



**KING NIALL OF THE NINE HOSTAGES  
MONARCH OF IRELAND A.D. 379 - 405  
ANCESTOR OF THE O'DALAIGH**

## **HISTORY OF THE O'DALYS**

THE STORY OF THE ANCIENT IRISH SEPT  
THE RACE OF DALACH OF  
CORCA ADAIMH

**This Book Is Written**

By

**EDMUND EMMET O'DALY  
of Chicago, U. S. A.**

SON OF THOMAS, SON OF JOHN, SON OF THOMAS,  
SON OF JAMES O'DALY OF DOON, STROKESTOWN,  
COUNTY ROSCOMMON, IRELAND.

[These O'Dalys of Doon, tradition maintains, descend from Ireland's renowned monarch, King Niall of the Nine Hostages. More directly this ancient family stems from Aenghus O'Dalaigh, court poet to Connacht's fourteenth century king, Hugh O'Conor. By this Hugh, slain in battle in the year thirteen hundred and nine was built the palace of Cloonfree, close to the present site of Strokestown, Roscommon.]

## THE HOUSE OF O'DALAIGH



"The great old Irish houses, the proud old Irish names,  
Like stars upon the midnight, today their lustre gleams-  
Gone are the great old houses-the proud old names are low  
That shed a glory o'er the land a thousand years ago.

"..... wheresoe'er a scion of those great old houses be,  
In the country of his fathers or the land across the sea,  
In city, or in hamlet, by the valley, on the hill,  
The spirit of his brave old sires is watching o'er him still."

(Clans of Ireland-Sullivan Brothers, 95 Abbey St., Dublin)

"CEAD MILE FAILTE O'DALAIGH"

(A Hundred Thousand Welcomes O'Dalys)

"CEAD MILE FAILTE" O'DALAIGH, AS YOU ASSEMBLE HERE WHILE A MODERN SHANACHIE (historian) OF THIS AGE-OLD SEPT TELLS ITS STORY AS MORE WORTHY AND LEARNED SHANACHIES (historians) DID OF OLD FOR OUR NOBLE ANCESTORS IN ANCIENT ERIU.

TIME MAKES ITS CHANGES EVEN IN GLORIOUS AND ANCIENT NAMES. SO DESPAIR NOT BECAUSE YOUR NAME BE NOW RECORDED AS O'DALY, DALY, DALEY, DAILY, DAILEY, DAYLY, DAWLAY OR DAWLEY INSTEAD OF O'DALAIGH. FOR A LEGITIMATE BLOOD RIGHT TO ONE OF THESE NAMES MARKS YOU AS OFFSPRING OF THE "RACE OF DALACH" OF CORCA ADAIMH.

"CEAD MILE FAILTE," THEN, YOU OFFSPRING OF THE "RACE OF DALACH," AS YOUR BLOOD RIGHT BIDS YOU ENTER THE FAMILY ASSEMBLY. ITS ANCIENT STORY IS YOUR HERITAGE. AND LET HIM WHO MAY DENY THIS CLAIM, FURNISH WORTHY PROOFS AGAINST THE AGE-OLD TRADITIONS AND RECORDS OF THE GAEL.

## THE SURNAME O'DALAIGH ORIGIN AND ADOPTION

The most ancient account known which deals with the origin of the family name O'Dalaigh is one by Godfraidh Fionn O'Dalaigh, Ireland's arch-professor of poetry, who lived about six hundred years ago. This historical poet contended that the surname O'Dalaigh was derived from Dalach, a sixth century bardic scholar of the Race of Dalach, who was fostered in literature by Colman Mor, the son of Leinin. Godfraidh's contentions appear in one of his historical poems now entitled "Patron Saint of the O'Dalys," composed shortly before his death in 1387. In this ancient record Godfraidh relates the following story of the Race of Dalach:

Professor Osborn Bergin, who translated this record from the Gaelic, states: "The following poem is addressed to Colman son of Leinin (or Lenene), patron saint of Cloyne. According to a text published in *Anecd. from Ir. MSS.* III., p. 60, he was an athlaech or 'ex-layman,' that is, a cleric who had followed some other profession before taking orders. From this poem we learn that he had been a poet, and that when he abandoned the profession of poetry for a higher calling, he left his skill to his fosterling and pupil Dalach. From this Dalach are descended Muintear Dhalaigh, the O'Dalys, 'perhaps the most famous bardic kindred in Ireland' (O'Grady, *Cat.* 343)."

"The author is Godfraidh Fionn 15 Dalaigh, 'Ireland's archprofessor of poetry,' who died in 1387. He was professional poet to the MacCarthys, to the Earls of Desmond, and to the O'Briens of Thomond."

[Colman Mor, son of Leinin, died about 600 A.D.]

### GODFRAIDH FIONN O DALAIGH---CCT. (i.e., Sang)

(Translation)

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|--|--|
| 1. Great Colmin, son of Leinin,<br>melodious sage of smooth<br>bright hand, the O'Dalys are<br>bound to love thee, thou art<br>our share of the Colmans.                                   | 7. Upon Colman of lofty Cloyne<br>was put the first compact ( ? )<br>therefore did he renounce<br>poetry--better was the yoke<br>(of piety) for which it was<br>changed.                         |
| 2. Herein is the key of profit:<br>remember the branch of<br>kinship; suffer thou not,<br>O friend, thy art, our craft,<br>to spring away from thy stock.                                  | 8. Sainly Colman loved perfect<br>faith for what he got in<br>heaven: he bequeathed the<br>art apart from which he<br>obtained help.   |
| 3. Thou were the fosterer of the<br>poet from whom we come, thou<br>patron whose name is Colman.<br>'Tis a tale that must be<br>told (the tale of), Colman<br>whose fosterling was Dalach. | 9. We must set forth the ground<br>of our friendship for great<br>Colman son of Leinin: the<br>bequest of his art by Colman<br>through the discontent of<br>the white-footed red-lipped<br>one.' |
| 4. Dalach would not have studied<br>the craft had not Colman been<br>by his side: it was clear<br>from his training that Colman<br>was guiding him at every step.                          | 10. Colman left the art of poetry<br>to a beloved fosterling of<br>his, the first man from whom<br>we were surnamed, an ollav<br>to whom reverence were due.                                     |
| 5. Whoever says that poetry<br>merits nothing--how clerical--<br>poetry is no art opposed to<br>God, it was He who helped<br>Colman  | 11. His fosterling was Dalach,<br>to him he gave his blessing:<br>to the true race of his old<br>fosterling, ever since, the<br>blessing of the righteous<br>man has brought profit.             |
| 6. Colman, to whom all love was<br>due, was long devoted to<br>poetry: it were not likely<br>that he should have professed<br>it if God had not wished him                                 | 12. The chiefs of Dalach's race--<br>their strength is in legacies:<br>upon the sods of the brown<br>earth it was Colman who<br>left them to us.   |

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>13. It were fitting for the race of Dalach, to whom he gave the profitable craft, to spread some verses of their art before Colman, patron of Cloyne.</p> | <p>15. Have regard to us, O fosterer of our ancestor, concerning that high and pleasant city: take me in charge above all others for my kinship to him whom thou hast chosen.</p> |
| <p>14. As thou hast given us our art, O mighty Colman, find for us a city like the fort of God, when we have spent our first life.</p>                       | <p>16. Refuse me not! I pray that thou wilt show to the seed of thy dear pupil, for love's sake, the power of thy help, O Colman.</p>   |

1 "That is, through Colman's dissatisfaction with his old profession."

2 "i.e. Wherever the O'Dalys are scattered throughout Ireland."

(From *Studies-Dublin*, Vol. VII-NO. 25-March 1918)

This account by Godfraidh Fionn undoubtedly comprises a remarkable ancient testimony associated with the surname O'Dalaigh. By some scholars Godfraidh Fionn's contentions are classified as a bardic fiction; others apparently accept them as factual.

It appears, however, to be reasonably certain as the poet's verses indicate, that Godfraidh Fionn O'Dalaigh must have sincerely believed that his assertions, addressed to a saint in heaven, formed a true account of the "Race of Dalach." Besides, Godfraidh is a witness whose testimony is more closely linked to the period in which the surname O'Dalaigh was first adopted historically than any other known authority on this surname.

Contrasted with Godfraidh's beliefs are the opinions which prevail among authorities today pertaining to the derivation of the surname O'Dalaigh. These ordinarily mirror the conclusions of O'Donovan, O'Farrell and other comparatively modern historical writers.

O'Donovan in his edition of the work, *The Tribes of Ireland*, published in 1864, records that "O'Dalaigh" is from Dalach (the son of Fachtna), of the ninth century.

O'Farrell, Irish historiographer to Queen Anne, in his "Linea Antiqua," dated about 1709, links the name O'Dalaigh to Dalach (father of Cuchonnacht na Sgoile), who was born in the eleventh century.

O'Hart in his *Irish Pedigrees* (M'Glashan and Gill-Dublin-Edition, Year 1876, First Series, pages 119-120) records O'Dalaigh from Dalach who appears to have lived in the sixth century. This Dalach was a younger brother of Muiredacht Mor, the 131st high king of Ireland, who died 527, A.D. Possibly, this Dalach, who would have been a contemporary of Colman Mor is the one to whom Godfraidh Fionn refers.

However, regardless of which "Dalach" ancestor the surname came from, it is evident that O'Dalaigh, like the majority of the Irish surnames, was not actually adopted as a family name until early in the Twelfth Century. At this time the Annals of the Four Masters and other records mention O'Dalaigh as a surname for the first time in connection with Cuchonnacht O'Dalaigh.

Cuchonnacht O'Dalaigh lived in Teffia, in what is now the County of Westmeath. Being noted for his learning, he was called "Cuchonnacht na Sgoile," meaning "Cuchonnacht of the School." He died in the year 1139.

The "O" prefixed to the name "Dalach" or "Dalaigh" signifies a degree of relationship to the Dalach from whom the name was adopted. It means grandson or male descendant of Dalach in contrast to the prefix Mac or Mc which would mean son of the ancestor specified.

Concerning the origin of the Irish family names in general, it is interesting to note that such names in Ireland were in some cases among the first - if not actually the first - surnames to become established in Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire.

For Irish surnames there is evidence in the annalistic records indicating that some of the hereditary Gaelic names took form at periods as early as the ninth and tenth centuries. These names appear to comprise our earliest substantiated European records of family names. Yet while some of these surnames date from the ninth and tenth centuries, this circumstance is not general for Irish family names. The majority, like the surnames met in France and Italy, appear to have been adopted in the eleventh or twelfth centuries as in the case of the family name O'Dalaigh.

# THE SURNAME O'DALAIGH

## ANCIENT AND MODERN

The names O'Daly, Daly, Daley, Daily, Dailey, Dayley, Dawlay and Dawley, and variations of these are all derived from the same common origin. These forms are Anglicised versions of the ancient Gaelic family name Ua Dalaigh or ODalaigh, pronounced "O Dhaulee."

Such changes from the Gaelic to English forms in Irish surnames originally began as a result of tyrannical laws, designed by the English rulers, which outlawed Gaelic names and customs as a means of penalizing the Irish people into a state of subjugation. Beginning with the reign of the English King Edward IV (1465), the law demanded that every Irishman living within the territory known as the "Pale" take an English name and comply with other English customs or forfeit his possessions. This demand was couched in the following terms:

"At the request of the Commons it is ordeyned and established by authority of the said Parliament, that every Irishman that dwells betwixt or amongst Englishmen in the County of Dublin, Myeth, Uriell and Kildare, shall goe like to one Englishman in apparell and shaving off his beard above the mouth and shal be within one yeare sworne the liege man of the King in the hands of the lieutenant or deputy, or such as he will assigns to receive this oath for the multitude that is to be sworne, and shall take to him an English surname of one towne, as Sutton, Chester, Trym, Skryne, Corke, Kinsale; or colour, as white, blacke, browne; or arte or science, as smith or carpenter; or office, as cooke, butler; and that he and his issue shall use this name under Payne of forfeiting of his goods yearely till the premises be done, to be levied two times by the yeare to the king's warres, according to the discretion of the lieutenant of the king or his deputy."

-5 Edward IV. cap. 3.

Some families complied with the demands set forth in this decree of Edward by adopting new non-Gaelic names from towns, colors or trades, but the great majority stubbornly resisted this original order. As a result the law proved a failure and about a century later one finds the anti-Irish poet Spencer requesting that decrees be enforced under which Gaelic surnames "be utterly forbidden and extinguished."

"Moreover," said Spencer, "for the better breaking of these heads and septs which was one of the greatest strengthes of the Irish, methinks it should be very well to renewe that ould statute which was made in the reigne of Edward the Fourth in Ireland, by which it was commanded, that whereas all men used to be called by the name of their septs, according to the severall nations, and had no surnames at all, that from henceforth each one should take upon himself a severall surname, either from his trade and faculty, or of some quality of his body or minde, or of the place where he dwels, so as every one should be distinguished from the other, or from the most part, whereby they shall not only depend upon the head of their sept, as now they do, but also in time learne quite to forget his Irish nation. And herewithal would I also wish the O's and Mac's wh,;ch the heads of Septs have taken to their names, to be utterly forbidden and extinguished. For that the same being an ordinance first by O'Brien for the strengthening of the Irish, the abrogating thereof will much enfeeble them."

Activities of this kind, however, did not cause any radical change in the majority of Gaelic family names. But later, a peculiar form of persecution practiced by the English officials in Ireland caused the Gaelic type of name to disappear rapidly. These officials, especially the magistrates and lawyers, were in most cases entirely ignorant of the Irish language and unable to pronounce the Gaelic names correctly. Because of this ignorance they adopted the practice of ridiculing the owners of such names and the humiliating effect of this moral persecution was disastrous to Gaelic names. To escape such ridicule the Irish gradually disguised their names under an English form until eventually about the close of the Seventeenth Century, the Gaelic type of surname disappeared almost entirely, and but few families in Ireland retained the traditional "Mac" or "O" which so conspicuously marked an Irishman. Among the newly adopted names the majority were supposed to be representative of the original Gaelic forms and meanings translated into their English equivalents. In many cases the Anglicised forms were actually closely related to the basic Gaelic surnames minus the "Macs" or the "O's" as in the case of the name Daly. But in other instances - as O'Donovan records in his articles on Irish surnames - the altered names had no proper relation with their original Gaelic forms or meanings. O'Mulmoghery became Early because moch-eirghe means early rising. O'Mulclohy became Stone, based on the belief that "cloch" signified Stone. McConnava was changed to Forde from the mistaken belief that "ava" equated with atha--of a ford. MacConry became King under assumption that the "ry" part of the original was equivalent to righ, meaning a king, whereas the name was really derived from the ancestor Curoi. And so forth.

The final doom of the Gaelic surnames came as a result of the widespread establishment of the English language among the Irish. This circumstance caused the English form of names to be taken for granted and considered as natural.

Thus, today, O'Dalaigh descendants bear the Anglicised names previously mentioned instead of the Gaelic O'Dalaigh of their ancestors.

Existing records do not give us any certain knowledge regarding the exact dates at which the various O'Dalaigh ceased to use their Gaelic name. Undoubtedly, the Anglicised forms of it did not come into use until after the time of Edward IV's law. And in all probability, the change was gradually made among the scattered branches of the family at different times, and over a long period of years.

Today in Ireland the most common form of the name is "Daly,"\* but the Gaelic original has in recent times been re-adopted by some of the family group.

This trend back to the Gaelic will naturally spread as the ancient language gradually resumes its old dominant position in Ireland.

\* Throughout this HISTORY OF THE O'DALYS - the form "O'Dalaigh" is generally used rather than O'Daly, Daly, etc., in order that readers may become familiar with the Gaelic style of this family name.

## **"THE SURNAME 'O'DALAIGH'"** **"ITS MEANING"**

The meaning of the name "O'Dalaigh" is a matter of question. Some authorities claim it is "holding assemblies," "frequenting assemblies." O'Hart, in his work, "Irish Pedigrees" gives "blind" as a meaning. Other versions are "a giver" and "offspring of the oath." Therefore there is no agreement regarding the meaning.

Possibly, the following circumstantial evidence brings one closer to the real significance of the name, considering that the true basic genealogical claim of the pagan Irish seems to have been that they were offspring of their gods.

Associated with the oldest periods of Ireland's history one finds characters who appear to be either pagan gods of the early Irish or mythological personages. Some of these bear names similar to the ancestral name "Dalach" in its various Gaelic forms, O'Dala, O'Dalaich, and O'Dalaig or O'Dalaigh.

Among these characters of dim antiquity are Deledh or Dele, son of More the Fomorian, Dela or Deala the Firbolg father of Gann, Genann and other sons. Also Dala or Dala Glas of the Greeks of Scythia, from whom the four roads of Tara were named, according to one tradition. In other accounts Dala Glas is spoken of as one of the seven seers. These personages, in the opinion of authorities such as DeJubainville, MacAlister and MacNeill, represent the preternatural or mythological element of the Irish traditions, rather than the human portion.

(Celtic Ireland, Eoin MacNeill - Tara Pagan Sanctuary of Ireland, MacAlister; Irish Mythological Cycle, DeJubainville.)

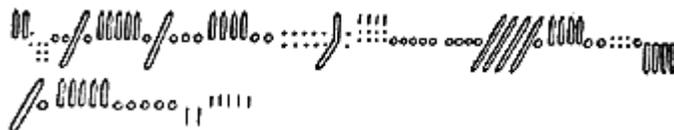
Other evidence also appears to link the name of "Dalach" to the supernatural. Professor William Copland Borlose, M.A., the antiquarian, in his work, *The Dolmens of Ireland*, says:

"On Sliabh Beatha in Tyrone is a cairn called Carn-Mor of which O'Donovan writes as follows: 'I have the honor of being the first who in modern times, has discovered the situation of the mountain of ante diluvian celebrity, on the top of which Bioth is said to have been interred by the seraglio which attended him. I have been much disappointed at finding that, instead of Bioth, Dalach is commander-in-chief of its fairies. Dalach now resides in Carn-Mor, the very cairn in which Bith or Bioth was interred, and his [Dalach's] castle is sometimes seen in the lake beneath it.'"

"They [the fairies]" Professor Borlose states, "had their kings and queens, as Finvarra, Dalach, and Medb, and probably all the witches were royal personages." (Pages 821-822-852.)

Additional data of this type is associated with the Ogham stone inscriptions. These inscriptions comprise the oldest known form of Irish writing, and are of accepted antiquity, being definitely of pagan origin.

The Ogham, called the Gowran Stone, represents a good example of this class of record. Its probable transcription, according to the Rev. Father E. Barry, P.P., M.R.I.A. and Fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, in his article, "Ogham Stones in Kilkenny County," *Royal Society of Antiquaries Journal*, 1895, pages 348 sgg is:



**D[ ALL ]O MAQA MUCORI M[ A ]QI ERACIAS MAQI LI**

Commenting on this genealogical inscription, as that is what all known Ogham stone records consist of, the Rev. Father Barry says in the main:

". . . Here Doo, Di, Dan, Dabu, Dlu, Dobo, or Dalo, is possible, but only Dalo is probable.

". . . The 'Book of Leinster' has nominative Dalo, Dala, Dula, and Dail; genitive Dalo, Dala, Daula, and Dula; and dative Dalo. It mentions Dalo of Slige Dala 155b, 169b, and of Mag Dala 46b, of great antiquity; Dala mac Ferdomuim, of the third century 205a; Dail, 3269, also Dula 381a, also Dila 312a, son of Laider, charioteer of Cuchorb, king of Leinster, early in the second century; Brec mac Dula, whose father was fourth from Colla Fochrich, who flourished A.D. 330, 383b; Diarmait mac Dala, 338b; and Findlaith mac Dala, 350d, whose fathers were ninth and eleventh from Ailill Olom, king of Munster, early in the third century; the very ancient Leinster family, the Hui Deccair Dala; Dalan mac Rosa Falgi, a grandson of Cathair Mor, king of Ireland (circ. A.D. 177) ; Dalach mac Umoir, at the beginning of the Christian era, 152a; many a later Dalach, and O Dalaigh, now Daly; gen. Dalann, in a pedigree of St. Cainnech of Achad bo in Upper Ossory 3481; and DAL, a female, 36a.

"From the nearness of Gowran to Dunbell, and the somewhat similar antiquity of the Gowran inscription, and No. I Dunbell, it may be that Dalo, whose monument is at Gowran, is the Deccair Dala, whose son's monument was at Dunbell, and whose posterity were the Hui Deccair Dala. Another Ossorian Dato of great antiquity was Dalo of Mag Dala, 'Dato's plain,' and of Slige Dala, 'Dalo's way,' called Slige Dbala meic Umoir, in the Agallamh, 'Silva Gadelica,' 109, and called by the Four Masters Bealach-mor-muigedala, A.D. 1580, 1600, 'the great road of Dalo's plain,' but, by Dr. O'Donovan, contrary to all authority, translated 'the great road of the plain of the meeting.' In the Agallamh, Dalo of Slige Dala is son to Umor, but in the Dindshenchas he is Dalo Glas, son or son-in-law of one Fedlicu, or son of Tait, fifth from Gaedel Glas; and the Slige was named from him, because he was guide to Setna Secdberg in making it for the druids of East Munster (= Ossory) visiting Tara, or because he and Setna made it (to connect the churches) of East Munster, or because he frequented it for highway robbery.

". . . In a poem ascribed to Find Mac Cunlaill, Lia is said to have been slain by the Clanna Mornai. If that Lia were he of the Gowran inscription, his great grandson D(al)o of that inscription should have died in or before the middle of the fourth century of the Christian era. The story called Feis Tige Lt. LL. 189e; is lost, and its Lia is unknown."

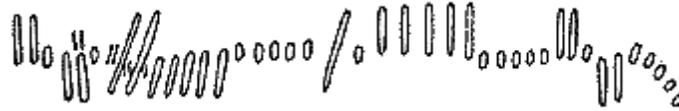
Another interesting ogham exhibit is the Dunbell stone of Kilkenny. The Rev. Barry transcribes its inscription as follows:



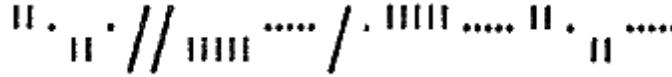
**BRAN[ I ]TTOS MAQI DECAR[ I ] DD[ ALAS ]**

Gen. DECAR[ I ] DD[ ALAS] . . . . means "difficult," "reluctant." The "Book of Leinster" has gen. sg. Dechraig 329d, the name of a man fifth in descent from Tadg mac Cein, of the Battle of Crinna, A.D. 226; gen. sg. Deccraig 154b, the name of a quasi-historical king of Srub Brain in Innishowen; nom. sg. Deccair 201, the name of one of the nine queens buried at Kilcorbain, near Naas; and the family name Hui Deccair Dala 316b, given also at 133b "Book of Ballymote," and given as Hui Decrair at 388a LL. The Hui Deccair DALa were said by some to be descended from Illan mac Duntaing, a king of Leinster, who died A.D. 506. . . . ut alii dicunt, LL. 316b, BB. 133b. Unfortunately neither the "Book of Leinster" nor the "Book of Ballymote" states what was the other origin ascribed to the Hui Deccair Dala. If, as looks likely, the Decara (or Decaria) D[aii] (or D[alas]) of the Dunbell inscription were the eponymous ancestor of the Hui Deccair Dala, that family, in the male line, was not descended, unless by adoption, from Illand mac Dunlaing, who flourished centuries after the disuse of Irish genitives, such as BRANITTOS in the Dunbell inscription.

Rev. Barry is ranked as a high authority on the Ogham writings, but the conclusions he has drawn from the Gowran and Dunbell stones are unfortunately uncertain. In this connection R. A. S. MacAlister, M.A., another outstanding authority, concludes according to his article, "Notes on Some of the Kilkenny Oghams," journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, Vol. VII, year 1897, that readings other than Barry's, Dalo, D Dalos are more probable. Aside from these questionable inscriptions a third Ogham exists, known as the Monataggert II, containing the names Dali and Dalagni. Professor R.A.S. MacAlister transcribes the inscription on this ogham as follows:



MONATAGGART II



DALAG N I MA Q IDALI I

"In very minute scores the name *Dalagni* (or traces of it) is to be seen scratched at the beginning of the inscription—probably an engraver's memorandum. The name of the son is a derivative from that of the father, by affixing the patronymic or diminutive suffix *-gnos*; compare *Ercagni maqi Ercias* at Seemochuda, and the Kilbonane inscription already commented upon in this volume. *Dalagni* is to be equated to Dalan, the name of the druid in the story of the 'Wooing of Atain'; a name different from this (or to its base Dal) is Dall, with a genitive in *-os*, which I thought I could make out on the Rathduff inscription" (45).

(*Studies in Irish Epigraphy*, pages 141, 142.)

Professor MacNeill, in his article entitled "Mocu, Maccu," (the equivalents of "Maqi") says:

"The word which follows mocu [in the oghams] is a portion of the name of the *gens*, and is in fact the genitive of the name of the eponymous ancestor. This personage is not a human ancestor as middle Irish and modern Irish writers supposed. I have shown in *New Ireland Review*, November, 1906, that he is the tutelary god of the race. In many cases the mythological ancestor is female. We need not suppose as many gods as eponymous ancestors. There is clear evidence that Irish gods rejoiced in a profusion of synonyms." (*Eriu*, Vol. III, Part I, page 42.)

Therefore from the collective evidence available, it would appear that there are reasonable grounds for assuming the family name "O'Dalaigh" has a godly or mythological significance. Even though this theory lacks certainty, it seems to deserve serious consideration. Based as it is on data associated with times of antiquity in Ireland, it at least provides a more logical probable meaning of the name O'Dalaigh than the more popular versions built almost entirely on definitions given in modern dictionaries for supposed parts of the family name.