

THE Y-DNA PROJECT

April 2007

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

We have had five new participants join the Project over this last quarter, four of which have been found to be part of Breifne Group A, whose modal matches the Northwest Irish Modal Haplotype I mentioned in the last report. We also have new results for 25, 37 and 67 marker upgrades in the Kerry Eoghanacht tribes. The additional 67 marker upgrades have helped solidify the ancestral modal for these tribes. A Mór participant has upgraded his markers from 12 to 37, confirming that my original designation for him was accurate. The updated spreadsheets reflect all this new material..

A few months ago I was contacted by Dennis Wright, who has been researching a recently discovered cluster haplotype in Ireland that has been labelled Irish Type III (the first two types being a 'Southern Irish' modal similar to that of the Glens and the 'Northwest Irish' modal mentioned in the Jan 2007 Journal report). Dennis has a website devoted to this haplotype - http://au.geocities.com/t120r61/Irish_Type_III.htm. This cluster matches the Atlantic Modal Haplotype (which is also the Mór modal at all markers except one) with differences at five particular markers. The origins for this cluster are found mainly in Tipperary, Limerick and Clare, with a few in Kerry and elsewhere. A significant percentage of individuals in the cluster are O'Briens, including the current Chief of the Name, Conor The O'Brien. It so happens that three of the participants included in the Mór tribe also match this Irish Type III modal. Their origins are in Offaly and Tipperary.

The first question to address with this new information is whether these three individuals should still be considered part of the Mór tribe. The TMRCA spreadsheet shows them no further distant from other members of the current group than average. Their place of origin is to the east of traditional Eoghanacht Raithlind territory, though one member has information from a Donohoe (current spelling), still living in his old home area, that the ancestors did originally come from near Killarney.

If they are not truly Mór members, then who would they be? Tighe, our tribal history expert, and I have had a number of discussions about the data and have come to some conclusions concerning these three O'Donoghues in particular and the Eoghanacht in general.

It is first necessary to provide a bit of history at the beginning of the earliest contemporary annals begun in the 500s A.D., which was long before the assignment of surnames. At that time, the Eoghanacht Raithlind were the most powerful of the Eoghanacht tribes in Munster. Their core territory was the rich lands between the River Lee and the River Bandon in what is now West Cork. Due most certainly to their warlike tendencies, they had gained supremacy over much of the area throughout the whole of Munster. They were actively expanding their territories and conquering local tribes,

among them the Corcu Loegde, an Erainn tribe in a territory to the southwest of them, along with the Osraighe who were one of the Corcu Loegde's vassal tribes in the general area of present day Kilkenny. It would have been expected that the Eoghanacht Raithlind place allies as overlords of these Osraighe. The Eoghanacht Ruis Airgit (Silver Wood) were located just north of the Osraighe, and it is quite possible that they were given this role. Around this same period, the Raithlind in concert with the expanding Cashel Eoghanachts were also battling northwest towards Clare, which was part of Connacht at that time. In order to accomplish this task, they sent a contingent of Deisi warriors (a Belgic – Fir Bolg Celtic tribe in Wexford) to Clare, almost certainly under Eoghanacht leadership as well. They were successful and these soldiers remained in Clare to assure the allegiance of the tribes there. Not long after, the Osraighe expelled their Eoghanacht overlords and some of those warriors travelled to Clare. It so happens that there is record of another Ruis Airgit in Clare, which would suggest that the overlords of the Osraighe had been Ruis Airgit as well, joining others of their tribe there.

The Eoghanacht are traditionally considered descendants of Eoghan Mór, himself a descendant of the first Milesian invaders. There are various versions of this Milesian 'invasion', with various names for the principals involved, and while it is our view that it is plausible that such a person actually existed, the details and lineages claimed to descend from Eber Finn and Eiremheon – including all the historical ruling families across the island, both north and south – may be synthetic invention. But, that does not mean that there was not close tribal connections between these Milesians. It is recorded that Eoghan Mór returned to Spain to bring back more Spanish soldiers to help him in his conquests, which is quite plausible; and there would be lineages amongst those soldiers loyal to Eoghan Mór and his progeny, who would be subsumed into the overall tribal body of these Spanish Gaels.

The chiefs of the Raithlind Eoghanacht (the kings of Uí Eachach) would have made the choices of which of their contingent were given the charge of being the sub chiefs of the newly conquered peoples. It is quite possible that members of a particular sub tribe of a distant familial lineage were assigned the leadership of the Osraighe in Tipperary, and others from that tribe were sent to Clare. These were new territories for them, and a chance to establish their own suzerainty. After losing their dominant position amongst the Osraighe, some of those forces may have stayed in that territory, holding whatever lands they had gained for themselves, others may have joined their cousins in Clare.

Five hundred years later, when the peoples on the island began to adopt surnames, the Eoghanacht Ruis Airgit as such had faded into insignificance, but many of those cousins in North Munster would have assumed the name of the powerful warlord of the time to whom they were related – Brian Boru. Those cousins remaining in East Munster could have maintained a spiritual allegiance to the Eoghanacht Raithlind, by now centred in Killarney under the leadership of Awly Mór, Prince of Loch Léin – the dominant force in West Munster. It was during the time of this great chief that the name O'Donoghue began to appear in the annals. If these East Munster cousins were going to assume a name, what better name than 'strong warrior/mighty hero', acknowledging their fealty to their ancestry? As I mentioned above, a local Donohoe of the area who was contacted by

one of our Type III members said that the family had originally come from Killarney long ago. Perhaps she was referring to that connection to the O'Donoghues Mór.

Now to address the yDNA evidence and how it relates to this history. When corresponding with Dennis Wright, he kindly gave me his spreadsheet and the formulas he used to chart the haplotypes he gathered through Family Tree's Ysearch and other databases which matched the Irish Type III cluster. These formulas allow you to calculate the TMRCA (Time to most recent common ancestor) for the whole group, not just one individual compared to another, which my current spreadsheets contain. I noted the *average* distance between the Glens and Mor members in my charts, but not a calculated probability based on all the haplotypes together. Having this facility, it became apparent that the distance to a common ancestor when the three Irish Type III haplotypes are included in the Mor group increases by 30%, which would suggest that while they are almost certainly Eoghanacht, they are probably not directly related to the Eoghanacht Raithlind lineage but rather a later or different branch.

While it will never be a certainty that these Irish Type III O'Donoghues are descended from Eoghanacht Ruis Airgit and/or Osraighe, it is a definite possibility. But, if this is the case, then how do I deal with my current assignment of possible Osraighe for the two Dunphys we currently have in the project? Peter Dunphy has recently upgraded his markers from 12 to 25. With the additional markers, it appears that he and Paul Dunfee Johnson are only distantly connected. Without more samples, it is difficult to have any assurance of their appropriate designation, but I am less inclined to consider them Osraighe at this point. Peter himself has done quite a lot of research with the matches of various genetic distances he has located in Ysearch and is of the opinion that his ancestors may be Brigantes, who originated in England. Some of them crossed over the Irish Sea to the Dublin area and made their way down to Wexford, which is where Paul Dunfee Johnson's ggggrandfather was born. So, contrary to the belief of some historians, the Dunphys may not be Eoghanacht at all. Their haplotypes still show they are part of the Atlantic Modal Haplotype, which is the most numerous group within the large R1b haplogroup. Peter still matches rather closely with the Mór ancestral modal (which as I indicated, happens to match the AMH almost exactly), but I am not convinced that it is a genuine familial relationship. As I have mentioned in the past, Family Tree points out that haplotype numbers can converge, just because there are so many R1b members. Unfortunately, it is difficult to overcome such uncertainty in the absence of an accompanying paper trail. And we are attempting to reach back a great deal farther than any paper trail could lead us.

I have made the decision to relocate the three Irish Type III O'Donoghues from the Mór to the Osraighe for the moment, and the Dunphy/Dunfees have joined the Unsure group. All this is, of course, subject to change, as more data comes in to help us.

We also have another new member in the Project, Alan Neil Donoho, who closely matches a current member, Glen Dale Dunehew. They share an uncommon null value at DYS439. Family Tree lists it as a [12](#), but it is not equal to the normal 12 most others have (particularly in the Mór group). I am conducting some research into this unusual

value, since there are relatively few individuals of all those being tested for yDNA that have a null at that marker.

In an effort to increase my knowledge for the Project, I have recently joined a mailing list for ISOGG (The International Society of Genetic Genealogists – <http://www.isogg.org>) and the GENEALOGY-DNA mailing list at Rootsweb (<http://www.rootsweb.com>). The issue of privacy was discussed at one point, where some felt allowing even last names to appear on publicly available websites (of which our yDNA Project is one) was inappropriate. For any of you who have looked at the yDNA link, you will be aware that I have included the full name of the participants. For those seeking connections, being able to see a given name might assist in identifying possible familial associations. While no one would be able to identify which ‘John O’Donoghue’, for instance, you might be amidst the world population, if any project member requests it, I will remove their first names or use only initials.

I have added place of origin in Ireland, if known, for the participants in the Eoghanacht, and will follow on with the Cavan/Breifne later. If any of the participants see that I do not have theirs listed, please let me know. I have been trying to make contact with everyone, but some email addresses are no longer valid. If a participant has changed his email address since loading it in his personal page at Family Tree, please update it and let me know. I am still collecting blood types, for those participants who have not yet shared with me.

This is the time of year for Joe Donohoe’s annual report on the progress of his Breifne Clans Project. He has an impressive 189 participants, roughly 25% Donohoes, and his equally impressive report can be found through the link in the yDNA Project section of the website. It contains some interesting findings comparable to the news in our report here. The summary is included in the Journal for all to see, and those interested to read the complete report can find it at http://www.odonoghue.co.uk/guests/projects/ydna_results.php; look for the *Spreadsheet C* paragraph down the page and click on [here](#).

Breifne Clans Y-DNA Report 3

By Joseph A. Donohoe Group Administrator Breifne Clans Project (Member 54) of San Francisco, California, USA

There are several indications and conclusions in this report to supplement the conclusions reached in earlier reports.

The most significant conclusion here is that many in the largest group of linked individuals in the project, the Mixed Breifne Surnames (MBS) group, belong to Haplogroup R1b1c7, the modal haplotype of which is known as the Northwest Irish Modal Haplotype (NWIMH). The MBS group is a loosely linked and widespread group, indicative of a common male-line ancestor who was remote in time but still within the historical era of the region.

As the Ui Neill have been shown to belong to Haplogroup R1b1c7 by Moore, McEvoy et al., and the O'Conors in this study (one of whom belongs to the family of the O'Conor Don) also belong to Haplogroup R1b1c7, and as the historical tradition states that the Ui Neill, the Ui Briuin Ai (the O'Conor ancestral lineage) and the Ui Briuin Bhreifne are all of the same fifth-century origin, there is an indication here that the MBS group may represent the Ui Briuin Bhreifne. More Ui Briuin Ai data will be required to make this a firm conclusion.

A second conclusion is that at least some surnames now found in the Breifne area arose independently more than once, from different eponymous ancestors who bore the same forename, either in the region or elsewhere or both. The two surnames, Donohoe and McTiernan, represented by 20 or more lineages in the BCP are each represented in two or more groups in the project which are unrelated within the historical era. The two forenames relevant here, Donnchadh and Tighernan, were fairly popular in the period when surnames were being adopted in the region.

A third conclusion is that the other principal groups in the BCP (Groups B1, B2, B3, B4 and C1) do not belong to Haplogroup R1b1c7, and in fact belong to a haplogroup or to haplogroups which have not yet been defined, and/or are not being tested for by Family Tree DNA (FTDNA). This means that these participants do not belong to Haplogroups R1b1c1 through R1b1c8.

The McGuires and their branches, participants representing 13 lineages, belong to one of these groups, C1, which suggests that the McGuires are not Airgialla or that the Airgialla (at least that part associated with the McGuires) are not a branch of the Connachta. Participants representing two surnames strongly associated with Breifne, O'Rourke and Brady, also fall into these groups (B3 and B4), which indicates that these two clans do not belong, at least by descent, to the Ui Briuin Bhreifne, as tradition asserts. The sample groups for all three of these clans are small, however, so more data is needed here.