

Stair Ghearr na h-Uí Bairrche

Fadó, fadó, roimh teacht na Críostaíochta go hÉirinn, ba é Cathair Mór airdrígh na hÉireann. Ba é aon rígh na Laigen, treibheanna saor a Laighean, a bhí ina airdrígh freisin. Bhí go leor mac aige agus rialaigh siad thar a lán codanna de Laighean. Na mic aosta a bhunaigh trí threibh na Laigen ársa; ó Rus Failge a bhí na h-Uí Failge, ó Dáire Barrach na h-Uí Bairrche agus ó Bhreasal Enechglas na h-Uí Enechglais.

An dara mac, Dáire Barrach, a bhunaigh na h-Uí Bairrche, rúndacht ar thorthaí Tara, Sláine agus Dún Aillinne i dTuaisceart Laighean, i ríocht ársa Brega. Deirtear gur railaigh sé naoi mbliana mar rí Laigin. Ba é an duine a chabhraigh le hEoghan Mór ná cumhacht a fháil ar ríocht Mumhan.

Bhí triúr mhac ag Dáire Barrach, as a bhfuil trí threibh saor na h-Uí Bairrche; ó Féicc iad na h-Uí Breccáin, ó Eochu Guinech iad na h-Uí Móenaig agus ó Mhuireach Sníthe iad na h-Uí Briúin.

Bhí mac agus ogha Dáire Barrach, Muiredach Mo-Sníthech & Móenach ina ríghthe ar na Laigin freisin.

Mar a tharlaíonn sé, ghéill sean-threibheanna Laigain, Uí Failge, Uí Bairrche agus Uí Enechglais ceannas don chéad réimeas eile, sliocht mac eile Cathair Mór, Fiachu Ba hAiccid, a raibh a mhac Bressal Bélach ina shinsear Uí Dúnlainge agus Uí Cheinnselaig. Dhíbir Uí Cheinnselaig na h-Uí Bairrche ó thuisceart Laighean agus d'imigh Uí Bairrche ó thuaidh chuig contaetha Uladh Fhear Manach agus an Dúin.

Ba é Eochu Guinech, sliocht Féicc mac Dáire Barrach, a d'athchóirigh Uí Bairrche go Laighean. Agus é sin á dhéanamh, dhúnmharaigh sé a sheanathair Crimthann, mac Éna Censelach, bunaitheoir Uí Cheinnselaig. Ba é an choimhlint idir na treibheanna ná cogadh thar cathartha i measc na Laiginigh a scaipeadh thar farraige go dtí an Bhreatain thiar. Mar thoradh air sin, scaipeadh na treibheanna vasáileach, na Déise go Port Láirge agus Dyfed sa Bhreatain Bheag agus na Uí Liatháin go dtí Corcaigh Thoir agus Dyfed, Gower agus Kidwely sa Bhreatain Bheag agus Leithinis Dhumnonian i gCorn na Breataine. Shocraigh Uí Bairrche i Laighin Theas agus d'éirigh leo arís.

I ginealaíochtaí ársa na h-Uí Bairrche, tugtar bród áite do cheannairí spioradálta na treibhe. Naomh

A brief history of the Uí Bairrche

Long ago, before the coming of Christianity to Ireland, Cathair Mór, was high king of Ireland. He was the only king of the Laigen, the free tribes of Leinster, who was also high king. He had many sons and they ruled over many parts of Leinster. His older sons founded the three tribes of the old Laigen; from Rus Failge were the Uí Failge, from Dáire Barrach the Uí Bairrche and from Breasal Enechglas the Uí Enechglais.

His second son, Dáire Barrach, the founder of the Uí Bairrche, ruled over the fortresses of Tara, Slane and Dún Aillinne in north Leinster, in the ancient kingdom of Brega. It is said that he ruled nine years as king of the Laigin. It was he that aided Eoghan Mór regain power over the kingdom of Munster.

Dáire Barrach had three sons, from whom are the three free tribes of the Uí Bairrche; from Féicc are the Uí Breccáin, from Eochu Guinech are the Uí Móenaig and from Muiredach Sníthe are the Uí Briúin.

The son and grandson of Dáire Barrach, Muiredach Mo-Sníthech and Móenach were also kings of the Laigin.

As it happens, the old tribes of the Laigain, the Uí Failge, the Uí Bairrche and Uí Enechglais gave way to the next wave, the descendants of another son of Cathair Mór, Fiachu Ba hAiccid, whose son Bressal Bélach was the ancestor of the Uí Dúnlainge and the Uí Cheinnselaig. The Uí Cheinnselaig displaced the Uí Bairrche from north Leinster and the Uí Bairrche migrated northward to the Ulster counties of Fermanagh and Down.

It was Eochu Guinech, a descendant of Féicc son of Dáire Barrach, that restored the Uí Bairrche to Leinster. In doing so, he slew his grandfather Crimthann, son of Éna Censelach founder of the Uí Cheinnselaig. This conflict between the tribes was a civil war among the Laigin which also spread across the sea to west Britain. It resulted in the displacement of the vassal tribes, the Déise to Waterford and Dyfed in Wales and the Uí Liatháin to east Cork and Dyfed, Gower and Kidwely in Wales and the Dumnonian Peninsula in Cornwall. The Uí Bairrche settled in south Leinster and once again prospered.

In the ancient genealogies of the Uí Bairrche, pride of place is given to the spiritual leaders of the tribe. St.

Tigernach, i gClogher, Tír Eoghain agus Cluain Eois Mhuineacháin, Naomh Fiacc i Sláine na Mí agus Sléibhte Ceatharlach, Naomh Eoghan MacTáil i gChill Chuilinn Chill Dara, Naomh Cuilinn i gOileán Mhanann, Naomh Émíne na Letha a gurb é Briotáin Fhraince, Naomh Diarmait (Mo Dímmóc) i Sliabh Mairge (sliabh Uí Bairrche) Laois Ceatharlach agus St Fiachra Goll Chluain Fearta na Gaillimhe. Ceapadh Naomh Fiacc ina chéad easpag Laighean ag Naomh Pádraig. I Loch Garman, bhí lonnaíochtaí áitiúla Ard Crema, Ard Chaomháin, Ard Cholaim agus Beigéirinn ar an taobh thuaidh de chaladh Loch Garman agus Teach Moshagard agus Banú ar chósta theas Loch Garman.

Tá tábhacht na n-Uí Bairrche sa séú haois léirithe ag na póstaí a taifeadh ag banphrionsaí Uí Bairrche. Ba í Corbach iníon Maine, de shliocht Muiredach Mo-Snítheach, a bhí pósta máthair Diarmait mac Cerbaill, Ard-Rí na hÉireann († 565AD). Ba í Eithne, sliocht Féicc, máthair St Colum Cille nó Columba († 597AD) an ceann is mó de na misinéirí Éireannacha. Sa taifead ar a ginealais, tá Cairpe an file, a chuireann Keating síos mar rí Laighean, agus a athair Ailill Mór, a bhfuil cur síos air mar Rí na hÉireann i Leabhar Mór Leacain.

Sa dara leath den séú haois, Rí na h-Uí Bairrche suntasach, a bea Cormac mac Diarmata mac Echach Guinig. Tá sé ainmnithe roinnt uaireanta i saol na naoimh Éireannach agus tá sé léirithe mar rialtóir neamhthrócaireach Laighean Theas. De réir shaol St Comgall ó Bannchar an Dúin, thug sé tailte mhainistir Dhésert Diarmata chuig an naomh. Deirtear go raibh trí chaisleán aige; Baile Cheatharlach ar an Berba, Foibran (b'fhéidir i Sligeach nó san Iarmhí) agus Ard Crema (ar an taobh thuaidh de chaladh Loch Garman). Is dócha go n-ainmnítear Cill Chormaic (lár Loch Garman) agus Dún Chormaic (cósta theas Loch Garman) ina dhiaidh. Ag deireadh a shaoil, d'éirigh sé as chun cónaí le St Comgall agus tá sé ráilte faoi:

"Brionglóid a bhí aige go raibh sé ag siúl thart ar theorainneacha Laighean ag tabhairt cuairt ar a chuid cathracha agus fortresí álainn, agus go ndeachaigh sé trasna na bplánaí bláthanna agus na móinéir álainn; Samhlaíodh dó a ríocht agus a charbaid chogaidh breátha agus chonaic sé é féin timpeallaithe ag a thiarnaí cogaidh, a phrionsaí agus a mór uaisle, agus le siombailí a chumhachta ríoga."

Ó lár na naoú aoise, tá go leor iontrálacha ann le Uí

Tigernach of Clogher Tyrone and Clones Monaghan, St. Fiacc of Slane Meath and Sleaty Carlow, St. Eoghan MacTáil of Kilcullen Kildare, St. MacCuill of the Isle of Man, St. Émíne of Letha that is Brittany France, St. Diarmait (Mo Dímmóc) of Slievemargy (mountain of the Uí Bairrche) Laois Carlow and St. Fiachra Goll of Clonfert Galway. St. Fiacc was appointed as the first bishop of Leinster by St. Patrick. In Wexford, there were the monastic settlements of Artramon, Ardcavan, Ardcolm and Beggarin Island on the northern side of Wexford haven and Tomhaggard and Bannow on the south Wexford coast.

The importance of the Uí Bairrche in the sixth century is indicated by the marriages recorded by Uí Bairrche princesses. Corbach a daughter of Maine, a descendant of Muiredach Mo-Snítheach, married was the mother of Diarmait mac Cerbaill, High King of Ireland (†565AD). The mother of St Colum Cille or Columba (†597AD) the greatest of Irish missionaries, was Eithne, a descendant of Féicc. In the record of her genealogy, there is Cairpe the poet, whom Keating describes as king of Leinster, and his father Ailill the Great, who is described as King of Ireland in the Book of Lecan.

In the second half of the sixth century, a prominent King of Uí Bairrche, was Cormac mac Diarmata mac Echach Guinig. He is named a number of times in the lives of the Irish saints and is shown as a ruthless ruler of south Leinster. According to the life of St. Comgall of Bangor Down, he donated the lands of the monastery of Dísert Diarmata (Castledermot Kildare) to the saint. He is stated to have had three castles; Carlow town on the Barrow, Foibran (possibly in Sligo or Westmeath) and Ard Crema (Artramon on the north side of Wexford harbour). It is likely that Kilcormick (mid Wexford) and Duncormick (south Wexford coast) are named after him. At the end of his life he retreated to live with St. Comgall and of him it is said:

"He dreamt that he had been walking round the borders of Leinster visiting his beautiful cities and fortresses, and that he had traversed the flowering plains and lovely meadows; he dreamt of his kingdom and of his fine war-chariots and he saw himself surrounded by his war-lords, princes and magnates, and with the symbols of his royal power."

From the middle of the ninth century, there are

Bairrche Maige (Laois Cheatharlach) agus Uí Bairrche Tire (Loch Garman agus an chuid eile de Laighean), a d'fhéadfadh a léiriú go bhfuil roinnt dá gcríocha agus da gceannaireacht mar a thaispeántar i nginealach ríthe Uí Bairrche.

I 866AD, Conn, mac Cionaedha, tighearna Ua m-Bairrchi Tíre, do mharbhadh oc toghail in dúine forsna Gallaibh, a rinne a lonnaíocht ansin ar thaobh theas Chuain Loch Garman.

Ag an am sin, ba rí ríogach Uí Bairrche é Tressach mac Becan, rí Uí Bairrche Maighe. Cuimhnítear air sna hAnnála Rioghachta Éireann agus freisin i roinnt dánta i Leabhar Laighean. Is foinse ainm teaghlaigh Ua Treasaigh é. Meastar mar laoch Laighean é agus rialóir abhainn Berba (Tressach Berba barr). De réir na hannála a fuair sé bás i 884AD:

Rinne Flann mac Lonan, príomh-fhile Éire, an dán seo a leanas mar gheall air:

Tromm ceō for cōiced mBressail
ōtbath leō Līphi lessaig,
tromma esnada Assail
do brōn tesbada Tressaig.

Scōth mo menma, mūd mo gnās,
ō luid Tressach i tiugbās,
osnad Ōenaig Līphi lāin
Laigen co muir macc Becāin.

Chomh maith leis sin ag an am seo, is cosúil gur riaradh an t-eaglais i Laighin ó lonnaíocht mhainistir Uí Bairrche i nGleann Uisean in aice le baile Cheatharlach. I 916AD i gcath Cheannfuait (in aice le Léim an Bhradáin i gChill Dara thuaidh) maraíodh Maelmaedhog mac Diarmaid Ardeaspag Laighean agus abb Ghleann Uisean. Is an-neamhghnách é an tagairt do chéim ardeaspag nó easpaig fiú Laighean san am sin.

Go déanach sa naoú haois críochnaíodh ceannas Uí Cheinnselaig ar an tSláine níos ísle i Loch Garman. Bhris Uí Dróna agus Uí Cheinnselaig cumhacht Uí Bairrche ag gluaiseacht ó dheas, ag glacadh le gleann na Sláine ó Ráth Bhile go An Tulach, rud a scar Uí Bairrche Laois Ceatharlach ó mhuintir Loch Garman. Sna hannála, bhí an tagairt dheireanach do Uí Bairrche Tire i 906AD. I gcuntas an Cath Bealaigh Mugna 905AD, deir sé gur tháinig Cleirchén rí Uí Bairrchi as Inis Failbe, a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ina Inis Fáil (Beigéirinn) ar an taobh ó thuaidh de chaladh Loch

numerous entries to Uí Bairrche Maige (Laois Carlow) and Uí Bairrche Tire (Wexford and the rest of Leinster), which may indicate a division of their territories and leadership as shown in the genealogy of the kings of Uí Bairrche.

In 866AD, Conn, son of Cinaedh, lord of Uí Bairrchi Tire, was slain while demolishing the fortress of the foreigners (Vikings), who then made their settlement on the south side of Wexford Harbour.

At that time, the prominent king of the Uí Bairrche was Tressach mac Becan, King of the Uí Bairrche Maighe. He is remembered in the Annals of the Four Masters and also in a number of poems in the Book of Leinster. He is the source of the Tracey family name. He was regarded as a hero of Leinster and the ruler of the river Barrow (Tressach Berba barr). According to the annals he died in 884AD:

Flann, son of Lonan, chief poet of Ireland, composed the following poem about him:

A heavy mist upon the province of Breasal,
since they slew at the fortified Liphe,
Heavy the groans of Assal,
for grief at the loss of Treasach.

Wearied my mind, moist my countenance,
since Treasach lies in death.
The moan of Oenach Lifi all,
and of Leinster to the sea, is the son of Becan.

Also at this time, the church in Leinster seems to have administered from the Uí Bairrche monastic settlement of Gleann Uisean (Killeshin) near Carlow town. In 916AD at the battle of Cheannfuait (near Leixlip north Kildare) Arch-bishop of Leinster and Abbot of Gleann Uisean, Maelmaedhog son of Diarmaid was killed. The reference to the rank of archbishop or even bishop of Leinster is very unusual at this time.

Late in the ninth century the Uí Cheinnselaig domination of the lower Slaney in Wexford was complete. The Uí Dróna and Uí Cheinnselaig broke the power of Uí Bairrche by moving southward, seizing the Slaney valley from Rathvilly to Tullow, thereby separating the Uí Bairrche of Laois Carlow from those of Wexford. In the annals, the last reference to Uí Bairrche Tire was in 906AD. In the account of the Cath Bealaigh Mugna 905AD, it states that Cleirchén king of Uí Bairrchi came from Inis Failbe, which may be Inis Fail (Beggan) on the north

Garman. Ainmníodh ceannairí Uí Bairrche Tíre sna hannála, nach bhfuil ainmnithe sna ginealaíochtaí.

Faoin deichiú céad agus an t-aonú céad déag leagann na tagairtí do Uí Bairrche béim ar a gcaidreamh lena gcomhleacaithe ó thuaidh, na h-Uí Dúnlainge. I Timna Chathaír Máir ón Lebor na Cert, luaitear faoi Uí Bairrche go bhfuil siad ina gcónaí ar theorainn theas a gcuid comhleacaithe, Uí Dúnlainge mar bhac ar Uí Cheinnselaig:

“suidh erenach Tuath-Laigen
cráidhfídh crícha Tes-Ghabair”

Sa Lebor na Cert, tá Uí Bairrche suite idir Uí Drona agus Uí Buide agus gheobhaidh faighlann siad seo a leanas ó Rí na Laiginí:

Ocht n-eich d[U]ibh Bairrchi ar a m-beodhacht,
Ba beag d’fhin a [n]-eangnamha,
Ocht (g)-cuirn, ocht mná, níros mughaiigh,
Is ocht moghaidh mean, mara.

Murab ionann agus treibheanna eile, ach amháin an Uí Dúnlainge, ní íocann siad cíos ar ais.

Níl aon tagairtí maidir le haon rannpháirtíocht ag Uí Bairrche i gcatha Brian Boru, gur de Dhál gCais in Iarthar na Mumhan é. Áirítear leis seo Cath Cluain Tarbh i 1014AD, a troideadh i gcoinne Uí Dúnlainge a gcomhleacaithe. Mar sin féin, sa gheimhreadh roimhe seo de 1013AD, taifeadtar go ndearna Brian Boru campáil i Sliabh Mairge, agus gur chreach sé Laighin chomh fada le Baile Átha Cliath, agus chuir sé léigear air. D’fhéadfadh sé seo tús a chur le hábhar nua Uí Bairrche, leis le h-uaracht Dál gCais.

Is é Donnchadh mac Aedh meic Tressaig, Rí na h-Uí Bairrche, an chéad cheannaire eile a bhfuil tagairt déanta air sna hannála. Sa bhliain 1024AD, bhuail sé fir Mhumhan ag Gleann Uisean, le comhghuaillíocht leis an Uí Drona agus Fotharta, treibheanna atá suite díreach ó dheas agus soir ó Uí Bairrche i gContae Cheatharlach. Sa 1040sAD, in éineacht le Uí Muiredaig as na Uí Dúnlainge, bhuail sé a chomharsana na Laeighis (Laoise) agus Osraighe (Cill Chainnigh), agus Uí Cheinnsealaigh. Maraíodh Domhnall Reamhar oighre tighearna Uí Cheinnsealaigh, i dturas creiche in Uí Bairrche agus cuireadh creach ar Fhearna. Le díoltas an dá cheann sin, chuir Diarmait mac Mael-na-mbo Uí Cheinnsealaigh scrios ar Ghleann Uisean, agus leagadh an t-aireagal, agus maraíodh céad agus tógadh

side of Wexford harbour. The leaders of Uí Bairrche Tíre in the annals are not named in the genealogies.

By the tenth and eleventh centuries, the references to the Uí Bairrche emphasise their relationship with their northern allies, the Uí Dúnlainge. In the will of Cathair Mór from the Book of Rights, the Uí Bairrche are stated to live on the southern frontier of their allies, the Uí Dúnlainge as a barrier to the Uí Ceinnselaig:

“Chief of the rulers of North Laigin,
Thou shall harass the lands of South Leinster”

In the Book of Rights, the Uí Bairrche are located between the Uí Drona and the Uí Buide and receive the following from the King of the Laigin:

“Eight steeds to the Uí Bairrche for their vigor,
‘T’was but small for a man of his (their
chieftain’s) prowess,
Eight drinking-horns, eight women, not slaves,
And eight bondmen, brave [and] large.”

Unlike other tribes, except the Uí Dúnlainge, they do not pay a tribute in return.

There are no references to any participation by the Uí Bairrche in the battles of Brian Boru, who was of the Dál gCais of western Munster. This includes the Battle of Clontarf in 1014AD, which was fought against their Uí Dúnlainge allies. However, in the previous winter of 1013AD, it is recorded that Brian Boru camped at Sliabh Mairge, and plundered Leinster as far as Dublin, to which he laid siege. This may have been the start of a new Uí Bairrche allience, with the Dál gCais.

The next leader that is referenced in the annals was Donnchadh mac Aedh meic Tressaig, King of the Uí Bairrche. In 1024AD, he defeated the men of Munster at Gleann Uisean, with an alliance with the Uí Drona and Fotharta, tribes located immediately to the south and east of the Uí Bairrche in County Carlow. In the 1040sAD, along with Uí Dúnlainge allies, the Uí Muiredaig, he battled his neighbours the Laeighis (Laois) and Osraighe (Kilkenny), and the Uí Cheinnsealaigh. Domhnall Reamhar (i.e. Domhall the Fat), heir to the lordship of Uí Cheinnsealaigh, was killed in a preying excursion into Uí Bairrche and Ferns was plundered. In revenge for both of these, Gleann Uisean was plundered by Diarmait mac Mael-na-mbo of Uí Cheinnsealaigh, and the oratory was demolished, and a hundred were killed and several

na céadta mar phríosúnaigh. I 1042AD, i gcath Magh-Mailceth i Laois, Donnchadh mac Aedh & Murchadh mac Dunlaing do marbadh le Gillaphadraig mac Donnchadh, tighearna Osraighe, agus Cucoigriche Ua Mordha, tighearna Laeighis, agus Macraith Ua Donnchadha, tighearna Eoghanacht (Mumhan). Mar a maraíodh sa chath seo freisin Gilla-Emhin Ua h-Anrothain, tighearna Ui-Cremhthannain (thoir Laois), agus Eachdonn mac Dunlaing, Tániast Laighean le go leor eile. Ag an am seo, tháinig Uí Cheinnselaig mar phríomh-threibh Laighean agus faoin aonú aois déag bhí ceannas ar ríocht Laighean bainte ó Uí Dúnlainge acu.

Ba iad Uí Treasaig agus Mac Gormáin príomhtheaghlaigh Uí Bairrche in amanna stairiúla, nár ainmníodh an dá cheann acu sna ginealaíochtaí níos sine. I nginealach ina dhiaidh sin, ainmníonn MacFhiostaishigh iad agus tagraíonn sé go háirithe do Uí Mhaoil Umha, Uí Domhnaill, Uí Cearnaigh, Ua mBrocain, Uí Móenaig (ó Móenach mac Muiredach Sníthe), Síol Cumaine, Monaig Ulad, Fir Monach loch Éirne agus Uí Caindeachain.

Ba é 1008AD an chéad tagairt do Ua Tressach sna h-aaaála, áit a deir sé, "Gussán, mac uí Treassaich, tigherna Ua m-Bairrche, d'écc." Sa dara haois déag, ghlac MacGormáin mar cheannairí Uí Bairrche, cé nach raibh sé amhlaidh i Loch Garman. Is é an chéad tagairt do MacGormain i 1103AD agus i 1124AD nuair a luaitear sna h-annála "Muiredhach Mac Gormáin, tigherna Ua m-Bairrche ordan, & aireachas, & primh-athlaoch Laighen esidhe d' écc." Go hiontach sna ginealais i Rawlinson 502, ann Tá dhá shnáithe i liostaí rí Uí Bairrche. Áirítear sa chéad cheann dhá thagairt do 'Gormáin' agus ceann do 'Tressaig'. Tugann an dara snáithe níos giorra aird ar 'Tressach mac Beccáin'. B'fhéidir gurb é seo an t-athrú ar ríthe agus ar shuíomh.

D'fhéadfadh Muiredhach Mac Gormain a bheith ainmnithe i ndeontas talún do mhainistir Cistercian i Bealach Conglais agus sa 'Leabhar Dharú' a thugann tuairisc ar chomhaontú talún idir mainistreacha Gleann Uisean agus Darú agus na Dál gCais.

Ba é an t-iontráil stairiúil deiridh ar Uí Bairrche sna hannála, i 1141AD nuair a ghníomhaigh an michlúiteach Diarmaid Mac Murchadha, rí Laighean, go fealltach i dtreo cinnigh Laighean, is é sin, Domnall, tigherna Uí Faelain, agus rí-oidhre

hundred were carried off as prisoners. In 1042AD, in the battle of Magh-Mailceth in Laois, Donnchadh mac Aedh and Murchadh mac Dunlaing were killed by Gillaphadraig mac Donnchadh, lord of Osraighe, and Cucoigriche Ua Mordha, lord of Laeighis, and Macraith Ua Donnchadha, lord of Eoghanacht (Munster). Also slain in this battle was Gilla-Emhin Ua h-Anrothain, lord of Ui-Cremhthannain (east Laois), and Eachdonn mac Dunlaing, Tanist of Leinster with many others. At this time, the Uí Cheinnselaig became the dominant tribe of Leinster and by the eleventh century they had taken over the kingship of Leinster from the Uí Dúnlainge.

The chief families of the Uí Bairrche in historical times were the Uí Treasaig (Tracey) and Mac Gormáin (MacGorman), both of whom were not named in the older genealogies. In a later genealogy, MacFhirbhishigh names them and also makes particular reference to Uí Mhaoil Umha, Uí Domhnaill (O'Donnell), Uí Cearnaigh (O'Carney, O'Kearney), Ua mBrocain (O'Brogan), Uí Móenaig (from Móenach son of Muiredach Sníthe) (Mooney), Síol Cumaine (Cummin), Monaig Ulad (Mooney of West Co. Down), Fir Monach locha Éirne (Mooney of Loch Erne) and Uí Caindeachain (O'Canahan?).

The first reference to Tracey in the annals was in 1008AD, where it states, "Gussan, son of Ua Treassach, lord of Ui-Bairrche, died." In the twelfth century, MacGormáin had taken over as leaders of the Uí Bairrche, though perhaps not in Wexford. MacGormain is first referenced in 1103AD and in 1124AD where the annals state "Muiredhach Mac Gormain, lord of Uí Bairrche, who was the ornament and glory, and the chief old hero of Leinster, died." Extraordinarily in the genealogies in Rawlinson 502, there are two strands in the Uí Bairrche king lists. The first includes two references to 'Gormáin' and one to 'Tressaig'. The second, shorter strand gives prominence to 'Tressach mac Beccáin'. Perhaps this reflects the change in kingship and location.

Muiredhach Mac Gormain may have been named in a land grant to the Cistercian abbey of Baltinglass and in the 'Book of Durrow' describing a land agreement between the monasteries of Killeshin and Durrow and the Dál gCais.

The last historical entry of the Uí Bairrche in the annals, was in 1141AD when the infamous Diarmaid Mac Murchadha, King of Leinster, acted treacherously towards the chieftains of Leinster, namely, Domhnall, lord of Ui Faelain, and royal heir of Leinster, and

Laighean, agus Murchadh h-Uí Tuathail, & triúr mac Mac Gormain a mharbh sé; agus i leith Muircheartach Mac Gillamochoimog, tigherna Feara Cualann, a bhí dallta aige. Dhéag an gníomh seo laige mhór i Laighin, mar atá seachtar déag d'uaisle Laighean, agus go leor daoine eile a raibh céim níos ísle leo, maraíodh nó dalladh aige ag an am sin.

Scaip teaghlach Mac Gormain ó Sliabh Mairge agus déantar iad a thairfeadh mar shocrú i Muineachán, i dTiobraid Árann agus leis na Dál gCais sa Chlár. Tugadh talamh dóibh ar chósta thiar an Chláir dá gceann cinnigh agus tháinig siad ina gceannasaithe míleata ag no Ó Briain, áit a bhfuair siad saibhreas agus tionchar mór agus tá go leor iontrálacha sna h-annála.

I Loch Garman, bhí teaghlaigh níos sine Uí Bairrche fós feiceálach agus tugtar faoi deara iad mar easpaig Ferns, Cairbre O'Kearney †1095AD, Maelisu O'Cahan †1135AD agus Roderick (als Rory) O'Trassy †1145AD. I ndeisceart Loch Garman, bhí Uí Rónáin de Teach Moshagard ann freisin. Mar a tharla le teaghlaigh Ghaelacha eile, chaill siad a d-tionchar le teacht na Normánach.

Tar éis na tréimhse seo ní thairfeadtar Uí Bairrche sna hAnnála Éireann.

“Ní ba tuath tuath gan eagna, gan egluis, gan filidh, gan righ ara corathar cuir 7 cairde do thuathaibh.”

Finit

- *Míle buíochas le Donnchadh Ó Seighin*

Murchadh Ua Tuathail, and three sons of Mac Gormain whom he killed; and also towards Muircheartach Mac Gillamochoimog, lord of Feara-Cualann, who was blinded by him. This deed caused great weakness in Leinster, for seventeen of the nobility of Leinster, and many others of inferior rank along with them, were killed or blinded by him at that time.

The Mac Gormain family dispersed from Slievemargy and are recorded as settling in Monaghan, Tipperary and with the Dál gCais in Clare. Their chiefs were granted land on the west coast of Clare and became military commanders of the O'Briens, where they acquired great wealth and influence and there are numerous entries in the annals.

In Wexford, the older families of the Uí Bairrche were still prominent and are noted as bishops of Ferns, Cairbre O'Kearney †1095AD, Maelisu O'Cahan †1135AD and Roderick (als Rory) O'Trassy †1145AD. In south Wexford, there was also Uí Rónáin of Tomhaggard. As with other Gaelic families, they lost their influence with the coming of the Normans.

After this period the Uí Bairrche are not recorded in the Irish Annals.

“A country without a chief is dead.”

End