

## ***Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*:<sup>1</sup> text and context**

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In 1917, the eminent Gaelic scholar, Pádraig Ua Duinnín,<sup>2</sup> published *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*,<sup>3</sup> an edition of a tale in Irish which purports to be an account of a dispute within the Maguire clan in the fourteenth century.<sup>4</sup> The earliest known extant version of the tract is found in MS 1297 (formerly H.2.6) in Trinity College, Dublin which was transcribed by Seán Mac Gabhráin in 1716 under the patronage of Brian Maguire of Knockninny. In the manuscript itself, the tale is entitled ‘Beatha mhic Maghnus sonn’<sup>5</sup> and the tract is described in the library catalogue as ‘exceedingly curious and valuable as illustrating the history of Fermanagh, and throwing light upon Irish manners and clanship in the 14<sup>th</sup> century’.<sup>6</sup> Ua Duinnín noted that ‘the tract is written professedly at a date long after the events it purports to narrate, and seems to have been partly or wholly drawn from manuscript originals’.<sup>7</sup> He also contended that it could not ‘have attained its present form very long before the date 1716, at which it was written “from the old historical book” by John MacGovran or MacGauran (Mac Gabhráin). It is uncertain whether this scribe copied it as it stood or introduced modern forms’.<sup>8</sup> *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, as shall be shown hereafter, is not only a fascinating and valuable text in its own right but when considered in the broader historical context of south Ulster in the early eighteenth century is also a fine example of how such a tract can contribute significantly to our understanding of Gaelic life in an era of social and political change.

In his volume, Ua Duinnín provides the reader not only with his edition of the Irish-language text of the story (pp 23-63) but also an introduction in which the tale is situated in an historical context (pp 7-22). Also included are some notes on the Irish text (pp 65-69);<sup>9</sup> a description of the manuscript itself (pp 69-72); a translation of the text (pp 73-97); a section entitled ‘Flaithsheanchas’, in which the editor provides further details about characters who appear throughout the tale (pp 99-110); a section entitled ‘Dinnsheanchas, etc.’ (pp 111-34), which comprises a list of all the placenames that occur in the text and notes on their provenance; a brief genealogy of the Flanagans of Toora and the Maguire clan (pp 135-136); brief notes on the authorship of the tract (p. 137) as well as the placenames ‘Coole’ and ‘Coolmany’ (p. 138) and, finally, a short description of the contents of what was then classed TCD MS H.2.6 (pp 139-140).

Although Ua Duinnín did not believe that any other copy of the tract existed,<sup>10</sup> the text of the tale is also found in two other manuscripts: CE 17 in Bishop’s House, Waterford and G 147 in the National Library of Ireland. These two later manuscript versions of the story largely follow the Trinity College manuscript and appear to be copies of it.

### *MS 1297 – Trinity College, Dublin*

This manuscript was compiled in 1716 by Seán Mac Gabhráin<sup>11</sup> for Brian Maguire of Knockninny. The text, ‘Me Guidhir Fhearmanach’, is found at the beginning of the manuscript (pp 1-29). A Life of St Maodhóg (*Beatha Mhaodhóg*), and other pieces of prose and poetry make up the rest of the manuscript. A complete account of the contents of the manuscript is available in the *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in Trinity College*.<sup>12</sup>

### *CE 17 – Bishop’s House, Waterford*

The scribe, Cúchonnacht Mac Aodha, copied this manuscript up to page 295 over several months between 1738 and 1739. He had the entire volume bound and his own name appears in English on the front cover, ‘Constantine McHugh 1739’. Mac Aodha’s scribal style is clear and the penmanship very attractive. He made considerable use of conventional scribal abbreviations. Pádraig Ó Fiannachta provided a description of the manuscript and its contents in his *Clár lámhscríbhinní*.<sup>13</sup>

*G 147 – National Library of Ireland, Dublin*

Noted Dublin-based scholar, Muiris Ó Gormáin, collected and copied the material in this manuscript in 1766. Its contents relate primarily to the eighteenth century. Nessa Ní Shéaghadha surmised that Ó Gormáin used MS 1297 as his source when transcribing ‘Me Guidhir Fhearmanach’.<sup>14</sup> Ó Gormáin’s hand is neat but not stylish or decorative and he rarely used scribal contractions. Ní Shéaghadha provided a full description of the contents of G 147 in her catalogue. (See pp 104-5).

Manuscripts Waterford, CE 17 and NLI, G 147 preserve the order of the events of the story as presented in the Trinity College manuscript and, indeed, there is little difference between the versions of the tale presented by each of the three scribes. In respect of the accuracy of spelling and transcription, however, TCD, MS 1297 and NLI, MS G 147 correspond more closely to one another. While he followed the events of the story faithfully, the inaccuracies and spelling mistakes in Waterford, CE 17 seem due to a degree of carelessness on the part of Cúchonnacht Mac Aodha. He sometimes misplaced elements of the original text in his copy and made frequent mistakes in copying the text. One feature of this is the number of times he began writing a particular word but made a mistake before completing it: *gei* for *ccein*, *dis* for *dilis*, *dilis* for *dlighthsi*, *dea* for *daileadh*, for example. (This leads one to speculate that someone might have been reading the original aloud to him in order, perhaps, to enable him to copy the text more quickly). When such errors occurred, Mac Aodha’s practice was to surround the incorrect word or phrase with a series of dots to indicate a mistake. This has the effect of making the manuscript look untidy in places and also serves to make the errors stand out. Mac Aodha and Ó Gormáin included other material found in MS 1297 in their manuscripts, further indicating that both scribes used it as their source.

Central to the story in *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach* is Maghnus, Lord of Fermanagh, who ruled over seven *tuatha* or tribes. Although he was quite elderly, he had a young son who is described in the text as a *leanbán óg éagciallaidhe* [a young weak child not come to the use of reason].<sup>15</sup> Maghnus also had a younger brother, Giolla Íosa, lodging at the time the events described took place with Ó Raghallaigh, his grandfather and king of East Bréifne. Giolla Íosa was young, vigorous and courageous, and loyal to his elder brother. As king of Fermanagh, Maghnus was wont to collect his *cíos ríoghdha* or ‘royal tribute’ from his sub-chieftains at the end of each year. According to the tale, this was his practice over thirty-five years of his reign:

*Agus do bhí ar an órdughadh sin feadh chúig mbliadhán déag agus fithche ag riaghlughadh agus ag follamhnughadh na seacht dtuathann so Fhearmanach mar ba dhú do thriath agus do thighearna, gan imreasan ná easaonta idir chill ná tuaith ann fris an ré sin.*<sup>16</sup>

And he continued in this manner for the space of thirty-five years, directing and ruling those seven tuaths of Fearmanach as became a ruler and a lord, without strife or discord amongst the laity or the clergy there during that time.

However, when illness prevented him from doing so over a period of three years, word spread that Maghnus’s doctor had done all he could for his ailing master and that there was no hope of restoring him to health. Considering that tributes had not been collected for some time, and that their lord’s children were too young to assume high office, some of the sub-chieftains made it known that they would not pay the tribute unless it was collected in person by the lord as had been the usual practice until then. When this news reached Maghnus, he arranged for his stewards to collect the payments owed. The implication in the tale is that Ó Flannagáin,<sup>17</sup> in particular, resented having to pay the tribute (especially as the one who was to receive it was no longer fit to rule) and assumed unilaterally for himself the role of representing the other sub-chieftains. It is also possibly the case that he harboured ambitions for

promotion over the others and saw an opportunity for advancing his own status and that of his family within the power structures of the Maguire lordship - perhaps even ruling in Maghnus's stead. He refused to acknowledge the stewards and insisted that he would pay dues to none but Maghnus himself. The stewards began to seize what cattle and other valuables they could in lieu of the tribute but Ó Flannagáin retaliated, leading an attack on them. In the ensuing skirmish, fifteen members of Maghnus's entourage were killed. Ó Flannagáin himself also perished and his followers suffered significant casualties.

Following the altercation, Maghnus called together his trusted advisors in order to take their counsel. Ó Breisléin<sup>18</sup> advised that he assemble his leading supporters and counsellors and that they investigate the events that took place with a view to establishing what *éiric* (compensation) was due to him for the loss of his people and the refusal of the sub-chieftains to pay the lawful tribute. This proposition met with the approval of the gathering and the consultation took place. Ó Breisléin reported the decision of the gathering, 'that neither party should get an eric or honour price from the other, since many were slain there from both parties and especially since Ó Flannagáin himself had fallen; but to let all that were living live and all that were killed to let them be so' (§16). Maghnus disagreed, accusing Ó Breisléin of making a perverse judgment owing to 'a partiality you have shown towards Ó Flannagáin' and issued his own judgment:

It is certain that each vassal is bound to do homage to his liege and to give him what he is lawfully entitled to; and that therefore they neither obeyed nor did homage to their liege seeing that they denied me my own right, and that thus they are bound to give me an eric for the death of my people, as they shall do later. (§18)

Following the judgment, Maghnus contended that Ó Flannagáin thought his king to be without rightful heir but Maghnus reminded those assembled that he had 'a capable heir at the present time who will have the governing of this county to the seventh generation after me', that heir being his brother, Giolla Íosa. (§21)

Maghnus wrote to Giolla Íosa with details of the uprising who returned home to his brother where the two consulted about how best to proceed. Maghnus stated that he wished Giolla Íosa to 'avenge the death of my people and obtain an eric for them, and moreover that you might bring me my tribute in spite of these chiefs'. (§29) At Maghnus's behest, Giolla Íosa enlisted the support of Ó Domhnaill and his allies, instructing him to 'proceed with that host and not leave a chief or constable in Lower Fearmanach that you will not bring here to me with hands bound or in fetters'. (§33) The rest of the story relates the events that followed but, in summary, Giolla Íosa succeeded in quelling the disturbance and securing the agreement, under oath, of the sub-chieftains to accept the penalty imposed on them, to bow to the authority of Maghnus once more and not to question his rule again. (§§79-80) Several days of feasting then ensued before the sub-chiefs departed for their territories.

Following this successful outcome, Giolla Íosa advised Maghnus that he wished to return to Breifne but that Maghnus ought to employ capable stewards to collect his tribute and to send for him without delay, should any further discord arise. (§87) Magnus remarked that:

It is certain that a country without a chief is dead; and not long shall I live in any case; and life is not a boon to me in this my present plight, since I lost the use of my limbs. ... Do not part from me in that way until I die and do you assume after me the headship of the country, enjoying and defending it, and do not go away from me for the short time I have to live until I die and until you regulate everything that is left by me and until you assume my patrimony and my inheritance when I am gone. (§88)

Giolla Íosa was not keen to accept this transfer of control when there was a rightful heir but Magnus responded, pointing out 'these heirs are not more my care than you are; and I prefer that they as well as you should enjoy a long-extended life rather than that they should lose the entire county from your not defending it'. (§90) Magnus then outlined the terms of the transfer:

'I will mention here the portion of territory I should like my heir to possess and the conditions on which I will cede to you my right to the country. And these are the conditions: If my heirs come to maturity that they and their heirs should be sharers in the secrets and counsels both of yourself and of your heirs after you. Secondly, that they should, under you, have the forming and regulating of every decree and every compact. (§90-91)

Magnus then named the lands he wished to hold on to and preserve for his descendants in posterity. Giolla Íosa agreed to the terms, although he expressed the reservation that the other lords might think 'that it was in consideration of my service to you as regards these tuaths of Fearmanach, or because you yourself are losing your vigour of limb and your strength, that I took over the headship of your country or the inheritance which is the right of your own son.' (§94) Magnus assured him that:

It will not be so considered in any part of Ulaidh, for it is not you who are asking it of me, but it is I who understand the harm that would come of there not being a leading ruler over the county after my death. For this reason, I deem it more just to leave this settlement behind me while I am alive so that my own heir and you may reap the advantage of it ... And in the presence of the ollamhs who are here and of as many of the clergy and the laity as are on the spot I am ordaining all these things and leaving my own rights and this county of Fearmanach to you on the conditions mentioned above. And do you, Giolla na Naomh Ó Luinín, commit to writing all these things.

Well then, said Giolla Íosa, in God's name I will let you have your way and I undertake to fulfil every one of these conditions. (§95)

There then followed a period of a year and a half during which Magnus and Giolla Íosa ruled together over the seven tuaths of Fermanagh before Magnus finally passed away, leaving his kingdom in peace and the lordship thereof secure.

As Ua Duinnín observed in his introduction to the text 'Given the king [i.e. Magnus], then, the elements of the story hang together with the beauty and sequence of dramatic truth. But was there such a king?'<sup>19</sup> With that simple question he raised a core issue at the heart of this tale, that of its historical authenticity. Paul Walsh noted that the earliest mention of Fir Manach (from which the name Fermanagh derives) occurs in the Annals of Ulster in AD 1009 where ancestors of three families from which came lords who ruled Fermanagh between 1009 and 1212 are first listed.<sup>20</sup> The leadership of the representatives of these families came to an end early in the thirteenth century and the O'Donnells began to emerge as the predominant clan.<sup>21</sup> However, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Maguire clan came to the fore as the pre-eminent family and it is from them that the lords of Fermanagh were drawn until the early part of the seventeenth century.<sup>22</sup> The tale, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, is set in this approximate period and purports to relate a series of events that involves two of these lords, Magnus and Giolla Íosa, who are described as rulers of Maguire clan in the early 1300s. Ua Duinnín noted that:

The Genealogies certainly give Magnus and Giolla Íosa as brothers, and sons of Donn Mór son of Ragnall, etc., and tell us moreover that from Magnus sprang the MacManuses of Seanadh and that from Giolla Íosa sprang the kings of Fermanagh. Both the Annals and the Genealogies

state, moreover, that Donn Carrach, son of Domhnall, son of Giolla Íosa was the first of the Maguires to rule over Fermanagh. This Donn died in 1302 according to the Annals and to O Clery's Genealogies, Mac Firbis giving a slightly different date, and is known to have signed an official document as King of Lough Erne, that is, of Fermanagh, in 1297, five years earlier. There is a Donn Mag Uidhir mentioned in the annals under the year 1264, who may have been the same personage and who certainly cannot be the Donn Mór who was father of Maghnus and Giolla Íosa, if we follow our tract and give Maghnus about forty years of rule over Fermanagh. It would seem, therefore, that the Annals and Genealogies do not leave room for the reign of Maghnus Ma Guidhir or for that of his brother, as kings of Fermanagh. Moreover, the history of Fermanagh as given in the Annals during the century preceding the death of Donn Carrach maintains a perfect silence as regards the incidents and characters described in our tract.<sup>23</sup>

Going further, Ua Duinnín listed such evidence as he could glean from the Annals in respect of the history of Fermanagh, outlining the main characters who are mentioned therein and trying to trace the thread over the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. In light of his analysis of the evidence available, Ua Duinnín reached the following conclusion:

From all these facts we may conclude that neither Maghnus nor Giolla Íosa Ma Guidhir was king of Fermanagh in the full sense of the term, and that if they ruled over the country as described in our tract it must have been as acting lords for Ó Domhnaill of Tyrconnell, who at the beginning of the thirteenth century had sprung into prominence and power.<sup>24</sup>

Noted Fermanagh historian, Pádraig Ó Maolagáin, concurred with this view.<sup>25</sup> Cunningham and Gillespie also noted that a set of events similar to those described in 'Me Guidhir Fhearmanach' is recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters as having occurred in the late fifteenth century among ancestors of Brian Maguire of Knockninny.<sup>26</sup> While the incidents that occurred bear a striking resemblance to Mac Gabhráin's tale, the names of the characters involved are not the same as those in *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*. The similarity between the two descriptions cannot be ignored, though, and as Cunningham and Gillespie note, 'This is the only set of circumstances from the history of the Maguires as preserved in the annals which roughly corresponds to events in Brian Maguire's pseudo-historical tract'.<sup>27</sup> The incident is retold in a manuscript history of Fermanagh<sup>28</sup> authored in English between 1718-19 by T. Dolan, which is preserved in the National Library of Ireland (MS 2085) but, once again, the names of the characters are different.

While all this serves to demonstrate that Mac Gabhráin appeared to manipulate historical fact to serve the purpose of giving his tale the appearance of antiquity and historical validation, Ua Duinnín also noted his attempts to use language to similar ends and remarked:

There are some traces of partial modernisation; thus *féin* and *budh dhéin* are placed more than once in pleonastic juxtaposition; the promiscuous use of *for* and *air (ar) forra* and *orra*, etc., seems to point in the same direction.<sup>29</sup>

In the main, the type of Irish used in the tract suggests that it was written probably in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries. It is certainly not the Irish of the fourteenth century. Other anachronisms in the text point to the dubious nature of the author's claims for its antiquity. For example, there are twenty-one occurrences of the word *conda* (county).<sup>30</sup> If this were a term common to the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, then we should not be surprised at its appearance. However, the term 'county' was not used in Fermanagh until the beginning of the seventeenth century.<sup>31</sup> If the term was coming into use around that time, it is reasonable to assume that it had become more established by the

early eighteenth century and the number of occurrences of the term in the text attests to that probability. Paul Walsh remarked that the expression *macaibh Suibhne*, which appears six times in the text, is a fifteenth century one, at the earliest.<sup>32</sup> Its use here may be an attempt to invoke antiquity or it may simply be the case that Mac Gabhráin was familiar with it in other texts and unconsciously introduced into the tract.

At the beginning of the tale, Mac Gabhráin stated that he was drawing on the *seanleabhar seanchais Fhearmanach* (the old book of Fermanagh lore).<sup>33</sup> In her review of Ua Duinnín's edition, Helena Concannon suggested a possible link between this *seanleabhar seanchais* and another *seanleabhar*, the 'Old Book of the O'Clerys of Donegal'.<sup>34</sup> She cited as her source Owen Connellan's English translation of the Annals of the Four Masters in which Connellan included an English translation of *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*.<sup>35</sup> Connellan stated that the translation had been made 'from the Irish original, a valuable MS in the possession of Mr Geraghty, the publisher of these Annals, and which is considered to have been compiled towards the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, about A.D. 1740, from the old books of the O'Clerys of Donegal, by James Maguire, a learned writer, native of Fermanagh'.<sup>36</sup> It has not proven possible to trace this source and so it is therefore difficult to say with any certainty what actual sources Mac Gabhráin might have used when he drafted *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*. Aubrey Gwynn points out that it is unlikely that he was able to use the Annals of Ulster, as their whereabouts between the years 1636-1750 are disputed.<sup>37</sup> Mac Gabhráin may have had access to the Four Masters but this cannot be proven either, since it is not known how widely available they were at the time. The Four Masters themselves were in Fermanagh in 1632, when they used the Annals of Ulster in drawing up their annals. Given the lack of certainty around the possible sources, it is almost impossible to determine whether the tale was composed wholly around the beginning of the eighteenth century or whether it was drafted from fragments of earlier sources, written or possibly oral, still available at the time. Bernadette Cunningham and Raymond Gillespie have suggested that the story 'reached the form in which it was preserved in the manuscripts of Brian Maguire in his own lifetime. It presented the past, in obviously anachronistic terms, as it might have been, rather than concerning itself unduly with loyalty to any primary source material'.<sup>38</sup> Given the questions the provenance of the text raises about its origins, it is difficult to quibble with that assessment.

Thus the question which the text *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach* raises most persistently is 'Why was it written?' given that, at best, it would appear to be an amalgam of historical fact, creative fiction and, perhaps, a degree of deliberate political propaganda for familial ambition. One commentator observed that 'though little more than a fragment of a story, it is woven in such a fashion that one might assert it possesses the essence of an historical novel'.<sup>39</sup> It is clearly more than that, however. The best explication of the possible aims of the tract's writer and those of his patron, Brian Maguire of Knockninny, has been outlined by Bernadette Cunningham and Raymond Gillespie.<sup>40</sup> They used historical evidence and the context of the time to map the decline of a great dynasty - and the subsequent rise of a moderate scion thereof - and, more crucially, assessed the tale in the context of the shifting political, cultural and linguistic landscape of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

They take as their starting point the basic premise that 'by tracing the items sponsored by particular patrons we can construct a relatively comprehensive picture of an individual's cultural and literary concerns'.<sup>41</sup> They examined the manuscripts (the collection of which had been overseen by Brian Maguire) and treated them 'as a coherent body of material assembled not by accident, but according to the interests of the patron who sponsored it.' Casting an eye over several hundred years of Maguire history, they demonstrated that the branch of the family to which Brian's forebears belonged declined in status in the early sixteenth century and that the headship of the family passed to another line of Maguires who had fought on the side of the English during the Nine Years' War and who became barons of Enniskillen. This line, headed by Conor, second Baron Enniskillen, fell out of favour after he was executed for his role in the rebellion of 1641. The headship then passed to another line, known as the

Maguires of Tempo, who acquired land arising from the plantation of Ulster. Although the Knockninny Maguires were minor figures at the time, Brian's father, Conchubhar Modartha, 'used the fluid situation created by the plantation to improve his status' and benefited from tenancies under Lord Balfour.<sup>42</sup> Conchubhar Modartha and his son, Brian, gradually established a growing status within the barony of Knockninny. A manifestation of this was Conchubhar Modartha's refurbishment of the chapel of Callowhill in the parish of Kinawley which included the creation of a burial ground for the family. Following Conchubhar's death, Brian had a stately tomb erected over his father's grave which bore a coat of arms and by the end of the seventeenth century, he served as a captain in the Jacobite army, which is a measure of the standing he had achieved by then. Cunningham and Gillespie assert that social advancement of the kind they describe within the period of two generations was not unprecedented in the Ireland of the seventeenth century but that:

families who had advanced thus on the social scale felt that they also needed to justify their new social position. The social requirements of the day also demanded that the upwardly mobile family should behave in a manner appropriate to their newfound station. Both of these interdependent demands lay behind Brian Maguire of Knockninny's activities as a patron and manuscript collector.<sup>43</sup>

Against that background, then, how did Seán Mac Gabhráin's *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach* assist Brian Maguire's drive for upward social mobility? A remark made by Cunningham and Gillespie provides a significant clue: 'Apart altogether from the act of patronage which befitted one of Brian's social standing, in the eyes of both native and settler, much of the material transcribed had direct relevance to Brian's concerns and preoccupations'.<sup>44</sup> The key phrase here is 'in the eyes of both native and settler'. If we take this remark, coupled with the fact that the details, characters and events outlined in the story cannot entirely be traced in other reliable historical sources such as the annals and genealogies, then the assertion that 'the story appears to be a conflation of several historical events into one "origin tale" of the family of Brian Maguire of Knockninny'<sup>45</sup> is the only reasonable conclusion a reader can draw. Ua Duinnín himself observed that 'though it is difficult to fix the precise moorings of our narrative, there can be no doubt that the picture it gives us is, in broad outline, a truly historical picture'.<sup>46</sup> It must be assumed that what he meant by that remark is that there is sufficient detail in the story to warrant application of the epithet 'historical' but that the 'narrative' is a story in which significant creative licence has been invoked.<sup>47</sup>

Given the fact that the structure of Irish society underwent such fundamental change between 1550 and 1750, it is not unreasonable to conclude that Gaelic patronage and literature would evolve in response to political and social developments.<sup>48</sup> Following in the footsteps of his father, Conchubhar Modartha, Brian Maguire was at the heart of negotiating this cultural shift. He needed to root in the traditions and culture of his Gaelic heritage his emerging status in the area in which his family was growing steadily more prominent. The lands around Knockninny were granted at the time of the plantation to the Balfours and the Maguires managed to acquire leases from the Balfours, the terms of which improved with each new grant.<sup>49</sup> Building on the efforts of his father before him, it is clear that Brian Maguire was carefully moulding a new status for himself in an evolving cultural milieu. In that context, therefore, it is very likely that he wished to keep an eye on the native and settler agenda. Having a text which spoke to the antiquity of his family through reference to long-established norms in Gaelic culture was extremely important, as it would have had the effect of reminding the local native population of its links to ancient and hallowed Gaelic tradition. The implications of a story that had at its core a chieftain of the Maguire line in charge of the county, who was capable of orchestrating the suppression of an uprising - even though seriously ill - then restoring successfully peace and good relationships between the errant sub-chieftains, and demonstrating a desire to maintain a rule that was

fair and peaceful are obvious. Brian Maguire could be seen and regarded by the new political regime as one whose wider family and whose forebears respected the rule of law and for whom peace, stability and prosperity were core considerations. Such a reputation could only strengthen his position within that regime. So, the opening paragraphs of *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach* may be interpreted as functioning as a *mise en scène*, recounting a mixture of historical and semi-historical information that laid down a firm foundation for what was to follow in the main part of the story.

These opening paragraphs of the story briefly but effectively situate the Maguire lineage in ancient Gaelic lore and tradition, thereby creating the aura of venerable antiquity. Paragraph 1 contains a *precis* of an ancient family pedigree from Maghnus and Giolla Íosa back into the mists of time and the rise of the Maguire dynasty. Paragraphs 2 and 4 refer to their forebears, Cormac and Nadhshluaigh, who divided the territories of Fermanagh and Monaghan between them. Paragraph 3 introduces a story that purports to account for the naming of Lough Derg (County Donegal), which allows the narrator to explain how central a role St Patrick played in the matter and further links events described in the tract to the Patrician era and thus neatly creates a link between the Maguires and St Patrick himself. In Paragraph 5 the narrator claims that the Maguires are kings of Fermanagh: 'From this Giolla Íosa sprang all the kings of Fermanach; and from Magnus sprang the Clann Maghnusa of Seanadh in every place in which they are found'.<sup>50</sup> Paragraph 6 lists the sub-chieftains of the seven tuaths of Fermanagh and Paragraph 7 names all the termoners with responsibility for church lands 'in the time of Donn Mór, son of Raghnaill', information the importance of which would have been understood readily by the native inhabitants familiar with local, long-established tradition. These seven introductory paragraphs establish the roots of the tale in antiquity and tradition, and in so doing, ensure that the suggestion of ancient authority from which it is drawn is communicated at the outset to its readers or, indeed, to hearers of its recitation. The conclusion of the tract, which describes the discussion between Maghnus and Giolla Íosa about the transfer of the lordship of the county to Giolla Íosa following Maghnus's death, provides a neat historical context for Brian Maguire's claim to status as a man of substance in Knockninny. The agreement stipulated that Maghnus's heirs should always be *lucht cogair agus comhairle*<sup>51</sup> to Giolla Íosa and his descendants (§90) and assigned to them ninety tates that correspond to the baronies of Coole and Knockninny, where Maghnus resided. (§92) (Such a position of privilege was likely to have been advantageous at the time of the plantation when grants of land were being made.)<sup>52</sup> The status of the tract is furthered bolstered by the inclusion of other tales along with it, some of which drew on continental sources.<sup>53</sup> While these stories had no direct bearing on local events, they too belonged to the genre of heroic narrative and the implication of their appearance alongside *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach* is likely to have been a reinforcement of the message that this was a text of standing in a much broader cultural context.<sup>54</sup> Such an implication would have assisted greatly Brian Maguire's desire to be known as a man of letters.

Acknowledgment of his reputation is given in the following brief preface by Mac Gabhráin in praise of Brian Maguire, which appears at the start of TCD, MS 1297 just before the text, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*.<sup>55</sup>

*Ag so leabhar Bhriain Mhe Guidhir Mhic Conchubhair Mhodartha Mhic Bhriain Mhic Sheáin Mhic Fheidhleime Dhuibh Mhic Giolla Phádraig Mhic Éamuinn na Cúile, bíatach iomlán chongbhus teach aoidheadh prionsópálta le haghaidh uasal agus ísiol, éigsi agus ollamhan, aos ciúil agus oirfide, oide oileamhna agus altruim na n-órd gcráibhtheach a n-aimsir persecution, déirceach agus tiodhlaiceach do bhochtaibh, do bhaintreabhuibh agus do dhileachtuibh agus do dheibhleinnibh dearóile Dé; duine do chaill mórán airgid le hathnúadh, le sgríobhadh agus le fúasgladh iomad leabhar ó Ghallaibh agus ó Ghaedhealaibh chum maithiosa na cundae, do mhéadughadh ar anama agus onóra an chinidh dá bhfuil, do mhéadughadh glóire agus onóra*



*Dé, agus a sochar dá anam agus go ndeachaidh. Jany ye vii, 1716/17. Ansúd an ceathramh lá don nDoluic.*

[This is the book of Brian Me Guidhir son of Conchubhar Modartha son of Brian son of Seán son of Feidhleime Dubh son of Giolla Phádraig son of Eamonn of Coole, i.e. an entirely generous host who keeps a principal house of hospitality for the great and the lowly, for poets and the learned, for musicians and performers, for tutors and protectors of religious orders in times of persecution, for alms for the poor and indigent, for widows and orphans and for all the unfortunate weaklings of God; a man who has spent a great deal of money on the restoration, the transcription and the preservation of many books of both the English and Irish for the good of the county, for the promotion of the name and honour of his kind as they are, for the greater glory and honour of God, and for the benefit of his soul, and so may it be. Jan[uary] ye vii, 1716/17. Here on the fourth day of December.]

The thrust of the scribe's testimony here cannot be misinterpreted. It is a fulsome description of the role Brian Maguire had assumed for himself at Knockninny. While it appears at the outset of the manuscript and therefore refers to its contents as a whole, the fact that *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach* follows immediately after it is probably significant because it serves to ensure that the tract which provides a pseudo-historical basis for his status within the native tradition is accorded pride of place in the collection. The reference here to both *Gall agus Gael* (English and Irish) is noteworthy, too, as it is an explicit acknowledgment of the new cultural and political context which obtains in Fermanagh and is a clear statement of Brian Maguire's intention to negotiate the evolving landscape. Cunningham and Gillespie also noted a similar panegyric for Brian Maguire in MS C.vi.1 in the Royal Irish Academy, which contains the Book of Knockninny, in which similar language was used to extol his virtues and where, again, specific reference is made to both native and settler: 'a keeper of a hostelry for English and Irish, musicians and literati'.<sup>56</sup> The import of these references cannot be underestimated and Cunningham and Gillespie make the point that in the early eighteenth-century context:

the act of patronage itself was of importance to both natives and settlers in an evolving county society ... [and that] it would appear that within both settler and native Irish society throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries there was a process of consolidation following the turbulent decades of the 1640s and 1650s. This impetus towards consolidation manifested itself in the self-conscious patronage of writings which were historical justifications of newly won positions.<sup>57</sup>

The point is well made and the evidence supports the case that Maguire was keen to root his newly-emerging and evolving status in a tradition that reached far back into Gaelic antiquity. In the text of the obituary of Cathal Óg Mac Maghnusa (+AD 1498) in both the Annals of Ulster and the Annals of the Four Masters the language used is very similar to that which Seán Mac Gabhráin and Séamas Mag Uidhir employed when penning their panegyrics recognising the patronage of Brian Maguire. Compare the entries:

Mac Maghnus Méig Uidhir died this year, that is, Cathal Óg son of Cathal son of Giolla Pádraig son of Matha, etc. One who was hospitaller over Seanadh ... and the one to whom were most grateful the bardic companies and strangers and poor mendicants of Ireland ... and the one who planned and compiled and assembled this book from very many others.  
[Annals of Ulster]

Mac Maghnusa of An Seanadh, i.e. Cathal Óg son of Cathal son of Cathal son of Giolla Pádraig son of Matha, etc., a man who kept a house of general hospitality, a hospitaller at Seanadh Meic Mhaghnessa ... and a fountain of charity and mercy to the poor and indigent of the Lord; he it was who collected together many historical books from which he had compiled the Historical Book of Baile Meic Mhaghnessa.<sup>58</sup>  
[Annals of the Four Masters]

It is very probable that Seán Mac Gabhráin was familiar with these obituary texts and, in particular, was aware of their relevance in a Fermanagh context (owing to the Mac Maghnusa connection) and how the wording in them might be manipulated for the benefit of Brian Maguire's reputation. Echoing a link - however tenuous - with one of Fermanagh's greatest literary sons would not have been lost on those with any knowledge of the native canon of literature and history. Perhaps Mac Gabhráin simply felt that they represented accurately what Brian Maguire of Knockninny was attempting to achieve and that he himself could contribute to the project through his scribal work and by drawing attention to Maguire's patronage through the composition of such panegyrics. After all, it was in the nature of those who benefitted from patronage to discharge faithfully the will of their master and one must assume that there was some degree of communication between patron and scribe as to what the primary purpose of the work was. Cunningham and Gillespie observed that:

Brian Maguire had to come to terms with two traditions [and] two systems. He constructed a monument to his past in Gaelic terms through his manuscript collections. The magnificent tomb erected in memory of his father, and the adoption of a coat of arms was part of the same procedure within the context of settler values. These two systems were not distinct. It is clear that Brian Maguire's efforts at literary patronage were intended as much for the furtherance of an emerging English-style 'county' society in which the native Irish were becoming involved, as to impress his Gaelic contemporaries. Native and settler in late seventeenth and early eighteenth century Ulster were engaged in parallel quests to come to terms with, consolidate and justify their newfound social positions.<sup>59</sup>

That is certainly a valid assessment and it is important to recognise the role played in the project by scribes such as Seán Mac Gabhráin and Séamas Mag Uidhir, who were central to its success through their knowledge of and ability to negotiate the Gaelic literary world. In so far as it is possible to tell, it would appear that Mac Gabhráin, through his work on *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach* in particular, managed to provide Brian Maguire with a ready-made tale that had all the ingredients of an enjoyable heroic adventure with which to draw in the reader and yet maintain just the right amount of detail to provide historical leaven for the whole. The import of the text cannot be underestimated as it allowed Brian Maguire to cement his position within a new social order. In doing so, he sought to respect and draw on the heritage of the native Gaelic literary and oral tradition while simultaneously seeking ways in which fulfil his ultimate ambition in respect of his reputation in that new order. A line from the scribal testimonial to the Book of Knockninny (RIA, MS C vi 1) very neatly sums up what the essence of that ambition was:

Now since neither we nor these poor scribes are competent to make poems or verses, we are bound by right and conscience to write truly and veraciously in prose of the good repute and noble qualities of this gentlemen, so that what we write may live after him and may be a model for his descendants to imitate his goodly deeds - the which fortune may God grant them according to His own will and that of men - and if his posterity so do, their children's children

shall never fail or drop into obscurity.<sup>60</sup>

The role of the scribe is defined clearly here; it was not their task nor, indeed, their competence to compose material in honour of their patron. Their understanding of the purpose of their endeavours was simply to copy a selection of ancient prose and poetry and to commit to paper a true and accurate account of Brian Maguire's 'good repute and noble qualities'. One might suggest that whether they themselves wanted to do so or not, that is exactly what they were employed to do and they simply discharged their duty in that regard. However, it must also be averred from what is written above - no matter how formulaic the statement might appear - that Seán Mac Gabhráin 'by right and conscience' provided the tale, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, as part of Brian Maguire's compilation of manuscripts precisely to engineer for his patron a literary legacy and a reputation that would endure. The fact that it has to this day is testament to the audacious vision of the entire project.

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<sup>1</sup> The surname Maguire is usually rendered *Mag Uidhir* in Irish but for the sake of continuity, the form used by Ua Duinnín, *Me Guidhir*, is employed throughout this essay. Fermanagh is *Fear Manach* in modern Irish but, in deference to Ua Duinnín's edition and for the sake of continuity, *Fearmanach* is used here.

<sup>2</sup> Pádraig Ua Duinnín was also known as Patrick Dineen. 'Ó Duinnín' rather than 'Ua Duinnín' is the usual spelling in modern Irish but as 'Ua Duinnín' is the form used in the printed volume, that spelling is retained here.

<sup>3</sup> Pádraig Ua Duinnín (ed.), *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1917).

<sup>4</sup> Found in a manuscript held in the library of Trinity College, Dublin which is numbered MS 1297.

<sup>5</sup> 'The life of the sons of Maghnus herewith'. The text in the manuscript begins with the following line: *Bladh do ghabháltas, ⁊ do bheatha chloinne Dhuinn mhóir, mac Rághnaill mhe Guidhir .i. Maghnus ⁊ Giolla Íosa annso síos ar na thionsgnughadh aníodh an seiseadh lá fithchiod do mhí Mháarta 1716, ⁊ ar na sgríobhadh as an seanleabhar Seanchais do Sheán mhágabhran, mac Cobhthaigh, etc.* ['Herewith a fragment of the rule and the life of the children of Donn Mór, son of Rághnall ma Guidhir, namely Maghnus and Giolla Íosa, begun today, the twenty-sixth of March 1716, and written from the old book of lore by Seán mhágabhran, son of Cobhthach, etc.'].  
<sup>6</sup> T.K. Abbott & E.J. Gwynn, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in Trinity College* (Dublin, 1921), p. 74.

<sup>7</sup> Ua Duinnín, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Ua Duinnín commented on his reasoning for providing the notes and translation thus: *Ós rud é go bhfuil aistriú dá chur leis an dtráchtas sa leabhar so le haghaidh lucht staire, táim ag cur na gluaise seo im' dhiaidh leis le haghaidh na mac léinn.* [As I have provided a translation of the tract in this volume for the benefit of historians, I supply the following glossary for the use of students.] See p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> Ua Duinnín, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, p. 69. *Ní dóigh liom go bhfuil ach aon chóip amháin den tráchtas atá i gcló sa leabhar seo le fáil anois, .i. an chóip atá sa lámhscríbhinn H.2.6 TCD.* [I think there is only one copy of the tract published in this book now extant, i.e. the copy in MS H.2.6. TCD].

<sup>11</sup> TCD, MS 1297 includes an account of the Life of St Maodhóg (Mogue) which Mac Gabhráin also copied. At the end of that particular part of the manuscript, the scribe signed his name in English, 'John Ma Gauran, July the 20<sup>th</sup>, 1716' (See *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, p. 140.) St Maodhóg was closely linked to the nearby parish of Templeport in the diocese of Kilmore. Cf. Bernadette Cunningham & Raymond Gillespie, 'The purposes of patronage', p. 45.

<sup>12</sup> Abbott & Gwynn, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in Trinity College*, pp 74-6.

<sup>13</sup> Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, *Clár lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge: Leabharlanna na cléire agus mionchnuasaigh*, Fascúl I (Baile Átha Cliath, 1987), pp 21-23. CE 17, as well as other Irish-language manuscripts catalogued by Ó Fiannachta in St John's College, Waterford, were held there until the college was closed in 1999 and the manuscripts transferred to the Diocesan Archive at Bishop's House, St John's Hill in Waterford.

<sup>14</sup> Nessa Ní Shéaghdha, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library* (Dublin, 1977), iv, pp 101-2. As Cúchonnacht Mac Aodha's manuscript pre-dates Ó Gormáin's by almost thirty years, it is reasonable to surmise that Mac Aodha copied his version from MS 1297.

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<sup>15</sup> Ua Duinnín, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, p. 57, §88. (English translation, p. 93.) Ua Duinnín divided the tract into 100 paragraphs of varying length, which is useful for the purposes of referring to various parts of the story and for the sake of convenience, the practice is continued here.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29, §11. (English translation, p. 77.)

<sup>17</sup> The Ó Flannagáin clan were hereditary chieftains of *Tuath Rátha* (Toora) in the barony of Magheraboy. (Cf. Ua Duinnín, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, p. 134.)

<sup>18</sup> Members of this family were hereditary brehons (or legal advisers) to the Maguires.

<sup>19</sup> Ua Duinnín, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Paul Walsh, 'The chieftains of Fermanagh' (Part I) in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (May 1920), p. 364. (hereafter *IER*.) The persons in question are named as Eigneach, Dubhdara and Maelruanaidh. See also Peadar Livingstone, *The Fermanagh story* (Enniskillen, 1969), p. 20, fns 33-35.

<sup>21</sup> Ua Duinnín, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, pp 9-10.

<sup>22</sup> Walsh provided a complete list of these lords in 'The chieftains of Fermanagh' (Part II) in *IER* (June 1921), pp 515-84. The rise of the Maguire family is traced fully by Katharine Simms in 'The medieval kingdom of Lough Erne' in *Clogher Record*, 9 (1977), pp 126-41 at pp 129-33.

<sup>23</sup> Ua Duinnín, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, pp 8-9.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> Pádraig Ó Maolagáin, 'An early history of Fermanagh' in *Clogher Record*, 1:4 (1956), pp 113-25. In his pedigree chart of the 'Maguire family and offshoots' on pp 120-21, compiled from MacFírbisigh transcript, RIA, MS 23 K 45; 'Geinealaighe Fhearmanach' in *Analecta Hibernica*, 3 (1931), pp 62-150, he demonstrates the genealogical status of Maghnus and Giolla Íosa.

<sup>26</sup> Cunningham & Gillespie, 'The purposes of patronage', p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Pádraig Ó Maolagáin, 'An early history of Fermanagh' in *Clogher Record*, 1:5 (1957), pp 54-55. The entire text of this history was reproduced by Ó Maolagáin in volumes 1 & 2 of *Clogher Record*. See *Clogher Record* (1955), pp 131-40; (1956), pp 113-25; (1957), pp 50-70; (1958), pp 280-92; (1959), pp 458-68 and (1960-1), pp 42-49.)

<sup>29</sup> Ua Duinnín, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, §§4, 5, 6, 8, 13, 14, 15, 21, 31, 87, 90, 93, 95.

<sup>31</sup> Livingstone, *The Fermanagh story*, pp 57-66, esp. p. 63. See also Litton Falkiner, *Illustrations of Irish History* (London, 1904), pp 124-29 and Henry Morley, *Ireland under Elizabeth and James I* (London, 1890), p. 328.

<sup>32</sup> Walsh, 'The chieftains of Fermanagh', p. 573. Ua Duinnín also notes occurrences of the phrase in the Annals of Ulster for the years 1522 and 1540, as well as references in the Annals of the Four Masters for the years 1522 and 1527. See *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, pp 101-102. The phrase occurs in §§33, 38, 58, 66, 75 and 83 of the text.

<sup>33</sup> Ua Duinnín, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> Helena Concannon, 'The Maguires of Fermanagh' in *Studies: an Irish Quarterly Review*, 6:23 (September 1917), pp 503-4.

<sup>35</sup> Owen Connellan (ed.), *Annals of the Four Masters* (Dublin, 1846), pp 633-40.

<sup>36</sup> Connellan (ed.), *Annals of the Four Masters*, p. 633. It should be noted that whereas Connellan simply referred to 'the old books of the O'Clerys of Donegal', Concannon used the term 'old book of the O'Clerys of Donegal'. This was simply a typological error in Concannon's review but one that would make a significant difference to how the phrase might be interpreted. 'Old books of the O'Clerys' may simply refer to a loose collection of written sources whereas using the term 'old book of the O'Clerys' connotes something much more formal. It is also possible that the phrase 'the old books of Fermanagh, O'Clery' (or whoever/whatever) was a convenient scribal shorthand reference to any written sources in existence or known to the scribe. An example of this is in a reference in the O'Clerys Martyrology of Donegal to litanies contained in a twelfth-century manuscript (TCD, H.2.18) as 'an old ancient vellum book'. (See <https://celt.ucc.ie/published/G206009.html>, fn 1.)

<sup>37</sup> Aubrey Gwynn, 'Cathal Mac Maghnusa' in *Clogher Record*, 2 (1959), p. 384. Connellan was critical of what she described as Mac Gabhráin's 'utter disregard ... for the evidence of the Annals of Ulster'. (See 'The Maguires of Fermanagh', p. 504.)

<sup>38</sup> Cunningham & Gillespie, 'The purposes of patronage', p. 42.

<sup>39</sup> Cathal Ó Háinle, 'An tÚrscéal nár tháinig' in Cathal Ó Háinle, *Promhadh Pinn* (Maigh Nuad, 1974), p. 95. *Tá saothar beag eile de chuid an 18ú céad ann atá fuinte go maith sa chaoi, cé nach bhfuil ann ach blúire de scéal, go bhféadfai a cheapadh go bhfuil mianach an úrscéil stairiúil ann.* Connellan suggested in her review that the text was

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'extremely interesting as an Irish forerunner both of the historical novel and the novel with a purpose'. See 'The Maguires of Fermanagh', p. 504.)

<sup>40</sup> Cunningham & Gillespie, 'The purposes of patronage', pp 38-49.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>46</sup> Ua Duinnín, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, p. 21. The question of the historical nature of medieval texts has been discussed by various scholars. Katharine Simms, for example, has noted that 'overtly historical tracts concerning post-Norman family history have received uneven treatment.' In some instances, historical narratives long thought of as being historical in nature have been shown to be quite the opposite. She cited the anonymous Irish narrative of the Bruce invasion, *Cath Fhochairte Brighite*, as an example stating that it 'has been revealed as a nineteenth-century forgery.' See Katharine Simms, 'Literary sources for the history of Gaelic Ireland in the post-Norman period' in Kim McCone and Katharine Simms (eds), *Progress in medieval Irish studies* (Maynooth, 1996), p. 209.

<sup>47</sup> The text is replete with references to activities that were commonplace in ancient tales, e.g., the swearing of oaths (§§73 & 80); banqueting and feasting (§§2, 9, 19, 23, 26, 27, 35 & 83) and custom and law relating to concepts such as *éiric* or 'honour-price' (§§15, 16, 17, *et seq.*).

<sup>48</sup> Cunningham & Gillespie, 'The purposes of patronage', pp 38-9.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp 40-1. Marianne Elliott, drawing on various sources stated that 'the plantation played havoc with this intensely status-conscious society. Suddenly people deemed their social inferiors (Irish and British alike) were rising on the social ladder while those who would normally have been in the elite were rapidly declining. This elitism and social snobbery of Gaelic society is frequently overlooked.' Elliott noted that some contemporary commentators observed that the native people held great store by their pedigree and were proud of being able to trace their lineage back through the generations. She concluded that 'this older lineage definition of status was to continue in Ulster Catholic society alongside the newer landed one, quite independently of wealth and property, and was undoubtedly responsible for the long memory of customary land rights.' See Marianne Elliott, *The Catholics of Ulster: A history* (London, 2000), p. 95.

<sup>50</sup> Ua Duinnín, *Me Guidhir Fhearmanach*, §5, p. 75.

<sup>51</sup> This phrase may be translated as 'confidants and advisers'.

<sup>52</sup> Concannon, 'The Maguires of Fermanagh', p. 505; Walsh, 'The chieftains of Fermanagh', pp 572-3; Livingstone, *The Fermanagh story*, p. 63 & p. 475, fn. 14; Cuthbert McGrath: 'Í Eódhasa' in *Clogher Record*, 2 (1957), pp 1-19 at p. 6; Ó Háinle, 'An tUrsceál nár tháinig', p. 96.

<sup>53</sup> Cunningham & Gillespie, 'The purposes of patronage', p. 43.

<sup>54</sup> Bernadette Cunningham and Raymond Gillespie explore how and why manuscript collections of tales were configured in particular ways in 'Owners and users: The changing contexts of the Book of Ballymote' in Ruairí Ó hUiginn (ed.), *Book of Ballymote: Codices Hibernenses Eximii II* (Dublin, 2018), pp 251- 71, esp. pp 254-55.

<sup>55</sup> While this preface is omitted entirely by Ó Gormáin in NLI, G 147, Mac Aodha, in his manuscript, introduces part of it into the preamble to his version of the tale but does not reproduce it in full.

<sup>56</sup> Cunningham and Gillespie, 'The purposes of patronage', p. 47, fn 44. The role of 'biatach' or 'hospitaller' and the keeping of a place of hospitality was highly important in Irish society and standard references to this occur in various sources - especially in the Annals. (Cf. Rev. C. O'Connor, DD, *An historical address on the calamities occasioned by foreign influence in the nomination of bishops to Irish Sees - Part II* (Buckingham, 1812), p. 305: '1512 – Tuathal O'Cléri, the son of Thadeus, surnamed the crooked, learned in History and Poetry, a man who kept a house of hospitality, generally for the rich and for the poor, died'.

<sup>57</sup> Cunningham and Gillespie, 'The purposes of patronage', pp 47-8.

<sup>58</sup> See Nollaig Ó Muraíle (ed.), *Cathal Óg Mac Maghnusa and the Annals of Ulster*, by Aubrey Gwynn SJ (Enniskillen, 1998), pp vi-vii.

<sup>59</sup> Cunningham and Gillespie, 'The purposes of patronage', pp 48-9.

<sup>60</sup> Paul Walsh (ed.), 'The Maguires and Irish learning' in *Irish men of learning* (Dublin, 1947) §9, pp 244-45. This is a translation by Walsh of material that was first published in Irish by Colm Mac Lochlainn in *Tobar fíorghlan Gaedhilge, 1450-1850* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1939), §9, pp 190-91. See appendix.