

## Lettermoylan of Clann Bhruaidealha: A résumé of their landholding, topography & history

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This paper surveys the landholding of the learned poet-chronicler lineage, Clann Bhruaidealha of west Co. Clare and touches on the relationship between Clann Bhruaidealha and their estate at Lettermoylan on Slieve Callan. As members of the Gaelic learned class Clann Bhruaidealha had extensive landholding in Ibrickan and other parts of Co. Clare, including church land, crannóg and towerhouse settlements.

Confusion appears to exist in Co. Clare as to the whereabouts of Lettermoylan.<sup>1</sup> Lettermoylan, it may be observed, was one of the historical estates of the Meic Bhruaidealha (*viz.* Clann Bhruaidealha<sup>2</sup>), a learned poet-chronicler lineage that was among the *literati* service families whose chief patrons were the Uí Bhriain of Thomond. Uncertainty over the location of Lettermoylan is compounded by the observation that its location on the eastern slopes of Slieve Callan (*Sliabh Calláin*) afforded the area little value in agricultural terms. It is deemed an unlikely residence for a high status family of the Gaelic literary class. The land surrounding the slopes of Slieve Callan are characterised as marginal and of low productive value, a fact easily deduced from a walk around the boggy perimeter of its eastern and southern slopes.

This confusion arose from the misleading identification in John O'Donovan's edited version of the *Annals of the Four Masters* (1856).<sup>3</sup> There it states Lettermoylan lay in Dysert within a subdivision of 'Glangee'. This identification was appended as a note by O'Donovan accompanying the annalistic recording of the death in 1595 of Maccon Ó Cléirigh *ollamh* to Ó Domhnall in history, who died while visiting 'Leitir-Maelain in Thomond' (*Leitir Maolain i tuadhmunhain*).<sup>4</sup> The error also found its way into Fr. Edmund Hogan's *Onomasticon Goedelicum* (1910).<sup>5</sup> From this point uncertainty has remained as to the actual location of Lettermoylan. It will be ascertained in this article that Lettermoylan situated on the eastern flank of Slieve Callan in the

<sup>1</sup> The author wishes to thank Martin Breen, Prof. Pádraig Ó Riain (UCC), Brian Ó Dálaigh, Dr Katharine Simms (TCD), Kenneth Nicholls (UCC), Prof. Joep Leerssen (Universiteit van Amsterdam) and Jane Tottenham in the preparation of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> The correct literary form of the name is written thus. See Seathrún Céitinn, *Foras Fearsa ar Éirinn*, III (London, 1908) pp12-14. Also see James Carney, 'De Scriptoribus Hibernicis', *Celtica*, vol. 1 (1946) pp 86-103:91 where it is written as 'Clann Bhrúidealha'. For literary or phonetic reasons the Meic Bhruaidealha used the form 'McBrodyn' in English and 'Bruodinus' in Latin sources. The exact reasons for this are unclear but the form appears to have been adopted by successive members of the family in the seventeenth century.

<sup>3</sup> See John O'Donovan (ed.), *Annála Ríoghachta Éirean/The Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, From the Earliest Period to the Year 1616*, (second edition, Dublin, 1856).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, *sub anno* 1595.

<sup>5</sup> See Fr. Edmund Hogan's *Onomasticon Goedelicum: locorum et tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae: An index, with identifications, to the Gaelic names of places and tribes* (Dublin, 1910).

modern parish of Inagh (which once formed part of the Church of Ireland parish of Dysert<sup>6</sup>) and that it encompassed an ancient church associated with Mac Reithe (*i.e.* Mac Creiche).<sup>7</sup> This church had an important bearing on the status of Lettermoylan and provides one explanation of the link between Lettermoylan and Clann Bhruaidealha.

In 1912 antiquary Dr George U. Macnamara confirmed O'Donovan's mistake and added that 'Glangee cannot be found in the townland list at all, but there is a Glennageer in the adjoining parish of Inagh'.<sup>8</sup> Glennageer does not appear in the 1641 *Books of Survey and Distribution*, but Lettermoylan does feature in 1641 under the Church of Ireland parish of Dysert.<sup>9</sup> The modern Glennageer situates on the eastern slope of Slieve Callan. It will be shown that Lettermoylan, while no longer designated a townland division, once comprised modern day Glennageer, Knockalassa, Magherabaun and Ballynoe where Mount Callan House now stands. Investigating the link between Clann Bhruaidealha and Lettermoylan is the key to comprehending the landholding and status of this learned lineage. This paper has twin purposes; to unravel the connection between Lettermoylan and Clann Bhruaidealha, and to survey their landholding. The course taken here demonstrates that their landholding in the seventeenth century is relevant to understanding their origins as a family of the Gaelic learned class.

### Clann Bhruaidealha Origins

It has been speculated that Clann Bhruaidealha shared genealogical links with the Uí Dheaghaidh and that their remote ancestors held the kingship of Corcomroe.<sup>10</sup> We read in the annals that a Bruaided succeeded to the kingship in 871,<sup>11</sup> and he is sometimes identified as a progeniture of the lineage.<sup>12</sup> By the eleventh-century the descendants of Bruaided seemed to have been displaced from Corcomroe and instead held the lordship of *Ráith Tamhnaighe*.<sup>13</sup> This can tentatively be identified as Toonagh in Dysart parish,<sup>14</sup> from whence may derive the townland Ballybrody, possibly representing the rump survival of Clann Bhruaidealha's ancient patrimony. If this was the case, it needs to be reconciled to the fact that Clann Bhruaidealha's claim to the *ollamh*-ship of *seanchas Uí Bhriain* was achieved only in the sixteenth century.<sup>15</sup> Prior to this date Clann Bhruaidealha's activity in the learned professions of chronicling and poetry must have enjoyed a more circumspect regional character, commensurate with their status as a local lineage with local sources of patronage.

Genealogist John O'Hart identified several Meic Bhruaidealha obits for the years 1427 and 1518 which refer to kinsmen with the appellations 'chief professor of poetry

<sup>6</sup> Edward Worth, Bishop of Killaloe (1660-1669,) groups Lettermoylan as part of the termon of Dysert. See MS 1777, 'Typescript copy of a survey of lands in the diocese of Killaloe made for Bishop Worth, 1661', transcribed by (Rev) James B. Leslie, National Library of Ireland, 1936, pp 31-3. Also see R. Simington (ed.), *Books of Survey and Distribution, Vol. 4, Clare* (Dublin, 1967) p. 533 where it is recorded as a denomination in the parish of Dysert.

<sup>7</sup> Mac Creiche is the form of the name used throughout this paper.

<sup>8</sup> See Dr. George U. Macnamara, 'The O'Davorens of Cahermacnaughten, Burren, Co. Clare', *Journal of the North Munster Archaeological Society*, vol. 2 (1912-13) pp 63-212 and no. 4, vol. 2 (1913) pp 194-211.

<sup>9</sup> Simington, *Books of Survey and Distribution, Clare*, p. 533.

<sup>10</sup> Friar Bruodinus sets out the genealogical links of Clann Bhruaidealha to the Uí Dheaghaidh and their shared descent from the brother of Bloid (*a quo* Uí Bhloid) Oengus. Antonius Bruodinus, *Propugnaculum Catholicae Veritatis Libris X Constructum, in Duaeque Partes Divisum, Pars Prima Historica in Quinque Libros*, (Prague, 1669) pp 771, 851.

<sup>11</sup> See *Annals of the Four Masters*, sub anno 871, 899 on his father Flaithbheartach and his own obit.

<sup>12</sup> Diarmuid Ó Murchadha, 'The Origins of Clann Bhruaidealha', *Éigse*, vol. 31 (1999) pp 121-130:122.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 123-4. Also see *Annals of the Four Masters*, sub anno 1069.

<sup>14</sup> Ó Murchadha, 'Origins of Clann Bhruaidealha', p. 124.

<sup>15</sup> *Annals of the Four Masters*, sub anno 1563.

and history' and 'chief historian and bard' to the 'O'Quinn of Cineal-Fearn[h]aic'.<sup>16</sup> Whether there is any basis to these claims is uncertain because the supporting annalistic entry or corresponding genealogy has not been located. But as these obits make clear, it is more credible that prior to the mid-sixteenth century when learned Meic Bhruaidealha appear in the annals,<sup>17</sup> members of Clann Bhruaidealha were probably attached to local ruling families such as the Uí Chuinn. While Clann Bhruaidealha must have been active as a learned family from the mid-fourteenth century when Seaán Buidhe Mac Bruaidealha composed a poem for Mathghamhain Ó Briain in c.1365-69,<sup>18</sup> their emergence as the chief poet-chronicler lineage in the sixteenth century owed much to their links with the fourth Earl of Thomond as they graduated from being *ollaimh* to the Uí Chuinn of Inchiquin.

In discussing the origins of Clann Bhruaidealha which Friar Antonius Bruodinus traces to the Dál gCais ancestor-founder and links them to both the Uí Dheaghaidh and the Uí Bhriain, he also says something about the exemptions from tribute and military quartering enjoyed by Clann Bhruaidealha and that they received an income from their patrons.<sup>19</sup>

*Denique notandum est, quo in honore inter Hiberniae Principes semper fuere Chronologi illi, qui diligenter, sincere, & veridice acta Regum, & praecipuarum, Familiarum, earumque Genealogias, observabant. Nam praeterquam quod ipsi antiquissimae erant nobilitatis, ex eodem ordinarie stipite originem trahentes, ex quo ij quorum erant Chronologi descenderunt (Bruodini v. g. qui OBrienoram semper fuere Chronologi, originem trahunt, non solum ab Eibero Mileri primogenito, sed etiam a Cassio, a quo OBrien descenderunt; Bruodiga namque a quo Bruodini dicuntur, filius fuit Deaghi, filij Aenea capitosi, filij Cassis, ex cujus primogenito Bloid dicto, descendunt O'Brien, ut inferius fusius ostendam) sed & emptione plus, quam Ecclesiastica gaudebant. A Principibus enim annuam recipiebant pensionem. In publicis sessionibus, non infimas post Principes sedes occupabant. Tam pacis, quam belli tempore, a Contributionibus, militumque Quartirijs exempti erant. His, aliisque privilegijs gaudebant, eo sine, ut diligenter suo insisterent muneri, postpositoque omni respectu, nitidam describerent veritatem.*<sup>20</sup>

[Finally it should be noted in what honour those chronologists, who diligently, sincerely and truthfully kept the deeds of kings and of the most important families, and the genealogies of the latter, have always been held among the princes of Ireland. For aside from the fact that they themselves were from very ancient nobility, drawing their origin regularly from the same root of which those descen-

<sup>16</sup> John O'Hart, *Irish Pedigrees: Or, the Origin and Stem of the Irish Nation*, (fifth edition, vol. 1, Dublin, 1892) p. 105.

<sup>17</sup> *Annals of the Four Masters*, sub anno 1563.

<sup>18</sup> On Seaán Buidhe Mac Bruaidealha's poem *Dlighthid ollamh urraim ríogh* ('An ollamh should be respected by his prince') see Láimhbheartach Mac Cionnaith (ed), 'Dlighthid ollamh urraim ríogh', in *Dioghluim Dána* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1938) pp 252-6. Also see a full translation of the poem in L. McKenna, S.J. 'Poem to Ó Briain', *The Irish Monthly*, vol. 49 (1921) pp 112-17. It appears that Mac Bruaidealha had caused verbal injury to his patron Mathghamhain 'Maonmhaighe' son of Muirheartach Ó Briain' and his poem was offered in the spirit of reconciliation and an eye for the continuance of Ó Briain's patronage.

<sup>19</sup> In Bruodinus' work he notes that bards and other learned orders in Ireland traditionally received immunities or privileges for rendering services to ruling dynasties. See Cornel O'Mollony, *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologetici*, (Prague, 1671) p. 147.

<sup>20</sup> Bruodinus, *Propugnaculum Catholicae Veritatis*, p. 771.

ded whose chronologists they were (the Bruodini, for example, who have always been the chroniclers of the O'Briens, draw their origin not only from Eiberus, the first son of Milerus, but also from Cas, from whom the O'Briens descended; for Bruodiga, after whom the Bruodini are named, was the son of Deagh, the son of Aeneas capitosus, the son of Cas, of whose first-born, who was called Bloid, the O'Briens descend, as I will show at greater length further below), but they also enjoyed greater exemption than that of the Church. For they used to receive an annual pension from the princes. In public sessions, they did not occupy the lowliest seats after the princes. Both in times of peace and in war, they were exempt from contributions and from the duty of providing quarter. These and other privileges they enjoyed, to this end, to be sure, that they would pursue their duty diligently and, with a disregard for every (other) interest, they would write down the clear truth.]<sup>21</sup>

The elite literate class possessed a degree of wealth and privilege which included immunity from rent and tribute.<sup>22</sup> In the case of the Meic Bhruaidealha chronicler-poets the immunity which their family enjoyed was that of their chief residence at Knockanalban, to the south of Slieve Callan. It may be significant that the Clann Bhruaidealha residence at Knockanalban was a crannóg, a fortified settlement that resonated an ancient, if somewhat arcane, tradition of settlement. We know from the fourteenth-century saga-text *Caithréim Thoirdealbhaigh* that the masters of learning, the *ollaimh*, had as their residence the *ráth* ('*agus gach ollam ina ráith*')<sup>23</sup> while other members of the learned orders such as the 'noble coarbs' were described as dwelling in their 'high church' ('*agus gach uasalchomarba ina áirdchill*').<sup>24</sup> The continued importance of the *ráith* as a secular residence beyond the medieval period is attested in the Uí Dhuibhdábhoireann occupation of Cahermacnaughten in the seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup> The Meic Bhruaidealha also held a more conventional late medieval Gaelic residence, a tower-house at the imposing vantage point of Doonogan.<sup>26</sup>

In respect to the foregoing it can equally be posited that Clann Bhruaidealha shared an early connection to a monastic site after being ousted from the kingship of Corcomroe. What may be gathered from these fragmented facts is agreeable with the general view that Clann Bhruaidealha shared, along with other native *literati*, a peculiar connection to the monastic church.<sup>27</sup> Such a link probably evolved out of the monastic *scriptoria* of the

<sup>21</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>22</sup> Immunities from tribute and military service can be identified for the brehon Meic Fhlannchadha lineage of *Tuath Ghlae* (Killilagh) in Corcomroe. See James Hardiman (ed.), 'Ancient Irish Deeds and Writings Chiefly relating to Landed Property from the Twelfth to Seventeenth Century: With Translation, Notes and a Preliminary Essay', in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xv (1826) pp 1–95, pp 36–43. The specific reference reads, '*A ta na sairsi ac Sil Flannc[h]ad[h]a*' ('immunities of the race of Flanchy').

<sup>23</sup> Sean Mac Ruaidhrí Mheic Craith, *Caithréim Thoirdealbhaigh*, (ed.), Standish Hayes O'Grady (First edition, London, 1929) p. 134.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Macnamara, 'The O'Davorens of Cahermacnaughten', (1912–13) pp 63–93. On the chronology of occupation of such residences into early modern times see Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, 'Native Enclosed Settlement and the Problem of the Irish 'Ring-fort'', *Medieval Archaeology*, vol. 53 (2009) pp 271–307.

<sup>26</sup> Petworth House Archives, MS C.27.A.60, Ibrickan Survey [1615].

<sup>27</sup> The early ecclesiastical origin of the Gaelic learned orders has received considerable attention by historians. See, for example, Proinsias Mac Cana, 'The Rise of the later school of Filidheacht', *Ériu*, vol. xxv (1974) pp 126–46. For a similar view but relating to Gaelic Scotland see Derick S. Thomson, 'Gaelic Learned Orders and Literati in Medieval Scotland', *Scottish Studies*, vol. 12, part 1 (1968) pp 57–78.

Irish Church and became the preserve of a caste of specialist families who transmitted native learning inherited from the monastic scribes of the twelfth century and earlier. The setting up of learned families on termon lands, along with reconstituting important clerical tenants as *airchinnigh* (erenaghs), sometimes occurred after the reorganisation of the Irish Church in the twelfth century.<sup>28</sup> The process of reconstituting themselves as a learned family and being granted stewardship over certain church lands – perhaps those sites associated with the Corcomroe saint Mac Creiche – had the advantage of allowing Clann Bhruaidealha to maintain their position, though at the expense of relinquishing political influence to the Uí Dheaghaidh. There are other examples of formerly important lineages being diminished in political terms and adopting ecclesiastical status to ensure their survival. In Co. Clare the best example of this process were the Uí Ghráda of Tuamgraney.<sup>29</sup>

We may also deduce a possible connection between the religious epithet of Maoilín (i.e. small tonsured man) and Clann Bhruaidealha. It is known that learned families often attempted to give themselves a pseudo-ecclesiastical legitimacy by adopting religious epithets.<sup>30</sup> This is evidenced from the Uí Dhuibhdábhoireann brehons of Corcomroe who retained forenames such as Giolla na Naomh (i.e. devotee of saints) over generations.<sup>31</sup> It may be significant that the forename Maoilín was used over a long period by Clann Bhruaidealha. A now lost pedigree showed a ‘Dermot son of Maoilín, professor of poetry and history to the O’Quinns of Cineal-Fearn[h]aic 1427’, and the forename Maoilín carried on over subsequent generations in this line.<sup>32</sup> Other religious forenames can be noted such as Giolla Brighde of Lettermoylan who became *ollamh* in 1582,<sup>33</sup> and we may also submit the eleventh century Giolla Molua Ua Bruaidealha<sup>34</sup> of *Ráith Tamhnaighe* (Toonagh?) in Dysert parish, ostensibly an early medieval ancestor-founder and bearer of another pseudo-devotional forename.<sup>35</sup>

### *Mac Creiche & Clann Bhruaidealha*

A survey of the evidence on Clann Bhruaidealha suggests a connection of some antiquity with the cult of the Corcomroe saint, Mac Creiche. On the lands of Lettermoylan, near the present day Mount Callan House, exists the remains of a small medieval church or oratory situated next to a flowing stream. The site is known locally as ‘church field’<sup>36</sup> and was used into modern times as a children’s burial place, though it is now wooded. The dimensions of the structure suggest an early medieval church, akin to proprietary

<sup>28</sup> This process has been observed in Fermanagh where some erenagh families acquired termon lands either through a grant or in piecemeal fashion over the medieval period. See Ciarán Ó Scea, ‘Erenachs, erenachships and church landholding in Gaelic Fermanagh, 1270-1609’, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. 112, C (2011) pp 271-300.

<sup>29</sup> Aoife Nic Ghiollamhaith, ‘Kings and Vassals in Later Medieval Ireland: The Uí Bhriain and the MicConmara in the Fourteenth Century’, in Terry Barry, Robin Frame & Katharine Simms (eds), *Colony and Frontier in Medieval Ireland* (London, 1995) pp 201-16:202.

<sup>30</sup> Ó Scea, ‘Erenachs, erenachships and church landholding in Gaelic Fermanagh’, p. 297.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, the obit of Giolla na Naomh Ó Duibhdábhoireann, a law *ollamh*, in 1364. *Annals of the Four Masters*, sub anno 1364. Also see the Giolla na Naomh Óg Ó Duibhdábhoireann who featured in a 1606 deed that divided the estate among several brothers in the manner of ‘gavelkind’ inheritance, including the stone ring-fort residence of the family at Cahernacnaughten in the Burren. See Macnamara, ‘The O’Davorens of Cahernacnaughten’, (1912-13) pp 89-93.

<sup>32</sup> O’Hart, *Irish Pedigrees*, p. 105.

<sup>33</sup> *Annals of the Four Masters*, sub anno 1582.

<sup>34</sup> See his obit in *Annals of the Four Masters*, sub anno 1069.

<sup>35</sup> Ó Murchadha, ‘Origins of Clann Bhruaidealha’, p. 123.

<sup>36</sup> The site was pointed out to the author by locals in October 2011 as such.

churches that served as a religious establishment for local kin-groups.<sup>37</sup> Westropp provides a description of the site which remains apt today:

On a spur beside a stream, above Mount Callan House; an oblong foundation (about 31 feet by 15 feet inside, the walls 2 feet 8 inches thick) of small flagstone masonry, the wall rarely over a foot high and the whole sheeted with wild hyacinth.<sup>38</sup>

A careful reading of the Life of Mac Creiche reveals that the church at Lettermoyle has ancient origins. In the medieval Life of Mac Creiche it states that he went into the hermitage located between ‘*Formáoil*’ and the river ‘*Eidhneach*’ which was called ‘*Clúain hÍ*’.<sup>39</sup> The *Eidhneach* (Inagh) river flows through modern day Ballynoe (i.e. Lettermoyle) which situates west of *Formaoil* (Formoyle).<sup>40</sup> From the context it is apparent that Mac Creiche had his hermitage in this district which was described in his Life as a small stone structure.<sup>41</sup> The ruined foundations of the church near Mount Callan House in Ballynoe are plausibly the survival of the original hermitage. Other sites situated nearby are reputed to have links to Mac Creiche. To the southwest of Slieve Callan are the townlands Shanavogh East and West which may be the wooded place of *Cell Senbotha* that was granted to Mac Creiche to build a church.<sup>42</sup> It is unlikely to be a coincidence that Lettermoyle was held by the Meic Bhruaidealha who, in turn, paid a rent to the Bishop of Killaloe in right of it constituting part of termon Dysert. While caution needs to be exercised in the absence of corroborating evidence, circumstantial evidence links Clann Bhruaidealha to early saintly veneration sites in west Co. Clare.

Clann Bhruaidealha’s link to Mac Creiche veneration sites may represent the vestige of a historical connection to the native monastic church, perhaps even suggestive of the lineage’s origins. It is possible that such a link may have been forged by association during the post-Reform medieval period. In a supplication to Rome dated 1419 cleric ‘Thady Ybrodyga’ petitioned for the rectory of ‘Drunkrythe’ (*Droim Criche*, Drumcreehy).<sup>43</sup> This was Tadhg Ó Bruaidealha<sup>44</sup> who was probably a kinsman of the Meic Bhruaidealha of Ibrickan. Drumcreehy rectory was a prebend of the treasurer’ship of

<sup>37</sup> Inspection of the site by the author in July 2012 identified possible remains of an enclosure around the site and the presence of a south facing entrance.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas J. Westropp, ‘Notes on certain primitive remains (forts and dolmens) in Inagh and Killeimer, Co. Clare’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xlvi, part ii (1916) pp 97-120:103. Averil Swinfen notes that ‘during the last century this church bore the startling, though not altogether surprising, name of Temple-ee-coffin (church of the Graves), for while there is no conspicuous graveyard in sight it is confirmed locally that there was a burial place nearby’. Averil Swinfen, *Forgotten Stones: Ancient Church Sites of the Burren and Environs* (Dublin, 1992) p. 126.

<sup>39</sup> Charles Plummer, *Miscellanea Hagiographica Hibernica* (First edition, Brussels, 1925) p. 13 [*Betha Meic Creiche*].

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* Also see Westropp, ‘Notes on certain primitive remains (forts and dolmens) in Inagh and Killeimer, Co. Clare’, p. 103. Mac Creiche is also said to have founded two other churches in the vicinity of Inagh: *Teampull na glas Aighne* and *Cell Senbotha*. Also see Thomas J. Westropp, ‘Ancient Remains Near Lehinch, Co. Clare’ *Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, iii (1905-08) pp 193-212.

<sup>41</sup> Plummer, *Miscellanea Hagiographica Hibernica*, p. 53 [*Betha Meic Creiche*].

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 54-5. For an alternative view that places Mac Creiche’s *Cell Senbotha* as Kilshanny to the north, see Pádraig Ó Riain, Diarmuid Ó Murchadha & Kevin Murray, *Historical Dictionary of Gaelic Placenames, Foclóir Stairiúil Ait-aimneacha Na Gaeilge*, Fascicle 4 (London, 2011) pp 49-50.

<sup>43</sup> *ASV Registum Supplicationum*, 129f. 18v. This is also excerpted and published in Special List 43 available at the National Library of Ireland Manuscripts Reading Room. This is the only reference to a Mac Bruaidealha in Papal correspondence for the fifteenth century.

<sup>44</sup> Both the Ó and Mac patronymic were interchangeably used by contemporaries. Such interchangeability regarding the name is encountered in the seventeenth century Latin writings of Friar Antonius Bruodinus.

Kilfenora and a townland in the parish is known as ‘Bishopsquarter’.<sup>45</sup> Prebends were benefices whose revenue from lands was often held by hereditary clergy or erenagh families. It is likely that Drumcreehy rectory was associated with the coarbship of Mac Creiche.<sup>46</sup> If this was the case then Thady Ybrodyga held the coarbship of Mac Creiche in 1419, a position that may have been related to Clann Bhruaidealha’s association with Mac Creiche sites such as Lettermoylan in Ibrickan. The fact that a kinsman of Clann Bhruaidealha is found in northern Corcomroe at Drumcreehy is rather conspicuous and suggestive that the coarbship was a titular title attached to the rectorship and not dominated by a hereditary coarb of local provenance.

Clann Bhruaidealha also held land in places associated with Mac Creiche; we find a pardon issued to ‘Miellien oge McBrodie of the Synnganagh’ in the parish of Kilmacreehy near Liscannor in 1585.<sup>47</sup> This is almost certainly Maoilín Óg Mac Bruaidealha who at his death in 1602 was recognized as *ollamh*.<sup>48</sup> Clann Bhruaidealha’s interest in the cult of Mac Creiche may have extended beyond west Co. Clare. A branch of Clann Bhruaidealha was settled on Moynoe termon near the monastic site of Inishcaltra, which was connected with Mac Creiche in his later life.<sup>49</sup> From these gleanings we may deduce a link, perhaps one forged by early association, between Mac Creiche foundations and Clann Bhruaidealha. The form and nature of that association is uncertain but it is reasonable to suggest that as a learned family Clann Bhruaidealha may once have graduated from an early medieval monastery.

### **Lettermoylan & Clann Bhruaidealha: c.1200-c.1650**

Lettermoylan (*Leitir Maoláin*, ‘damp hill-side of Maoláin’) would be rather obscure to history in the absence of its late medieval association with Clann Bhruaidealha. We are fortunate that several early references to Lettermoylan survive and in many cases owe their survival to the penmanship of a Mac Bruaidealha. Slieve Callan is known to history by the presence of the celebrated Ogham stone<sup>50</sup> found at its southern flank in the townland of Knockalassa. Local school master and poet John Lloyd publicized the Ogham stone in his *An Impartial Tour in Clare* in 1778,<sup>51</sup> and its apparent inscription dedicated to Conán, a member of a band of warriors slain on the slopes of Callan in remote times. On visiting Slieve Callan in 1785 Theophilus O’Flanagan wrote on arriving at Knockalassa:

<sup>45</sup> Rev. Philip Dwyer, *The Diocese of Killaloe from the Reformation to the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin, 1878) p. 98.

<sup>46</sup> The colophon of the Life of Mac Creiche (*Beatha Meic Creiche*) states that it was copied by Friar Micheál Ó Cléirigh in the convent of the friars of Donegal on 11 May, 1635 from the copy which he wrote at Ennis Friary in June 1634 from a book which Maoilechlainn Ó Callannáin wrote at *Cell Maoilodhrain* for the coarb of Mac Creiche in 1524. This has been interpreted by some to be Killoran in Castletownarra in Co. Tipperary. Rather, *Cell Maoilodhrain* was ‘Kilmoylan alias Kilmulran’ recorded in 1641 in Abbey parish consisting of abbey land under the proprietorship of ‘Karwall O Kallinan’ and other Uí Challannáin kinsmen. Drumcreehy situates nearby so it is likely that the coarb of Mac Creiche for whom *Beatha Meic Creiche* was written was located at Drumcreehy church. The fact that episcopal land of the See of Kilfenora situated at Drumcreehy, represented in the townland there called Bishopsquarter, strengthens the case that a coarbship was based at Drumcreehy. Simington, *Books of Survey and Distribution*, p. 443; Plummer, *Miscellanea Hagiographica Hibernica*, [*Beatha Meic Creiche*].

<sup>47</sup> See *The Irish Fiant of the Tudor Sovereigns During the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Philip & Mary, and Elizabeth I*, Fiant, Eliz., No. 4753 [year 1585].

<sup>48</sup> *Annals of the Four Masters*, sub anno 1602.

<sup>49</sup> Pádraig Ó Riain, *A Dictionary of Irish Saints* (Dublin, 2011) p. 422.

<sup>50</sup> The Ogham stone was known as *Leac-Conain* into the late nineteenth century, a fact recalled by locals living on Slieve Callan. Sir Samuel Ferguson, ‘On the Alleged Literary Forgery Respecting Sun-worship on Mount-Callan, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. 1 (1879) pp 315-322:322.

<sup>51</sup> John Lloyd, *A Short Tour: or, an Impartial and Accurate Description of the County of Clare with Some Particular and Historical Observations* (Ennis, 1780).

...about a mile north east from the high road leading from Ennis to Ibrickan, I perceived (as I thought) a square rock, which bore the awful appearance of a monument, on the Leitirmoylan (that is the south east) side of the mountain.<sup>52</sup>

The publicity gathered by Lloyd's publication provoked academic discussion for over a century. Slieve Callan is also known for the Knockalassa wedge tomb, a visible reminder of megalithic occupation of the site. Máire MacNeill, writing on the survival into modern times of vestiges of the ancient festival of Lughnasa, describes the topography and environs of Slieve Callan:

In the south-west of the county there are a few low ridges of higher ground and one considerable hill, Slieve Callan, which rises to 1,282 feet, seven miles in from the sea. Its situation is a commanding one, giving it wide prospects all around, framed by the hills of the Burren, Aughty, Slieve Bernagh, the Shannon estuary and the sea. Its immediate neighborhood is rough and boggy for the most part—*bréan-tír*, the sour land, lies north from it—but only seven miles to the east is the more fertile tract in which Ennis stands.<sup>53</sup>

Slieve Callan (*Sliabh Calláin*) enters into pseudo-history in medieval manuscripts such as the Battle of Gabhra which features the warrior-hero Conán<sup>54</sup> and embellished in Micheál Coimín's 1748 work of fiction *Eachtra Chloinne Thoirdealbhaigh mhic Stairn* ('Legend of Children of Turlough son of Starn').<sup>55</sup> Slieve Callan is recalled in the poem *Duanaire Finn* which talks of a *Fuath Sleibhe Colláin*<sup>56</sup> (phantom of Slieve Callan), and it is also found in the medieval text, *Beatha Sheanáin*, where the monster (*Cathach*) of Inis Cathaigh is said to have been banished to *Dubhloch* (Doolough lake) near Slieve Callan by Seanán himself.<sup>57</sup> According to the lore of placenames, or *Dinnsheanchas*, Slieve Callan was once known as '*Sliabh Leitreach*'<sup>58</sup> and the antiquary T.J Westropp suggested this name survived on Slieve Callan in the form of *Leitir Maoláin*.<sup>59</sup> Slieve Callan also occurs in the fifteenth century topographical tract by Ó hUidhrín where it is written as *Collán* and regarded a marker of the territory of the Dál gCais.<sup>60</sup>

The annals do not furnish us with knowledge as to the history of settlement at the site. However, '*Sliabh Cailge*' where the Mairtínigh of the Corca Bhaiscinn battled King Óen-

<sup>52</sup> Theophilus O'Flanagan 'On the Ogham Inscription stated to have been discovered some years since on the Mountain of Callan in the county of Clare', *The Dublin Philosophical Journal, and Scientific Review* (May 1826) pp 134-44:135.

<sup>53</sup> Máire MacNeill, *The Festival of Lughnasa* (London, 1962) p. 193.

<sup>54</sup> Also see O'Flanagan, 'Ogham Inscription... Callan', pp 134-49; and Siobhan de hÓir, 'The Mount Callan Ogham Stone and its Context', *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, vol. 25 (1983) pp 43-57.

<sup>55</sup> Pádraig Ó Briain, (ed.), 'Eachtra Thoidhealbhaigh mhic Stairn maille me Eachtraibh a Thriúir Mhac le Michéal Ó Coimín', *Blíthfhleasg de Mhílseánaibh na Gaeilge* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1893). It is mentioned in this work that on Slieve Callan at a place called *Poul Gorm Liath* lived a great boar on the north side of the mountain. See William Hackett, 'Folklore - Nol: Porcine Legends', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 2 (1853) pp 303-10:304.

<sup>56</sup> MacNeill, *Festival of Lughnasa* p. 200.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. Doolough is described in the text as '*Nigricantis aquae juxta montem Callain in Tuamonia*'. See John Colgan, *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1948) under March 8th, Section xxxviii.

<sup>58</sup> The reference reads: '*Is ann con[a]clai[d] Alestar a raith for Sleib Collan .i. Sliab Leitreach indiu: is de asberar raith Cluana Alestair*'. ['Then Alestar dug his rath on Sliab Collan now Sliab Leitreach. Hence it is called the rath of Cluain Alestair']. Whitley Stokes, 'The Prose Tales in the Rennes Dindschenchas', *Revue Celtique*, vol. 15 (1894) pp 272-336:317.

<sup>59</sup> T.J. Westropp, 'Notes on certain primitive remains (forts and dolmens) in Inagh and Killeimer, Co. Clare', p. 104.

<sup>60</sup> John O'Donovan (ed.), *The Topographical Poems of John O'Dubhagain and Giolla Na Naomh O'Huidhrin* (Dublin, 1862) p. 123.

gus Olmucaidh in the pseudo-mythical past (3790 BC), is thought to be Slieve Callan.<sup>61</sup> The popular festival of Lughnasa was held at Knockalassa until it was suppressed in the mid-nineteenth century and replaced by Garland Sunday.<sup>62</sup> From this it may be gathered that Slieve Callan and surrounds constituted a ritual landscape. Such landscapes were associated with the estates of the Gaelic learned class who were attuned to the significance of veneration sites which helped legitimise their landholding and status.

### *References in Bardic Poetry*

Lettermoylan enters the historical record in a late sixteenth century poem. The form and rhyme of the poem is of the classical *Dán Díreach* style, an accomplished metre composed by poet-scholars. The poem was doubtlessly the work of a Mac Bruaideadha and given its context it can be placed in the 1580s. This makes it plausibly the composition of Giolla Brighde Mhic Bhruaideadha (d.1599)<sup>63</sup> who succeeded his kinsman Maoilín as *ollamh seanchais* in Thomond in 1582,<sup>64</sup> or Maoilín Óg Mhic Bhruaideadha (d.1602) who succeeded as *ollamh* around 1588.<sup>65</sup> Maoilín Óg's literary activities were considerable, and he assisted in making a translation of the New Testament into Irish when he was based in Dublin in 1602.<sup>66</sup> The most likely author of the poem, however, was Tadhg mac Dáire Mhic Bhruaideadha who appears never to have been recognised as *ollamh* but instead cultivated a personal relationship with his patron Donough O'Brien, fourth Earl of Thomond.<sup>67</sup>

In practice there may have been overlap between when the title *ollamh* transferred from Giolla Brighde to Maoilín Óg.<sup>68</sup> Giolla Brighde was still living at Lettermoylan in 1591.<sup>69</sup> This piece of information is evidence that Lettermoylan remained the chief residence of the Mac Bruaideadha *ollamh* in the late sixteenth century. The attribution of the poem is likely Tadhg mac Dáire, owing to a later identification of the poem by Friar Antonius Bruodinus, grand-nephew of Tadhg mac Dáire. The poem was addressed to Uilleog and Seaán, sons of the Earl of Clanrickard (d.1582).<sup>70</sup>

<sup>61</sup> *Annals of the Four Masters, sub anno 3790BC*. Also see Westropp, 'Notes on certain primitive remains (forts and dolmens) in Inagh and Killeimer, Co. Clare', p. 104.

<sup>62</sup> MacNeill, *Festival of Lughnasa*, pp 197-9.

<sup>63</sup> *Annals of the Four Masters, sub anno 1599*.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid., sub anno 1582*. He witnessed a covenant that was written before 1571. Hardiman (ed.), 'Ancient Irish Deeds', p. 67.

<sup>65</sup> Maoilín Óg Mac Bruaideadha was regarded as the representative of Clann Bhruaideadha from 1599 when he composed a poetic quatrain to Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill on the return of his cattle to him that were rustled by Ó Domhnaill's troops. But his claim to the *ollamh*-ship may be traced back to 1585 when he signed as a witness to the Composition of Connacht. Certainly from around 1588 he is credited with writing a pedigree for Clann an Oirchinnigh. See *Annals of the Four Masters, sub anno 1599*. Also see RIA MS 23.H.22, p. 11.

<sup>66</sup> Richard F. Cronnelly, *Irish Family History, Part III* (Dublin, 1864) p. 330 and Joep Leerssen (ed.), *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael* (Cork, 1996) p. 327. On Maoilín Óg in Dublin in c.1600 and that he was enlisted in the translation of the New Testament while visiting Dublin in the retinue of the Earl of Thomond see T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds), *A New History of Ireland: Early Modern Ireland 1534-1691, Vol.3*, (reprint, Oxford, 2009) p. 512. On Maoilín Óg's activities in Dublin he was described as 'duine iúlmar sa teanguídh Ghaoidheilge, sa gColáiste nuadh láimh ré Baile atha Cliath' ['A person wise in the Irish language, in the new college close to Dublin']. Cuthbert McGrath, 'Materials for a History of Clann Bhruaideadha', *Éigse*, vol. iv, part 4 (1943-4) pp 48-66:61 [cf. note 17].

<sup>67</sup> See his poem *Eascar Gaoidheal éag aoinfhir* in Brian Ó Cuív, 'An elegy on Donnchadh Ó Briain, fourth earl of Thomond', *Celtica*, vol. 16 (1984) pp 87-105.

<sup>68</sup> Maoilín Óg is described by Bruodinus as 'in Elogijs Obrienorum' (Eulogist of O'Brien). See Bruodinus, *Propugnaculum Catholicæ Veritatis*, p. 974.

<sup>69</sup> 'Pardon to Gilabride Mc Brodyne, of Letter Mellane'. See *The Irish Fiant of the Tudor Sovereigns During the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Philip & Mary, and Elizabeth I* (Dublin, 1994) Fiant, Eliz., No.5686 [year 1591].

<sup>70</sup> *Annals of the Four Masters, sub anno 1582*.

The poem conjecturally envisages Ireland being divided between the poet and his patrons, the Clanrickard Bourkes. Relating to Lettermoylan are several verses of topographical interest:

*Do ním leath do Leitir Maoláin  
Nach mín muighe  
Tír ar a gceiltear néall nimhe  
Fán tréan tuile  
Tír e Leaghan sneachta ag snighe  
Dearca duine  
Do ním leath mar éin-eing oile  
d'Éirinn uile*

[one half I count from / rough-fielded *Leitir Maoláin* / where sky is overcast / and torrent heavy, / and where falling snow / blinds men's eyes; / all the rest of Éire / I count as the other half]<sup>71</sup>

The poem continues with references to Slieve Callan, leaving us in little doubt that the Meic Bhruaidealha chronicler-poets<sup>72</sup> had their estate at *Leitir Maoláin* on Slieve Callan. Characteristically, the poet underplays the value of his land,<sup>73</sup> while employing hyperbolic language to describe the virtues of the territory that he wished to assign his patron through his poetical partition of Ireland:

*Óthá Éighneach go hucht gColláin  
Mar chuid tíre  
Beag nach bhfuilid i gcló a chéile  
[umun] mó míle  
Níor ghab duine iadh budh fhuaire  
Riamh is righe*

[from Éighneach [Inagh] / to Collán's slope / lands with most game[?]  
/are mostly alike / no one ever got poorer / land and realm as share]<sup>74</sup>

In this stanza Mac Bruaidealha is indicating that his patrimony included the land between *Éighneach* (river Inagh) and Slieve Callan. This sweep of territory includes the townlands Formoyle Eighteragh and Formoyle Oughteragh which are located on the eastern slopes of Slieve Callan and adjacent to Lettermoylan. These lands were under Clann Bhruaidealha proprietorship in 1641.<sup>75</sup>

Other references abound in the poem, including an allusion which imagines the poet standing on a 'stream-wasted' mountain. The context implies that the mountain in question is that of 'rough-fielded *Leitir Maoláin*' referred to earlier in the poem and where the form *Leitir*, (damp, wet hill-side) creates a typonymic association with the poet's metaphorical territory:

<sup>71</sup> McKenna, 'A Partition of Ireland', (January-June), p. 331.

<sup>72</sup> According to the late-eleventh-century Book of Rights no poet is entitled to reward who is not also a learned historian. Katharine Simms, 'Literacy and the Irish Bards', in *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, (ed.), Huw Pryce (Cambridge, 1998) pp 238-258:247.

<sup>73</sup> Elsewhere in the poem Mac Bruaidealha refers to his land as, '*is léigid damh-sa an eang (an shaidhbhir) [eassádhail] anshochair iomchumhang úd*', ['and they leave to me the poor, unattractive, miserable, narrow district I spoke of'].

<sup>74</sup> McKenna, 'A Partition of Ireland', (January-June), p. 331.

*Is gidh tromdha tathaoireach tarchuisneach atáim-se ar an dtulán sruithmheirgeach sléibhe so, ní mó ná meanma is mór-aigneadh cloinne [ionnsaighthighe] éicht-bheodha oirdhearca (urramhanta) an Iarla.*

[however rough, insulting and vituperative I am, standing on this stream-wasted(?) mountain-height, not greater is the spirit and pride of the impetuous, vigorous, famous, respected race of the Earl].<sup>76</sup>

Mac Bruaidealha goes on to describe the common folk, casting light on the living conditions of those at the bottom of the social milieu, in contradistinction to Clann Bhruaidealha as members of the learned class:

*ná mór-aigneadh na muinntrei-se an uair shuidhidh i n-a mbothógaibh crom-lúbánacha creat-lomnochta ag comhól ar a chéile dá gcuidhinibh béil-fhliucha blaitheche is dá dtobannaibh mór-chluasacha meidhge bruidearnaighe, 7 ag éisteacht nr hagallaimh is re holl-ghlór a n-ainmile teadh n-éigciallaidh 'na nuirthimcheal is gach [aon aca] ag tabhairt aithne go hurmhaisneach ar uraghall is ar fhoirbhéicigh gacha hainmhidhe seach ar oile.*

[nor (is) the commonfolk's spirit and pride (greater) when they sit in their crooked, bare-walled cottages, drinking against each other from their overflowing bowls of buttermilk and their big-handled vessels of bubbling whey, listening to the chattering and uproar of the senseless beasts about them, each of them cleverly distinguishing the chatter and roaring of each beast].<sup>77</sup>

The rest of the poem establishes the noble credentials of the Clanrickard Bourkes whose warriors listen to bardic poetry and drink strong, fermented drinks. In writing about his great-uncle, Friar Antonius Bruodinus relates how Tadhg mac Dáire Mhic Bhruaidealha composed poems in Latin and Irish. Bruodinus refers to one poem which light-heartedly divided Ireland between Tadhg mac Dáire and the sons of John de Burgo. We can probably take this as an error in the name of patron for the poem was dedicated to a Seaán (John) son of 'Riocard'. Bruodinus remarks:

*Nobis qui Domini Thaddaei Bruodini scripta, & poëmata praemanibus habemus, praesertim jocosos illos Rithmos Latino-Hibernicos, quibus Hiberniam inter se, & Illustrissimi Domini Joannis de Burgo filios, jucunde divisit (ex quibus abunde constat illum in lingua latina fuisse fundatissimum....)*<sup>78</sup>

[To us, who have before our very hands Master Thaddaeus Bruodin's writings and poems, especially those playful Latin-Irish Verses, in which he delightfully divided Ireland between himself and the sons of the most illustrious Sir John de Burgo (from which it is abundantly proved that he was most thoroughly instructed in the Latin language...)]<sup>79</sup>

Friar Bruodinus possessed considerable authority on the matter and it is conceivable that some poems were entrusted to him as a learned clerical kinsman of the family. He may

<sup>75</sup> Simington, *Books of Survey and Distribution*, pp 533-4.

<sup>76</sup> McKenna, 'A Partition of Ireland', *The Irish Monthly* vol. 57 (July-December, 1929) pp 368-372:368.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 368-9.

<sup>78</sup> O'Mollony, *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologettici*, p. 116.

<sup>79</sup> Author's translation.

have had family documents in his possession when he was guardian of the friary of Our Lady of the Snows in Prague in the 1660s and 1670s. Bruodinus' identification of Tadhg mac Dáire as the author of this poem which places Lettermoylan and Slieve Callan at the centre of the poet's allegorical territory, supports the view that Lettermoylan of Clann Bhruaidealha situated on the slopes of Slieve Callan.

A reference also exists to Slieve Callan ('*Sléibhe Colláin*') in a poetic eulogy of uncertain attribution.<sup>80</sup> Slieve Callan is referred to among the poetical exchange between Tadhg mac Dáire and the Ulster poets known as *Iomarbhágh na bhfileadh* ('Contention of the Bards') about whether the Ó Briain or the Ó Domhnaill had the best right to consider themselves heirs to the high kingship of Ireland. The exchange was instigated in c.1616 when Tadhg mac Dáire became involved in a poetic contention with the poets of Ulster.<sup>81</sup> In a poem critical of Tadhg mac Dáire's learning, Roibeard Mac Artúir belittles Tadhg mac Dáire's acquisition of knowledge, and refers to Slieve Callan:

*Daoine eile dá rádh ris; go bhfuair seisean an t-eo fis ó Aoibhill ban-fháidh síl mBluid; atá aige na caraid.*

*Muna gcreididh-se a n-éabhairt; tigidh ar gach aird d'féachain iongantair mhór seacha soin; rein-Shliabh Callain re n-iodhnaibh.*

[Others say of him (Tadhg mac Dáire) that he got the knowledge-salmon from Aoibheall who is his friend, the prophetess of Blod's race. If you do not believe him, come from all parts to see a greater marvel still, old Slieve Callan in travail!].<sup>82</sup>

He continues:

*Dá bhfiafraighidh cia an toirrhear; ó Shliabh Callain do coimpreadh aithchim ar bhar n-éigse sibh; gabháil dibh ar bhar ngáiribh an uair do mheas gach Muimhneach; do chonnairc méad a bhuilgsean gein an-mhór uaidhe do bhreith; acht luch féir uaidh níor tuismeadh.*

[If you ask what was the progeny conceived by Slieve Callan I implore of you by your poetic profession to restrain your laughter, for when every man of Mumha who saw the great swelling imagined that an enormous progeny was being brought forth there was born – only a field mouse!]<sup>83</sup>

Clearly the intended meaning of the 'progeny' conceived by Slieve Callan was Tadhg mac Dáire and his lack of skill in the art of poetic knowledge. In another poem composed by Roibeard Mac Artúir mention is made to *Leitir Maoláin*. The poem refers to Tadhg mac Dáire's poem to the Clanrickard Bourkes in c.1580 and leaves little ambiguity as to *Leitir Maoláin* being in the hands of Tadhg mac Dáire at that time:

<sup>80</sup> See *Port oireachais Ara Chliach* in RIA MS 3 (23/L/17), 141b. Also see Damian McManus & Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh (eds), *A Bardic Miscellany* (Dublin, 2010) pp 541-4. The poetic eulogy to Toirdhealbhach Ó Briain Ara (d.1400) is attributed to both Domhnall Ó Maolchonaire and Tadhg mac Dáire Mhic Bhruaidealha.

<sup>81</sup> See Joep Leerssen, *The Contention of the Bards* (London, 1994).

<sup>82</sup> Rev. L. McKenna (ed.), *Iomarbhágh na bhfileadh: The Contention of the Bards, Part I* (London, 1918) pp 158-9.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* The last line could be an allusion to Horace, the classical lyric poet, who satirically wrote '*parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus*' ('the mountains go into labour and give birth to a ridiculous mouse'). I thank Prof. Joep Leerssen for this reference.

*An file d'fhuil Éibhir Fhinn,  
thagrais go beacht dá thaoibh rinn  
isé go glic do rinne  
roinn na tíre adeirimid-ne.  
Leitir Mhaoláin, gidh nach mín,  
a chuid ronna fé[i]n don tír;  
Inis Fódla ó soin amach  
fághuidh fa chlannuibh Búrcach.<sup>84</sup>*

[The poet of Éibhear Finn's blood who argues his side perfectly with me;  
we (I) say he cleverly divided the country.

*Leitir Mhaoláin*, though not smooth, is his own share of the country;  
he will leave Inis Fódla (Ireland) from that out to the Bourkes.]<sup>85</sup>

Slieve Callan and district was forefront in the minds of Meic Bhruaidealha poets. As demonstrated by the references to Slieve Callan by poets supporting the Ulster side of the 'Contention', the area was known to have an association with Clann Bhruaidealha. This is because Slieve Callan was the residence of cognate branches of Clann Bhruaidealha: Lettermoyle and Formoyle, and slightly further afield, Knockanalban and Doonogan; the latter two places contained a crannóg and a towerhouse residence.<sup>86</sup>

#### *Tadhg mac Dáire & Lettermoyle*

In identifying the status of Lettermoyle it is useful to look at the known facts of the Meic Bhruaidealha and their proprietorial arrangements. There is evidence suggesting that Tadhg mac Dáire Mhic Bhruaidealha had landed interests at Lettermoyle, despite recent scholarship on the issue.<sup>87</sup> Tadhg mac Dáire's principal residence was at Knockanalban (Mount Scott, *Mons Scoti*), according to the writings Friar Antonius Bruodinus:

*Momoniensium partes scriptis, & verbis tuebatur patruus meus magnus, bonae memoriae, Dominus Thaddaeus mac Bruodin, seu de Bruodin, Darij filius, Dominus de Monte Scoti.*<sup>88</sup>

[The cause of the people of Munster was defended through writings and (spoken) words by my great uncle of good memory, master Thaddaeus Mac Bruodin, or the Bruodin, son of Darius, (and) proprietor of Mount Scott]<sup>89</sup>

We read in a Latin deed of 1606 that Tadhg mac Dáire was a 'feoffee for uses' on three and a half quarters of land in Clondagad parish in the Barony of Islands, and he gave his residence as 'Thadeus McBruodine de Corkanalabuna' (Knockanalban).<sup>90</sup> While not in actual possession of this land which was owned by Clann Mhic Mhathghamhna but

<sup>84</sup> Cuthbert Mhág Craith, *Dán na mBráthar Mionúr* (Dublin, 1967) pp 178-94.

<sup>85</sup> I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr Michelle O Riordan of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS) in the translation of these passages.

<sup>86</sup> Carol Gleeson, 'Knockanalban Crannog(s), Co. Clare', *The Other Clare*, vol. 13 (1989) pp 32-4. The author visited the site of Knockanalban crannóg in September 2011 and notes that a levelled stone structure can still be discerned in the centre of the surrounding marshy land and wooded thicket.

<sup>87</sup> Gearóid Mac Eoin, 'Crosántacht Íorónta a Cúlra agus a hÚdar', in Máirtín Ó Briain & Pádraig Ó Héalaí (eag.), *Téada dúchais: aistí in ómós don ollamh Breandán Ó Madagáin* (Indreabhán, Gaillimh, 2002) pp 113- 19:119.

<sup>88</sup> Bruodinus, *Propugnaculum Catholicae Veritatis*, p. 851.

<sup>89</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>90</sup> National Library of Ireland: MS 45,669/2 (dated 1606). The identifiable land denominations in Clondagad parish include Knockalehid, Ballycloghessy and Dehomad.

rather acting as a trustee, Tadhg mac Dáire's interest was probably on account of his marriage to Aine, daughter of Tadhg Mac Mathghamhna.<sup>91</sup>

The five quarters of land in the barony of Ibrickan which Tadhg mac Dáire possessed in 1615 made him a substantial landholder.<sup>92</sup> As Tadhg mac Dáire held his estate at Knockanalban rent free<sup>93</sup> the implication that he had an interest in Lettermoyle suggests that it was collective family property with proprietorship vested in the agnatic *dearbhfine* of Clann Bhruaidealha. Tadhg mac Dáire also appears in the Great Office inquisition taken in 1618 for Inchiquin barony; there he appears holding 'Lettermollan' while also holding lesser interests in Racahaine, Formoiluoghtare, Kurragh, Formoil-Iaghter, Rolloduff, Cloonahaha along with other kinsmen.<sup>94</sup> In the Great Office inquisition of 1621 he was a juror and of 'Lettermollan' but also held Ballidubeg, indicating that his landholding was dispersed but intertwined with other members of Clann Bhruaidealha.<sup>95</sup>

Some scholars have pointed out that Tadhg mac Dáire Mhic Bhruaidealha was a minor figure before 1615.<sup>96</sup> While he was never recognised as the Mac Bruaidealha *ollamh* the fact that he held Knockanalban free from rent implies his literary activities were rewarded by the Earl of Thomond. Tadhg mac Dáire arbitrated a deed in 1606 for the Earl though it is clear from this deed that he was not the *Mac Bruaidealha*.<sup>97</sup> That title was held by Connor the son of Maoilín Óg as can be discerned from the Mac Bruaidealha signatories of the deed; 'Connor Brodyn otherwise McBrodye and Teig McBrodyn'. Tadhg mac Dáire served as a juror on an inquisition into the lands of the Earl of Thomond in 1619 where he gave his residence as 'Lettermoelane'<sup>98</sup> and he turns up in other contemporary deeds written in Irish, indicating that his signature was sought after.<sup>99</sup>

Tadhg mac Dáire's fosterage connection with the Earl of Thomond placed the poet as a leading kinsman of Clann Bhruaidealha, despite him not holding the *ollamh*-ship:

*Catholico ritu Baptizatus, as tandem delicate lactatus, nutritus per annos 7 in Domo viri illustris, Domini Cornelij Clancki, Domini de Inse & Finola Bruodin ejus uxoris. Crescente aetate Principis pueri, parentis jussu, Dominus Thadeus*

<sup>91</sup> Bruodinus notes that '*Thaddeus Bruodinus, Darij de Monte Scoti filius, in uxorem habuit Annam Mahuny, seu Mathei, illustris viri D.[ominus] Thadei de Tuonafarna filiam*' ['Taddy Bruodin, the son of Darius of Mount Scott, took a wife Anna Mahuny or Mathei [i.e. McMahan] who was the daughter of the illustrious master Thady of Tuonafarna']. Tuonafarna can be identified as *Tuath na Fearna* which corresponded to the parish of Killadysert, and was under the lordship of Clann Mhic Mhathghamhna. It also appears that Tadhg mac Dáire's sister Bridget married into Clann Mhic Mhathghamhna of Tuonafarna, her husband being Cornelius MacMohony (*seu Matthaei*). O'Mollony, *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologetici*, pp 124, 129.

<sup>92</sup> Petworth House Archive, MS C.27.A.60, Ibrickan Survey [1615].

<sup>93</sup> See Petworth House Archive, MS C.27.A.60, Ibrickan Survey [1615]; and Petworth House Archive, 'An abstract of such rents and renewes as doe belonge to the right Hon. Henrye Earle of Thomond [1626]', Petworth House Archives, Chichester, MS No. C27/A 39.

<sup>94</sup> Petworth House Archive, MS 16.B.E., [Great Office of Inchiquin Barony taken 1 September, 1618]. Landholding of other kinsmen in 1618 may be abstracted thus: Connor McBrodin of Kilky; Shane McBrodin of Kilky; Cosny McBrodin of Balliogane; Cury McBrodin of Balliogane; Dary McBrodin and Donill McBrodin of Formoil Iaghtare; and Dary McBrodin of Ballindornish and Cloonanahy. A reference exists to a Teig McBrodin of Cloonginy, and who held a parcel of the two quarters of Formoile. This may in fact be Tadhg mac Dáire. The fragmented landholdings in the 1618 and 1621 Great Offices supports the view that the property of the family was held by partible inheritance among the *dearbhfine* of Clann Bhruaidealha. I thank Kenneth Nicholls for this reference.

<sup>95</sup> Petworth House Archive, MS 16.B.E., [Great Office of Inchiquin Barony taken of 27 March 1621]. I thank Kenneth Nicholls for this reference.

<sup>96</sup> Leerssen, *Contention of the Bards*, p. 33.

<sup>97</sup> See Petworth House Archive, MS C.13/34a [23 September 1606]. Also printed in Luke McInerney, 'Documents from the Thomond Papers at the Petworth House Archive', *Archivium Hibernicum*, vol. lxiv (2011) pp 7-49:42.

<sup>98</sup> The reference in the inquisition reads: 'Thady Mac Brody de Lettermoelane'. Petworth House Archive, MS B.26.T.16) on 1 April 1619. Also see John Ainsworth (ed.), *The Inchiquin Manuscripts* (Dublin, 1961) p. 325 [no.1011].

<sup>99</sup> See Hardiman (ed.), 'Ancient Irish Deeds' p. 60 (undated); p. 81 (1592); p. 84 (1594) along with Dermot McBrodye.

*Bruodinus Finola frater, curam illius accepit, illumque sub sua disciplina in diversis hiberniae locis, in quibus studuit, per annos 14 habuit, tandem mortuo Catholico suo parente, Juvenis Comes 21 circiter tunc agens annum, in Angliam, cum suo Praefecto Bruodino navigavit; ubi pervasione Thomas Butler, Ormaniae tunc potentissimi Comitis (ut Reginae favores sibi conciliaret) a fide defecit Catholica. Post dutos tandem annos in Hibernia Comes una Thadeo Bruodino, Catholico suo Praefecto venit; ubi Thadeus ex illustrissima Mohuniorum familia uxorem duxit.*<sup>100</sup>

[(Donough O'Brien was) Baptized under the Catholic rite, delicately nursed, nurtured for seven years in the house of that illustrious man, Master Cornelius Clanchi, master of Ennis, and Finola Bruodin, his wife. Over the course of the boy prince's years, master Thady Bruodin, the brother of Finola, received the care of him by order of his parents, and kept him for fourteen years under his tutorage at diverse places in Ireland, where he studied; when at last his own Catholic parent died, the young earl, at about the age of 21 years, sailed for England with his guardian Bruodin; whereupon through the persuasion of Thomas Butler, at that time the powerful Earl of Ormond, he forsook the Catholic faith (in order to commend himself to the Queen's favours). Finally after two years [back] to Ireland the Earl, together with Thady Bruodin, his Catholic guardian arrived; whereupon Thady Bruodin took a wife from the most illustrious family of the Mahons.]<sup>101</sup>

The claim that the Earl was fostered by Tadhg mac Dáire's sister Finola who was the wife of Conchubhar Mac Fhlannchadha (Cornelius Clanchi) of Ennis for seven years before being placed under the tutelage of Tadhg mac Dáire, confirms Tadhg's standing. As Tadhg mac Dáire died in 1625-26 and not the mid-seventeenth century as O'Flanagan implausibly relates,<sup>102</sup> it is necessary to reconsider an earlier birthdate of c.1550<sup>103</sup> which reconcile these claims set out by Bruodinus. An earlier birthdate would account for the fact that the Earl was in England in 1577.<sup>104</sup>

Such affinity between Tadhg mac Dáire and the Earl may account for the direct personal poems that he addressed to the Earl.<sup>105</sup> This, despite the title *ollamh seanchais* was held by Maoilín Óg.<sup>106</sup> The poems composed by Maoilín Óg, the official *ollamh seanchais* of Thomond, were formulaic and in a prescribed style, fitting for an official poet to Ó Briain. Maoilín Óg followed the traditional occupation of compiling annals, that is, chronicling events for his Uí Bhriain patrons, a point confirmed by Antonius

<sup>100</sup> O'Mollony, *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologetici*, pp 112-13.

<sup>101</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>102</sup> Theophilus O'Flanagan, 'Advice to a Prince', *Transactions Gaelic Society*, vol. 1 (1808) p. 27.

<sup>103</sup> A birthdate of c.1540/1550 would seem realistic if he accompanied Donough O'Brien to England in 1577. This birthdate is accepted by some scholars. See Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, (ed.), *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing Volumes IV: Courts and Coteries II 1500-1800* (Cork, 2005) p. 452. Ní Dhonnchadha follows Leerssen who suggests that Tadhg mac Dáire died after 1625. See Leerssen, *Contention of the Bards*, pp 33-4.

<sup>104</sup> H.C. Hamilton (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Ireland: Elizabeth I, 1574-85* (London, 1867) p. 113. Also see J.S. Brewer & W. Bullen (eds), *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts Preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth 1575-1588*, (London, 1868) p. 115. The latter reference notes that Donough O'Brien, son of Conor O'Brien third Earl of Thomond, had been 'brought up here in our Court'.

<sup>105</sup> Tadhg mac Dáire addressed five poems to his patron Donough O'Brien, fourth Earl of Thomond. In particular see *Mór atá ar theagasc flatha* ('a major task to instruct a prince') which was probably written in c.1599. His other notable poem was the eulogy on the death of the Earl in 1624 titled *Eascar Gaoidheal éag aoínshir* ('The death of one man entails the overthrow of the Gael'). On the dating of the former see Leerssen, *Contention of the Bards*, p. 43 and on the latter see Ó Cuív, 'An elegy on Donnchadh Ó Briain', pp 87-105. Several of Tadhg mac Dáire's poems have been preserved in the *Duanaire Uí Bhriain* ('Poem book of the O'Briens'). See Maynooth MS M 107, [*Duanaire Uí Bhriain*].

<sup>106</sup> See *Annals of the Four Masters*, sub anno 1599, 1602. The annals confirm that Maoilín Óg held the position of *ollamh*.

Bruodinus.<sup>107</sup> Maoilín Óg's poems tended to focus on genealogical themes such as *Cuirfead comaoín ar Chlainn Tail* ('I will lay an obligation on the descendants of Tál')<sup>108</sup> along with themes concerning enumeration of lordship. By contrast, Tadhg mac Dáire cultivated a personal relationship with the Earl which is marked by his direct advice-poem to the Earl, *Mór atá ar theagasc flatha* ('A major task to instruct a prince').<sup>109</sup> Tadhg mac Dáire's elegy on the death of the Earl illustrates his personal attachment to his patron and his direct personal style leaves us in little doubt that he saw himself as the pre-eminent poet of the Earl of Thomond's household. In a prophetic remark in his poem *Eascar Gaoidheal éag aoinfhir* ('The death of one man entails the overthrow of the Gael') composed on the death of the Earl, Tadhg mac Dáire laments:

*A Dhé, dá dtagrahd tusa  
Budh furtacht é dom urchra-sa  
M'éag ina ghoire go grod  
An t-éag roimhe ó nach rárag.  
[O God, since I did not attain death before him it would be a help  
for my grief if you would ordain that I should die near him shortly]<sup>110</sup>*

This proved to be prophetic as Tadhg mac Dáire was dead by 1626, two years after writing the verse. Despite being what can only be described as a political functionary in his role as a poetic apologist for the Earl of Thomond, Tadhg mac Dáire's learning and literary achievements were considerable. Friar Antonius Bruodinus wrote that he was a multi-lingual *litteratus*; no doubt a product of the native schools of *filidheacht* and *seanchas*:

*Dominus Thaddeaus mac Bruodin, seu de Bruodin, Darij filius, Dominus de Monte Scoti.... (qui Familiae suae senior, seu caput erat, & Excellentissimi, Illustrissimique Domini, Donati Magni o Brien; Tuomoniae Comititis, & Momoniae tunc Praesidis, Aulae Praefectus) ut erat in Graecis, Latinis, Anglicis, & Hibernicis litteris apprime doctus, & in antiquitatibus Regni, praedecessorum more, versatissimus....<sup>111</sup>*

[Master Thaddeaus MacBruodin, or the Bruodin, the son of Darius, of Mount Scott [Knockanalban] (who was the 'senior', or head, of his family, and prefect of the court of the most excellent and most illustrious Master Donatus the Great O'Brien, Earl of Thomond, and then President of Munster), being exceedingly learned in Greek, Latin, English and Irish literature and in the manner of his predecessors, extremely well-versed in the antiquities of the realm.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Bruodinus writes: '*Donatus O Brien Caribrac dictus Limericensi & Tuomoniam, pijssimus simul, & potentissimu Princeps: Qui (ut legitur in Bruodinorum Chronicis, & refert Milerus Juvenis mac Bruodin, seu de Bruodine, in Elogijs O Brienorum) per varias alias Hiberniae partes, fundavit, & dotavit 80 monasteria, parochiales ecclesias, & sacella*' ['Donatus O Brien known as *Caribrac* of Limerick and Thomond, both a most pious and powerful prince: Who (as we read in the Bruodin chronicles, and *Milerus* the younger [Maoilín Óg] mac Bruodin, or the Bruodin, mentions him in the Eulogies of the O Brien) founded and endowed 80 monasteries, parish churches and shrines through various other parts of Ireland']. These annals, or the 'Book of Maoilín Óg Mac Bruaideadha', covered the period 1588-1603 and was used in the compilation of the *Annals of the Four Masters (Annála Rioghachta Éireann)*. See Bernadette Cunningham, 'The Historical Annals of Maoilín Óg Mac Bruaideadha, 1588-1603', *The Other Clare*, vol. 13 (1989) pp 21-4; and Bruodinus, *Propugnaculum Catholicae Veritatis*, p. 967.

<sup>108</sup> See RIA MS 1080 (B/iv/2). Also see McManus & Ó Raghallaigh (eds), *A Bardic Miscellany*, pp 175-9.

<sup>109</sup> O'Flanagan, 'Advice to a Prince', pp 31-54.

<sup>110</sup> Ó Cuív, 'An elegy on Donnchadh Ó Briain' p. 101. Also see Martin Breen, *The History of Bunratty Castle* (Ruan, 2012) pp 19-20.

<sup>111</sup> Bruodinus, *Propugnaculum Catholicae Veritatis*, pp 851-2.

Evidence suggests that Tadhg mac Dáire was in Dublin in 1617 probably as part of Earl of Thomond's retinue.<sup>113</sup> However, little evidence exists that he travelled to the continent in the 1620s despite his name somewhat ambiguously appearing in a list of Irish poets compiled by O'Sullivan Beare.<sup>114</sup> The inclusion of his name under a list of Irish physicians on the continent in the 1620s is no real proof that Tadhg mac Dáire travelled abroad, despite his renown.

*Lettermoylan termonland*

In fully grasping the history of Clann Bhruaidealha is it necessary to consider the significance of Lettermoylan. Our most definitive record of Lettermoylan and its connection with Clann Bhruaidealha occurs in the notebook of Bishop Worth (1660-1669), Protestant Bishop of Killaloe. In the notebook of Bishop Worth, proof may be obtained that Lettermoylan was ecclesiastical property held by the Meic Bhruaidealha, and that in 1617 kinsmen of the family were disputing the right of Bishop John Rider in leasing Lettermoylan to new tenants:

Littermoylan: Arable & pasture 333a; pasture & mountain 1,232a; pasture & bog 147a in ye survey profitable 463a, unprofitable 1,249a. The release hereof to ye Bishop challenged by virtue of an old lease by heirs of Teige McBroodie and Gillbrode McBroodie but set by me to Mr Hobson....Teige McBroodyn and Gillbride McBroodyn released to ye Bishop of Killaloe the half quarter of Lettermoylan 6 Martii 1617.<sup>115</sup>

This passage is an unmistakable reference to Lettermoylan being situated on Slieve Callan. The fact that it appeared under the termon of Dysert confounded scholars in assuming that Lettermoylan belonged in the modern parish of Dysert and subsumed under an alias land division. In 1614 the Protestant Bishop of Killaloe, John Rider, wrote to the Lord Deputy seeking assistance in recovering church lands. In respect to Lettermoylan Bishop Rider wrote:

...and also Teig McBroodie gent., denyth to yield the like possession of the houses and mancons [*sic*] within the half quarter of land called Littermolane within the parish of Dysert although the said Sheriff hath given your petitioner [i.e. Bishop of Killaloe] possession of the said half quarter at which persons still remain in the said houses, plough and pasture upon the said lands and take the rents thereof to their own use to the great damage and impoverishing of your petitioner...to call the said parties being now in town...and give directions to the right honourable Earl of Thomond or the Sheriff of Co. Clare to take [...] that your petitioner may quietly enjoy such lands...<sup>116</sup>

Lord Baron Inchiquin  
William Nelan  
John O'Griffa Gents.  
Teig McBrody

<sup>112</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>113</sup> Leerssen, *Contention of the Bards*, p. 65.

<sup>114</sup> His name appears under its Latinised form, 'Thaddaeus MacBruodinus' but with no other particulars. Rev. Aubrey Gwynn, S.J., 'An Unpublished Work of Philip O'Sullivan Beare', *Analecta Hibernica*, no.6 (1934) pp 1-11:11.

<sup>115</sup> MS 1777, *Typescript copy of a survey of lands in the diocese of Killaloe made for Bishop Worth, 1661*, pp 31-2.

<sup>116</sup> 'Petition to the Lord Deputy and Council of John [Rider] Bishop of Killaloe', c.1614 (National Library of Ireland: MS 45,686/1) also see Ainsworth (ed.), *Inchiquin Manuscripts*, p. 432. [no.1318].

It is apparent from this document that the lands around Lettermoylan were of mixed economic activity; ploughland and pasture, and that there were different types of dwellings that may cautiously be interpreted as ‘houses’ (i.e. cabins and lesser quality dwellings) and ‘mansions’ (i.e. substantial dwellings). As we have seen earlier the Meic Bhruaídeadha released Lettermoylan to the bishop on 6 March 1617. The lease was taken over by William Hobson who was recorded as a ‘tituladoe’ of the former Clann Bhruaídeadha property at Knockanalban in 1659.<sup>117</sup>

### *Moynoe termonland*

A branch of Clann Bhruaídeadha was based at Moynoe in east Co. Clare where they were hereditary keepers of the eleventh-century manuscript *Saltair Chaimín*.<sup>118</sup> The manuscript was presented to Friar Micheál Ó Cléirigh in the 1630s when he was seeking material for his compilation, *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann*.<sup>119</sup> The nature of Clann Bhruaídeadha’s land holding on church lands at *Tearmonn Chaimín* at Moynoe<sup>120</sup> is uncertain, but it does suggest a medieval (erenagh?) connection with the church and termon:

4 q[arters] of Moynoe were claimed by the possessors as their fee. [On] 6 Jan[uary] 1617 fflan McBroodyn, Charles ali[a]s Callogh Mac Broodyn, Donogh O Cormochan and David Mac Cormochan surrendered and released all their interests therein [spelling modernised].<sup>121</sup>

From 1638 the Meic Bhruaídeadha of Moynoe entered into a series of leases on the church land with New English settlers.<sup>122</sup> They also appear to have held lands on termon Tulla where, in 1627, Constance Brody of Tyredagh testified at an inquisition into the historical extent of termon Tulla and where the reliquary known as ‘Moghully’s black book’ (i.e. St Mochuilla) was produced as evidence.<sup>123</sup> The Meic Bhruaídeadha still held land in Inishcaltra parish in 1641 where they were said to have had a burial cypyt.<sup>124</sup> Further, we read the remark by Friar Antonius Bruodinus confirming that Clann Bhruaídeadha had hereditary lands in the vicinity of Lough Derg.<sup>125</sup> His remark clearly meant the Meic Bhruaídeadha branches at Inishcaltra and Clonrush, of which Flann McBroodyn was head in the 1630s.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Séamus Pender (ed.), *Census of Ireland circa 1659* (Dublin, 1939) Kilmurry parish. Also see MS 1777, *Typescript copy of a survey of lands in the diocese of Killaloe made for Bishop Worth, 1661*, pp 33-4.

<sup>118</sup> McGrath, ‘Materials for a History of Clann Bhruaídeadha’, p. 51.

<sup>119</sup> Chris O’Mahony & Brian Ó Dálaigh, ‘A Seventeenth Century Description of Co. Clare’, *Dal gCais*, no. 9 (1988) pp 27-38:37 [note 40].

<sup>120</sup> A land denomination there was known as Knockbrody at the time of the Tithe Applotment Books in 1825. The denomination was not subsequently recorded in Griffith Valuation of the 1850s. *Tithe Applotment Books*, Moynoe parish, [20th November 1825].

<sup>121</sup> MS 1777, *Typescript copy of a survey of lands in the diocese of Killaloe made for Bishop Worth, 1661*, pp 7-8.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 8-9.

<sup>123</sup> RIA MS 24 D 17, pp.45-46. The inquisition stated that Constance Brody of Tyredagh in Tulla parish was aged 80 when he testified at the inquisition in 1627 and that he had dwelt at Tyredagh for 54 years.

<sup>124</sup> Bruodinus, *Propugnaculum Catholicae Veritatis*, p. 968.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77. Friar Antonius Bruodinus was well acquainted with Clann Bhruaídeadha of Moynoe as he writes that he saw there the library of Flann Mac Bruaídeadha. This must have occurred sometime in the 1630s, see *ibid.*, p. 770.

<sup>126</sup> On Flann Mac Bruaídeadha (*alias* Florentius) and that he was regarded as the *Mac Bruaídeadha* at this time, see *ibid.*, p. 770.

We are told by Friar Antonius Bruodinus that a library existed at Moynoe in the 1630s.<sup>127</sup> The library was in the possession of Flann Mac Bruaideadha. Flann Mac Bruaideadha is first recorded as dwelling on the termon of Moynoe in 1621 when he occupied one quarter of Aughrim in Tuamgraney parish on the border with Moynoe parish.<sup>128</sup> It would appear that at this library Micheál Ó Cléirigh saw a copy of *Saltair Chaimín* in 1636, but that Flann was already dead by the time Ó Cléirigh arrived at *Tearmonn Chaimín*.<sup>129</sup> It is worth quoting Bruodinus' description of the library and its ancient texts at length:

*vidi insuper ego non semel in Bibliotheca minimae meae familiae Senioris (vulgo mac Bruodin) nobilis viri, D. Florentii mac Bruodin, Domini de Moyneo, antiquissimas Regni Hiberniae historias, ante tot saecula a Bruodinis in membrana mundissime exaratas, et doubus Tomis (quorum unus Rufus, et alter Ruber dicitur) contentas. In Rufo omnia facta Regum et Principum Familiarum (praesertim vero earum quae ex Eibero, Mileri Hispani, pimiique ex illa stirpe Regis Hiberniae, descenderunt) continebantur. In Rubro vero libro, inter alia arbores genealogicae, non solum Regiae O Brienorum Familiae, sed et praecipuarum omnium Hibernicarum familiarum artificiose collocatae videntur.*<sup>130</sup>

[Moreover, I myself have seen not [just] once in the library of the Senior (Mac Bruodin) of my very humble family, [i.e.,] of the noble Master Florence Mac Bruodin, Master of Moynoe, the most ancient histories of the Kingdom of Ireland, set down on parchment by the Mac Bruodins very neatly so many centuries ago, and contained within two volumes (of which one is called *Rufus* ['Reddish'] and the other *Ruber* ['Red']). In *Rufus* were contained all the deeds of the families of kings and princes (but especially of those that have descended from Eiber [i.e. *Éibhear Fionn*], the son of Milerus the Spaniard [i.e. *Mil Espáine*], and of the first King of Ireland from that branch). In the book *Ruber*, however, there can be seen, skillfully put together, among other things, genealogical trees, not only of the royal family of the O'Briens, but also of all the principal Irish families].<sup>131</sup>

The book *Rubro vero libro*, ('the Red Book') which contained genealogical tracts of some antiquity might be a reference to the *Leabhar Ruadh Muimhneach* that was penned by Murchadh Riabhach Ó Cuinnlis in c.1400 and was preserved at Quin Friary when Ó Cléirigh visited.<sup>132</sup> Clearly Clann Bhruaideadha at Moynoe also followed the profession of chronicling in the same manner as the Lettermoylan and Ibrickan branches. A

<sup>127</sup> The location of the Clann Bhruaideadh residence and library at Moynoe is not known. However, a castle-like structure situated next to Moynoe church may in fact have served as a *scriptorium* and a safe place for the storage of manuscripts. A similar situation may also have transpired at Urlanbeg in Kilmaleery parish where a small castle-like structure may represent a place for the production of manuscripts for the brehon Meic Fhlannchadha lineage, rather than being a towerhouse. On the castles of Co. Clare see R.W. Twigge, 'Edward White's Description of Thomond in 1574', *North Munster Archaeological Society Journal*, vol. 1. no. 2. (1910) pp 75-85.

<sup>128</sup> Petworth House Archive, MS B.16.B, [Great Office of Tulla Barony taken 28 March 1621]. Flann held Aughrim in mortgage from Luke Brady of Tuamgraney. I thank Kenneth Nicholls for this reference.

<sup>129</sup> McGrath, 'Materials for a History of Clann Bhruaideadha', p. 51.

<sup>130</sup> Bruodinus, *Propugnaculum Catholicae Veritatis*, p. 770.

<sup>131</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>132</sup> Edel Bhreathnach, 'The mendicant orders and vernacular Irish learning in the late medieval period', *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. xxxvii, no. 147 (May 2011) pp 357-75:363; and see McGrath, 'Materials for a History of Clann Bhruaideadha', [note 10].

connection between Clann Bhruaidealha and the library of Quin Friary is plausible given the attraction of learned families to mendicant orders in the later medieval period.

Friar Antonius Bruodinus is silent regarding Lettermoyle. Rather, Bruodinus is prolific when it comes to identifying Meic Bhruaidealha kinsmen at Slieve Callan (*viz. Mons Callani*).<sup>133</sup> Although Bruodinus should be read with caution and the usual caveats apply to this first-class propagandist for Clann Bhruaidealha, he is an important witness to the genealogy and landholding of the family. Bruodinus' father was Milerus (Maóilín) of the Ballyogan branch of Clann Bhruaidealha in Kilraghtis parish (and which had land in adjoining Inchicronan).<sup>134</sup> His line of the family can be traced to the mid-sixteenth century Dáire, father of poet Tadhg, and who had land at Ballyogan as well as at Knockanalban in Ibrickan.<sup>135</sup> Bruodinus must have had access to family manuscripts when he compiled his work *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologettici* and he possibly benefited from the assistance of clerical cousins for specific facts.<sup>136</sup> It is known that six of the family became Franciscans in the seventeenth century,<sup>137</sup> several of whom were appointed guardians of Ennis Friary.<sup>138</sup> From Bruodinus we can grasp certain facts concerning Clann Bhruaidealha and their ecclesiastical connections. According to Bruodinus the Meic Bhruaidealha residence at *Mons Scoti* (Knockanalban) never paid rent to the Bishop of Killaloe as it was not designated ecclesiastical land and that it was hereditary property:

*Mons Scoti...in baronia est de Ibrickan, in qua nec Abbas, nec Episcopus ullus pedem terrae unquam habuit. Dominum Thaddeus Bruodinum ac post illius obtium, Dominum Jacobum, Thadei filium, montis Scoti fuisse Dominum nobis Tuomoniensibus notum est.*<sup>139</sup>

[Mount Scott is in the barony of Ibrickan, in which neither any abbot, nor any bishop ever held a foot of land. It is known to us *Tuomoniensibus* [i.e. 'Thomondmen'] that master Thaddeus Bruodinus and, after his death, master Jacobus, the son of Thad[d]eus, had been the proprietor of Mount Scott]<sup>140</sup>

His statement here was factually correct but deliberately partial in its purpose. As his work was generated in response to an attack from fellow Franciscan Thomas Carew<sup>141</sup> which admonished Bruodinus' prior writings on Clann Bhruaidealha, Bruodinus omitted the fact that rather it was Lettermoyle that paid a rent to the Bishop of Killaloe. The 1641 *Books of Survey and Distribution* confirm that Lettermoyle remained in the hands

<sup>133</sup> O'Mollony, *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologettici*, pp 44-5, 123-32.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 42, 126.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124. On Dáire it reads: '*Darius Bruodinus, Dominus Montis Scoti, Balliscanlan, Balliogan, etc., Finolam Grajam, Donati de Balli An Crow filiam in uxorem habuit*'. [Darius Bruodin, master of Mount Scott, Ballyscanlan, Ballyogan, etc, had as a wife Finola Grajam, the daughter of Donough of Ballyancrow].

<sup>136</sup> Perhaps Bonaventura Bruodinus, a professor of philosophy and theology in Prague, was at his side when he compiled his works in the 1660s and early 1670s. On Bonaventura see Alice Stopford Green, *The making of Ireland and its undoing, 1200-1600* (London, 1908, p. 455.

<sup>137</sup> McGrath, 'Materials for a History of Clann Bhruaidealha', p. 50.

<sup>138</sup> Patrick Conlan, *Franciscan Ennis* (Athlone, 1984) pp 64-5.

<sup>139</sup> O'Mollony, *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologettici*, p. 109.

<sup>140</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>141</sup> Carew's (or Carves as it is written) main work refuting Bruodinus was Thomas Carves, *Responsio Veridica Ad Illorum Libellum Cui Nomen Anatomicum Examen P. Antonii Bruodini Hiberni..Sub Ementito Nomine P. Cornelii O Molloni Editum*, Sulzbach, 1672.

of the Established Church and later was leased to the Synge family into the nineteenth century. A letter from 1689 by John Roane, Bishop of Killaloe, reveals that Lettermoylan remained episcopal mensal land at that later date.<sup>142</sup>

#### *Lettermoylan in other records*

We find from placenames on Slieve Callan that the mountain was used for transhumance grazing and it is likely that the Meic Bhruaidealha had herds of cattle which grazed on the summer pastures of Slieve Callan. Placenames such as Boolyduff (*Buaile Dhubh*, ‘dark pasture’) and Boolynagreana (*Loch Buaile na Gréine*, ‘lake of the sunny pasture’) serve as a reminder of transhumance activity on Slieve Callan. Such places were established ‘boolying’ sites from at least the seventeenth century.<sup>143</sup>

Sources of income for learned lineages included fees for serving as public notaries and acting as scribes of legal documents.<sup>144</sup> In Gaelic lordships wealth was measured both in the amount of cattle one possessed and the amount of retainers attached to a lineage. The Gaelic learned class were noted to have been endowed with great herds of cattle. This point is attested in the 1599 raid into *Cinéal Fearmhaic* by Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill who plundered the cattle of Maoilín Óg Mac Bruaidealha, only to restore the cattle to the poet and receive, in return, a favourable poetic quatrain.<sup>145</sup> Ó Domhnaill also rustled the cattle of Tadhg mac Dáire, though the raid received a more condemnatory reception from the poet,<sup>146</sup> probably on account of Tadhg mac Dáire’s personal closeness to the Earl of Thomond.

Signatures in documents from the late sixteenth century confirm Lettermoylan as one of the chief residences of Clann Bhruaidealha. We read in an indenture to the Composition of Connacht in 1585 that Teige McRory of ‘Littermaoelin’ signed as a witness.<sup>147</sup> No original version of the Composition manuscript survives, only an imperfect copy made in 1700.<sup>148</sup> In all probability Teige McRory is a scribal error, the original reading being ‘Teige McDory’ or ‘Teige McBrodry’; as the original is now lost this cannot be established beyond doubt. Lettermoylan is also recorded in an inquisition in 1619 where ‘Thady MacBrody’ (Tadhg mac Dáire) was empanelled as a juror.<sup>149</sup>

### **Clann Bhruaidealha estate**

#### *Landholding in 1615*

A study of the landholding of Clann Bhruaidealha holds clues to their historical status and position in Ibrickan. For example, the spatial relationship between Doonogan as their

<sup>142</sup> Ainsworth (ed.), *Inchiquin Manuscripts*, p. 24. [no.71].

<sup>143</sup> Simington, *Books of Survey and Distribution*, pp 541-2.

<sup>144</sup> Literate members of Clann Bhruaidealha are frequently found in legal instruments in both the *Inchiquin Manuscripts* and also in the collection of Irish deeds printed by James Hardiman. See Ainsworth (ed.) *Inchiquin Manuscripts* [nos. 890; 920; 930; 936; 937; 964; 966; 975; 952; 980; 981; 984; 995; 999; 1003; 1008; 1011; 1018; 1021; 1025; 1029; 1030; 1044; 1318; 1321; 1344; 1483]; and Hardiman (ed.), ‘Ancient Irish Deeds’, pp 61, 67, 80, 81, 84.

<sup>145</sup> *Annals of the Four Masters*, sub anno 1599. Mac Bruaidealha attributed Ó Domhnaill’s incursion as revenge for the demolition of Grianán Ailigh by the grandson of Brian Bóroimhe, and thereby ancestor of Donnchadh Ó Briain, fourth Earl of Thomond, whose territory Ó Domhnaill raided.

<sup>146</sup> Leerssen, *Contention of the Bards*, p. 45. See Tadhg mac Dáire’s poem *Fóiridh mo leisge, a Leith Chuinn* in L. Cionnaith, (ed.), *Dioghluim Dána*, (Dublin, 1938) no. 95.

<sup>147</sup> A. Martin Freeman, (ed.), *The Compossicion Booke of Conought* (Dublin, 1936) p. 7.

<sup>148</sup> The author inspected this copy at the British Library and found the 1936 printed version an accurate transcription of the c.1700 handwritten copy.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Lettermoelane in Petworth House Archive, MS B.26.T.16, [1 April 1619].

towerhouse residence and the more ancient dwelling at Knockanalban on a crannóg, is yet to be determined. The occupation of crannóg sites by learned families into early modern times is well known, as are the occupation of other traditional sites such as the *caiseal* residence of the Uí Dhuibhdábhoireann brehons at Cahermacnaughten in Burren, and the Meic Fhlannchadha brehons at Cahermaclanchy in Corcomroe. In some cases crannóg sites were re-used early medieval royal residences and dynastic sites which had become re-occupied by learned families in the later medieval period. Crannóg sites often represented symbolic, though archaic residences, relegating them to a secondary use by the early modern period. Their sequestered nature made them ideal for the storage of documents and as schools and guest-houses rather than permanent residences. At this period the *ollamh* of the lineage occupied towerhouse residences in the manner of the ruling Gaelic class.<sup>150</sup>

Around Slieve Callan various branches of Clann Bhruaidealha held land into the seventeenth century. According to the 1615 ‘Survey of Ibrickan’<sup>151</sup> and the 1626 rental of the fifth Earl of Thomond’s estates,<sup>152</sup> identification of Meic Bhruaidealha proprietors shows that they had a strong presence in the barony. In 1615 Clann Bhruaidealha occupied over 9,500 acres or around a fifth of Ibrickan barony.<sup>153</sup> Their chief landholdings in 1615 included; Donnsallagh, Shanavogh, Doonogan and surrounding five quarters,<sup>154</sup> Shandrum and Moyglass, Cloghaunnatinny, and Knockanalban.<sup>155</sup> In 1626 it included: Lackamore, Kildeema,<sup>156</sup> Shannaglas, Cahircolligan, Annagh, Knockanalban, Carrowlagan and Ballymackea.<sup>157</sup> It can be seen that their landholding coalesced around Knockanalban and Doonogan in Ibrickan and on Slieve Callan at Lettermoylan.

The association between Clann Bhruaidealha and Slieve Callan can also be found in a letter in Irish by Conchubhar Mac Bruaidealha and dated January 1631, written as an introduction for the German settler Matthew de Renzy.<sup>158</sup> The letter relates that when de Renzy arrived in Ireland in 1606 he sought to learn Irish and, ‘in his journeying he came across the family of Mac Bruaidealha, in particular Conchubhar Mac Bruaidealha, and Tadhg mac Dáire, who were knowledgeable and very learned in Irish’.<sup>159</sup> The letter is headed, ‘*Kl Ianuair for Satharn 1631 Callainn* (The Kalends of January on Saturday 1631, Callan).<sup>160</sup> We may posit that *Callainn* is *Sliabh Calláin*, identifying Conchubhar Mac Bruaidealha’s residence at the time of writing. In 1636 Franciscan friar and scholar, Micheál Ó Cléirigh, travelled throughout Ireland seeking approbations for his work

<sup>150</sup> See, for example, the learned families of Co. Clare who possessed towerhouses in the sixteenth century such as the Ó Catháin of Inis Cathaigh and Ballykett. Martin Breen, ‘A 1570 List of Castles in County Clare’, *North Munster Anti-quarian Journal*, vol. xxxvi (1995) pp 130-8 and Twigg, ‘Edward White’s Description of Thomond in 1574’, pp 75-85.

<sup>151</sup> Petworth House Archive, MS C.27.A.60, Ibrickan Survey [1615].

<sup>152</sup> Petworth House Archive, ‘An abstract of such rents and renewes as doe belonge to the right Hon. Henrye Earle of Thomond [1626]’, Petworth House Archives, Chichester, MS No. C27/A 39.

<sup>153</sup> Computed using modern townland approximations of 1615 denominations. Also see Petworth House Archives, MS C.27.A.60, Ibrickan Survey [1615].

<sup>154</sup> According to the 1615 survey these included the five quarters of Carrowduff, Kildeema, Finnor More and Killargynayne (Killerman?) (all spellings modernized). See Petworth House Archives, MS C.27.A.60, Ibrickan Survey [1615].

<sup>155</sup> Petworth House Archive, MS C.27.A.60, Ibrickan Survey [1615].

<sup>156</sup> The 1626 rental records that the five quarters of Kildeema and Finnor More were held by ‘Teig mc Brodie’s sonnes’.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> Conchubhar did not inherit his father Maoilín Óg’s poetic mastery as can be seen in the short poem he included in the letter to de Renzy which was not composed in the accomplished *Dán Direach* style, characteristic of a bardic poet. Brian Mac Cuarta, ‘Conchubhar Mac Bruaidealha and Sir Matthew de Renzy (1577-1634)’, *Éigse*, vol. 27 (1993) pp122-6:125

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

*Annála Ríoghachta Éireann*, during the course of which he obtained the signature of Conchubhar Mac Bruaideadha. Conchubhar's *testimonium* read:

*Táinic an brathair bocht Michel O Clérigh (amaille le humhla a uachdaráin an tathair Ioseph Euerard prouinsial uird S. Fr.) dom láthair do léchadh 7 do thais-bénadh an leabhair airis 7 annáladha 5 do sgriobhadh lais 7 lasan aois ealadhna oile isa lámha atá air 7 iar na fhéuchain 7 iar na hreathnucchadh dhamh, atúsa Mac Bruaideadha (Conchobar mac Maoilin Oicc) Chill Chaoid[h]e 7 o Leitir Mhaoláin i ccontae an Chláir aga fhiadhnachadh go bhfoil an leabar ionmholta 7 nach cumhain linn leabar airis, no annáladh dfaicsin as mo, as fearr 7 as lionmhaire choitchinne ar Erinn uile iná an leabar so 7 gurab doiligh toibhéim, lochdughadh, na increachadh do dhéunamh air. Do derbhadh ar a ndubhart atáim ace cur mo láimhe air so i cCill Chaoid[h]e II Nouember 1636.*

*Conner Mac Brody da ngoirter*

*Mac Bruaideadha.*

[Whereas the poor Friar Michel O Clérigh came into my presence (in obedience of his superior, Father Joseph Everard, Provincial of the Order of St Francis) to show me this book, together with other books; I am Mac Bruaideadha, Conchobhar son of Maoilin Óg of Cill Chaoid[h]e [Kilkee] and Leitir Mhaoláin [Lettermoylan] in the county of Clare, testifies that I have seen many books relating to the festivals of the Irish saints, but never did see any one book of them so full, eminently clear, and arranged in better order, and so worthy of praise as the Festival and Martyrology which are in this book; and to attest this, I put my hand upon it in Cill Chaoid[h]e [Kilkee], 11 November 1636.

Conner Mac Brody, who was proclaimed Mac Bruaideadha]<sup>161</sup>

Conchobhar's residence can be identified as *Cill Chaoid[h]e* (Kilkee in Dysert parish) and *Leitir Maoláin* (Lettermoylan, in Inagh parish). His proprietorship of Lettermoylan descended to him from his father, Maoilín Óg. This was the same Conchubhar Mac Bruaideadha who wrote the letter in 1631 in favour of Matthew de Renzy.

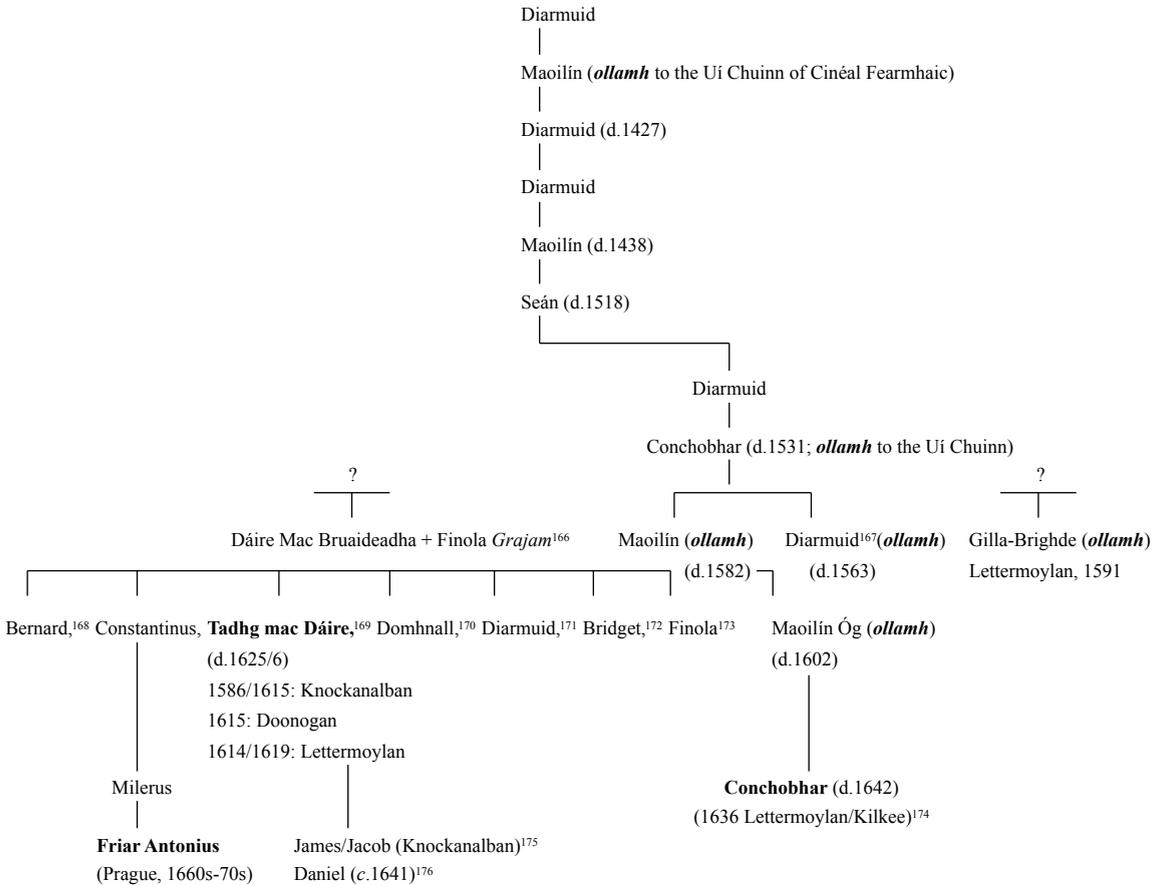
Conchobhar must have gained the appellation *Mac Bruaideadha* in the intervening years after the death of his father Maoilín Óg in 1602, and when he helped arbitrate an agreement between members of Clann Uí Mhaoil Dhomhnaigh and the Earl of Thomond in 1606 for lands near Killaloe.<sup>162</sup> The indenture to the agreement mentioned 'Connor McBrodyn otherwise McBrodye and Teig McBrodyn' suggesting that Conchobhar was the *McBrodyn/Mac Bruaideadha* by that stage.<sup>163</sup> Conchobhar apparently died in 1642 and, we are informed, was in possession of Lettermoylan at the time of his death.<sup>164</sup>

<sup>161</sup> Paul Walsh, *Gleanings from Irish Manuscripts*, (Dublin, 1933) p. 78. On the Meic Bhruaideadha and their relationship to the compiling of the *Annals of the Four Masters* see Bernadette Cunningham, *The Annals of the Four Masters: Irish history, kingship and society in the early seventeenth century* (Dublin, 2010) pp 278-98. On Kilkee towerhouse site in Dysert and its possible occupation by Clann Bhruaideadha see See Risteárd Ua Cróinín & Martin Breen, 'Some obscure tower house sites in the Corofin area', *The Other Clare*, vol. 17 (1993) pp 5-12:8, & note 35, p. 12.

<sup>162</sup> See Petworth House Archive, MS C.13/34a, [23 September 1606]. The full indenture is printed in McInerney, 'Documents from the Thomond Papers at Petworth House Archive', p. 42.

<sup>163</sup> This may have been a nominal title and it appears not linked to the *ollamh*-ship. That position effectively falling into disuse on the death of Conchobhar's father Maoilín Óg in 1602. Conchobhar also arbitrated a deed written in Irish in 1614. Gearóid Mac Niocail, 'Seven Irish Documents from the Inchiquin Archives', *Analecta Hibernica*, no. 26 (1970) pp 47-69:65.

<sup>164</sup> O'Hart, *Irish Pedigrees*, p. 105. Also see Richard F. Cronnelly, *Irish Family History: Being an Historical and Genealogical Account of the Gaedhals from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Dublin, 1864) p. 331.

*Leading kinsmen of Clann Bhruaidealha*<sup>165</sup>

<sup>165</sup> The names presented here are derived from O'Hart, *Irish Pedigrees*, pp 104-05 and references in Friar Antonius Bruodinus' work, written under pseudonym, O'Mollony, *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologettici*.

<sup>166</sup> Read: '*Darius Bruodinus, Dominus Montis Scoti, Balliscanlan, Balliogan, etc., Finolam Grajam, Donati de Balli An Crow filiam in uxorem habuit, ex quibus multi egregij viri, & foeminae descenderunt*' ['Darius Bruodinus, master of Mount Scott, Balliscanlan, Balliogan, etc, took Finola Grajam, daughter of Donough of Ballyancrow, as a wife, and from them descended numerous remarkable men and women'. *Ibid.*, p. 124].

<sup>167</sup> See *Annals of the Four Masters, sub anno 1563*.

<sup>168</sup> O'Mollony, *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologettici*, p. 124.

<sup>169</sup> Tadhg mac Dáire wife was Anna Mohony of Tuonafarna, she being of Clann Mhic Mhathghamhna, *ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>170</sup> Domhnall mac Dáire composed the poem *Ceolchair sin a chruit an riogh* which was dedicated to the fourth Earl of Thomond. Walsh, *Gleanings from Irish Manuscripts*, p. 111. Also see the '*Daniel Bruodinus Darij secundus filius*' in O'Mollony, *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologettici*, p. 124.

<sup>171</sup> See a deed in Irish dated 1592 and written at Mauthail in Rath parish, Inchiquin, where one of the witnesses was 'Diarmoid mac Dáire Mhic Bruaidealha'. The scribe of the deed was Ualgharg Mac Bruaidealha who is an otherwise unknown kinsman. Mac Niocaill, 'Seven Irish Documents from the Inchiquin Archives', p. 53.

<sup>172</sup> O'Mollony, *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologettici*, p. 129. Bridget married Cornelius MacMohony of Tuonafarna.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> Conchobhar's daughter Elenor of 'Kilky' (Kilkee in Dysert) married Thadeus Mohony of Tuonafarna, *ibid.*, p. 132

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 43, 125.

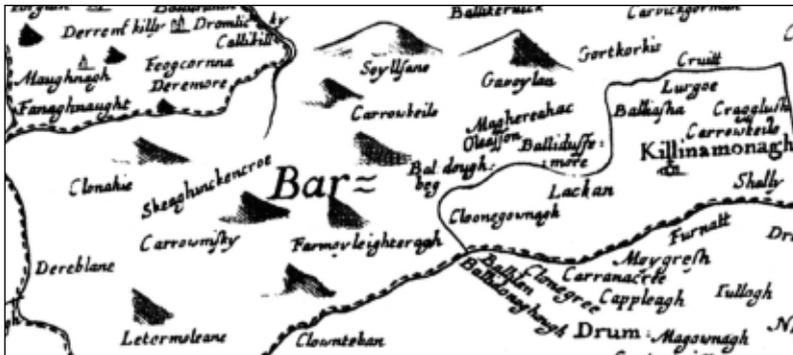
<sup>176</sup> Several of Tadhg mac Dáire's sons held the five quarters of Kildeema and Finnor More in 1626. See Petworth House Archive, 'An abstract of such rents and renewes as doe belonge to the right Hon. Henrye Earle of Thomond [1626]', Petworth House Archives, Chichester, MS No. C27/A 39.

*Landholding, 1641*

Various branches of Clann Bhruaidealha are recorded in the 1641 *Books of Survey and Distribution* in Co. Clare. Meic Bhruaidealha kinsmen can be found holding land at Inishcaltra, Dysert, Kilraghtis and Inchicronan parishes.<sup>177</sup> Examining landholding around Slieve Callan can ascertain Lettermoylan's position as an estate of a leading branch of Clann Bhruaidealha. In 1641 Meic Bhruaidealha kinsmen in Dysert parish (now Inagh) held Cloonanaha to the north of Slieve Callan, and at Formoyle Upper and Lower bordering Lettermoylan to the east.<sup>178</sup> The cluster of kinsmen at Formoyle included the sons of Maoilín Óg and Tadhg mac Dáire Mhic Bhruaidealha, strongly intimating that in Inagh parish was domiciled the leading branch of Clann Bhruaidealha.<sup>179</sup> All these lands were forfeited to the Earl of Inchiquin<sup>180</sup> and in the words of antiquarian Dr George Macnamara, the Meic Bhruaidealha proprietors were 'unceremoniously evicted, and their lands, though poor and unproductive, helped to fill the hungry maw of Morough the Burner.'<sup>181</sup>

In 1641 other lands held by Meic Bhruaidealha included the townlands of Kilkee and Lisheenrahanick and Lisheencreevy in Dysert parish.<sup>182</sup> The former of which was the property of Conchobhar son of Maoilín Óg. As we have shown Kilkee (*Cill Chaoidhe*) was where Conchobhar signed his approbation of Ó Cléirigh's work in 1636; his other property being Lettermoylan. This serves to highlight that the Clann Bhruaidealha branch at Dysert had intertwined interests in Inagh parish. This rather innocuous point owes itself to the fact that modern day Inagh parish once formed part of Dysert parish and included Lettermoylan on its far western border.

In 1641 Lettermoylan was in the hands of the Bishop of Killaloe, undoubtedly because the oratory church of Mac Creiche designated it as church land. On Petty's County Map of 1685 Lettermoylan is marked to the west of 'Formoyleighteragh' (Formoyle Lower) and next to a mountain, presumably Slieve Callan.



Petty's Hiberniae Delineatio County Map (1685)

<sup>177</sup> See proprietors listed under these parishes in Simington, *Books of Survey and Distribution*.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 533-5.

<sup>179</sup> The full recording including the townland sub-divisions are, for Formoyle Eighteragh: Daniel McBrodly of Letterahoffe; Conor McMoylin McBrodly of Gortinterill and Cloonecolpa and Knockluoghra; Conor McDary McBrodly of Derynakilly and Clooneckiddle; Daniel McDaniel McBrodly of Clooneckiddle; John McBarnard McBrodly of Tirranskagh; Luke McBrodly of Knockluoghra. For Formoyle Oughteragh: James Oge McBrodly of Lairheagh; Daniel McTeige McBrodly of Beannormollagh[?]. Simington, *Books of Survey and Distribution*, pp 534-5.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 534-5.

<sup>181</sup> Macnamara, 'The O'Davorens of Cahermacnaughten, Burren, Co. Clare', p. 75.

<sup>182</sup> Simington, *Books of Survey and Distribution*, pp 553-4.

*Knockanalban estate*

Knockanalban was one of the chief residences of Clann Bhruaidealha. The fact that Tadhg mac Dáire Mhic Bhruaidealha occupied it since at least 1586 confirms this view.<sup>183</sup> Tadhg mac Dáire appears at Knockanalban again in 1602 when he was noted as a ‘gent’ in the same fiant that recorded a Shane McBrian McBrody, yeoman of ‘Litternewlan’.<sup>184</sup> Clearly this is a reference to Lettermoylan though Shane McBrian is an otherwise obscure kinsman. The 1615 survey of Ibrickan records Knockanalban rent free and that ‘Teig McBrodya holdeth for which he payeth not rent’.<sup>185</sup> Knockanalban was one of eight quarters of Ibrickan that was exempt from paying [either] ‘hoggs nor muttons’.<sup>186</sup> Knockanalban was still rent free in 1626 when the fifth Earl of Thomond’s rental listed its occupant as ‘Teig mc Brodies widdowe’.<sup>187</sup> This fact places Tadhg mac Dáire’s death between 1624, when he composed an elegy on the death of the Earl of Thomond,<sup>188</sup> and 1626.<sup>189</sup> The legend that Tadhg mac Dáire was flung from the heights of Doonogan castle by a rapacious Cromwellian in the 1650s is demonstrably untrue. Perhaps the myth had its roots in Tadhg mac Dáire’s proprietorship of Doonogan instead; the story possibly serving as an analogy of the dispossession of Clann Bhruaidealha in the Cromwellian settlement or of some other violence directed against them.

Around Knockanalban and Doonogan Clann Bhruaidealha held their largest estates in the early seventeenth-century.<sup>190</sup> Knockanalban’s exemption from rent signified the status of the Meic Bhruaidealha as official poet-chroniclers. According to Friar Antonius Bruodinus, the professional reputation of Clann Bhruaidealha rested on several functions including chronicling events and maintaining the genealogies of the nobility:

*Inter Hibernos... (more omnium per Europam Nationum) sunt nobiles, nobiliores, nobilissimi; divites, ditiores, ditissimi. Bruodinus non negavit; sed palam confessus est, suam familiam esse tantum nobilem, ex qua semper unus fuit familiae caput, seu senior (vulgo MacBruodin dictus) cujus erat priscis Regnantibus, Hibernis, inter alios Regni Chronologos historiam Regni scribere, genealogias, et facta notabilia Principum O Brien et aliarum certarum magnatum familiarum observare.*<sup>191</sup>

[Among the Irish... (by the custom of Nations all through Europe) Bruodin did not deny this [i.e. that there are several grades of nobility]; instead, he openly confessed that his family, which always brought forth one head of the family, or the

<sup>183</sup> See *The Irish Fiant of the Tudor Sovereigns During the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Philip & Mary, and Elizabeth I*, Fiant, Eliz., No. 4860 [year 1586]. The reference reads ‘Teig Me Brodie, of Knockinalbie’.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, Fiant No. 6615 [year 1602].

<sup>185</sup> Petworth House Archive, MS C.27.A.60, Ibrickan Survey [1615].

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> Petworth House Archive, ‘An abstract of such rents and renewes as doe belonge to the right Hon. Henrye Earle of Thomond [1626]’, Petworth House Archives, Chichester, MS No. C27/A 39.

<sup>188</sup> See Ó Cuív, ‘An elegy on Donnchadh Ó Briain, fourth earl of Thomond’, pp 87-105.

<sup>189</sup> Petworth House Archive, ‘An abstract of such rents and renewes as doe belonge to the right Hon. Henrye Earle of Thomond [1626]’, Petworth House Archives, Chichester, MS No. C27/A 39. The documentary evidence puts to rest the remark by Theophilus O’Flanagan that Tadhg mac Dáire was hurled down from the summit of Doonogan to his death by a Cromwellian in the 1650s. If it were true, he would have been very old at that time if we consider that he is recorded as witnessing documents in the 1580s. See Theophilus O’Flanagan, *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Dublin*, vol. 1 (1808) p. 27. O’Flanagan does relate that Tadhg mac Dáire, ‘possessed a fine appenage, as the hereditary *PHILISOPHIC* [*sic*] *BARD* of Thomond (even in the decline of such establishments)—the castle of Dunogan, and its appurtenances’.

<sup>190</sup> Tadhg mac Dáire Mhic Bhruaidealha may be considered a substantial landholder as his total landholding in 1615 was in excess of seven quarters. See Petworth House Archives, MS C.27.A.60, Ibrickan Survey [1615].

<sup>191</sup> O’Mollony, *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologetici*, pp 40-1.

senior (generally called MacBruodin), whose [task] it was when the Irish of old reigned, to write, among other chroniclers of the realm, the history of the realm, and to observe the genealogies, and the remarkable deeds of the O'Brien princes and those of other certain great families].<sup>192</sup>

The fourth Earl of Thomond's patronage of Clann Bhruaidealha extended to other learned members such as Teig McBroody who was the rector of Bunratty (Tradery) prior to 1612,<sup>193</sup> and to Friar Dermot Bruodin, a member of the Slieve Callan branch and educated in Spain.<sup>194</sup> Friar Dermot Bruodin served as the guardian of Ennis Friary until his death in 1617 and was accorded protection by the Earl (under the guise of being 'mad') and permitted to preach publicly in Ennis.<sup>195</sup> He was also a recipient of a Spanish pension in 1605 and was a follower of the Baron of Lixnaw during the Nine Years War.<sup>196</sup> We may place some credence in Bruodinus' writings and his authority extends to unraveling the landholding of Meic Bhruaidealha kinsmen. While too complicated to detail here, aspects of his writing can be used to determine that the chief branches of the family were located around Slieve Callan and Ibrickan.<sup>197</sup>

It is not known what purpose Knockanalban crannóg<sup>198</sup> served but its sequestered location and its symbolic reminder as an 'antique residence' may have been the reason of its appeal for a learned family eager to impress their status and ancient credentials. Alternatively, the defensive feature of a crannóg may have proven useful for the practical purpose of storing documents and manuscripts. It is conceivable that Knockanalban had several purposes, one of which was that of a manuscript library or archive. Its location on an island surrounded by a watery marsh<sup>199</sup> would also have made it an ideal venue in which to conduct a school (*sgoilteach*) or keep a guest-house (*teach n-oiged*).

There are no contemporary references to a Meic Bhruaidealha school unlike the Uí Dhuibhdábhoireann law school at Cahernacnaughten<sup>200</sup> or the Uí Mhaoilchonaire

<sup>192</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>193</sup> The advowson of the rectory had remained in the hands of the Uí Bhriain since the collapse of the Norman colony of *Tradraighe* in c.1318. It is of no surprise that Earls of Thomond sought to appoint a member of Clann Bhruaidealha to the rectory to serve the O'Brien household at Bunratty Castle. During the fifteenth century Meic Conmara clerics monopolised appointments to the rectory. Perhaps the move by the fourth Earl of Thomond from Clonroad to Bunratty encouraged a break from tradition and the appointment of a Mac Bruaidealha whose learning may have made him more than just a cleric, but an advisor at Thomond's court. We also read of a student cleric, Gillabride Broodin, who was appointed to the rectories of Killuran and Kilsely in 1619 and appears in a Latin church document from 1621. Dwyer, *Diocese of Killaloe*, pp 148-9; and Ainsworth (ed.), *Inchiquin Manuscripts*, p. 328. In another list Bishop Rider notes the Catholic priest Donnell Broodin active in Killinaboy and Kilkeedy parishes in Inchiquin barony, *ibid.*, p.144.

<sup>194</sup> Antonius Bruodinus writes that: '*Dermitius mac Bruodin, seu Bruodinus, Franciscani Ordinis inclytus opinion sanctitatis alumnus. Patrem habuit Milerum Bruodinum, Dominum montis Calany*' [Dermot MacBruodin or Bruodinus, of the Franciscan Order of Killaloe, whose father was Milerum Bruodinum, proprietor of Mount Callan]. Bruodinus, *Propugnaculum Catholicae Veritatis*, p. 500. One wonders if he was the son of Maoilín (d.1582) or Maoilín Óg (d.1602) as *Milerum* is used by Bruodinus as a Latinised form of Maoilín.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 500-04. Bruodinus relates that in order for friar Dermot to not present a public threat to the English administration he did not shave his head or beard and wore a long dress to give the impression of a foolish eccentric. This was a stratagem permitted by the Earl of Thomond to allow Dermot Bruodin to continue public ministry without suffering prosecution.

<sup>196</sup> Micheline Kerney Walsh, 'O'Sullivan Beare in Spain: some unpublished documents', *Archivium Hibernicum*, no. 45 (1990) pp 46-63:53,55. He is recorded therein as 'Dermicio Brodino' and was to receive 15 crowns.

<sup>197</sup> See O'Mollony, *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologetici*, pp 40-6, 109, 123-32.

<sup>198</sup> See Gleeson, 'Knockanalban crannog(s), Co. Clare', pp 32-4. A possible second crannóg is identified at Knockanalban, a point confirmed by the local landowner in July 2012.

<sup>199</sup> The present landowner, James O'Boyle, informed the author in June 2012, that in former times the land around Knockanalban crannóg was much wetter than today, and formed a small lake. O'Boyle added that his father remembered the land being drained and that the lake existed when the site was the property of Lord Leconfield.

<sup>200</sup> See Macnamara, 'The O'Davorens of Cahernacnaughten, Burren, Co. Clare' (1912-13).

school at Ard Kyle near Bunratty.<sup>201</sup> But it can be surmised that a school existed and it was attended by Matthew de Renzy in the 1610s when he began to study Irish.<sup>202</sup> Evidence also exists that the Meic Bhruaídeadha maintained links to other learned families who ran schools, whether through their marriage ties with the Meic Fhlannchadha for example,<sup>203</sup> or Tadhg mac Dáire Mhic Bhruaídeadha's poetic address to Clann Dhuibhdábhoireann where he describes the 'limewhite *lios*' of Cahermacnaughten.<sup>204</sup> The literary network of Clann Bhruaídeadha was extensive and connections were maintained as far afield as Donegal from where a member of the learned Uí Chléirigh died while visiting Lettermoylan in 1595.<sup>205</sup> Such allusions imply familiarity with the schools and residences of other learned families. Residences of the Gaelic learned class served several purposes: a storage place for official documents; a defensive residence for the *ollamh* and his kin; a display of prestige; and in the case of residences attached to a school, a solitary place in which to produce manuscripts.

One of the last known connections between Knockanalban and the Meic Bhruaídeadha occurs at the time of the Irish Confederacy when 'Gillebridy mc Brody' (Giolla Brighde) of Knockanalban was involved in an attack on English settler John Ward in 1642.<sup>206</sup> By the mid-seventeenth century aristocratic patronage had almost disappeared and few of the professional families continued to maintain schools and learning. From around this time Clann Bhruaídeadha virtually disappear from the historical record.

#### *Doonogan estate*

In 1615 Doonogan was owned by Tadhg mac Dáire Mhic Bhruaídeadha.<sup>207</sup> Doonogan probably can be regarded as *primus inter pares* among Clann Bhruaídeadha residences, serving as a more conventional residence for Tadhg mac Dáire, although uncertainty exists as to how long he held it. In 1835 Eugene Curry observed that the castle stood as a ruin and local memory identified it as a Clann Bhruaídeadha possession:

Dun Ógáin: castle partly ruined stands convenient to Milltown Malbay. It with its appurtenances was the patrimony of the celebrated McBrodins. The last I believe [of] whom was thrown down the steep precipice on which the castle stands, by one of Cromwell's soldiers.<sup>208</sup>

Today only scattered masonry abounds the site which commands an impressive view over west Clare. Tadhg mac Dáire's ownership of Doonogan, and the five quarters of land in the surrounding vicinity along with a rent free estate at Knockanalban, unequivocally

<sup>201</sup> On this family see Brian Ó Dálaigh, 'The Uí Mhaoilchonaire of Thomond', *Studia Hibernica*, xxxv (2009/2010), pp 45-68.

<sup>202</sup> Mac Cuarta, 'Conchubhar Mac Bruaídeadha and Sir Matthew de Renzy', pp 122-6.

<sup>203</sup> Various reference may be found in O'Mollony, *Anatomicum Examen Enchiridii Apologetici*, pp 124-132. Bruodinus lists their marriage alliances with notable lineages such as the Meic Conmara, Meic Fhlannchadha and Uí Ghráda, among others.

<sup>204</sup> Macnamara, 'The O'Davorens of Cahermacnaughten, Burren, Co. Clare', (1912-13), p. 209.

<sup>205</sup> *Annals of the Four Masters*, sub anno 1595.

<sup>206</sup> Deposition of John Ward, TCD MS 829, fol. 80v, 25/4/1643.

<sup>207</sup> Petworth House Archives, MS C.27.A.60, Ibrickan Survey [1615].

<sup>208</sup> 'Extract of a letter from Mr E. Curry to George Smith Esq. College Green, Dublin, dated at Limerick 8 July 1835' (RIA, 'Ordnance Survey Ireland: Co Clare Extracts', vol 2, pp 510-11). I wish to thank Brian Ó Dálaigh for supplying this reference.

demonstrates his high status. We may therefore observe Lettermoylan as one linchpin in a wider network of landholding that included Knockanalban and Doonogan, all of which were corporate to the lineage.

### **Slieve Callan: a ritual landscape**

There is little doubt that Slieve Callan and its environs constituted a ritual landscape that extended north to the Burren. This landscape which has traces of human occupation that stretch back to the megalithic also contains important medieval sites. These sites would have served as ‘antique identifiers’ that help justify the landholding claims of members of the learned class, including rent free lands. As Katherine Simms has pointed out, the estates of the bardic poets were often located in areas with symbolic meaning, and that sequestered sites were especially sought to convey a sense of retreat from the world and where learning could be pursued. These sites were integrated into a territorial matrix that often encompassed wilderness and natural beauty, along with productive grazing and pasture land.<sup>209</sup>

Often the estates of the learned class were arranged near or on inauguration sites and the mensal land of local dynasties. Such sites often coincided with anciently used places of burial, monastic foundations and megalithic tombs. Many of these features are found around Slieve Callan suggesting that the Clann Bhruaideadha estates were arranged similarly. The solitary Ogham inscription of unknown antiquity on the southern slope of Slieve Callan, and the now destroyed cromlech that situated next to Lough Boolynagreana,<sup>210</sup> along with a megalithic tomb at Knockalassa, serve as examples.<sup>211</sup> It might also be relevant to note the folklore tradition that links the Ogham stone to the key of the submerged city of Kilstephén (*Cill Stiopháin*) which was reputedly hidden at the bottom of Lough Boolynagreana;<sup>212</sup> other variants place the key under the Ogham stone and buried with Conán.<sup>213</sup> Other ritual markers that are found on the Meic Bhruaideadha estate include the oratory church at Lettermoylan near the present Mount Callan House, and the status of the church land there constituting part of Dysert termon.<sup>214</sup> The occupation of Knockanalban crannóg may also be seen in the same context; reoccupation of a site of considerable antiquity would be congruent with a learned family wanting a symbolic link with a territory’s antiquities.

<sup>209</sup> Katharine Simms, ‘References to landscape and economy in Irish bardic poetry’, in H.B. Clarke, J. Prunty & M. Hennessy (eds), *Surveying Ireland’s past: multidisciplinary essays in honour of Anngret Simms* (Dublin, 2004) pp 145-68:146.

<sup>210</sup> MacNeill, *Festival of Lughnasa*, p. 197. The presence of the cromlech was recalled by Prof. Brian O’Looney who visited the site in 1859.

<sup>211</sup> According to Lewis’s Topographical Dictionary there existed two small wedge tombs in proximity to the one seen today at Knockalassa and also the remains of a stone *ráth*. Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*: (second edition, London, 1837) p. 90.

<sup>212</sup> Macnamara, ‘The O’Davorens of Cahermacnaughten, Burren, Co. Clare’, (1912-13), p. 153. Macnamara cogently noted that the Ogham stone was close to where the ‘McBrodin family’ once lived and may be attributed to them as a scholastic exercise, perhaps erected in commemoration of Conán. He considered that if such a tradition existed it was likely they who were acquainted with early manuscripts and histories and had the wherewithal to inscribe archaic Ogham characters. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>213</sup> On this view of the tradition see the letter written by E.W. Burton Esq., Clifden, dated April 1785 which relates local traditions about an ‘enchanted key’ interred with Conán. *The Dublin Philosophical Journal, and Scientific Review*, May 1826, p. 144.

<sup>214</sup> Edward Worth, Bishop of Killaloe (1660-1669), groups Lettermoylan as part of the termon of Dysert. See ‘MS 1777, Typescript copy of a survey of lands in the diocese of Killaloe made for Bishop Worth, 1661’, transcribed by (Rev) James B. Leslie, National Library of Ireland, 1936, pp 31-3.

It may be significant that the Meic Bhruaidealha estate around Doonogan in Ibrickan situated close to the medieval territorial boundary with *Ui Chormaic*, the demarcation of which lay just east of Doolough. The allocation of lands to the professional class often comprised boundary lands,<sup>215</sup> a point that can also be seen in the location of church sites and high status residences. Lettermoylan was located on the farthest western reaches of termon Dysert bordering Kilmurry-Ibrickan parish. Estates located on the boundary between territories served various functions including barriers of sanctuary and places of assembly; and as can be observed with Lettermoylan were usually coterminous with parochial and termon divisions. From this view the location of estates of the learned class which often comprised termon land frequently coincided with territorial boundaries. These factors cannot be discounted when considering Clann Bhruaidealha's landholding.

### Lettermoylan's division into townlands

Little primary material is available for Lettermoylan during the eighteenth century; only from the early nineteenth century does sufficient material exist. Slieve Callan is mentioned only in passing in a letter dating from around c. 1699-1703 by Sir Donough O'Brien of Dromoland regarding allegations that he was a Jacobite sympathizer.<sup>216</sup> Records are silent on further references to the district until the mid-eighteenth century when Lettermoylan was let by the Right Rev. Nicholas Synge, Bishop of Killaloe, (1746-1771) to his grandson George Synge of Rathmore in King's County.<sup>217</sup> In 1844 George Synge's son Lt. Col. Charles Synge, built a small house known as the 'The Court' at Lettermoylan (now Ballynoe).<sup>218</sup> According to the will of Lt. Col. Charles Synge who died in 1854, Lettermoylan passed into the proprietorship of the Synge family sometime before that time:

I own and am possessed of the four known [*sic*] as the four plough lands of Lettermoylan Mount Callan in the barony of Inchiquin and Co. Clare held under lease from the Bishop of Killaloe and the inheritance having been purchased and from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of Ireland.<sup>219</sup>

Mount Callan House was built on the site of 'The Court' in 1874 by a relative also named Col. George Charles Synge. The house and property went to the inheritance of the Tottenham family in 1891, and has remained in the possession of that family to the present day. The division of Lettermoylan into townlands occurred after it was surveyed and mapped in July 1842.<sup>220</sup> The map shows how Lettermoylan was divided and parceled, and assigned to smaller denominations.

<sup>215</sup> On boundary association see Pádraig Ó Riain, 'Boundary association in early Irish society', *Studia Celtica*, vol. 7 (1972) pp 12-29.

<sup>216</sup> The letter mentions Cloonanaha: 'Cluonehaha...there is a little patch of mountain near Sliewcallane', see Ainsworth, *Inchiquin Manuscripts*, p. 270 [no. 882].

<sup>217</sup> After 1634 the leasing of church lands was restricted to 21 years at not less than half 'the true value' (i.e the market rent). Many bishops circumvented this restriction by issuing a new lease every year at a renewal fine, resulting in much of the bishops' income being derived from renewal fines. Examples exist of Church of Ireland bishops making long term leases of church land to their children, such as Archbishop Charles Agar of Cashel. I thank Kenneth Nicholls for his advice on this point.

<sup>218</sup> Anonymous, (ed.), 'Mount Callan House and estate—an extract from the diary of Colonel George Charles Synge', *Dal gCais*, vol. 5 (1979) pp 94-100:94.

<sup>219</sup> The author wishes to thank Jane Tottenham of Mount Callan House for providing the will for inspection.

<sup>220</sup> 'Map and survey of Lettermoylan as now divided for the Messrs. Synge... situate in the barony of Inchiquin, Co. Clare. Surveyed by Michael and Peter O'Loghlin. Folio sheet vellum, coloured, July, 1842' (National Library of Ireland, Manuscript Map: 21 F. 75 (1)).



*'Map and survey of Lettermoylan as now divided for the Messrs. Syngé' ..., July, 1842*

From this map it can be seen that Lettermoylan comprised 1,833 acres and, judging from the townlands that bounded the area, it encompassed much of present day Ballynoe, Glennageer, Magherabaun and Knockalassa.<sup>221</sup> Further proof that Lettermoylan was originally joined with Glennageer and neighbouring townlands may be obtained in the *Ordnance Survey Name Books*, (1840-42) which categorically show that Lettermoylan and Glennageer constituted one land unit, though the former was by that time part of an enlarged Glennageer:

Glannager (*Gleann na g-caor*, valley of the berries) townland property of Edward Syngé Esq. It consists chiefly of mountain pasture and bog with different stripes of arable and tillage interspersed there throughout. A road also runs along its S.E boundary. Names in this townland – Subdivision Lettermoylan, Lough Booly-nagreena, Lackcommame, Commanes, Knock[?], Cullane, Mount Callan or Slieve Callane.<sup>222</sup>

<sup>221</sup> The modern size of these townlands is: Ballynoe (524 acres); Glennageer (844 acres); Magherabaun (624 acres) and Knockalassa (935 acres). In total these townlands comprise 2,927 acres.

<sup>222</sup> *Ordnance Survey Name Books*, Co. Clare, 1840-2.

Lettermoylan does not feature by the time of the Griffith Valuation in 1855.<sup>223</sup> By the 1870s the Synge estate at Slieve Callan consisted of 2,940 acres, much of it comprised the divisions of Lettermoylan: *i.e.* Ballynoe, Glennageer, Magherabaun and Knockalassa.

### Concluding Remarks

Lettermoylan of Clann Bhruaidealha was located on the eastern slope of Slieve Callan. Encompassing much of modern-day Ballynoe and Glennageer, as well as Knockalassa and Magherabaun, Lettermoylan existed as a townland until the 1840s. Historically Lettermoylan constituted episcopal mensal land and was located on the western border of termon Dysert. It is curious that Clann Bhruaidealha were ecclesiastical tenants both at Lettermoylan and at Moynoe in east Co. Clare where a branch of the family pursued native learning. These facts may support the view that Clann Bhruaidealha shared, along with other members of the Gaelic learned orders, a pre-reform connection to the Irish monastic church. This would account for them being settled on church land and being a *literati* lineage.

The Meic Bhruaidealha chronicler-poets did not leave us with a genealogy documenting their history; instead we are left with the imprint of their literature in bardic poetry and the physical remains of their residences at Knockanalban crannóg and Doonogan towerhouse. We are also reminded of their former presence by the ruined foundation of the oratory church of Mac Creiche, which can be seen perched above the stream that flows down the *Leitir* of Slieve Callan.

## Appendix One

### Calendar of entries relating to Lettermoylan

- c.1580 Tadhg mac Dáire Mhic Bhruaidealha's poem to the Clanrickard Bourkes.
- 1585 Teige McRory [*recte* McDary/macDáire?] of 'Littermaoelin' witness to the Composition of Connacht.
- 1591 Pardon issued to 'Gilabride Mc Brodyne, of Letter Mellane'.
- 1592 Maccon Ó Cléirigh, *ollamh* to Ó Domhnall died while visiting 'Leitir-Maelain' in Thomond.
- 1602 Pardon issued to 'Shane McBrien Mc Brody, of Litternewlan yeoman'.
- 1614 Bishop of Killaloe's petition to the Lord Deputy mentions 'houses and mancons [*sic*] within the half quarter of land called Littermolane within the parish of Dysert'.
- 1617 Teige McBroodyn and Gillibride McBroodyn released to the Bishop of Killaloe Lettermoylan.
- 1618 Great Office Inquisition for Inchiquin records Teig McBrodin of 'Lettermollan' and Bernard McBrodin of 'Lettermollan' (with a strike through it and substitutes 'Sonnagh').
- 1619 'Thady Mac Brody de Lettermoelane' in the inquisition into the lands of Donough O'Brien, fourth Earl of Thomond.
- 1621 Great Office Inquisition for Inchiquin, Teig McBrodin as a juror and of 'Lettermollan'.
- 1636 Conchobhar Mac Bruaidealha, son of Maoilín Óg of *Chill Chaoid[h]e* and *Leitir Mhaoláin*.

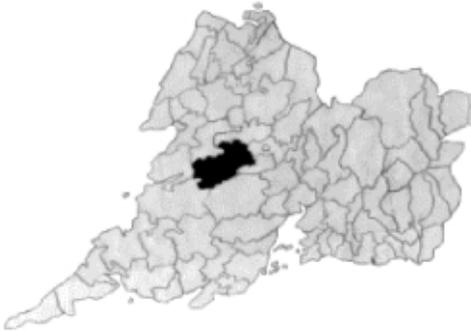
<sup>223</sup> *Griffith Valuation of Ireland*, 1855, Parish of Inagh.

- 1641 Littermoylan recorded as bishopric land in the *Books of Survey and Distribution*.
- 1685 Letermoleane appears on Petty's County Map of 1685.
- 1689 John Roane, Bishop of Killaloe's letter to Sir Donat O'Brien which mentions 'Lytttermoylane'.
- 1740s-50s Lettermoylan let on a 999 years lease by the Right Rev. Nicholas Synge, Bishop of Killaloe, (1746-1752) to his grandson, George Synge.
- 1842 Lettermoylan mapped for Lt. Col. Charles Synge and surveyed as consisting 1,833 acres.
- 1843 Lettermoylan appears in the Tithe Applotment Books for Inagh parish under the designation 'Lettermoylan Glaumageer' (*recte* Glanagee).
- 1844 Lt. Col. Charles Synge, erected a house known as the 'The Court' with a slate roof at Lettermoylan.
- 1855 Lettermoylan falls into disuse as a land denomination and is subsumed by the denominations Glennageer and Ballynoe which are instead recorded in the Griffith Valuation.
- 1874 Colonel George Charles Synge builds Mount Callan House on the site of 'The Court'.

## Appendix Two

### Parishes associated with Clann Bhruaideadha

Inagh Parish



Kilmurry-Ibrickan Parish



Dysert Parish



Moynoe parish

