

The unidentified “Wlonchargan” of the Middle English poem *Sarmun* in British Library, MS Harley 913

パトリック・オニール

Patrick P. O’Neill

この小論の目的は、14世紀、アイルランドにおいて英語を話す人々が暮らしていた Pale と呼ばれる地域で書かれた写本、Harley 913（大英図書館所蔵）に収められている中英語詩に現れる “Wlonchargan” という名前の人物を特定することである。ほとんどの研究者が “Wlonchargan” は人名であると考えているものの、これまで、それが誰であるのかは不明のままであった。この論文は、当時のローマ教皇の手紙、ならびにアイルランドの年代記や固有名詞集から、それが13世紀、よく知られていたある特定の人物であったこと、そして、その人物が生きていた当時の背景を明らかにする。

キーワード : Annals of Inisfallen; Cashel; Cîteaux; Donnchad Ú(a) Longargáin; Franciscans; Harley 913; Killaloe; Pope Honorius III; *Sarmun*; Wlonchargan

British Library, MS Harley 913, is a pocket-size manuscript dating from the first half of the fourteenth-century, containing a miscellaneous collection of poetry and prose in Latin, French and English. Thanks to the pioneering work of Wilhelm Heuser,¹⁾ the manuscript's origins have been firmly located in early fourteenth-century Ireland, in the English-speaking area known as the Pale.²⁾ It contains seventeen poems in Middle English, among them one described by the first cataloguer of the manuscript, the celebrated Humphrey Wanley, as "A Divine Poem ... upon Death; against Pride."³⁾ Judged by contents alone, this is a reasonably accurate if somewhat laconic characterization. Heuser went a step further in identifying the poem as a sermon in verse, to which he gave the name "*Sarmun*."⁴⁾ His evidence was the final stanza which rounds off the poem by reassuring the audience that listening to "this sermon" has gained them seven years indulgence: "*Alle þat beþ icommin here / Forto hire þis sarmun, / Loke þat ze nab no were, / For seue zer ze habbiþ to pardoun.*"⁵⁾ He further pointed to such close resemblances between the *Sarmun* poem and a group of three other Middle English poems in Harley 913 in content, tone, prosody and language as to justify giving them the collective name of the four preaching poems ("Die vier Predigtgedichte"). And he concluded that all four were not only copied in Ireland but also composed there.⁶⁾

The present note has a much more modest aim, simply to elucidate a hitherto unexplained topical reference in *Sarmun* and discuss its significance. The reference is found buried in the final line of quatrain 27 (lines 109–112), as follows,

Beiz freris prech of heuen and helle,
Of ioi and pine to mani man,
Al þat him þenchit bot dwelle,

1) W. Heuser (ed.), *Die Kildare-Gedichte: die ältesten mittelenglischen denkmäler in Anglo-Irischer Überlieferung*, Bonner Beiträge zur Anglistik vol. 14 (Bonn, 1904), especially pp. 11–19.

2) A date ca. 1338–42 has been proposed by A. Fletcher, "The Date of London, British Library, Harley MS 913 (The 'Kildare Poems')," *Medium Ævum* 79 (2010), 306–10, based on the evidence of one item in the manuscript, a list of Franciscan houses in the Irish and English provinces.

3) *Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum* 3 vols. (London 1708), I, p. 473 (item 13).

4) *Middle English Dictionary* (online) identifies the poem by its incipit, *Be grace of godde*.

5) Ed. by T. Turville-Petre, *Poems from BL MS Harley 913, 'The Kildare Manuscript'*, Early English Texts Society o.s. 345 (Oxford, 2015), p. 29, which I translate as follows: "All who have come here to listen to this sermon, see to it that you have no anxiety, since you receive seven years indulgence."

6) Heuser, *Die Kildare-Gedichte*, pp. 85–88.

As men telliþ of *Wlonchargan*.⁷⁾

In the verses immediately preceding, the poet attempted to focus the minds of his audience on the prospect of Final Judgment and the possibility of Hell. In the same vein, he castigates in the present verse the human tendency to treat the afterlife as something imaginary (*dwelle*), and by way of exemplum he mentions “Wlonchargan.” But who is this all-too-human Wlonchargan? Heuser speculated that there must have been a story about someone of that name which was well known to the medieval audience of Harley 913 but which is unfortunately lost to us.⁸⁾ *Middle English Dictionary* suggests a name derived from ME *wlonk* (‘pride’)⁹⁾ which, if true, would certainly be an appropriate personification in a sermon about pride. Unfortunately, this tempting suggestion fails on phonological and morphological grounds since it would require sundering what appears to be the digraph <ch> in Wlonchargan, while at the same time leaving unexplained its remaining two syllables. Turville-Petre’s recent edition of the poem *Sarmun*, while acknowledging the word in the “Index of Proper Names,” simply notes in the commentary that it is “[o]therwise unrecorded.”¹⁰⁾

In fact the name is well recorded, though admittedly in a somewhat different linguistic dress. The first clue is its initial <w>, a symbol normally employed by Anglo-Norman scribes to represent the voiced labiovelar approximant /w/ of both French and Middle English.¹¹⁾ However, in an Irish setting the same scribes sometimes resorted to using this distinctive <w> symbol to represent Irish (Gaelic) words beginning with the vowel /u/.¹²⁾ For example, the Irish place-name (*Caislén*) *Uilcín* (now Castle Erkin, Co. Tipperary) is represented by (*Castrum*) *Wilekin*; the Irish barony *Uaithne Tíre* (now Owney, Co. Tipperary) by *Wethenitire*; and even the Scandinavian-Irish place-name *Ulfreksfiordr* (near Larne, Co. Antrim) is written as *Wulfrichford*.¹³⁾ The commonplace nature of these examples also highlights the fact that the issue of how to represent Irish /u/ could not be easily avoided, since official docu-

7) “Even though the friars preach to many people about Heaven and Hell, about the joy (of the former) and the pain (of the latter), all of that seems to them to be but an illusion, as they relate about Wlonchargan.” Text from Turville-Petre, *Poems*, p. 26.

8) Heuser, *Die Kildare-Gedichte*, p. 88.

9) *Middle English Dictionary*, s.v. *wlonk* 3 (adj.) lists “Wlonchargan” as “surname and in personal name.”

10) *Poems*, p. 109.

11) Here and throughout letters are bound by angled brackets while phonemes are given within slanted lines.

12) Though the more common representation was with <u>.

13) Examples taken at random from G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans 1169–1333, with an introduction by Seán Duffy* (Dublin, 2005), p. 364, n. 20 (=Bk III, p. 165 of the original edition).

ments written by scribes who belonged to the Anglo-Norman bureaucracy in Ireland, inevitably and frequently had to deal with Gaelic onomastica. Especially common were Irish surnames that involved a formula of nomenclature which began with the word *Úa* or *Ú*. In the Old Irish period (pre-900), *Úa* (earlier *auē*, ‘grandson, male descendant’) was often combined with the name of an eponymous ancestor (in the genitive) to identify someone as a member of a particular sept.¹⁴⁾ By the early tenth century this combination of *Úa* (often monophthongized to *Ú*, later *Ó*) and eponym came to be used as a surname. Thus, we find contemporary entries in the Irish Annals not only employing the new formula but also using initial *Ú*; for example, the Annals of Inisfallen for the year 1197 records the death of the Bishop of Emly, Ragnall Ua Flainn Chua, with the *Ú*-spelling, “*Quies episcopi...Imlecha Iboir, .i. Ragnaild U Fhlaínd Chua*”; likewise, under 1201, “*Diarmait mc. Mathgamna Ú Briain mortuus est*” (“Diarmait, son of Mathgamain Ua Briain, died”).¹⁵⁾ Such evidence suggests that the initial <w> of Wlonchargan stands for Gaelic *Ú* as the first element of an Irish form of nomenclature.

Also symptomatic is the final *-an* of Wlonchargan which in an Irish context likely stands for the diminutive *-án*, a suffix commonly found in Irish proper names.¹⁶⁾ If we accept that the first and last morphemes of Wlonchargan are likely to be of Gaelic origin, then the same conclusion likely holds true for the remaining elements of the name. Further supporting evidence is the close phonological resemblance between Wlonchargan and the anglicized Irish name “(O’) Lonergan,” which in its medieval Irish form is well attested as *Ú(a) Lonngargáin*. A comparison between the latter and “Wlonchargan” reveals, not surprisingly, some differences, but all of a nature that can be explained as phonological adaptations in a process of anglicizing an alien Irish word. Thus, as already noted, the first element of the Irish name, in the form *Ú* (/u:/), was often represented by Anglo-Norman scribes with the symbol <w>; while the rendering of the second element, Ir. *lonn* (<lond) by *lon* is unremarkable. In the third element, Ir *garg-*, the initial <g> (lenited in Irish because it is compounded with the preceding *lonn*, thus /g/ > /ɣ/) represents a voiced velar spirant. But since Middle English had lost the voiced velar spirant of Old English, the closest phonological match, the unvoiced equivalent /χ/

14) See D. Ó Corráin, “*Áui, Úi, Uí: A Palaeographical Problem?*” in P. Moran and I. Warntjes (edd.), *Early Medieval Ireland and Europe: Chronology, Contacts, Scholarship: A Festschrift for Dáibhí Ó Cróinín*, Studia Traditionis Theologiae (Explorations in Early and Medieval Theology) 14 (Turnhout, 2015), pp. 301–9.

15) *The Annals of Inisfallen* (MS. Rawlinson B. 503), ed. and transl. by Seán Mac Airt (Dublin, 1951), pp. 322–23 and 328–29.

16) See R. Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish, revised and enlarged edition with supplement, translated from the German by D. A. Binchy and Osborn Bergin* (Dublin, 1946), p. 173 (§271.1).

(spelled <ch>) was substituted. Finally, in the treatment of the Irish diminutive *-áin* both the long quantity of the vowel (indicated by an acute accent) and the function of the glide <i> as a marker of palatalized final /nⁱ/, were ignored, the first perhaps because the syllable was unstressed,¹⁷⁾ the second because Middle English did not have such a phoneme. Thus, “Wlonchargan” in the poem *Sarmun* can be plausibly read as an anglicized version of the Irish surname *Úa Lonngargáin*.¹⁸⁾

The *Úa Longargáins* were a notable Munster family sufficiently important to warrant considerable documentation in both Gaelic Irish and Anglo-Norman sources of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Contemporary Irish genealogies give them an impressive lineage based on their descent from the sept of the *Dál Cais* (whose seat was in Co. Clare), which made them immediate relatives of Brian Boru, king of Ireland during the first decades of the eleventh century. One of the earliest references to a member of the family is Célechair Ua Longargáin (died 1008), a nephew of King Brian, who served as Abbot of Terryglass, a prominent monastery in north Tipperary. Indeed, his profile is symptomatic of the *Úa Longargáin* family’s influential presence in the ecclesiastical, rather than the secular, sphere. Its male members often provided bishops for the local diocese of Killaloe, which covered a large swath of territory in the southern half of Ireland. This office also provided a jumping-off point for higher ecclesiastical status, so that no less than three members of the family became Archbishop of Cashel (and thus the whole province of Munster) during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The last of these archbishops was Donnchad *Úa Longargáin* II¹⁹⁾ (referred to as ‘Donatus’ in papal correspondence), who held office from July 1216 until his resignation sometime before August 1223 (he died in 1232). As will now be argued, he was the specific target of the derisive comment in the *Sarmun* poem under the name “Wlonchargan.”

The clue to Wlonchargan’s identity is the implied accusation in the poem that his notoriety derived from some improper conduct involving willful insouciance about dying and the afterlife. At first

17) Significantly, in *Sarmun*, “Wlonchargan” rhymes with “man,” a short syllable. In any case it is quite possible that in spoken Irish the original vowel length of *-án* in the present name was no longer operative, given its weakened (unstressed) position as a third syllable.

18) Another treatment of this Irish name is found in a Latin charter from *ca.* 1210 in favour of the Hospital of St. John the Baptist, Dublin, which was witnessed by “Johannes Olinugran,” prior of Cashel; ed. Eric St. John Brooks, *Register of the Hospital of S. John the Baptist without the New Gate, Dublin* (Dublin, 1936), no. 443 (p. 283). Here the first <g> of (Ó) Longargáin, a voiced velar fricative, seems to be unrecorded.

19) So named to distinguish him from his predecessor with the same name who occupied the position from *c.* 1208 to 1216.

glance it seems a rather odd charge to make — after all morally oriented literature of the thirteenth century (including that of Harley 913) was much more likely to address abuses concerning greed, lust for power, and oppression of the poor rather than a lack of diligence about eschatological matters. Also peculiar is that the poet does not give the full name (much less title) of the perpetrator—simply his surname. From these circumstances we can hazard a guess that the poet had in mind some event connected to a certain “Wlonchargan,” one so egregious that it did not require a retelling of its particulars, including the full name of the party concerned. Such an event did occur, and it had to do with Donnchad Úa Longargáin, making him a *cause célèbre* in early thirteenth-century Ireland.

The background is as follows. In 1216 Donnchad assumed the office of Archbishop of Cashel, another witness to the long tradition of ecclesiastical preferment enjoyed by the Úa Longargáins as staunch representatives of the older Gaelic political order. But that dominance was now being challenged by the recently arrived Anglo-Norman colonists, both ecclesiastical and secular. Prominent among the latter was the king’s justiciar in Ireland, Geoffrey de Marisco, who at this very time (1216-17) was attempting to intrude his nephew on the diocese of Killaloe as its new bishop, a double challenge to Donnchad since Killaloe was his home diocese (virtually a familial fiefdom), while also falling within his jurisdiction as archbishop. The same justiciar soon after appropriated ecclesiastical lands in the new town of Cashel where Donnchad had his seat. The archbishop responded by putting the diocese of Cashel under interdict, an ecclesiastical punishment whereby the whole community was denied the sacraments though not excommunicated. Then early in 1220 he set out for Rome to seek redress from Pope Honorius III. What happened next we know only from a letter of Honorius written to the people of Cashel later that year (August 3, 1220). For an understanding of Donnchad’s conduct and its impact on his diocese the letter is worth translating in full:

To the clergy and people of the town and diocese of Cashel. Your esteemed brother [Donatus]... Archbishop of Cashel, has taken great care to explain to us that when he was recently on his way to the Holy See he fell gravely ill at [the Cistercian monastery of] Cîteaux. The same Donatus, believing himself to be at death’s door, received there the monastic habit [of a Cistercian]. In consequence, you refuse to show him the customary respect and obedience due to him, even though he did not resign from his episcopal office—nor would he have been able to do so without special permission from the Holy See. Therefore, since the monastic state and the episcopal office are not mutually incompatible, we order your community by apostolic decree, notwithstanding

that same event, submissively to render the customary respect and obedience due to the said archbishop.²⁰⁾

From the first part of Honorius’s letter we learn that while passing through France on his way to Rome Donnchad stopped at the Cistercian monastery of Cîteaux, where he became seriously ill. Fearing imminent death he made vows as a Cistercian monk.²¹⁾ However, he obviously recovered from his illness, since he was able to continue his journey to Rome and confer with Pope Honorius. Had Donnchad remained at Cîteaux as a Cistercian monk after his recovery in accord with his death-bed vow, his Anglo-Norman enemies in Ireland would have had little grounds to criticize him. As it was, they now had multiple reasons to revile him. From their perspective his decision to become a Cistercian monk on his deathbed had gained him unfairly the spiritual advantages of the monastic state without his having endured the rigors which that lifestyle normally entailed. Moreover, upon his recovery, he had conveniently put aside his monastic vows and resumed high ecclesiastical office; and finally, he had successfully made his case against them in Rome, as suggested by the vigorous statements of support for the Gaelic Irish Church issued by Honorius in summer 1220.²²⁾ So intense were the hostile feelings towards Donnchad that Honorius felt compelled in the second part of his letter to command the people and clergy of Cashel “to submissively render the customary respect and obedience due to the said archbishop.” In the same letter Honorius argued that since only the pope could remove Donnchad from his episcopal office, his deathbed vow to that effect had no validity — he was still their archbishop. Evidently the pope’s appeal for Christian comity had little effect, as suggested by

20) Translated from the original text, ed. by M. P. Sheehy, *Pontificia Hibernica: Medieval Papal Chancery Documents concerning Ireland, 640–1261*, 2 vols (Dublin, 1962–5), I, no. 138 (p. 224), which reads as follows, “Clero et populo civitatis et diocesis Cassellensis. Venerabilis frater ... Cassellensis archiepiscopus nobis insinuare curavit quod cum nuper constitutus in itinere ad sedem apostolicam veniendi, apud Cistercium infirmitatem gravissimam incurrisset, idem credens sibi mortis periculum imminere ibi suscepit habitum monachalem, propter quod ei reverentiam et obedientiam consuetam renuitis exhibere, quamquam dignitati sue nec cesserit nec potuerit cedere sine apostolice sedis licentia speciali. Cum igitur monachalis habitus et pontificalis dignitas non repugnent universitati vestre per apostolica scripta mandamus quatenus occasione huiusmodi non obstante prefato archiepiscopo reverentiam et obedientiam (sic) consuetam humiliter impendatis.”

21) The ties between the monastery of Cîteaux and the secular rulers to whom Donnchad owed allegiance, the Úa Briain, were especially close.

22) See A. Gwynn and D. F. Gleeson, *A History of the Diocese of Killaloe* (Dublin, 1962), p. 230.

the fact that Donnchad remained abroad for the next few years while continuing in office.²³⁾

The narrative of Donnchad's dubious deathbed conversion surely explains how he became a byword for spiritual insouciance and insincerity. Nor should the obliqueness of the *Sarmun* poet's reference to this event be construed as induced by fear of scandal; quite the opposite: his treatment seems to imply that a mere reference to the archbishop's name will suffice to conjure up the notorious story. Moreover, the use of a present tense verb (*men tellib*, 'people relate') to allude to the affair suggests that *Sarmun* was composed while the communal memory of Donnchad Úa Longargáin was still fresh. How soon that happened is difficult to say but if, as Heuser plausibly suggested, the poet was a preaching mendicant friar, specifically a Franciscan,²⁴⁾ the poem could not have been composed before the 1220s at the earliest, when that order first arrived in Ireland. Whatever its precise date the fact that it ridiculed the Gaelic Archbishop of Cashel by making him the object of a cautionary exemplum reflects the charged atmosphere of discord during the thirteenth century between the Gaelic-speaking and English-speaking communities in Ireland.

23) He was at Gloucester on July 30, 1222, presumably on his way home to Ireland; and while there he received submissions about the Killaloe controversy, which indicates that he was still in office; see *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland, 1171–1307*, ed. H. S. Sweetman, vol. 1 (London, 1875), p. 159 (no. 1034). However, he resigned in the following year, as recorded in the local Munster annals, the *Annals of Inisfallen, s.a. 1223*, "In t-ardeaspug O Lonbrogain d'agbail a airdeaspugoidi da deoin..." ("The Archbishop Ó Lonbrogáin voluntarily quitted his archbishopric"); under 1232 the same annals record his death; see Mac Airt, *The Annals of Inisfallen*, pp. 344–5 and 348–49, respectively.

24) On the grounds that in no other order of mendicant friars did the granting of indulgences (such as the one with which *Sarmun* ends) play a larger role than among the followers of St Francis. Since 1223 the Franciscans had been granted the exclusive privilege of the Portiuncula Indulgence which very quickly spread throughout the member houses. Heuser, *Die Kildare-Gedichte*, p. 88, notes the amount of attention devoted to the Portiuncula Indulgence in other (Latin) parts of Harley 913.