ímar, accompanied by a great fleet arrived again in the western harbour of Luimnech and Belan Littill and his son were killed by him. He then fixed his residence on the western harbour of Luimnech from whence he made many spoils and battles.

The annals depict Mathgamain as a successful king of Munster after sacking of Limerick ..but his enemies were growing

Annals of Inisfallen 972: the three ordinances, viz., the banishment of the [Norse] *suaitrech*, the banishment of the foreigners from Luimnech, and the burning of the fortress, were enacted by the counsel of the nobles of Mumu, namely, Mathgamain and Faelán and the son of Bran, and others

- AI 973 " Dub dá Leithe, coarb of Patrick, came to Mumu and made his visitation; and he and the coarb of Ailbe quarrelled regarding the levy, and Mathgamain, king of Mumu, made peace between them, and they agreed upon the perpetual right of [the coarb of] Patrick.
- AI 974 "The son of Bran took the hostages of Mumu from Luimnech southwards, and marched against Mathgamain"
- AI 975 Death of Cormac, son of Faelán (of Déise of Waterford), by the army of Mathgamain.

In other words, by 974, Mael Muad son of Bran, the king of Desmond , is linking up with Irish and Vikings on south bank of Shannon versus the Dál Cais leader while Waterford chafes under Dál Cais rule.

Mathgamain is killed by his enemies

- ***Annals of Ulster*** 976: Mathgamuin son of Cennétich, king of Cashel was killed by Mael Muad son of Bran.
- ***Annals of Inisfallen*** 976: The capture of Mathgamain son of Cennétig, king of Caisel. He was treacherously seized by Donnuban and handed over to the son of Bran in violation of the guarantee and despite the interdiction of the elders of Mumu, and he was put to death by Bran's son
- ***Cogadh*** §LIX: And Donnuban son of Cathal (king of the Uí Fidgente), in his own house betrayed Mathgamain having been instigated to it by Ímar of Luimnech and he delivered him to Mael Muad son of Bran and to Imar in violation of all the saints and the clergy of all Munster. This was the counsel that was acted upon there; Mathgamhain was delivered up by Donnuban to Mael Muad son of Bran and to the foreigners although he was under the protection of Columb son of Ciaragán, *comarba* of Finbarr (of Cork) that he should not be killed or blinded.

Conclusions

- For story of Brian's rise to kingship of Munster, we are largely dependent on the propaganda text in the *Cogadh*. This is a tale of military conquest written during reign of Brian's descendants. in which the enemies of the Dál Cais were the Vikings of Limerick, the kings of the Uí Fidgente (county Limerick) and the king of *Deas-Muman* (essentially county Cork).
- When we compare this with the contemporary record in the annals, we see the old provincial kings of Munster, ruling at Cashel, were weakened by events and armies operating on a national scale and by their fights with the Uí Néill of the north and eastern midlands.
- In the contemporary annals, we see little or no sign of Brian in this period. Instead all victories are credited to his elder brother Mathgamain
- Missing from this account are references to Dál Cais allies which we can trace through study of their marriages (next week).

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On the specific links between annals and the *Cogadh* as historical sources, see Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, “Cogad Gáedel Re Gallaib” and the Annals: A Comparison” *Ériu* 47 (1996), 101-26

For date of compilation of *Cogadh* see M. Ní Mhaonaigh, “Cogad Gdedel re Gallaib: some dating considerations”, *Peritia* 9 (1995), 354-77

Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh – wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill ed. J.H. Todd (London 1867), <http://archive.org/details/cogadhgaedhelreg00todd>

- For editions of Irish annals, both in original Irish and with translations - see www.ucc.ie/celt

On early 10th C Uí Néill context, with specific reference to reign of Congalach mac Máel Mithig –see C. Swift: “The early history of Knowth” in *Historical Knowth* esp. 15-36