

QUARTERLY yDNA REPORT

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The early kindreds of O'Donoghue ancestors - based on recent DNA findings

Progress to date

Based upon DNA participation to date, we have identified three distinct tribal branches of the modern name O'Donoghue and its many variants - Donohoe, Donahue, Dunphy, Dunahoo etc.

The three branches are these - Cavan Donohoes, Eóghanacht Cashel O'Donoghues and Eóghanacht Rathlind O 'Donoghues

However historical records suggest that there were other O'Donoghue tribes in Ireland (see the Historical Origins area of the society's web site), and we need a much wider level of participation to start to identify the DNA patterns for these. There are already some current participants for whom tribal origin remains an unknown.

For any of us to know to which branch we belong, it is necessary to take a DNA test. I encourage any of you, who are curious, to do so. The test is very simple and of a reasonable cost. It will enable each of us to be more confident of our ancestry, and where we fit in this amazing story of a name that has played a very important part in the tumultuous events of Irish history.

Each of these tribes may have a different genesis - and while all are Irish and Celtic, each may have arrived in Ireland from a different place and at a different time. All three have a unique history to tell. For each tribe I describe below my current hypothesis on their origin. My opinions are based up on my own research, and the input of others who are carrying out similar DNA studies.

We await the results of a DNA study being carried out by the Genetics Department of Trinity College Dublin into clan origins and interrelationships, which will, hopefully, extend our knowledge further and increase the coherence of our understanding.

The Celtic migrations to Ireland

The mythology of Ireland describes a number of invasions, two of which are judged to have been Celtic. The first wave was that of the Fir Bolg, of which it is thought there were three different strands. They are generically described as the Érainn. The second wave was that of the Milesians or Gaels. They were given great prominence by the annalists and genealogists, largely, one supposes, because they were the later conquerors.

In legend these two waves occurred 234 years apart. Archaeologists believe that iron using tribes settled from Central Europe around 600 BC, and that Iron Age La Tène Celts arrive around 300 BC. This is a time gap of about 300 years, which is not too far away from the mythology.

Two maps in the concluding part of Dr.Raftery's book *Pagan Celtic Ireland - The Enigma of the Iron Age* are very telling. They show the division of North and South by recovered styles of La Tène material, and especially in the distribution of beehive quernstones. It shows dramatically a dichotomy of cultures and more clearly than anything else indicates the separation of these two diverse groups. I quote from this book

"Some scholars believe that certain aspects of southern forts – notably the chivaux de frise defences - betray Iberian (Spanish) influence, and have speculated whether the elusive southern Iron Age could in some way embody traditions of Iberian origin (while undoubtedly 'Celtic' in many ways, Spain too largely lacked a La Tène material culture). In this regard the fact that Q-Celtic dialects were common to both Spain and Ireland was seen as significant."

So perhaps we can broadly conclude that the Northern half of Ireland was largely composed of a population of British Celts (besides the indigenous Bronze Age peoples), and the Southern half was of a Spanish Celtic type.

The Donohoes of Cavan

The Donohoes may, therefore, have been of Érainn (Fir Bolg) origin. If this surmise is correct, they were perhaps from the continent of Europe (via Britain), specifically the area of modern day Belgium - hence the name Belgic or Fir Bolg. The Celtic god Bolgos, (the God of Thunder) was their chief god.

Caesar calls these Belgic Celts the fiercest that he encountered in his Gallic Wars, and many of the influx into Ireland may have come from that conflict. There are several mythic stories about these Celts - but I will not recount them here in this summary. Suffice it to say that they were a very powerful people whose cognates Érainn, Ivernian and Hibernian all mean 'Irishmen'.

Joseph A Donohoe is the leader of a clan organization which meets annually, and has had many gatherings in the Irish territories of their ancestors.

The O'Donoghues of the Glen

This tribe is most probably of the Eóghanacht of Cashel and has an active Chief of the name - Geoffrey Paul O'Donoghue - who is the patron of our society. The ancient genealogies state that they are descended from the legendary Corc of Cashel, and DNA evidence has strongly indicated that they share with the MacCarthy name this common ancestry and close blood ties.

Producing several kings of Cashel this tribe was possibly also of Érainn stock. They had invaded Wales in the Roman times and were only driven out with much difficulty by Roman mercenaries in the 4th century AD.

After returning to Ireland they set up a hegemony over other tribes of the southern half and ruled from the Rock of Cashel for the next 500 years.

They supplied petty kings of Cashel in the period just after Brian Boru and the coming of the Normans. At the time of the Norman invasion it is our current hypothesis that they were driven from the Cashel area and joined with their namesakes the O'Donoghues Mór, who were establishing their Uí Echach kingdom in Kerry.

Annalists apparently confused the two families and claimed that they were related. DNA evidence suggests that they were only very distantly so. The MacCarthys attempted to establish a feudal kingdom of Desmond and the O'Donoghues of the Glen were granted a privileged position in that hierarchy and maintained themselves even into the post Desmond Rebellion phase. They continued to support a chief into penal times and unto this day, when the aforementioned chief, Geoffrey Paul, and his family, still prosper and survive.

The O'Donoghues Mór

This tribe has, until now, been lost in historical terms, but recent DNA evidence strongly suggests that they still exist. The current writer of this piece and the founder of The O'Donoghue Society, Rod O'Donoghue, have DNA patterns of a distinct nature which based on their geography of origin and family tradition lead to this conclusion. There are others as well (some half dozen individuals identified thus far), who show that they share this lineage, including the inaugural leader of this DNA project, the late Professor Thomas M. Donahue, and his son Neil.

Their genesis differs from the two aforementioned branches insofar as they were probably not of Érainn root stock or the first wave of invaders. They were possibly of the second wave or Milesians (also known as Scoti), who are thought to have been of Near Eastern origin, coming from distant Scythia near the Caspian Sea by way of North Africa and Spain.

They supplied a King of Munster just before the rise of Brian Boru, and became enemies to that later O'Brien dynasty. They were also opponents of the MacCarthy dynasts and often clashed with those ambitious magnates.

Recent findings of relationships with other names

The analysis which follows is intended to show how DNA markers correlate between different individuals of other names. It is based on the 12 marker test and, over time, we will extend it with 25 markers. As some of these participants do not share the same surnames these results must be treated as indicative not substantive, but they do open up

some very interesting possibilities for future research within the timeframe for possible relatedness, which could go back as far as 2000 years.

The close relationship between the Glen and MacCarthy lines

Geoffrey, The O'Donoghue of the Glens matches MacCarthy cases 8406 and 12283 exactly. Compared to cases 19657, 6840 and 7643 there is a genetic distance of one.

O'Donoghues Mór relationships with Clan Donnachaidh (Robertsons, Duncans and others) in Scotland

Rod O'Donoghue has a genetic distance of one from two Robertsons and one Duncan. I share Rod's closeness to the Clan Donnachaidh also, and this can be explained by the fact that we are both modern day representatives of the O'Donoghues Mór.

The O'Donoghues Mór may have been the ancestors to some of the Scottish clans - specifically Clan Donnachaidh who are descended from the King Duncan I - infamously murdered in Shakespeare's great play.

O'Donoghue Mór and O'Donoghue of the Glens

Rod and Geoffrey differ in four numbers in their first 12 markers. This is a sizeable difference indicating that Rod is seemingly much more closely related to the Scottish Clan Donnachaidh than he is to his namesake and good friend Geoffrey, The O'Donoghue of the Glens.

History revealed

Thus is history being revealed by DNA evidence - I urge all of you who have not yet done so to apply for and take this simple test. It can reveal for you your distant history and inform you of the glorious deeds of your ancestors.

Sources:

Correspondence with Patrick O'Shea

Myth, Legend and Romance, Daithí Ó hÓgáin

Pagan Celtic Ireland - The Enigma of the Iron Age, Barry Raftery

The Timechart History of Ireland, Power and Duffy