

Brian ‘na luirech’ Mac Gillpatrick, who died about 1511, and is buried at Fertagh, should have found a place in the Pedigree here (Carrigan, 1905, Addenda and Corrigenda).

The death of Brian, written as the French/Latin variant *Bernardi* along with the name *Johes* on the tomb, is neither 1511 nor 1537. By 1905 the tomb inscriptions were so worn that Carrigan could find no associated date (“Fertagh Church Ruins”, 1905, pp. 357-58). But an unattributed letter to the editor of *Anthologia Hibernica* from more than 100 years earlier than Carrigan’s visit, while stating the lettering even then was ‘much defaced’, gave a date for *someone* buried there as 1525 (Anonymous, 1793, *see also* Seward, 1795).

These examples of errors, confusions, and gaps in the key Mac Giolla Phádraig texts provide the explanation for, and focus of, this article – *Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí* – that is, to review Mac Giolla Phádraig records for the period 1384-1534. These dates are not arbitrary. The bookends are, for reasons that will become apparent, Richard II’s expedition to Éire in 1384 and the rebellion of Silken Thomas, the 10th Earl of Kildare, in 1534.

Article Overview

Part I of *Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí* covers the period 1384-1455, and *Part II* covers the period 1456-1534. *Part I* is broken down into sections that highlight the notable Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí and key events of the period, viz.

- Finghin Óg, Lord of Ossory ca. 1396 – ca. 1417
- Talbot and Ormond, and the shaping of the Mac Giolla Phádraig of Ossory
- Donnchadh Mór Riabhach, Lord of Ossory ca. 1417 – ca. 1448
- The events of 1443
- Donnchadh Mór Riabhach in *Liber Ruber*
- Donnchadh Mór Riabhach in the Ormond Deeds
- Donnchadh Mór Riabhach in the Kildare Rental
- Éire 1444-1448
- The Ormond-Mac Giolla Phádraig Alliance: Part I
- Finghin Mór, Lord of Ossory (ca. 1448 – ca. 1468)
- Morena ny Eóin Mac Giolla Phádraig
- Miscellanea: Criomthann and Tadhg Dubh Mac Giolla Phádraig

Finghin Óg Mac Giolla Phádraig (? – ca. 1417), Lord of Ossory (ca. 1396 – ca. 1417)

Finghin Óg (Finnin ‘the young’) emerged as the key figure among the Mac Giolla Phádraig of Ossory toward the end of the fourteenth century; a period referred to by O’Byrne as one of *greater flexibility in Irish politics* (2001). That *flexibility* had led to the increasing formation of alliances between Gaelic chieftains who had become more hostile to *the Anglo-Irish and the king’s officers*. This included the Mac Giolla Phádraig – in 1395, the Sheriff of Carlow, Geoffrey de Vale, produced a writ evidencing his prior, *warring with the justiciar against MacGillpatrick at Kilkenny* (Johnston, 1977).

That a crisis was coming to Éire was *an accepted fact*, and in October 1394, Éire experienced the military might of Richard II, the first English monarch to set foot in Éire since John in 1185. One of the most prized by the English among the Irish chiefs to swear his oath of liegance was Art Óg Mac Murchadha Caomhánach (Art ‘the young’ MacMurrough-Kavanagh), the Lord of Leinster. Alongside Mac Murchadha at Ballymore, Carlow on 18 February *Fennan MacGillpatrick* swore *merely to submit to the royal will*, indicating that liege homage was beyond his authority; while most other Irish Lords present were clearly identified as the *captains of their nation*, Finghin Óg was not (Johnston, 1977).

Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí chieftainship lay elsewhere between 1383 and 1396, and that is apparent from other records of the period, which note the deaths of two Lords and one Tanist of Ossory, as follows:

...Mac Gillpatrick. Lord of Ossory; and the son of Kellagh Mac Gillpatrick, Tanist of Ossory, all died of the same plague (O'Clery, 1856, p. 691)

Mac Gilla Patrick Ossoriae dominus obiit (O'Clery, 1856, p. 746)

One of the aforementioned Lords of Ossory was probably Finghin, the father of Finghin Óg, who, according to a plaque at Achadh Bhó (Aghaboe) Abbey established a Dominican Friary there, purportedly in 1382 (Archdall, 1876) and elsewhere recorded *ante annum* 1400 (Burke, 1762).

That Finghin Óg was not Tanist in 1383 bears testimony to his youth, nevertheless Mac Murchadha, having recognised the revival of the Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí (a once supreme force in 12th Century Leinster) in the Irish midlands during the 1300s had identified Finghin Óg as Lord of Ossory in waiting. Art's traditional diplomatic ploy secured a Mac Murchadha-Mac Giolla Phádraig alliance; the marriage of Finghin Óg to Art's daughter Sadhbh (Sabina) had probably occurred by 1386 (O'Byrne, 2001) when the Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí had almost certainly joined him during Art's campaign on their territory.

Numbers of the English of Ossory fell by Mac Murrough, King of Leinster (O'Clery, 1856, p. 707)

The likely date of Finghin Óg's ascendancy, following the death of either his father or another senior Mac Giolla Phádraig, is 1396 and evidence of a continuation of Mac Murchadha-Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí campaigns is found shortly after that in 1398.

Mac Murchadha went on an expedition, and the Foreigners of Laighen and Midhe overtook him; and a great number of the Saxon army, and the kerne retainers of Mac Murchadha, were slain there, including ... William, the son of Cerbhall Mac Gilla-Patraic, and the son of Diarmaid Ruadh Mac Gilla-Patraic (Hennessy, 1871, p. 85)

Finghin Óg was still living in 1411 when the annalists record the death of Sadhbh (Hennessy, 1871) but his days ended sometime between then and 1417, when another chief had appeared (Freeman, 1944). With the passing of Finghin Óg, the next Lord of Ossory was Donnchadh Mór Riabhach (Donagh 'the Great, the Swarthy') Mac Giolla Phádraig (Freeman, 1944). And by 1417 the political scene in Éire was undergoing a shake-up of seismic proportions; the next 27 years would see a clash between the Anglo-Irish le Botiler of Urmhumhan (Ormond) and a legend in waiting – Sir John Talbot. Ultimately this rivalry dictated the course of the Mac Giolla Phádraig through to the end of the Late Middle Ages, and Mac Giolla Phádraig history from 1417 to 1455 can only be understood within the Talbot-Ormond context.

Talbot and Ormond: the shaping of the Mac Giolla Phádraig

The House of Ormond had enjoyed more than 200 years of unprecedented stability, where there had been *an almost unbroken succession from father to son from 1185 until 1405* in the senior line; this had allowed the Butlers to amass sizeable landed estates particularly in Cúige Mumhan (Munster) and, at their northern extremities, on the borders of *Mac Giolla Phádraig's Country*. Following the death of James, the 3rd Earl of Ormond, in 1405, the title fell to his son, James the 4th Earl of Ormond – the *White Earl*. The custodianship of the young Earl's lands was granted to Thomas of Lancaster, who was the son of Henry IV and the King's Lieutenant of Ireland, since Ormond had not reached his majority. In 1411, at 21 years, he was granted possession of his lands, although effective control had been realised from 1407 when he was engaged in various military actions (Beresford, 1999).

In contrast, although the Talbots had established contacts in Éire since 1174, closer associations only came in the latter part of the 14th Century. Richard Talbot, the father of Sir John, had claim to the succession to the Lordship of Wexford since 1389, although that claim was contested by Reginald Grey of Ruthin (Pollard, 1969). But, on the back of his feats during the Glyndŵr Rising, Talbot was elevated to the King's Lieutenant of Ireland in 1414 (Lyte, 1927) and this advantaged him over Grey; on the resolution of the claim several years later he

became Lord Wexford (Pollard, 1969). The stage was now set for a feud between the Houses of Ormond and Talbot, which would dominate the first half of 15th-century Anglo-Irish history (Griffith, 1941).

Talbot's earlier tenure in Éire was marked by devastating military raids and the *pacification* of Irish tribes (Pollard, 1969). Ó Mórdha (O'More) was first to submit, swept aside within 12 days; others soon followed as Talbot's strategy of immediately enlisting those he had conquered reaped dividends (Ellis, 1827). Initially, Talbot appeared to support Ormond who had just returned from fighting for Henry V in the 1417-1420 French campaign, having been knighted prior to Azincourt (Curry, 2000). Ormond was retained, *with his whole retinue horse, and foot, well mounted, armed and arrayed, for the terme of one year* (Dugdale, 1675, p.329), and, along with his brother Thomas, Ormond was appointed as guardian of the peace and commissioner of array for Cill Chainnigh, Tiobraid Árann (Tipperary), and Port Láirge (Waterford) (Tresham, 1828).

However, *the Lieutenancy of Ireland in the fifteenth century was a hard and thankless post* (Pollard, 1969, p.106). Irish clans had *neither unity nor the desire to throw out the English. Instead, they enjoyed plundering or extorting, ransoms from the cultivated borders of the English held land* (Pollard, 1969, p.108). Talbot's early success had come at a steep financial cost, but funds for Éire were becoming harder to come by – completely understandable considering the financial drain of the 100 Years War (McFarlane, 1962). Therefore, it is no surprise that as early as 1415 Talbot's gaze had fallen on Ormond's debts to the Crown and, ultimately, in 1417 this led to the seizure of Ormond's Irish lands (Empey, 1970).

Talbot was compelled to petition for funds in England, which led to a period of absenteeism from 1416-1417. Absenteeism was part and parcel of life for a servant of the Crown in Éire but from the outset of his appointment Talbot was more absent than not, which served to quickly dictate how he was perceived by Irish and Anglo-Irish alike, i.e., that he was an *external royal authority*. In contrast to Talbot, Ormond was viewed as a *residential Lord* who well understood compromise and the need to work with Irish chieftains (Pollard, 1969). That became evident to Talbot in no uncertain terms when Thomas Butler secured the services of a *troop of wild warriors*, being some 200 horsemen and 300 foot, who joined him to aid Henry V in France where they were immortalised for their valor at the siege of Rouen (Moore, 1840; Devon, 1837).

But if financial pressures and the Ormond's siding with the enemy wasn't enough for Talbot, his political alignment conflicted with his foe and his foe's allies (Crooks, 2020) and this was no more apparent than during the struggle for the Earldom of Desmond, when Talbot favoured Thomas FitzGerald whereas Ormond was in the camp of James 'the Usurper' (Pollard, 1968). There were many outcomes of the Talbot-Ormond feud (Griffith, 1941), but the one that concerns this article is that as both parties sought to garner support from the Irish, the Irish were compelled to choose sides (Pollard, 1968). From ca. 1416 Ormond had established alliances with the Mac Murchadha, Ó Broin (O'Byrne), Ó Tuathail (O'Toole) and the Ó Conchubhair Fhailghe (O'Connor Faly), often with the requisite marital links (O'Byrne, 2001). But where would the designs of Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí lie? That clan decision fell, doubtless in no small part, to Donnchadh Mór Riabhach Mac Giolla Phádraig.

Donnchadh Mór Riabhach Mac Giolla Phádraig (? – ca. 1448), Lord of Ossory (ca. 1417 – ca. 1448)

That Donnchadh Mór Riabhach has been largely overlooked as a clan chieftain by the most noted Mac Giolla Phádraig historians, viz., Carrigan and Shearman, is somewhat understandable. Carrigan makes no direct reference to Donnchadh Mór Riabhach, but the most significant historical reference to him is the earliest, which appears in Annála Connacht. These annals were absent from Carrigan's list of works consulted since the relevant passage was not published until 1944, two decades after Carrigan's death. Freeman's translation reads

Piers son of James son of Edmund Butler, who would have been Earl of Ormond, was killed on the night of Shrove Tuesday, in the house of Donnchad Oirech Mac Gilla Patraic in Ossory, by Donnchad's blacksmith while they were dancing (Freeman, 1944).

That Freeman left Oirech untranslated only becomes understandable on viewing the Annála Connacht manuscript (MS C iii 1, f. 52 r); in parts the scribe's handwriting is very unclear and the passage is also highly abbreviated. It appears as, *donch airig m.g.p*, which in this context is read, *Donnchadh chief of the Mac Giolla Phádraig*.

Quite aside from the growing Talbot and Ormond 'situation', the significance of 1417 is not lost for in this year the annals also record (a) the death of both Art Óg Mac Murchadha Caomhánach the King of Leinster and his son Diarmait; (b) Art's son Donnchadh became Leinster's King, and, (c) *a great war broke out in Leinster between the English and Irish* (O'Clery, 1856, pp. 831-833). Aged friends were passing, new leaders were emerging, and change was inevitable. The forging of new Irish/Anglo-Irish alliances doubtless took much negotiation behind the scenes and that Mac Giolla Phádraig were interacting socially with Butlers in 1417 is plainly apparent – fasting's eve was a time for *singing, dancing and otherwise playing* (Aucoin, 2019, p. 176); but was the death of Piers a mere accident, the result of bad blood or, perhaps, a Talbot motivated hit?

Whatever the case a letter, which Crooks (2007) attributes to being written in 1420, from John Marshal, constable of Athy castle, to Talbot indicates Donnchadh Mór Riabhach's position had become clearly defined; he was *willing to become Talbot's man* and was *awaiting instructions on how to proceed in Talbot's service* (Pollard, 1968, p.121) particularly against Calbhach (Calvagh) Ó Conchobhair Failghe and James FitzGerald of Desmond (Crooks, 2007). That the Mac Giolla Phádraig-Mac Murchadha relationship forged ca. 1386 was not a factor in Donnchadh Mór Riabhach's decision to take Talbot's side is most likely due to it being a period of Mac Murchadha decline; their role was severely impacted due to Donnchadh Mac Murchadha's capture by Talbot, who held him prisoner from 1419-1427 (O'Byrne, 2001).

The choice of Talbot over Ormond was the continuation of the ongoing war between the Butlers, now the occupiers of ancient Mac Giolla Phádraig territory in the heart of Cill Chainnigh, and those who they had displaced. The earliest clear record of Butlers and Mac Giolla Phádraig in direct conflict with each other is found in 1323 when the expedition of Justiciar John de Bermingham to quash the Éile Ó Cearbhaill (Ely O'Carroll) rebellion also targeted Mac Giolla Phádraig, with support coming from Thomas Butler the 1st Lord of Dunboyne (Empey, 1970). In 1356 Peter le Botiller, 2nd Baron of Dunboyne, received 100 marks from Edward III as reward for killing *Gillepatrick chief of Ossory* (Butler, 1945). And the spoiling of Upper Ossory by James Butler 3rd Earl of Ormond, at times Lord Justice and a Justiciar of Ireland, in 1394 (O'Clery, 1856) was likely retribution for the Mac Murchadha-Mac Giolla Phádraig attacks of 1386.

Although at opposite ends of the axis there is little record of Butler - Mac Giolla Phádraig conflict immediately following Talbot's enlistment, but there is evidence of both sides in conflict with allies of the other. Ormond's defeat of Ó Mórdha, Mac Giolla Phádraig's ally, is a noteworthy event in 1421 and in the same year the annals record

Mac Gillpatrick and the son of Libned a Frene, one of the English, set out with twelve score soldiers on a predatory excursion into Leix, and did not halt until they reached the monastery of Leix; but O'Conor Faly happened to come in contact with them in that country, and attacked Mac Gillpatrick and the English, and defeated and slaughtered them, and his people obtained great spoils of the armour, arms, and accoutrements of the English. (O'Clery, Vol. IV, p. 851)

This was no random act by Donnchadh Mór Riabhach, and no random response by Ó Conchubhar Fhailghe – in 1419 the son of this same de Fréine had taken Calbhach Ó Conchubhar Fhailghe, an Ormond ally, prisoner and sold him to Talbot (O'Clery, 1856).

But apart from these brief records and that, in 1431, *Domnall Mac Gilla-Patraig, namely, son of the King of Ossory, died* (O'Clery, 1856) – this Dónall (Donal) was the son of Donnchadh Mór Riabhach – there are no other significant Mac Giolla Phádraig records until 1440. It was a period when Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí succession is uncertain (O'Byrne, 2001) and when Norman- Gaelic government was a, *peculiar balance, albeit an uneasy one* (Empey & Simms, 1975).

Growing tensions and the events of 1443

The relative calm between Butlers and Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí was doubtless influenced by Ormond's alliance with the Earl of Desmond from 1422-1444 (Empey & Simms, 1975), which included an indenture for marriage between Ormond's daughter and Desmond's son and that, *the two Earls shall maintain, cherish, love and defend each and either of the two and their heirs and children against all men* (Curtis, 1935, p.72).

Also significant in this era was the marriage, in 1432, of Ormond to Elizabeth FitzGerald, the daughter of Gerald the 5th Earl of Kildare, which was shrewd to say the very least since it led to him acquiring Kildare lands and staking claim to the Earldom of Kildare. But FitzGerald's were outraged and the marriage ultimately led to Thomas FitzGerald, grandson of Gerald and the 7th Earl, allying himself with those others disgruntled with Ormond, such as the Ó Mórdha and the emergent Ó Broin of Wexford. Ormond was intent on developing new alliances and securing his succession plans, and he arranged the marriage between his nephew and potential heir, Edmund Mac Richard Butler (ca. 1415-1464), to Catherine the daughter of Máel Ruanaidh Ó Cearbhaill Éile; it was a double deal since Edmund's sister Mary was coupled to Máel Ruanaidh's son Seán (O'Byrne, 2001).

The growing regional tension must have been palpable, and in 1440 the annalists record a, *predatory incursion into Leix, O'Moore's territory*, by the Ó Conchubhar Fhailghe who were then routed by the Earl of Desmond and Mac Gillpatrick (O'Clery, 1856). With so many factors in play it is no surprise that when Talbot returned to Éire in 1442 there came *the climax of the quarrel* (Griffith, 1941).

By 1442 the period of relative truce had afforded Mac Giolla Phádraig the time to construct a castle into the mountainside at An Chúlchoill (Cullahill). Carrigan (1905) estimates its erection as ca. 1425 and credits the build to Finghin Mór Mac Giolla Phádraig (Lord of Ossory ca. 1448 – 1469); neither the date of the build nor the builder is substantiated but it is considered more likely that it was Donnchadh Mór Riabhach's project. Regardless, by 1436, the last year of Sir Thomas Stanley's terms as Lord Lieutenant, the commanding structure evidenced that the power of the Mac Giolla Phádraig had grown; in response, in 1442, Cullahill fell:

Order, at petition [etc.], to pay the sovereign, provost and commons of the town of Kilkenny 100s granted to them as a reward, because they sustained various labours at their own costs in the company of Thomas Stanley Kt, former Lieutenant of Ireland, and that of Lionel Lord Welles, Lieutenant, in resistance of the malice of the Irish enemies and English rebels, and especially in breaching the castle of McKilpatrick. (Crooks, 2012)

After the successful attack Finghin Mac Giolla Phádraig, son of the Lord of Ossory (O'Donovan, 1846), was taken hostage by Edmund Mac Richard, Ormond's trusted deputy lieutenant and *alter ego* (Beresford, 1999) while Ormond was in England facing charges brought by Talbot (Empey, 1970). Mac Firbis made record of his *treacherous* slaying – the following year Finghin was set upon in his chains by Mac Richard's lackies; they took off his shackles and, *beat him and his brother Diarmaid with them until they died* (O'Clery, 1856).

Shearman adds considerable detail to the annalistic account, stating that according family tradition:

In the year 1443, the Cave of Dunmore was the scene of a cruel slaughter of this of some Ossorians whose kinglet Finghin na Cuilcoille Mac Gilla Patraic was a prisoner in Kilkenny. His brother Dermot stealthily brought forty men, whom on his way to Kilkenny he concealed in the Cave of Dunmore... and then... went on to Kilkenny under pretence of visiting his brother, meanwhile Walter Mac Edmund Butler had secret intelligence of the intended rescue (Shearman, 1879, p. 360)

The Finghin in Shearman's account is referred to as a *kinglet*, which is revealing since he is called neither Lord of Ossory nor Tanist, but just as Finghin Óg Mac Giolla Phádraig (Lord of Ossory ca. 1396 – ca. 1417) before him was once a star on the rise so was this Finghin. Of him Mac Firbis wrote

the said Fingin being well worthy of the Kingdome of Ossory as sole Lord through his vertuous qualities and conditions both in princely person, wealth, liberality and martiall ffeates (O'Donovan, 1846, p. 200)

That *princely person* referred by Mac Firis better describes a youthful heir in waiting rather than the incumbent Lord. It also serves to clear up the confusion around his status, his ascent and his progeny. Carrigan (1905) correctly identifies him as the father of Finghin Ruadh (The 'Red') who in 1478 exacted revenge on the Butler's on account of his father's murder but Shearman (1879) erroneously describes him as Lord of Upper Ossory, the husband of Margaret Butler, and the son of Finghin (Lord of Ossory, ? – 1383/1386). Shearman, in fact, was describing the incumbent Lord of Ossory, Finghin Mór; these errors are due in large part to the failure to recognise the status of Donnchadh Mór Riabhach, who in 1443 was extant, but perhaps aged and ineffectual.

Following the murderous acts on Finghin and Diarmaid, Walter *set out for Dunmore, and piled up straw and brambles against the mouth of the Cave and smothered the forty men there concealed* (Shearman, 1879) after which Mac Richard's ransacked Osraí (O'Clery, 1937). And if the loss of two sons in a single year wasn't enough Donnchadh Mór Riabhach lost a third, Maeleachlainn (Malachy) Ruadh, in a heavy defeat at the hands of a son of Edmund Mac Richard Butler (O'Clery, 1937).

Much more can be learnt of the life and times of Donnchadh Mór Riabhach from three major, largely neglected, sources. In the chronological order in which they appear these sources are (a) Liber Ruber (Red Book) of the Diocese of Ossory, (b) The Calendar of Ormond Deeds, and (c) the Rental book of the Earl of Kildare.

Donnchadh Mór Riabhach in the Liber Ruber

The Liber Ruber (Red Book) of the Diocese of Ossory is an episcopal register containing 79 leaves of vellum with compilations dating from the period when Richard de Ledrede was Bishop of Ossory (1317-1360) until 1577. As part of the Representative Church Body (RCB) Library's project to digitise manuscripts, the Liber Ruber (RCB Library D11/2/1) can be viewed via a Church of Ireland portal (<https://issuu.com/churchofireland/docs/redbookossory>).

The entry pertaining to Donnchadh Mór Riabhach is on Folio 11a, the exact date of which is not recorded. Scholars typically cite 1460-1478 when Bishop David Hacket held the seat (Lawlor, 1908). However, Carrigan (1905) narrowed the range to 1468-1478 and this is likely because he understood the John McKeve referred to as the *late Rector* of Darú (Durrow) died in 1468, or earlier (Bliss, 1893, *refer* Vol. 12, 668, 1468).

Carrigan (1905) presents Folio 11a in the original Latin and provides an English translation (*refer* Vol. 2., pp. 217-219) but it is unusual to see that, having been so diligent with his earlier coverage of the Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí (*refer* Vol 1., pp. 47-109), he offers no insights or explanations into who the seven Mac Giolla Phádraig (or their kin) mentioned are or where they may fit within the clan dynamics apart from the obvious Séafra (Geoffrey), Lord of Ossory (1468-1489). For the record the seven mentioned are:

- Donnchadh Mór Riabhach
- Toirealach mac Donnchadh
- Tadhg Ruadh mac Donnchadh
- Tadhg Dubh
- Séafra, captain of his nation
- The daughter of Edmund Butler, wife of the 'late' Mac Giolla Phádraig
- The 'late' Mac Giolla Phádraig

Donnchadh Mór Riabhach was deceased prior to 1468 and he is named only with respect to his living sons Toirealach (Terrence) and Tadhg Ruadh. Carrigan, a scholar of renowned ability in Gaelige and Latin, was able to make sense of his difficult to read by-name *Riabhach* where others struggled. Shearman (1879) identified

him as *Doncadh Salach* and placed him as a brother of Séafra in his genealogical tree but made no comment about him in the body of his text. Among scholars, Donnchadh Mór Riabhach's only recognition as the Lord of Ossory comes from O'Byrne (2001) who places him as chieftain ca. 1415-1430.

Liber Ruber does not name Tadhg Dubh as either the son of Donnchadh Mór Riabhach or the son of *the late* Mac Giolla Phádraig and for good reason. He was the son of Finghin Óg, and in the Annals of Ulster he is identified as the son of Finghin, Tanist of Ossory who died 1487 (MacCarthy & Hennessy, 1895). Tadhg Dubh is also among those referred to by the Abbot of the Cistercian monastery of St. Mary Gráig na Manach (Graiguenamanagh), Cill Chainnigh, for his crimes against the church and men (Bliss, 1893, *refer* Vol. 10, 464, 1450). He is discussed later in this article, refer *Miscellanea*.

The daughter of Edmund Butler is nameless, known only as the *wife of the late Mac Giolla Phádraig*. From the Ormond Deeds (Curtis, 1937) the late *Mac Giolla Phádraig* is known to be Finghin Mór (Lord of Ossory (ca. 1448 – 1468). The Deeds describe him as *Fynynum magnum* having obtained the same by-name as his predecessor perhaps thorough the greatness of his exploits or the length of his reign, or both; he can only be the son Finghin Óg (Lord of Ossory, ca. 1396 – ca. 1417) since Donnchadh Mór Riabhach was unlikely to have given two sons the name Finghin. Other sources provide the date of Finghin Mór's death, alongside that of an old ally, shortly before the entries in Liber Ruber were penned

O'More and Mac Gillpatrick died of the plague (O'Clery, 1856, p. 1055).

Finghin Mór and his wife are discussed briefly later in this article, and more depth in *Part II*. Séafra Mac Giolla Phádraig (d. 1489) Lord of Ossory is discussed in *Part II*.

Liber Ruber provides valuable insights regarding the senior members and structure of Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí 1468-1478. As for the subject of the record itself, it relates to fixing the bounds of the Bishop of Ossory's manor of Darú, which in turn provides valuable insights into Mac Giolla Phádraig territories 1468-1478. This will be discussed in *Part II*.

Donnchadh Mór Riabhach in the Ormond Deeds

Donnchadh Mór Riabhach is also referenced in the Calendar of Ormond Deeds, where he is referred to as *Donatus magnus* (Curtis, 1937). The Deeds, a collection from the medieval era, were once contained in the muniment room of the Marquess of Ormond at Cill Chainnigh Castle. They were calendared by Edmund Curtis, Professor of History at Trinity College, and published by the Irish Manuscripts Commission in six volumes, 1932-1943.

The relevant section of the Deeds contains the depositions of witnesses relating to a land dispute in the former Barony of Áth Charna (Aharney) between Oliver Cantwell, the Bishop of Ossory (1487-1527), and Thomas Purcell, Lord of Foulksrath; they are dated 11 March 1517. A hearing relating to church lands in Osraí is an echo of the previously discussed record in Liber Ruber. By reason of the *remarkable details* of the deed Curtis left it in Latin. The court session would have been heard in Irish because the deponents in the case were not scholars, but the official court documents would have been recorded in Latin. However, it is apparent the court scribe was, (a) at times, unable to find the right word from Irish to put into Latin, particularly those words that pertained to place names, (b) used some form of medieval shorthand in the court room itself, and (c) was familiar mostly with church Latin. In addition, it appears the court transcript was written out later in Latin longhand by a different scribe who was a scholar of classical Latin but not so familiar with church Latin.

For the deed itself, Cantwell's case was supported by numerous deponents, including members of his own family, as well as those who had knowledge of Mac Giolla Phádraig who had lived in the general location. The parts that relate to Mac Giolla Phádraig (Curtis, 1937, pp.38-42) are translated into 21st Century English here.

The Rector of Darú swore he had he asked a certain McPhilip, who he believed to be 80 years old or more, and who knew the limits of the Baronie land. McPhillip had said *that in his own conscience he had heard from*

Morena, the daughter of MacGilpatrick, John 'The Blind' Butler, Donald MacGilpatrick and others along with other elders and went on to describe the boundaries of the lands owned by John, which included the modern-day townlands of An Lois Dubh (Lisduff), Garrán Na Páirce (Parks Grove), and Cluain na gCaorach (Clonageera).

A deposition from Rory O'Phelan, a 60-year-old man, stated that he and Thaddeus 'the Red' Mac Donaghy of An Seisceann (Seskin) leased land, which included Garrán Na Páirce from

John 'the Blind' Butler and Morena, the daughter of MacGilpatrick for certain annual rent, who reimbursed him 16 pence to resolve the dispute with McCody so they ensured there was no interruption in the days and years of the tenancy

Thaddeus, son of John, son of Thaddeus 'the Rough' O'Helane, aged 70 years and more, made a deposition stating that William Óg O'Hagan had sworn by God, on the third day before he died, that the land had previously been

a matter of dispute between Fininum 'the Great' MacGilpatrick and his wife the daughter of Edmund Butler, and Edmund McCody whose principal interest was one field near Rathcall. Thaddeus also described how, John 'the Blind' Butler and Morena his wife, apportioned the lands to every man, even as their lands are free from other claimants

And

Cornelius O'Clery aged 70 years and more, stated under oath the land had been conferred upon Donald 'the Great' MacGilpatrick, John the son of John 'the Blind' Butler and Morena MacGillpatrick

These passages enable the clear identification of key landowners in the vicinity of Áth Charna long before the time of the hearing: John 'the Blind Butler' and his son John; Morena ny Giolla Phádraig the wife of John 'the Blind Butler'; Donnchadh Mór Riabhach Mac Giolla Phádraig; Finghin Mór Mac Giolla Phádraig; and, the daughter of Edmund Butler who was Finghin Mór's wife. The depositions were heard in 1517, and the deponents were all in their later years – aside from estimating that the deponents were likely recalling events from 30-60 years earlier, can the timeframes for the previous landowners' occupancies be discovered? This aspect will be discussed further in *Part II*.

Reference to John, the son of John 'the Blind' Butler, is found elsewhere in the Ormond Deeds. Dated 16 March 1495 is an indenture between John and Oliver Cantwell stating that, *said John, with the assent of his heir, his sons and kinsmen, granted for a pledge of twenty-two cows to the said bishop certain towns of his, viz., Áth Charna, Lios Dúnaigh (Lysdowney) and Cill Bhríde (Kilbreedy) in the Barony of Áth Charna (Curtis, 1935, p.280).*

Based on the evidence presented here, that John 'the Blind' Butler was a person of note is irrefutable; being of his esteemed surname and in possession of significant lands on the Cill Chainnigh-Laois border connects him clearly to the House of Ormond. It is also clear a contemporary of *John 'The Blind' Butler* was a Mac Óda (McCody). The Mac Óda were previously L'Ercedeknes until, *waxing Irish they adopted an Irish patronymic* and named themselves after Odo L'Ercedekne (Carrigan, 1905); they were also known as Archidekyn or Asteken (Curtis, 1935), but for the purposes of this article Archdekin will be used.

The Mac Óda in question was likely related to, or even the same person, as the Edmund Mac Óda who had been in dispute with Finghin Mór and his wife. From here further evidence gathered from the Ormond Deeds indicates the wife of John 'the Blind' Butler, viz., Morena, was probably the daughter of Eóin (Owen/John) Mac Giolla Phádraig. An indenture dated February 8, 1453 between William and Edmund Mac Óda Archdekin and Eóin Mac Giolla Phádraig's daughter

granted to said Owne all the land of Curdyysheyes and Kylfane in pledge for a mark, if said Owne survive (overlyve) said Edmund, that then she shall have the above land till she be paid twenty-five

shillings and if so be that said Edmund shall survive said Owne then he shall have the said land without any payment (Curtis, 1935, p. 172)

In summary, from the Ormond deeds we uncover that Donnchadh Mór Riabhach was a contemporary of Morena, who the daughter of Eóin Mac Giolla Phádraig. Morena was also the wife of John ‘the Blind’ Butler. Another contemporary was Finghin Mór who married the daughter of a certain Edmund Butler. Therefore, we evidence a double marriage between the Mac Giolla Phádraig and the Butlers, in keeping with the Ormond practice of alliance building.

Donnchadh Mór Riabhach in the Kildare Rental

The rental book of Gerald FitzGerald, 9th Earl of Kildare, begun in 1518 is held by the British Library (MS Harleian 3756) but is published in part and in its entirety by Hore and Mac Niocaill, respectively (Hore, 1859; Hore, 1862; Hore, 1866, Mac Niocaill, 1992). Neither Carrigan nor Shearman appear to have had direct access to MS 3756, and although Carrigan cites part of the rental published by Hore (1862) he makes no attempt to explain the identity of those of *Ossory – McGyllepatrikis countre* named therein as paying annual duties to Kildare in 1530, as follows:

- Brian mac Toirealach mac Donnchadh of Formaoil (Formoyll)
- Clann Maeleachlainn Ruadh for the defense of Baile Dhabhag (Ballygauge) etc. in Laois
- Eóin
- Toirealach mac Donnchadh

In addition, the rental has an intriguing entry for duties, *on the sonnys of Donnogh Makdonnok OShoylle in the Burgache and in Syrebege* (Hore, 1862, p. 125). The locations can be identified as Buiríos Mór Osraí (Borris-in-Ossory) and Cnoc Saighre (Knockseer) but the identity of the *OShoylle* was beyond even the interpretive skills of Carrigan (1905).

Hence, we identify that Donnchadh Mór Riabhach’s son Toirealach, who was living 1468-1478, is extant 52-62 years later in 1530 along with a grandson, the son of Toirealach, named Brian. We also identify an entire Mac Giolla Phádraig sub-branch, Clann Maeleachlainn Ruadh, the descendants of Maeleachlainn Ruadh (d.1443) the son of Donnchadh Mór Riabhach. The ascent of Eóin Mac Giolla Phádraig is not provided but the Kildare Rental states that he and Toirealach mac Donnchadh Mac Giolla Phádraig are the clan members with authority since the rental agreement with Kildare is granted by them both *in the name of all ther brethren* (Hore, 1862, p. 125).

Evidence of the relationship between Clann Maeleachlainn Ruadh and Kildare can be taken from the fact they were under Kildare’s protection and it is also apparent that the leadership of the Mac Giolla Phádraig was not singular in 1530. That some Mac Giolla Phádraig had a close relationship with Kildare whereas others were loyal to the Butlers is the likely reason for the fractured clan leadership. These aspects, as well as the possibility that Donnchadh Mór Riabhach had a son named Donnchadh who was the progenitor of a Mac Giolla Phádraig sub-branch known as *OShoylle*, are discussed further in *Part II*.

Lastly, several other Mac Giolla Phádraig are mentioned in MS 3756 who were individuals living 1513-1530 but they have with no established link to Donnchadh Mór Riabhach; they also will be discussed in *Part II*.

Éire 1444-1448: a time of turmoil

The loss of Donnchadh Mór Riabhach’s three sons in quick succession, including the *Kinglet* of Ossory, would have been a hammer blow for Mac Giolla Phádraig; they were likely now a clan in turmoil, daily watching their southern boundaries as the power of Ormond, Edmund Mac Richard and his allies grew. And clan leadership would have gnawed at Donnchadh Mór Riabhach’s mind. His two younger sons, Toirealach and Tadhg Ruadh (Lawlor, 1908), were out of the reckoning for Tanist, with their juniority most certainly the key factor. As

events would have it the clan's failure to capitulate even further at this stage was due to help from an old alliance and the formation of a new one.

From the Annalist's account it is clear the Ormond treachery sent shockwaves across Éire, not only because of the fragile political climate but also because well-defined protocols for holding hostages had been violated. Previously a bone of contention between Ormond and Talbot, since the latter had, *broken the good old custom by which anyone who captures an Irish enemy may keep him and hold him at his own profit* (Griffith, 1941, p.381), there would have been the expectation of Finghin's eventual release by Ormond. Even so that Finghin was kept in hostage chains is testimony to the disdain in which he was viewed by Edmund Mac Richard (Lavelle, 2017) and that the brothers were slain in cold blood is indicative of Mac Richard's anger over the rescue attempt, the breach of hostage protocols and the ongoing bitterness between the two camps.

The response from Ó Mórdha was immediate, his son struck Cill Chainnigh and killed Piers Butler, the grandson of Piers Butler seneschal of Tipperary (Curtis, 1937) and those others who had murdered Finghin and Diarmaid (O'Clery, 1856). Ormond, so long on the front foot found his world sliding into chaos. Summoned to England to face charges from the pro-Talbot faction, he appointed his *kynesfolk* to govern Tiobraid Árann while he was absent. A family feud ensued as said

kynesfolks were entred into suche a wrongfull and inordynate pride and malicious diuision and rancour betwene themselves that they fell suddenly out of their good obedience to be murderers and mansleers of either other (Curtis, 1937, p. 210).

The Butlers splintered into the Mac Richard faction and a faction based at An Chathair (Caher) in Tiobraid Árann; these were Mac Richard's first cousins via his father's half-brother James Gallda ('the foreigner') Butler (Beresford, 1999). And worse followed when the Ormond-Desmond peace treaty failed. This was due in large part to the failure to secure the agreed marriage between the parties' respective children – Ormond's daughter was betrothed, somewhat ironically, to Sir John Talbot's son and heir; this an attempt to finally draw a close on the Talbot-Ormond feud. In 1444 Desmond raided Tiobraid Árann and Ormond responded with an invasion of Eastern Cúige Mumhan (O'Clery, 1856). A one-year truce was agreed but this only afforded time for Desmond to ally himself with Butler's hated foes, Mac Giolla Phádraig and Ó Mórdha (Beresford, 1999), whereas Ormond had been summoned to England by Henry VI who imprisoned him for his, *certaine crimes and many accusations* (O'Clery, 1856).

In 1446, with the truce over, the Earl of Desmond made the most of Ormond's absence and family disunity and led a force that devastated Cill Chainnigh and Tiobraid Árann. A petition dated 1446 from John Cantwell Archbishop of Cashel to Henry VI regarding the rebellion by *Irroys ennemys and Englis rebels* pled for help against Desmond, *Mcgyllepatrik of Ossery with his oste and Omorth of Leys with his oste* (Empey, 1970). It was a year when Éire was beset by anarchy, wars, and plagues; it is little wonder that Mac Firbis penned, *a hard yeare was this* (O'Clery, 1856). A nadir for Ormond came in 1447. Mac Richard and Art Caomhánach were captured by Piers fitz James Butler of Caher and Walter Tobin; Mac Richard was ransomed but Caomhánach was not so lucky (O'Clery, 1856). The situation for Ormond had become dire, but there was about to a *re-alignment* (O'Byrne, 2001).

A man who exhibited moments of religious fervour throughout his lifetime (Bliss, 1893, *refer for example* Vol. 7, 341, 1420), Ormond was, perhaps, endeavoring to making his peace as his days drew to a close. The signs were there, in 1444, that he had the ability to forgive and move on. There is no evidence of conflict between he and Talbot after 1444 and in later life the pair developed a *firm friendship and political alliance* (Pollard, 1968). Following his pardon and return to Éire in 1448, Ormond set about restoring order, both regionally and amongst the Butlers factions. Control of Cill Chainnigh went to the Mac Richard Butlers, the Butler's of Dunboyne were granted administration of Tiobraid Árann and the Butlers of An Chathair became protectors of the Ormond lordship (Beresford, 1999).

Mac Richard Butler was, *emerging as a central figure in the Ormond lordship* and was doubtless the wiser from having been under Ormond's tutelage. The next generation in Butler leadership, Mac Richard had, by 1447,

allied himself militarily to Art Mac Murchadha Caomhánach, the nephew of Donnchadh King of Leinster; in the next decade Mac Richard would further secure that alliance via marriages between the families (Beresford, 1999). The strategy bore all Ormond's hallmarks, but the aging Earl's sun had not quite set; he still had time to make the peace with some old enemies, and there was a new alliance to forge.

The Ormond Mac Giolla Phádraig Alliance: Part I

A marriage pact between Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí and Ormond was likely sealed before 1450, and Byrne's (2001) estimate of 1448 or 1449 makes sense based on other marriages he was arranging at the time, such as that of his niece Gormflaith (Gormly) to Éinrí (Henry) O' Néill of Tír Eoghain (Tyrone). The respective marriages of Morena ny Eóin Mac Giolla Phádraig to John 'the Blind' Butler and Finghin Mór Mac Giolla Phádraig to the daughter of Edmund Butler almost certainly took place during or shortly after 1448, when Ormond returned from England.

And in 1450 Pope Nicholas V received a petition from the Abbott of St. Mary Graiguenamanagh complaining

that James, earl of Ormonie, Edmund and Robert his brothers, and Donatus Macmurchw, Donald Orian, Thady Magillapadraich and Donald Kemanach, and certain other clerks and laymen, of the dioceses of Ossory and Leighlin, more cruel than Pharaoh who, although he had not knowledge of the law, nevertheless left the priests and their possessions in their pristine liberty, do not fear to subjugate the said monastery to their jurisdiction and temporal rule as if it were their own patrimony (Bliss, 1893, refer Vol. 10, 464, 1450)

In response the Pope gave orders for the Abbott to

summon the said earl and the said others, and all others concerned, and if they find the above to be true, to monish and require the said James, Edmund, Donald, Donatus, Thady, and all the others above named, and their accomplices and abettors utterly to desist from the foregoing and from all other grievances (Bliss, 1893, refer Vol. 10, 464, 1450)

In all likelihood the Ormond Mac Giolla Phádraig alliance was secured by this time – it surely was by 1454 when a sustained attack on Loch Garman (Wexford) was led by Domhnall Riabhach Caomhánach who was joined by the Earl of Desmond, Edmund Butler, *Mcagylffatryk*, and others. (Curtis, 1932; Beresford, 1999).

Could the aged warlord Donnchadh Mór Riabhach have consented to an alliance with the Butlers after seeing at least three of his sons killed at their hands? Perhaps, but regardless of whether or not he lived to see peace with his old enemy the date of his passing, though unrecorded, is ca. 1448. The new Lord of Ossory was Finghin Mór (?-1468) son of Finghin Óg Mac Giolla Phádraig, and in all certainty it was he who rode on Loch Garman with Edmund Butler. The identity his Butler brother-in-arms and father-in-law is, by Beresford's account, Edmund Mac Richard (1999) but this is not clear from the record where it is simply, *Edmund Butler* (Curtis, 1932).

This last point is key because it points to the identity of Finghin's new wife. Other factors are against her being the daughter of Edmund Mac Richard. Mac Richard is recorded as having only two daughters, Catherine who married Edmund Butler, Lord of Dunboye, and Elena who married Richard Power (Mosley, 2003). An alternative Edmund Butler is the brother of James Butler, 4th Earl of Ormond, who appeared in the Papal Letters (Bliss, 1893, refer Vol., 10, 464, 1450) and yet little is known of this Edmund; until *Part II* the identity of Finghin's wife will remain a mystery.

An account of the Ormond-Mac Giolla Phádraig alliance is continued in *Part II*, but it marked the end of one era and the start of a new one and, ultimately, it was a decision that would split the clan. As *Part I* draws to a close there are some loose ends to tie up.

Finghin Mór Mac Giolla Phádraig (? – ca. 1468), Lord of Ossory (ca. 1448 – ca. 1468)

Finghin Mór Mac Giolla Phádraig and his wife, the daughter of Edmund Butler, are discussed further in *Part II*. His place in *Part I* of this article has been established and his entrance into the Mac Giolla Phádraig annals at the time of one of the clan's most notable junctures means his presence in *Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí Part II: 1456-1534* is second to none.

Morena ny Eóin Mac Giolla Phádraig

Morena ny Eóin Mac Giolla Phádraig, largely undiscovered but not unmentioned. She is very key to understanding the destiny of Clann Mac Giolla Phádraig from the mid 15th century for a century or more afterwards – it is hard to imagine life without her. This princess of Ossory was bound in marriage to the House of Ormond. Her husband, John 'the Blind' Butler, has been equally lost by historians but in *Part II* his ancestry, his descendants and his place in Mac Giolla Phádraig history is revealed.

Miscellanea

Criomthann Giolla Phádraig

From the Papal Letters in 1427:

Mandate to collate and assign to Ceruallus alias Crifannus Macgyllapadruyc, clerk, of the diocese of Ossory, who is of noble birth and has studied canon and civil law for several years in places which are not universities - the rectory of Achabo in the said diocese (Bliss, 1893, refer Vol. 7, 486, 1427).

From Carrigan (1905) we read the branch of the Fitzpatricks known as the *Criffins* originated in Baile Uí Chaollaí (Ballykealy) in Áth Charna Parish. Today Baile Uí Chaollaí castle is a remnant of their past; the *Criffins* are discussed further in *Part II*.

Of *noble birth* Criomthann is likely the son of Fin Óg.

Tadhg Dubh Giolla Phádraig (1415/1416 - 1487)

From the Papal Letters in 1429:

To the prior of Sayrkyerayn in the diocese of Ossory. Mandate to grant in commendam to Thady Macgillapadrig, clerk, of the diocese of Ossory, who is in or about his sixteenth year and is of a noble race of princes, until he attains his twenty second year, the rectory of the parish church of St. Magymog de Rosconnyll in the said diocese (Bliss, 1893, refer Vol. 7, 287, 1429)

Of a *noble race of princes* Tadhg Dubh can only be the son of Finghin Óg Mac Giolla Phádraig Lord of Ossory (ca. 1396 – ca. 1417) since he is not named in the Liber Ruber as a son of Donnchadh Mór Riabhach. He is the same Tanist of Ossory who died 1487 (O'Clery, 1937); his birth is also known with precision as either 1415 or 1416. As a young man he harbored clerical aspirations and yet by 1450 he is among those chastised by Pope Nicholas V (Bliss, 1893, refer Vol. 10, 464, 1450). He is discussed further in *Part II*.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the Barney Douglas, for his assistance with Latin translations, and Proinsias Mag Fhionnghaile for his advice relating to *Gaeilge*, people's names and place names.

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