

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY: RAWLINSON  
B 502 AND *LEBAR GLINNE DÁ LOCHA*

INTRODUCTION

IT HAS been argued by the present writer that the manuscript known as *Lebar Glinne Dá Locha* (LGDL) is not to be identified as the manuscript now known as Rawlinson B 502 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, as had earlier been argued by Pádraig Ó Riain.<sup>1</sup> In a recent article Ó Riain has restated his claim that LGDL and Rawlinson B 502 are one and the same manuscript.<sup>2</sup> Many of the points raised by Ó Riain in his latest contribution call for further comment and it is to this end that the present article has been written.

THE POEM *Cia lín don rígraid ráin ruaid*

Central to Ó Riain's discussion of the poem *Cia lín don rígraid ráin ruaid* was his assumption that there are only two extant copies of the poem, those in Rawlinson B 502 and RIA MS 23 D 17 (790). As the scribe of 23 D 17 cites LGDL as his source for this poem and as the version in 23 D 17 is almost identical with that in Rawlinson B 502, Ó Riain concluded that the scribe of 23 D 17 must have been referring to Rawlinson B 502 in this instance. Ó Riain argued that it was most unlikely that there could have been a third almost identical copy of this poem in spite of the fact that it consists of only 32 lines.<sup>3</sup> The present writer drew attention, however, to a third copy of this poem in National Library of Ireland MS G 3.<sup>4</sup> It was also pointed out that the latter manuscript is in agreement with 23 D 17 in its omission of a short prose introduction to the poem which is found in Rawlinson B 502.<sup>5</sup> It is somewhat surprising, therefore, to find that Ó Riain still maintains that there are only two extant copies of this poem.<sup>6</sup>

No source is cited for *Cia lín don rígraid ráin ruaid* in G 3. We do know, however, that LGDL is cited as a source for other material

<sup>1</sup>C. Breatnach, 'Rawlinson B 502, Lebar Glinne Dá Locha and Saltair na Rann', *Éigse* 30 (1997) 109–32; P. Ó Riain, 'The Book of Glendalough or Rawlinson B 502', *Éigse* 18 (1981) 161–76. All references in this article to Rawlinson B 502 are to the second vellum part of that manuscript.

<sup>2</sup>P. Ó Riain, 'Rawlinson B 502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Locha: a restatement of the case', *ZCP* 51 (1998) 130–47.

<sup>3</sup>P. Ó Riain, 'The Book of Glendalough or Rawlinson B 502', 166–7.

<sup>4</sup>C. Breatnach, 'Rawlinson B 502, Lebar Glinne Dá Locha and Saltair na Rann', 123.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.* 122–3.

<sup>6</sup>P. Ó Riain, 'Rawlinson B 502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Locha: a restatement of the case', 138.

in this manuscript.<sup>7</sup> The poem and its prose introduction are found in Rawlinson B 502 in a section of text headed *Haec sunt credentium regum nomina*.<sup>8</sup> It would seem to be the case that, at some stage of its manuscript transmission, *Cia lín don rígraid ráin ruaid* was removed from its earlier context. We may now look again at the versions of the poem in 23 D 17 and G 3. Both of these manuscripts cite LGDL as a source. In the case of 23 D 17, LGDL is explicitly cited as the source for our poem. In both G 3 and 23 D 17, however, the poem is removed from the context in which it is found in Rawlinson B 502. The short prose introduction to the poem in the latter is also omitted in the former manuscripts. If LGDL were the manuscript now known as Rawlinson B 502 one would then have to assume that both the scribe of G 3 and the scribe of 23 D 17 independently removed the poem from its earlier context and independently omitted its prose introduction. A more plausible argument is that the evidence of G 3 and 23 D 17 suggests that the removal of *Cia lín don rígraid ráin ruaid* from its earlier context and the omission of its prose introduction occurred in a common source. The common source may have been LGDL.<sup>9</sup> It may also be noted that 23 D 17 and G 3 are in agreement in omitting marginal notes to this poem found in Rawlinson B 502.<sup>10</sup> On the basis of the foregoing evidence, it may be argued that the scribe of 23 D 17 in citing LGDL as a source for *Cia lín don rígraid ráin ruaid* is not referring to the manuscript now known as Rawlinson B 502.

#### SALTAIR NA RANN

Another section of Ó Riain's more recent contribution on LGDL and Rawlinson B 502 which might also have benefited from further reflection on his part is his discussion of Saltair na Rann. It was pointed out by the present writer that Saltair na Rann, in addition to being used as the title of this metrical composition, was also used in the seventeenth century, at the latest, to refer to Rawlinson B 502, the reason being that Saltair na Rann is the opening text of that manuscript. Ó Riain acknowledges this fact and states as follows:

At about 1630, after coming into possession of the manuscript, James Ware, taking his cue from the title of the well known poem with which the codex now begins,

<sup>7</sup>Cf. N. Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland*, fasc. I (Dublin 1967) 25 (at 22va and 23r).

<sup>8</sup>Cf. M. A. O'Brien (ed.), *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae I* (Dublin 1962) 124–8.

<sup>9</sup>For another example of common omission of material found in Rawlinson B 502 in later manuscripts which cite LGDL as one of their sources cf. J. Carney (ed.), *The poems of Blathmac*, Irish Texts Society XLVII (Dublin 1964) xii; P. Ó Riain, 'The Book of Glendalough or Rawlinson B 502', 171–4; C. Breatnach, 'Rawlinson B 502, Leabar Glinne Dá Locha and Saltair na Rann', 110–13.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae I*, 126.

began to call it *Saltair na Rann*. Material copied from the manuscript, apparently about this time, and forwarded to John Colgan was accordingly also ascribed to *Saltair na Rann*. Aside from this, however, there is no other known evidence for the use of *Saltair na Rann* as a name for Rawlinson B 502.<sup>11</sup>

One crucial matter left unmentioned by Ó Riain is that when the title *Saltair na Rann* is used to refer to Rawlinson B 502 it is also invariably stated that this is the *Saltair na Rann* which was written by Óengus Céle Dé. I have pointed out that this is the case with regard to references to this manuscript by James Ware, John Colgan and Geoffrey Keating which are, respectively, as follows:

‘... Oengus *Celide*, Author antiquus, qui in libro dicto *Psalter-narran* ...’;

‘... ex *Saltuir-na-rann*, ... quod composuit Aengusseus Keledeus.’;

‘... *Saltair na Rann* ro scríobh Aonghus Céile Dé.’<sup>12</sup>

These references agree perfectly with the heading to the opening text of Rawlinson B 502 which is as follows:

‘*Psaltar na rann inso sis dorigni Oengus celi De.*’

It is thus the case that Ware, Colgan and Keating all indicate that the *Saltair na Rann* to which they refer is that said to have been written by Óengus Céle Dé. That Ó Riain seems to have failed to notice this crucial distinction is indicated by his references to other manuscripts in which, according to him, *Saltair na Rann* is cited as a source. These are given as follows:

For other examples of the use of *Saltair na Rann* as the name of a manuscript source, see Maynooth Manuscripts R 70, pp. 527, 534; R 71, p. 111, and Royal Irish Academy Manuscript 23 L 34, pp. 194–6, 205. In none of these cases is the text referred to in Rawlinson B 502.<sup>13</sup>

It may be pointed out that in none of these instances is there any mention of Óengus Céle Dé in connection with these references. The source quoted in these manuscripts also calls for further comment. In the case of the items on pp. 194–6 and 205 of RIA MS 23 L 34 (1007) Ó Riain would appear to be dependent on information provided in the *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy* which

<sup>11</sup>P. Ó Riain, ‘Rawlinson B 502 alias *Lebar Glinne Dá Locha*: a restatement of the case’, 146.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. C. Breatnach, ‘Rawlinson B 502, *Lebar Glinne Dá Locha* and *Saltair na Rann*’, 126, 127, 130.

<sup>13</sup>P. Ó Riain, ‘Rawlinson B 502 alias *Lebar Glinne Dá Locha*: a restatement of the case’, 146, n. 52.

states (p. 2871) that the text on p. 194 is ‘ex Psaltair na Rann’, the text on p. 195 is ‘from the same’, the text on p. 196 is ‘from the same source’ and the text on p. 205 is ‘as an tpsaltair’. Examination of the manuscript itself reveals a somewhat different picture, however. The following are the headings to the items mentioned by Ó Riain as they are actually found in this manuscript:

Heading on p. 194: ‘Ex Psaltair na Rann ⁊ cetera.’;

Heading on p. 195: ‘Ex Psaltair ⁊ cetera.’;

Heading on p. 196: ‘Corbmac mac Cuilindáin cecinit ex psaltair ⁊ cetera.’;

Heading on p. 205: ‘As an tpsaltair’.

We may compare the heading on p. 196 of this manuscript with the heading to the same item, the poem *Mochean do theacht a leabhair* which is ascribed to Cormac mac Cuilleannáin, in one of the other manuscripts cited by Ó Riain above, i.e. Maynooth R 70, p. 527:

‘Corbmac mac Cuilindáin cecinit ex psaltair ⁊ cetera.’

Not only is there no reference to Óengus Céle Dé in any of the above instances but in some cases the source referred to is explicitly associated with another figure, Cormac mac Cuilleannáin. The latter is associated with another well-known saltair, i.e. Saltair Chaisil, a manuscript which has been the subject of an article by Ó Riain himself.<sup>14</sup> It may thus be the case that, in at least some of the instances above, the source cited is, in fact, Saltair Chaisil.

A further item in RIA 23 L 34, p. 211, not mentioned by Ó Riain, is stated to be ‘ex Psalterio ⁊ cetera na rann’. This is the poem *Bérad breath na himriosna* written by Tadhg an Ghadraigh Mac Aodhagáin. As Brian Ó Cuív has pointed out, this heading is also found in a closely related copy of this poem found in RIA MS 23 H 13 (706).<sup>15</sup> There is some doubt as to the date of composition of this poem. Ó Cuív suggests that it may have been written in the seventeenth century.<sup>16</sup> The ‘Saltair na Rann’ quoted as a source for this poem must obviously have been a late manuscript and presumably refers to a verse anthology. The present writer has pointed out that the term *saltair* can be used of a manuscript without regard to its contents. Attention was also drawn to the fact that Geoffrey Keating mentions that the term *saltair* is employed in the titles of manuscripts to indicate the frequent occurrence of verse in such manuscripts. He also states that *saltair* and *duanaire* are alike in that both can be used of manuscripts containing many poems.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup>P. Ó Riain, ‘The Psalter of Cashel: a provisional list of contents’, *Éigse* 23 (1989) 107–30.

<sup>15</sup>B. Ó Cuív, ‘The poetic contention about the River Shannon’, *Ériu* 19 (1962) 89.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.* 90.

<sup>17</sup>C. Breatnach, ‘Rawlinson B 502, Lebar Glinne Dá Locha and Saltair na Rann’, 130–1. Cf. P. Ó Riain, ‘Rawlinson B 502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Locha: a restatement of the case’,

There must be some doubt as to the sources cited in the manuscripts mentioned above. Confusion is reflected in the *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy* where the item on p. 205 of 23 L 34, the poem *Risin ord ard fhealmhanach*, is said to derive from both Saltair Chaisil and Saltair na Rann.<sup>18</sup> What is clear is that there is no mention of Óengus Céle Dé in association with any of these sources. As previously stated, when Saltair na Rann is used to refer to Rawlinson B 502 it is invariably the case that it is said to have been written by Óengus Céle Dé.

In *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* Geoffrey Keating refers to some of the major manuscript sources extant in his day. These include the following:

Leabhar Árda-Mácha; Saltair Chaisil, do scríobh Cormac naomhtha mac Chuileannáin (rí dá chúigeadh Múmhan agus áirdeaspog Chaisil); Leabhar na hUachongmhála; Leabhar Chluana heidhneach Fionntain i Laoighis; Saltair na Rann ro scríobh Aonghus Céile Dé; Leabhar Ghlinne-dá-loch.<sup>19</sup>

Among the manuscripts mentioned here is Saltair Chaisil ascribed to Cormac mac Cuileannáin. Keating distinguishes between this manuscript and Saltair na Rann written by Óengus Céle Dé. Particularly striking, in the present context, are the last two manuscripts mentioned by Keating, i.e. *Saltair na Rann ro scríobh Aonghus Céile Dé* and *Leabhar Ghlinne-dá-loch*. It would thus appear to be the case that a distinction is being made by Keating between the manuscript now known as Rawlinson B 502 and LGDL. Ó Riain does not discuss this item of evidence in his recent contribution but instead concentrates on another reference by Keating to Saltair na Rann in which the latter is cited as a source for the poem *Uí Néill uile ar cúl Choluim*. This poem is not now to be found in Rawlinson B 502. I have argued that the poem may have been originally contained in Rawlinson B 502 and may have been lost due either to a loss of folios or to severe trimming of pages of that manuscript by a seventeenth-century binder. Ó Riain's rejection of this possible explanation is based on an unfounded assumption by him of speculation on my part and on a circular argument concerning a section of genealogies in the Book of Lecan and the citing of LGDL as a source therein. Ó Riain's discussion of these matters is as follows:

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146, n. 52, where reference is made to a manuscript containing a martyrology in verse and which is entitled 'Saltair na Rann'.

<sup>18</sup>*Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, Index II (Dublin 1958) 1239–40.

<sup>19</sup>Geoffrey Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* i, ed. David Comyn, Irish Texts Society IV (London 1902) 78; cf. C. Breatnach, 'Rawlinson B 502, Leabhar Ghlinne Dá Locha and Saltair na Rann', 130.

Pace Breatnach, in Keating's case, the relevance to R[awlinson B 502] is unsustainable, because the extract ascribed to *Saltair na Rann*, the poem beginning *Uí Néill uile ar cúl Choluim*, is absent from what survives of the twelfth-century manuscript. Breatnach proposes two possible explanations (p. 128). First, two lost folios of R, containing genealogical matter concerning saints, might also have had this poem among their contents. Secondly, since the poem is preserved on the margin of a page in LL [i.e. The Book of Leinster], this might also have applied to R, in which case, due to severe trimming of pages by a seventeenth-century binder, it could since have been lost. Unfortunately for both parts of this speculation, neither the part of the Book of Lecan corresponding to the two lost folios of R, nor the ample lower margin of the folio in R corresponding to where the marginal addition occurs in LL, shows any sign of the text.<sup>20</sup>

Ó Riain's remarks concerning the Book of Leinster and Rawlinson B 502 are somewhat at variance with what the present writer actually stated which is as follows:

The poem on the tutelary saints of Ireland [i.e. *Uí Néill uile ar cúl Choluim*] is not found in Rawlinson B 502. The text of the genealogies of Irish saints, however, is now imperfect at the beginning of this section in Rawlinson B 502 owing to the fact that two leaves have dropped out between folios 50 and 51. There was also severe cropping of the margins of this manuscript by the seventeenth-century binder. The poem on the tutelary saints of Ireland may have formed part of the section on the genealogies of the saints now wanting in Rawlinson B 502.<sup>21</sup>

It will be observed that there is no suggestion in this passage that the nature of the preservation of the poem *Uí Néill uile ar cúl Choluim* in the Book of Leinster had any bearing on Rawlinson B 502 as intimated by Ó Riain in the passage quoted above. As suggested above, Ó Riain's statement that that part of the Book of Lecan corresponding to the two lost folios of Rawlinson B 502 does not show any sign of this poem also calls for comment. He would seem to have in mind the citing of LGDL as a source for the section of text in the Book of Lecan corresponding to the lost section of text in Rawlinson B 502. Needless to say, this argument is circular. Such an argument could only have validity if LGDL and Rawlinson B 502 were one and the same manuscript. If Rawlinson

<sup>20</sup>P. Ó Riain, 'Rawlinson B 502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Locha: a restatement of the case', 143–4.

<sup>21</sup>C. Breatnach, 'Rawlinson B 502, Lebar Glinne Dá Locha and *Saltair na Rann*', 128.

B 502 and LGDL are two distinct manuscripts, however, the argument is entirely baseless.

Ó Riain also discusses John Colgan's references to *Saltair na Rann*. He is of the opinion that Colgan should not be regarded as an independent witness to the use of *Saltair na Rann* as a means of referring to Rawlinson B 502 and suggests that Colgan may have been dependent on Keating in this regard. He states of Colgan's references to *Saltair na Rann*:

However, V. Hull has pointed out that there are at least two references by Colgan to a manuscript bearing that title. One contains a Latin translation of the poem assigned to the *Saltair* by Keating, which Breatnach treats as independent evidence of the use of the name (p. 128). However, the fact that Colgan had at his disposal a copy of Keating's *Foras Feasa*, which he regularly cites in Latin translation, suggests that he may have been doing the same in this instance. Indeed, in a note to his second reference to the *Saltair* as the name of a manuscript, made in the course of his account of the martyrologist Óengus at the 11 March, Colgan cites Keating in support of the claim that Óengus had written the manuscript.<sup>22</sup>

Ó Riain also states that 'Breatnach omits the note from his extensive quotation of the relevant passage (pp. 129–30)'.<sup>23</sup> We may now examine the note and its context. It occurs in that section of text in which Colgan assigns *Saltair na Rann* to Óengus Céle Dé on the authority,

*vetusti Codicis membranei, ex quo libellus homonymorum descriptus, nobis nuper ex patria missus est, cum tali inscriptione; Homonymi Hiberniae Sancti ex Saltuir-na-rann, id est, (vt ego interpretor) ex Psalterio multipartito; quod composuit Aengussius Keledeus.*<sup>24</sup>

In his note Colgan adds the following reference (my italics):

Sepherinus Kaetinus *etiam* lib. 2 de Regibus Hiberniae scribit (sic!) illud opus à S. Aengussio compositum esse.<sup>25</sup>

It is clear from these items of evidence that Colgan is not solely dependent on Keating as a source for this matter, as intimated by Ó Riain.

<sup>22</sup>P. Ó Riain, 'Rawlinson B 502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Locha: a restatement of the case', 144.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.* n. 44.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. C. Breatnach, 'Rawlinson B 502, Lebar Glinne Dá Locha and *Saltair na Rann*', 129–30.

<sup>25</sup>Vernam Hull, 'Keating, Colgan, and the *Saltair na Rann*', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 16 (1927) 456; cf. P. Ó Riain, 'Rawlinson B 502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Locha: a restatement of the case', 145.

Colgan cites Keating in support of his other source. Colgan and Keating are therefore independent witnesses to the use of *Saltair na Rann* as a title of the manuscript now known as Rawlinson B 502. Moreover, Keating makes a distinction between this manuscript and LGDL.

#### EXEMPLAR AND LINE OF TRANSMISSION

In cases where one is endeavouring to prove that one manuscript is copied directly from another it is crucial, of course, to distinguish between the exemplar of that manuscript and the line of transmission to which it belongs. The fact that certain manuscripts belong to the same line of transmission does not imply that all such manuscripts were copying from the same exemplar. In both of his articles on Rawlinson B 502 and LGDL there would seem to be some confusion on Ó Riain's part with regard to this crucial distinction. In his more recent discussion of the pedigees of the saints, for example, Ó Riain refers to §§5–133 of his edition of the corpus of saints' pedigrees.<sup>26</sup> He draws attention to 'the considerable amount of identical correspondence, of the kind that is usual in manuscripts of the same line of transmission from a common source, between [Book of] Lec[an] §§5–133, B[ook of] B[allymote] and L[eabhar] B[reac]'.<sup>27</sup> He then observes: 'How the Lec., BB, and LB versions of the Corpus relate among themselves would merit closer investigation'.<sup>28</sup> It was also observed by the present writer that there is 'a good deal of agreement between Lec., BB and LB' in this section of the Corpus and that 'there are many instances where two of the codices agree with each other against the third'.<sup>29</sup> Ó Riain states that 'one would have expected some further examination of the textual evidence beyond the few examples discussed by me'.<sup>30</sup> Some further evidence was, in fact, adduced<sup>31</sup> and numerous other examples of discrepancies between Lec., BB and LB can be found among the variant readings of Ó Riain's edition of the Corpus. On the basis of certain evidence adduced by him, Ó Riain states that 'it is clear that the whole of Lec., both before and after the note referring to the change of source from an LGDL-version to an LL-version, belongs in the same line of transmission from LL as BB and LB. This means that there is no foundation whatever for Breatnach's opinion that Lec. §§5–133 belongs to a separate line of transmission from LL to that represented by BB and LB'.<sup>32</sup> What the

<sup>26</sup>P. Ó Riain, 'Rawlinson B 502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Locha: a restatement of the case', 134–8.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.* 137.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>C. Breatnach, 'Rawlinson B 502, Lebar Glinne Dá Locha and *Saltair na Rann*', 119.

<sup>30</sup>P. Ó Riain, 'Rawlinson B 502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Locha: a restatement of the case', 137.

<sup>31</sup>C. Breatnach, 'Rawlinson B 502, Lebar Glinne Dá Locha and *Saltair na Rann*', 119.

<sup>32</sup>P. Ó Riain, 'Rawlinson B 502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Locha: a restatement of the case', 138.



present writer actually stated was that a plausible explanation for the discrepancies between Lec., BB and LB 'is to postulate the existence of other non-extant manuscript versions of the pedigrees of the saints at the time of compilation of Lec., BB and LB. Needless to say, it would be quite possible that some of these non-extant manuscripts ultimately derived from LL'.<sup>33</sup> In other words, whereas similarity between certain texts naturally suggests that such texts belong in the same line of transmission, it does not necessarily follow that all such texts were copying from the same exemplar.

In the case of other evidence discussed by Ó Riain in his two articles on Rawlinson B 502 and LGDL both a failure to distinguish between *exemplar* and *line of transmission* and unproven assumptions on his part concerning the direct dependence of one manuscript source on another raise serious methodological questions.

In his more recent article Ó Riain states that mention was not made by the present writer of an extract from the death-tale of Niall Noígiallach in the text *Cóir Anmann*.<sup>34</sup> The item of text in question in *Cóir Anmann* is the poem *Mac Echach ard n-orddan* and a few lines of prose which immediately follow this poem. In his earlier article Ó Riain had maintained that the poem provided further evidence for the identification of Rawlinson B 502 as LGDL. His argument in this instance is based on the fact that the few lines of prose following this poem are found in almost identical form in Rawlinson B 502 and *Cóir Anmann*. As the latter cites LGDL as its source for this item of text, it can be concluded, according to Ó Riain, that what is being referred to is the manuscript now known as Rawlinson B 502. He states:

The poem *Mac Eachdach ard nordan* has a more important function, however, for it not only indicates that Rawl. B 502 was being used directly by the author of the O'Clery *Leabhar Gabhála*, it also proves once more that Rawl. B 502 and the Book of Glendalough are one and the same manuscript. Thus, apart from the copies in Rawl. and in 23 K 32, only one other copy of the poem survives, in the section of *Cóir Anmann* which purports to explain the name Niall Noígiallach. The *Cóir Anmann* text consists of a copy of the poem, with some variant readings *vis-à-vis* Rawl., and a few lines of prose which are followed by the statement: *Lebur Glinne Da Locha in bec sin*. The prose reads as follows in Stokes's edition: *Luidh dano Niall do saigid ríghí co Letha ⁊ co hEtáil, conid aire asrubhrad Noígiallach de .i. cóic géill hÉrenn ⁊ giall Alban ⁊ giall Saxan ⁊*

<sup>33</sup>C. Breatnach, 'Rawlinson B 502, Lebar Glinne Dá Locha and Saltair na Rann', 119.

<sup>34</sup>P. Ó Riain, 'Rawlinson B 502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Locha: a restatement of the case', 141.

*giall Bretan 7 giall Franc etc.* . . . What matters here, however, is its wording which, apart from the *etc.*, agrees word for word, indeed form for form, with only one other version known to me, the sentence which introduces the poem *Mac Echach ard norddan* in Rawl. B 502.<sup>35</sup>

This is one of a number of examples cited by Ó Riain in support of his view that close textual affinity between two extant manuscripts implies that the later manuscript must be directly dependent on the earlier manuscript, irrespective of length of text. In the case of the item of text common to two different manuscripts quoted above it may be observed that the said item in this particular instance is very brief. The present writer has questioned whether it could be plausibly argued that short items of text could be accurately copied by only one scribe.<sup>36</sup> Ó Riain is evidently of the opinion that such is the case. It would also follow in such cases, according to the methodology employed by him, that if the later of two extant manuscript cited its source in such instances, then the earlier extant manuscript must be that cited source. This is the methodology used, for example, in the case of the short prose item quoted above. This item of text is found in almost identical form in two extant manuscripts. The later of the two extant manuscripts quotes its source. In this instance Rawlinson B 502 is the earlier of the two extant manuscripts containing this item of text. The later extant example was written by a redactor of *Cóir Anmann* who quotes LGDL as his source. Therefore, according to Ó Riain's methodology, the redactor of *Cóir Anmann* can only be referring to the manuscript now known as Rawlinson B 502.

Ó Riain, as we have seen, is evidently of the view that no more than two manuscripts can contain an item of text in almost identical form. He reiterates this point of view in his more recent article. Responding to the view expressed by this writer that more than two manuscripts can contain a text in almost identical form, Ó Riain states that such an argument 'flies in the face of the principle, well founded in Irish practice, that close agreement among texts argues against a long scribal tradition'.<sup>37</sup> With regard to this statement we may now examine more closely another item of text discussed by Ó Riain, i.e. the tale of Niall Noígiallach's death from the O'Clery recension of *Lebor Gabála* in RIA MS 23 K 32 (617). According to Ó Riain, most of this tale was copied directly from Rawlinson B 502:

The tale of Niall's death, for its part, is sometimes given in O'Clery's own words. Mostly, however, it is an almost verbatim copy of the recension otherwise found in Rawl. B

<sup>35</sup>P. Ó Riain, 'The Book of Glendalough or Rawlinson B 502', 169–70.

<sup>36</sup>C. Breatnach, 'Rawlinson B 502, Lebar Glinne Dá Lochs and Saltair na Rann', 121.

<sup>37</sup>P. Ó Riain, 'Rawlinson B 502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Lochs: a restatement of the case', 139.

502. One passage from the text will suffice to illustrate this ...:

Rawl. B 502 81r 11

*Documlai iarum Niall co Laigniu ar sluagud ⁊ asbert ná ragad uaidib hi céin bad beo nó co tubarta dó Echuid i ngill ⁊ hi ngiallacht. Ocus ba sed sòn ba hécen. Co tucad sé (side?) co hÁth Fadat hi Fothartaib Fea for brú Sláine cona farcbad ar chind Néill ⁊ slabrad moa brágit ⁊ eithre na slabraidi tria choirthi toll.*

23 K 32 160.13

*Docomlai trá Niall cona slógad co Laigniu, et asbert ná ragad uaidhib hi céin bad beo co tabarta Eochaid dó i ngiallacht, occus ba sed sòn ba héiccen dóigh tuccadh side co hÁth Fadhat i Fothartaib Fea for bru Sláine, co ffarccbad ann ar cind Néill, et slabrad moa brághait et eithre an tsabraide tria coirti toll.<sup>38</sup>*

Ó Riain is undoubtedly correct in stating that Rawlinson B 502 and 23 K 32 are in very close agreement with regard to this particular item of text. Again, however, the methodology employed here may be questioned. He states that this 'is a random passage whose evidence is borne out by the remainder of the text in 23 K 32. Manifestly, O'Clery's version is in such close agreement with Rawl. B 502 that it most likely derives directly from it'.<sup>39</sup> In his more recent article Ó Riain states that this item of text furnishes further proof of the identity of LGDL and Rawlinson B 502:

Since R[awlinson B 502] and 23 K 32 clearly belong in the same line of transmission, and since the O'Clery *Leabhar Gabhála* cites LGDL among its sources, it seemed to me that here was a case where it may actually have been drawing from that source.<sup>40</sup>

It may be observed that we have here another instance of failure to distinguish between *exemplar* and *line of transmission*. Because O'Clery states that he had access to LGDL and because there is close textual affinity between items in 23 K 32 and Rawlinson B 502, as in the case of the item quoted above, this constitutes further proof, according to Ó Riain's methodology, that Rawlinson B 502 is to be identified as LGDL.

There can be little doubt that Rawlinson B 502 and 23 K 32 belong in the same line of transmission with regard to the passage above. As has

<sup>38</sup>P. Ó Riain, 'The Book of Glendalough or Rawlinson B 502', 167–8.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.* 169.

<sup>40</sup>P. Ó Riain, 'Rawlinson B 502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Locha: a restatement of the case', 140.

been previously pointed out, however, this does not necessarily imply that Rawlinson B 502 was the direct source of 23 K 32.<sup>41</sup> In response to this Ó Riain has stated:

One can say, however, that the more examples there are of this kind of remarkably close affinity between R[awlinson B 502] and texts declared to be based on LGDL, the less one is justified in raising the objection that a hypothetical intermediate ‘fair copy’, for which there is no other evidence, could have been intended.<sup>42</sup>

We may now examine the item of text cited above in more detail. It should firstly be pointed out that it is not specifically stated that this particular item of text is based on LGDL. O’Clery simply mentions LGDL as one of the many sources used by him in the compilation of his version of *Lebor Gabála*. The contents of 23 K 32, moreover, point to a fundamental flaw in Ó Riain’s argument in this instance. This manuscript is a copy of the O’Clery recension of *Lebor Gabála*. The exemplar of this manuscript, therefore, must have been either O’Clery’s original text or another copy of this text. It follows from this that even if Rawlinson B 502 was used as one of the sources for the O’Clery recension, it was not the direct source for 23 K 32. The fact that there is close textual affinity between 23 K 32 and Rawlinson B 502 therefore implies that there must have been close textual affinity between Rawlinson B 502 and the exemplar of 23 K 32. It can thereby be concluded then that there was at least one ‘intermediate fair copy’ between Rawlinson B 502 and 23 K 32 (allowing for the assumption that Rawlinson B 502 was one of O’Clery’s sources in the first instance).

A copy of the O’Clery recension of *Lebor Gabála*, believed to be an autograph copy, has, in fact, recently been discovered. The manuscript in question is now in the Royal Irish Academy (shelf-number 23 M 70).<sup>43</sup> Due to a loss of folios, only the beginning of the tale of Niall Noígiallach’s death now survives in this manuscript. The passage quoted above from this tale has consequently been lost. In addition to this particular text, however, there exists another manuscript which includes among its contents a copy of the O’Clery recension of *Lebor Gabála* which appears, on preliminary examination, to be independent of that in 23 K 32. This is RIA MS C iv 3 (1192) which was written in the seventeenth century by Dáibhidhe Ó Duibhgheannáin. Ó Riain makes no mention of this manuscript. The passage quoted above from Rawlinson B 502 and 23 K 32 is found in C iv 3 as follows:

<sup>41</sup>C. Breatnach, ‘Rawlinson B 502, Lebar Glinne Dá Locha and Saltair na Rann’, 124–5.

<sup>42</sup>P. Ó Riain, ‘Rawlinson B 502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Locha: a restatement of the case’, 141.

<sup>43</sup>Cf. R. Baumgarten, ‘Kuno Meyer’s Irish manuscript’, *Newsletter of the School of Celtic Studies* I (second printing, Dublin 1987) 23–5.

RIA C iv 3 (72v):

Do chomhlai tra Níall cona shlógadh co Laighniu, 7 is bert na ragadh uaidhibh hi cein badh béo no co ttabhartha Eochaidh dhó i ngíallecht, 7 ba sedh són, ba héigen, doigh tuccadh sidhe co hÁth Fadhat i bFothartaibh Féa for brú Sláine, co ffargbadh ann for cionn Néill 7 slabhradh móa bhrághait, 7 eithre an tslabhraidh tria choirthe tholl.<sup>44</sup>

Comparison of this passage and the corresponding text in both Rawlinson B 502 and 23 K 32 indicates that it is possible to have at least three almost identical copies of the same text. 23 K 32 and C iv 3 are in even closer agreement to each other than either is to Rawlinson B 502. This item of itself radically undermines the assumption made by Ó Riain that close textual affinity between two manuscripts implies direct dependence of the later manuscript on the earlier one. Yet much of his argument concerning his identification of Rawlinson B 502 as LGDL rests on such an assumption.

It has been seen above that Ó Riain also states that apart from the copies in Rawlinson B 502 and 23 K 32, only one other copy of the poem *Mac Echach ard n-orddan* survives, i.e. that in *Cóir Anmann*. He has failed to take account, however, of at least one other copy of this poem which is to be found in RIA MS C iv 3. There are three quatrains in this poem which is found as follows in Rawlinson B 502, 23 K 32 and C iv 3:

Rawl. B 502 (81a)	23 K 32 (159–60)	C iv 3 (72)
Mac Echach ard n-orddan	Mac Eachdach ard n-ordan	Mac Eachdhach ard n-ordan
Nial nár nuall as gargam	Niall nár nuall as gargam	Niall nár nuall as gargam <sup>h</sup>
Gabais ríge remenn	Gabais ríge reimenn	Gabhais ríge rémeann
hErenn 7 Alban.	hErenn et Alban.	hÉrenn agus Alban.
Ethais giall each coid	Ethais giall gach coiccidh	Eathais gíall gach cóigídh
Fo thír nErenn ardda	Fo thír nErinn n-arda	Fo thír nÉrenn n-árda <sup>a</sup>
Tuc fri reir cen terba	Tucc fri reir cen terba	Tug fri réir gan terba <sup>b</sup>
Cethri geill a hAlba.	Ceithre geill a hAlba.	Ceithre géill a hAlba.
Conid de bae dosum	Conadh de baoidósomh	Gonadh dhe báoidhósomh
Hi toruib fi an frithach	Hi toraib fi an fritheach	Hi toraibh fian frítheach
Fri riadh na rig rathach	Fri riadh na rígh rathach	Fri riadh na rígh rathach
Niall Noigiallach nithach.	Niall Naoigiallach niteach.	Niall Náoighiallach níteach.

<sup>a</sup>nárda written above expunged letters.

<sup>b</sup>taba (with suspension stroke after b) expunged before terba.

Ó Riain noted that ‘O’Clery ascribes the poem to Corbmac as is also done in a second copy of the poem in Rawl. B 502, 136 b 22ff. He takes his text, however, from the version within the tale’.<sup>45</sup> This second copy of the poem in Rawlinson B 502 differs in some respects from the first copy. If O’Clery was using Rawlinson B 502 as a source for this item

<sup>44</sup>Marks of lenition have been represented by Roman *h*. All abbreviations have been silently expanded. In the case of *i ngíallecht* there is a superfluous suspension stroke and point after the second *l*.

<sup>45</sup>P. Ó Riain, ‘The Book of Glendalough or Rawlinson B 502’, 169, n. 22.

of text it is not immediately obvious (nor is any explanation offered by Ó Riain) why he should have attributed this poem to Corbmac, as is the case in the second occurrence of the poem in Rawlinson B 502, but then have decided to copy a second copy of the same poem from a different section of the manuscript.

Some more observations may be made about the three versions of the poem quoted above. Although it can be seen that there is close agreement between all three manuscripts in the case of the text above, there are also some minor discrepancies (not alluded to by Ó Riain). In q. 2a, instead of *cóicidh*, Rawlinson B 502 has *coid*. Is it the case that the scribes of the later manuscripts independently corrected this error? We may also look at q. 2b. In this instance Rawlinson B 502 has *arda* whereas the later manuscripts have *n-arda* and *n-árda* respectively. One might ask if it is likely that both of the later scribes independently introduced nasalisation here. I would suggest, in the light of all the evidence discussed above, that 23 K 32 and C iv 3 derive from a source which was not Rawlinson B 502. As noted earlier, this source must surely have been the original O'Clery recension of *Lebor Gabála* or a copy thereof.

The question now arises as to whether Rawlinson B 502 was being used as a source for both the prose item and poem discussed above in the actual compilation of the O'Clery recension of *Lebor Gabála*. According to Ó Riain, the prose item above is 'a random passage whose evidence is borne out by the remainder of the text in 23 K 32'.<sup>46</sup> Examination of both manuscripts, however, indicates that whereas there is some agreement between the manuscripts, they also diverge significantly in parts. Shortly after the prose item mentioned above there occurs a quatrain in which one such instance of divergence occurs. The quatrain occurs in Rawlinson B 502 and 23 K 32 as follows (C iv 3, it may be added, is in agreement with 23 K 32 in this instance):

Rawl. B 502 (81a)	23 K 32 (160)
Lia lama laich ro fes	Lia lan lama druthi
Fo chres isin sailchedna	Fo cres dar sal sailchetha
Eochu mac Enna ro la	Eochu mac Enna ro la
For Laidcenn mac Bairceda.	For Laidhcend mac Bairchedha.

In lines *a* and *b* of this quatrain there are marked discrepancies between Rawlinson B 502 and the later manuscripts. Rather than supporting Ó Riain's argument, this particular item of text would seem to indicate that Rawlinson B 502 was not being used here as a source for the O'Clery recension of *Lebor Gabála*.

The evidence relating to the section of the tale of Niall Noígíallach's death and the poem *Mac Echach ard n-orddan* clearly indicate that it is possible to have more than two almost identical copies of the same

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.* 169.

item of text. The matters discussed above also point to serious flaws in the methodology employed by Ó Riain with regard to almost identical copies of textual items in two different manuscripts, especially when such items of text are relatively short. Also highlighted is the need to distinguish between *exemplar* and *line of transmission* when discussing manuscript sources. In the case of the manuscripts LGDL and Rawlinson B 502, if a manuscript quotes LGDL as a source for an item of text which is to be found in almost identical form in Rawlinson B 502, it cannot be concluded from this that the latter and LGDL are one and the same manuscript.

On the basis of matters discussed both above and in the present writer's previous discussion, there are strong grounds for believing that LGDL and Rawlinson B 502 are two separate manuscripts.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>It may be added here that John Armstrong has suggested on other grounds that Rawl. B 502 and LGDL are two distinct manuscripts; cf. *Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 5 (1985) 415. I will discuss this and other related matters in a forthcoming article. For additional evidence in support of some of the points discussed by the present writer, cf. B. Ó Cuív, *Catalogue of Irish language manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries: Part 1, Descriptions* (Dublin 2001) 175–80.