

THE Y-DNA PROJECT

April 2009

Quarterly report from Elizabeth O'Donoghue, the Society's Group Administrator

We've had a bumper quarter this time with two new Glens tribal members, three Mór members, a new Breifne Group A member, a new unaffiliated participant testing to 37 markers to compare to a second cousin already in the project, and another unaffiliated participant in haplogroup I.

These new results have presented some interesting findings. One of the new members in the Glens tribe has a different surname, but the results match our Glens modal closer than they do any related surnames. Though to their knowledge, they originate in Clare, a tribe of their surname is found in Munster, which could explain their matching the Glens modal.

A known adoption has instigated a yDNA test by another participant. His results exactly match another Glens member, and they have communicated to discover a common ancestor, which has opened up a whole new family history to enjoy. This was a real success story.

In the Mór tribe, we have three members who have no close relationships, but the pattern of their haplotype indicates the likelihood of them being part of that tribe. The more unusual result is for a family whose paper trail suggests that a paternal ancestor had been adopted and was not a true O'Donoghue. However, a review of photos of the O'Donoghue ancestor and three generations of offspring suggests a surprising family resemblance and increases the odds that family may indeed be O'Donoghues, however the paper trail may appear. With that evidence, the similarity of haplotype and the lack of matches with the suspected surname or any other surname, we are including this participant in the Mór tribe. If future evidence lessens this likelihood, we can always reconsider.

The second cousins show an instance of a mutation within three generations at one of the faster mutating markers in the first twelve. This is evidence that a mutation can take place any time in a family's history.

Our new haplogroup I individual has clear roots in Cork, with a paper trail to the late 1800's. There could be a number of explanations for this. While not genetically an O'Donoghue on the male line, it is possible that there was intermarriage with female O'Donoghue lines in the distant past prior to the taking of surnames, and being in the tribe, would have adopted Ó Donnchu when surnames were taken. As it happens, this member has an exact match with a Haley in the Family Tree database. And coincidentally, there is a different Haley in the project who matches our Glens tribe, also from Cork. I think it can be inferred from this that a related group of haplogroup I2a individuals were living in west Cork and affiliated with the Glens Eoghanacht. When surnames were taken, they split in some way, resulting in some taking the name

Haley and others assuming the tribal name of Ó Donnchu, from both the R1b Eoghanacht and the haplogroup I2a.

As you can see, our Project has continued to grow and add to our knowledge of the origins of our different tribes. In so doing, it has become more cumbersome to update the spreadsheets with the new data, since I have to enter each new statistic individually. In order to speed up the process, I've begun to use the Dean McGee Y-Utility at http://www.mymcgee.com/tools/yutility.html?mode=ftdna_mode to calculate the results. You will see the results in Spreadsheet D. While I am still using Family Tree's mutation rates, they are averaged in the calculations in this utility and will produce a slightly different figure in a number of cases. This utility calculates to the closest 25 years in all haplotypes, no matter how many markers have been tested, which I had been doing only for the 67 markers comparisons. In any case, as I've often said, these are just estimates anyway and should only be considered 'ball park' figures. And, the longer the TMRCA, the potentially less accurate the figures may be.

I've also eliminated the second sheet which had calculated the year A.D. of MRCA. It was only a matter of subtracting the TMRCA from 2000, which can be done easily figure by figure for anyone interested. Again, it meant a good deal of manual entries of the formulas needed to get the figures. I'd much rather spend my time helping individuals with questions and research than crunching numbers.

The second program of RTE's 'Blood of the Irish', mentioned last quarter, did not contain any particularly revelatory information worth noting. The programming did not include some of the most current data being discovered regarding the genetic history of Europe, which may have developed after the program was produced, so its value was somewhat limited.

One of those developments is the discovery of the value of the SNP labelled L21. I mentioned it in the last report. At the time, it appeared that the Southern Irish Modal haplotype may be L21-, meaning from an older lineage, back probably thousands of years ago, prior to the gene in one individual mutating and adding the SNP to its genetic makeup. The absence of L21+ in the few Spanish samples tested could have meant a connection there.

Since then, we have our results in for the initial testing of L21. We had both a Glens and Mór representative tested - and both came back positive. Further results coming in from others having the test done indicate that the Southern Irish Modal haplotype is L21+, contrary to the initial negative finding for one individual. That gentleman is having his test redone, since it seems the likelihood is that it was an error to report it negative. (Errors do at times occur. A watchful eye for odd results usually prompts a group administrator to question the findings - as Joe Donohoe did for the strange 30 marker results that came in for one of the Breifne Group A participants, which were eventually corrected.)

There is also one L21+ result found in Spain now - in the northern area of the country. That contrasts to a significant number of other continental L21+ results, particularly in areas of France and Germany which were settled by Celtic tribes. This all appears consistent with the probability that L21 is an SNP associated with the Celts, though obviously less prevalent in the Spanish Celts. Does this contradict the

Milesian myth of coming from Spain via Egypt and Scythia? To those who wish to discount the myth, they point to this relative lack of L21 in Spain as evidence against the myth. Some believe the SNP originated in Ireland, which would make any individuals having L21+ be part of the early settlers of the island and the likelihood of the Milesians being later 'invaders' would be very suspect. It would have been very tidy to find our Eoghanacht tribes were L21-, matching the prevalence in Spain, but it does not necessarily cancel the possibility that they had come from other Celtic areas north of the Pyrenees prior to their travels to the east before coming back via Spain to Ireland.

I have found evidence of haplotypes matching our Eoghanacht tribes in the YHRD database (YHRD.org) and more recently a paper, *Population History of the Dniester-Carpathians*, which are found in the area of Romania near the Black Sea, which historically had been Scythian territory. Significantly, the haplotype of the Mór members with the unusual value of 12 at DYS392 was found there (see the October 2006 Journal, *The Milesian Myth & the Scythian Connection*). The only difficulty with these sources is that the number of markers tested is only eleven (YHRD) or seven (*PHD-C*) – basically from the first twelve Family Tree markers – so the connection is statistically less significant than if there were more markers that matched as well. I keep looking.

To get back to the L21 SNP, as more people are tested, there will be an improved chance of determining the origins of this subclade. I will keep you updated.

I will be reorganizing the yDNA spreadsheets somewhat in future and moving to the Dean McGee Y-Utility for the other tribal comparisons as well. If any of you have any suggestions for features you'd like to see added or changed, let me know at elizabethod(@)eircom.net.