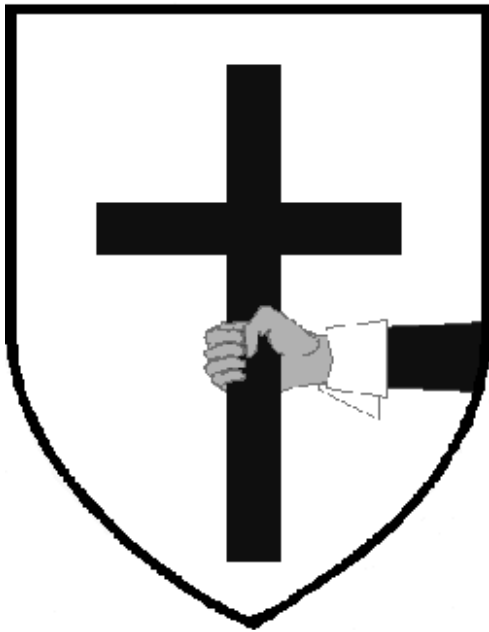
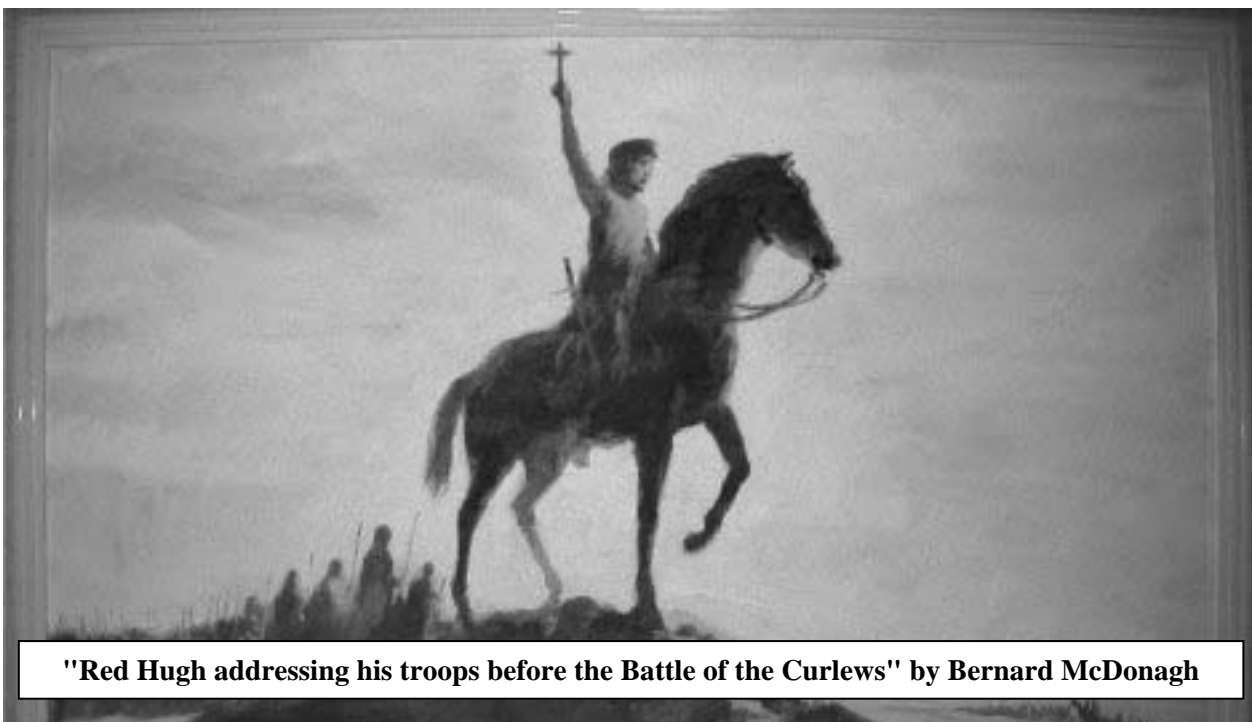


Ó Domhnaill Abá



O'Donnell Clan
Newsletter No. 29

Winter 2000



"Red Hugh addressing his troops before the Battle of the Curlews" by Bernard McDonagh

NEWS

Peadar O'Donnell - Biography

A recently published book, simply entitled "Peadar O'Donnell" celebrates the life and times of the Rosses born novelist, editor and social reformer. This well-indexed, scholarly research is the work of Peter Hegarty. The 334 page hardcover publication is published by Mercier Press, ISBN 1.85635.204.8 and is available in Irish bookshops for IR£12.99.

Austrian Visit

Early last July my wife and I visited Oberammergau (south Germany) to see the Passion Play and then spent a week touring Austria. We were warmly received and treated at Hochkreut by Count Gabriel O'Donnell and his wife Ulricke where we spent a lovely evening. Their son, Douglas and his wife Aimée (see report on their marriage, ODA No 24) live with them and help to run the extensive wildlife park. Their firstborn, a son, Kilian Moritz Columcille Lamoral, born Nov. 1998, seemed to play a big part in everyone's life. Countess Elizabeth who got married in summer '99 and lives not too far away has a son, Constantine, now aged 8 months. Recently I received the news that a second son has been born to Douglas and Aimée. Douglas Moritz Rory Columcille arrived on the 22nd Sept. 2000.

Farkas

On page 47 of 'O'Donnells of Tír Chonaill' appears a brief mention of Henry(68a) who settled in Hungary. Henry had two of a family, Rory and Eveline. Rory's only son, Heinrich, died without issue in 1932 and so ended the O'Donnell name in that family. Eveline married a Nicolaus Edler von Farkas in 1894 They had one son, Jenó, who married a Dabis Rosa and had a son, Charles. There, my records ended and I often wondered what became of Charles de Farkas. Imagine my surprise when in Oct. last I received a letter from that same Charles now living in New York. A few days later I received a packet containing colour photocopies of

several family documents pertaining to his O'Donnell ancestors. Since then I've had more correspondence and gradually his story begins to unfold - a fascinating story, which I hope, with his permission, to write sometime in this newsletter.

Henry O'Donnell - again?

Yes, there never seems to be an issue without a mention of this man. One glorious day during the summer my wife and I and indeed a large crowd of people made our way to Tory Island for the unveiling, by Minister for Sport and Tourism, Dr. James McDaid, of a plaque honouring Henry O'Donnell's world record swim. Henry set a new world record (see ODA No. 25) when, in Aug. '97, he swam from Tory Island to Aranmore Island, a distance of approx. 24 miles in ten and a half hours. Along with the unveiling, presentations were made by several sporting organisations and speeches were delivered. Then, all enjoyed a reception in the community centre. Later that evening, midnight to be exact, began the music and dancing and drinking. All came to an end at 5.00 am next morning. As we made our way to our accommodation the sun was well above the horizon and the air was full of the smell of clover and the clamour of corncrakes, a bird now extinct in most parts of Ireland.

Colmcille Book

Manus O'Donnell, 21st Chieftain (see ODA No. 6), wrote one of the earliest biographies of St. Colmcille. Recently, an English version edited by Brian Lacey has been published and is available in paperback. ISBN 1-85182-395-6. The original gaelic version is housed in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, England. Here I quote from the blurb -

From *c. 1510* Maghnus Ó Domhnaill (Manus O'Donnell) was a leading political figure in the north-west of Ireland. Between 1537 and 1555 he was chieftain of Tír Conaill. In 1532 he completed the greatest cultural achievement of

his life, the composition of the *Beatha Colaim Chille* or 'Life' of the sixth-century monastic founder whom Manus claimed as his 'high saint and kinsman in blood'. The 'Life' is an extraordinary work, running to nearly 100,000 words of verse and prose, written, for the most part, in clear, elegant Irish. It is a compendium of all that was known or (more correctly) believed about Colum Cille in Manus' day.

Like the life of Manus himself, the *Beatha Colaim Chille* is being recognized increasingly as an example of the extension to Gaelic Ireland of Renaissance ideas and standards. Although the *Beatha* is not our best source for reconstructing the life of Colum Cille, it does provide an insight into the beliefs, practices and cultural interests of Gaelic Ireland in the early part of the sixteenth century, prior to the onset of the Reformation and the Tudor conquest.

Kinsale Re-enactment

At present (Nov. 2000) plans are being made to commemorate the march to Kinsale by O'Neill and O'Donnell in the winter of 1601 and the subsequent battle fought there (see ODA No. 8). Although it happened in winter, the organizing committee feels the commemoration should take place in summer on account of longer day, weather and tourists. It will most likely happen next July. Members of the Irish army, working in relays, will perform the actual march. Anyone wishing to join them the whole way or part of it is welcome to do so. I have been asked to co-ordinate the first stage i.e. Donegal to Sligo. I hope to post more information, as I get it, on my website.

Daniel O'Donnell

Daniel's appeal hits the one million pound target

(The Derry People & Donegal News, Friday, August 18th, 2000)

On his visit to visit to Siret in Romania some two years back singer Daniel O'Donnell was

appalled at the conditions of the State run orphanages. On his return home he joined forces with the Romanian Challenge appeal, and set a target of £1 million to build new half-way homes for the orphans

Today the appeal has reached the target, and Daniel who was made a 'Freeman of Siret', was delighted to be on hand to open two half-way homes in the town for the young orphans. Daniel says that the Romanian Challenge Appeal aid workers have removed about sixty young orphans from the orphanage, and re-housed them. Despite reaching the £million target, the campaign will go on, as extra funds are badly required. Daniel's aim is to re-house and train the five hundred young people still in the State run orphanage in Siret, where the conditions are still very grim.

ACHTUNG!

Daniel's ready to invade Germany

BY EDDIE ROWLEY 1st Oct, 2000

ACHTUNG! Daniel O'Donnell has found ways of making Germans listen to his dulcet tones.

The Irish superstar crooner has recorded the classic song, *Roses Are Red*, in the German language and is bidding for his first chart hit in that territory.

Now on the brink of becoming a major star in Germany - the third biggest market in the world - Daniel is even

studying the language. He told the *Sunday World*: "I have many German friends living in Donegal, so, hopefully, they will help me with the lessons.

'It's a very exciting move for me, as I love the challenge of going to new places where nobody knows me, to see if I can win them over. There's a great sense of satisfaction from that when it works."

Daniel was a special guest on last week's *Musikanter Stadel* German TV show, which has an estimated audience of 15 million viewers.

Presenter Karl Moik said he is convinced that Daniel is going to be a superstar there.

Phil Coulter's song to Donegal Castle

By Daniel Browne (Donegal Democrat October 21st 1999)

Last Monday saw world renowned musician Phil Coulter give a special performance of his new song "If these stones could speak" which is dedicated to Donegal Castle. Minister Sile de Valera addressed the large crowd in attendance and welcomed Mr. Coulter's efforts on the project.

Speaking to the crowd gathered in the banquet hall of the castle Deputy de Valera, Minister of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands said that Mr. Coulter's commission had been part of a project to celebrate the millennium by having 11 heritage sites throughout the country commemorated in music.

She said the event was a very important one for Donegal Castle which had a special place in Irish history. "The stones of this great castle have stood witness to much history and the time is now ripe to pay musical tribute to all that has passed here", she said.

The Minister said she felt music was a suitable way to pay tribute to many of the nations' monuments, a theme that is echoed in the name of the project group that organised these theme songs, "Ceol Reoite" or "frozen music". The title of the project is derived from Goethe's famous dictum that, "Architecture is frozen music".

Minister de Valera said Donegal Castle is one of the nation's most interesting heritage sites and its importance was of "national resonance". She said the manor wing of the castle which was built by the Brooke family who took over the castle after the departure of Red Hugh shows the continuity of history in the castle.

The Minister went on to thank all the members of her Department and all those involved in the restoration of the castle for a very "sensitive and authentic" restoration. "Surely the finest single achievement has been the rebuilding of the floors, stairways and ceilings in Irish Oak", she said.

Speaking about Mr. Coulter's involvement in the project the Minister said that the name of Phil Coulter, "suggested itself". "if Derry is the town he loves so well then Donegal is a county which is close to his heart", she said. She went on to hail him as, "Ireland's Ambassador of song" and said his pen is surely mightier than any sword.

Mr. Coulter then addressed the crowd in Irish saying what a pleasure it was to be in Donegal. He told the crowd that he was sure the last time, there was a gathering like this in the castle

was at the time of Red Hugh himself. He said that he chose Donegal out of all the heritage sites because of his special relationship with the county.

"I have a house in Donegal and very fond memories as a child of the taking trips here. I remember that it was a very intrepid voyage for us as kids to take an old Lough Swilly coach the 15 miles to Donegal" he said.

Mr. Coulter went on, to coin his own phrase, "the people of Derry have always seen Donegal as a source of "tranquillity"". The musician then noted his own long-standing fascination with the history of the O'Donnells and that he felt their story was an important part of Irish history. "So many pages of Irish history were written in this castle it is an important place to commemorate", he said.

Speaking to the Democrat after his performance the Derry born artist went on to say that he hoped his song would be accessible to the people of Donegal and beyond. "I hope people take this new song to their hearts as it is easily singable, I'll also be including it on my new album which will be released in the coming months", he said.

The song itself, "If these stones could speak" was performed by Mr. Phil Coulter on piano, Ms. Aoife Ní Fhearraigh on vocals, Brendan Monaghan on Uilean pipes and whistles and Fergal Murray on keyboards. The Derry based group, "Different Drums of Ireland" also accompanied the piece.

The haunting melody speaks of the tales the stones could tell if they had a voice, stories of the Chieftains of Tir Chonaill and the glories of Red Hugh. The song goes on to say that surely Red Hugh's spirit lives on in the walls of the castle and all around the county that was in its glory days in the time of the dead Chieftain. "now the castle stands, proudly back in Irish hands. He's at peace again, Red Hugh O'Donnell is home again".

Speaking after the performance Minister de Valera was very moved and said she was, "delighted with the wonderful piece". She said she was proud of everyone who had been involved in than project and said that she had really felt the emotion of the song during the performance.

Daniel - This is your Life

Although 'This Is Your Life' has been a regular TV series for well over two decades, it rarely features in either the Radio Times Reader's Favourites or The National Top Ten TV Programmes. However, the official viewing figures for 29th May - 4th June, proved to be the exception. It was during this week that Daniel was the chosen celebrity to be presented with Michael Aspel's 'Big Red Book', and, as a consequence, the show shot into seventh place in the Radio Times Top Ten Chart.

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If These Stones Could Speak.

- Words and Music Phil Coulter.

*If these stones could speak
What a tale they'd tell
Of the heroes and chiefs of Tyrconnell,
Of the battles fought,
The wonders wrought
And the glories of Red Hugh O'Donnell.
For within these Castle walls,
In the Tower, in the Halls,
The spirit of O'Donnell will live on.*

*On the wind you'll hear the voices calling,
In the trees, when dead of night is falling,
In the ocean's roar,
In the Gap of Barnesmore,
In the hills of Donegal.*

*And they say his ghost still walks the Tower,
And recalls Tyrconnell's finest hour,
Riding far and wide,
With O'Neill there at his side,*

*In the glory days.
When the Castle fell
He had loved it so well
His soul could never rest*

*You will hear from Fanad to Falcarragh,
In Gweedore, The Rosses and Gweebarra
Now the Castle stands
Proudly back in Irish hands,
He's at peace again
Red Hugh O'Donnell is home again.*

*O'Donnell
O'Donnell O'Donnell*

O'Donnell O'Donnell

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Book review: "The Story of The Rosses"

I've recently finished the excellent book, "The Story of the Rosses" by Ben O'Donnell (<http://homepage.eircom.net/~storyoftherosses/>)

As a descendant of Irish emigrant ancestors, I bought the book hoping to learn more of what life was like for my fathers' family - the O'Donnells of Sheskinrone, the Rosses. What I found in the book exceeded my expectations. I expected to learn the history of the area, to be informed as well as entertained by the stories of a remote community of Donegal. My hopes were amply fulfilled - I learned far more than I expected, including such matters as the Plantation of Ulster, the Famine, the 1798 Rebellion, the War of Independence and Native Rule affecting the Rosses, and I enjoyed many wonderful stories including most memorably for me the story of the Arranmore Pearls. What emerges is a history of a people of imagination, strength and courage, a people with artistic and intellectual ability, a people of faith who value Ireland, as well as their independence, their home and land and family,

just as my family still does today in the USA.

I have always had a great feeling of pride in my O'Donnell, Donegal and, Ireland heritage. The 'Story of the Rosses' justifies my pride. I consider this book a must-have for anyone who wants to understand their Irish heritage. The 'Story of the Rosses' is a great history of rural Ireland, generally. The Story fills in the gaps that many of the genealogical community can only wonder at - beyond names and dates of our ancestors, who were they? What were their interests? desires? passions, fears and loves? Understanding and answers are contained in this treasure. Reading this book is an experience of knowledge and pride, and I and all Irish are indebted to Ben O'Donnell for preserving 'The Story of the Rosses' for us.

Gail O'Donnell, Virginia, USA.

AN O'DONNELL GATHERING IN KANSAS, U.S.A.

(The following article was written on February 16, 2000 by Deborah Foss Talloy for The O'Domhnaill, Abu Newsletter.)

One week earlier than the August'99 Clan Gathering in Donegal, more than 160 descendents of John & Elizabeth O'DONNELL OF Miltown Malbay, Clare, gathered in Junction City, Kansas to celebrate their treasured Irish heritage. Histories say that there was a branch of O' Domhnaill which went south to Corea-Vascian in southwest Clare in the 10th or 11th century and another in the 15th. Our line, once in Clare, married three times into a branch of O'Brien. Elizabeth Hill O'Donnell was born in Limerick, the daughter of Thomas George Hill and Diana Mullock.

John and Elizabeth were married in St Ann's Church, Dublin, on February 7, 1861. Their first child, Anna Elizabeth, was born in Tarbort, Kerry, on December 17th of the same year at the Hill home. Thirteen additional children were born, all at Carhueduff House, Carhueduff Township, County Clare, with the beautiful Cliffs of Mohrer & the sea only a few miles west of their house. John was an estate manager for Mr. George Wyndham, aka, Lord Leconfield.

Mr. Wyndham, adopted son of Percy Wyndham O'Brien, Earl of Egremont, inherited a huge tract of land in Clare upon his father's death in 1837. Mr. Wyndham was responsible for extensive reforms aimed at making Clare land holdings more productive through agricultural innovation and by reducing the number of tenants on a given piece of land. He set up "model farms" throughout the county and brought in agricultural experts to live in and run the farms. Carhueduff was one of those "model farms" Those tenants, asked to leave their small holdings, were encouraged to emigrate. Arrangements were made in Canada, Australia and the U.S. to receive them and their passage was paid by Mr. Wyndham. This began well before the Famine and continued for many years, until holdings constituted forty acres or more. By the 1870's, these holdings were being farmed again in small holdings with rents exacted according to acreage.

In the 1870's and '80's, there was a lot of unrest in that part of Clare. The fact that land was in the hands of absentee landlords, exacting ever-increasing rents was deeply resented. There were acts of violence taking place against landowners and their agents. John O'Donnell began to consider emigration so that his

large family would be more assured of opportunities for education and safety. He nearly signed on to go to New Zealand when he met an agent from the Union Pacific Railroad who was in Ireland enticing settlers with offers of cheap land in the newly opened American West. He bought, sight unseen, a piece of land in Rice County, Kansas.

Ten years before their arrival, there had been a major money panic, with bank closings and the crash of the cattle market. In 1874, there was a devastating grasshopper infestation which devoured everything in sight, leaving only eggs to hatch the next year. Settlers began to flee and the town had shrunk. The town fathers, working with the Union Pacific, developed a sales pitch with "visuals" to take to Europe. In fact, a local painter was commissioned to make paintings of men climbing ladders to chop ears of corn and watermelons so enormous that two men could stand on them at once.

The gold fields in the Rockies had the railroads engaged in a tumultuous chase to strike lines through the heretofore unbroken Prairie between Kansas City and Denver. They followed the winding path of the Smokey Hill River straight across the center of Kansas Territory. This route spawned roaring cowtowns like Ellsworth, which would become the now O'Donnell home. Ellsworth had become the head of the cattle trail by 1872. Huge herds were fattened on grass around the town. By midsummer, there could be as many as 120,000 head, ready for shipping east. Old west figures such as Gens. Custer & Sheridan, Wild Bill Hickok, Wyatt Earp and Buffalo Bill Cody all spent time in Ellsworth. This was the scene into which the O'Donnell brood stopped in the fall of 1884.

John O'Donnell and one of his older sons came over first to look over the land and begin making preparations for the emigration of the rest of the family. A few months later, Elizabeth and her ten surviving children sailed from Queenstown, Cobh on September 16, 1884 on the ship Wyoming. The Wyoming was a British Steamer owned by Williams & Guion, sailing out of Liverpool. She had an iron hull, three decks, two masts, one funnel and the earliest compound engines in transoceanic service. The crossing took eleven days.

John and son were in New York to meet them. Although there are no records, it is probable that they made their way west by train.

It must have been an arduous trip for the parents. John was, by this date, in his sixties and Elizabeth was thirty-seven years old and fourteen times a mother! For most of the children, it was magical and exciting. They made a stop in Kansas City, the last "outpost of civilization" to provision. My grandfather, Fred, was eleven and put in charge of "the ham". When he tired of carrying it in his arms, he commenced to drag it behind, tied to a string.

Their destination in western central Kansas was an expanse of about 3,000,000 acres, known to geologists as The Dakota Formation. "Post rock", which is comprised of limestone, lies less than 2' below the prairie surface. The limestone, if unexposed to air, is soft. They drilled into a rock bed with wedges, splitting posts into lengths. These they used around their fields, instead of wood posts. Those that broke were used for houses and outbuildings, of which many, many still stand. From the train windows, as they crossed the state of Kansas, they would have seen these limestone outcroppings, the dark shale hills, native prairie grasses "as high as a horse's belly" and the endless cottonwood groves along the river. This was one of the best buffalo pastures on the continent. Explorer, Coronado, arrived in Ellsworth in 1540 to find that Francisco Vasquez de Caba had been there earlier in search of the rich Seven Cities of Cibola. The last major Indian raid was in 1879.

When the O'Donnell family arrived in Ellsworth, on that late September day in 1884, they took the entire third floor of Larkin's White House Hotel. They stayed a month, while finishing touches were being put on the house on their claim in nearby Geneseo, Rice County.

What they did not know was that this land was not suitable for farming. There wasn't enough water for irrigation and their well had a high concentration of saline. That first winter, they nearly starved to death. There had not been sufficient time to set in enough food crops and rainfall had been scant. They found that, to protect themselves from the Kansas winds, they had to brace the house, all around, with 2X4's. In 1886, there

was a terrible blizzard, followed by a grasshopper plague the following summer. But, when some of the boys accidentally burned down the house whilst burning off a nearby field, it was time to move into Ellsworth.

By the mid-eighties, Ellsworth had several hotels, a hospital built in 1881, schools, stores and many saloons. The eldest son, Harold, had studied medicine at the University of Dublin. He had set up a practice in Ellsworth right after their arrival in Kansas. Of the six sons, three more went to medical school and two were hardware merchants. Two daughters were teachers, one a musician, one a registered nurse and one a secretary. This family was remarkably literate and long-lived. The former, they attributed to the fine schooling they received at Mr. Ball's school in Carhueduff. They knew their poetry, literature and history.

As we descendents gathered to greet one another and pore over sundry displays of photographs and letters, many of us were deeply moved and grateful to these sturdy, energetic, life-loving ancestors. They have certainly left us a standard of service and joyful living we can all follow.

In a piece written in the 1950's, Anna Elizabeth, writes about "Leaving The Old Home"... "On that last morning, we were ready, waiting in the parlor for the car to come around, when the door opened and a line of women, led by Mrs Carty, came in keening ... the saddest, weirdest wailing you ever heard. (We used to hear it when people were passing in the night, to take the train in Ennis, going to Australia or America.) The women came around to each one crying and kissing our hands. Then, when we were ready to start, I remember Martin Crehan holding up his baby for Mother to kiss, the tears rolling down his cheeks. For the last time, the long road to Kilrush... for the last time before leaving for America and Kansas..." Carhueduff House was passed to Martin Crehan and remains in his family to this day. Many, many descendents of John O'Donnell and Elizabeth have stopped to see the Crehans over the years to catch up on family news. The ties remain unbroken between Ireland and the descendents of John and Elizabeth O'Donnell.

Sources:

Pre-Famine reform and Emigration on the Wyndham Estate in Clare by Flannan P. Enright

Memories of Ireland by Anna Elizabeth O'Donnell, 1950

Ships of Our Ancestors

Trails of the Smoky Hill by Wayne C. Lee and Howard C. Raynesford

O'Donnell and my Research on Ossian's Influence on Modern Greece by Kathleen O'Donnell-Kassimatis

While doing research on Ossian and his influence on Modern Greek literature here in Athens, I discovered the name O'Donnell. Before discussing this connection let us look at how "The Poems of Ossian" made their appearance in Modern Greece.

James Macpherson, a Scot, gathered oral Ossianic ballads in Gaelic and, using some fragments of ancient manuscripts presented the world with a poetic prose translation of "The Poems of Ossian" in 1760 which included "Fingal" and "Temora" (Tara). Soon this work, a harbinger of the Romantic Movement, was translated into numerous European languages by several prominent translators including the Abbot Cesarotti, a professor of Ancient Greek and Latin at Padua University, Italy. Cesarotti became, in fact, a most enthusiastic Ossianic scholar, producing translations of Macpherson's work that came to be considered more evocative of Ossian than those of the Scot; Cesarotti saw Ossian thus:

".... let him be a native of Morven,
or of Ulster ... but no one will say
that he was not the son of Apollo."

Cesarotti also became the most significant conduit between Ossian and the Mediterranean as well as South America.

The great Greek poet Dionysos Solomos, a son of the Ionian island of Zakynthos, resided in various regions of Italy between 1808-1818. It was during these years that the young man was introduced to Ossian through Cesarotti's translations. Solomos later appropriated Ossianic imagery and themes in his own poetry, even referring to Ossian by name in his "Ode to the Moon" written in 1825. So popular did Solomos' poems become among the emerging nation of Modern Greece that he eventually received the honour of being Greece's national poet.

It was while researching the influence of Ossian upon Solomos in particular and the Greek movement for independence in general that I came upon "The History of English Literature" by the Modern Greek critic Georgiadis Arnakis that devoted a chapter to Irish writers, including one

John Francis O'Donnell. Like Solomos, O'Donnell found inspiration in Ossian evoking his image in lines such as:

"I've rhymed to the chieftains and sages; at
councils and camp fires I've sung
Or, heated with mead, flung my hands
where the moon in the skies stood at bay."

(4th verse from the end of "Ossian")

Born in Limerick in 1837, O'Donnell married an Irishwoman by the name of Miss Jones. They had one or two offspring.

As a journalist using noms-de-plume he contributed to various editions of "The Tablet", "Chamber's Journal", "Fun", "The Boston Pilot" and "The Illustrated Magazine". When he went to London in 1861 he had the good fortune of meeting Charles Dickens who, liking his poetry, published it in "All the Year Round". In 1873 O'Donnell set sail for New Zealand having secured a lucrative position. However, he died the following year on May 7, 1874.

My research into Ossianic influence in the Mediterranean also led me to the discovery of another O'Donnell in connection with Ossian, this one, the 16th century Manus O'Donnell (son of Hugh), Prince of Tírconnaill (See "Ó Domhnaill Abú" Newsletter No. 6 Autumn, 1986). Manus O'Donnell's name and work had been evoked by an English translator of Cesarotti's Ossianic writings to refute Samuel Johnson's claim that Macpherson's original translations had been a forgery in a book published by the Highland Society in 1807. To Johnson's assertion that:

"There cannot be recovered in the Erse language five hundred lines of which there is any evidence to prove them a hundred years old."

the translator had countered with O'Donnell's "Life of St. Columkille" (the 6th century cleric who founded the Irish Church in Iona, North West Scotland) written in an Irish narrative that can still be read with ease today. This work is presently housed in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Kathleen O'Donnell-Kassimatis
Athens 21 January, 2000