

On Fitzpatrick Scholarship Editorial

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As I reflect on the first three years of the Journal of the Fitzpatrick Clan Society, my feelings are of great gratitude.

I'm particularly thankful to Ian Fitzpatrick – we work together on many different Fitzpatrick research threads. Ian is an excellent genealogist – I don't know of any researcher of North American Fitzpatrick lines who is more knowledgeable or more accurate than he is; and, of course, he has a grasp of Fitzpatrick DNA that is second to none.

I'm also very grateful for our peer reviewers. I consider peer review is a scholar's best friend – there is nothing to fear with peer review; it can only improve a researcher. Of course, peer review must be done well. With Dr. Esther Fitzpatrick (Auckland University), Proinsias Mag Fhionnghaile CIOM, Luke McInerney (Vice-Chair, Clans of Ireland), and Dr. Paul MacCotter (University College Cork), we have been able to draw on peer-reviewers of the highest quality.

Peer reviewers help us 'get things correct', but that doesn't mean our journal articles will be without error or that our theories therein will necessarily stand the test of time. But since we publish electronically, we have the opportunity to edit and revise our works. One of the aims of the Journal of the Fitzpatrick Clan Society Editorials is to notify readers of changes to our articles. Minor revisions or updates of articles and their publication under the same Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is perfectly acceptable in this age of digital-only publications. The Fitzpatrick Clan Society denotes such updates by providing the version number. Since older versions will be overwritten online, all previous versions are retained and can be provided on request.

And our articles 'Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí 1384-1534 AD Part I' (Fitzpatrick, 2020a) and 'Mac Giolla Phádraig Osraí 1384-1534 AD Part II' (Fitzpatrick, 2020b) have both been subject to minor revisions and are now date stamped September 2022. The modifications were deemed necessary because of the uncovering of material relating to (a) the proven date of death in 1511 of Séan, father of Brian the first Baron of Upper Ossory, and (b) the identity of the woman whose image is carved into the mensa tomb at Gráinseach Feartach (Grangefeartach), which demonstrates she is not, as purported by Carrigan (1905), Katrina Malloy; instead she is of the Butler household – perhaps even Margaret Butler, who was one of the later wives of the first baron.

Far from signaling failures in previous versions, article revisions highlight the Fitzpatrick Clan Society's commitment to academic integrity and high scholastic values. I hope our commitment is replicated in the future by those who contribute to the Fitzpatrick knowledge base elsewhere. It is essential not to accept anything but the best scholarship.

And 'On Fitzpatrick Scholarship', I would like to caution frequenters of online Fitzpatrick blogs, Facebook pages, and websites such as Wikipedia – I consider it a big mistake to make such internet sources the bedrock of your Fitzpatrick knowledge base.

Take, for example, Wikipedia, which is defined at its own site as

'a multilingual free online encyclopedia written and maintained by a community of volunteers through open collaboration and a wiki-based editing system'
(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia>; 8 Sep 2022).

The Fitzpatrick Clan Society has, on occasion, reviewed Fitzpatrick-related material at Wikipedia and considers there are occasions when academic integrity and scholastic value are very low; one of the main problems is lack of attribution or attribution that is incorrect. It is also highly noteworthy that Wikipedia

‘does not consider itself to be reliable as a source and discourages readers from using it in academic or research settings. Researchers, teachers, journalists, and public officials do not regard Wikipedia as a reliable source’

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reliability_of_Wikipedia; 8 Sep 2022).

One of the major issues relating to Wikipedia reliability is that articles ‘can be edited by anyone at any time’ (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reliability_of_Wikipedia; 8 Sep 2022) and that the

‘editing model is highly concentrated, as 77% of all articles are written by 1% of its editors, a majority of whom have chosen to remain anonymous’

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reliability_of_Wikipedia; 8 Sep 2022).

The Fitzpatrick Clan Society finds it difficult to understand why anyone contributing to the Fitzpatrick knowledge base would wish to be patently anonymous. And yet this is a common occurrence at Wikipedia with one editor, who goes by the pseudonym ‘Rí Osraige’. Why not come forward, be open, and discuss Fitzpatrick histories with academic integrity and high scholarly values? The answer, quite aside from the ego-possessed belief they are ‘The King of Ossory’, is, perhaps, that they (a) have low scholarly status and (b) are unwilling to let go of outdated dominant Fitzpatrick clan narratives.

A revealing example of the work of ‘Rí Osraige’ on Wikipedia is found in the article ‘Osraige’ (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osraige>; 8 Sep 2022). Among the most blatant abuses of ‘Rí Osraige’ in the article relate to statements about the Ua Braonáin, which are preserved here for posterity (Figure 1).

‘Rí Osraige’ refutes the Mac Fhirbhisigh pedigree of Ua Braonáin Uí Duach (O’Brennan of Idough) (ref. 82 in the Wikipedia article), which was provided in the Fitzpatrick Clan Society article, ‘The Similar-Sounding Surnames of Haplotype R-BY140757’ (Fitzpatrick & Fitzpatrick, 2021; ref. 83 in the Wikipedia article) and states the Ua Braonáin Uí Duach was an Uí Failgi clan, not an Osraige clan. The basis of ‘Rí Osraige’s’ challenge to Mac Fhirbhisigh is based on that ‘most Irish genealogical sources ... are unanimous that the O’Brennans belong to the Dál Birn’. It is worthwhile examining the evidence ‘Rí Osraige’ uses in support of their argument, which, following the Wikipedia reference numbers (Figure 2) when they are provided, are as follows:

- 77. King’s Inn genealogies (MS 11);
- 78. Geoffrey Keating;
- 79. John O’Hart;
- 80. The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland;
- 81. The modern scholar, Dr Bart Jaski (University of Utrecht).

Concerning Jaski first, since it serves to demonstrate ‘Rí Osraige’s’ poor scholarship best, ‘Rí Osraige’ states that ‘the O’Brennans belong to the Dál Birn, as descendants of Cerball mac Dúnlainge with the Fitzpatricks ...is echoed by modern scholars such as Bart Jaski’. Jaski’s Osraige pedigree indeed places the Ua Braonáin Uí Duach as descendants of King Cearbhall. Yet, Jaski plainly states that he had ‘not been able to consult the genealogies compiled by Dubhaltach Mac Fhir Bhisigh’; this since they were

largely inaccessible until eight years after Jaski published his work (Jaski, 1995; Mac Fhirbhisigh & Ó Muraíle, 2003).

And the temerity of 'Rí Osraige' also becomes their downfall because good scholarship would seek out Jaski's position first-hand to gain an updated opinion, not assume to know it. I recently emailed Bart on the Ua Braonáin Ui Duach pedigree and the respective merits of Mac Fhirbhisigh versus 'the rest' – he related the following.

'I found in Chronicon Scotorum for the year 1146: Giolla Padraig mac Donnchadha h Gillepadraig rí Osraighe do marbadh do mhacaibh Conghalaigh Ui Braonáin i c-Cill Chainnig [i.e., Gillapadraig, son of Donnchadh Ua Gillapadraig, King of Osraighe, was slain by the sons of Conghalach Ua Braenain, in Cill-Chainnigh].

It makes sense to me why [Mac Fhir Bhisigh] states that [the Ua Braonáin Ui Duach] meet with Uí Duach ... they are not of the Osraige (like Mac Gilla Pátraic) but of Uí Failghi (Offaly).

Riagáin (Riacán) is a son of Cináed (King of Uí Failgi, died 829), son of Mugrón (King, died 782, missing in this and other pedigrees) son of Flann da Congal (King, died 740), etc. Uí Duinn was a district ruled by Ó Riagáin, and when we now count the generations we find that Congalach who died in 1146 fits in perfectly with the year of 1146 in which he is mentioned.

So, you were right to conclude in your article that they [the Ua Braonáin Ui Duach] are Uí Failghi, but this throws light on why the various versions disagree, and [Mac Fhir Bhisigh] is right' (pers.comm, 9 October, 2022).

With Jaski's authoritative position made clear, and aligned with Mac Fhir Bhisigh, what then of Rí Osraige's other 'Irish genealogical sources' that, in their opinion, state the Ua Braonáin Ui Duach were Osraige? Aside from O'Clery, for which a complete refutation is provided in 'The Similar-Sounding Surnames of Haplotype R-BY140757' (Fitzpatrick & Fitzpatrick, 2021), Geoffrey Keating's position (ref. 78) can be viewed at the [Internet Archive](#); in short, Keating makes no mention that the seed (siol) of Braonain were the same as the Ua Braonáin Ui Duach. John O'Hart (ref. 79) used primary sources, in this case O'Clery, for his pedigrees. He was not the author of ancient genealogical manuscripts or even a scribe of the Mac Fhir Bhisigh or O'Clery era. He lived from 1824-1902; by citing O'Hart Rí Osraige is re-citing O'Clery. And the Fragmentary Annals of Ireland (ref. 80) make no reference to the descendants of Braonain being the same as the Ua Braonáin Ui Duach.

The King's Inn genealogies, MS11 (ref. 77), are intriguing. Jaski notes, 'O'Clery and King's Inn 11 have a lot in common, which I'm going to investigate further and perhaps write a short article about' (pers.comm, 9 October 2022). It is likely that O'Clery's errors, as highlighted in 'The Similar-Sounding Surnames of Haplotype R-BY140757' (Fitzpatrick & Fitzpatrick, 2021) may have sprung from the King's Inn genealogies.

But, in short, it is apparent that Rí Osraige attempts to con readers into thinking a swathe of Irish genealogists consider the Ua Braonáin Ui Duach were Osraige. In truth, this is far from the case; we posit the Mac Fhir Bhisigh's pedigree of the Ua Braonáin Ui Duach as Uí Failghi stands above O'Clery's. And Jaski, a scholar and a recognised modern Irish genealogist, agrees.

One further reference (84) of Rí Osraige's is worth mentioning, even if it is just for comedic value; it is a YouTube video! On that, perhaps it is worth Rí Osraige's reflecting on what Wikipedia has to say (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Reliable_source_examples, 8 Sep 2022):

‘YouTube and other video-sharing sites are generally not considered reliable sources because anyone can create or manipulate a video clip and upload without editorial oversight.’

‘However, official channels of notable organizations ... may be acceptable as primary sources if their authenticity can be confirmed.’

The author of the YouTube video (ref. 84), is not of a notable organisation, which brings me back to my comments ‘On Fitzpatrick Scholarship’. It is easy to uncover who scholars are – [Google Scholar](#) is just one place to look. Scholars are not self-appointed; their body of work and their citations speak on behalf of them. In contrast, wannabe scholars need platforms on which they can peddle their drivel. With that in mind, don’t believe all you see or hear about Fitzpatrick histories or DNA just because it’s on Wikipedia or YouTube.

Mike Fitzpatrick PhD [✉](#)
Editor, Independent Scholar, Auckland 0604, New Zealand

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Mac Fhirbhisigh, D. and Ó Muraíle, N. (2003). *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach*. Dublin, De Burca.

Figure 1: Text from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osraige>; 8 Sep 2022.

- Ua Braonáin (O'Brennan) of Uí Duach (Idough). Most Irish genealogical sources, such as Ó Cléirigh *Book of Genealogies*, the Mac Solaidh-Tipper Collection of Genealogies (RIA MS 23 M 17), King's Inn genealogies (MS 11), Geoffrey Keating, John O'Hart, the *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* and others, are unanimous that the O'Brennans belong to the Dál Birn, as descendants of Cerball mac Dúnlainne with the Fitzpatricks.^{[77][78][79][80]} This is echoed by modern scholars such as Bart Jaski.^[81] However, Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh is uniquely alone stating they belong to the Uí Dhuinn (O'Dunn) and, therefore, would be an Uí Failghe tribe according to his transcription.^{[82][83]} Modern genetic evidence confirms the majority tradition and disconfirms Mac Fhirbhisigh, showing the O'Brennans to be closely related to the Fitzpatricks in the proximate timeframe of king Cerball.^[84]

Figure 2: References 77 – 84 from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osraige>; 8 Sep 2022.

77. ^ "Irish Script on Screen - Meamram Páipéar Ríomhaire" [↗](#).
 78. ^ "The history of Ireland" [↗](#). 1902.
 79. ^ "Irish pedigrees; or, the origin and stem of the Irish nation" [↗](#). Dublin, J. Duffy and Co.; New York, Benziger Brothers. 1892.
 80. ^ "Fragmentary Annals of Ireland" [↗](#).
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81. ^ Jaski, Bart (31 July 2013). "Genealogical tables of medieval Irish royal dynasties" [↗](#).
 82. ^ Mac Fhirbhisigh, Dubhaltach (2003). *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach*. Dublin: De Burca.
 83. ^ Fitzpatrick, Mike (2021). "The Similar-Sounding Surnames of Haplotype R-BY140757" [↗](#). *The Journal of the Fitzpatrick Clan Society*. **2021** (2): 1–41. doi:10.48151/fitzpatrickclansociety00421 [↗](#).
 84. ^ "The Cerball Nexus" [↗](#). *YouTube*.