

Ó Dubhagáin, Seoán Mór

by Aidan Breen

Ó Dubhagáin, Seoán Mór (d. 1372), historian and poet, came from a family that had been hereditary historians to the O'Kelly chieftains of Uí Mhaine in eastern Galway. He is the scribe of an early section of the Book of Uí Mhaine or 'Book of the O'Kellys' (most of which is held in the RIA, but the fragment attributed to Ó Dubhagáin is in BL, Egerton MS 90, ff 17–20), and the author of several poems, the most famous being 'Triallamh timcheall na Fódla' ('Let us pass round Fódla'), a detailed but unfinished account of the chief Irish families of Ulster, Connacht, and Leinster up to the Anglo-Norman conquest. In another poem he gives the genealogy of the Cenél Fiachach, a branch of the Southern Uí Néill in the Westmeath–Longford area. In other poems he praises his contemporary Muirchertach Ó Maolmhuaidh and gives the succession of the provincial kings of Cashel down to Domnall Mór Ua Briain (qv) (d. 1194). Several pieces in prose and poetry by him were copied into a mid-fourteenth-century MS by the contemporary scribe Lúcas Ó Dalláin (TCD, MS 1298, ff 190–94, 196–205, 210–26).

His most famous pupil was Adamh Ó Cianáin (qv) (d. 1373), a poet and scribe from Fermanagh. His collection of genealogies is recorded in a colophon as having been copied from the book of his tutor, Seoán Ó Dubhagáin. In 1351 O'Kelly Uiliam Buidhe (qv), chief of Uí Mhaine, invited all the bards and poets in Ireland to a great Christmas feast at Knockcroghery, Co. Roscommon, from which the poem 'Fáilte Uí Cheallaigh' ('O'Kelly's welcome') derives. The feast is recorded in the Annals of Clonmacnoise. It was, according to contemporary accounts, celebrated in extraordinary style. It is likely that it was held at Ó Dubhagáin's suggestion.

'Having withdrawn from the world', Ó Dubhagáin spent the last seven years of his life at the priory of St John the Baptist at Rindown, Lough Ree, Roscommon. He died in 1372 and is described in the Annals of Ulster as *aird senchaid na hÉireann* ('chief historian of Ireland').

AU (1887–1901 ed.), ii, 546–7; *Ann. Clon.*, 98; Eleanor Knott, 'Fileadh Éireann go h-aointeach', *Ériu*, iv (1911), 50–69; M. E. Dobbs, 'Cenel Fiachach m. Néill', *ZCP*, xxi (1938–9), 1–23; T. Ó Donnchadha (ed.), *An Leabhar Muimhneach* (1940), 412–25; J. Carney (ed.), *Topographical poems by Seoán Mór Ó Dubhagáin and Giollana-Naomh Ó hUidhrín* (1943); *Ann. Conn.*, 306, 340; J. Bannerman, 'Senchus Fer n-Alban [pt 1]', *Celtica*, vii (1966), 142–62:143–5; Aubrey Gwynn and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses: Ireland* (1970), 215–16

Downloaded from <http://dib.cambridge.org> by IP 100.103.238.216 on Tue Jan 19 02:54:25 UTC 2021 Dictionary of Irish Biography Online © 2021 Cambridge University Press and Royal Irish Academy. All rights reserved. Not for commercial use or unauthorized distribution.