

Munster and Irish kingship in 10th-12th centuries. Power representation

1. Introduction

Medieval Ireland is known for a great number of kings - in fact there were probably no less than 150 kings in the country at any given date between the fifth and twelfth century¹. Since the total population was probably well under half a million, this multiplicity of royalty is all the more remarkable. Of course, all of them were of different types. There were in general: *rí tuaithe* – the king of single tuath or tribe, *rí tuath* or *rui ri* (great king) was the king of several tribes, but commonly he was called according to the name of territory or the name of ruling dynasty branch (for example, *rí Iarluachra*, which means the king of the territories to the west of Luachra mountains); *rí coicid* (king of fifth, i.e. of one of the provinces into which Ireland was traditionally divided) or *ard-ri* of province (*ard-ri Ulad*, *ard-ri Connacht*, *ard-ri Laigen*), and, at once, *ard-ri* or *rig Érenn* – high-king of Ireland².

In spite of the concept of the high-kingship in Ireland, there is no evidence about centralized monarchy before the king Brian Boru from the Munster's dynasty Dál Cais. Irish provinces and their kings were independent from each other and were mostly connected with the dynastic relations. From the beginning of early Middle Age till the Norman invasion there were two powerful ruling dynasties in Ireland: Uí Néill in the central and north part and Eóganachta dynasty (after them Dál Cais), in the south, in Munster.

In many aspects in Early Medieval Ireland Munster was the world to itself. It was not just independent from Uí Néill who possessed the title of high-kings in Ireland and the north part of Ireland, but also usually presented as their main antagonist. In medieval pseudo-historical tradition we can find that two legendary ancestors of Eóganachta and Uí Néill – Mug Nuadat and Conn of Hundred battles, divided Ireland in two main parts: *Leth Cuin* (the half of Conn), which is in the north, and *Leth Moga* (the half of Mug) in the south³. In seventh century, Munster and

¹ Byrne F.J. Irish Kings and High-Kings. Dublin. 2001. P. 7.

² Ibid. P. 7

³ See O'Rahilly T.F. Early Irish History and Mythology. Dublin. 1946. P.191.

Leinster formed their own cultural area with the high standard of Latin learning, where first Irish genealogies and a lot of early narrative were written⁴.

In the end of the 8th century, the closed world of Irish kingship with its frequent cattle-raids and internecine was broken by the beginning of Viking invasion. At first, there were just raids, but in the middle of the 9th century the real invasion into the country began.

Viking invasion had a great impact on whole aspects of life in medieval Ireland. In the church history, it caused the end of golden age of Irish pilgrimage, during which the leaving of monastery's community for an ascetic life in small islands lost in the sea was a peak of monk's career⁵. The status of such people – *déorad De* (which means exile in the name of God) before Vikings' invasion was equal to a king or bishop⁶. However, during the invasion, life of monks concentrated in the abbeys, mostly because of external threats.

Irish kingship was influenced by Vikings' invasion even more. Irish society has been seen so archaic, isolated, and tribal. An "old order", when the power was distributed territorially between provincial kings, regional kings and local lords, that had survived since antiquity, was shattered by the Viking attack⁷. Nevertheless, these divided kingdoms had no chance against foreign invaders. That is why, from the second part of 9th the tendency to strong and united power appeared among Irish kingdoms. This implies intensification of the struggle for power. In Munster it went parallel with the decline of the main ruling dynasty Eóganachta and with the rise of the group known as Dál Cais from Clare. The most known representative of them, Brian Boru became the first real high-king of Ireland who could unite under his power most part of tribes of Medieval Ireland and totally defeated Norsemen in the battle of Clontarf in 1014 AD.

This pursuit of strong and consolidate power also displayed in the interest in historical and pseudo-historical tradition, especially in genealogies and retrospective tribal histories about great deeds and justice of ancient kings – the legendary ancestors of powerful dynasties⁸. The gain of these texts was to prove the high status of the rulers and explain the position of subordinate ones. Even fiction relations between ruling dynasty and one small tribe, which were fixed in

⁴ *Byrne F.J.* Irish Kings and High-Kings. Dublin, 2001. P. 170

⁵ See *Rekdal J.E.* The Irish Ideal of Pilgrimage//In *Quest of the Kingdom: Ten papers on Medieval Monastic Spirituality*/Ed. *Hardelin A.* Stockholm, 1991. Pp. 9-26.

⁶ *Charles-Edwards.T.M.* The social background to Irish peregrination//*Celtica*, 1976. P. 57.

⁷ *Donnchadh Ó Corráin.* Viking Ireland – Afterthoughts//*Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age*/ed. *H.B.*

Clarke, M. Ní Mhaonaigh and R. Ó Floinn. Dublin, 1998. P. 1

⁸ *Мухайлова Т. А.* Ирландия от викингов до норманнов: язык, культура, история. Москва, 2012

genealogies, could be a guarantee of special privileges for last one⁹. They also could legitimate the right of power. For example, great Irish king Brian Boru who was one of Dál Cais, originally part of Déisi (subordinate) tribes, seems to be an initiator of a rewriting of genealogies¹⁰. In the late version of Munster genealogies which came down to us we can find the fiction ancestor of Dál Cais – Cormac Cass among the early Eóganachta kings. In late Dál Cais genealogical tracts we can find even the arrangement of alternate succession made between Eóganachta and Dál Cais ancestors, which is absent in earlier texts¹¹.

This period between 10th and 12th century is best described by the title of the great Irish scholar Donnchadh Ó Corráin's seminal book – “from Vikings to Normans”. During this transitional period, Irish society was undergoing the period of momentous change. According to Ó Corráin, who quoted a medieval Irish poem written about 1150, it was an age of upset and uncertainty, when sovereignty destroyed by base kindreds, iniquitous law and great arrogance in kings¹², and “of the needy transitory king who will subdue the miserable husbandman”¹³. The relationship of king and over-king slowly changed to dependent and lord. The concept of great and just king, the saintly royal ancestor found itself in Irish historical writing of this period, which is present in the European literature of the age¹⁴. Historical and pseudo-historical materials were reworked to serve new purposes, particularly that of the glorification of kingship.

2. Sources

Narrative sources

For my research project I use different groups of historical sources. Firstly comes historical narrative: historical and pseudo-historical writing of studied period, genealogies and annals. Many of the texts are still preserved in vellum manuscripts produced during the medieval period, others have come down to us as paper transcripts made by scribes and hedge-schoolmasters working under the patronage of Gaelic and Old English aristocrats in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Quite a large proportions of material of this kind still remaining unpublished, especially the later collection of genealogies. Nevertheless most of the key texts are edited, some of them even with English translation.

⁹ See for example: *Charles-Edwards T.M.* Early Christian Ireland. Cambridge, 2000. P. 534-550.

¹⁰ *Jaski B.* The Genealogical Section of the Psalter of Cashel//*Peritia*. 17-18, 301.

¹¹ See more in *Ó Corráin D.* Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil: history or propaganda//*Eriu*, 25. P. 8-9.

¹² *Ó Corráin D.* Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil: history or propaganda//*Eriu*, 25. P. 67.

¹³ See more in *Knott E.* A poem pf prophecies//*Eriu* 18. P. 64-72.

¹⁴ *Ó Corráin D.* Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil: history or propaganda//*Eriu*, 25. P. 69.

Annals

Speaking about annals there are *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*, edited and translated by John O'Donovan¹⁵ with notes and commentary between 1851-1856. He also edited *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* in 1860¹⁶, which are Middle Irish combination of chronicles from various Irish annals and narrative history. *The Annals of Innishfallen* which is our main record of Munster medieval history, were first published by R. I. Best and Eóin Mac Neill in 1933¹⁷; *The Annals of Ulster*, which seems to be based on the material from now lost Armagh continuation of the Chronicle of Ireland. They were edited and translated by W. M. Hennessy and B. Mac Carthy between 1887-1901¹⁸. In addition, *The Annals of Tigernach* were edited with partial translation by Whitley Stokes 1895-1896¹⁹.

Genealogies

One of the main editions of Irish genealogies I used is multi-volume publication of the *Great Book of Genealogies*²⁰ by An Dubháilach Óg Mac Fírbhisigh (died in 1671). This is the first comprehensive collection of its kind to be printed with an English translation. It has the advantage of being very comprehensive coverage over a long period of Irish history, but the disadvantage of being a late compilation. The pedigrees have been transcribed and usually updated out of earlier manuscripts, which were in turn transcribed and updated from previous genealogical compilations. Among the early genealogical collections – the one from *Laud Miscellany 610* manuscript, which seems to be of Munster origin, was edited without translation by Kuno Meyer²¹. Other much part of the work of the early Irish Church scholars in this field was published by O'Briens in his *Corpus Genealogiarum Hibernae* in 1976.²²

¹⁵ *Annála Rioghachta Éireann. Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to the year 1616*/Ed. and tr. by *O'Donovan J.* Dublin, 1851. Second edition, 1856. See *Kenneth W. Nicholls.*

'Introduction' to the annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters/ed. *O'Donovan J.* (facsimile reprint). Dublin, 1990.

¹⁶ *Annals of Ireland: three fragments*/Ed. and tr. by *O'Donovan J.* Dublin, 1860. *Fragmentary annals of Ireland*/Ed. and tr. *Radner J.N.* Dublin, 1978.

¹⁷ *The Annals of Innisfallen*/Ed. and tr. *Seán Mac Art.* Dublin, 1951

¹⁸ *Annála Uladh: Annals of Ulster otherwise Annála Senait, Annals of Senait: a chronicle of Irish affairs from A.D. 431 to A.D. 1540*/Ed. *Hennessy W. M., Mac Carthy B.* Dublin, 1887-1901. Reprinted with fresh introduction and biography, ed. *Nollaig Ó Muraíle.* Dublin, 1998.

¹⁹ *The Annals of Tigernach*/Ed. and tr. by *Stokes W.*//*Revue Celtique* 16 (1895) 374–419 (Rawlinson B 502); 17 (1896) 6–33, 116–263, 337–420; 18 (1897) 9–59, 150–303 (Rawlinson B 488).

²⁰ *The Great Book of Irish Genealogies by An Dubháilach Óg Mac Fírbhisigh* /Ed. *N. Ó Muraíle.* Dublin, 2006.

²¹ *The Laud genealogies and tribal histories*/Ed. *Meyer K.*//*Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 8 (1912). pp. 291-338.

²² *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*/Ed. *O'Brien M.A.* Dublin, 1962.

Prose tracts and sagas

Among historical and pseudo-historical writings, for my research work I use the stories from kings' cycle, which main theme is the representation of king's power, the glorifying of his greatness and judgment. Sometimes, these texts tell not about the reign of the king himself, but about the great deeds of his legendary ancestors. For example, the text, approximately dated to XII century – *Forbhais Droma Damghaire (The siege of Druim Damghaire)*²³, describes the war between the mythological high-king of Tara, who is shown as unjust king – Cormac mac Art and ancestor of Munster Eóganachta – Fiacha Muillethain, who became the winner. This text forms one of a wider collection of tales – *Cath Cnucha*²⁴, *Cath Maighe Leana*²⁵, *Cath Maige Muccroimhe*²⁶, *Cath Crinna*²⁷, *Cath Cluana Tairbh*²⁸, *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil*²⁹, which is sometimes called “a kind of Romantic history of Munster, A.D. 174-1138”³⁰.

Legal material

The other group of the sources used in this research is legal material. It is very important, because of the great amount of evidence about king's status, rights and obligations to his vassals contained in the Old Irish law-texts. The first text I am interested in is the *Frithfolad Muman*³¹ (The Counter-Obligation of Munster). This law treatise of mid-eight century tell us about obligations which are owed by the king of Munster to his client-kingdoms in return for the obligation they have to him. So, *Frithfolad Muman* presupposes a contractual conception of early Irish kingship. It also contains the evidence about different status of Munster tribes and about their privileges.

²³ Forbuis Droma Damghaire/Ed. *Sjoestedt M.L.*// *Revue Celtique*. XLIII (1926), 1-123

²⁴ The Battle of Cnucha/Ed. and tr. *Hennessey W. M.*// *Revue Celtique* 2 (1873). Pp. 86-93.

²⁵ *Cath Maighe Léna*/Ed. *Kenneth J.* Dublin, 1938.

²⁶ *Cath Maige Mucrama: The battle of Mag Mucrama*/Ed. and tr. *O'Daly M.*// *Irish texts society* 50. Dublin, 1975. Pp. 88-93.

²⁷ *In Silva Gadelica (I–XXXI): a collection of tales in Irish*, vol. 1-2/Ed. and tr. by *O'Grady, Standish Hayes*. London, 1892. Vol. 1. Pp. 319-326. Vol. 2. Pp. 359-368.

²⁸ *Cath Cluana Tarbh, 'The Battle of Clontarf*/Ed. *Meidhbhin Ni Urdail*// *Irish Texts Society Main Series* 64. Dublin, 2011.

²⁹ *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil. The Victorious Career of Cellachan of Cashel or The Wars Between the Irishmen and the Norsemen in the Middle of the 10th Century*/Ed. and tr. *Bugge A.* 1905. See also *Ó Corráin D.* *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil: history or propaganda*/Eriu, 25. Pp. 1-69.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 3

³¹ *Dál Caladruig (Frithfolaithe Caisil fri Tuatha Muman)*/Ed. *O'Keefe J.G.*// *Irish texts*. Vol. I. Dublin, 1934. Pp. 19-21.

Another important legal text of Munster origin is *Uraicecht Becc*³² (“Small Primer”) – an Old-Irish tract of status, which has an interesting evidence about the status of the king in Medieval Ireland, as well as the description of different types of kingship.

And the last one is well-known *Crith Gablach*³³ (“Branched Purchase”) which tells us about the details on the grades of nobility and commons. It includes client ship information for even the highest nobility and presents a certain amount of interesting evidence about the duties of the king.

³² *Breatnach L.* A companion to the corpus Iuris Hibernici. Dublin, 2005. Pp. 315-318..

³³ *Crith Gablach/Ed. Binchy D.A.*// Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series 11. Dublin, 1941.

3. Eóganachta dynasty

Eóganachta was a ruling dynasty of Munster from the 6-7th centuries (or maybe even earlier) till the 10th century when it came to decline after the death the king Ceallachan of Caisil in 954. They had been ruled the Kingdom of Desmond, and its offshoot Carbery, to the late of 16th century. We can single out seven main branches of Eóganachta, who claimed descent from Corc mac Luigthig, founder of Cashel and who generally accepted by modern scholars as the “true” Eóganachta:

1. Eastern Eóganachta, belonged to the inner cycle³⁴ (main branch) of the dynasty: Eóganachta Chaisil or Uí Maic Laire, Eóganachta Aine, Eóganachta Glendonnach and Eóganacht Airthir Cliach, which already disappeared from political scene by X century.
2. Western Eóganachta (outer cycle): Eóganacht Locha Léin and Eóganacht Raithlind.
3. Eóganachta Maige Geirginn.

The inner cycle and kings of Cashel

King of Cashel was the high-king of Munster, who spread his authority among all Munster tribes. According to historical tradition and early medieval Munster legal tracts, only the descendants of the Munster king Nad Froich or Eóganachta of inner cycle had a right to be *rí Muman* or *rí Chaisil*³⁵. It seems that geography played the more important role, than genealogical relations between this alliance of eastern Eóganachta³⁶. Their territories from early medieval times may be defined geographically as those in a ring around the Galty Mountains. Surprisingly, but Eóganachta Chaisil, who produced the major part of Kings of Cashel were the most outlying dynastic group – they lived on the eastern periphery of dynastic territories.

Even if in the early medieval times, some kings from outer cycle claimed to be the king of Munster³⁷, in IX-X century this title was totally occupied by the main branch of Eóganachta. In spite of the periods when we have no evidence about any kings of Cashel: from 909-914 AD; 924 or 931 to 936 or 939 AD³⁸. How succession was determined during this period is also unclear. It seems that the political structure in Munster was so complicatedly hierarchical and the

³⁴ Charles-Edwards T.M. Early Christian Ireland. Cambridge, 2000. P. 536.

³⁵ See more in Dál Caladruig (Frithfolaithe Caisil fri Tuatha Muman)/Ed. O'Keefe J.G./Irish texts. Vol. I. Dublin, 1934. Pp. 19-21. And in Lebor na Cert: The Book of Rights./Ed. Dillon M./Irish texts society. Dublin, 1962.

³⁶ Charles-Edwards T.M. Early Christian Ireland. Cambridge, 2000. P. 536.

³⁷ See Ó Buachalla L. Contributions Towards the Political History of Munster, 450-899 A.D./Journal of the Corc Historical and Archaeological society. LVII (1952), 67-86.

³⁸ Kelleher J. V. The Rise of the Dál Cais/North Munster studies/Ed. Rynne E. Thomond Archaeological society, 1967. P. 231.

process of contesting succession was so difficult that at times no one would take the throne of Cashel³⁹.

The most outstanding representatives of Éóganachta dynasty of this period were Cormac mac Cuilennáin (902-908AD) and Cellachán Caisil (939-954 AD). The first one was also known as a king-bishop of Munster. He may have attempted to restore the authority of the kings of Munster over neighboring Leinster and perhaps aspired to be high king of Ireland. He also may be an author of now-lost Psalter of Cashel with a genealogical section, which seems to be the first codex in which such material was collected⁴⁰. He was killed by High-king of Ireland Flann Sinna in the battle of Belach Mugna in 908 AD. Following his death, Munster was seemingly without a king for some years.

In Munster historical tradition he is described as a king of the great wisdom as well as a saint bishop. The Fragmentary annals have a following note about him: “*A scholar in Irish and in Latin, the wholly pious and pure chief bishop, miraculous in chastity and in prayer, a sage in government, in all wisdom, knowledge and science, a sage of poetry and learning, chief of charity and every virtue; a wise man in teaching, high king of the two provinces of all Munster in his time*⁴¹”. His figure was seemingly used for a long time afterwards by secular scribes to praise Éóganachta kings and their successors Dál Cais.

The other outstanding figure of this period, which seems to be very popular among later scribes is Cellachán Caisil mac Buadacháin, who was the king of Munster approximately between 939 till his death in 954. The son of Buadachán mac Lachtnai, he belonged to the Éóganacht Chaisil. Annals described him as ruthless and power-hungry Munster king who made extensive use of the Vikings as military allies. He is first mentioned in annals in 936 when, at the head of the forces of Munster, he plundered Clonmacnoise abbey. In 939, with the forces of Munster together with the Vikings of Waterford under their king, the son of one Haakon⁴², he raided Meath, plundered the monasteries of Cloneagh and Killeigh⁴³. His figure usually used in later historical tradition as the main antagonist to Dál Cais kings, the long historical contender of Éóganachta, whom he defeated in battle at Gort Rottacháin and slew their king Cennétig mac Lorcaín (who was the father of the famous Brian Boru) and two of his sons.

³⁹ Ibid. P. 232.

⁴⁰ Jaski B. The Genealogical Section of the Psalter of Cashel/Peritia. 17-18, 301.

⁴¹ Fragmentary annals of Ireland/Ed. and tr. Radner J.N. Dublin, 1978. FA 423.

⁴² Downham, Clare. Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014. Dunedin Academic Press, Edinburgh, 2007. P. 262.

⁴³ Ó Corráin D. Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil: history or propaganda/Eriu, 25. P. 4.

According to annals, his battle-career ended in 953, when the Munster men, in the alliance with the Vikings of Limerick plundered Clonmacnoise again⁴⁴. A year later he died. This is one, more sober and historical portrait of Cellachan personality. The other one, which is described in the twelfth-century text *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil* (The victorious career of Cellachan Caisil), has nothing common with the historical Cellachan⁴⁵. Here Cellachan described as the brave king, who was chosen by nobles to be the king of Munster from the other equal candidates, one of whom was Cennetig from Dál Cais⁴⁶. He succeeded in consolidation of Munster men and fought off the Vikings, who threatened Munster tribes.

This text is an excellent example of historical propaganda in medieval Irish literature. Irish scholar Pádraig O’Ryan considers CCC to be a piece of dynastic propaganda on behalf of Mac Carthaig (Eóganachta dynasty) in 1128-1131, composed in emulation of *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* (the War of the Irish with the Foreigners) which has very similar subject and itself was put together in the early twelfth century to glorify the Uí Briain⁴⁷. This historical romance, in spite of many chronological and factual mistakes, describes us two historical realities: the one is the 10th century opposition between Dál Cais and Eóganachta (of course, not in details, because of its propaganda character) and the second is the political reality of 12th century Munster, during the powerful king of Munster from Eóganachta dynasty Cormac Mac Carthaig, who became the first Eoganachta king of Munster since the middle of the 10th century whose claim was not contested by Dál Cais and he held this position from 1127 until 1134.

4. The rise of Dál Cais

As we can see, the 10th - 12th centuries in Munster had not been shaken just by Viking’s invasion, but also by inner confrontation between two powerful dynasties: Eóganachta and Dál Cais. The last originally belonged to the *Déisi Muman*. They did not belong to Eóganachta and was subordinate tribe in Munster⁴⁸. Their territory comprised Waterford and a part of south Tipperary, along the Waterford border. In early medieval times they colonized the territories of

⁴⁴ Annals of Ulster (s.a. 953), Annals of Four Masters (s.a.951[=953]).

⁴⁵ *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil*. The Victorious Career of Cellachan of Cashel or The Wars Between the Irishmen and the Norsemen in the Middle of the 10th Century /Ed. and tr. Bugge A. 1905.

⁴⁶ Dál Cais succeeded to be the kings of Munster after Ceallachan death. During his reign, they were powerful but still subordinate tribe of Munster. Till the reign of Brian Boru and the genealogical rewritings initiated by him, Dál Cais formally had no right to be the kings of Munster. So, the passage about the arrangement of alternative succession made between Cormac Cas and Fiachu Muillethan and about the equal succession’s rights of Eoganachta and Dál Cais in the text is the political reality of the 12th century.

⁴⁷ *Ó Corráin D. Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil: history or propaganda//Eriu, 25. P. 5.*

⁴⁸ *Byrne F.J. Irish Kings and High-Kings. Dublin. 2001. P. 177.*

East Clare (Déis Becc) and then divided into two sections: *In Déis Tuaiscirt* (all East Clare and part of East Limerick) and *In Déis Deiscirt* (in the rest of East Limerick)⁴⁹. In Déis Tuaiscirt (later Dál Cais) firstly reached the success in the reign of their king Cennédig, son of Lorcán (the father of Brian Boru), who was the first of his dynasty to lead an army outside his own territory. He was killed in 951 AD by Ceallachan, king of Munster, but was succeeded by his outstanding sons. The second son Mathgamain (954 - 976 AD) defeated Eóganachta Caisil dynasts, who spent much of their time liquidating one another after the death of Ceallachan, and were unable to defend their inheritance. Therefore, in 964 AD Mathgamain became the king of Munster.⁵⁰ Brian Boru, his younger brother and future high-king of Ireland, was his right hand. The perfect co-operation between the two was largely responsible for the rise of the family during the lifetime of just two generations. In 1002 AD Brian Boru, who succeeded the kingship of Munster defeated the king of Ireland Maelseachlainn II of the Southern Uí Néill and became the first real high-king of Ireland who succeeded in the consolidation of the most part of Irish tribes under his power. More than that, he was the single Irish king who did it.

In spite of great military career, Brian Boru was well-known for his patronage to monasteries. He built and rebuilt churches and schools; established what now would be called scholarships; sent students abroad to study. During his reign, Munster genealogical corpus was edited: according to the new redaction, Dál Cais became the part of Eóganachta because of their fictional ancestor, Cormac Cass, the brother of Eógan Mór, the mythological ancestor of Eóganachta⁵¹. Surprisingly, even the powerful Brian Boru, who was declared in the book of Armagh as Emperor Scotorum (Irish Emperor)⁵² could not ignore the historical tradition, fixed in early Munster narrative and legal treatises, according to which, the throne of Cashel could be only held by Eóganachta kings.

From Clontarf to Normans

The reign of Brian Boru usually described as peaceful, without intestine strife, till 1013 AD when Norsemen raised their heads again. One chronicler even tells of a lady with the gold ring

⁴⁹ Ryan J. Brian Boru, King of Ireland/North Munster Studies/ Ed. Rynne E. Thomond Archaeological society, 1967. P. 355.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 359.

⁵¹ The Laud genealogies and tribal histories/Ed. Meyer K.//Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie, 8 (1912).P.303. See more in Чехонадская (Живлова) Н., Веренич В.: К проблеме ирландских гаплотипов группы R1b1b2 (атлантического модального гаплотипа): опыт ДНК-генеалогического исследования. Часть 2// The Russian Journal of Genetic Genealogy. 1. №2 (2009).

⁵² Ryan J. Brian Boru, King of Ireland/North Munster Studies/ Ed. Rynne E. Thomond Archaeological society, 1967. P. 362.

which she carried openly from Donegal (in the north) to Glendore Harbour in the South, without interference from anybody⁵³. During and after his reign historical writing and historical propaganda, which glorified the king was flourishing, but in the end, he did not introduce a new type of monarchy nor evolve plans for more peaceful methods of successions. His son Donnchad, who succeeded him after his death in the battle of Clontarf (1014 AD) was King of Munster but was never in a position of high-king of Ireland. He was succeeded as the king of Munster by his powerful nephew Toirdelbach and he by his yet more powerful son, Muirchertach Mór, King of Ireland – maybe the most powerful among all Brian’s descendants. He lived normally in Limerick until he fell gravely ill in 1114 and was exiled to Killaloe abbey by his brother Diarmait. Meanwhile, the Eóganachta of Cashel restore their power and influence, and their resurgence led to the division of Munster into Thomond (north Munster), the O’Briens kingdom and Desmond (south Munster), that of the MacCarthy’s. In this condition of never-ending wars between different clans, Munster met the Norman invasion, which began in 1169 AD.

5. Conclusion

My work is still in progress but I believe that the considerations and summary I presented in this paper gave a brief introduction to the period and the studied subject. The period of 10th-12th centuries between Viking’s and Norman’s invasions was very important transition period, during which we can see the tendency to consideration and to creation the new type of monarchy, but unfortunately, not strong enough to reach this goal. This fact predetermined the future fate of Irish kingship, which fall down under Norman invasion and lost its political independence for many centuries. However, this tendency had its important literary and cultural consequences. It raised the interest in historical writing and pseudo-historical tradition, which led to the Irish tradition and power representation as well as to so-called historical propaganda. Genealogical tracts, tribal histories and pseudo-historical telling about the great deeds of legendary ancestors which gain was to prove the status and privileges of one’s dynasty and belittle its enemies, can tell us a lot about the medieval ages in Ireland, and unfortunately sometimes are the single sources about the history of some Irish as well as Munster kingships.

⁵³ Ibid. 362.

