

A MISUNDERSTOOD ANNAL: A HITHERTO UNNOTICED CÁIN

1. AN ANNAL FOR 810 (AI)

As is well known, the Annals of Inisfallen (AI) are principally concerned with the affairs of Leth Moga or the Southern Half of Ireland – and particularly with those of Munster – which as the editor, Seán Mac Airt, pointed out ‘show a slow but steady increase from the middle of the sixth century onwards’.¹ Many of the Munster entries are shared, of course, by other annals. Some, however, including the entry for 810 under discussion here, are unique to AI. As edited and translated by Mac Airt, this annal reads: *Bo-shlechta la Mumain la Dare ocus la Adhuar macc nEchin* ‘The law concerning cows [promulgated] in Mumu by Dáire and by Aduar, son of Echen’.²

Since *bó-shlechta*, apparently a derivative of *bó* ‘cow’ and *slicht* ‘section’,³ is usually preceded by *cáin* ‘law’, we may follow Mac Airt in allowing for this in the translation.⁴ Unremarked and presumably unnoticed by Mac Airt, however, the text of the annal otherwise also deviates considerably from the norm in such entries. Moreover, these other irregularities have an important bearing on the meaning of the annal.

The annals for the period from 697, when Adomnán gave his *lex innocentium* ‘to the peoples’ (*populis*),⁵ until the early part of the ninth century, when the practice appears to have ceased,⁶ place on record some twenty-six promulgations of a saint’s *lex* or *cáin*.⁷ If *X* be taken to represent the saint to whom the law was almost invariably attributed, *Y* the region or people adopting it and *Z* the king or cleric promulgating it, then the usual formulation of the annal entry in its fullest form is *lex X for Y la Z* (AU 793, 799, 814, 823, 825).⁸ With omission either of *for Y* (AU 744, 753, 757, 778, 806) or of *la Z* (AU 748, 772, 788, 793, 812), this basic formulation also occurs in a shorter form. Formulations

¹S. Mac Airt, *The Annals of Inisfallen* (Dublin 1951) xxiii.

²*ibid.*, 122–3. R. Thurneysen, ‘Aus dem irischen Recht V’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 18 (1930) 353–408, p. 387, quotes the annal but does not translate it. K. Hughes, *The Church in early Irish society* (London 1966) 152 n., quotes Mac Airt’s translation, modifying it slightly.

³Thurneysen, *ZCP* 18 (1930) 384 n.; cf. *Dictionary of the Irish language [DIL]* S-272.

⁴For a collection of references to the *cáin* see Thurneysen, *ZCP* 18 (1930) 387–8.

⁵The two editors of AU have taken *populis* to refer to people (sg.): S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Niocaill, *The Annals of Ulster* (Dublin 1982) 156–7. A plural seems called for, however, if only because many tribes were involved. Adomnán’s place as the maker of the first of the *cána* is reiterated in K. Meyer, *Cáin Adamnáin* (Anecdota Oxoniensia, Oxford 1905) 12–13 § 21. If we except that of Adomnán, however, laws were generally named after long-dead saints.

⁶If we omit the ‘external’ law of Sunday (AU 887), the latest record of the promulgation of a native *cáin* is the reference in AU 836 to the law of Patrick being ‘carried to Connacht’. A revival in the practice was attempted in the early eleventh century (AI 1040).

⁷For a general discussion of *cána* see K. Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: introduction to the sources* (London 1972) 80–82.

⁸Sometimes the word order varies (AU 793) or is added to (AU 814, 823).

deviating from the norm occur in AU 697, 727, 737, 780, 783, 811, 813, 826, 836. Of these, however, only AU 813, which reads *lex Darii la Hu Neill* 'Dari's law [promulgated] among the Uí Néill', agrees with AI 810 in using *la* to denote the region or people adopting the law.

Despite the almost total lack of support elsewhere for the use of *la* in reference to the region or people adopting the law, Mac Airt must be followed in taking *la Mumain* of AI 810 to mean 'in Mumu'. The phrase can have no other possible meaning. On the other hand, despite the overwhelming support of the AU entries, his translation of *la Dare ocus la Adhuar macc nEchin* as '[promulgated] . . . by Dáire and by Aduar, son of Echen' cannot possibly be correct. Both of these personages were in fact saints, belonging, in as far as either ever existed,⁹ to the so-called Age of Saints (c. AD 500–650). This rules out, of course, the possibility that either could have promulgated a law in AD 810. Moreover, each of these saints is otherwise acknowledged as the 'source' of a law. And finally, despite the manuscript reading *Daire*, Mac Airt's rendering of the first saint's name as Dáire, an exclusively male name, is wrong. The correct form is the exclusively female name Darií.

Before proceeding to an examination of the evidence for saints Darií and Aduar, therefore, we may now emend Mac Airt's translation of AI 810 to read: 'the law (or laws) concerning cows, of Darií and of Aduar son of Echen, promulgated in Mumu'.

2. THE NAME DARÍ

The three main sources of evidence for the name Darií, which seems to have been used exclusively of the saint so called,¹⁰ are the annals, which focus on her law, the calendars of saints, and the genealogies of the saints. All of these sources agree in providing, almost invariably, her name with an ending in *-i*. The pattern is set by four annals (AU 812, 813, 826; AI 810). Two spell the name *Darii*, one *Dari* and the fourth *Dare* (AI 810).¹¹ The calendars follow suit. The earliest of these, the Martyrology of Tallaght, composed 828 × 833, has three examples of the name (Feb. 13, Aug. 7, 8), each spelt *Darii*.¹² The late twelfth-century Martyrology of Gorman twice (Aug. 8, Nov. 2) spells it *Dari*, and even in the seventeenth-century Martyrology of Donegal only one

⁹The connotations of Dari's name (§ 2 below) do not inspire confidence in her status as a saint. Similarly, Aduar can be shown to have probably enjoyed ancestral status (§ 4 below).

¹⁰Dari's place in a number of different calendar lists (e.g. Aug. 8, Nov. 2) does not necessarily imply that we have to do with two or more saints of the same name. The saint is assigned, for instance, only one pedigree. I take all references to be to the one saint.

¹¹The only other annals to notice Dari's law is *Chronicon Scotorum* (ed. W. M. Hennessy, London 1866), which has two references, *Dairi* (812), *Daire* (826).

¹²R. I. Best, H. J. Lawlor, *The Martyrology of Tallaght* (London 1931). The date is discussed in P. Ó Riain, 'The Tallaght Calendars redated' (forthcoming).

of three entries (Aug. 8, Sept. 28, Nov. 2) substitutes *-e* for *-i*.¹³ The genealogies of the saints reveal a similar pattern. Thus, of the eight early full-length recensions of the saint's pedigree, seven adopt the form *Dari* and one, the earliest version, the form *Darii*.¹⁴ In fact, only in the seventeenth-century recensions of the pedigree is the name spelt *Daire*.¹⁵

The overwhelming manuscript support for a form ending in *-i* (*-í*) has been generally ignored by editors or commentators of texts containing the name. Almost without exception these have taken the name to represent either *Daire* (*Dairi*), a non-existent personal name, or *Dáire*, an exclusively male name. The often illustrious scholars who have erred in this regard include, in chronological order, J. H. Todd and W. Reeves (1864), W. M. Hennessy (1866, 1887), B. Mac Carthy (1901), W. Stokes (1895, 1905), P. Walsh (1918), R. Thurneysen (1930), R. I. Best and H. J. Lawlor (1931), M. A. O'Brien (1932), S. Mac Airt (1951), P. Grosjean (1963), K. Hughes (1966, 1972), S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Niocaill (1983), and, most recently, the writer of this article (1985).¹⁶

Stokes's inclusion in the list does not say much for the maxim *seniores priores*. In his earlier work, his editions of the Calendar of Oengus (1880) and of the *Vita Tripartita* (1887), he had quite correctly taken the name to represent *Darí*.¹⁷ By 1895, however, when he edited the Martyrology of Gorman, indecision about the name, now rendered *Dare* (Nov. 2) and indexed as *Dari*, had become evident.¹⁸ By 1903, he was prepared, with Strachan, in their edition of *Thesaurus palaeohibernicus*, to index the

¹³W. Stokes, *The Martyrology of Gorman* (London 1895); J. H. Todd, W. Reeves, *A calendar of the saints of Ireland* (Dublin 1864). In Ó Cléirigh's index to the latter work, the saint's name is spelt *Daire* (Latin *Daria*). J. Colgan, *Acta sanctorum Hiberniae* (Louvain 1645), also refers to the saint as *Daria*.

¹⁴P. Ó Riain, *Corpus genealogiarum sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin 1985) 8 § 39. The Book of Glendalough (Rawlinson B 502) represents the earliest surviving version.

¹⁵P. Walsh, *Genealogiae regum et sanctorum Hiberniae* (Maynooth and Dublin 1918) 62. Cf. An Dubhaltach Mac Fhir Bhisigh's *naoimhsheanchas* 711 (*Daire*). I have to thank Nollaig Ó Muraíle for this reference.

¹⁶Todd, Reeves, *Calendar* (1864), 501; W. M. Hennessy, *Chronicon Scotorum* (1866) 129, 135, 376; idem, *Annals of Ulster* I (1887) 301, 323; B. Mac Carthy, *Annals of Ulster* IV (1901) 111; Stokes, *Martyrology of Gorman* (1895), 352; idem, *Martyrology of Oengus* (1905) 211, 414; Walsh, *Genealogiae* (1918), 161; Thurneysen, *ZCP* 18 (1930), 387; Best, Lawlor, *Martyrology of Tallaght* (1931), 241; M. A. O'Brien, 'Varia IV', *Ériu* 11 (1932) 154-71, p. 161; Mac Airt, *Annals of Inisfallen* (1951) 457; P. Grosjean, 'Notes d'hagiographie celtique 53', *Analecta Bollandiana* 81 (1963) 260-69; Hughes, *Church in early Irish Society* (1966) 151-2; idem, *Early Christian Ireland* . . . (1972), 81; S. Mac Airt, G. Mac Niocaill, *The Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)* (1983) 269, 283; Ó Riain, *Corpus* (1985), 239. In a review of my work (*Éigse* 22 (1987) 163-5, p. 164), L. Breatnach draws attention to the error. His claim, however, that 'Thurneysen and O'Brien took it that the name . . . was . . . *Dáire*' is inaccurate; the former wrote *Dare*, the latter *Daire*. We may also add to the above list, D. Ó Corráin, F. Maguire, *Gaelic personal names* (Dublin 1981) 69, where Saint *Darí* (Aug. 8) is taken to represent *Dáire*.

¹⁷W. Stokes, *On the calendar of Oengus* (RIA Trans. I, Dublin 1880) cccxlii; idem, *The Tripartite Life of Patrick* II (London 1887) 504.

¹⁸Stokes, *Martyrology of Gorman*, 153, 211, 352.

name under Dáre.¹⁹ And by 1905, when he published his second edition of the Calendar of Oengus, he had carried the progression to its logical conclusion. The earlier Darí was now not only rendered Dáire; she was also identified as a man!²⁰

Thurneysen's view of the name took an opposite course. Having first followed Stokes's later work in maintaining that the saint was a man named Dare, he later allowed at least for the possibility that the *urheber* of the law was a woman named Darí.²¹ In doing so, he drew attention to the previously scarcely noticed but thoroughly well-founded opinion on the matter expressed by Carl Marstrander in the first fasciculus of the Dictionary of the Irish language (1913).²² Marstrander had in fact taken his cue from Stokes's early work, from which he took his first example of the name. He went on to define Darí, quite correctly, as an uninflected feminine form 'not identical with Dáre'. Moreover, the *-í* element of the name is explained, in a separate entry on Dathí, as the genitive of *eó* 'yew'.²³ The prefix *dar-*, which is peculiar to female names, has since been explained by M. A. O'Brien as the remains of **duchtair*, a possible Irish reflex of the Indo-European word for daughter.²⁴

3. WHO WAS SAINT DARÍ?

Despite Stokes, who took the gloss *bóchána* 'of the law concerning cattle' to represent a place-name, only to be corrected in turn by O'Brien, Thurneysen and Grosjean,²⁵ none of the sources already mentioned names the saint's church. As Grosjean, who persisted in calling the saint Dáire,²⁶ rightly pointed out, however, her pedigree 'invite à la chercher dans le pays de Tír Amalgada', a territory whose name is now reflected in the barony of Tirawley, Co. Mayo.²⁷ Also, drawing on the tract now known as 'Four Saints', which describes an encounter between a Saint Cormac 'bien légendaire' and Darí, Grosjean noted that the saint was connected with Mag Gannach, now Moygawnagh, the name of a parish in the barony of Tirawley.²⁸

¹⁹W. Stokes, J. Strachan, *Thesaurus palaeohibernicus* II (Cambridge 1903) 306.

²⁰Stokes, *Martyrology of Oengus*, 211, 414.

²¹Thurneysen, *ZCP* 18 (1930) 387; idem, 'Allerlei Nachträge', *ZCP* 19 (1933) 125–33, pp. 130–31.

²²*DIL* D-104: 'Darí'.

²³ibid., 120–22: 'Dathí'.

²⁴M. A. O'Brien, 'Etymologies and notes', *Celtica* 3 (1956) 168–84, pp. 178–9.

²⁵Stokes, *Martyrology of Gorman*, 211, 297; O'Brien, *Ériu* 11 (1932) 161; Thurneysen, *ZCP* 19 (1933) 131; Grosjean, *Analecta Bollandiana* 81 (1963) 261.

²⁶He defends this form of the name in a footnote (ibid., 261 n.).

²⁷ibid., 265. For the pedigree see Ó Riain, *Corpus*, 8 § 39.

²⁸P. Grosjean, *Analecta Bollandiana* 81 (1963) 265–9, pp. 268–9. In the process, Grosjean followed Colgan (*Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae*, 752 § viii) in misunderstanding the text (p. 268), which records Darí's neglectful reception of Cormac, but this does not upset the identification. Colgan (p. 755) seems to have taken Darí to be the same as Darbhile of the Uí Fhiachrach, assigning her a feast on 26 October. Cf. Walsh, *Genealogiae*, 62 § 9 (note added by Colgan). For the text on 'Four Saints' see J. G. O'Keeffe in *Irish Texts* 3 (1931) 1–8, p. 2 § 5.

In fact, the saint's church in this area can now be even more accurately identified. It was at Kildaree – from **Cill Dairí* 'Dari's church' and not Cill Dá Rí 'church of two kings' as previously supposed²⁹ – in the parish of Crossmolina, which adjoins that of Moygawnagh.³⁰ Two other Connacht churches named Kildaree, in the baronies of Ballymoe and Clare, Co. Galway, similarly commemorate the saint.³¹ While none of these churches is mentioned in an early documentary source, it must seem likely that one or other of the three was involved in the promulgation of Dari's law. Three of the four references in the annals to the law relate to a very short span of time (AU 812, 813; AI 810 [= AU 811?]). Of these, two relate to regions outside Connacht, i.e. Uí Néill (813) and Mumu (810). The fourth reference (AU 826) records the reimposition of the law in Connacht. There was, it seems, a flurry of activity concerning the law about 811–12 which can hardly have been unconnected with recent political developments in Connacht. Connacht had just then, through the efforts of Muirgius mac Tommaltaig (*ob.* 815) of the Uí Bhriúin, become 'a power on the Irish scene'.³² The support of the church was, as F. J. Byrne points out, a powerful contributory factor in this development.³³ During Muirgius's reign, for instance, Patrick's law had twice been brought from Armagh to Connacht (AU 799, 811), a sure sign of the increase in influence of the western province. Muirgius had also been instrumental in the promulgation of laws associated with more local churches, like that of Roscommon (AU 793). It may well be, therefore, that Dari's law was first promulgated at Muirgius's behest. Moreover, its adoption by the Uí Néill and Munstermen very probably also underlines the then increasing influence of Connacht in Irish affairs.

4. SAINT ADUAR'S LAW

Unlike Dari, who figures in several calendar lists, Aduar is nowhere provided with a feastday. Indeed, were it not for the single annal in AI (810), we would depend on the genealogies for the sum of our information concerning the saint. There are two conflicting pedigrees. One assigns Aduar to the Síl nAduair of Lóichsi, the implication being that his was originally an ancestral cult.³⁴ The other attaches him to a branch of the

²⁹In the Ordnance Survey Namebooks (Mayo), the Irish form is given as Cill Dá Rígh 'church of two kings'. In the Letter Books for the same county (vol. I, p. 49), attention is drawn to 'a grave in which two kings . . . are said to lie interred'. E. Hogan included this folk-etymological form in his *Onomasticon Goedelicum* (Dublin 1910), p. 188, on the authority, it seems, of the Ordnance Survey. For a late fourteenth-century spelling as *da rig*, see *Ir. Texts* 3 (1931) 7 § 21.

³⁰Both parishes are within the barony of Tirawley.

³¹An Irish form Cill dá Rí 'church of two kings' has been similarly proposed for each of these names. See Ordnance Survey Letter Books (Galway I), pp. 74–5. Cf. J. O'Donovan, *The tribes and customs of Hy-Many* (Dublin 1843) map opposite p. 1.

³²F. J. Byrne, *Irish kings and high-kings* (London 1973) 251.

³³*ibid.*, 251–2.

³⁴Ó Riain, *Corpus*, 31 § 186. Cf. M. A. O'Brien, *Corpus genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin 1962) 93. In the latter source Aduar is included in a secular pedigree.

Osraige, who were of course neighbours of the Loíchsi.³⁵ Aduar's law, which presumably also concerned cattle, is as poorly documented as the saint himself. It has the distinction, however, of being mentioned in two hitherto misunderstood texts. One of these, the annal in AI for 810, has already been discussed (§ 1). The other is a marginal gloss added by the Book of Leinster scribe to an entry on Aduar in the Osraige section of the secular genealogies.³⁶

Taking the Rawlinson B 502 text as a guide, the LL exemplar at this point probably read:

Aed Cóemchenn a quo Aduar mac Echind
hUinniuc a quo Huí Fhorannáin.³⁷

The LL scribe, having written *mac*, found himself at the end of a line. Omitting *Echind*, presumably by mistake, he began the next line with *hUinniuc*, as in the exemplar. On noticing the omission, either then or later, he added a gloss over Aduar and in the right margin which has been read, both by M. A. O'Brien and by A. O'Sullivan, as follows: *.i. qui fecit in mac (?) cháin Echín*.³⁸ This reading makes no sense. In fact, the gloss consists of two originally separate parts. The scribe first added *mac [?] Echín* in the right margin to make up for the original omission, duplicating *mac* (if this is the correct reading) in the process. And having done so, he went on to write over Aduar and continuing into the right margin *.i. qui fecit in cháin*. The text of LL 339 bc 39 as a whole may then be read and translated as follows, the gloss being indicated by parentheses:

Aed Cáem a quo Adhuar mac (mac Echín .i. qui fecit in cháin)
'Aed Cáem ancestor of Aduar son of Echen, i.e. he who made the law'.

This tells us nothing much about the law, except that it was attributed to Aduar of the Osraige. It does, however, corroborate the evidence of AI 810 as to its hitherto unnoticed existence.

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³⁵ Ó Riain, *Corpus*, 45 § 277.

³⁶ Book of Leinster [LL], 339 b c 34. Cf. O'Brien, *Corpus*, 105 (= 129 a 29).

³⁷ I follow the manuscript reading, which is arranged in lines as here, adding, where necessary, length-marks and lenition.

³⁸ O'Brien, *Corpus*, 105; A. O'Sullivan (ed.), *The Book of Leinster* VI (Dublin 1983) 1496.