

## The Composition of Connacht: an ancillary document from Lambeth Palace

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A hitherto seldom cited ancillary document to the 1585 Composition of Connacht is reproduced. The document, a list of 'the names of all the mackes and oes' of Thomond and Connacht, can be found among the Carew Manuscripts at the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth Palace in London. This document can be profitably used in determining Gaelic social hierarchies in the late sixteenth century.

This article<sup>1</sup> transcribes an ancillary document to the 1585 Composition of Agreement known as 'the names of all the mackes and oes within the provenance of Connaught and Thomond'. The document is reproduced in the appendix and appears in the Carew Manuscripts lodged at the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth Palace in London at shelf-mark MS 614 f.25. Much information can be gleaned from the Carew Manuscripts relating to sixteenth century Co. Clare, including genealogical and historical material relating to Munster.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this article is to publish a list of politically significant sept lineages associated with Thomond and Connacht at the time of the 1585 Composition Agreement. The list is important from the frame of view that the Composition Agreement was a negotiated settlement amongst leading nobility, landholders, officials and clergy. While the final signed agreement included the chief landholders and nobility in Thomond and Connacht, the list of 'Macs and Oes' provides evidence that lesser sept lineages and cadet branches of ruling dynasties featured in negotiations with English officials and their lands (ostensibly) confirmed by letters patent. Taking a particular focus on lineages associated with Co. Clare, this list is of interest as it was the first time the proprietorial interests of the lesser sept lineages of Thomond were recognised within the framework of English feudal tenure.

The value of the list lies in pointing to other stakeholders in the negotiation of the Composition Agreement; it also reveals a social hierarchy that encompassed ruling lineages and landholding septs. The list of the 'Mackes and Oes' while sharing similar characteristics with other 'sept lists' drawn up by English officials, is unique in its focus on lesser lineages in Co. Clare, and for this reason is deserving of reproduction here.

### *Text and Historical Sources*

Several copies of the Composition Agreement survive, including a contemporary copy at Lambeth Palace library. This copy contains sections not included in the published *Compossicion Booke of Conought*.<sup>3</sup> The list of 'Mackes and Oes' reproduced here was

<sup>1</sup> The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Brian Ó Dálaigh and Martin Breen in the preparation of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, genealogical details of Gaelic families contained in Lambeth Palace Library, Carew Ms Vol.599, f.1r [microfilm] and Carew MS Vol. 626.

<sup>3</sup> A. Martin Freeman, (ed.), *The Compossicion Booke of Conought* (Dublin, 1936).



published as an abstracted (and truncated) version in the *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts* (1868)<sup>4</sup> and in the *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Ireland* (1867).<sup>5</sup> Both calendars do not furnish the historian with full details and contain transcription errors and inconsistencies which are best remedied by recourse to the original text.<sup>6</sup>

Sources for the study of late medieval Thomond are readily accessible to the historian. These include the 218 inquisition abstracts published by James Frost in 1893,<sup>7</sup> the *Inchiquin Manuscripts*,<sup>8</sup> the fragmentary survival of Chancery pleadings<sup>9</sup> and Irish Fiant records.<sup>10</sup> Also, the correspondence in the *Calendar of State Papers of Ireland* and the *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts* and the Thomond Papers lodged at the Petworth House Archive in West Sussex<sup>11</sup> contain much historical information.<sup>12</sup> It is hoped that the publication of this list adds to the corpus of published material for the history of Gaelic Thomond.

### 1585 Composition of Connacht

The Composition of Connacht was an important turning point in the relationship between Gaelic magnates and the English Crown. In areas of Leinster and Munster anglicisation was the result of conflict and plantation rather than organic expansion of English administration. In the Gaelicised lordships of western Ireland the process of change was initiated under the establishment of the Presidency Council in 1569. The end result was the assimilation of the province of Thomond and Connacht into the expanding English administration and ushered in a new period of settlement and consolidation on the estates of Gaelic loyalists such as Donough O'Brien, fourth Earl of Thomond.<sup>13</sup>

The first assizes were held in 1570-71 at Ennis Fairy which was being used as a headquarters for the Presidency's activities in Co. Clare.<sup>14</sup> The establishment of English administration in Co. Clare came about after Sir Henry Sidney, the Lord Deputy, progressed through Thomond in February 1576 and abolished the ancient customs of 'coigny, kernetty and bonaght' and forced Conor O'Brien, the third Earl of Thomond, to

<sup>4</sup> J.S. Bever & W. Bullen (eds), *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts Preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth, 1515-1624*, 6 vols (London, 1867-73): vol. 2, 1575-1588, p. 406.

<sup>5</sup> Hans Claude Hamilton (ed.), *Calendar of the State Papers Relating Ireland of the Reign of Elizabeth 1574-1585* (London, 1867) pp 582-3.

<sup>6</sup> Some transcription errors were remedied in Freeman, (ed.), *The Compossicion Booke of Conought*.

<sup>7</sup> See James Frost, *A History and Topography of the County of Clare*, (reprint, Dublin, 1973) pp 268-337.

<sup>8</sup> John Ainsworth (ed.), *The Inchiquin Manuscripts* (Dublin, 1961).

<sup>9</sup> *Chancery Bills: Survivals from pre-1922 Collection*, [abstracted index] National Archives of Ireland.

<sup>10</sup> *The Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Philip & Mary, and Elizabeth I* (Dublin, 1994).

<sup>11</sup> See Luke McInerney, 'Documents from the Thomond Papers at Petworth House Archive', *Archivium Hibernicum*, vol. lxiv, (2011) pp 7-51.

<sup>12</sup> *Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Ireland, of the Reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth, 1509-1596*, 5 vols (London, 1860-90) and *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*; Francis W. Steer & Noel H. Osborne (eds), *The Petworth House Archive: Vol 1: A Catalogue* (subsequent volumes ran to no.5).

<sup>13</sup> The collaboration of Donough, fourth Earl of Thomond, was a milestone in the Tudor absorption of Thomond, which relied on Donough's anglicising policies, rather than conquest and plantation. Donough was responsible for consolidating his estates around his manor at Bunratty and introducing English and Dutch settlers. Also see Bernadette Cunningham, 'Newcomers in the Thomond Lordship, c.1580-c.1625', *Dal gCais*, no.11 (1993) pp 103-11. In 1606 the Earl of Thomond was commended by English officials for entertaining and receiving 'as many English as he can any way draw unto him, and uses them so well that many resort thither'. Rev. C.W. Russell (ed.), *Calendar of the State Papers Relating Ireland of the Reign of James I: 1606-1608* (London, 1874) p. 34.

<sup>14</sup> Frost, *History and Topography of Clare*, pp 243-5. Contemporaries regarded holding of assizes in Co. Clare an inconvenience resulting in prisoners escaping from jails and that the 'Commissioners have been driven to keep their assizes in an open abbey', *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts 1601-1603*, pp171 & 173.



acquiesce authority for the earldom to the New-English administration. Building on this foundation the English administration sought a more ambitious strategy to compound taxes and rents from land.

The assizes that were held after the first Composition Agreement in 1577 were held at locations in the vicinity of Ennis such as at Knockenegan, Dromoland, Quin and the Windmill nearby Limerick,<sup>15</sup> on lands of Gaelic magnates favourably disposed, or politically drawn, to the New-English administration. Inquisitions were an important tool of the New-English administration and a powerful means of extending political patronage and formed part of a broader strategy of recasting customary relationships to reflect common law feudal arrangements.<sup>16</sup> Contemporary descriptions provide a vivid account of the holding of assizes:

The common sort of people resort in great numbers to the assizes; and such as have any cause of complaint exhibit their petitions to them—some against the officers of the province and the best men of the country; to which complaints the other parties (if they be in the town) are required to make speedy answer. This being done, and some days of respite being given to provide proof, they hear and end the case, if it be then ready for censure, or else they leave it until the next assize... The charges of proceedings and sentence before them in this kind is 2s 9d. This cheap manner of proceeding pleases the common sort, and is some cause why they forebear complaints to the President, which displeases the clerks of the common council and attornies of the province. Having discovered that the clerk for collecting fines within the province had rendered no accompt [account] for divers years, he has now caused them to be estreited into the Exchequer, and collected by sheriffs according to the manner of England.<sup>17</sup>

In August 1585 the lands of the Gaelic magnates and leading freeholders had been surveyed and a tripartite agreement made between the inhabitants of Thomond and Connacht, the Crown (represented by Lord Deputy Sir John Perott) and churchmen from Killaloe and Kilfenora dioceses. The 1585 composition sought to replace charges and military exactions that Irish lords and English garrisons imposed on the province by converting them into a rent-charge levied on land.<sup>18</sup> This process was part of a wider push of spreading English law and encourage local sept-heads to pursue freeholder status and break the client-patron dependence with their overlords.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The location of the Windmill can be divined from the entry at Petworth House: 'Inquisition post mortem relating to the estates of Connor, late Earl of Thomond, taken at le Wynd Mill juxta Limbrycke in Com' Clare'. Petworth House Archives, Ms 1140 (8 August 1581). The Windmill, therefore, was on the north side of the river Shannon in Co. Clare. Patrick Nugent places Knockenegan to the north of Ennis: presumably modern-day Knockanean. Patrick Nugent, 'The interface between the Gaelic clan system of Co. Clare and the emerging centralising English nation-state in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century', *Irish Geography*, vol. 40, no. 1 (2007) pp 79-98:83.

<sup>16</sup> On the role of inquisitions and the significance of their locations see *ibid*, pp 82-3.

<sup>17</sup> Humfrey Winche was the author of this description. Winche presided over inquisitions such as the 1606 assize taken at the Windmill in Co. Clare concerning the inheritance of the Meic an Oirchinnigh sept of Kilnasoolagh, Co. Clare. In a society of strong kinship ties it was difficult to find impartial juries. A Chancery Pleading relating to a dispute amongst Meic an Oirchinnigh freeholders states that the petitioner (Donnough McInerinyhein) could not get justice under the common law by 'reason of his [Mahowne McInnerryny ie. the plaintiff] alliance among common Jurors'. This was a common problem faced by Gaelic freeholders and chief reason for pursuing suits in the Court of Chancery under the Law of Equity, *Calendar of the State Papers Relating Ireland of the Reign of James I: 1606-1608*, pp 425-6; *Chancery Bills: Survivals from pre-1922 Collection*, B. No.228, National Archives of Ireland; and Frost, *History and Topography of Clare*, p. 280.

<sup>18</sup> Cunningham, 'Newcomers in the Thomond Lordship, c.1580-c.1625', p. 103.

<sup>19</sup> Colm Lennon, *Sixteenth Century Ireland: The Incomplete Conquest* (Dublin, 1994) p. 241.



The Composition Agreement is divided into two sections. The first served as a survey of lands and sets down an annual rent charge of ten shillings payable to the crown on each quarter of land, with the revenues going directly to the Presidency of Connacht. The second section abolished 'names stiles and titles of captainships, tanistships and all other Irish authorities and jurisdictions...used by the said lords, chieftains and gents., together with all elections and customary divisions of land'.<sup>20</sup> The indenture swept away the remaining vestiges of Gaelic authority and signaled the end of the Gaelic system. The agreement undermined the power of the dynastic clans who lost their right to levy customary duties. Principal magnates, however, were exempt from paying the composition rent on their mensal lands such as John McNamara.<sup>21</sup>

The 1586 inquisition into the lands of John McNamara lists sub-denominations in his lordship of west Clann Chuiléin and the traditional charge that he levied.<sup>22</sup> Following the Composition Agreement in 1585 John McNamara's lordship charges were replaced by a levy of five shillings on each land quarter, payable to the Earl of Thomond as the 'lord of the soil'.<sup>23</sup> This transformed the tenurial status of sept-lineages settled on these lands into a landlord-tenant relationship. The 1624 inquisition post mortem of Donough O'Brien, fourth Earl of Thomond, recites the rent-charge levied on land by the Earl.<sup>24</sup>

Although many of the leading families of Thomond signed the Composition Agreement in 1585, the leading representative of west Clann Chuiléin—John McNamara Fionn—refused to sign. The *Annals of the Four Masters* noted in characteristically restrained style a subtle disapproval of the agreement, which must have reflected a view subscribed to by some of the Gaelic learned caste.<sup>25</sup> Between 1585 and 1589 John McNamara complained to the English administration of the unfair nature of the composition agreement.<sup>26</sup>

### *Social Hierarchies*

In viewing the 1585 Composition Agreement it is possible to make an informed judgment about existing social rankings. The degree to which Gaelic lords and notables were

<sup>20</sup> Freeman (ed.), *The Compossicion Booke of Conought*, p. 17.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 24-25. The castle of Knappogue with four quarters of land and two quarters in the town of 'Dengen freely exonerated and discharged of and from this composition and of and from all other rents or demands of the Earl of Thomond'.

<sup>22</sup> The 1586 inquisition, in an apparent reference to either the 1585 Composition or similar legislation, notes that 'mcNemarrac his kearntyes and huntmen ha[d] certain Dutys upon certaine qrs of Land in the said Barrony untill the same and such lyke wer cott off by statute' [original spelling]. Luke McInerney, 'The West Clann Chuiléin Lordship in 1586: Evidence from a Forgotten Inquisition', *NMAJ*, vol. 48 (2008) pp 33-62:60.

<sup>23</sup> Freeman (ed.), *The Compossicion Booke of Conought*, p. 19. The Earl of Thomond and his heirs received five shillings on 344 quarters of land in the barony of Dangan-i-viggan (i.e. Bunratty) barony as well as having six quarters of land at the manor of Bunratty free from paying the Composition charge to support the President of Connacht. Immunities such as this helped augment the Earl's position as the principal landed magnate and Gaelic loyalist in Thomond – a position his sons Henry and Barnaby continued into the seventeenth century.

<sup>24</sup> 'Inquisition Post Mortem of Donough O'Brien, fourth Earl of Thomond', Petworth House Archives, Chichester, Ms.1141.

<sup>25</sup> *Annals of the Four Masters*, sub anno, 1585.

<sup>26</sup> According to a letter by John McNamara dated to 3 March 1588-9 written from Ennistymon, McNamara wrote to Lord Burghley and stated: 'I thought it necessary on my part hereby to acquaint your good Lordship with the unkind dealing of the right honourable the Earl of Thomond...who rather practice how to encroach upon my suitable living...[and] for that most and famous number of the lawyers of this land are allied to the Earl of Thomond through his marriage with the house of Kildare and his kindred with the house of Ormond, whereby I am forced to take refuge in the conscience of her Majesty's ministers of the Council in Ireland' [spelling modernised]. See R.W Twigge, *Materials for a History of Clann Cuilein*, Add Ms 39260, Twigge Collection, British Library, p. 192. Twigge cites the original Ms: S.P.I. Elizabeth CX 411.A. Also see the 'case between the Earl of Thomond and [Shane] McNamara touching things meet [sic] to be stayed' in SP 63/135 f.253 [dated 26 July 1588] and 'details of suit between Earl of Thomond and [Fyn] MacNamara' SP 46/130 f.36 [undated]. The latter letter alleges that McNamara's district was unduly charged an annual quit rent to the Earl, although McNamara claimed to be a tenant-in-chief and that the Earl's father (Connor O'Brien, d.1581) in a grant from the Queen, 'passed castles and lands that were other men's now troubled for their own'.



compensated for their loss of titles and privileges enables a reconstruction of the social hierarchy of 1585.<sup>27</sup> The Composition Agreement cajoled the Gaelic gentry to be fully enmeshed in feudal land tenure. At the apex of the hierarchy was the Earl of Thomond whose lands and power expanded with the Composition Agreement. The Earl shared the upper tier position with the Baron of Inchiquin and Sir Tirelagh O'Brien who enjoyed two-thirds of their land free from crown rent. They shared a similar position with the bishops of Killaloe and Kilfenora.

The second tier in the hierarchy included clan magnates such as John McNamara Fionn and Donell McNamara Riabhach, and the McMahon and O'Loughlin clans. These clans' former social position were recognized by granting them six quarters each as a demesne free from crown rent on their tower-house residences. On their inherited lands they were required to pay ten shillings per quarter to the crown and five shillings payable out of each quarter to the Earl of Thomond. Also, as feudal subjects, they were required to pay the twentieth part of a knight's fee to the Queen's manor at Ennis.

The third tier in the social order consisted of six individuals who were rewarded for their service to the crown. Gaelic loyalists such as Dr James Neylan<sup>28</sup> and Boetius Clancy<sup>29</sup> and New-English officials such as Edward White, Clerk of the Council of the Province of Connacht, were included. Most of these individuals were rewarded with a *baile* size land unit exempt from crown rent. The fourth tier comprised of lesser clan and sept-heads and were required to pay the crown rent of ten shillings per quarter and an additional five shillings per quarter to the Earl of Thomond. This arrangement transformed them into freehold tenants, despite the status of some of them as 'chiefs of their name'.<sup>30</sup> Sept lineages that fall into this category tend to be recorded in the list of 'Mackes and Oes'.

### The 'Mackes and Oes' of Thomond and Connacht

Lists of Gaelic septs and chief magnates can be found in Tudor correspondence. Take, for example, the 1497 'captains of countries in Ireland whereof have been in times past kings...[?]' which includes Thomond and scribes the chief families thus: O'Brien, McNamara, O'Kennedy, O'Carroll, McMahon, O'Connor, O'Loughlin, O'Grady [spelling modernised].<sup>31</sup> Or the 1549 'names of the chief regions and countries and the chief Irish of Ireland' which touches upon the ruling lineages of Thomond.<sup>32</sup>

A contemporary list entitled 'draft report of certain commissioners showing the Lords and Chieftains of Munster and Connaught' and thought to date from c.1586 contains topographical information of Gaelic lordships in the west of Ireland. For Thomond, the chief dynastic lineages are listed. The list represents one of the most extensive lists drawn

<sup>27</sup> Nugent, 'Gaelic clan system of Co. Clare and the English nation-state', p. 88.

<sup>28</sup> Dr James Neylan was a scion of the Uí Nialláin, a learned medical kindred and physicians to Earls of the Thomond. See Brian Ó Dálaigh, 'Doctors Donnell and James Neyland and the O'Briens of Thomond 1530-1599', *The Other Clare*, vol.15 (1991) pp 15-19.

<sup>29</sup> Boetius Clancy was a leading representative of the Síol Fhlannchadha, a learned legal (brehon) lineage with branches in Corcomroe and Tradraige.

<sup>30</sup> On a more detailed breakdown of the social hierarchy see Patrick Nugent, 'A Historical Geography of the Transformation in the Territorial Organisation of Gaelic Society in County Clare during the Early Modern Period' (unpublished PhD thesis, University College Cork, 2002) p. 314. Also see the reference to 'Donogh McGlanchi of the Urlion chief of his name' who signed the indenture of Thomond. See Freeman, (ed.), *The Composition Booke of Conought*, p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> SP 63/214 f.46 [dated 1497].

<sup>32</sup> *Calendar of Carew Manuscripts*, vol. 1, document 191 (MS 623, p.173a). For Thomond the lineages mentioned are: 'O'Brene of Twa Ibrene; McNamara of Clanghwllan; O'Kynedy of Ormonde; O'Kerowyll of Elye; O'Meagher of Ikeryn; McMaghon of Bruyse otherwise of Korkevasky; O'Conor of Corckanroe; O'Laghlyn of Boryn; O'Grade of Kenaldownall; O'Brene of Arragh; O'Molryane of Wehen; O'Doyre of Kynlemanaghe; McBrene of Ighonaght.'



up for the families of Co. Clare in the sixteenth century and contains similarities with the 1585 'list of the Mackes and Oes'.<sup>33</sup> Similar lists were compiled for other Gaelic lordships such as the 'note on all the lands and castles in Muskry McDermond, near Cork' written by Carew in 1600 and which listed the 'septs and freeholders in Muskrie', taking particular pains to identify learned Gaelic families.<sup>34</sup>

The 1585 'list of the Mackes and Oes' is of interest because of the detailing of lesser lineages who are not recorded as subscribing to the final Composition Agreement. The list appears to be arranged in hierarchical fashion and encapsulates Tudor nomenclature of Gaelic surnames. Read alongside contemporary sources such as inquisition material<sup>35</sup> the list contributes to a more nuanced picture of Gaelic social hierarchy. In this vein the 1570 and 1574 'castle lists'<sup>36</sup> of Co. Clare, and the 1574 'castle list' for Co. Galway<sup>37</sup> are useful sources for the historian and can be profitably used alongside the 1585 list to corroborate which lineages were politically important prior to collapse of the Gaelic order.<sup>38</sup>

It is likely that the list of 'Mackes and Oes' was compiled by an informed observer to the composition. One possibility is Edward White, Clerk of the Council in Connacht, who was bi-lingual and familiar with the affairs of the Gaelic lords in Thomond and Connacht.<sup>39</sup> While within the realm of speculation, White's correspondence preserved in the State Papers indicates a similarity in handwriting styles with the list found at Lambeth Palace library.<sup>40</sup> Definitive identification of the author, however, is likely to remain illusive.

The list was copied twice in the State Papers, each version slightly differing from the other. At SP 63/120 f.3 the list, which is published in the *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Ireland* (p.582) is dated 3 October 1585, two months after the Composition Agreement was signed. This list contains names of the 'Mackes and Oes' and under each column has a sum of 41 'Mackes' and 26 'Oes'. The columns are drawn in bold style and spelling variations with other versions are evident. For example 'McEverhin' in this list is corrected in other documents as 'McEnerhin'. The text, however, is identical in all three versions.

<sup>33</sup> SP 63/127 f.194. The list contains interesting nomenclature. The Mac Conmara lordship of Clann Chuiléin is referred to as 'McNamaras country called Shyle Ea' [ie. Siol Aodha]. On Thomond lineages it reads: 'The Earl of Thomond, the Baron of Inchiquin, Sir Turlough O'Brien, McNamara Ban, McNamara Reaghe, McMahon, Teige McMahon, O'Laughlin, McKillareweigh, the Earl's follower'.

<sup>34</sup> *Calendar of Carew Manuscripts*, vol. iii, document 519 (MS 635 p. 17a). The learned Gaelic lineages mentioned include: 'Hegans (brehons), Aulyves alias O'Levies (surgeons), O'Dallies (rhymers), O'Donins (chroniclers)'.

<sup>35</sup> Including the detailed inquisition of the Court of Exchequer held at Galway in 1586. See R.W. Twigge, *Materials for a History of Clann Cuilein*, Add MS 39260, Twigge Collection, British Library, pp 180-6.

<sup>36</sup> Martin Breen, 'A 1570 List of Castles in County Clare', *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, vol. xxxvi (1995) pp 130-8 and R.W. Twigge, 'Edward White's Description of Thomond in 1574', *North Munster Archaeological Society Journal*, vol. 1, no.2 (1910) pp 75-85.

<sup>37</sup> Col. J. P. Nolan MP, 'Galway Castles and Owners in 1574', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, vol. iii (1900-1901), pp 109-23.

<sup>38</sup> Effort has already been made in determining social hierarchies such as the west Clann Chuiléin lordship and the social line-up of the 1585 Composition Agreement. See, for example, McInerney, 'The West Clann Chuiléin Lordship in 1586', p. 55 and Nugent, 'Gaelic clan system of Co. Clare and the English nation-state', p. 88.

<sup>39</sup> Edward White compiled the 1574 list of castles of Co. Clare and was described in a letter from Sir Edward Fitton to Lord Burghley dated 27 March 1573 (*recte* 1574) as being able to speak Spanish, understand French and as to 'his own tongue [Irish]...he can both well write and speak it and interpret it; born in the town of Limerick of good parentage and English nation' [spelling modernised]. Twigge, 'Edward White's Description of Thomond in 1574', p. 76. Edward White presided over inquisitions where, undoubtedly, his interpretation skills would have been useful. See the 1578 inquisition in Frost, *History and Topography of Clare*, p. 268.

<sup>40</sup> See the letter by Edward White to Sir Francis Walsingham dated 11 July 1589 regarding intelligence matters from Connacht including information about Sir Morough Ne Doe O'Flaherty. White had been compiling reports from Connacht for English officials since the 1570s. SP 63/145 f.151 [11 July 1589].



The list found at SP 63/130 f.82 and also dated 3 October 1585 was written in a different hand in a legible style and with less definitive columns and numbering. The columns are absent of the summed totals of 'mackes' and 'oes' found in SP 63/120 f.3, but this document is also written over two pages. This version appears to have corrected 'McEverhin' (*recte* 'McEnerhin'), perhaps indicating this was a copy made from SP 63/120 f.3. In both cases the date of 3 October 1585 suggests that the lists were ancillary of, and *ex-post* to, the signed Thomond indenture of 14 August 1585 and the Clanrickard indenture of 2 September 1585.

The list found amongst the Carew manuscripts in Lambeth Palace library at Ms 614 f.25, and which is the focus of this paper, appears to have been compiled in the wake of the Composition Agreement, possibly in the month of September. A document entitled 'a copie of the Lords and chieftains of the province of Connaught and Thomonde to the Lorde Deputie' and dated 27 September 1585 is contained in the same manuscript edition and follows the list of 'Mackes and Oes'.<sup>41</sup> Providence would suggest that the list was written in September 1585, especially as it was written in the same hand as the aforementioned document. It is possible that the version found in the Carew manuscripts was the original version pre-dating the two other copies found in the State Papers series.

The purpose of the list of the 'Mackes and Oes' reproduced here from the Carew manuscripts is unclear. It appears as a solitary document and omits Gaelic magnates such as the O'Briens (Uí Bhriain) and McMahons (Meic Mhathghamhna) and also omits learned lineages such as the Clann Bhruaidealha or Uí Dhuibhdábhoireann who do, however, feature as witnesses to the inquisition into the lands of Co. Clare on 14 August 1585.<sup>42</sup> The reference to 'castles and lands belonging to their names ... [and] inheritance ... confirmed by her Ma<sup>te</sup> letters patents to them and their heirs in English Succession', suggests the listed lineages were politically important and had a stake in the landholding matrix. Probably the list was compiled with the purpose of providing such second tier septs—many of whom did not sign the final indenture agreement—with confirmed land tenure. The compiling of the 'Mackes and Oes' in September after the indenture of Thomond and Clanrickard could have served to remedy the omission of these septs from the original indenture agreements. The list, in contrast to the other versions, is adorned by a note made in another (later?) hand which reads, 'a note of all the names in Connaught and Thomond that begin with Mac or O'.

Below is a reproduction of the original text (see appendix) which corrects inconsistencies of spelling found in the *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Ireland*:

Hereafter ensueth the names of all the Mackes and Oes within the province of Connaught and Thomond whose Irish callings customary rents and spendings are by their own assents extinguished and determined for ever; In consideration that by this composition not only all the castles and lands belonging to their names; but also such castles and lands as they have of their own inheritance, are to be confirmed by her Ma<sup>te</sup> letters patents to them and their heirs in English Succession, together with some small yearly rents charged upon certain quarters of freeholders land to a [?] of the chieftest of them in full recompense of their said customary rents and demands [spelling modernised].

<sup>41</sup> Lambeth Palace Library, Carew Ms 614 f.25 [microfilm].

<sup>42</sup> A. Martin Freeman, (ed.), *The Compossicion Booke of Conought*, p.7.



## Viz:

1. Macke Willm Eugther	14. Mc Girraugh	27. Mc Granill	40. Mc Dyermt Gall	12. O Harie reogh
2. Mc Nemarra ffynne	15. Mc Reamon	28. Mc Diermot Roe	41. Mc Manye	13. O Naughtine
3. Mc Nemarra Reoughe	16. Mc Thomas	29. Mc Branan	1. O Rourk	14. O Loughlin
4. Mc Gillereaughe	17. Mc Vavie	30. Mc Keherny	2. O Connor Sligoe	15. O Guffe
5. Mc Claneghee	18. Mc Walter	31. Mc Evillye	3. O Connor Dunne	16. O Neylan
6. Mc Enerhin	19. Mc Dermot	32. Mc Costolloe	4. O Connor Roe	17. O Murry
7. Mc Hubbert	20. Mc Padin	33. Mc Jordan	5. O Kelly	18. O Mannyn
8. Mc Owoghe	21. Mc Tibbott	34. Mc Murry	6. O fflahertie	19. O Conchanon
9. Mc Willm Roe	22. Mc Phillippen	35. Mc Enawe	7. O Male	20. O Birne
10. Mc Cremon	23. Mc Connell	36. Mc Loughlin	8. O Heyne	21. O ffynne
11. Mc Walter	24. Mc Glanghie	37. Mc Granill	9. O Maddyne	22. O Hanly
12. Mc Hugh	25. Mc Tyernan	38. Mc Donough encorren	10. O Dowdy	23. O Harte
13. Mc Edmonnde	26. Mc Keallae	39. Mc Donough cowlea	11. O Hary bwyne	24. O Lorkan
				25. O fflanagan
				26. O Mulrenyn <sup>43</sup>

The text replicates what was agreed in the Composition indenture and that the central tenant of the agreement such as 'customary rents and demands' were extinguished and the chief lords were to be compensated by charging rent on 'certain quarters of freeholders land'. This is at the heart of the Composition—that traditional impositions by overlords upon freeholders were commuted into a rent levied on land to support the administrative machinery of the Presidency of Connacht. Rent was also levied to support proprietors in the capacity of landlords, not Gaelic magnates.

A curious reference in this document to 'castles and lands belonging to their names' implies that sept-lineages were important proprietorial branches of ruling clans. This was the case of the Mc Walter, Mc Thomas, Mc Tibbott, Mc Owoghe and Mc Hubbert lineages who were Clanrickard Burkes and they held tower-houses and demesne lands.<sup>44</sup> For the Thomond septs, the first several to be mentioned are documented to have possessed tower-houses. Take, for example, 'Mac ne mara' at Dangan-i-viggin and 'Mac Clanchie' at Urlanmore, Ballysallagh and Stonehall who appear in the 1570 castle list, and 'Mac Gylereugh' at Cragbrien and 'Maceneryheny' at Ballynacragga in the 1574 castle list.<sup>45</sup>

Another point of interest is the anglicisation of Irish names. Clearly 'Mc Nemarra ffynne' is a rendering of Mac Conmara Fionn and was scribed above the following Thomond septs: 'Mc Nemarra Reoughe', (Mac Conmara Riabhach) 'McGillereaughe', (Mac Giolla Riabhaigh) 'McClaneghee', (Mac Fhlannchadha) and 'McEnerhin' (Mac an Oirchinn[igh]).<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Lambeth Palace Library, Carew MS 614 f.25 [microfilm].

<sup>44</sup> The 1574 Galway castles and owners list records Ullick McOwge, William McTibbot, and McHubert 'chief of his sept' as occupying tower-houses in Loughrea barony. Nolan, 'Galway Castles and Owners in 1574', p. 112.

<sup>45</sup> The 'Mac Clanchie' at Ballysallagh and Urlan was recorded as 'Conoghor oig mac Clanchie a brehon', while 'Donill mac Clanchie' at Ballineclohie (Stonehall) was recorded 'prest' (*sic*). Breen, 'A 1570 List of Castles in County Clare', pp 123-33 and Twigge, 'Edward White's Description of Thomond in 1574', pp 80 & 84.

<sup>46</sup> On a sixteenth century history of the Meic an Oirchinnigh and its locally popular form Meic an Oirchinn, see Luke McInerney, 'Land and Lineage: The McEnerhinys of Ballysallagh in the Sixteenth Century', *North Munster an Antiquarian Journal*, vol. 49 (2009) pp 1-26. Note therein the Chancery Pleading referring to Clann an Oirchinnigh of Quin and Kilnasoolagh parishes in Co. Clare where they were an important lineage.



The Composition Agreement was not ostensibly about title to land.<sup>47</sup> Contemporary references to freeholders' land to be granted by letters patent notwithstanding, it was not until the Ulster forfeitures in the early seventeenth century that freeholders recognized that establishing title to land was necessary.<sup>48</sup> Nonetheless, concern amongst Gaelic proprietors in Thomond and Connacht to land title was palpable, as demonstrated by the statement: 'such castles and lands as they have of their own inheritance, are to be confirmed by her Ma<sup>te</sup> letters patents to them and their heirs in English Succession'. This point suggests the primacy of primogeniture inheritance.

Other documents contained in Carew MS 614 include a letter from the 'Lords and chieftains' to the Lord Deputy. The letter states that former uncertainties concerning the Composition were set right and that 'now we and the people [are] greatly content'.<sup>49</sup> We also find in a separate document 'names of the new erected manors for the Queens Majesty in the province of Connaught and Thomond...with the rents and services to them knit and annexed'.<sup>50</sup> The Manor of Ennis ('Innyshe') was held by the Earl of Thomond and details of other manors set out.<sup>51</sup> This document crystallises the feudal nature of the Composition by setting out what military strength could be raised for the Queen. Reserved to the Queen were 312 horsemen and 1,386 footmen who were charged from 6,712 quarters of land, out of a total 7,872 quarters. Some 1,160 quarters were exempt from charges and held 'in freedom' by chief lords and gentry.<sup>52</sup>

The ancillary list of the 'Mackes and Oes' of Thomond and Connacht is of significance to the historian because it provides a snap-shot of freeholders who occupied the lordship; a political 'who's who' of Thomond and Connacht. It provides evidence that the final indenture was a negotiated settlement amongst a broader spectrum of Gaelic proprietors, not just territorial magnates and heads of landholding clans, but also incorporated the heads of sept-lineages and cadet branches of ruling clans. It contributes to the body of material available in archival institutions for research into sixteenth century Gaelic hierarchies. The study of social hierarchies allows us to have a coherent and more nuanced appreciation of the transition from Gaelic lordship to the foundation of early modern Ireland.

<sup>47</sup> Bernadette Cunningham, 'The Composition of Connacht in the Lordships Clanricard and Thomond', *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. xxiv, no.93 (May, 1984) pp 1-14:12.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13.

<sup>49</sup> Lambeth Palace Library, Carew MS 614 f.26 [microfilm].

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Those manors mention include: Listeman (Co. Galway), Arkyn (Co. Galway), Millike ('O'Madden's country', Co. Galway), Strade (Co. Mayo), Ballymote (Co. Sligo), Moihill (Co. Leitrim), Boyll (Co. Roscommon) and Athlone (Co. Roscommon).

<sup>52</sup> Lambeth Palace Library, Carew Ms 614 f.24-25 [microfilm].



