

THE yDNA PROJECT

Quarterly report from Tom Donahue (Member 5), the society's Group Administrator

The Cavan or Breifne Donohoes

It is apparent that there are several kinds of O Donnchadha in our yDNA project. There are the O Donoghues of Kerry who once were a major component in the Eoghanachta Rathlinn of West Cork, and are now split into two septs - the O Donoghues of the Glen and the O Donoghues of Ross, once the O Donoghue Mor branch. And there are those from other areas, many of whom have entered our study under the aegis of the Donohoes of Cavan. These we shall denominate Breifne related septs. Accordingly, I have divided the table showing the tMRCMA (number of generations back to a common male ancestor for two individuals with 50% probability) in two.

Table 1 compares tMRCMAs for Breifne related participants with the entire set of individuals for whom we have results at 25 sites. At a glance it is clear that there is no systematic close relationship, genetically, among the Breifne group. One perfect match (17 and 18) is between two Donahues whose relationship has not yet been established through birth and marriage records, and neither of whom joined the project under the sponsorship of the Breifne septs. The colored boxes identify the cases in which the tMRCMA is 110 generations or fewer. This reveals a weak link between individuals 17, 18, 19 and 20 to 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Kerry septs and among 16 (Kerry) and 11, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 22. Participant 11 is from Ulster, 17 from Wexford, 19 from Cavan, and 20 from Wicklow. Otherwise the tMRCMA are very large. This strongly suggests that the ancestors of none of these individuals belonged to the same or closely related septs. It is to be hoped that as more people join the project we will be able, over time, to relate these cases to one of the areas of historical origins shown on the society web site, and thus develop profiles for each. We need many more participants to make progress in this direction.

O Donoghue	Lives in	Origin			
A Geoffrey Paul Vincent	IR	Glen	12 Vincent J Donohoe	WI	Offaly
The O Donoghue of the Glen			13 Michael C. Donahue	IN	Kerry
1 Dwaine J O Donohue	Ontario	Clare	14 Thomas J. Preusser	WI	Laois
2 Donald Donahue	MI	Glen	15 John O Donoghue	IR	Kerry
3 Thomas M Donahue	MI	Glen	16 Tighe O Donoghue	IR	Kerry
4 Florence O Donoghue	Glen	Glen	17 Thomas R. Donahue Jr.	DC	Wexford
5 John M O Donoghue	Au	Glen	18 Joseph M. Donahue	OH	
6 Gerard G O Donoghue	UK	Glen	19 Michael Joseph Donohoe	IR	Cavan
9 Rod O Donoghue	UK	Kerry	20 Michael Nmi Donohoe	IR	Wicklow
10 Joseph A Donohoe	SF CA	Cavan	21 Brian T. Donohoe	IR	Longford
11 James A. Donohue	NJ	Ulster	22 Wm J. Donohoe	CA	

	tMRCMA in Generations									
O D	17	18	10	11	12	19	20	21	22	
A	192	180	230	188	220	140	154	142	142	
1	183	183	174	180	180	140	140			
2	105	105	210	121	175	80	91			
3	125	125	192	160	180	106	98			
4	120	120	172	150	180	106	140			
5	160	160	212	150	145	106	123	109	123	
6	140	140	205	160	158	140	155			
9	150	150	198	160	162	140	123	160	200	
13	150	150	198	160	162	140	123			
15	150	150	198	160	162	140	123			
16	102	102	210	170	140	80	120			
14	150	150	240	160	124	107	140			
17		7	121	55	183	123	110	123	101	
18	7		121	55	183	106	155	123	101	
10	121	121		122	290	195	123	260	19	
11	55	55	122		240	106	123	160	75	
12	183	183	290	240		200	110	180	240	
19	123	106	195	106	200			35	105	
20	110	110	155	123	120	110		105	195	
21	123	123	260	160	180	35	105		210	
22	101	101	19	75	240	105	195	210		

Table 1

Probability of 50% that a pair had a common male ancestor less than t generations ago

Kerry O Donoghues, Mor and Glen

Where the Kerry septs are concerned we have the makings of an important discovery. This has to do with the relationship between O Donoghue Mor and O Donoghue of the Glen septs. One of our members, Tighe O Donoghue of Loch Guitane has a strong family tradition that his ancestors were of the O Donoghue Mor sept. In the January report we related that Rod O Donoghue (9) and two others (13 and 15) were perfectly matched and not far in tMRCMA from Tighe. Also, their families lived in Coshe Maigne which was O Donoghue Mor territory and not in the Glen of the Flesk. So we proposed that they, as well as Tighe, were O Donoghues Mor. Tighe O Donoghue recounted, in the January 2002 journal issue, the saga of the O Donoghues of Ross after Ruaidhri, the O Donoghue Mor, was killed during the Desmond war of the 16th Century and the clan lands were confiscated. Further study shows that my cousin Don (2), myself (3) and individual 14 all have common ancestors fewer than 95 generations ago with the core group of O Donoghues Mor. The rest of the Kerry O Donoghues, including Geoffrey Paul, The O Donoghue of the Glen form another group that seem to be O Donoghues of the Glen. They are within 90 generations of each other but much farther removed than that from the O Donoghue Mor group. The average number of generations between presumed members of the O Donoghues of the Glen is 55 generations (1400 years-600 AD). This is also the average gap between members of the putative O Donoghues Mor, whereas 158 generations (4500 years-2500 BC) separate members of the two different septs. Table 2 shows the relevant data.

Table 2

- A Geoffrey Paul Vincent 9 Rod O Donoghue 16 Tighe O Donoghue
- 1 Dwaine J O Donohue 10 Joseph A Donohoe 17 Thomas R. Donahue Jr
- 2 Donald Donahue 11 James A. Donohue 18 Joseph M. Donahue
- 3 Thomas M Donahue 12 Vincent J Donohoe 19 Michael Joseph Donohoe
- 4 Florence O Donoghue 13 Michael C. Donahue 20 Michael NMI Donohoe
- 5 John M O Donoghue 14 Thomas J. Preusser
- 6 Gerard G O Donoghue 15 John O Donoghue

tMRCMA in generations with 50% probability

O D	A	1	4	5	6	2	3	9	13	15	16	14
A		107	53	35	44	123	143	210	210	210	123	182
1	107		90	73	73	90	107	153	153	153	123	109
2	123	90	120	90	106		27	77	77	77	90	60
3	143	107	140	90	123	27		92	92	92	95	90
4	53	90		35	44	120	140	183	183	183	90	120
5	35	73	35		19	90	90	141	141	141	90	140
6	44	73	44	19		106	123	150	150	150	107	150
9	210	153	183	141	150	77	92		7	7	36	77
13	210	153	183	141	150	77	92	7		7	36	77
15	210	153	183	141	150	77	92	7	7		36	77
16	123	123	90	90	107	90	95	36	36	36		92
14	182	109	173	140	150	60	90	77	77	77	92	
19	140	140	106	106	140	80	106	140	140	140	80	107
20	154	140	140	123	155	91	98	123	123	123	120	140
12	220	180	180	145	158	175	180	162	162	162	140	124
17	192	183	120	160	140	105	125	150	150	150	102	150
18	180	183	120	160	140	105	125	150	150	150	102	150
10	230	174	172	212	205	210	192	198	198	198	210	240
11	188	180	150	150	160	121	160	160	160	160	170	160



The average number of generations separating individuals from other members of the two septs is

- 2-Glen 106 generations A-Glen 60 generations
- 2-Mor 68 generations A-Mor 191 generations
- 3-Glen 120 generations 1-Glen 68 generations

3-Mor 81 generations

1-Mor 127 generations

9, 13, 15-Glen 107 generations

4-Glen 55 generations

9, 13, 15-Mor 49 generations

4-Mor 149 generations

16-Glen 140 generations

5, 6-Glen 41 generations

16-Mor 79 generations

5, 6-Mor 119 generations

14-Glen 140 generations

14-Mor 79 generations

These results, if they should hold up, have deep implications for the relationship of the two O Donoghue septs.

In brief, the relationship would appear to be quite feeble. Conventional wisdom, manifested in genealogies and annals, has it that these O Donoghues were all members of the Cineal Laoghaire of Uibh Eochaidh or the Eoghanachta Rathlinn, who inhabited West Cork along with their Uibh Aodh (O Mahony) brethren from the 5th to the 12th century. During the period of turmoil following the Battle of Clontarf, the O Donoghues were at war with their old nemesis the Dalcassians (O Briens) and their old colleagues, the O Mahonys. The upshot was that, with the O Briens pressuring the McCarthys and O Sullivans in Tipperary, and the O Briens and O Mahonys making life unpleasant for the O Donoghues, the three Eoghanachta tribes - McCarthy, O Sullivan and O Donoghue executed a movement into the peninsulas of the south West and the region around the Lakes of Killarney that had been the desmesne of the Eoghanachta Loch Lein -O Moriaritys, O Carrolls, et al. Eventually O Donoghues and McCarthys dispossessed these septs and took over the region around Loch Lein and that to the east, comprising the present Barony of Maghunihy. The chief of the O Donoghues in the 12th century was Auliffe Mor who built the cathedral at Aghadoe. According to the annals, Auliffe split the O Donoghues into two septs, giving leadership of one, the O Donoghue Mor to son Cathal and the other, the Glen sept, to son Conchur.

If the findings related here hold up, this could not have happened. The two septs appear to have existed separate and distinct long before the Cineal Laoghaire left West Cork for Kerry. Present day O Donoghues trace membership in their respective septs back 55 generations, but it was 4000 years ago that contemporaneous members of either sept can find an ancestor in the other one. When the O Donoghues arrived in Kerry they must have been aware that they belonged to one or the other of two distinct septs. They may have forgotten when or how that had happened, but it is not plausible that Cathal and Conchur were brothers if they were of different septs. If they had been brothers this would mean that Auliffe Mor chose an O Donoghue of the Glen to be chief of the pre-existing O Donoghue Mor sept. We know that the present chief of the O Donoghues of the Glen is an O Donoghue of the Glen, so it could not have been the other way around. Thus we are left wondering how the annals got things so wrong.

Now this discussion must be restrained by one big caveat. Our sample is too woefully small for this conclusion to be robust. If and when we add another dozen or so to our sample, the pattern we now see may be utterly scrambled. Or it may be confirmed. We need to recruit more O Donoghues.

Other Septs

In my January report I discussed the yDNA evidence for relationships between the O Donoghues and other Eoghanachta, specifically the McCarthys, and with other purportedly non Milesian Irish tribes such as the Erainn (Fir Bolg) and Laigin, represented by O Sheas and O Moores. It is now necessary to revisit that study, treating the O Donoghues Mor and of the Glen separately. Table 3 shows that about half the McCarthys surveyed are quite close, genetically, to O Donoghues of both septs and about half rather distant. Curiously, it appears that the gap between each of the O Donoghue septs and the McCarthys - 105 and 120 generations - is considerably less than that between the two O Donoghue septs -160 generations.

Table 3
O Donoghue Mor, and Glen tMRCMA
(Generations)

to McCarthys			to O Sheas		
McC	Glen	Mor	O S	Glen	Mor
8	41	146	2	60	101
9	41	170	3	60	83
11	47	155	5	38	131
12	27	140	7	62	109
15	85	155	Av	55	106
24	16	118	8	96	73
Av	43	134	4	101	120
2	140	68	6	82	120
19	117	75	Av	71	105
22	134	74			
Av	127	72			
20	140	98			
21	132	93			
1	144	122			
4	135	108			
6	114	122			
7	154	124			
14	124	122			
16	153	137			
18	115	123			
23	135	124			
Av	105	120			

This table shows that members of both O Donoghue septs, but especially those of the Glen, have a closer relationship, genetically, to the O Sheas, by and large, than with their Eoghanachta kindred, the McCarthys. Very much the same is true for the O Moores, one of the Laigin tribes of Leix.

Table 4
O Donoghues Mor and Glen-O Moore
tMRCMA generations

O M	Glen	Mor
1	57	97
2	57	97
3	57	97
8	57	136
9	90	134
10	65	81
11	77	77
12	110	90
15	83	118
19	85	109
Av	79	103

A comparison of O Sheas and McCarthys (Table 5) produces results similar to that for O Donoghues and McCarthys.

O Shea's tMRCMA to McCarthys in Generations

McC	O Sheas
8	82
9	77
11	86
12	41
15	78
24	66
Av	72
2	130
19	69
22	69
Av	89
10 others	129

In brief, yDNA studies provide no basis for a distinction between so called Milesians and other Irish people that origin tales say were in the land before the Milesians arrived there.

