THE ‘BRITISH’ GENEALOGY OF THE CAMPBELLS

The subject of this note is the genealogy of the Campbells preserved in Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh’s Book of Genealogies. It has been printed before, in Skene’s Celtic Scotland and in Ó Raithbheartaigh’s Genealogical Tracts. Its peculiar qualities have been noted by W. D. H. Sellar in his investigation of the tangled web of Campbell genealogical claims, and by the present writer in the course of a discussion of the learned Gaelic background of those claims.

In the sixteenth century and the earlier part of the seventeenth the learned poets and seanachai to the House of Argyll promoted an elaborate and distinctive account of their patrons’ descent from Adam. Two important strands were woven into this genealogy: the Campbells were made to descend (1) from King Arthur, and (2) from the eponymous Briotán who, in the Leabhar Gabhála Éireann, settled in Britain when the sons of Neimheadh were driven out of Ireland by the Fomorians, thereby ending the third Invasion. These assertions give voice to the most insistent theme of the earlier, learned traditions of the Campbells: that they were ‘British’ in origin. The Campbells’ official poets naturally sought to substantiate that claim, and used whatever genealogical building blocks were available to them in literary or historical sources. The curious thing about Mac Fhirbhisigh’s Campbell genealogy is that it does not use the all too transparent ‘British’ building blocks employed by the Campbells’ own poets in his day, but presents a different and more obscure genealogy containing, as Sellar puts it, ‘names with an archaic Welsh or British look about them’. What follows is an attempt to evaluate that statement.

The relevant part of the Book of Genealogies reads as follows:

1 For the Leabhar Geinealach of Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh, written around 1650 and now lodged in the Library of University College, Dublin, see Eoin MacNeill’s Introduction to T. Ó Raithbheartaigh, Genealogical Tracts I (Dublin, 1912); T. F. O’Rahilly and others, Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy (Dublin, 1926–70), pp. 1814, 1839; P. Ó Raithéin, Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae (Dublin, 1985), pp. xlv–xlvi. Our genealogy, hereafter cited as F, appears on p. 42 of the MS. It appears to have been put together during the earldom of Gilleanbuidh, 7th Earl of Argyll, i.e. between 1584 and 1658.

2 See p. 52, no. 83.

3 The earliest Campbells ± Norman, Briton or Gael?, Scottish Studies 17 (1977) 109–25 (117).


5 I would associate the construction and promotion of this version of the Campbell genealogy with the activities of the MacEwen learned family, on whom see D. S. Thomson (ed.), The companion to Gaelic Scotland (Oxford 1983), 170–71 and references there cited. (It should be stated that this attribution is, strictly speaking, inferential; yet is hard to see who else could have been responsible.)


8 See p. 42. The genealogy is set out in columnar form in the original; otherwise I print it without change. I am grateful to Tomás Ó CATHASAIGH for checking the readings of the ms. Variants are cited from RIA ms 24 N 2 (designated ‘Fa’), an eighteenth-century copy of the now lost Genealogical Abstract made by Mac Fhirbhisigh in 1666 (see RIA Catalogue, pp. 1812, 1850). The Campbell genealogy occurs on p. 7 of ms 24 N 2.
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Geineadach meic Ailin

. . . Duibhne o raiter Meg dhuihbne m feradoigh m Smeirge a m artuir m iobhair b m lidir m bernaid m Muiris m Magoth m Coiel m Catogain m Cadimoir "m Catogain" m bende m Mebrec m griffin m briotain d o traid breithnaig d m fergus leterg m nemid. 7c.

"Above the g are two letters of which the first is indistinct (a mark of lenition over the g, or a barred l signifying na 'or'?), the second is a b; Smerge F2 b Iobhar F2 c = om. F2 d-d om. F2 'lethdeirg F2"

In the Book of Genealogies the Campbells were the only contemporary family to be given a Nemedian origin. This treatment presumably reflects the fact that they had only recently become a major power in the Gaelic world. At a later stage in their collective development their line would be engrafted directly onto the central, Milesian stock of the Gaelic genealogical tree. Here, however, the Campbells have been squeezed in at the end of the Nemedian section, where they are immediately followed by the Fir Bholg genealogies.

In order to demonstrate how far this account diverges from the 'received' version of the Campbell pedigree, as elaborated by their official poets in Mac Hibirbhisigh's own day, I give now the corresponding section (i.e. between the strategic names Duibhne and Briotán) as found in the so-called Kilbride version:

. . . Duibhne mac Feradoig mac Smerbi mac Artuir mac Ambrios mac Considin mac Amgcel mac Toisid mac Conmuic mac Considin mac Artuir na [. . .] mac Larnailin mac Toisid mac Artuir laimdearg mac Benbriot mac Artuir mac Allardaid mac Artuir h.e. mac Lamdoid mac Fionlug mac Artuir oig mac Fir Mara mac Artuir moir mac Banebriot mac Briotus mac Briotain a quo Braodn [sic] mac Fergusa leith dearg mac Nemid. . .

Here the types of literary and pseudo-historical sources utilised, and the signs of the pedigree-makers' manipulation of them, are fairly readily discernible. The point to stress here, however, is the almost complete absence of overlap between

10 This was done by deriving them from Lugaid mac Itha: see, for example, Keating's account in D. Comyn and P. S. Dinneen (ed.), The History of Ireland (4 vols., London, 1902-14), 2, pp. 284, 382.
F2 carries the following statement at the conclusion of its Campbell entry: aedead gribhne ele gurab ar lorcc Fhathuid c.na (i.e. Canann) meic Mac Con ata Mac Ailin na hAlban. tug gurab eadar dha Mac Ailin consloinnteacha do bheth ann. The last comment is an under-statement where the Campbells are concerned.

11 I.e. the lost National Library of Scotland ms 72, 1, 32, on which see D. Mackinnon, A descriptive catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts. . . in Scotland (Edinburgh 1912), 217–21. It is printed here, for illustrative purposes, exactly as it was given by W. F. Skene in Collectanea de rebus albanicis (Iona Club: Edinburgh 1847). The form of the genealogy contained in this manuscript and some closely related sources is not without interest as a case study in pedigree making, as I hope to have shown elsewhere: see next note. The genealogy was apparently compiled between 1530 and 1558, i.e during the earldom of Gilleasbuig, 4th Earl of Argyll, with whom the pedigree begins. Robin Flower (Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum, 2 (London 1926), 293) gave the manuscript as 'ante 1543'; but according to Mackinnon's Catalogue (p. 219) our genealogy was added 'in a later hand' than the main body of the text.

12 See W. Gillies, 'The invention of tradition, Highland-style', in A. A. Mac Donald, M. Lynch and I. B. Cowan (ed.), The Renaissance in Scotland: studies in literature, religion, history and culture offered to
Mac Fhirbhisigh’s account and that represented by the ‘Kilbride’ family of mss. And the same is true if we compare the earliest extant Campbell genealogy, that preserved in the so-called ‘1467 manuscript’;\(^1\) for there is no warrant here, either, for Mac Fhirbhisigh’s names.

\[\ldots\] duibne ic eirenaid\(^a\) mic meirbi ic artuir ic iubuir i. rîgh in domain \(\ldots\) \(\ldots\) gan tusam.\(^b\)

\(^a\)Or eirenaiti? \(^b\)Read gan amrus ‘no doubt’; faint strokes visible above the us and m may have meant ‘transpose’.

Here we see on the one hand evidence for the presence of an Arthurian awareness at the literary level, and at the same time a clear hint that the ‘King of the World’ appellation was not very credible to the compiler; perhaps because it was not well established in Gaelic at the time.\(^1\) Since this pedigree comes to a halt with Iobhar, father of Arthur, there is no point of contact with the part of F which concerns us.

What, then, are we to make of Mac Fhirbhisigh’s version? Bearing in mind Sellar’s suggestion of an actual Cumbric origin for the earliest Campbells, could we suppose Mac Fhirbhisigh to have fallen heir to an early version of the clan’s genealogy, unknown to the compilers of the ‘MS 1467’ genealogies and subsequently suppressed by the clan’s own seanchaithe in favour of a more grandiose scheme? Or, at the opposite extreme, is F simply on a par with the more elaborate Kilbride version, a parallel response to the challenge of the manifestly over-short ‘1467’ version? Before attempting to answer this question I propose to consider first the linguistic and orthographic consistency of the individual ‘British’ names, with special reference to the question of their ‘Welshness’, and then the evidence to be gleaned from the Campbell entry as a whole and from its setting in the manuscript.

At the undeniably mythical upper end of the family tree the reference to Briotán mac Fearghusa Leithdeirg mheic Neimhidh brings us to familiar territory: the standard late medieval Gaelic teaching of Leabhar Gabhàla Èireann. It needs no further comment here. At the potentially historical end, the names up to Artùr mac Iobhair are likewise non-contentious, at least for present purposes; for they are common to all the older genealogical accounts of the Campbells.\(^1\)

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\(\text{John Durkan (Leiden 1994), pp. 144} - 56\). To the ‘Welsh’ names identified there one should add Llewelyn, Gaelicized as Larnailin or similar (see, e.g., S. Mac Airt [ed.], \textit{The Annals of Innisfallen} [Dublin 1951], p. 398, s.a. 1307), and reinterpreted as though it contained the element lâmh ‘hand’. This name lies behind the form Larnailin quoted above.

\(^1\) I.e. NLS ms 721.1.1, on which see most recently C. Ó Boioll, ‘Scciastics in a manuscript of 1467’, \textit{Scottish Gaelic Studies} 15 (1988) 122–39. The genealogies in ‘MS 1467’ are reckoned to date from earlier in the fifteenth century (cf. Sellar, ‘Earliest Campbells’, p. 123); the Campbell genealogy, which appears on f. 1, col. 4, l. 40, terminates with ‘Cailín òg, who looks to be the Colin known to later tradition as Cailín Longantach (\textit{ob.} 1413).


\(^\text{Older}^\) means basically those which come directly from the Gaelic learned tradition: see ‘Some aspects’, p. 293, note 40. Their defining characteristic is their resistance to the intrusion of the Fenian hero Diarmaid Ò Duibhne into the pedigree: see W. Gilles, ‘Heroes and ancestors’, in B. Almqvist, S. Ó Catháin and P. Ó hEalaí (eds.), \textit{The heroic process} (Dublin 1987), pp. 57–74. They contain the following sections: ‘the present’ to Cailín Mór (\textit{ob.} c. 1296); Cailín Mór to Duibhne; Duibhne to
It is the intervening names, from *Lidir* to *Griffin*, that concern us. The specific question of their ‘archaic Welsh or British’ status may be approached as follows."

Some of the forms clearly represent names which are widely attested in Medieval Welsh sources, thinly disguised by Gaelic orthographical and inflectional practices. On the other hand, the sequence of names given in *F* does not coincide, as it stands, with any other genealogy — historical or otherwise — that I have been able to discover. Given the well understood purposes of genealogical compilation, and the methods commonly employed by genealogists to achieve their ends, a robustly sceptical approach is demanded: a genealogy like this must in effect be presumed bogus unless it can be proved genuine. Hence, while the present one could in theory be genuine, we should face from the outset the possibility, or probability, that it is not. If it is not authentic, it could be a genuine sequence but belong originally to a family other than the Campbells; or it could be a fabrication, whose source materials and principles of construction may or may not prove to be identifiable.

Since pedigree makers and fakers are generally more concerned with names than with linguistic forms, philological clues can sometimes help us to gauge the provenance and authenticity of texts like the present one. It is therefore expedient to begin our investigation by examining the individual names in the list. The most straightforward names are (1) *Catogain*, which occurs twice; (2) *Caidimoir*; and (3) *Mebrec*. These three display certain shared linguistic and orthographic features which permit us to form a hypothesis about the immediate background of the genealogy, against which the other, less transparent names can be tested.

(i) *Catogain* strongly suggests Welsh *Cadwgon/an*. Presumably the *-ain* shows Gaelic declensional palatalisation. Comparison between the Gaelic form and possible manifestations of the Welsh name provokes two comments. First, we have in the *-t-* a strong suggestion of contact with a written Welsh source: a late OW/early MW spelling *Catocaun* or similar. On the other hand, the *-g-* suggests something rather different: either a later MW/ModW written form (as in *Cadwgon/an*) or a simple pronunciation spelling (i.e. /g/). If a written Welsh source were responsible for the *-t-g-* sequence in this name it would have to be classed as inconsistent — transitional, perhaps, between the earlier and later systems. However, another possibility should be mentioned. While it is not easy to discern alternative ways of generating the *-t-* one could perhaps

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Artúr; Artúr to Neimheadh; Neimheadh to Adam (some versions omit this last section). Sellar believes that the section up to Cailein Mòr, and perhaps also that from Cailein Mòr up to Duibhne, is historical; see ‘Earliest Campbells’, p. 112.

16 This formulation should not be pressed too hard: the source or sources we are pursuing could date from any time up to the sixteenth century, and could be considerably earlier, though hardly ‘British’ in the strict linguistic sense.

explain the -g- as resulting from association with the Irish diminutive termination -(ag)án: compare the 'suffix substitution' in Rigullán for OW Rigualaun (MW Riwallon). In that case we should read Catogáin above.\textsuperscript{a}

(2) Caidimoir corresponds well with the name which appears as late OW Cetimor, MW Cedifor/Cydifor, if we again allow for the introduction of o-stem inflection in a Goidelic context. This time the -d- (for /d/) can represent a pronunciation spelling (early or late) or a late written source, but not an early written source. The -m-, on the other hand, can reflect an older written source; though it could also, if Irish -m- = / ū/, reflect an oral rendering of uncertain date. As for the -a- in the initial syllable, the spelling Cadifor, is not unknown in MW sources. On the other hand, the -a- could have been chosen to signal a non-palatalised /k/; in a context where writing ce- or ci- would have suggested /k'/; or it could have been influenced by the numerous and prominent Welsh names beginning with /kad/. There are no unambiguous conclusions to be drawn from Caidimoir alone; but its testimony on the background of the genealogy is at least compatible with that of Catogáin.\textsuperscript{b}

(3) Mebreic corresponds to MW Meuric. While the -c is not significant for dating as between OW and MW, it does suggest a Welsh written source. If that is correct, the -e- in the first syllable would suggest MW rather than OW, in which the name appears regularly as Mouric. The -b- likewise could be linked with the idea of a written Welsh source containing MW -eu- if this were taken by a Gaelic-speaking reader as a graphic variant for -eb-, or alternatively if it were understood as /eu/ by a Welsh speaker in whose dialect this sequence occurred for historical /ev/. A similar spelling occurs elsewhere in the Book of Genealogies, in the section on Breathnuigh Érenn, where the ramifications of Clann hoisdeg mec mebhric are recorded. (The -ic found here is easier to account for than the -ec of our form; but the latter seems more puzzling than troublesome for present purposes.) Once again, then, there are definite hints that somebody had access to a Welsh, and perhaps more specifically a written Welsh source.\textsuperscript{c}

The mutually consistent evidence of these three names raises the question whether other names in this section of the genealogy could be explained similarly. In other words, can they be explained as Welsh names exhibiting the same mixed indications of oral and written, of late OW and MW characteristics?

(4) Lidir could well represent Elidir, with -d- for /d/ as in Caidimoir, if one could explain the loss of the initial vowel. Given our hypothesis, one might

\textsuperscript{a} For Rigullán etc. see T. F. O’Rahilly, Early Irish history and mythology (Dublin 1946), pp. 362, 464. The -o- of Catogáin might be taken as supporting the suggestion of an OW written source, though on that basis we might have expected to see something representing the etymological -g(u)- of OW galaun.

\textsuperscript{b} For Cadifor see P. C. Bartrum, Early Welsh genealogical tracts (Cardiff 1966), p. 106. A less likely explanation (since the intrusion of the -i- is hard to motivate) would involve MW Cadfor (OW Canmor).

\textsuperscript{c} See the Royal Irish Academy’s Dictionary of the Irish Language, s.v. u, for the incidence of u for bh at the textual level.
tentatively suggest omission of a pre-tonic vowel during the passage from a Welsh to a Gaelic context – i.e. with /e/ lidir/ taken as initially stressed /lidir/.

6. If Coel immediately suggest Coel. The graphic sequence -oel could be taken as an attempt to indicate that the name was to be pronounced with the vocalic sequence /oel/ and not with the monophthong of Early Modern Irish /oel/. At the risk of appearing over-ingenious, however, it is worth asking whether a form of Howel may not be implied. The initial C. would not be a serious problem, since non-Gaelic names in initial /hl/ are not infrequently taken as though they contained /xl/, thus enabling a back-form in /kl/ to be extracted. Alternatively, the confusion between (mac) Ailin and (mac) Cailin in several versions of this genealogy may suggest a different explanation: the difficulty of distinguishing unfamiliar names with initial /kl/ from those with initial vowel (or /hl + vowel) after mac or meic. Admittedly, the spelling Howel(l) seems to be preferred in other instances of the name in Mac Fhirbhisi: but on one occasion the name is glossed Gomheil (alt. Godheil) a Ghaoidealg, where the initial G- was presumably generated through *Mé Gomheil and the -mb and -dh- are attempts to cope with the disyllabic pronunciation. In the light of this evidence it would not be right to exclude the possiblity that Coel represent Howel, perhaps through the intermediary of a form like *Howel(l). At all events, we are not short of a plausible Welsh original for Coel.

7. Magoth as it stands occurs as a variant to Magog son of Iapheth, who appears, in Mac Fhirbhisi and elsewhere, in the biblical section of the ascent from Nemed mac Agnomain to Adam. This would give us a name with quite different associations from those so far discussed. Yet it would be possible to argue that an unfamiliar name similar to Magoth/Magog occurring in a Nemedian genealogy could have been affected by the familiar name. On that basis, and for the sake of our hypothesis, we might suggest that the name to be understood here is in fact a form of Madog, earlier Matauc.

8. The name Gri®n (-t®in) introduces a fresh dimension: while it can obviously be related to Graffudd (or some earlier form of that name), it appears in a guise which suggests an Anglo-Irish or Anglo-Welsh milieu as its immediate source, as opposed to the direct Gaelic-Welsh interface which has sufficed us as a model

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31 See R. Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* (Cardiff 1960), p. 344, for the position of the stress in Elidir and the possibility of its being re-analysed as y lidir even within Welsh.

32 See, e.g., C(h)am for Ham, son of Noah, in A. G. van Hamel (ed.), *Lebor Bretnach* (Dublin [1912]), pp. 6, 7 §§ 5, 9.

33 On the orthographical challenge posed by a form like Hlo(a)el see B. Ó Caív, ‘Vowel hiatus in Early Modern Irish’, in A. T. E. Matonis and D. F. Melia (eds.), *Celtic language, Celtic culture: a Festschrift for Eric P. Hamps* (Van Nuts 1990), pp. 96-107. The converse phenomenon occurs in Welsh (for sub nedd for Fionn mac Cumhûil: see P. Sims-Williams, ‘Fionn and Deirdre in Wales’, *Eigo* 24 (1986) 1-15 (4). On this hypothesis, the testimony of Coel would seem to argue for a later rather than an earlier Welsh connection (cf. *OW Higuel*); but continued familiarity with the name in Ireland warns us against placing undue weight on this point.

so far. This has to be borne in mind when we consider Berna(i)rd and Muiris, which carry the same suggestion. 8

(8) Muiris is familiar as the Early Modern and Modern Irish equivalent and rendering of Maurice, a name which became common in Ireland in the Anglo-Norman period. If we seek a Welsh name here, we may recall that in Wales Maurice occurs in non-Welsh contexts as a rendering of Meurig (which was, of course, its cognate, since both originated in Late Latin Mauricius). In other words, if Grifin could stand for Graffudd, could not Muiris represent Maurice standing in the same way for Meurig? It may be objected that we already know how Meurig came out in this genealogy, viz. as Mebrec. However, pseudo-differentiation of this sort would be perfectly normal if the genealogy were a fabrication; while if it were in some sense authentic one could at a pinch suggest that this occurrence might have had a more archaic spelling (such as OW Mouric whose equivalence to Meurig was overlooked by some Gaelic genealogist or scribe). 9

(g) Bearna(i)rd is not so easy to account for on our hypothesis of basically pre-Norman Welsh names. It is true that in Anglo-Irish sources Bernard sometimes functions as the equivalent of the native name Brian; but I am not aware of a parallel occurrence in Wales. All one can say for the moment is that a sufficient number of the other names in the genealogy have yielded possible Welsh originals of sufficient plausibility to suggest that there may be a similar original here too, whatever misadventures have befallen it. 10

(10) The last name in the section, Bende, is puzzling in a different way. It does not immediately suggest a Welsh personal name on a par with the core of transparent names so far discussed. On the other hand, it is not devoid of possibilities if one wished to go further than simply postulating an unidentified Welsh name in the genealogy. For one thing, Bende could represent an epithet erroneously detached from the name it once qualified and promoted to the status of an independent name, a common enough occurrence in genealogical sources. At its most economic, this hypothesis would invite us to read Catogain (mic) Bende mic Mebrec. While Bende itself (‘Hot-head’, i.e. pen + te) would serve, the possibilities could be multiplied: a disarmingly neat textual solution would be to read Catogain (mic) Bendemic [mic] Mebrec, thereby distinguishing the older from the younger Cadwgan by a form of pendeuic ‘prince, ruler’ which showed the same mixture of orthographic traits as we have observed in Caidimo(i) etc. If a solution along these lines were sustainable, the case for a written

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8 In view of a question to be raised anon, it should be noted that Griffin is also found in Scots sources: see A. O. Anderson, Early sources of Scottish history (Edinburgh 1922), t. 90 (Fordun’s Chronicle on the death of ‘Griffin, son of Eadán mac Gabráin). The possibility that F’s Grifin might represent a textual mistake for Welsh Grifri should not be entirely overlooked.

9 Alternatively, Muiris might represent another, perhaps less familiar, Welsh name: for example, Morudd, which is cited on other grounds below.

10 St Bernard appears in MW as Bernet (see Grifia barddwniaeth gynnar gymraeg, s.v.) or Bern(i)rd (Bartrum, Genealogical tracts, p. 71 [42]). A possible alternative is suggested below.

11 For *Pende cf. (1) Tande and other compounds discussed by I. Williams, Canu Llywarch Hen (Cardiff 1935), p. 193, and Canu Aneirin (Cardiff 1958), p. 280 (l. 860); (2) pendew, peisel and other epithets in pen- listed by Bartrum, Genealogical tracts, p. 247. On pendeuic see P. Russell, Celtic word-formation:
Welsh original would be much strengthened, whatever its original status and provenance.

On a quite different tack, however, Bende cannot but remind us of Bêinne (Briot), a literary character with a certain antiquity: in the Cormac cycle, in which he figures as a British war-leader who meets his death at the Battle of Mag Mucrama; and in the Fenian literature, where he appears as a king of the Britons (and father of one 'Artúr'). It is obviously from these sources that he has been extracted to do service as a suitably 'British' figure in the cocktail of names making up the mainstream Campbell genealogies: compare Benbriot m Artuir and Banebriot m Briotus m Briotain in the Kilbride version printed above. Could this name be the source of Bende in Mac Fhirbhisigh? And, if so, should it count merely as a pedigree-maker's building block here too, a mere cipher for 'British'? Or could the relationship between Bende and Bêinne be a more complex and interesting one? We shall have to leave this question open for the time being.

I believe that this brief review of the forms in F confirms that there is a 'Welsh dimension' to be reckoned with in its background. Those Welsh originals which we can extract without difficulty are plausible enough and can readily be paralleled in such sources as those represented in Bartrum's *Early Welsh genealogical tracts*. Moreover, there are hints of contact with written Welsh of the late OW or early MW period, and perhaps also of some acquaintance with the spoken language – allowance duly made for a modicum of morphological interference from Gaelic and some confusion resulting from unfamiliar forms. We should now like to know whose – if anybody's – genealogy this is, and how it has come to be here. If (as I have asserted) the genealogy as it stands is not a known one, is it an unknown genuine one, or a fabrication, or a bit of both? And is it a product of mainstream Irish genealogical tradition, or did it originate in Scotland? In the absence of an obvious answer to the first question it is expedient to start with the second.

This is not our only example of Brythonic names occurring in Irish genealogies. Most famously we have the origin-legend of the Dêise, whose pedigree includes Welsh names corresponding to the period of their sojourn in Wales and confirmed to a considerable degree by Welsh genealogical sources; and there are some other examples besides – in the *Lebor Bretnach* and elsewhere. At a more proximate level, the later Irish genealogists (as exemplified by Mac Fhirbhisigh) had the means and motivation to take 'British' families into account in the case of the *seanGhoill* families termed *Breathnaigh Éireann* some of whom possessed or attained sufficient political importance to make their ancestry interesting to the
men of learning." Furthermore, the Book of Genealogies also contains a couple of items even more closely comparable to ours: in its Nemedian section, between the Leabhar Gabhála-based account of the origins of the Britons and the genealogy of Mac Ailín, some purportedly or potentially Welsh names occur in connection with the pedigrees of St Patrick and St Manchán mac Dubhtain. It is worth dwelling briefly on these last items.

The make-up of the extended version of Patrick's genealogy was analysed by Ancombe, who showed that the section from Odissus the great-grandfather of Patrick (who appears in the Confessio and in the early Lives) up to the mythical Britinus (or Bretan or Brit) son of Fergus Lethderg contained an admixture of names of Brythonic and Anglo-Saxon origin. Whether or not Ancombe was wholly correct in his understanding of the signification of the individual names, the occurrence of this material in Mac Fhirbhisigh provides a yardstick by which to measure the linguistic and orthographical traits of the Campbell genealogy and the possibility of insights into its motivation and construction. The points I believe we should note here are: (1) the use of names to express racial associations (in this case 'British' and 'Jutish'); (2) the introduction of blocks of names from different sources, with the possibility of inserting one block of names within another; (3) the textual instability of unfamiliar names, involving the possibility of creating free-standing names out of original epithets.

The Manchán / Mainchán material is similarly suggestive. For here too Mac Fhirbhisigh cites a genealogy containing name-forms which are pretty obviously Welsh in origin, together with descent from Britán a quo Bretain. In this case there is the further parallel that the sequence of names given is not elsewhere (though some of the individual names are of course well-known); on the other hand, Manchán's genealogy, like Patrick's, appear in the earlier genealogical collections, whereas the Campbell one does not.
Parallels like these attest to a degree of interest in ‘British’ material on the part of the Gaelic literati, beginning not later than the eleventh-century appearance of Lebor Bretnach and continuing in the centuries following the twelfth, when the ‘British’ presence became a reality in Ireland after the Norman conquest. It is by no means impossible that more such material, now lost, was available to genealogists in the Early Modern period. Indeed, the corpus of such material could have been added to at the time when translated texts and exotic romantic models were making their presence felt in the literature. On that basis it would be permissible to speculate that our names were abstracted by Mac Fhirbhisigh or a predecessor from some such source or sources, and put to work in connection with the Campbells when the latter became important enough to merit the serious concern of Irish genealogists – say, in the sixteenth century.

Need we dwell any further on the matter? There are three points about Mac Fhirbhisigh’s Campbell genealogy that make me uneasy about the hypothesis just proposed. The first is a linguistic one: there are a couple of possible Scotticisms in the genealogy as we have it. Thus the common Campbell fore-name Gilleasbuig (anglicised ‘Archibald’), which recurs in the latest section of the genealogy, consistently appears with the Scottish form *gille* rather than *gi*(*l*)*la*; and when the genitive of Donnchadh (anglicised ‘Duncan’) is written out in full it is Donnchaidh as in Scottish Gaelic, and not Donnchadh. Admittedly, these linguistic points would count for little on their own. But there is also a question of methods and scholarly temperament. It is not my impression that Dubhaltach mac Fhirbhisigh would himself have put together a pseudo-genealogy like this. Moreover, I am intrigued by a reference elsewhere in the Book of Genealogies to a genealogical account which he had found ‘among the books of Fardorough McFirbis, who was a sennachaidhe well acquainted in Alban and much frequented it’.

Third, and most cogent, is the fact that, after giving the main Campbell genealogy as printed above, Mac Fhirbhisigh continues as follows:

Macailín bheos
Dubhggall m Domhnuill m gille epscoip m dubhghaill m Donnchuidh m Donnchaidh an agha m ailin 7rl.

This is the genealogy of Dugald, son of Donald Campbell of Kilmory, a younger son of Archibald Campbell of Auchinbreck. The Campbells of Auchinbreck were a relatively important and well-known branch of the family who held lands in North Kintyre and Knapdale from the mid-fifteenth century bearing in mind the variants recorded by Ó Riain we may make the following tentative equations: Ru(í)in (Ruin) = Rhun; Siotumain (Tiubhmain, Tiocumain, etc.) = Segwyn? Tegwyn? Teglan? Túid?; Ruithin (Rouithin, Clothinsoinein) = Cloten? a compound name in Clod-?; Felitir (Phelitir, etc.) = Elidir (i.e. taking inorganic F- as starting point)? Peleidyr (i.e. original epithet)? See note 47 for conclusions to be drawn from the form of Goirtigern.

Thus it would be hard to disprove the suggestion that the form *gille* might have been employed to impart a Scottish flavour to the genealogy; compare the *gill(e) moar* in Seán Clárach MacDomhnaill’s Bim-se buan ar bhuaidhirt gach be, and o-stem treatment of Donnchadh is not without parallel in Ireland. See, e.g. G. Mac Niocaill, ‘Duanaire Ghearoid Iarla’, Studia Hibernica 3 (1963) 7–59, p. 44, for the rhyme chomraigh: Dhonncaidh (25 4.4).

Translation quoted from Skene, Celtic Scotland, 3, 199, n. 33.
and descended from a younger son of Donnchadh an Ágha, grandfather of the first Earl of Argyll. The Dugal with whom the genealogy begins lived in the second half of the sixteenth century. All other things being equal it would seem an obvious inference that somebody connected with this branch of the family supplied the genealogy to the Irish antiquarian tradition. As we have said, it was in the mid-sixteenth century that the Campbells became, for a fairly brief period, major dealers in Irish-Scottish Gaelic politics. This heightened involvement brought with it the practical necessity for their genealogical credentials to be established – amongst other reasons, so that bardic poetry could be addressed to them by Irish poets. Could not the Campbell genealogy have been supplied from a Scottish source in response to such an enquiry?

Of course, it could be contended that, while somebody from Kilmory might have supplied the later generations of the genealogy with their specifically Scottish field of reference, or the earliest generations with their grounding in the universally acknowledged doctrine of the *Leabhar Gabhála Éireann*, the ‘British’ section finds no counterpart in Scottish tradition and is more likely to have been supplied (‘off the peg’, as it were) in Ireland, where the scale of literary-historical activity was much greater. Yet, as we noted earlier, it was precisely at this time that the Earl of Argyll’s official historians were promoting a new genealogy to fill those intervening generations. Is it likely that Irish genealogists would have taken it upon themselves to go against the line of the official poets of a Scottish family?

While no definite solution to the problem is attainable, Professor Angus Matheson’s discussion of the MacEwen poetic family suggests a possible ‘Scottish’ scenario. Matheson pointed out that the MacEwens, before their association with the Earls of Argyll, had clearly been official poets to the MacDougalls of Dunollie, the remnant of a once-powerful family of the race of Somerled, whose patrimony of Lorn had earlier passed into the hands of the Stewarts, and whose fate became more intimately bound up with the aspirations of the Campbells when the latter took over the Lordship of Lorn in the late fifteenth century. Bearing in mind Matheson’s suggestion that the MacEwens could have had a certain prestige value to potential patrons as representatives of one of the

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41 E.g. Dual olamb do thrissail le nisg, an unpublished poem composed for Argyll by O’Donnell’s chief poet (NLS MS 71.2.2: see Gillies, ‘Some aspects’, p. 260); cf. the verses to Tadhg Ó Dálaigh du-chuamair don Chraisibh (E. Knott, *The bardic poems of Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn* (London 1922–26), i, 56; ii, 224).

42 While Donald, the father of our Dugal, appears in the record evidence (e.g. as a witness to a Glassary writ of 1565: see MacPhail, *Highland Papers*, 2, 204), I can discover no special literary connection for this family. Thus, for instance, they are not mentioned amongst the Campbell houses visited by ‘Angus of the Satires’ (G. Henderson, ‘Aonghus nan Aoir’, *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 26 (1904–07), 458–65). On the other hand, it could conceivably be significant that the genealogy of the cadets of Auchinbreck (*Genealogy of the cadets of the family of Auchinbreck*) described Dugal’s nephew, Mr Dugal Campbell (ob. 16.10.1671), as ‘Parson of Lettrikennie in Ireland’.

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major Irish bardic families, and the fact that the ascendant star of the Campbells would have offered obvious attractions to practising *fili*, we might well surmise that the MacEwens became poets to the Campbell chiefs at or about that time.\footnote{The elegy on Eóin Ciar MacDougall, *Doathnacht Eain ar Stáil gCúin* (ed. W. J. Watson, *Scottish verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* [Edinburgh 1937], pp. 166–75), shows Eóghan mac Eóin mhic Athairne (MacEwen) still performing the function of *fili* to MacDougall of Dunollie in the 1490s.}

But the Campbells would most certainly have had professional poets to support them before then. The tradition of courtly and satiric versification amongst members of the ruling family presupposes such a presence by the end of the fifteenth century, just as their dominant role in southern Highland politics since the Wars of Independence implies it.\footnote{The Earl of Argyll, Argyll’s cousin Duncan of Glenorchy and Isabella, Countess of Argyll, are amongst the ‘local’ poets who contributed poems to the Book of the Dean of Lismore: for references see Gillies, ‘Some aspects’, p. 286, note 3.}

Could it be that the representatives of this earlier tradition were displaced when the MacEwens were brought in, and found patronage within the Auchenbreck branch of the family? Could they have been the source of what was, by Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh’s day, a decidedly ‘alternative’ version of the Campbell genealogy?

This is, of course, a mere guess. It is possible that further investigation of the voluminous and widely scattered documentation on the Campbells might turn up information to confirm or amend our suggestion; for the Campbells are in many ways under-researched, and the tendency of historical research since the publication of Professor Thomson’s ‘Gaelic learned orders and literati’ has been to reinforce and extend our awareness of the presence of the learned orders in Gaelic Scotland in the late medieval period.\footnote{D. S. Thomson, ‘Gaelic learned orders and literati in medieval Scotland’, *Scottish Studies*, 12 (1968) 57–58. Amongst more recent works see especially J. W. M. Bannerman, *The Beatons* (Edinburgh 1986), and ‘The King’s poet and the Inauguration of Alexander III’, *Scottish Historical Review* 68/2 (1989), 110–49.}

Equally, there are important general questions whose elucidation could have a bearing on our problem. For example, to what extent was there a Scottish (as opposed to a pan-Gaelic) orthodoxy on genealogical matters? There are some hints that such a distinctively Scottish tradition may have existed, but the case has yet to be examined in detail. Until such time as questions like these have been investigated extreme caution is needed.

At all events, the possibility is not excluded that the ‘British’ genealogy came from Scotland, where it may have represented a stratum of Campbell tradition to be eclipsed shortly after it was handed over to Mac Fhirbhisigh or his source. A late medieval bardic family in Argyll would, on any reckoning, have had access to the mainstream of genealogical information: the practice of bardic poetry would have been impossible without this. Such a family would also have had particular reasons – given the Campbells’ ‘British’ claims – to seek out, preserve and elaborate information bearing on British origins as outlined in the *Lebor Bretnach*, the *Leabhar Gabhála* and similarly derived sources. In the course of this quest some Scottish *fili* may have compiled or recovered the sequence of names we find in the genealogy, and used it to supply an additional era of Campbell prehistory. Later on, this version could have come to seem too subtle in its political message, too cursory in its treatment of King Arthur, and too short to span the centuries.
between the early historical Campbells and the prehistoric Nemedian colonists of Britain.

Finally, we must at least pose the question, ‘Whose genealogy?’ Of the two other genealogies adjacent to the Campbell genealogy in Mac Fhirbhisigh, we have seen that Patrick’s contains demonstrably exotic material designed to symbolize ‘Jutish’ and ‘British’ connections. Manchán’s comes under suspicion on account of the presence of Goirt(h)igern, a rendition which in circumstances like the present must surely refer to the famous king Vortigern of the Historia Brittonum." Does the Campbell genealogy have any claim to be less ‘bogus’? In view of our declared predisposition to presume ‘guilt until proved innocent’ in cases like this we should be prepared to test the genealogy of Mac Caillíon in that spirit for signs of fabrication. The strong Arthurian bias in the Campbell tradition as a whole, coupled with the absence of evidence for our names in the older genealogical codices, suggests that the Historia Regum Britanniae (or rather, in view of our earlier conclusions, Brut y Brenhinedd) should be our litmus paper. The results are interesting if not conclusive. Mêbrech, Lìdir (assuming *Eldir and Cœel readily find Galfridian counterparts with excellent Scottish or Northern associations in the Historia and Brutiau: Marianus/Meuryc, Eldurus Pius/Eldyr War, and either Coillus/Coel or Hoelus/Howel. If our tentative explanation of Muiri as Morudd were right we could add Morvidus/Morudd (the father of Eldurus), and our problem with Bearna(i)rd could be resolved by Brianus/Breint (Hir). *Madauc (if we were right about this) and Grifin could also find counterparts in Madanus/Madawc and in the various forms corresponding to Gruffyd (ub Nogoet) in Brut Dingestow. However, the motivation for recruiting the former (the son of Locrinus) is less than obvious, while the latter (mentioned once as a participant at Arthur’s great convention at Caerleon) is a peripheral figure indeed; as a result, and bearing in mind the ubiquity of both these names in Welsh historical sources, we should probably not count them either way for the purposes of the present exercise. We are left, then, with Catoga(i)n (bis), Caidimo(i)r and Bende, which do not have any obvious analogue in the Historia or Brut. If we were determined to press for a conviction we could advance the claims of Cadmanus/Cadfan and Cador/Cadwr, and even seek a solution for Bende in Brennius/Bran (hardly Peanda!). But that would surely be an excess of zeal. For the background of Patrick’s genealogy (to go no further afield) reminds us that more than one source can be drawn on in a case like this, and there would be little difficulty about assuming a second Welsh source in the present case, once one had conceded the likelihood of a first. The upshot of this examination must, it seems to me, be a ‘not proven’ verdict, leaving us with a strong suspicion that we are dealing with a fabrication involving a text that may be added that the form of the name is strongly reminiscent of those occurring in mss of Historia Brittonum and Lebor Bretnach. It is also interesting to note that the rest of the names in Manchán’s pedigree can almost all be found with little difficulty in lists of the Kings of Britain, e.g. as printed by Bartrum Genealogical tracts, pp. 49–50) from Jesus College ms 20.

For the forms assumed by Geoffrey’s names in the Brutiau see B. Roberts, The treatment of personal names in the early Welsh version of Historia Regum Britanniae, Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies 25 (1972) 274–90.

of *Brut y Brenhinedd* deployed in concert with a further Welsh source or sources unknown.\textsuperscript{99}

Unfortunately, this conclusion brings us no nearer a solution to our other main question: the evidence for the provenance of *F* is still inconclusive. We may maintain that the Irish record contains the better parallels for the occurrence of Welsh names in Gaelic genealogies. But those we have examined owe their creation to an earlier phase of scholarly activity than that which the Campbell genealogy implies: the former relate, as we have pointed out, to the British interest which stimulated, and was then fuelled by, the Irish translation of the *Historia Brittonum*; while the latter appears to relate rather to Geoffrey of Monmouth and his Welsh translators. Moreover, we are hampered by ignorance of the genealogical schemes and doctrines which may have been worked out by the Scottish Gaelic literati during the period when Geoffrey's work was drawn into the heated and serious world of Anglo-Scottish Arthurian controversy. As a result, our investigation ends on a rather negative note. But if the stream has petered out before revealing its source, it has led through some unfrequented by-ways and posed some questions with a more general application. It is just the sort of problem one could have brought to Jim Carney in the knowledge that he would share one's curiosity and offer perceptive insights and criticisms from expected and unexpected angles.

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\textsuperscript{99} If *Bende* has been inspired by the Gaelic literary figure Béinne (see note 29), his status is, of course, rather different.