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EDITED BY
DAVID GREENE

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CONTENTS

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ON THE POETRY OF THE SCALDS
AND OF THE FILID

Introductory Note

The article printed below first appeared in 1954 in Vol. CXXVIII of the Icelandic Journal *Skírnir*. Even if it were only 'a talking point rather than a statement of fact'—to quote Turville-Petre's own modest assessment —it would still be desirable to make it available to the large number of Celtic scholars who read Icelandic with difficulty, or not at all. It appears here in English at an opportune moment, since the whole question of the origin of the Irish metrical system has been opened up again by Calvert Watkin's deep and extensive survey of the subject in his article 'Indo-European metrics and archaic Irish verse', *Celtica* VI (1963) 194–249. Watkins's conclusion, that Irish, together with Greek, Vedic and Slavic, has preserved the metrical form of Indo-European poetry, has not won universal acceptance, in part at least because it seems to attach too little importance to the striking resemblances between Irish metres and those of the Germanic languages; thus Heinrich Wagner complains that Watkins, as well as Jakobson and Meillet, has resorted to abstractions in order to cover up the essential difference between quantitative and stress metres (*Pokorny Festschrift* pp. 307–8). Elsewhere in this volume (pp. 23 ff.), James Carney brings new evidence for the existence of stress metres in Irish from the earliest times. All this makes the thesis of the present article highly relevant, for, if Irish had in fact a system in which stress and alliteration played a major rôle, that system would be close enough to that inherited by the Scandinavian poets to make mutual influences not only possible but likely. It is to be hoped that the debate will continue, and the pages of this journal will be open to further contributions to it.

I have to thank Gabriel Turville-Petre for permission to translate his article and Ólafur Jónsson, editor of *Skírnir*, for allowing me to reprint it; most of all I have to thank Gearóid Mac Eoin for his excellent English version.

DG

IN THIS article I intend to make a comparison between the poetry of the Scandinavian people and that of the Irish. But first of all it may not be out of place to recall shortly the principal episodes of Irish history during the Viking period.

It is impossible to say for certain when the Scandinavians made their first contact with Ireland. It is possible that the great fleet which plundered the island of Tory in the year 617 was manned by Scandinavians, but that can never be more than conjecture. However, reliable sources relate that Scandinavian vikings plundered the islands of Iona and Lambay in the year 795 and Inish Patrick, not far from the Isle of Man, in the year 798. A few years later, vikings plundered Inishmurray near Sligo and bands of them made forays inland as far as Roscommon. The Irish annalists tell of many attacks and landings in the following years, principally in the South of Ireland. In the year 823 Bangor on Belfast Lough was attacked and a short time later further attacks were made on the east coast of Ireland. By this time Scandinavians seem to have begun to settle in Ireland and the annalists of that period imply that whole bands of them had settled in East Meath about the year 826 and on the coast of Wicklow about the year 835.

It is impossible to say for certain to which of the Scandinavian nations these first vikings belonged. But one may assume that some of them were Norwegians who had settled in the Orkneys and in Shetland. These islands had been settled from Norway a few decades earlier.

In the year 832, according to the Irish annalists, the Norwegian Turgesius landed in the north of Ireland at the head of a large royal fleet. Other fleets, which were probably also under the leadership of Turgesius, landed in other Irish harbours. Turgesius was recognised as king of all the Scandinavians in Ireland and probably held sway over many Irish people also.

The organisation of Irish society fell to pieces under the tyranny of Turgesius. He took possession of the monastery of Armagh, expelled the abbot and installed himself in his place. His wife, Ota, assumed a similar dignity in Clonmacnoise and gave oracles from the altar of the cathedral church in her capacity as a priestess.

The Irish annalists of this period describe Turgesius in extreme terms, as though he were in his person the incarnation of paganism and Anti-Christ himself. The historians of a later period held that his object was to uproot Christianity and to establish an utterly pagan kingdom in Ireland. But it is hardly likely that such a thought could have occurred to him. The pagans had no hard and fast dogmas in matters of religion and bothered little about the religious beliefs of other people. Turgesius plundered churches and monasteries,

because in them were kept the valuables and wealth of the people. He made himself abbot of the monastery in Armagh because he was ambitious for the abbatial power.

The kingdom of Turgesius lasted only thirteen years. Then he was captured by one of the Irish chieftains who had him drowned. The opposition of the Irish grew for a while thereafter and the annalists speak less frequently of battles between the Scandinavians and the Irish than of battles between the fair and the dark foreigners, that is between the Norwegians and the Danes on the coasts of Ireland. Irish chiefs fought on the side of the Norwegians or the Danes as it suited themselves.

Large bands of Danes came to Ireland about the middle of the ninth century and fierce battles were fought at that time. It is said that on one occasion when the battle was going against the Danes they called on St. Patrick, the favourite saint of the Irish, and carried off the victory. Such accounts show how insignificant was the opposition of the Scandinavian pagans to christianity and christian customs. At first the Danes were successful in their battles against the Norwegians, but their power was later broken when the Norwegian chief Amhlaíbh landed in the year 853. It was said of Amhlaíbh that he was the son of the king of Lochlann, and many scholars have assumed that he was identical with Ólafr Hvíti who is often mentioned in Icelandic documents dealing with the period of the settlement of Iceland. But the Icelandic documents do not support that identification. Amhlaíbh became head of the foreigners in Ireland and Irish chieftains fought sometimes with, sometimes against him.

By this time the Irish and the Scandinavians had lived as neighbours for about a generation and influenced each others way of life. The Norwegian scholar, Carl Marstrander,[1] investigated the loanwords which Irish borrowed from Scandinavian and came to the conclusion that the majority of them are derived from the dialect which was spoken in South-west Norway. He holds that some of these loanwords show Norwegian forms which cannot be later than the middle of the ninth century.

This hybrid Scandinavian-Irish culture becomes clearly visible in the accounts of the people called Gall-Ghaedhil or foreign Irish. These people appear first in history about the middle of the ninth century, when they are mentioned by the Irish annalists. Some say they were Irish who had been fostered by Scandinavians. Others say that they were Irish people who had abandoned christianity and adopted the customs of the Scandinavians. Many of them were doubtless the sons of Scandinavian fathers and Irish mothers. For a short period the Gall-Ghaedhil appear as a separate nation, warlike

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[1] *Bidrag til det norske sprogs historie i Irland* 1915.

and independent. They fought sometimes with the Irish, sometimes with the Scandinavians, just as they pleased. They surpassed the Norwegians in fierceness and cruelty. They attacked the churches just as the Norwegians did and were called the 'sons of death' (*maic báis*). The name of one of their chiefs tells its own story. His name was Caitill Finn. That is the Norwegian name Ketill with the Irish epithet *finn* 'fair'. Caitill was defeated and killed by the Norse leader Amhlaíbh about 856. After his time there are few accounts of attacks by the Gall-Ghaedhil in Ireland. But the mixed Norse-Irish nation which lived in Western Scotland and the Hebrides was also called Gall-Ghaedhil in later times.

Amhlaíbh visited Ireland every now and again up to the year 870. Then it is said that he returned to Norway where his father was faced with internal disturbances. This in not at all unlikely, because the Icelandic historians relate that in those years there was internal conflict in Norway, when Haraldr Hárfagri rose to power. Now begins a period of peace in Ireland probably because Norwegian chieftains were fully occupied at home and were unable to send any strong force to Ireland.

It was during this period that the Scandinavians first became aware of Iceland though it is likely that the Irish had gone there many generations previously. It is possible that the Scandinavians first heard of Iceland from the Irish. The earliest settlers of Iceland found before them Irish hermits. The dialect which the majority of the settlers of Iceland spoke was the same as that which was spoken in south-west Norway and was also that which was most commonly spoken in the Norwegian colonies of Ireland. The settlement of Iceland was, of course, the result of many causes. One of them was the tyranny of Haraldr Hárfagri, as the Icelandic historians tell us. But it would also appear that further causes are attributable to the conditions in Ireland. After Amhlaíbh had left for home, the outlook for the Norwegians was gloomy. Many of them found it desirable to emigrate to Iceland. And indeed a considerable number of the first settlers came from Ireland and the Hebrides, not from Norway itself.

According to the Icelandic genealogies, many of the first settlers were of mixed race, and tradition implies that they were also mixed in religion and culture. They were men of the type called Gall-Ghaedhil by the Irish annalists.

One of the most prominent settlers was Helgi hinn Magri (Helgi the Thin) who settled the whole of Eyjafjörður. His father, Eyvindr, was a native of Gotland but had settled in Ireland. Helgi's mother was Rafarta, daughter of an Irish subking called Kjarval (Cerrball). It is said that Helgi was of very mixed religion, that he believed

simultaneously in Thor and in Christ. Auðr hin Djúpúðga settled a large region of western Iceland. She had been reared in the Hebrides, where her father had held sway as jarl of Haraldr Hárfagri. Auðr was a christian and deeply religious. One of her followers, Erpr, was son of a Scottish jarl and of an Irish princess.

Örlygr was also a well-known settler and a relative of Auðr. Just like his kinswoman, Örlygr had been reared in the Hebrides by a bishop called Patrick. He built a church on Kjalarnes where his descendants adopted the custom of devotion to St. Colum Cille, one of the principal saints of the Irish, even though they themselves were no longer christians.

Many Icelandic leaders have Irish names or epithets, such as Njáll, Kormákr, Helgi Bjólan, Ólafr Feilan. But the slaves who bore Irish names were proportionately more numerous. I need only mention Dufþakr and Melkolfr.

Thus the culture of the Icelanders was mixed from its very beginning. In its principal features it was Scandinavian, but influences from the British Isles and Ireland were considerable. Scholars debate how strong these Irish influences on Icelandic culture were and in which fields they are to be found. In this article I intend to examine this problem from one point of view only. I wish to look at certain metres which were in use among Irish and Scandinavian poets in those countries.

First, it is desirable to trace the history of metrics in Ireland in broad outline. In this I rely on the specialist works of R' Thurneysen, Douglas Hyde and Kuno Meyer.[1] Otherwise I follow my own paths.

As far as can be seen, the earliest metres which the Irish poets used were similar to those of early Germanic verse. Their principal characteristics were rhythm and alliteration. The rhythm was dependent on the principal stress or 'rise' which was repeated at determined intervals. The number of unstressed syllables was not fixed and varied from one line to another, as happens in *Beowulf* and in the earliest Scandinavian heroic poems, *Hamðismál* and *Hlöðskviða*.

Alliteration in the earliest Irish poems was governed by the same rules as in early Germanic poetry. Alliteration took place between accented syllables which began with the same consonant or with any vowel. However, in the earliest Irish poetry alliteration was not used, as in the earliest Germanic poetry, to bind one line to the next,

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[1] The following works have been indispensable: Douglas Hyde: *Irish Poetry* 1903. R. Thurneysen: 'Zur irischen Accent- und und Verslehre' in *Revue Celtique* vi, 1885, pp. 336 ff. R. Thurneysen: 'Mittelirische Verslehren' in *Irische Texte* (ed. W. Stokes and E. Windisch), III, 1891. K. Meyer: *Über die älteste irische Dichtung* I–II, 1913–14, K. Meyer: *Bruchstücke aus der älteren Lyrik Irlands*, 1919. Some of the opinions about Irish poetry which appear in this article are borrowed from these works.

but each accented syllable alliterated with the following to form a
sort of chain which was broken only when another alliterative chain
began.   The following example shows how this alliteration usually
appeared:

> /Brūisius, / brēosus
> /bārnia / lond / Labraid,
> /lāth / Elggae,
> /ane / Luirc / Lōiguiri.

The alliteration did not have to bind the lines together in pairs
as in early Germanic and Icelandic poetry.   But, as the above example
shows, the third line may be connected by alliteration with the second
and the fourth with the third.   Stanzas can be joined together in
the same way.   The lines quoted above continue as follows:

> /Lugaid / lōig, / lond
> /Labraid, / sanb / Sētne,
> /sochlu / Cōil / Cobthach,
> /conn / Māl / Muiredach.

Kuno Meyer has investigated these primitive Irish poems with
great care.   He cites only a few poems which are composed in this
metre and concludes that the majority of them were composed at the
end of the sixth or in the seventh century.   The subject matter of
these poems is not very interesting.   The pedigrees of chieftains are
traced to Adam and other famous Old Testament characters.   Some-
times the heroic feats of ancestors are recalled, and superficially
these poems are not all unlike *Ynglingatal*, *Háleygjatal*, and *Nóregs-
konungatal*, in which the pedigrees of the Norwegian and Swedish
chieftains are traced.   It is worth noting that, while the Scandinavian
poets begin with Óðinn or the earliest ancestors and trace the genea-
logy down to the chieftains who were still alive, the Irish poets begin
with the living chieftains and trace the pedigree backwards, just as
is done in *Biskupsættir* in Icelandic.

Irish poems of this type can usually be divided into strophes
or sections.   Each section is composed of four lines.   In many
poems each line has two stresses, as was usual in early Germanic
poetry.   In some of the poems which Meyer quotes the lines have
three stresses while others have two and three in alternate lines:

> /Dind / Rīg
> /rūad / tūaim / tenbai,
> /trīcha / fuirech
> fo/brōn / bebsait.

The lines in Irish poems are often bound together in pairs and these
pairs are called long lines (Germ. *Langzeile*).   The alliteration which

binds one line to another is sometimes unreal, i.e. when stressed syllables alliterate with unstressed, as in the example:

/trīcha / fuirech
fo/brōn / bebsait.

The long lines are usually joined together with end-rhyme.   In some examples, such as those above, there is no end-rhyme, and this would seem to be the oldest form.   In the Book of Leinster, which was written in the second half of the twelfth century, it is said that Ross Ruad, king of Leinster, was the first to use end-rhyme.   This can hardly be true, for Ross Ruad is thought to have lived in the second century after Christ, but this assertion serves to show that the medieval metrical scholars in Ireland were aware that end-rhymes was an innovation in Irish poetry.

The grouping of lines in strophes or stanzas would seem to be another innovation.   Thurneysen[1] has drawn attention to many early fragments which cannot be divided into stanzas of equal length, in spite of regular alliteration and rhythm.

Such examples lead one to suspect that the earliest poets in Ireland did not divide their compositions into stanzas.   Both strophic division and end-rhyme may probably be regarded as derived from hymns and popular songs in Latin, though end-rhyme only reached its full development with the Irish poets.

This primitive rhythmic poetry fell into disuse among the Irish in the seventh or eighth century and was largely replaced by the so-called syllabic poetry.   This derives its name from the fact that the number of syllables in the line is fixed.

Poetry of this type has a rhythm which is every bit as strong as that of the previous type, but the basis for the rhythm is different It no longer depends on the stress but on the number of syllables in the line, on the last stress in the line, and on the form of the line-end.

The majority of scholars agree that this syllabic poetry originated in the Latin hymns and popular songs of the fifth and sixth century. Thurneysen in a famous article in *Revue celtique* (vol. vi, 1885, pp. 336 ff.) pointed to some early Latin poems which he regarded as the models followed by the early Irish poets.

It is noticeable that in those examples which Thurneysen cites the number of syllables in the line is fixed, each line ends in a particular way, and the position of the final stress in the line is determined by rule.   In the example given here below the line is formed of fifteen syllables but is divided into two by the caesura which occurs after the eight syllable.   Therefore the long line is equivalent to two

[1] *ZCP* xix, 1933, pp. 205-6.   Compare *ibid*. xii, 1918, 365.

short lines, the first of which has eight and the second seven syllables:

> Caesar Gallias subegit
> Nicomedes Caesarem,
> Ecce Caesar nunc triumphat
> qui subegit Gallias.

These continental poems cited by Thurneysen differ from Irish syllabic poetry in that the stresses in each line are repeated at regular intervals. There exist still more primitive poems in Latin which in some points more closely resemble Irish syllabic verse.

The hymn which St. Augustine composed against the Donatist heretics in the fourth century after Christ is a good example.[1] Each line is composed of sixteen syllables, but is divided into two short lines, each of eight syllables. Each line contains the same number of stresses and the position of the last stress in the line or in the half line is always the same. Therefore the line-end always has the same form. In this hymn the end of the line always consists of a trochaic dissyllable. One line is as follows:

> Propter hoc dominus noster
> voluit nos praemonere

and another runs:

> congreganti multos pisces
> omne genus hinc et inde.

Sometimes the final syllables are joined together by end-rhyme:

> Omnes qui gaudetis de pace
> modo verum iudicate.

Sometimes Latin metricists regard this type of poetry as rhythmic. Irish metricists would probably regard it as unrhythmic. But I doubt if they are right in doing so. This poetry exhibits the same qualities as Irish syllabic verse: the syllables are counted, the end of the line has a fixed form and all stresses except the final one are variable both in number and position. Stanzas of eight-syllable lines ending in a dissyllable, like the hymn of St. Augustine, are to be found in Old Irish where it is called *Rannaigecht bec mor* or *Sedrud* (Murphy: *Early Irish Metrics* p. 54). But it is not a common metre. I cite here one example from an Irish medieval metrical tract:

> A mic rig na cairce a / Cualaind
> fin duid is mid mailte / maidim
> Is rut a milid a / Malaind
> do laim do ririb i / Croirind.[2]

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[1] Cf. F. J. E. Raby: *Christian Latin Poetry*, 1927, p. 20 ff.
[2] See Thurneysen: 'Mittelirische Verslehren', p. 146.

The most popular metre with the Irish was called *debide*. It consisted usually of seven-syllable lines. In this metre the form of the line-end was variable but only within the limits imposed by strict rules. For example, if the last stress in the first line fell on the final syllable, the final stress in the next line would fall on the penultimate or antepenultimate syllable:

> Inmain tír an tir út / thoir
> Alba cona / hingantaib:
> nocha ticfuinn eisdi il/le
> mana tísainn le / Noíse.[1]

Irish syllabic poetry is divided into stanzas and each stanza usually consists of four lines. As I have already said, stanzaic division seems to have been in use before syllabic metres were perfected. But whatever the truth of that, the stanzaic division probably originated in Latin hymns and popular songs.

I do not intend here to discuss the wide variety of Irish metres, elision, or the shortening of lines. Neither do I intend to speak of end-rhyme, *comhardadh slán* (perfect rhyme), or *uaithne* (consonance) in Irish poetry. But I will turn now to Scandinavian metrics and will endeavour to see in what way they can be compared to the Irish.

The earliest poems which have been preserved in the northern countries are rhythmic with regular alliteration. As in the earliest Irish poetry, the stress is the basis of the metre and the stress is repeated at regular intervals. Lines are formed and each line contains two stressed syllables. The lines are bound together in pairs by alliteration. Here one must distinguish between *stuðlar*, which is alliteration in the narrow sense and falls on one or both of the stressed syllables in the first line and *höfuðstafr*, which usually falls on the first stressed syllable in the second line of the pair. Each line contains the same number of stresses, but the number of unstressed syllables which precedes or follows the stresses varies from one line to the next, as this example shows:

> Sjau eigu vit salhús
> sverða full,
> hverju eru þeira
> hjǫlt ór gulli.

It is doubtful whether it is right to divide these early poems into stanzas. Modern editors most frequently do so. But even the most diligent of them are often unsuccessful in making the stanzas equal in length. This early metre is very similar to that which is used in the Old English *Beowulf* and in the heroic poetry

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[1] From *Oidheadh Chloinne Uisnigh*, ed. W. Stokes in *Irische Texts* ii (1), 1887, p. 127.

of the Germanic peoples on the European mainland. Early Germanic poetry is not divided into stanzas.

But gradually stanzaic division appeared in Scandinavian poetry and the full stanza usually contains eight lines and is divided into two half-stanzas with a considerable pause after the fourth line. Each half-stanza is complete in itself in form and the sentences in it are grammatically perfect. Therefore, the Scandinavian half-stanza contains four lines and is similar to the stanza which was in use among Irish and Latin poets. Rhythmic or accented poetry of this type forms about one third of the poetry which is preserved in early Icelandic manuscripts. A great part of it is preserved in the *Konungsbók* of the *Sæmundar Edda*. Its metrical models are to be found among the heroic poems of the English and other Germanic peoples.

However, the great majority of early Icelandic and Norwegian poems differ basically in form from the Eddic poetry. They may be called by the name *Dróttkvætt* or Court poetry or Scaldic poetry. No one doubts that the metres used by the court poets are later than those which the Eddic poets used. But there is considerable disagreement about their age and origin.

Scandinavian scaldic verse resembles Irish syllabic poetry in many points but differs from it in others.

As in Irish poetry, the syllables are counted and in most of the scaldic metres the end of the line has a fixed form. Usually, but not always, this consists of a trochaic dissyllable. In the most popular of the Irish metres, *debide*, the lines consist of seven syllables. But in the most popular of the scaldic metres, called *dróttkvætt*, the line consisted of six syllables and ends always in a trochaic dissyllable:

> Þél høggr stórt fyr stáli
> stafnkvígs á veg jafnan
> út með éla meitli
> andærr jǫtunn vandar . . .

It is only right to mention that in the half-stanza, as in all poetry written in the *dróttkvætt* metre, alliteration is governed by stricter rules than in the Eddic poetry. In the stricter form, the first stressed syllable in the second line must always alliterate and its first letter is called *hǫfuðstafr*. Two stressed syllables in the first line must also alliterate and they are called *stuðlar*.

The above half-stanza is composed in the metre *dróttkvætt*, but the poet has followed stricter rules than is usual. The lines are joined together in pairs with alliteration, as is usual in Eddic poetry. But, in addition to that, each line has a kind of internal rhyme, *hending*, which falls on the last stressed syllable and on another stressed syllable within the line. *Hending*, as illustrated in the second and fourth line above, is called *aðalhending* i.e. the consonants

at the end of the syllable are the same and are preceded by the same vowel: *stafn* : *jafn*, *and-* : *vand-*.

Irish poets used *aðalhending* no less than the Scandinavians, but in Irish poetry it is formed in a different manner and its position is not the same as in the *dróttkvætt* metre. The vowels had to be identical but the consonants which followed them needed only to belong to the same consonantal group. In many Irish metres *aðalhending* was used as an end-rhyme to join the line-ends together, but it was also used to connect a word in the middle of one line with a word in the middle of the next. In the first and third lines of the example given above, the rhyme is called *skothending*. There the vowels are dissimilar but the consonants which follow them are identical: Þél: *stál*, *út*: *meit*. *Skothending* is not unlike *uaithne* (consonance) in Irish poetry. As in the case of *uaithne*, *skothending* is formed with identical consonants but different vowels. But *skothending* differs from *uaithne* in so far as the consonants must be identical, whereas in *uaithne* they need only belong to the same consonantal group. In Irish metrics the consonants are divided into six groups: (Soft (c, p, t), hard (g, b, d), rough (ch, ph, th), strong (ll, m, mm, ng, nn, rr), light (bh, gh, dh, l, mh, n, r), while s stands alone.[1] The stanza in the following example is composed in the metre *Rannaigecht Mhór*. There is *comhardadh slán* or *aðalhending* between the final syllables of the second and fourth line and *uaithne* or *skothending* between the first and third line.

> Imdha broc ag dol fa a / dhíon
> ann is míol muighe nach / mall,
> is édan rionntanach / róin
> ag techt on muir móir an / all.[2]

The metres in use among the Scandinavian scalds were almost as varied as those of the Irish. There are approximately one hundred metres preserved in Old Icelandic. Each of them has its own name and the medieval metrical scholars distinguished between them just as the Irish metricists did in the *Metrical Tracts*. One variation which the scalds used was to shorten or truncate alternate lines by removing the unaccented final syllable, so that the rhythm is completely changed, as is illustrated in the following half-stanza by the early settler Þórir Snepill:

> Hér liggr, kjóla keyrir
> kaldakinn of aldr,
> en vit forum heilir,
> Hjǫlmun-Gautr, á braut.

[1] Cf. D. Hyde: *Irish Poetry*, p. 89; E. Knott: *Irish Syllabic Poetry* 1935, pp. 4–5.
[2] Cf. *The Adventures of Suibhne Geilt*, ed. J. G. O'Keeffe, 1913, p. 136. Second edition: Medieval and Modern Irish Series Vol. I, 1931, p. 72.

In other examples each line is truncated, as in the following, which Óttarr Svarti composed in the first years of the eleventh century:

> Fold verr folk-Baldr,
> fár má konungr svá,
> ǫrn reifir Áleifr,
> es framr Svía gramr.

Irish poets also used this trick which has a very noticeable effect on the rhythm. The following Old Irish example is written in a type of debide, but the first line is shortened to three syllables, so the metre is called *Debide gairit*, 'shortened debide'.

> Do chath / rod,
> A Dhé nime, ni ma / lott,
> ba Suibhne Geilt m'ainm iar / sin,
> mh'aonar dhamh a mbarr / eidhin.[1]

The seven-syllable *rannaigecht* which has rhyming words at the end of the alternate lines, can be shortened in the same way. The following stanza is put in the mouth of the hero Fer Diad before he began his tragic duel with his foster-brother, Cú Chulainn:

> Truag, a Dhé,
> teacht do mhnaoi eadrom as / é,
> leth mo croidhe in Cú cen / col
> agus leth croidhe na Con / mé.[2]

I have cited only a few examples, but I think that they suffice to show the principal resemblances between Irish and Scandinavian metres. In the scaldic metres, as in the Irish, each syllable is counted and there is very little room for variation in this. In Irish metres, as in those of the scalds, the form of the line-end is an important factor. New metres are formed not only by changing the number of syllables, but also by changing the form of the line-end. In Irish and in Scandinavian poetry, both *aðalhending* (*comhardadh slán*) and *skothending* (*uaithne*) are used, but they are formed somewhat differently and have different positions within the stanza. Both the Irish and Scandinavian poets were conscious craftsmen and were therefore always willing to experiment and form new metres.

In many points, however, the metres of the scalds differ from those of the Irish. Alliteration occurs in both but in the syllabic Irish poems it is used only as an ornament, whereas in the poetry

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[1] *The Adventures of Suibhne Geilt*, 1913, p. 38; second edition, p. 21.
[2] *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, ed. E. Windisch, 1905, p. 455. *The Stowe Version of Táin Bó Cuailnge*, ed. C. O'Rahilly 1961, ll. 2697 ff.

of the scalds it is an indispensable structural feature.   In the matter of alliteration the metres of the scalds resemble those of the Eddic poets and other early Germanic poets.

There is a further difference which I have hardly mentioned. In the majority of Irish syllabic poems the line-ends are joined by rhyme.   In many metres this rhyme is in alternate lines.   But in *Debide*, which is the most common of all Irish metres, the line-ends rhyme in pairs.   Arising out of this stressed syllables are made to rhyme with unstressed as in the following example:

> Sirfidh Éirinn 'na gheilt / ghlas
> agus bidh do rinn / raghas.[1]

End-rhyme was not a very important feature of scaldic poetry but the oldest examples of it are probably those found in *Höfuðlausn*, which Egill composed about the middle of the tenth century.   As far as I know, the scalds never used alternative rhyme but rhymed the line-ends together in pairs and sometimes the rhyme continued right through the stanza.   One seldom finds the scalds rhyming stressed and unstressed syllables, but there are examples of it: Egill has one in *Höfuðlausn*:

> Vasat villr staðar
> vefr darraðar.

Some scholars have sought to show that it is a great difference between Irish metres and those of the scalds, that in Irish the line is usually of seven syllables, whereas the most popular length of line among the scalds is of six syllables.   But this difference is hardly of importance and may well owe its origin to poetic taste and the nature of the two languages.   The Irish metre *Rinnard*, which is not at all uncommon, consists of six-syllable lines which always end in a trochaic dissyllable, just as do the lines of the *dróttkvæoi* metre, for example:

> An clog sin ro / ghonais
> notchurfi-si ar / cráobhaibh
> gurbat aon re / hénaibh
> an clog náomh re / náomhaibh.[2]

There exists, however, a more important difference between the Irish and Scandinavian metres.   I have already mentioned that in Irish poems the number of the stressed syllables varies from line to line but the position of the final stressed syllable is fixed according to predetermined rules.   The examples which have already been cited are sufficient to show this.   They will also show

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1 *The Adventures of Suibhne Geilt*, 1913, p. 6; second edition 1931, p. 4.
2 *Ibid.* p. 12, second edition, p.6.

that the form the line-end contains a rhythm which is repeated
at regular intervals. But it is said that in the *dróttkvætt* line the
number of stressed syllables is unchangeable, just as is the number
of syllables and the form of the line-end. In the most common
metre, *dróttkvætt*, there are three stresses in each line, in some
metres there are two, and in others there are four.

It is not to be denied that in the majority of scaldic poems the
number of stressed syllables is the same in each line, but I am not at
all convinced that this is always so. For this reason I have some-
times been in doubt as to how a line should be scanned, especially
those composed in the metre *haðarlag*. Other metricists besides myself
have had the same difficulty and have come to different conclusions.
Some have asserted that *haðarlag* is a type of *malaháttr*. If such
is the case, its lines have two stresses. On the other hand, some
would hold that *haðarlag* is a type of *dróttkvætt* metre and, if such is
the case, the lines should have three stresses.[1] But as far as I can see,
some lines in *haðarlag* have three stresses and some have only two.
But the number of syllables is fixed and the form of the line-end is
invariable. I cite the following example from the poem *Hrafnsmál*
which Þormóðr Trefilsson composed about Snorri Goði:

> Saddi svangreddir
> sára dynbǫru
> ǫrn á ulfs virði
> í Alptafirði.
> þar lét þá Snorri
> þegna at hjǫrregni
> fjǫrvi fimm numna;
> svá skal fjandr hegna.

If all scaldic verse were examined in this light I expect that further
doubtful lines would be found. I well realise that this guess of
mine will seem far-fetched to many.

Fifty years ago there were many scholars who thought that the
scaldic metres and their great variety of language was the result of
influence from Irish poetry.[2] Few would agree with this at the present
day. Instead of this the majority hold that the complex language
of the scaldic poems and their great variety of metres were formed

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[1] Snorri Sturluson (*Háttatal* 79) seems to regard *haðarlag* as a type of *dróttkvætt*
metre, as does also A. Heusler: *Deutsche Versgeschichte* i, 1925, pp. 216 and 301 ff.
On the other hand Finnur Jónsson: *Stutt íslenzk bragfrœði*, 1892, pp. 52–3 and E.
Sievers: *Altgermanische Metrik*, 1893, p. 113 regard *haðarlag* as a type of *málaháttr*.

[2] Among the older scholars who held that the scalds were influenced by Irish poets
one may name A. Edzardi: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*
v, 1878, p. 570 ff., Gudbrandur Vigfússon: *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* i, 1883, esp. pp.
446 ff., and S. Bugge: *Bidrag til den ældste Skaldedigtigtnings Historie*, 1894. In more
recent times A. Heusler: *Deutsche Versgeschichte* i, pp. 299 ff. came to the same conclusion
but did not investigate the problem fully.

by Scandinavians who had never heard any poetry other than early Germanic heroic verse and the like, more or less the same as is to be found in the *Sæmundar Edda*. It is thought that the poetic language and even the strict counting of syllables originated in magical formulas.[1] The half-stanza in the *dróttkvætt* metre consists of twenty-four syllables and the number 24 is thought to have great magical importance because that was the number of the runic letters. It is also held that the scaldic poets cannot have been under any Irish influence because, it is said, *dróttkvætt* was being composed before the Scandinavians came into contact with the Irish.

Here we must consider when the earliest scaldic poems were composed. The earliest court poet mentioned in reliable sources, is Bragi Boddason the Old. Little is known with certainty about his life but accounts concerning Bragi and genealogies in which he and his kinsmen are named seem to indicate that he lived in Western Norway.

It is difficult to determine when Bragi lived. Most of those who have discussed the question in recent years have been convinced that his floruit lay in the first decades of the ninth century. The principal reasons for this opinion are that, according to several sources, Bragi composed poems about Bjǫrn, king of Haugr. None of these poems has survived and it is nowhere said that he composed them in scaldic metres. In *Egilssaga* mention is made of Bjǫrn and he is said to have been king of the Swedes. For that reason many scholars have concluded that he is identical with Bernus, a king who ruled over part of Sweden when St. Ansgar came there as missionary about the year 830. It is clear that the name Bernus is nothing other than the Bjǫrn in its Latin form. But apart from this there is little to support this identification of these two rulers. There are many arguments which would seem to contradict this identification.

Bjǫrn, at Haugi is named in many Icelandic genealogies. They disagree however, about the date at which he lived. He is called a king of the Swedes in one version of the *Hervararsaga* where he is also made a great grandson of Ragnar Loðbrók. If that were true Bragi could not have been born before the tenth century. But the genealogies in *Hervararsaga* are not to be trusted.

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[1] Finnur Jónsson denied that the Irish could have had any real influence on the poetry of the scalds. He considered that the relations between the Irish and the vikings were so unfriendly that such cultural influence could not have occurred. (*Bókmenntasaga Íslendinga* 1904–5, p. 7 ff., *Den oldnorske og oldislanske Litteraturs Historie*, 2nd ed., 1920, i, pp. 18 ff. and elsewhere. E. Noreen (especially in *Eddastudier* 1921, pp. 32 ff. and in *Studier i fornvästnordisk diktning* ii, 1922, pp. 1 ff. and in *Den norskisländska poesien*, 1926, p. 143 ff.) also denied that there could be any question of Celtic influence. He was of the opinion that the peculiar qualities of scaldic verse were derived from magical and tabu formulas and the like. F. Askeberg: *Norden och kontinenten i gamal tid*, 1944, p. 108 ff, agree with Noreen. J. de Vries, *Altnordische Literaturgeschichte* i, 1941, pp. 70 ff, seems to be undecided in his opinion. Other scholars who discuss the origin of scaldic verse avoid this problem.

The genealogies in *Landnámabók*[1] imply that Bjǫrn flourished in the last decades of the ninth century, about the time when Iceland was settled. It is said there that Þormóðr hinn Rammi had fled from Bjǫrn and settled in Iceland. In two versions of *Landnáma* (*Hauksbók* and *Þórðarbók*), it is said that Þormóðr was a Swede and that may well be true. But in *Þórðarbók*, which seems to preserve the original text of this chapter, Bjǫrn is said to have expelled Þormóðr from Norway and not from Sweden. The reason was that Þormóðr had killed a man called Gyrðr and it is possible that this Gyrðr was the great-grandfather of Erlingr Skjálgsson, who lived in Western Norway and died about 1028. But of course this is only conjecture.

In Þórðarbók it is also said that a certain settler, Ólafr Bekkr, was a refugee from Bjǫrn on account of murder. Ólafr was the son of Karl from Bjarkey in Hálogaland, and so it is likely that Bjǫrn would have expelled him from Norway and not from Sweden. Nevertheless it is possible that the author of the Landnámabók had confused Bjarkey in Hálogaland with Bjarkey on the Lǫgr (Mälaren).

There is a further account in Landnámabók about Þórðr Knappr, a settler. According to one version of the book, *Hausbók*, Þórðr was a Swede. According to the other two versions he lived in Sogn in Western Norway. Haukr calls Þórðr a nephew of King Bjǫrn, but according to Þórðarbók and Sturlubók he was Bjǫrn's son.

It is clear that according to the most reliable Icelandic sources, Bjǫrn of Haugr flourished, not in the first, but rather in the last decades of the ninth century. It is unlikely that he was king of the Swedes, but it is possible that he was a sub-king in Western Norway. The word *haugr* is not uncommon as an element in Norwegian placename compounds. It is possible that some medieval historians made Bjǫrn king of the Swedes because they wished to identify him with Bernus whom they knew from 'Adam of Bremen's History of the Bishops of Hamburg' or from other learned sources.

In *Landnámabók* and elsewhere Bragi is said to have composed a verse about Geirmundr and Hámundr, the twin sons of Hjǫrr, king of Rogaland. This verse is preserved but is not composed in any type of Scaldic metre. When the twins, Geirmundr and Hámundr, grew up, they spent some years on viking expeditions and finally went to Iceland and settled there. They appear to have left Norway some years after the battle of Hafrsfjǫrðr, about 885–90, and can hardly have been born any earlier than 855–60.

It is difficult to draw conclusions about Bragi's dates from genealogies in which he is himself named. He was the great-grandfather

[1] On these pedigrees see the article of Jón Jóhannesson in *Afmælisrit dr. Einars Arnórssonar*, pp. 1–6; translated into English by G. Turville-Petre in *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* xvii 4 (1969) 293 ff.

of Arinbjǫrn who was the friend of Egill Skallagrímsson. According to *Egilssaga*, Arinbjǫrn was somewhat older than Egill, who was apparently born about 910. If we suppose that Arinbjǫrn was born about 905, we may consider that Bragi was born about 830. A similar conclusion may be drawn also from the genealogies of the poets Gunnlaugr Ormstunga (born about 984) and Tindr Hall-kelsson, both of whom were descendants of Bragi. But opinions based on such a weak foundation are not to be relied upon.

It should be mentioned that Gudbrandur Vigfússon in his book *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* (II, pp. 2 ff.), which has not received the attention it deserves, concludes that Bragi lived in the years 835–900.

The earliest poem by Bragi which is preserved, is called *Ragnars-drápa*. Eight stanzas and eleven half-stanzas of it are preserved in *Snorra-Edda*. One may conclude from these that this poem was composed in honour of a certain chieftain Ragnarr Sigurðarson. Medieval historians identified him with the famous Danish viking, Ragnarr Loðbrók. Scholars of a more recent period however, denied that they were one and the same, and it may well be that this is the sounder opinion. It is not at all unlikely, however, that, though he was a Dane, Ragnarr Loðbrók may have had a kingdom in Norway. We have little information about him from reliable sources, except that he sailed up the Seine and that his sons waged war in England for twelve years, from 865 to 877.

Most scholars agree that the verses attributed to Bragi are the earliest we have in any of the scaldic metres. They are composed in *dróttkvætt* metre, which is seen to be fully developed, even though the rules followed by Bragi are not as strict as those which we find in those poems which were composed at a later period. Some have assumed that there had been scaldic poets before Bragi whose poems are lost. I doubt whether this is correct. One might perhaps conclude from the sources that Bragi was the originator of the *dróttkvætt* metre and of other metres used by the court poets.

Medieval Icelandic mythologists speak of the god of poetry whom they call Bragi. In spite of the arguments put forward by Jan de Vries[1] and others, there is nothing in the sources to show that the god Bragi was at any time the subject of a cult. He must surely be identical with the poet Bragi, who in the mind of later generations was raised to divine status because he was responsible for this great revolution in metrics.

But if Bragi was the originator of this new art, it is difficult to believe that he had never heard any poems other than those written in the early Germanic metres. If Bragi lived in Western Norway, in the last decades of the ninth century, it is quite possible that he

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[1] *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* ed. 2, II (1957) 272 ff.

was in contact with Irish poets or even with the poets of the Gall-Ghaedhil.

I do not wish at present to discuss the vocabulary of the scalds, but a few words must nevertheless be said on the subject. As is well known, this is completely distinct from the vocabulary of all other types of Germanic poetry. The difference lies principally in its use of kennings. The scalds were not the first to use kennings, because they occur in early English poetry and in the Edda. But kennings were perfected in the hands of the scalds and became much more complex and varied than they had previously been. In their use of kennings the scalds use as comparisons not only visible things, as the early English poets did when they called a sword 'ray of battle' or the sun 'the jewel of heaven'. The scalds in their kennings made frequent use of early heroic tales and mythology. Already in the ninth century Bragi called the sea *Leifa lǫnd* 'the lands of Leifi', because Leifi was the king of the sea. In the work of another poet the sea is called *Meita vǫllr* 'the plain of Meiti' and the waves *Meita hlíðir* 'the slopes of Meiti'. Other Germanic poets made very little use of kennings of this kind, but one may find examples of them in Irish poems. In *Immram Brain* the waves are called *gabra Lir* 'Ler's horses', while the sea is called *crích Manannáin maic Lir* 'territory of Manannán mac Lir'.[1]

In scaldic verse kennings are often *rekit*, that is they are composed not only of two parts but three or even more. Bragi has many kennings of the type *rekit*. In *Ragnaradrápa* the shield is called *lauf Leifa landa* 'leaf of the lands of Leifi', where the poet was thinking of the bright shields decorating the gunwale of the long ships. As far as I know there are no kennings of this type in early English poetry. Neither have I found any unambiguous examples in early Irish poetry. But I think that such kennings might be found in the so-called rhetorics often inserted in Irish sagas. These rhetorics or runs have not yet been thoroughly examined and are often unintelligible. In the saga *Tochmarc Emire*, Cú Chulainn is made say to his beloved: *femmir i tig fir adgair búar maige Tethrai* 'We slept in the house of the man who tends the cattle of the plain of Tethra'. These strange words are later explained. Tethra was the king of the people who were called Fomoire and so may be regarded as the god of the sea. His plain is the sea. The cattle of that plain are fish, while the man tending them is the fisherman. Such figures of speech remind one of the kennings of the court poets like *Meita vǫllr*. If the court poet had spoken of the 'cattle of the plain of Meiti', he would have meant fish.

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[1] W. Krause: *Die Kenning als typische Stilfigur der germanischen und keltischen Dichtersprache*, 1930, gives some examples.

Some have argued that the Scandinavians understood too little of Irish culture to be influenced by the Irish poets. However, it is well known that the Scandinavians were quick to appreciate the beauty of Irish jewellery and sculpture and that Scandinavian craftsmen were considerably influenced by Irish models. There is also reason to believe that they appreciated Irish poetry. There exists a fragment of a poem which was composed in honour of one Amhlaíbh who was king of the men of Dublin. The name Amhlaíbh is the same as Ólafr and this chieftain was clearly a Scandinavian prince. It is not unlikely that he was that son of the King of Lochlann who came to Ireland in the year 853, but this is only an assumption.

There is an account of an Irish poet called Rumann who came into the fortress of the Scandinavians in Dublin and entertained the people with poetry. At first the Vikings refused to pay him the fee to which he was legally entitled under Irish law. Then Rumann asked for one penny from every bad Viking and two pennies from every good Viking. Since no one wished to be called a bad Viking, none of them gave him less than two pennies. Then Rumann composed a poem about a storm at sea which the Vikings could well appreciate. In this poem there are figures of speech or kennings which could just as well be found in Scandinavian court poetry. I shall quote a few stanzas:[1]

> Anbthine mór ag muig Lir
> dána tar a hardimlib;
>> at-racht gáeth, ran-goin gaim garg
>> co tét tar muir mórgelgarb . . .

> Is lán ler, is lomnán muir,
> is álainn in etharbruig . . . .

>> Fordath eala forda-tuig
>> mag mílach cona muintir; . . .

> glúastar mong mná Manannáin.

'There is a great tempest on the plain of Ler, bold over its high borders. The wind has risen, rough winter has killed us, and comes to us over the great wild sea . . .

The ocean is full, the sea in flood; beautiful is the palace of the ships . . .

The pallor of the swan has covered the plain of whales and its inhabitants . . .

The hair of Manannán's wife blows loose . . .'

[1] See K. Meyer: *Otia Merseiana* ii, pp. 79 ff. Cf. R. Flower: *The Irish Tradition*, 1947, p. 51; D. Greene and Frank O'Connor: *A Golden Treasury of Irish Verse*, p. 126.

This poem is attributed, in the single manuscript in which it has been preserved, to Rumann mac Colmáin who died in the year 747. But scholars are in agreement that the poem is much later and was not composed before the tenth or even the eleventh century. However that may be, the author of the poem may have belonged to that group of poets who taught the Scandinavians to look on poetry as a craft which gave the poet the right to demand great rewards and valuable jewellery.

One can hardly avoid the conclusion that the metres of the scalds first came into use in the later years of the ninth century and that their originators were poets from the west of Norway. If this is so, the earliest scalds belonged to that part of the Scandinavian nations which had closest connections with the Irish. The metres of the scalds differ in many important points from the earlier Germanic metres. Many characteristics can be traced to the sophisticated metres of the Irish *filid*. But the syllabic metres of the Irish were originally derived from those used in Latin popular songs and hymns. Some of those innovations which the Scandinavian court poets adopted may also point to Latin hymns which the Scandinavian poets heard in the British Isles. End-rhyme was probably adopted by the court poets from such Latin poetry.

I have not compared the matter of the Scandinavian poetry or its spirit with the matter and spirit of Irish poetry. The difference here is great. But I do not think that the Irish taught the court poets of Scandinavia what the matter of poetry should be. The Irish taught them rather how they should compose their poetry. The Irish poems which I have read are for the most part lyrical and delicate. But Scandinavian poems are often stiff and hard. The Irish poets composed their best work about love and the beauty of nature, while the scalds paid little attention to such matters. Nevertheless there are interesting descriptions of love and nature in Scandinavian poetry as in this stanza by Kormákr:

> Heitask hellur fljóta
> hvatt sem korn á vatni,
> enn emk auðspǫng ungri
> óþekkr, en bjǫð sekkva.
> Fœrask fjǫll en stóru
> fræg í djúpan ægi,
> auðs áðr jafnfǫgr tróða
> alin verði Steingerði.

Finally, I wish to thank those who read the manuscript of this article and commented on it. I would name especially Professor Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Dr. Jón Jóhannesson, Eiríkur Benedikz.

POSTSCRIPT

The above paper was published in *Skírnir* in 1954. I expressed in it the opinions I then held about the origins of scaldic verse-forms. These opinions were not new, but were as little fashionable then as they are today. Most scholars of recent times have seen the scaldic discipline as a purely native development.

Germanic and Celtic traditions have much in common. To think only of the stories of Sigurðr and Finn: these have many similarities, but it does not seem possible to say that the one influenced the other. In this case it seems likely that they are both part of a Celto-Germanic culture, and could have originated at a time when Celts and Germans lived close together on the Continent. I cannot enter into such general problems in this short note.

The traditional Germanic verse-forms, as exemplified in *Beowulf* and some of the lays of the *Edda* are, in some ways, like the Irish rhythmical forms, such as those published by Kuno Meyer (*Über die älteste irische Dichtung*, 1913–4, and *Bruchstücke aus der alteren Lyrik Irlands*, 1919), as well as those end-riming verses published in this volume by James Carney. Both the Irish and the Germanic are rhythmical and alliterative, although the place of the alliterating syllables and their function are less strictly determined in Irish than in Germanic.

But, both in Irish and in Old Norse, other forms of poetry are found. In these, the syllables are counted more or less strictly, and the line ends in a fixed form.

C. Watkins (*Celtica* VI, 1963, 194ff.) recently published a most learned paper, suggesting that Irish syllabic forms, with their fixed line-ending, were relics of Indo-European verse-forms. Many students of Irish, on the other hand, have regarded the Irish syllabic forms as 'imitation by vernacular poets of the Latin hymns sung by seventh-century Irish monks' (G. Murphy, *Early Irish Metrics*, (1961), 12).

I would not wish to decide between the conclusions just quoted, but I think it safe to say that the syllable-counting scaldic forms cannot descend from Indo-European, for we have no record of them in Germanic except in the Scandinavian lands. No examples of poetry in scaldic form older than those of Bragi are preserved, and recent research suggests that Bragi worked in the second half of the ninth century, rather than in the early years of it.[1]

Most of the verses which can reasonably be ascribed to Bragi are in the measure *Dróttkvætt*, which is undoubtedly the basis of most scaldic measures and the one most used.

[1] See Jón Jóhannesson's paper quoted above, p. 16 n. 1.

Many have maintained, as I have in the above paper, that Bragi was the founder of the scaldic art, but the arguments of the late Jan de Vries (*Ogam* IX, 1, 1957, 13ff.) suggest that both the diction and the metrical form of Bragi's verses are so highly developed that he cannot have been the first of scaldic poets, and that his work was the outcome of several generations of development. But de Vries evidently found the similarities between scaldic and Irish verse-forms too close for it to be likely that the two developed independently. On the evidence of the archaeologist, A. W. Brøgger[1], de Vries suggests that there had been peaceful contacts between Norse and Gaelic-speaking peoples before the Viking Age, as early as 750. Influence of the Gaelic forms on the Norse might well have taken place at that period.

Typical scaldic forms resemble the traditional Germanic in many ways, but differ in certain essentials. In these the scaldic forms generally resemble the Irish, particularly in the fixed syllable count and concentration on the form in which the line ends. The line-ending contributes much to the rhythm of scaldic poetry, although even more to that of Irish.

Unlike *Beowulf* and the oldest Eddaic poems, scaldic poems, like the Irish, are esssentially stanzaic, but, while the Irish stanzas commonly consist of four lines, those of the scalds consist of eight. But each half-stanza (*helmingr*) is generally complete in syntax; it can, and often does stand alone. It seems, therefore, that the basic scaldic unit is the half-stanza of four lines.

I have appended this note to show that my opinions today are not precisely the same as they were in 1954. I have discussed the problem in closer detail in a book on scaldic poetry, which is not yet published, nor even completed. The present paper was intended only to show one possible approach. It is to be hoped that the subject will be studied by those who are expert in Celtic as well as in Old Norse.

Finally, I must confess that I was in some doubt whether this paper, published so long ago, should be translated into English at this time. Much that I have said may be out of date, and there may be faults which I have overlooked. However, I am very grateful to David Greene for removing some slips and not less to Gearóid Mac Eoin, for his fluent, readable translation.

G. TURVILLE-PETRE

Oxford, November 1970.

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[1] *Den norske Bosetningen paa Shetland-Orknøyene*, 1930; cf. H. Shetelig, *Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland* I, 1940, 23ff.

THREE OLD IRISH ACCENTUAL POEMS[1]

I

Sét no Tíag

THIS poem is found in the 15th century BM. MS. 30512, fol. 33 (Flower, *Cat.* 484). A note follows: *Coimgi Coluim Cille ann sin ⁊ a gabail ac loigi ⁊ hic ergi ⁊ ag dul for sed ⁊ is adamra ⁊ rel.*, 'There is the protection (protective verse) of Colum Cille. And it is to be said at bed-time and on rising, and when going on a journey, and it is of marvellous avail.'

The poem is O.I. throughout, and apart from some commonplace scribal neologisms there are no late forms. The following may be noted: suffixed pron., 3 sg. m. *téiti*, §1; subjunctive of wish in *rom-ain*, §2, *narom-tairre*, §4; *gil* (npl. m.) for later *gela*, §3; final *-o* in *fiado*, §9; in vocabulary *Spirut Glan* for 'Holy Spirit.'[2]

The stanza consists of two rhyming lines, each having two 'phrases', which tend to be linked by alliteration; there is similar linking (*fidrad freccomail*)[3] between stanzas. The syllabic count is not uniform. It will be convenient to discuss the poem under the following headings: the rhyming system, the accentual system, date and general character.

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[1] It was intended, in the course of the present article, to deal with a number of matters relevant to it, or emerging from it. These include consideration of the date and character of much of the accentual verse preserved in the Leinster genealogies, the verse of Colmán mac Lénéni, of Luccreth moccu Chíara and the relationship of early accentual verse to *amhrán* metres. It was also intended to deal extensively with alliteration, *fidrad freccomail*, stressing of enclitics, de-stressing, etc. Comments proliferated to such a degree that the three texts in hand tended to be submerged, and comments on most of these matters have been relegated to an *Appendix*. I have on the whole avoided the difficult matter of alliteration and *fidrad freccomail* which requires a very broadly based treatment.

[2] See *The Poems of Blathmac*, Carney, 1964, p. 162 n. The latest of three known examples (including the above) is found in *A Maire mín maithingen* (*EIL*, Murphy, 1956, p. 48). The poem has been dated to the eleventh century, which seems to me at least two centuries too late. It is hoped to discuss this, and similar problems arising out of *EIL* on another occasion.

[3] The term *fidrad freccomail* may perhaps cover the bindings of 'phrases'. Here the term is used exclusively of the binding of stanzas. The term 'phrase' is used of what, in the present poems, may be regarded as the basic prosodic unit in which, as will be held, there are always two stresses (e.g. *Sét no tíag*) and which tends to be linked to the preceding and succeeding phrase by either alliteration, internal rhyme or consonance, or by a combination of such links. The 'line' is the group of phrases that ends with the main systematic rhyme. Hence, while in all three poems there are two 'lines' in each stanza, in I there are two phrases to the line, in II and III there are four. In II and III there are thus eight phrases in the stanza, and it may be significant that they belong to the type of verse called in Irish *ochtfhoclach* which could thus connote 'eight-phrased metre'; it may be, however, that the term *ochtfhoclach*, lit. 'eight-worded', refers to the line which, in this metre, has eight stresses, and thus, normally, eight words.

Rhyming system

Since there are nine stanzas there are nine main systematic rhymes. Of these six have identical consonants (*Críst*: *tríst*, *an*: *glan*, etc.).[1] The others, *níuil*: *tríuin*, *thech*: *meth*, *chiunn*: *friumm*, are such as would be regarded as correct at any period from the beginnings of rhyme in Irish to the end of the *dán díreach* period. More interesting is the fact that there is a considerable amount of non-systematized internal rhyme, perfect and imperfect, as well as consonance: *crích*: *bíth* rhyme perfectly together, and make an imperfect rhyme with the systematic rhyming words *Críst*, *tríst*, (§1); *-ain*: *airm* rhyme imperfectly, similarly *macc*, with the systematic rhyming words *glan*, *an* (§2); *caingin*: *aingil* rhyme perfectly (§3); *dechmad*: *talman* rhyme (§5);[2] *lond* consonates with *liumm*, *friumm* (§6); *rís*: *tís* rhyme perfectly, while *leth* rhymes perfectly with the systematic rhyming words *thech*, *meth* (§7); *fiur* rhymes imperfectly with the systematic rhyming words *chiunn*, *friumm* (§8).

If the poem was written before the dipthongization of *ē* (a matter which I regard as certain) approximate vowel correspondences, not amounting to rhyme, would be more marked:[3] *sét*, *tég*, *téiti* (§1), *tégait*, *fédo* (§6). Furthermore, anticipating what will be said shortly concerning the accentuation of proclitics in certain positions, I would see a rough rhyme between *ar cech*, *ata-*, *narom-* (§4), and perhaps correspondence of a type in *Torbach*, *narop* (§6). Similar proliferation of non-systematic rhyme and consonance will be noted in II and III.

Accentual system

When the syllabic count in an early rhyming and highly alliterative poem is uneven and the unevenness cannot be convincingly eliminated by ordinary editorial processes, we may suspect that we have to do with accented verse. It is clear that in the present poem the syllabic count is uneven; nor will any form of editorial ingenuity produce a convincing syllabic uniformity. The next step is to see if an accentual pattern can be discerned.

The poem is made up of nine stanzas, each having two lines and each line two phrases. The phrase *sét no tíag* shows an accentual pattern ⊥ _ ⊥ which is shared by 26 of the 36 phrases.[4] One phrase

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[1] In classical *dán díreach* full rhymes are generally avoided.

[2] Several examples of the rhyming of *a* with *e* + neutral consonant have been noted in old sources; see *The Poems of Blathmac*, p. 159 (note on 25b).

[3] The *é* of *sét*, *téiti*, arising from original *-nt-* and that of *tég*, *tégait*, etc. would not, of course, be identical.

[4] I suggest that the poem may have been sung to a tune. I base this on the obvious importance of the unaccented syllable (⊥ _ ⊥) which can occasionally be doubled (⊥ _ _ ⊥). There is no example of the type ⊥ ⊥ (*luad cáich*, *sál suan*, etc.) which is found frequently in accentual verse.

shows a pattern ⊥ _ _ ⊥ (*Tréodae rom-ain* §2). Two others show a pattern ⊥ _ ⊥ _ (*Muinter nime* §5, and *tucht ad-riä*, §7).[1] This leaves seven phrases, six of which, applying the criteria of syllabic verse, show one accented syllable; the single phrase remaining shows, according to the same criteria, three stresses.

The phrases showing a single accent are *ar cech caingin* (§3), *ar cech caingin, ata-teoch, narom-tairre* (§4), *narop lond* (§6), *ar mo chiunn* (§8).

If we assume here that in each case stress can fall on the first syllable the six will fall into stress-patterns already observed in the poem, three into the commonest type (⊥ _ ⊥): *ata-teoch, narop lond ar mo chiunn*; and three into what is a variant of it, achieved by slipping in an extra unaccented syllable after the second accent ⊥ _ ⊥ _: *ar cech caingin* (twice), *narom-tairre*.

Poems II and III, *Cétamon* and *Tánic sam*, show parallels to what we have noted here. Anticipating discussion of these poems the following may be said. The stanza consists of two rhyming lines of four phrases, each phrase containing two stresses. The syllable count is irregular. In a number of phrases one of the accents may be achieved by allowing the stress to fall upon an element that is unstressed in syllabic verse, such as a preposition or a pre-verbal particle. Such a stress is always separated from the following stressed element by an unaccented syllable, giving patterns similar to those found in the present poem (⊥ _ ⊥, ⊥ _ ⊥ _): *dò cach dinn* II (§6), *immasernar* II (§13), *dàr cach tír*, III (§7).

Furthermore it would seem that the final syllable of a trisyllabic word may be called upon to bear stress, or rather, bears a secondary stress, e.g. *tuigithir* (⊥ _ ⸌), II (§4), which differs from the foregoing examples only in that the syllable, normally unstressed, and now stressed for metrical purposes, is the last instead of the first in the phrase.

The remaining phrase in the present poem *fiur mnai maccaib* offers a problem that is in some way the converse of that we have been discussing. According to the standards of syllabic verse there are three fully accented words (⊥ ⊥ ⊥ _). Here we can propose an explanation that is basically similar to that proposed for the phrases having (according to the standards of syllabic verse) only a single stressed word. In certain contexts a syllable that would normally be stressed may lose stress when it precedes another stressed syllable. In many apparent examples of this the de-stressed syllable is one of three monosyllables and the pattern ⊥ _ ⊥ _ results from ⊥ ⊥ ⊥ _. Just as there are parallels in poems II and III for the stressing of elements that are normally unstressed, so also in these poems we have

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[1] I assume here that there is hiatus in *-riä*.

analogous examples of the de-stressing, for metrical purposes, of syllables that are normally stressed: *Greit mer fort* II (§13), *céol mbinn mbláith*, III (§2). These two lines may be regarded as resolving themselves into the popular types of phrase $\perp$ _ $\perp$. Consideration of the archaic verse in the Leinster genealogies will enable us to amplify this matter. (See *Appendix*, p. 65 ff).

Date and general character

Sét no tíag is Old Irish of a very simple type having none of the linguistic artifice of productions like *Amra Coluim Chille* and *Amra Senán*. If one thought of language alone one would probably date it to the eighth century. But the fact that it is glossed and was treated as a sacred prayer may suggest a greater antiquity. Metrically it compares most closely with poems II and III published here, with the second *Fursundud* attributed to Ladcenn mac Bairchedo,[1] and with some of the verse of Colmán mac Lénéni as seen in the fragments published and edited by Thurneysen.[2] It is attributed to Colum Cille (c. 522–97) who was an almost exact contemporary of Colmán (c. 530–606). There is no thought in the poem that would conflict with the saint's authorship: indeed, the emphasis on angels is in keeping with the picture of the saint presented in Adamnán's *Vita Columbae*. Were it not that in later times poems are fathered on Colum Cille that cannot possibly have been written by him I would be inclined to regard his authorship as likely. As it is, it cannot be disproved. The poem seems very democratic in character. The traveller envisaged is at first sight neither a chieftain nor a religious: he is more like a travelling merchant. He prays to be well received by all, to incur no man's venom, and to come home safely. He hopes that he will not over-spend, and will make a profit. The 'commercial' vocabulary is not inconsiderable for the length of the poem: *caingen*, *torbach*, *ad-ren*, *meth*. But on the whole it seems probable that the *persona* of the poem is a humble priest engaged in the dangerous business of 'purchasing' souls.

In editing I have given two texts, a diplomatic text and one normalized approximately to the standard of the Milan glosses. In the former all abbreviations are italicised including suprascript *h*.

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[1] Meyer, *ÄID* i, p. 27 ff.
[2] *ZCP* 19, p. 193 ff.

Edited texts

I *Sét no tíag*

1. Sét no tíag   téiti Críst;
    crích i mbéo   bíth cen tríst.

2. Tréodae rom-ain   airm i n-an,
    Athair, Macc,   Spirut Glan.

3. Tíagait liumm   —láthar ndil!—
    ar cech caingin   aingil gil.

4. Ar cech caingin   ata-teoch
    narom-tairre   nim o neoch.

5. Muinter nime   noíbdai níuil,
    dechmad nert   talman tríuin.

6. Torbach tóir,   tíagait liumm
    narop lond   fíado friumm.

Diplomatic texts

I *Sét no tíag*

1. Set *no* tiag*h* (.i. coti) teiti $\overline{\text{XP}}$
    c*r*ich imbeo (.i. *im*bin) bit cintrist (.i. *eter*toirres)

2. Treoda rom ain *air*m *im*man (.i. inanab)
    ath*air* m*a*c sp*ir*at glan

3. Tiagait lim lath*ar* ndil
    ar ce*ch* caingin aingil gil

4. Ar ce*ch* caingin atateoch (.i. guidim)
    na ro*mtair*ri neim (.i. olc) o neoch

5. Mui*ndter* neme naemdai niul
    dechm*ad* n*er*t talm*an* t*r*iun

6. Torbach toir tiagait lium
    narab lonn fiada *fr*ium

7. Rís cech leth,   tís mo thech,
   tucht ad-riä   réim cen meth.

8. Réid cech coí   ar mo chiunn,
   fiur mnaí maccaib   fáilte friumm.

9. Fírmaith fecht   fó don-fét
   fíado find   foraim, sét.
                              Sét no tíag.

7. Ris (.i. cachadh ricab) cech leth tis mo thech (.i. coroisir go tech)
   tucthad ria reim cen meth

8. Reth cech coí ar mo chinn
   fir mnai maccu failti frim

9. Fír maith fecht fodonfet
   fiado finn foroim sed
                        s.n.t.

Translation

1. The path I walk,[1] Christ walks it. May the land in which I am[2] be without sorrow.[3]

2. May the Trinity protect me wherever I stay,[4] Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

3. Bright angels walk with me—dear presence—in every dealing.

4. In every dealing I pray them[5] that no one's venom[6] may reach me.

5. The (ninefold) people of heaven of holy cloud, the tenth force of the stout earth.

6. Profitable band, they come with me, so that the Lord may not be angry with me.

[1] gl. That is, that he come.
[2] gl. That is, in which I am wont to be (reading -biu).
[3] I do not understand the gloss (see Notes).
[4] gl. That is, in which I shall stay.
[5] gl. That is, I pray.
[6] gl. That is, evil.

7. May I come to[1] every spot, may I come back to my home;[2] may the way in which I spend be a way without loss.

8. May every path before me be smooth, a welcome to me from man, woman and children.

9. A truly good journey! Well does the fair Lord show us a course, a path.

Notes.

1 *d.* The gloss *etertoirres* is a difficulty; *eter-* is expressed by the *et-* compendium and a suspension stroke; *toirres* is almost certainly for *toirrse* or *toirrsech* which is a usual gloss on *tríst* (See *Contribb.*, s.v. *tríst*).

4 *c. tairre* (*táirre*?), 3 sg. pres. subj. of *do-airret, do-áirret.*

5 *a-c. Muinter . . . dechmad. dechmad* requires an antecedent conveying the idea of 'nine'. This idea could be implicit in *Muinter nime* = the nine orders of angels. It is possible, however, that *Muinter* has been substituted for its synonym in this context *Noí ngrád. Noí* would give alliterative linking with *neoch.* For a similar association of the ten forces of heaven and earth compare: *Noí ṅgrad nimi ⁊ in dechmad grád talman tilchaig,* LL Vol. I, *l.*6508. Cf. further *noe montar nimae, Contribb.* M. col. 192, *l.* 26, *Poems of Blathmac, ll.* 290-300.

b-d. niuil . . . tríuin (*niul . . . triun* MS.). The emendation may be regarded as certain. Compare *Ōengein Dé talman trēoin* (O'Brien, *Corpus Gen.*, p. 4) in a poem of similar date and type.

6 *a. tóir. Contribb.* suggest that *tóir* may have been disyllabic. The matter could not be decided by the present instance since both *tóir* and *töir* would be metrically possible.

7 *a.* For the gloss I would doubtfully suggest reading *cach áit ricab* 'every place I shall come to'.

c. ad-riä: 1 sg. pres. subj. of *ad-ren* (See *Contribb.* s.v. *ad-ren*, and *as-ren*).

8 *c.* This stanza and the following have been quoted in *Poems of Blathmac* p. 116. There I have taken *maccu* as an equivalent of *macc.* Now, however, I think the context strongly suggests reading *maccaib*: the final consonant could have coalesced with the *f* of *fáilte.* In the unpublished Lambeth glosses I have noted *forsnabnoebib ⁊ forsnafirionib*: in the first case the *-b* of *forsnaib* has been depalatalized, in the second it has been depalatalized and has coalesced with the following *f.* The same source shows *dinafuilnedib, forsnatargabalib torimter.*

9 *b.* For *do-fét* (*to-fiad-*) see *Poems of Blathmac, l.* 69 n.

[1] gl. That is, every good fortune that I shall reach (?). See Notes.
[2] gl. That is, that I may reach home.

C

II and III

Cétamon and Tánic sam

Fionn's poem on May-day, *Cétamon*[1] was first published by Kuno
Meyer in his edition of *Macgnímartha Finn*, *RC* v (1882), 197 ff., the
poem forming part of the saga. It was re-edited, independently of
the saga, in Meyer's *Four Old Irish Songs of Summer and Winter*
(London, 1903, p. 8 ff.); the translation given there was reprinted with
some changes (but lacking the useful notes) in the translation of
the saga given in *Ériu* I, 186–7. A further revision of the translation
appeared in Meyer's *Ancient Irish Poetry* (1911), pp. 54–5. Another
translation with useful comment was given by Kenneth Jackson in
his *Studies in Early Celtic Nature Poetry* (1935), pp. 23 ff., 41 ff.

There were many unresolved difficulties in Meyer's main treatment
(*Four Songs*). Especially puzzling was the apparent lack of a con-
sistent metrical pattern. The poem was printed in stanzas of four
lines, Meyer regarding each printed line as a 'half-line'. He com-
mented: 'the half-lines vary in length very freely, and often in the
same stanza, from four to seven syllables'.[2] The extremes of this
unusual variation may be illustrated by reference to *má bód (buaid)*
mBreg mbras (§10) and *Lengait faindle fanna súas* (§8). It may be
remarked that these extremes have one thing in common: four
stresses.

The next attempt to deal with the problem was that of the late
Gerard Murphy in *Ériu* xvii (1955) p. 86 ff.[3] He noted that in
Meyer's text 'Most of the lines in his emended version[4] conform to
the syllabic pattern 5¹'. This, not unnaturally, suggested that the
poem was originally written in *lethrannaigecht mór* ($5^1 + 5^1 + 5^1 + 5^1$).
Murphy, in a brilliant exercise, reconstructed the text in this metre,
assuming that the corrupt manuscript text had come into being by
a series of misplacing of words, the frequent incorporation of glosses,
as well as 'a number of the ordinary corruptions which mar late
copies of an early text.' He had considerable confidence in his
restored text. He wrote: 'The result can hardly fail to convince
readers that the reconstructed text of *Cétemain* . . . is more like the
poem as originally composed than the text presented by the scribe
of Laud 610, though here and there doubt may be entertained con-
cerning the validity of certain details in the reconstruction.' This was

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[1] I have called the poem *Cétamon*, Murphy *Cétemain*; the reason will appear in a
note on 1 *a* below.

[2] *Four Songs*, p. 6.

[3] I give the dates as a matter of some interest. The problem of this poem has been
with us for 89 years since Meyer's first publication of it in 1882.

[4] In the MS. the stanzas are written without line-division. It is important to note
that Meyer, apart from dividing the stanzas into four printed lines, made no effort
to interfere with or to regularize the syllabic length of the lines.

not egoism; he simply meant to say that the fact that this reconstruction 'worked' was the best possible demonstration of the truth of his theory.

The reconstructed text as well as the original text of Laud 610 were reprinted in Murphy's *Early Irish Lyrics* (Oxford, 1956), p. 157 ff. The notes there (pp. 233–4) are a synopsis of those in the *Ériu* article, and have little to add. References here are to *Ériu* xvii.

If we examine Meyer's text, what Murphy referred to as his 'emended version', we find that of the 56 lines of the poem, 6 consist of 4 syllables, 29 of 5, 15 of 6, and 6 of 7. While the statement quoted that most lines consist of five syllables is literally true the proportion varying from the 'norm' is suspiciously high, indeed, almost half the total.

There are, it seems to me, good reasons for rejecting the reconstruction. In the editing of early poetry from manuscripts of five or six centuries later than the date of composition a very common fault is what might be called 'over-edition'. The modern editor, not understanding the manuscript text, assumes that it is 'corrupt' and rewrites it. Not infrequently the manuscript text turns out to be more correct than the re-writing: over-confident 'emendation' is to be guarded against.[1] Murphy's presentation of this poem involves, I think, more extensive interference with the manuscript text than has ever been thought necessary by a modern Irish scholar in a similar case. In other words it has every appearance of being an extreme example of 'over-edition'. A serious aspect of this is that in many lines the reconstruction demands the rejection of a word that is most apt to the poetic image. I would instance *Labraid tragna, trén bard* 'The corncrake utters—powerful bard' (§7), where *bard* 'bard' (which has a systematic metrical function as well as one of image) is rejected; *feraid seng saidbir sáith* 'the ant fetches a rich sufficiency' (§5), where *seng* 'ant' is rejected; *foirbrid* (or *for-beir*) *canach fann finn* 'delicate white bog-cotton flourishes' (§3), where *canach* 'bog-cotton' must go. If there were no other reason than that it necessitated the destruction of this fine phrase, *canach fann finn*, I would be tempted to reject the reconstruction. Not merely are *fann* and *finn* probably the most appropriate adjectives in Irish to describe bog-cotton but the beginning of May is precisely the time when this plant (*Eriophorum*) has begun to flourish: botany, no less than imagery, is a witness in favour of the manuscript.[2]

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[1] There are a number of examples of 'over-edition' in poems published or republished in recent years by various scholars. I do not claim to be guiltless, and find occasionally that some departures from the manuscript in my edition of the poems of Blathmac were unfortunate.

[2] The plant is specifically associated with May: *canuch cetamuin*, *RC* xiv, p. 416. There are two main types: *Eriophorum vaginatum* in which the cottony tufts appear in April/May, and *Eriophorum angustifolium* in which they appear in May/June (*An Irish Flora*, D. A. Webb, 1953).

In examining Murphy's theory we must ask the question: When, in the course of the manuscript tradition did this 'corruption' take place, a corruption that seems incredible, not so much in this or that detail, but in its assumed extent? Unfortunately this important point is not dealt with clearly by Murphy and we are obliged to use what is virtually a research process in order to discover what was his probable view.

According to Murphy *Macgnimartha Finn* was put together in the twelfth century.[1] The poem, which he would date to the ninth, was, he thought, included in the compilation. It was taken from an older manuscript source and there is no question of an oral tradition. That orality was not an important factor in the tradition of the poem is not stated in so many words. But had Murphy thought it important in this case he would doubtless have said so, since he was, on the whole, very much in favour of oral tradition as an important source of extant early and middle Irish poetry.[2] Besides, an oral hypothesis might have helped to add credibility to his thesis: one could see the supposed twelfth-century compiler beginning with a faulty oral text, and making matters worse by trying to correct it; subsequent scribes, finding the poem difficult, would make their own errors and corrections.[3]

All errors are attributed to scribal practice. He refers to 'an early scribe' (p. 92), 'an early copyist' (p. 94, twice), 'a later scribe' (p. 92), 'a glossator' (p. 93); by 'the scribe' (who is guilty of some of the errors) is meant, it would appear, the scribe of Laud 610. This means that the 'errors' would seem to have been produced by a series of at least four people: an early scribe, a later scribe, a glossator, and the scribe of the extant MS. It is difficult to know what Murphy meant by 'early' and 'later'. The matter has, as will be seen, a certain importance.

He points out (p. 87) that Meyer had noticed in the first quatrain that a word (*cucht*) had been misplaced.[4] He also pointed out that O'Rahilly, dealing not with the poem but with a prose passage in *Macgnimartha Finn*, had explained a textual diffi-culty as arising from the incorporation of a gloss in the text. He continues: 'Meyer, then, has seen that in at least one instance a word (*cucht*) has been misplaced by *the scribe*[5] in the poem beginning *Céttemain* and Professor O'Rahilly has suggested with probability

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[1] *Early Irish Literature*, Knott and Murphy (1966), p. 156.

[2] See his comments *EIL*, Introduction (p. xvii).

[3] Murphy was probably precluded from the hypothesis of a late writing down of this poem by his acceptance of *cróich* (§ 8) as an archaic spelling, deriving from the original.

[4] It is held below that Meyer was not, in fact, right and a more likely view is that a word was dropped after *cucht*. Meyer's emendation left the stanza still metrically abnormal.

[5] The italics in this quotation are mine.

that *the same scribe* has later incorporated a gloss in a corruptly preserved phrase. If we postulate *many similar misplacings, some similar incorporation of glosses,* and a number of ordinary corruptions which mar *late copies* of an early text (homoioteleuton errors, etc.) it is possible to construct a text which follows a definite pattern of metre . . .'

Murphy regarded *Macgnímartha Finn* as being the result of a twelfth-century tendency 'to add to the recording of ancient tradition'.[1] In other words, apart from such items as this early poem, which may or may not have had an original connection with Fionn, *Macgnímartha Finn* was a newly-constructed literary tale based upon traditional oral material.

By his references to the incorporation of a gloss in the text of *Macgnímartha Finn* and a similar mechanical error in the case of the poem, and by seeing a connection between these alleged events, Murphy is committing himself to a comparatively late date for the process of corruption, that is, to a date later than the supposed compilation of the tale in the twelfth century. Indeed, his references to 'the scribe' . . . 'the same scribe' and to 'late copies' would suggest that he regarded the fifteenth-century scribe of Laud 610 as responsible for a substantial amount of the alleged corruptions. Incorporated in an anecdote concerning Fionn in the early twelfth-century portion of the Bodleian MS. Rawlison B 502, there are two nature poems: *Fuitt co bráth,* a poem on winter, and *Tánic sam,* a poem on the coming of summer,[2] the latter presented here as poem III. Meyer regarded these three poems and the well-known *Scél lemm dúib,* a poem on winter, which completed his booklet, as being 'either by one poet, or on the same pattern' (p. 20). Murphy drew attention to Meyer's comment on 'similarities in phrasing between this poem and the poems *Fuitt co brath* (on winter) and *Tánic sam* (on summer) and used the similarities for textual criticism.

Meyer pointed out that the metre of *Tánic sam* is identical with that of *Cétamon.*[3] Furthermore, each poem presents the editor with the same type of problem. The 'lines', (in Meyer's terms, half-lines) are of different length. *Tánic sam* is much shorter than *Cétamon,* consisting of only 28 lines. As edited by Meyer it has 2 lines of 4 syllables, 17 of 5, and 9 of 6. Taking 5 as the norm *Cétamon* has 29 'normal' against 27 'corrupt' lines; *Tánic sam* has 17 'normal', 11 'corrupt'.

Here then is the dilemma confronting scholars who would accept Murphy's thesis: *Cétamon* and *Tánic sam* are two poems embedded in

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1 *Early Irish Literature,* p. 156.
2 Meyer, *Four Songs,* pp. 18–23.
3 The poems are indeed in the same metre, but. there are significant differences, as will be pointed out below, p. 35.

comparatively late[1] material concerning Fionn. They have both a similar and unusual metrical structure and each presents the editor with an almost identical editorial problem. Since the earlier version of *Tánic sam* is found in a fine manuscript of c. 1125 the 'problem' which Murphy tried to solve must have existed before that date— to suppose that such an unusual tradition as he suggests could have arisen independently in the case of two similar poems ascribed to Fionn would be too much to ask. Murphy's thesis, although he does not advert to the fact, would demand that *Tánic sam* should be reconstructed in exactly the same way as *Cétamon*, and we would have to assume almost the same amount of 'corruption'. His ignoring of the problem of *Tánic sam* is a grave weakness in his thesis.

In a note on the metre of *Cétamon* Murphy has the following to say: 'Reduction of two vowels in hiatus to a monosyllable . . . and use of forms such as *fúapair* (q. 4) for **fo-opair*, forbid explaining the syllabic irregularity of the scribe's lines on the grounds that the poem was written in the seventh century, for which century a few poems in rhyming stanzas with an irregular number of syllables in the lines have been attested.'

Here Murphy has rejected in advance the approximate view that is presented here, which is as follows: *Cétamon*, as well as *Tánic sam*, is in a stressed metre and, while there are unfortunately a number of faulty readings, there is no 'corruption' on the scale envisaged.

Murphy's statement on the date and character of *Cétamon* is logically open to objection. He is weighing two contrary hypotheses: (*a*) that the poem is seventh century and syllabically irregular; (*b*) that it is ninth century and syllabically regular. His argument could be criticized in detail, but a single example must suffice. The poem cannot, Murphy holds, be earlier than the ninth century because certain hiatus-words such as *sciach* and *té* (older *tee*) are already monosyllabic. But of these two examples *sciach* is a more than doubtful editorial creation; but, even were it not so, if the poem was 'seventh century and syllabically irregular', it could accommodate disyllabic *sciach* and *tee*. Hypothesis (*a*) has not been judged in its own terms, but in terms that emerge from an acceptance of (*b*).

Metre

The stanza in these poems may be regarded as consisting of couplets with monosyllabic end-rhyme. Each line has four phrases, the couplet

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[1] If, as would seem possible, the same hand is behind *Macgnimartha Finn* and the Fionn anecdote in Rawl. B 502, both incorporating similar, and possibly related poems, we may have to put back the date of the compilation of *Macgnimartha Finn* considerably. This section of the Rawlinson MS. is dated to c. 1125 and it is not clear that the anecdote is newly composed material. I regard the date of the original compilation of *Macgnimartha Finn* as an unsettled question.

ght, and hence is taken here as belonging to the *ochtfhoclach* ('eight-
hrased?) type[1]. Apart from the final monosyllabic rhyme there
 no syllable count, and we find in practice that the number of
yllables may vary considerably. A trisyllabic word may be regarded
s having a stress on the last as well as on the first syllable. I indicate
econdary stress by a grave accent: *Cétamòn*, II § 1, *suidigthìr* II § 2,
tc. Similarly elements normally unstressed may acquire metrical
tress when removed by a syllable from the main stress: *Is fo-cen*, II
 2, *ìmme-cherb*, II § 2, *ìmma-sernar*, II § 13, *òcus daim*, III § 2, *fòr
ach luss*, III § 5. An accented syllable standing immediately before
nother may be de-stressed: *céol mbinn mbláith*, III § 2. These are
henomena similar to those encountered in I[2].

There is a caesura after the second phrase, and the two parts of
he line are usually linked by rhyme between the last word of the first
part and a word in the second. This type of *aicill* rhyme is usual in
I, invariable in III, except that occasionally consonance rather than
ull rhyme is found. In II, in the cases where *aicill* is not present,
here is a compensatory internal rhyme between some word in the
irst half line and a word in the second; despite its occasional absence
n II, *aicill* rhyme may, I think, be regarded as virtually systematic.

Non-systematic internal rhyme of an approximate type (already
noted in I) is common. In II note, for example, *Berait, beich, becc*
having the same vocalism as the systematic *aicill* rhymes *nert, bert*
(§ 5); similarly *Labraid, tragna, canaid, ess* (*e* corresponding with *a*)
and the systematic *bard, n-ard* (§ 7); in III note the mixture of rhyme
and consonance where *Foss, n-oss, cass* correspond with the system-
atic *tess, dess* (§ 3).

There is a strong tendency to link each phrase with the phrase
following by either alliteration, internal rhyme, partial rhyme or
consonance, or by a combination of such links. Here important
differences emerge between II and III. In the former the couplets
are usually linked by alliteration (e.g. *linn, lethaid*, § 3), but this
linking is not present in III; *fidrad freccomail*, invariable in II, is
absent in III, the single instance (*chaiss, Canaid*, §§ 5, 6) being no
more than would be accounted for by chance. In III every phrase
ends in a monosyllable; this is usual in II, but far from invariable.

The lavish ornamentation of II and III may be regarded as *breccad*,
defined by Murphy as 'the multiplying of rime by dividing a stanza
into small sections which rime either wholly or partially with one
another' (*EIM*, p. 23). Furthermore he states (*ibid.*, p. 70) that
stanzas of the *ochtfhoclach* type 'may arise ... from the application
of *breccad* to other metres'. Murphy's views, as expressed here, must

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[1] On the interpretation of the term *ochtfhoclach* see, however, note 3, p. 23.
[2] See p. 24 ff.

be rejected inasmuch as he assumes that *breccad* is a late phenomenon
(eleventh century), the result of applying extra ornament to an early
type of modestly ornamented syllabic verse. The precise opposite is
the case: *breccad*, like *aicill* rhyme, originated in the linking of
successive phrases in archaic alliterative verse either by alliteration
or rhyme and is also found in archaic verse of the *ochtfhoclach* type
in the Leinster genealogies. (See, for example, *Mōen ōen*, Appendix,
p. 56).

Some further comments may be made on alliteration and rhyme.
In a phrase consisting of a single trisyllabic word with a secondary
stress on the last syllable one might expect the first consonant of
the last syllable to carry the alliteration occasionally, since, by
what is apparently a metrical licence, alliteration may be achieved
by syllabic division of words.[1] This might, I think, be possible, but
some examples in II show that the trisyllabic word, even where it
bears two metrical stresses, usually functions as a single alliterative
unit: *Cétamon* | *caín rée*, § 1, *suidig*[*thir*] | *síne serb*, § 2. There are
no examples of the other possible usage, nor, so far as I have noticed,
are there any in the archaic poems in the Leinster genealogies.

The main systematic rhyme, that is, the end rhyme, corresponds
with normal O.I. usage: the consonants are classified, there is strict
regard for quality, and vowels are identical. The same may be said in
general of the *aicill* rhymes. In III, if the text is correct, there seems
to be one case of a loose *aicill* rhyme (*barr, dairi*, § 4); see also the
note on the *aicill* rhyme *óg, bód*, II § 10. On the other hand internal
rhymes, which are used occasionally as substitutes for *aicill*, may be
very loose, amounting to little more than vowel correspondence. The
following may be noted : *laíd, laí*, II, § 1, *súaill, lúath* and *lethaid,
canach*, § 3, *cuirither, tuigithir*, § 4, *slaibre, saidbir*, § 5, *sétair, dé do*,
§ 6, *fáilte dó, tánic lóg*, § 7[2]. (For *lóg* see Notes).

In III *aicill* rhyme (or rarely a consonance substitute) is invariable,
and consequently we do not find the substitution of rough rhymes.
The poet, however, strives to link each phrase within the couplet
with the phrase following by alliteration, rhyme, or consonance,
and succeeds in all but a few instances, e.g. *rethid graig*, § 4. Granted
his intention, it would seem that we are to recognise a number of
rough rhymes corresponding more or less to those quoted above from
II; *ag, seng*, § 1, *tibid, find*, § 3, *tánic, ro-fáith*, § 5. Examples of
linking by consonance are: *éoin, cíuin*, § 2, *n-oss, tess*, § 3, *dín, Cúan*,
§ 4, *gaim, coin*, § 5, *orbb, cherbb*, § 6.

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[1] See Murphy *EIM*, p. 39. His comments are less than satisfactory, and the matter
requires further investigation.

[2] These rough rhymes are similar to those used in late *ógláchus* metres. But rhymes of
this type are found in tenth-century verse (*see Éigse* xiii, p. 309).

Date and general character

On metrical grounds I would associate *Cétamon* with the archaic poems in the Leinster genealogies (the latest portions of which belong to c. 630), with the verse of Colmán mac Lénéni (fl. c. 530–605), and with poem I of the present article. Amongst archaic linguistic features note *sétair* (to *séitid*), § 6 (see note), *cróich* = *cruaich*, § 8, *bód* = *buaid*, § 10 (see note), *úad* (= *ód*), rhyming with *ór*, § 13 (see note).

Cétamon has survived, not because of its intrinsic merit, but because of its association with Fionn. Fionn, we are told, learnt as a boy the ancient magico-poetic arts of *teinm láeda, imus for-osna* and *díchetal di chennaib*, and then made this poem to prove his skill as a seer-poet (*oc fromad a éicsi*). This is an oblique statement to the effect that *Cétamon* is a poem in an ancient metrical form of a type that might have been composed by Fionn. There is an implicit (and true) judgement that it is in every way a rare and outstanding achievement.

Originally the poem would appear to have been a lyric celebrating the advent of summer on Mayday and possibly had no connection with the saga in which it is embedded. In a much quoted passage Meyer has said: 'In Nature Poetry the Gaelic muse may vie with that of any other nation. Indeed, these poems occupy a unique position in the literature of the world. To seek out and watch and love Nature, in its tiniest phenomena as in its grandest, was given to no people so early and so fully as to the Celt. Many hundreds of Gaelic and Welsh poems testify to this fact. It is a characteristic of these poems that in none of them do we get an elaborate or sustained description of any scene or scenery, but rather a succession of pictures and images, which the poet, like an impressionist, calls up before us by light and skilful touches.'

In making this classic statement Meyer, so far as Irish is concerned, had primarily in mind the four poems *Cétamon, Scél lemm dúib, Fuitt co bráth* and *Tánic sam*.

The 'impressionistic' effect, the quick succession of pictures and images, has been found aesthetically pleasing. It should be noted, that the swiftness, the syntactic simplicity, the impressionism, are natural results of the metrical form. The image had to be presented in metrical phrases, usually bounded on each side by a pause, and frequently consisting of only two syllables.

As a poem *Tánic sam* is a fine accomplishment, but suffers by comparison with *Cétamon*. The latter,' to use a phrase of Frank O'Connor's, is primary literature. Nature is immediately experienced and observed. The author is a professional poet. This we might gather from his word-skill, from his combination of perfect diction

and an almost *tour de force* metrical form with vital perception and
vivid imagery. But we also know it from the fact that he stresses
the close relationship of prince and poet in his implicit presentation
of the Irish social scene. This social phenomenon lies behind the
images of the corncrake bard chattering in praise of summer, who is
the great visiting chief; the singing of the cool high waterfall; the
welcome of the warm pool; and summer's lavish reward to all for
their praise. The same reality lies behind the image of tree being
'ennobled' by summer, and endowed with the gold of the flag-iris.

The poet probably comes from the district of Brega, or nearby—
it is the only geographical name in the poem (§ 10). He has a sense
of beauty and a sense of humour, and he feels no incongruity in
allowing these senses to impinge, one upon the other. He sees
beauty in every aspect of nature; he observes the frenzied response to
summer of the birds, the bees, the fish, the flies and the ants; the
weather is mild and there is perfect peace. But in a very down to
earth manner he avoids abstraction. He approaches the conclusion
of his poem with the statement that (under such conditions) one has
an irrepressible desire to join the line of spectators at the racetrack.
It must be stressed that, although this thought is found in the second
last stanza, it is close to being the poet's conclusion. The return to
bird-song and the beauty of summer in the following half-stanza
and stanza is at least partly necessitated by the metrical convention
of closing a poem on the same note, and with the same word or words
with which it opened; a device that firmly seals the formal unity
achieved throughout by linking alliteration and substitute devices.

As regards date and character *Tánic sam* presents quite a different
problem. There are no archaisms of the type that we meet in *Céta-
mon*. But the poem, as indeed Meyer thought, must at least be
classed as Old Irish. A date in the mid-ninth century would be
very possible, but an earlier date might be arguable. Here we can
only present the evidence pointing to a date within the classical
Old Irish period on the one hand, and that suggestive of the eve of
the Middle Irish period on the other. But first it is necessary to
discuss a possible relationship between *Cétamon* and *Tánic sam*.

Meyer (*Four Songs*, pp. 6–7) mentioned that many lines in the
former poem 'find an echo' in the latter (cf. Murphy, *Ériu* xvii, p. 88).
Furthermore, both poems, in their saga setting, are spoken by Fionn.
Meyer, as already noted above, was tempted to think in terms of
common authorship (. . . 'composed either by one poet, or on the
same pattern . . .'). As we shall see, there can be no question of this.
But rather, if, as is suggested here, there is a period of two centuries
or more between the poems, we are entitled to suspect that the later
poem is a literary imitation of the earlier. Every image in *Cétamon*

is vitally realized, and, despite elaboration, there is a certain freedom in the metrical form. *Tánic sam*, by comparison, is an arrangement of clichés in a similar but more mechanical metre. In § 2 we are told that the cuckoo sings 'sweet smooth song' (the earlier poet had referred to the cry of the cuckoo as being 'harsh'); the poet is then led on to the further cliché of attributing to it a sleep-inducing quality, as if its song were a *suantraige*. In *Cétamon* the swallows fly upwards and their harsh music sounds about the hilltop; most unusually the verb *lingid* 'jumps' is used to describe the upward flight. The poet here is doubtless thinking of the fact that, as in the country to-day, it is regarded as a sign of good weather when swallows 'fly high'. In *Tánic sam* the swallows are generalized as 'birds' but the same unusual verb (*lingid*) is used of their flight to the hill-top; but with more economy than artistry the poet gives the verb a double subject so that it connotes simultaneously the flight of birds and the leaping of stags, the latter, of course, a more conventional usage. In *Cétamon* every stanza presents a new image. In the catalogue of nature events in *Tánic sam* the stag (*ag*) jumps in § 1, again (in plurality) in § 2 (*daim*), and stags (*daim*) 'congregate' in § 7. The phrase *díambi* is used in five of the seven stanzas and this becomes a tiresome syntactic gambit. In § 1 we read *sam . . . díambi réid rón rian*, 'summer whence the path of seals (= the sea) is smooth'. But within this locution, between 'summer' and 'whence' we are given in a complete sentence the parenthetically awkward and poetically disconnected image of the leap of the 'swift slender stag', a crudity that translators tend to disguise.

The comparative poverty in diction and imagery, the lack of linking between the lines of the couplet, the lack of *fidrad freccomail*, the fairly high instance of common phraseology with *Cétamon* as well as the similar metre, the attribution to Fionn, all combine to suggest that *Tánic sam* is an imitation of the earlier poem. This conclusion has a bearing on the textual problem: we may use each poem to criticize the text of the other, as indeed Meyer and Murphy have done, but without making clear the basis of their procedure. If we decide that the later poem was written c. 800 as an imitation of the earlier we are very close to a conclusion that, already at that date. *Cétamon* was attributed to Fionn. If, as I am inclined to believe, the poem and the saga formed part of material collected by Senchán Torpéist, they belonged together since the seventh century (See *Appendix*, pp. 67 ff., 80).

The features of *Tánic sam* which would suggest a date c. 800 (or earlier) are: npl. masc. adj. *lúaith, léith*, § 2; *sáim for* later *sám*, § 2; neut. *fúam*, § 4; *díambi*, 3 sg. consuet. of copula, §§ 1, 3 etc; *ro-fáith*, perf. of *fedid*, § 5; *for-berait* (favoured by alliteration against, *forbrit*

of MSS.), § 7. Also *dedlai*, 3 sg. fut. of *dlongaid* (?), *fris-sil*, 3 sg. fut. of *fris-slig* if the interpretation of the text is sound.

On the other hand *íach* 'salmon', § 6, can hardly be very early, and suggests the late Old Irish or early Middle Irish period: it is used as a monosyllable, and rhymes with *líac* (see note).   Emendation of *íach brecc bedc* to *íasc brecc bedc* on the basis of the occurrence of the latter phrase in *Cétamon* would not help, since a monosyllabic *íasc* would rhyme with an originally disyllabic *líac*.   Furthermore, we may note the word *ocus* in § 2. In early accentual verse there seems to be a tendency to avoid copulative conjunctions: none are found in I, II, nor in the verse of Colmán mac Lénéni.   In the accentual verse in the Leinster genealogies we usually find *sceo*, and even this is rare. In § 2 b the initial of *bláith* (older *mláith*) alliterates as *b*, not as *m*.

In the case of *Tánic sam*, as in *Cétamon*, recognition of the metrical structure enables us to make sense of some hitherto doubtful lines. In addition there is used here a MS. version which was unknown to Meyer, dismissed as unimportant by Jackson, and not used by Greene and O'Connor.   This, the version found in the fifteenth-century Munster RIA MS. C III 2, is printed for the first time below after the version from Rawl. B 502.

The C version, judging from its place in the MS. possibly derives from the lost twelfth-century MS., the Book of Glendalough (see RIA Cat., p. 3424).   Whether this be so or not, it is closely related to the Rawlinson text, but is clearly independent.[1]   Since the Rawlinson MS. is to be dated to c. 1125, the ancestral copy from which both derive would probably date from the eleventh century, possibly even earlier.   The edited text is based on Rawlinson, only because the orthography of that MS. is older: where the MSS. differ essentially the reading of the later MS. is of equal weight with the earlier.

In editing *Cétamon* I have kept close to the MS. As in my edition of the Blathmac poems, I have tried to eliminate the early modern spellings, but have not attempted to impose an archaic orthography on the text, except in a few cases in order to emphasise a point, or to make a rhyme or assonance immediately obvious. The text has suffered by successive scribes who dropped letters, syllables, words, sometimes whole phrases. Where possible in such cases the text has been emended, the additions being shown by square brackets and discussed in the notes.

To summarise: *Cétamon* is hardly later than the early seventh century, and possibly belongs to the sixth. *Tánic sam* is an imitation

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[1] In investigating the problem of the contents of the lost Book of Glendalough one is so frequently led to Rawl. B 502 that the question must inevitably arise as to whether the Rawlinson MS. is, in fact, a fragment of the other. It is impossible to discuss this matter here, and it must suffice to say that there seems to be decisive evidence against this. We may regard them as two contemporary and closely related Leinster manuscripts.

of *Cétamon*, possibly two centuries later. The association of the poems (and of the others published in Meyer's *Four Songs*) with the Fionn cycle appears to be old. These poems are a type of nature poetry belonging exclusively to the native tradition, and would appear to owe nothing to Christian influences. Indeed, the supernatural, whether of the pagan or Christian variety, is completely ignored in all of Meyer's *Four Songs*. This fact, and others, suggest that it will be necessary to revise current views on the monastic origin of early Irish nature poetry.

Edited texts

II *Cétamon*

1. Cétamon
    caín rée,
    rosaír and
        cucht [crann];
    canait luin
    laíd láin
    díambi laí
        gaí gann.

2. Gairid caí
    c[h]rúaid den:
    'Is fo-c[h]en
        sam saír';
    suidig[thir]
    síne serb
    imme-c[h]erb
        caill craíb.

3. Cerbaid sam
    súaill sruth,
    saigid graig
        lúath linn;
    lethaid folt
    fota fraích,
    for-beir canach
        fann finn.

4. Fúabair osgell
    scéill shigien,
    imm-reith réid
        rían rith;
    ré i cuirither
    sál súan,
    tuigithir
        bláth bith.

Diplomatic texts

II *Cétamon*

[1] Cettemain cain ree rosai rand
    cucht canait luin laid lain dia
    mbeith lai gai gann // sair suidig[1]
[2] Gairid cai cruaid dean isfocen samh
    sine serb imme cerb caill craib // aig luath
[3] Cearbaid sam suaillsruth saigid gr
    linn. lethaid folt foda fraích[2] forbrid
    canach fann finn // riænrith renacui
[4] Fuabair osgell sceill shigien imrid reid
    rither sal suan tuigithir[3] blath inbith

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[1] In the diplomatic texts of II and III the *cenn fo eite* is represented by two oblique parallel strokes.
[2] A point is inserted to divide *foda* and *fraích*.
[3] The second *i* is written below the line as a correction.

5. Berait beich
   (becc a nert)
   bert bond,
      bochta[i] bláith;
   berid búar
   slaibre slíab,
   feraid seng
      saidbir sáith.

6. Seinim crot
   caille céol
   con-gre[i]nn séol
      síd slán;
   sétair denn
   do cach dinn,
   dé do loch
      linn lán.

7. Labraid tragna,
   trén bard,
   canaid ess
      n-ard n-úa[r];
   fáilte dó
   [ó] linn té,
   tánic lúach
      fria lúad.

8. Lengait faindle
   fanna súas;
   imma-s[h]oich crúas
      cíuil cróich;
   for-beir mes
   máeth med
   innisid
      loth lóith.

9. Léig lath,
   fath fég,
   fér tar caín
      caí crúaid;
   cuirithir
   íasc brecc bedc,
   is balc gedc,
      láith lúaith.

10. Losaid fér,
    for-beir óg,
    má bód
       mBreg mbras;
    cain cach caille
    caindlech clár,
    cain cach mag
       már mas.

[5] Beraid beich beg an*e*rt b*e*rt bond bochta
        blaith b*e*rid buarslaib resliab fera
        id seng saidbir saith // án siadair
[6] Seiñ crot caille céol *congren*n seol sid sl
        dean*n* dacach din*n* dé do loch línn lai*n*
[7] Lab̄r tragna trén[1] bard canaid eas
        na*r*d nua failti dolin*n* te tanic luac*h*
        ra luad // ciuil croich foirbrid
[8] Lingid fain*n*le fan*n*a fuas imasoich[2] *cr*uas
        mes mæth med in*n*isid loth loíth.
[9] Leig lath fath feig ferta*r* cain cai c*h*ruaid
        cuirither iasg ṁbrecc mbedg isbalc
        gedg lait*h* luaith // reg mbras caín
[10] Losaid fer foirbrig og*h* mabuaid mbr
        cach caille coi*n*nle[3] clar cain cac*h* mag má*r* mas

[1] The mark of length is over the *t*. There seems to be a point between *e* and *n*.
[2] The second *i* is written below the line as a correction.
[3] *cle* with *o*inn inserted between *c* and *l* over *caret* mark.

11. Mell dag rée,
    ru-an gáith
        garb gam;
    gel cach ros,
    ruirthech síd,
        subach sam.

12. Suidi[g]thir
    íall én
        amil en;
    buirrithir
    gort glas
    i mbí bras
        glas gel.

13. Greit mer [f]ort
    imrimm ech
    imma-sernar
        sreth slúag;
    ro-sáerad crann
    gel is-tír
    co ní di ór
        eilestair úad.

14. Ecal fer
    fann fet,
    il fo-cain
        ard ucht;
    uisse ús menn
    imma-c[h]ain:
    "Cétamon cain
        cíuin cucht."

[11] Mell dag ree ruan gaith garb gam gel
     cach ros toirtech sidh subach samh
[12] Suidither ialen amilean buirither gort glas
     ambi bras glas geal // sluaig rosærad
[13] Greid mer ort imrim each imasernar sreth
     crand geal istir conidór eilestar uad
[14] Egal fer fann fedil focaín aird ucht uisi
     us menn imacoin cetteman caín ciuin cucht .c.

III *Tánic sam.*

1. Tánic sam
   slán sóer
   díambi clóen
       caill chíar
   (lingid ag
   seng snéid)
   díambi réid
       rón rían.

2. Canaid cuí
   céol mbinn mbláith
   díambi súan
       sáim séim;
   lengait éoin
   cíuin crúaich
   ocus daim
       lúaith léith.

III *Tánic sam*

Rawl. B 502, fol. 107a

[1] Tanic sam slan soer.   diaṁbicloen caill ciar.   lingid ag seng
       sneíd
    diaṁbíreid rón rían. // eoin ciuin cruaich. ⁊daim luaith leith
[2] Canaid cuy.   ceol ṁbind ṁblaith diambí suan saim sneid.
       lengait

3. Foss n-oss
   ro-gab tess,
   gáir dess
       cass cúan;
   tibid trácht,
   find fonn
   díambi lond
       ler lúath.

4. Fúam ngáeth
   baeth barr
   dairi duib
       druin daill;
   rethid graig
   máel múad
   díambi dín
       Cúan Caill.

5. Maidid glass
   for cach luss,
   bilech doss
       dairi glaiss;
   tánic sam,
   ro-fáith gaim,
   gonit coin
       cuilinn chaiss.

6. Canaid lon
   dron dord
   díambi orbb
       caille cerbb;
   súanaid ler
   lonn líac,
   fo-ling íach
       brec bedc.

7. Tibid grían
   dar cach tír;
   dedlai lím,
       fri[s]-sil snom;
   gáirit coin,
   dáilit daim,
   for-berat brain,
       tánic sam.

[3] Foss noss rogab tess. gair dess cass cuan. tibid tracht find fonn
diambilonn ler luath. // muad. diambi din cuan caill

[4] Fuam ngæth bæth barr. dairi duib druindaill.[1] rethid graig mǽl

[5] Maidid glass forcachlus. bilech doss daire glaiss. tanic sam ro fáith gaim. gonit coin cuilinn caiss // foling iach brec bedc

[6] Canaid lon dron dord. diambi forbb[2] caill cerb. suanaid ler lonn liac

[7] Tibid grian darcachtir. dedlaid lim frisil snon. garit coin dáilit daim. forbrit brain tanic sam. t.

RIA MS. C III 2, fol. 10a

// lingi aghseng

[1] Tanuig samh slan saor diambiclaon caill chiar
sneid. diambireidh ron rian // saimh sneidh

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[1] There are two dots under the final i of *dairi* and under the first d of *druindaill*.
[2] There is a *punctum delens* under *f*.

[2] Canuid cui ceol mbin*n* mblait*h*. diambi suan
    leangaid eoin ciuin cruaic*h*. ⅂daim luat*h* léim
[3] Foss noss rogab*h* tess. gair dess cas cuan. tibe
    tr*acht* fon*n*. diampi lond lear luat*h* // reit*h*ig*h* graig*h*
[4] Fuam ga*o*t*h* ba*o*t*h* barr. daire duib*h* druin daill
    maol muad*h*. diama[1] din cuan caill // tan*aic* sam*h* ro
[5] Muid*h*e glas f*or*gach lus. bilech dos daire glais
    faid*h* gaim*h*. goinid*h* coin qilin*n* kis // aig*h* ler
[6] Canait lon dord diambi f*or*bb caille cerb. sua*n*
    lond liag. foli*ng* iach brecc bedc // gairit coi*n*
[7] Tibig*h* grian dag*a*ctir. dedlai lim*h* frisil sno*m* *no* son
    dailit daim*h*. f*or*brit brai*n* tan*aic* sam*h*. T.

Translation of II, III.

II   *Cétamon*

1.   Lovely season of May! Most noble then is the colour of trees;
blackbirds sing a full lay, when the shaft of day is slender.

2.   The vigorous harsh cuckoo calls: "Welcome to noble Summer";
subdued is the bitter weather that caused the branching wood to
dwindle.

3.   Summer causes the tiny stream to dwindle; the speedy horses
seek a pool; the long tresses of heather spread out; delicate white
bog-cotton flourishes.

4.   . . . the sea runs smoothly; at a time when sea sleeps, blossom
covers the world.

5.   Bees of little strength carry a foot-load—flowers were reaped;
the mountain-pasture takes the cattle; the ant fetches a rich
sufficiency.

6.   The music of the woodland is like the playing of harps; the
melody brings perfect peace; a haze rises from every hill-fortress,
a mist from the full-pooled lake.

7.   The corncrake utters—powerful bard! The cool high waterfall
sings; there is welcome to him (Summer) from the warm pool; reward
has come for their praise.

8.   Graceful swallows fly upwards; harsh music plays about the
height; fruit increases, soft weight . . .

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[1] *diama* written above the line.

D

9.   The marsh is beautiful, see the covering: there is grass growing across a fine hard path; the speckled fish jumps, stout is the fly— swift warriors.

10.   Grass abounds, fullness. flourishes, Brega is still more ex- cellent; beautiful the luminous expanse of every woodland, lovely every great beautiful plain.

11.   Fine time of delights; the rough wind of winter has ceased; every wood is bright, peace abounds, summer is full of joy.

12.   A bird-flock settles . . . a green field, with a bright strong stream, burgeons.

13.   A wild ardour comes on you for horse-racing where a great crowd is stretched out in a line; the white tree has been ennobled in the land, receiving from him (Summer) something of the gold of flag-iris.

14.   The timid lad of weak whistles (now) sings a paean of triumph with puffed-out breast; fitting are the tidings that he announces clearly: "Beautiful and quiet is the colour of May".

III   *Tánic sam*

1.   Noble and perfect summer has come, that makes the dark wood bend (the swift slender stag leaps), that makes smooth the path of seals.

2.   The cuckoo sings a sweet smooth song that brings easy gentle sleep; the birds leap to the quiet hill, and the swift grey stags make a leap.

3.   Heat has seized the shelter of the deer; there is a fine har- monious cry of dog-packs. The strand smiles, fair land that is wont to anger the swift sea.

4.   There is a subdued rustle in the wild top of the stout dark black oakgrove; sleek well-bred herds of horses run, that are wont to find shelter in Caill Cúan.

5.   Every plant bursts out in green; the bush in the green oakwood is full of leaves; summer has come, winter has gone; twisted hollies wound the hound.

6.   The blackbird, inheritor of the thorny wood, sings a bold song; the fierce cliffed sea sleeps, the speckled salmon leaps.

7.   The sun smiles over every land; the edge will cleave, it will strike the bark.   Hounds cry out, stags gather, ravens increase, summer has come.

Notes to II and III

The differences between the present texts and translations and those of Meyer and Murphy are considerable.   The matter of space dictates that such differences should not always be discussed, and the reader is referred to Meyer's edition and translations in *Four Songs*.   Murphy's edition of *Cétamon* (*Ériu* xvii) has some very good ideas to offer, and these are referred to.   But it would be pointless to discuss certain details that are based on a metrical view of the text that has been rejected above.

II.   *Cétamon*

1 a. *Cétamon*. Two different forms are given in the manuscript: *cettemain* here, and *cetteman*, §14.   Many of the older exx. show a broad *t*, e.g. *denn céttamun* (see *Contribb.*, where it is stated that the word is indeclinable in the older language).   I suggest that *Cétamon* is originally the genitive of *Cétam (< *cét* + *sam*); cf. *Mithem*, 'June' (*mid* + *sam*), an *n*-stem, gen. *Mithemon*, BDD 17.   If so, *cétam* (<*cét*+*sam*) would have a phonetic *t*, not *d*, as in the Early Modern examples.   *Céitemain* (*Céd-*) would then be a secondary nom. formed from the dat., and influenced in form by *céite*, assembly.   The word *Samain*, '1 Nov'., would seem to have a similar history.   In the present text *Cétamon* here and in §14 is taken as genitive.

d. [*crann*].   In transcribing this type of alliterative verse the dropping of words through homoioteleuton is a natural danger.   The metre shows that a monosyllabic word has been dropped between *cucht* and *canait*.   The missing word should begin with *c* and rhyme with *gann*.   Experiment shows only two possibilities, *crann* 'tree', and *cland*, 'plant'.   The former seems more probable and compare the use of the idea of the 'nobility' of the colour of a tree in §14 (see note).

g. *díambi* (*dia mbeith* MS.).   The emendation is based on the occurrence of *díambi* in III § 1 cg, where, however, *dia* is analysed differently.   Note that the alliteration passes over *díambi* (*dia mbeith*).   In terms of the present metrical analysis of this poem we have to regard the present form as possessing metrical stress; we may compare *fria lúad* § 7 h which counts metrically as two stresses, but where *lúad* alliterates with the preceding *lúach*.   Compare further *narop lond* (two stresses) I §6, where alliteration (*liumm*) passes over *narop*; similarly in *ar mo chiunn* alliteration (*coí*) passes over *ar*, I §8.

The word-order is poetic.   In prose we would expect *díambi gann gai laí*, lit. 'when the shaft of day is slight (= at daybreak)'.   Compare (significantly, perhaps, in a nature context) *díamba folt crín samraid* which probably corresponds with a prose *díambi crín folt samraid*, 'when summer's foliage is withered', *Scéla Cano*, ed. Binchy, p. 18, note p. 36.   The present text supports Binchy's suggestion that *día* = when, and that *díamba* = *díambi*.

Note that in *Gramm.* (p. 180) Thurneysen hesitates between *laï* (disyllabic) and *laí* as gs. of *lae, laa, láa*, day. The rhyme here favours *laí*.

2 b. *den*. I have followed Murphy (who followed Jackson) in translating 'vigorous', but like many such poetic adjectives, the exact meaning is not clear (see Murphy's note). There seems to be a reluctance to use this adj. in the plural.

e. *suidig[thir]*. The metre shows that a syllable has been lost. Note that *suidig* occurs at the end of a line; the missing syllable could have been expressed by a single letter (*t* with suspension stroke).

f. *sine serb*. The genitive precedes the word upon which it depends; the adj. *serb* is used substantively.

g. *imme-c[h]erb*: 3 sg. pret. rel. of *imm-cerba*, cuts. Neither Meyer nor Murphy noted that this was a compound verb, and it is not given in *Contribb.* Murphy (EIL, glossary) associated *cerb* with the adj. *cerb(-p)*, but the rhyme with *serb* is against this. The RIA *Contribb.* have not quite worked out the confusion of *cerbb-, cerb(h)-, cirb(h)*, etc.

4 ab. Meyer emended *osgell* to *boscell*, a glossary word for 'doe' (*eilit*) or 'madman' (*geilt*), which he then interpreted as 'panic'. *scéill* was taken as acc. of *ciall*, with prosthetic *s*; *shigien* was emended to *sidin* 'deer' (see *Contribb.* s.v. *sideng*). He translated 'Panic startles the heart of the deer'. Murphy re-writes: *Fúapair sceith scell sciach*, translating 'Sprouting comes to the bud of the hawthorn'. All this is more than dubious, but Meyer may be right in seeing an oblique form of *ciall* behind MS *sceill* (: *réid*), but there is no support for the use of prosthetic *s* in this word. Apart from the addition of accents, I have left the text as it stands in the manuscript, but cannot attempt a translation. The first letter of *osgell* which, with Meyer and Murphy, I have taken as *o*, could be a badly formed *d*.

cd. *imrid réid rian rith*, 'The smooth sea runs apace', Meyer; *imreith réid rian rith*, 'The ocean flows a smooth course', Murphy. According to Murphy (who is followed here) the adj. *réid* qualifies *rith*. The prose word-order would be: *imm-reith rían rith réid*. Note that the reading of the MS. would permit an interpretation *ri* (= *fri*) *aen rith*, 'at a single bound', which may well be the correct interpretation.

e. *ré i cuirither*. (*rena* ... MS.) Murphy drops *rena*, and reads an absolute *cuirithir*. This is unconvincing metrically since it destroys the alliterative connection with the preceding line. *rena* is here taken as Mid. Ir. for O.I. *ré i*. For -*cuirither*, where -*cuirethar* might be expected, cf. *do-cuirither*, BDD[2] l. 1125.

h. *bláth bith*. So Murphy for MS. *inbith* (or *mbith*?). If the article were there we would expect *in mbith*. I suggest that the scribe's exemplar had *mbith*, and that *bláth* was treated scribally as accusative. Somewhere in the scribal tradition of this poem passive verbs were made to take the accusative e.g. *frith in mbradan* 'the salmon was found', in the prose preceding the poem (Laud 610, 120[a], l. 4). This was extended by analogy to deponent verbs as in *cuirither iasg mbrecc mbedg*, §9. For other examples of the use of the acc. after passive verbs see *Poems of Blathmac*, p. 115, note 45.

5 d. Meyer and Murphy took *bochta[i]* as a past participle; taken here as pret. pass. pl.

f. *slaibre slíab*. Murphy saw that MS. *slaib re* was to be taken as *slaibre*; he emended to *slabrai*, omitting *buar*. Thus *berid slabrai slíab*, 'the mountain ... carries off the cattle'.

slaibre (better, perhaps, *slabrae*) is taken here as a genitive preceding the noun on which it depends. Literally *slíab slaibre* = 'the mountain of (cattle-)

stock', that is, mountain pasture that could be used only in summer. Cf. placename *Slaibre*, TBC² p. 6.

g. *seng* 'ant' (= *sengán*) appears to be unique, and is not included in *Contribb*.

6 a. *seinim*: *seinnid*, Meyer, Murphy. *seinim* is a more logical extension of the suspension stroke than *sein*nid, and makes excellent sense; suspension rarely begins with a consonant.

ef. *sétair*. Thurneysen was tempted to see in *siatair* (*siadair* MS.) an old pret. of *saidid* (*ZCP* xvi, p. 274) but virtually withdrew this view, *Grammar*, p. 427. Murphy solved the difficulty: "I take *siadair* to be a modern spelling of a hitherto uninstanced 'strong' *séitid* 'blows', conjugated with alternation of *é* and *ia* such as appears in *tíagu* . . .". Since *séitid* is consistently treated as a weak verb, this form may be taken as evidence of the antiquity of the poem. A strong conjugation of *séitid* is not, however, uninstanced. In the archaic poem *Fo réir Coluim cén ad-fías* there is a line *curcan tar sal sephthais cloth* (Nat. Lib. MS. G 50, p. 110), to be read with O'Mulconry's Glossary, §276, as *curchán tar sál septais* (better *sephtus*) *clō*, 'a wind blew the curraghs across the sea', where *septais* is a reduplicated pret. of *séitid* followed by a pl. suffixed pronoun (*curchán* is npl. See note on *énán, Poems of Blathmac*, p. 155).

Murphy translates (omitting *cach*) "dust is blown from dwelling-place and haze from lake full of water". The translation is not quite satisfactory. *denn* does not mean 'dust' here, and the presence of the mist characterizes May, not its absence. For *ceó Cétamain* and *denn Céttamun* see *Contribb*. s.v. *céitemain*.

The archaic *sétair*, with *é* for later *ia*, is restored here on the basis of a probable rough rhyme with *dé do*.

7 a. *Labraid*. A non-deponent form of this verb is found in the Milan glosses, and we need not doubt that the deponent was already weakened in popular usage in the eighth century, if not earlier. Here we could, if absolutely necessary, read *labrithir*, extending the suspension stroke of the MS. as *-ithir*. Another possibility is to emend to *labar* 'eloquent'.

d. *n-úa[r]*. A letter has been dropped. The possibilities are *úag* and *úar*. Meyer and Murphy chose the former. The latter is a more obvious and definite epithet of a waterfall, and there may be a deliberate antithesis with *linn té* below. Cf. Pokorny, *ZCP* 27, p. 326.

gh. Meyer *tánic lúachra lúad* 'The talk of the rushes is come', and similarly Murphy. The present metrical analysis rules out *lúachra* which, in any case, did not give very good sense. With the present interpretation the coming of summer is presented with images drawn from the Irish social scene. The corncrake and the waterfall are poets praising and welcoming summer—they must be paid for their praise.

In this whole stanza we could, with metrical advantage, restore *n-ór*, *lód*, giving rhymes with *dó, lóg* (*lúach*).

8 a. *Lengait* for MS. *Lingid*. The emendation is supported by *lengait* III, §2, a stanza having a general correspondence with the present.

b. *súas* for MS. *fuas*. Meyer and Murphy accepted *fuas* as a unique form (see Murphy's note). I prefer to emend, since *fuas*, otherwise unsupported, could have come about by a simple scribal blunder, continuing the alliteration. The emendation provides alliteration for *-shoich* which otherwise stands outside the alliterative system: *s* and *sh* can apparently alliterate in earlier verse, a matter which I hope to discuss elsewhere. Otherwise one would read *imasoich* as *immus-soich*, with a feminine infix.

As given in the text the infixed pronoun is neuter, anticipating the feminine *cróich* (see *Gramm.*, p. 226.)

fgh. *med* 'weight', less likely for *mét* 'size'. Murphy follows Meyer in emending to *méth* 'rich', but emendation should not be resorted to when the general context is unclear. For *innisid* I have no suggestion. One expects two words, the first probably beginning with *m*, the second rhyming with *med* or with *maeth*. Murphy, while accepting *cróich* as = *crúaich*, treats the rhyming word as *loíth*. It is true that in the MS. the mark of length is over the *i* rather than the *o*. This is hardly important. If we accept *cróich* = *crúaich*, which I think we must (cf. *crúaich*: *lúaith* in an analogous stanza III, §2) we must also take *loíth* as = *lúaith*.

9 a–d. The present interpretation and those of Meyer and Murphy differ considerably. In *caí* (here 'path') both saw the word for cuckoo, with consequent differing interpretations of the preceding words (Meyer emending *fertar* to *ferthair*, Murphy reading *fert ar-caín*, but failing to interpret the first word). Here I have accepted Murphy's interpretation of *léig* (*Ériu* xvii, p. 95), and with Meyer taken *fath* as 'garment', 'covering'. In the present interpretation the lines present a series of closely related images (marsh . . . covering . . . grass . . . path). The emendation of *fēig* to *fēg* (ipv. 2 sg. of *fégaid*) involves merely the substitution of one permissible verbal form (*fég*) for another (*féig*). The MS. adoption of *fēig* may have been due to the influence of the neighbouring *lēig*. The *aicill* rhyme with *fēr* seems to be decisive. Notice the comparable use of a second person pronoun in § 13.

f. For MS. *mbrecc* see note on *bláth bith*, §4 h.

g. *gedc*. The word *gedc* is found only in *connach mó bolc iná gedc*, *Contribb.*, where it means 'so that his belly be no bigger than that of a *gedc*', showing that the *gedc* was something proverbially insignificant. In the present instance the salmon and the 'stout' *gedc* are grouped as 'swift warriors' in the same action: it would appear that it can only mean 'fly' 'gnat'; in the present context it probably refers to the mayfly. Compare the family name *Huí Gedcáin*, O'Brien, *Corpus Gen.*, p. 33.

10 b. *for-beir*: in MS. *foirbrig* (= *foirbrid*). Cf. *forbrid* (text *for-beir*) § 3 g, *forbrit* (text *for-berat*, emendation supported by alliteration III §7 g).

bc. *óg*: *bód*. It would appear that in archaic O.I. the word for 'victory' was *bód*. Hence the adj. *búadach* (never *búaidech*). Thurneysen says of the adjectival form 'In derivatives of *i*-stems both -*ach* and -*ech* are found', but the only example of -*ach* quoted is *búadach* (*Gramm.*, p. 222). Cf. *Caín srū*, *Esrū*, *boad ban*, O'Brien, *Corpus Gen.*, p. 7, l. 3: *Eochu Buaid* (leg. *Buad*) = *Eochu Buadach*, rhyming with *sluaig* (leg. *sluag*), *ibid.*, p. 6, l. 6. Thurneysen says (*Gramm.* p. 191): "It is doubtful if *búade* is occasionally gen. sg., not gen. pl., of *búaid* neut. 'victory'; see Wb. 24ª17, Fél." *búade* is possibly gen. sg. of an old *a*-stem; if *bód* was a fem. *ā*-stem the *m* of *mBreg* would be secondary.

11 a. *Mell dag rée* I take as = 'Fine (*dag*) time of delights' with *Mell* as a gen. pl. preceding the noun on which it depends. *dag* gives a perfect internal rhyme with -*an*, and is used independently instead of in composition, as in *treaba dagha*, (*Amra Chon Roí*, *Ériu* II, 4). Meyer, followed by Murphy, emended to *Meldach*. The present stanzas consists of six instead of eight phrases, but there is no other indication of loss of text.

e. *ruirthech* (*toirtech* MS.) *síd*. The MS. reading ('fruitful is peace' or 'fruitful is the mound') is not quite satisfactory, and *toirtech* stands outside the alliterative pattern. The emendation gives alliteration with the initial

of *ros* and a rough internal rhyme with *subach*; cf. *ruirthech rían* in the associated poem *Scél lemm dúib* (Meyer, *Four Songs*, p. 14).

12 c. *amil en* is unintelligible. Murphy's *i n-iath i mbí ben* is dubious; similarly Meyer's *immedōn len*. Since some words have apparently been dropped interpretation seems hopeless.

13 a. *[f]ort* (*ort* MS.). The alliterative pattern suggests that the *f* is silent. Cf. *raid rimm* (= *frimm*) where apparent alliteration with *Ruiri* presents a similar problem, O'Brien, *Corpus. Gen.*, p. 5.

e–h. *ro-sáerad . . . úad.* The white tree (that is, the snow-covered tree of winter) has now been ennobled by summer, receiving something of the golden colour of flag-iris. *gel is-tír* apparently makes a rough rime with *eilestair*; for *ní* we might restore *niu*, apparently the older dative; in the poem as originally composed there would apparently be rhyme between *slóg*: *ór*: *ód*.

14 a. *fer* 'lad'. *fer* 'man', *ben* 'woman' can apparently be used for 'bird', and without definition no particular species seems to be indicated. Compare: *rinn binn buide fir duib druin* 'musical yellow bill of a firm black lad' (apparently the blackbird), Murphy *EIL*, p. 6; *ben a lleinn co londath*, 'a woman in blackbird-coloured cloak', ibid. p. 10; *Céola fer mbrundederg forglan*, 'The music of bright red-breasted lads', ibid., p. 16 (following the MS. and rejecting Murphy's re-writing and translation).

c. *il.* The word is a hapax legomenon. Cf. *ilach.*

d. *ard* (*aird* MS.) *ucht.* Dative without preposition.

e. *ús* 'tidings': see *Contribb.* s.v. *aus.* The word may be an abstract based on *áu*, 'ear'.

III. *Tánic sam*

1 cd., gh. *díambí clóen caill chíar . . . díambí réid rón rían.* For *díambí* see II §1 g., note, and below §2 c, §3 g, §4 g, §6 c. In every case in the present poem Meyer read *dia mbí* taking *mbí* as the substantive verb. O'Connor and Greene see the copula in *díambí lonn ler luath*, §3 gh, *díambí forbb caill cherb*, § 6 cd; in the remaining examples they see the substantive verb. But I can see no reason for distinguishing *dia mbí clóen caill chíar* (subst. verb) from *díambí lonn ler lúath* (copula). Furthermore word-order is no guide in poems such as this. O'Connor and Greene read *dia mbí súan sáim réid*, 2 cd. But even here we may have an instance of poetic word-order of the type *díamba folt crín samraid* (see II §1 g, note); it is uncertain whether or not alliteration is intended between *bláith* and *-bi*. Here I print every example as if it were the copula. It is possible that we have in these cases a late poetic reflection of a period when the substantive verb and copula were not distinguished.

2 cd. *súan sáim séim* [MS. *sneid*], 'easy gentle sleep'. The primary meaning of *snéid* is 'swift', and, even allowing for the looseness with which poetic adjectives are used, it is not very suitable. Meyer misread *réid*, and is followed by Greene and O'Connor. I suggest *séim* (which maintains alliteration) and that *sneid* in the common exemplar of both MSS. was due to its occurrence in the preceding stanza (in its primary meaning 'swift').

3 cd. *gáir dess cass cúan.* Meyer takes the adj. *cass* as qualifying *cúan*: 'The lovely cry of the curly packs'. But *cass* (here translated 'harmonious.') can be an attribute of music: *cas cor cuirther* 'lively the tune that is played', Murphy, EIL, p. 6. In reference to music *cass* 'twisted' probably connotes the harmony of voices and instruments.

4 a–d. *Fūam ngāeth [m]baeth barr*
    dairi duib Drum Daill

'A sound of playful breezes in the tops of a black oakwood is Druim Daill' (Meyer).

Meyer miscopied *druin* as *Drum*, thus giving rise to an impossible place-name. Greene and O'Connor emended *barr* to *i mbruig*, and Meyer's *Drum* to *Druim*, translating 'There is a noise of wanton winds in the palace of the oakwood of Drumdell'.

ngáeth is not to be taken as 'of winds'. It is the adj. *gáeth* 'wise', forming an antithesis to *báeth* 'foolish', 'wanton'. Now that it is summer the noise in the branches of the dark oakgrove is 'wise', that is, 'subdued', as opposed to the wild and wanton sounds in winter. *Fúam ngáeth báeth barr* is to be taken as a copula sentence. Literally 'The wanton top is a wise noise'; Meyer's emendation of *bāeth* to *mbāeth* is incorrect. Note also that *dall* 'blind' is used, as often, in the sense 'dark'.

6 d. The MSS. differ: *caill cerb* R, *caille cerb* C. The latter, as the more difficult reading, is probably correct. *cerb* is taken as the adj. 'cutting', 'lacerating', used substantivally in the meaning 'thorniness', and preceded by its dependent noun. Cf. *sine serb*, II §2.

fg. *ler . . . líac* 'cliffed sea'. Meyer, followed by Greene and O'Connor, emended to *líach*, translating 'sad sea' ('weary sea', Greene and O'Connor). The emendation is not supported by C which has *liag*. I prefer to keep to the MSS., despite the bad rhyme. If we were to emend I would suggest reading *ler . . . líg* 'glittering sea'; *líg: íach* would be possible in a poem permitting consonance as a substitute for *aicill* rhyme. For *líg* referring to water note *Liphe líg* 'glittering Liffey', Meyer, *Hail Brigit*, p. 12.

7 c. *dedlai̦ lim*. Meyer read *dedlaid lim* 'a parting for me', with the suggestion of reading *dedail* for *dedlaid*. The metre, however, suggests that *lim = lím* (: *tír*). *dedlai* (*dedlaid, dedlai* MSS.) is, perhaps, 3 sg. fut. of *dlongaid* 'cleaves'. No translation is quite satisfactory.

d. *fri sil snon* 'from the brood of *cares' (Meyer), the asterisk indicating doubt. Greene and O'Connor re-write *fri sin sal*, 'to bad weather'. *fris-sil* is 3 sg. fut. of *fris-slig*, 'smites' (?). For the last word we have three variants: *snon*, Rawl., *snom* or *son*, C. *snom* (see *Contribb.* s.v. *snob, snom, snomad*), 'bark' seems to be the best reading. In *snom: gam* we may have a substitution of consonance for rhyme; certain examples in the poems in the Leinster genealogies and other archaic sources suggest that this is possible, even in the case of a main systematic rhyme. In one of Luccreth moccu Chíara's poems *Dáil* (= later *Daoil*) rhymes with *arrchiúir* (*ZCP* viii, p. 308, 1. 7). The reference in these lines would appear to be to the cutting of wood in summer to supply winter fuel.

APPENDIX

1.   Some accentual verse-types

The study of archaic rhythmical verse has been overshadowed by that of the regular syllabic metres. Both Meyer in his *Primer of Irish Metrics* and Murphy in his *Early Irish Metrics* have all but ignored the subject. Calvert Watkins in his 'Indo-European metrics and archaic Irish verse'[1] has in the main restricted himself to an investigation of the popular heptasyllabic line with trisyllabic ending. The latter's views and those advanced here seem to be mutually exclusive. The whole matter requires more intensive study; but meanwhile, in the hope of stimulating discussion, comment will be made on certain metrical patterns that can be observed in archaic material; attention will be called to corresponding patterns existing in the later tradition, where such have been casually noted. There appears to be a particularly close affinity between the accentual poetry of the sixth and preceding centuries, and the popular songs of comparatively recent times. The continuity is meagrely shown in the medieval manuscript tradition, but must have been uninterrupted at a popular level. The view taken here is that strict syllable count-ing began in the early seventh century : despite some fine achieve-ments in this form, it was an upper-class aberration; it lasted for more than a millenium. Looking over the entire range of Irish poetry we can distinguish three types: old accentual verse, syllabic regulari-zations and developments of the ancient metres (*nuachrotha*), and popular songs and poems of the last four centuries. These last descend directly from the old and natural tradition, and owe little if anything to the intervening artificiality.

A large part of archaic verse can be made to fall into two classes, the first of which may be called 'four-phrased', the second 'eight-phrased'. Each class may be sub-divided into three separate types according to whether the final word of each half stanza is mono-syllabic, disyllabic, or trisyllabic.[2] A third class will be added which we may call 'miscellaneous'. Further observation will doubt-less extend the range of types and involve changes in classification.[3] Examples are mostly, but not exclusively, taken from the Leinster poems[4] as given in O'Brien's *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* and

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[1] *Celtica* vi, pp. 195–249.

[2] The division of certain stanzas into eight 'phrases' is of use in the investigation of structure. But, as will be seen from certain comments at the end of this section, it has sometimes only a temporary empirical validity.

[3] So little research has been done on archaic and modern metres that some of the comments made here must be regarded as tentative and experimental.

[4] General references to the 'Leinster poems' are, of course, to those showing archaic structure, and not to the occasional stanzas in syllabic metres such as those in *Corpus*, pp. 44–5.

from Thurneysen's edition of the surviving fragments of the verse of Colmán mac Lénéni (c. 530–606), *ZCP* 19, pp. 117–204.

I   (a)   1.   Ruiri flatha / Fer Benn[1]
                 bāidis tríunu·/ tuath tenn (*Corpus*, p. 5).

         2.   Poem I above (*Sét no tíag*).

I   (b)   1.   Ardmac rīg / romac Nesa
                 nenaisc īatha / f̈er Fēne (Meyer *ÄID* II, 28 = *ALI* iv,
                       p. 346)[2]
         2.   Nī sēim anim / i n-anmib āne
                 ār for / Aed Slāne.   (*ZCP* 19, 201).

I   (c)   Luin oc elaib / ungi oc dīrnaib,
                 crotha ban n-athech / oc rōdaib rīgnaib,
                 rīg oc Domnall, / dord oc aidbse,
                 adand oc caindill, / calg oc mo chailgse[3] (*ZCP* 19,
                       p. 198).

Compare I(c) with:

           A Dhomhnaill Óig / má théighir thar fairrge
           Beir mé féin leat / as ná déin do dhearmad,
           As béidh agat féirín / lá aonaigh is margaidh
           As inghean ríogh Gréige / mar chéile leabtha agat.[4]

This type of verse is close to the common Germanic type where the line consists of four stresses, a caesura after the second stressed word, and each part of the line joined by alliteration. We may see another survival into the modern period in the *caoineadh* metre where the line consists of four stressed syllables, a caesura after the second, and each part of the line joined by horizontal rhyme, e.g.

           Mo chreach is mo léun thú / 'Bhéul Átha na Cairrge
           tairnig do ré / ó thréigis h'annsacht.[5]

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[1] The caesura is shown by a single oblique stroke.

[2] I print *īatha fer* for Meyer's *iathu fer*. The neut. acc. pl. may cause lenition (*Gramm.*, p. 143. § 4). This interpretation is supported by the alliterative pattern.

[3] There are some textual difficulties which, since they do not affect the metrical pattern, need not concern us here. Medial consonant groups in final rhyming words (and elsewhere when there are metrical indications) are underlined in black type. In verse dating from the sixth century disyllabic words with a medial cluster of consonants, generally resulting from syncope, are to be treated as trisyllabic. Hence in line-endings of a number of the Leinster poems trisyllabic words with simple medial consonance (*Lóegaire, Muiredach, Éremón, Augaine*, etc.) are metrical equivalents of *ardrig, Labraid*, etc. Words of the latter type are found occasionally with the medial vowel expressed: *Carmain* LL = *Caramain* BB, Meyer ÄID II, p. 22, *archoin* Rawl. B 502 = *aracoin* BB, *Corpus*, p. 73. Trisyllabic words which have lost a vowel through syncope are always metrically trisyllabic, e.g. *daurgrāinne*, *Corpus*, p. 19. See below, p. 72.

[4] *Duanaire Gaedhilge*, Róis Ní Ógáin (1921), p. 46.

[5] *Poems on the O'Reillys*, ed. James Carney (1950), p. 139.

In the remote prehistoric period rhyme would hardly have existed as a systematic feature of verse; indeed, it is absent in a functional sense in what are probably the oldest of the Leinster poems. The two parts of the line would have been joined by alliteration, and similarly every line to the line preceding, and the poem would have been closed by a formal echo of the opening word or phrase. This, apart from the usual presence of rhyme, is the normal position in most of the early verse that has survived, although alliteration, where we expect it, is sometimes disconcertingly absent. As Irish poetry developed rhyme made continual inroads on the function of alliteration. When accentual metres reappear in manuscripts, from the sixteenth century onwards, alliteration may be found as a natural ornament, but it is never functional: it has been completely replaced by rhyme. The development of rhyming lines would lead naturally to the formation of stanzas. The non-stanzaic form of the *caoineadh* metre is probably a feature of prehistoric origin, preserved because of the conservatism in ritual matters associated with death; the maintenance of non-stanzaic form, coupled with the use of end-rhyme, led to the not altogether happy result that the same rhyme had to be maintained from the beginning to the end of the poem.

The old type of verse represented by I (a) above and by *Sét no tíag*[1] survived in a less ornate form. Murphy, though without recognizing its metrical character, gives a single example consisting of five stanzas (*EIL*, no. 25). He attributes it, perhaps correctly, to Mael Ísu Ó Brolchain (†1086).[2] We may quote the first stanza:

> A choimdiu báid, / a rí na ríg,
> a Athair inmuin, / airchis dím.

This type has survived into the modern popular tradition. One has only to think of the well-known *Mo bhrón ar an bhfairrge* collected by Douglas Hyde, and perhaps closer, because religious:

> A Mhuire na ngrás, / a mháthair mhic Dé,
> go gcuiridh tú / ar mo leas mé.[3]

The type of verse represented by I (a), (b) and (c), is probably the most basic from of Irish versification. While it has survived into modern times in the forms quoted, and in *caoineadh* metre, it

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[1] *Sét no tíag* seems to differ from the example given in the apparent importance which it attaches to the unstressed syllables: phrases like *luad cáich* and *Fer benn* seem to be deliberately avoided. This, however, may be stylistic rather than an essential metrical feature. Poems of the type of *Sét no tíag* were the obvious models for the syllabic $3^1 + 3^1 + 3^1 + 3^1$ with rhyme between *b* and *d*, e.g. *Scél lemm dúib* (*EIL*, no. 53) and *Cride hé* (*EIM*, p. 58).

[2] A similar accentual poem is *Ná luig, ná luig*, printed by me, *Medieval Irish Lyrics*, no. xvii. The emendations made in the interest of syllabic uniformity should be disregarded. Note that I was apparently unable to reduce the line *acht'na chrú fó chré* to the desired four syllables.

[3] From Hyde's *Religious Songs of Connacht*, reprinted *Duanaire Gaedhilge* (Ní Ógáin, 1921).

can also, I think, be suggested as the source of the popular *deibhidhe*.
This matter can best be discussed in connection with Luccreth
moccu Chíara's poem *Ba mol Mídend midlaige* of which an edition is
in course of preparation, and which is briefly commented on below
(p. 75 ff.).

The second important type is that referred to here as 'eight-phrased',
for some forms of which the early Irish metrists use the term *ochtfhoc-
lach*; I follow Murphy in using this as a generic term. This metrical
form is similar to the first type in all respects (and apparently
derivative of it) except that the stanza generally consists of eight
instead of four phrases. So far as I know, no demonstrably archaic
examples of the type with disyllabic ending have survived, so it is
illustrated here by what may be a later syllabic regularization.[1]

II (a)   Poems II and III above.

II (b)   Fégaid úaib
               sair fo thúaid
               in muir múad
                   mílach;
               adba rón
               rebach, rán,
               ro-gab lán
                   línad.[2]

II (c) This type is the commonest in the Leinster poems and always
involves the question of words of the type *ardrig* being equated with
trisyllables. I give four examples, all from different poems.

(1)	Mōen ōen	Glinnset coicthe
	ō ba nōed,	codda ler
	nī bud noos	lergga iath
	ardrīg,	nĒremōin;
	ort rīga,	iar loingis
	rout ān,	Lōchet fiann
	hua Luircc	flaithi[3] Gōedel
	Labraid.	gabsus. (*Corpus*, p. 1).

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[1] On the other hand the example given may have been abstracted from a genuinely
archaic nature poem: being from a metrical tract it is without context. Note in the
case of this example that the fourth and eighth 'phrase', having only a single stress
(*mílach*, *línad*), will not fit into the definition of 'phrase' used in the present article.
[2] Based on Meyer, *Bruchstücke*, p. 45. Meyer, followed by other editors, read
muaid. Here I follow three of the four MSS. in reading *múad*. The quality of the final
consonant may not be important; cf. the correspondence of *becc*, *feit*, p. 58.
[3] MS. *flaithi*.

(2) Fācaib domun
     dīlechta
     dūr sab slōig
          Carmuin,
     selaig Fortrēn
     Feidilmid
     forcgla err
          angbuid.

Āeris trī cēta
cathrōe,
athlam
     tesgail,
i mbris Fergus
Fortamuil
for Bretnu
     bresgail[1].   (*Corpus*, p. 2).

(3) Ni dū dīr
     dermait
     dāla cach rīg
          romdae,
     reimsi rīg
     Temra,
     tūatha for slicht
          slōgdae.

Sōer cathmīlid
cōemḟata
Mōen Labraid
     Longsech,
lēo nīthach
nathchobbur,
cathchobbur
     coimsech. (*Corpus*, p. 8)[2].

(4) Māl ad-rualaid
     ·iat[h]u marb,[3]
     mac sōer
          Sētnai,
     selaig srathu
     Fomaire
     fo doīne
          domnaib.

Di uachtur
Alinne
oirt trīunu
     talman,
trebunn trēn
tuathmar
Mis-Telmann
     Domnon[4]. (*Corpus*, p. 20).

Ochtḟhoclach has wide ramifications, and its existence in recognizable form in Ireland in the sixth century (and doubtless for many centuries before) has significance outside the immediate Irish scene. For the moment, however, it must suffice to quote an example in Middle High German from a poem by Wolfram von Eschenbach written about 1200. If we were to classify it we would assign it to II (a) above. It differs from *Cétamon* and *Tánic sam* in that the first three phrases of each half stanza end in a disyllable, and in the importance

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[1] These two stanzas are from the poem *Nuadu Necht/ní dámair anflaith* attributed to Find Rossa Ruaid. There is a mixture of metres and only some fall into this pattern. The line-endings are all disyllabic with medial consonant clusters (*Lugdach*, etc.) or trisyllabic with simple medial consonance (*Crothomuin*, etc.).

[2] Attributed to Laidcenn mac Bairceda. Not all the stanzas fall into this pattern.

[3] LL gives an alternative reading *láthu már*. The correct reading is uncertain, and a trisyllabic word would be expected.; *iathu* (edition) is incorrect as acc. pl. of the old neuter *iath* (*iatu* MS.).

[4] *Domnainnn*, Rawlinson, a freak spelling; LL reads *Artt Mis-Delmond Domnand*. Lec., as often, has the best reading: *Domnon*.

of the unaccented syllable; also in that rhyme in the first three
phrases in each half stanza has reached full logical development as it
has in the ninth-century (?) Irish examples, II (b) above and the well-
known syllabic regularization of type III (b), *In t-én becc*, quoted below:

> So gedenken sêre
> an sîne lêre
> dem lîp und êre
>   ergeben sîn,
> der mich des bæte
> deswâr ich tæte
> im guote ræte
>   und helfe schîn[1].

The *ochtfhoclach* type, as we have seen above, II (b), survived
into the late Old Irish or early Middle Irish period in a syllabically
regularized form. A similar example of II (c) of apparently about
the same period is:

> In t-én becc
> ro léic feit
> do rinn guip
>   glanbuidi;
> fo-ceird faíd
> ós Loch Laíg
> lon do chraíb
>   charnbuidi   (Murphy, *EIL*, p. 6).

It can be maintained, I think, that just as the four-phrased type
may have given rise to *deibide*, the *rannaigecht* metres are syllabic
regularizations of the ancient *ochtfhoclach*. To illustrate this possi-
bility we will quote the first stanza of an eighth-century poem in
rannaigecht, printing it in eight phrases:

> A chóicid chain
> Choirpri chrúaid,
> coitset for slúaig
>   slechta dúir;
> táthum comram
> cith lam dúain
> co n-écius búaid
>   Domnann dúib.[2]

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[1] W. P. Ker, 'On a lyric stave called in Irish *ochtfhoclach bec*', KMMisc., p. 328.

[2] Based on the edition by Máirín O Daly, *Éigse* x, p. 181. I am not inclined to
accept the identification of Orthanach ua Caellámа with Orthanach, bishop of Kildare,
who died c. 849, (*ibid*, p. 177). I think it more likely that Orthanach was a secular
poet. He was, by his own testimony, not Brigidine, territory (LL 7466–7). The
poem *Masu de chlaind
Echdach aird* was written in Patrician. But his poem *Masu de chlaind
Echdach aird* was written in Patrician. territory (LL 7466–7). The
last stanza has a dedication to one Donnchad who is probably Donnchad s. Domnall,
king of Ireland 770–90. An important fragment of *A chóicid chain*, not used in the
edition, is found in T.C.D. MS. H. 4.22; it begins *Crothais indna fri cach eirr* (Abbot
and Gwynn *Catalogue*, p. 201).

This poem, like others by Orthanach, was composed in phrases usually containing two stressed words. The phrases are normally linked by alliteration and the stanzas by *fidrad freccomail*. This is an old type of *rannaigecht* obviously written by a poet who was well acquainted with the earlier tradition. The 'phrasing' breaks down only in the case of awkward proper names e.g. *Gabais Eter-scéle hán* (§ 6) where the line could not be divided without bisecting *Eterscéle*. The extent to which 'phrasing' of this type was used in later examples of *rannaigeacht* is a matter for further investigation.

In modern Irish *ochtfhoclach* is represented by Richard Barrett's *Preab san ól* and, as Ker has shown, the measure passed from Barrett to Byron through the mediation of John Philpot Curran. This fact shows us how easily a song measure can pass from one culture to another, in this case, to a dominant culture from one struggling for survival. It is not so well-known that the *ochtfhoclach* type is also represented in later Irish by Aodhagán Ó Rathaile's *Mac an Cheann-uidhe*. To illustrate this, we may print a half stanza in *ochtfhoclach* phrasing:

> Aisling ghéar
> do dhearcas féin
> im leabaidh is mé
>   go lag-bhríoghach,
> ainnir shéimh,
> dar bh'ainm Éire,
> ag teacht im ghaor
>   ar marcaigheacht.[1]

There is an example of another type of *ochtfhoclach* which is to be assigned to an early period. This, since the half-stanza ends in a monosyllable, might be regarded as a sub-type of II (a); but since it has certain distinctive characteristics it may better be regarded as the first of the miscellaneous group, III (a). It is found in the Old Irish Saga *Esnada Tige Buchet* which the latest editor would date at latest to the ninth century[2]; it is printed as prose. It is a single stanza enumerating the sons of Cathaír Már. The finals of the first three phrases in each half stanza are trisyllabic, that of the fourth phrase being a monosyllable. The free part of the line consists of a bare name and the trisyllabic word is an epithet. This means that the syllabic length of each phrase is determined by a non-metrical

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[1] *Dánta Aodhagáin Uí Rathaille*, ed. Dinneen, ITS iii, p. 12. Seán de Búrca, writing on 'Irish metrical patterns', *Lochlann* II, p. 54, notes the similarity between a certain type of Middle Irish verse composed in 'A regular succession of short units' and some of 'the most characteristic rhythms in modern Irish poetry'; amongst the latter he mentions *Mac an Cheannuidhe* (p. 55).

[2] *Fingal Rónáin and other stories*, ed. David Greene (1955), p. 28. The item in question may be older than the composition of the saga.

fact.   Since five of the sons mentioned in these six lines have di-
syllabic names, and one has a monosyllabic name, there is only one
divergence from a norm of five syllables.   The length of the fourth
line is also determined by a non-metrical fact; the name *Lóscán*
(later *Lúascán*) is necessarily associated with a monosyllabic epithet,
and the phrase consequently consists of three syllables.   But the
corresponding phrase, which concludes the stanza, and where the poet
is not constrained by a name, but only by the necessary mono-
syllabic ending, has five syllables.   All this shows that the poet,
apart from the phrase endings, is not concerned with syllabic length.
This type corresponds most closely to that which has been regularized
syllabically as $3 (6^3) + 4^1$, $3 (6^3) + 4^1$ (Murphy *EIM*, p. 72).   I indicate
syllabic length by bracketed numbers:

III	(a)	Rus Rúadbuillech,	(4)
		Crimthand Cétguinech,	(5)
		Dáre Trebanda,	(5)
		Lóscán Án,	(3)
		Echaid Airigda	(5)
		Bressal Enechglas	(5)
		Fiacha Foltlebor	(5)
		fort[a]-biä cách[1].	(5).

So far, all the poems noted, including that of Wolfram von
Eschenbach, have been based on 'phrases'.   It is now necessary to
abandon the word 'phrase', and instead to think of a line containing
three stressed syllables.   From the similarity of a song in the
modern tradition, and a fragment of an eleventh century poem in a
regular syllabic metre (but with marked stress undertones), I would
deduce the former existence of an early accentual type: in this the
half stanza would consist of three lines, each having three stressed
syllables, and ending in a disyllable, followed by a line with three
stresses, ending in a monosyllable.   The older poem, '*Can as' tic mac
léiginn*?', with slight and permissable cheating in the third line,
can be sung to the air of *Seán Ó Duibhir an Ghleanna*.   It is sufficient
to present the surviving fragment of the earlier poem in juxtaposition
with the first stanza of the later:

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[1] The edition has *Fortbia cách*.   The verb is explained as 'apparently the fut. sg. 3
of the compound of *benaid* of which the vn. is *fortbe*'.   In the RIA Dict. *fortbia* is quoted
as a future form of **for-diben*.   This explanation is formally difficult: one would expect
for-dibi.   Fiacha ba Aiccid (here F. Foltlebor) was a youngest son whose descendants
gained power over those of his brothers: *fort[a]-biä* means 'he will rule over them all'.
Compare Cathaír Már's words to Fiacha: *is tū for-bias do brāit[h]re ⁊ do chlann for-biat
a clanna co brāth* (*Corpus*, p. 71), ' It is you who will rule your brothers, and your
descendants will rule their descendants until doom'.

III (b) 'Can as' tic mac léiginn?'   Ar m'éirghe dham ar maidin,
    'Ticim ó Chlúain chéil-   Grian an tsamhraidh 'g
        bhinn;   taithneamh,
    íar légad mo léiginn   Chuala an uaill d'á casadh,
        téigim sís co Sord'.   Agus ceol binn na n-éan;
    'Innis scéla Clúana'   Bruic as míolta gearra,
    'Innisfet na cúala: Creabhair na ngoba fada,
    sinnaig immá húaga,   Fuaim ag an macalla
        ethait brúana bolg'.   As lámhach gunnaí tréan.[1]

In editing *Tánic sam* and *Cétamon* and in presenting types of *ochtfhoclach* such as *Móen óen* the stanza has been divided into eight phrases. But the problem of how we are to present these poems on the printed page would not have existed as a serious problem for the poets who composed them. They were composed to be learnt by heart, sung, recited, borne in memory: the eye hardly existed, only the ear and the mouth. Presenting them, as we have done, is merely an academic effort to understand their structure. This method of presentation is useful, but has certain disadvantages. Just as older examples of *rannaigecht* can be converted from a stanza of four lines to an *ochtfoclach* pattern, so can *ochtfhoclach* (with the exception of types such as *Can as' tic mac léiginn?*) be presented in a four-line stanza. This would, perhaps, be the most logical presentation, and would show points of structure that do not immediately strike the eye in the other method. If one looks back at the four examples grouped under II (c) it will become clear that we have to do with two different types of stanza. Presenting II (c) 1 in four lines gives a pattern with line-endings that can be expressed as $1 + 3 + 1 + 3$ which is an accentual metre corresponding probably to the syllabic *dian airsheng* of the metrical tracts ($7^1 + 7^3 + 7^1 + 7^3$, *EIM*, p. 48). In the other stanzas quoted we may note that, in the text as printed, a trisyllabic word (e.g. *fortamail*) or a disyllabic equivalent (*cathrōe*) is always[2] found in the second and sixth phrases. If we present any of these as a stanza of four lines each line will consist of a phrase (two stresses) followed by a trisyllable or its equivalent. We may, as an illustration, present that quoted above as II (c) 2, and against our usual practice will supply the lost vowels when they seem metrically necessary. The syllabic length of each line is indicated:

        Fácaib domun dílechta   (7)
        dúr sab slóig Caramuin;   (6)
        selaig Fortrén Feidilmid   (7)
        forcgla err angabuid   (6)

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[1] *EIM*, p. 70, and *Duanaire Gaedhilge* (Róis ní Ógáin), p. 75.
[2] An exception is *iathu marb*, but the text is almost certainly incorrect; see note p. 57.

The line here contains two stressed words followed by a trisyllabic ending which, I think, is here to be analysed as $\bot \_ \, \underset{\smile}{\vert}$ rather than $\bot \_ \_$. This is the line which was syllabically regularized as 7^3, and which was investigated by Calvert Watkins in the work referred to above. If one examines Watkins' examples one will note that the free part of the line almost invariably contains two stressed syllables.

This line is used in the very difficult poem by Luccreth moccu Chíara, *Conailla Medb / michuru*[1] which will be discussed below.

In the type we have just considered the line contained a single phrase followed by a trisyllable. Clearly related to this is a type where two phrases precede the trisyllable. In the following example, since the text of Rawlinson B 502 is poor, I have drawn on the readings of the Book of Ballymote and the Book of Lecan, and made a few silent changes of no significance. Note that *athair athar Olloman* = 'the grand-father of (Oengus) Ollam' = Labraid Móen:

III (c)   Dind ríg / rúad túam / tenbad
           trícha n-airech / fo brón / bebsat;
           bruisius, bréosus / bár niad lonn / Labraid,
           láth Elgca, / hua Luircc / Lóegaire;
           Lugaid lóeg, / lonn Sanb, / Sétna,
           sochla Cóel, / Cobthach mál, / Muiredach;
           mandrais armu / athair athar / Ollamon,
           oirt Móen / maccu áin / Augaini.   (*Corpus*, p. 18).

At this point we may logically deal with a type based on a line similar to those which we have just considered. It differs in having only one stressed word before the final trisyllable:

III (d).   Ropo thānaise

                   trīuin crepscuil
               cerdd promtha
                   Petair apstail.[2]

[1] *ZCP* viii, 306. In the modern tradition compare (*Duanaire Gaedhilge*, p. 29):
           Is truagh gan mise i Sasana
           Agus duine amháin as Éirinn liom
           Nó amuigh i lár na fairrge,
           In áit a gcailltear na mílte long.

[2] See *ZCP* 19, p. 203. Thurneysen read *crapscuil* (: *apstail*), rejecting the reading *crepscuil*. He was unaware that e + broad consonant can rhyme with a in archaic material. The word is certainly *crepscul*, or rather, **crepuscul* from Lat. *crepusculum*. For *cerd promtha* one MS. has *cerd promtha*, the other *cerd promad inti*. Thurneysen's *ceirdd promthaidi* 'durch die erprobte(?)kunst' is based on the latter reading. I prefer to follow Cormac's interpretation 'ab eo quod est crepusculum id est dubia lux'. The reference is probably to the testing of Peter at the second crowing of the cock. Something like 'It was the second hour (?) of strong twilight, the artifice of testing the apostle Peter'.

This stanza may be compared with a syllabic regularization 4 (5³),
and the line with that found in some sections of *Caoine Airt Uí
Laoghaire*:

Mór a shobarthan	Mo ghrádh go daingean tú!
ar a shádaile;	Lá d'á bhfeaca thú
bec a dobarthan	Ag ceann tíghe an mhargaidh.
úair is dánaige.	Thug mo shúil aire dhuit, etc.[1]

Finally we may give two examples of a non-stanzaic type with a
line consisting of a single phrase, one from the Leinster poems and
the other by the seventeenth century poet Dáibhidh Ó Bruadair:

III (e)	Lug Sceith,	Togha céile
	scāl finn,	a los a lútha
	fo nimib	an gart Gréagach
	nī raibe	ó thor Téibe
	bid mac Āine	nach olc d'úcadh
	aidblither.	. . . .
	Airddiu deeib	úrmhac Āine
	dōen dron	cnú na cléire
	daurgrāinne,	fuair rogha ríoghna
	glan gablach	ar feis láimhe
	hua Luircc	mór gcairde
	Lōegaire.	do rath gcéirde.[2]

2. Colmán mac Lénéni

In *ZCP* 19 (pp. 193–209) Thurneysen, in his article 'Colmān mac
Lēnēni und Senchān Torpēist', documents the development of his views
on the origins of Irish as a language written in the Latin alphabet. He
had been of the opinion that the earliest writing dated from about 700,
and that experimental uncertainty was obvious in the language of
the earlier glosses. His opinion was shaken, and he moved carefully,
almost reluctantly, backwards, until finally—in this article—the
Amra Coluim Chille and the fragments of the verse of Colmán forced
him to date the beginnings to 600, or a very few years before. The
evidence for this date was, of course, that the *Amra* must be thought
of as having been composed, and (as Thurneysen held from certain
linguistic indications) written, shortly after the saint's death in 597;
and one of Colmán's fragments was from a lament for Aed Sláine,
king of Tara, who died c. 604. Colmán is shown in the annals as

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[1] The first from *EIM*, p. 61, the second from *op. cit.*, ed. Shán Ó Cuív (1923).
[2] The first from *Corpus*, p. 19, the second from *Duanaire Dháibhidh Uí Bhruadair*,
ed. Mac Erlean, ITS xiii (1913). Compare further the dialogue of Cet and Conall,
Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó, ed. Thurneysen (1935), pp. 14-5, which, with its disyllabic
line-endings, compares more closely with the extract from Ó Bruadair. This dialogue
has many points of interest, and it is proposed to discuss it elsewhere.

dying c. 604–606, and, although Thurneysen was unaware of it, a retrospective entry in AI suggests that he was born c. 530, thus dying at about the age of 76. This would imply that Colmán's verse could date from about 550 onwards and the date of the emergence of Irish as a language written in the Latin alphabet would have to be put back another half century. But Thurneysen, having already moved back a century to 600, was not prepared to go any further. This placed him in a position where he had to resist the logical implications of his own excellent and adventurous work.

The poem *Luin oc elaib* (I (c) above) was written by Colmán to a king called Domnall whose kingship excelled that of others 'as swans excel blackbirds, or the shapeliness of aristocratic ladies the form of peasant women'. It was apparently written as a poem of thanks for the gift of a sword. In identifying Domnall, Thurneysen assumed that he was Domnall son of Aed son of Ainmire who was king of Tara in the years 628–42. Since the poem was apparently composed in Colmán's lay period this should mean not merely that Colmán was alive in 628, but that his whole monastic career, and the foundation of his monastery at Clúain Úama, still lay in the future. Thurneysen tried to get round this uncomfortable fact by denying the validity of Colmán's obit and suggesting that he became a monk in advanced years; and that when he praised Domnall as a king, the latter was merely a 'prince', an important man, but only his father's son. Apart from the fact that there was no guarantee in Ireland that a king's son would ever become a king, one may doubt if a single example can be quoted down to 1600 of a member of a dynasty who was not in fact a ruler being referred to by the term *rí*. If, as seems likely, this poem was written to a king of Tara, it can only have been written to the Domnall who became joint king of Tara with his brother Forcus about 565, and who died in the following year. This would, of course, mean that the poem was written in 565–6, and from other indications of Colmán's *floruit* this is entirely unobjectionable.

One may suggest a hypothetical career for Colmán based on his obit, and on the reasonable suggestion that he was aged about 76 at death. We will assume that, being an *athlaech*, an 'ex-layman', the master of two careers, he entered religion at the mid-point of his life, as tradition has it, under the influence of Brendan of Clonfert. On this basis his life and career would have been as follows:

1. Born c. 530, that is, less than 40 years after the death of Patrick, reckoning to the traditional death date (493).

2. c. 565 as part of his professional career, he wrote a poem thanking Domnall, king of Tara, for the gift of a sword.

3. c. 568 he meets Brendan of Clonfert, and under his influence becomes a monk.

4. *c.* 582, death of Brendan. At some time in these years Colmán founds the monastery of Clúain Úama, receiving a grant of land from the mid-sixth-century Eoganacht king, Cairpre, son of Crimthann[1]. He writes religious verse.

5. *c.* 604 he writes a poem on the death of Aed Sláine.

6. *c.* 606 he dies as abbot of Clúain Úama.

The surviving fragments of Colmán's verse comprise in all twenty lines, that is, two more than we have in *Sét no tíag*. Each stanza consists of two rhyming lines, and each line has two phrases. There is usually linking alliteration between phrases.

Assuming that these poems are accentual we may make the following analysis of matters relevant to the edition of the poems which form the main subject of the present article.

Of the 40 phrases constituting these fragments it is immediately obvious that in 32 there are two stresses in each. In two cases an element, unstressed in syllabic verse, is stressed when separated from the other stressed word by an unstressed syllable : *cen nach ndíchmairc, Ropo thānaise.*

In four cases a syllable that would normally be stressed, loses stress when it immediatley precedes another stressed syllable: *crotha ban n-athech, ainm gossa fer, Mag feda dian, dian cuillian clár.*

In two cases a preposition bears a full stress : *iar cotlud; ār for / Aed Slāne.* In the Leinster poems there are many cases where we may see certain prepositions bearing stress (and, indeed, other elements such as *ni,* which are unstressed in syllabic verse), e.g. *Di uachtur* II (c) 4 above, which occurs in a context where two stresses are usual.

3. The Leinster Poems

The character of these poems has already been illustrated to some degree by the quotations given above. Here we will consider some matters relevant to date and accentual character.

This last can best be considered on the basis of the poem:

> Ēnna, Labraid / luad cāich
> maic-sidi[2] Bresail / buain blāith (*Corpus,* p. 4).

This is the longest in the collection. It is in a simple metre (I (a), above), and, of all the poems, that from which statistical results can most easily be got.

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[1] This information is given in the ancient tract 'Conall Corc and the Corco Luigde', *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts,* III, p. 62. Here we are also told that Colmán's father was Colcu, also called Léníne.

[2] *mac side, Corpus;* but the sense requires the plural. In quotations I usually follow the text of the *Corpus.* Occasionally, however, there is some editing, and quotations are given in a form which they might take in a future edition. The use of macrons indicates more or less exact quotation, but the metrical divisions given in the *Corpus* are not necessarily followed, and, of course, the presentation of consonant clusters underlined in black type is always my own.

There are 54 stanzas, that is, 216 'phrases' here. Of these it is immedi-
ately clear that in 198 there are two stresses. The remaining 18
(which constitute over 8% of the whole) call for some comment.

In 6 cases a trisyllabic word, not in rhyming position, is to be
regarded as having two stresses, e.g. *Fācabsat* ($\perp \_ \triangle$) / *for sluagu sār*
(*Corpus*, p. 5).

In 1 instance a disyllabic word, with a medial consonant cluster,
constitutes a full phrase $\perp \_ \triangle$), and the final syllable rhymes with
a monosyllable:

(a)   Conchobur, File / Finn, Rus
      Ruad, Fairrge / Fergus   (*Corpus*, p. 5).

Note also:

(b)   Crothais Brega / Bresal Brecc,
      ar-dos-brūi Fiachu / Fobrecc.

(c)   Fiannrī ān / Ailill Glas,
      gabālach fiam / Foglas   (*Corpus*, p. 5).

(d)   [Grinni, Farni / Frainc, Fresin,
      Longbaird / Ladaich, Lid][1]   (*Corpus*, p. 7).

The last four stanzas quoted may be regarded as relevant to the
evolution of *deibide*, as to which suggestions are made below (p. 76ff.)
In (a), note that in *File Finn* (= *Finn File*) the epithet precedes
the name, and epithet and name are divided by the *caesura*; similarly
in giving the name *Rus Ruad* the poet has ignored the line-ending.
Fairrge Fergus (= *Fergus Fairrge*) is a similar case to *File Finn*.
This is a very important stylistic point, which will be discussed
further below, and which has relevance to the matter of additions
just mentioned (footnote 1).

In 2 cases, both of which are additional stanzas, the last element
of a 3 and 4 syllable biblical name may rhyme as a monosyllable:
Mathusa-lām, *Mala-lēl*.   This feature is quite common at a later
period; but in SR the second last syllable of *Mathusalem* is long, the
last short.[2]

In 5 cases a stressed monosyllable immediately preceding a stressed
syllable is de-stressed, e.g. *muir mall slān* (*Corpus*, p. 6).

In 1 stanza a trisyllabic word constitutes the second phrase in
each line.   There is full rhyme, but we may consider the secondary
stress ($\perp \_ \triangle$) as providing something resembling the normal mono-
syllabic ending:

          [Dachi, Etheoip, / Lyrecdai,
          Egeipt, Bragmuin / Innecdai]   (*Corpus*, p. 7).

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[1] For reasons to be given below stanzas in square brackets are considered as
additions to the original poem.
[2] See *Ériu* xvi, p. 116.

It may be noted that in the above comments reliance has been solely on the text of Rawl. B 502, as given in O'Brien's *Corpus*. Two other texts may be of very slight critical value. There is, in the first place, a version in the 15th or 16th century portion of LL. This tradition represents the work of a medieval scholar who tried to improve the poem; he removed what he obviously thought of as metrical blemishes, and in doing so, frequently destroyed the old metrical features. Some stanzas he rewrote, and his interference is immediately shown by the fact that he upsets the alliterative scheme. Meyer's edition over-values the text of LL, and is often a less than happy conflation of the two traditions. The other text is a series of poems beginning *Cū-cen-māthair | maith clann* (*Corpus*, p. 199), on the pedigrees of the Eoganacht kings and attributed to Luccraid moccu Chíara. Rhymes such as *móir: óir, óir: cóir, rian: Brían*, apart from other considerations, show immediately that the poems are not authentic. They borrow extensively from *Énna Labraid | lúad cáich*. I would suggest that they were written by Cormac mac Cuilennáin (†908) who is here tentatively regarded as the later Compiler of the genealogies.[1]

The Leinster poems deal with dynasts from the remote past down to the late fifth century. One is attributed to Find File who is supposed to have lived in the very remote prehistoric period (*Nuadu Necht | ni dāmair anflaith, Corpus*, p. 1). To one Ferchertne is attributed *Dind rīg | ruad tuam | tenbath*.[2] Ferchertne is doubtless to be taken as a pre-Christian Leinster poet, a Leinster, of course, that extended to the Boyne. He is probably the poet referred to by Muirchu (c. 700) as 'one of nine druid-poets of Brega'. Muirchu's comment would seem to be based on a *dindshenchus* poem, similar to *Dind Rīg*, elucidating the meaning and history of *Ferti Fer Féicc*, located at the Hill of Slane[3]. We might also note in passing that at least eight pagan poets are mentioned in the Leinster genealogies. Whether or not all could be referred to as 'of Brega' is hard to say: Find File or Find Rossa Ruaid, Ladcenn mac Bairchedo, Brí

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[1] Francis John Byrne, *ZCP* xxix, p. 384, has suggested a connection between Cormac and the genealogies. A very similar argument will be made below with regard to the Laud Genealogies as printed in *ZCP* viii. Note that in the pedigree of the descendants of Flann Feorna of the Ciarraige, in at least two cases the terminal figures are men whom Cormac would have known: Colmán, son of Cináed (†909, *AI*) and Indrechtach, son of Aed (†890, *AI*), (*Corpus*, pp. 228–9).

[2] This poem has been quoted above, p. 62. The metrical scheme suggests that *ruad* qualifies *tuam* rather than *rīg*, the adjective, as often in these poems, preceding the noun.

[3] 'postremo ad uesperum peruenierunt ad Ferti virorum *Feec* (Stokes, *Fee[i]c*), quam ut fabulae ferunt foderunt (fodorunt, MS.) viri, id est serui, *Fecc ol Ferchertni*, qui fuerat unus e novim magís profetis *Bregg*' (Stokes, *VT* II, p. 278). Stokes, followed by other interpreters, prints *Feccol*. But this seems impossible. The anecdote will not make sense unless we take *Fecc* as = *Féicc* 'of Fiacc', as in the first occurrence. The word *ol* is a difficulty. The context requires something like 'according to'.

mac Bairchedo, Bécc mac Lethdergáin from Ráith Bécce in Brega, Briccine mac Brigni, Torna écess, Ferchertne, and Find mac Cumaill, to whom many poems (including II of the present article) are attributed, although he is not designated as a poet in the genealogies. Berchán is also quoted and he is associated with Ráith Imgáin, (Rathdangan, Co. Kildare). He may, however, be a Christian poet.

Amongst the most important references in the genealogies are those to Senchán or Senchán Torpéist. The late Compiler quotes him three times, and in one of these instances he adduces a work, which he attributes to him, the *Cocangab Már*, as proof of the pedigree of Fionn mac Cumaill. This problem requires a very close linguistic study of the genealogies. Without going into the matter closely, I would suggest as a hypothesis worth testing fully that the compiler has made the *Cocangab Már* the basis of his own work.

General considerations of the traditions of Senchán would suggest that his life-span covered the period 580–650, and we might conceive of him as producing his *magnum opus* at about 630. A not altogether cursory examination of the *Corpus* seems to show that all the linguistic archaisms are found (in one manuscript or another) in those portions of the text that refer to people or events of before 630.[1] Such archaisms, so far as I have noticed, are rarely if ever found in reference to people or events of a later period. If this were not occasioned by the use of a manuscript source of 630 or earlier one would expect archaisms in an equal, or almost equal proportion, in reference to people and events of 650–750. I make this statement with some confidence, while conceding, of course, that a thorough examination of the orthography of the various sources is necessary; full regard must be had to the dating of the events and people referred to in the portions of the text where such archaisms are found. It may also be noted that, as one would expect, the less learned manuscripts such as the Book of Lecan and the Book of Ballymote, through the very ignorance of their scribes, are more likely to preserve archaic forms than the earlier and more learned manuscripts.

These archaisms include the following: genitives in -*o* rather than -*a* in such names as *Dícuill, Fuirgg, Droíd* (*Dicollo, Forggo, Droído*)[2]; preservation of *ō* and *ē* in names such as *Húi Fōlaing, Mag Rēta; Me-* rather than *Mo-* in personal names such as *Me-druí, Me-chú* (found only in gen. *Me-chon*); forms such as *Nio* (gen. *Niod*); spellings such

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[1] Most of the important references to Senchán are found in the article *Prull* in Cormac's glossary, in *Scéla Cano mac Gartnáin* (see Binchy's edition), in *Tromdám Guaire*, and other stories connected with the origins of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. The latest discussion of the last mentioned traditions is in my *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, pp. 165 ff. See also footnote, p. 73.

[2] Such genitives tend to be preserved with a greater frequency in unusual names. This is understandable, since the MSS. which we possess are the final result of a lengthy process of orthographical modernizing. References are not given to personal and placenames that can be easily checked in the indices to the *Corpus*.

DYNASTS OF LEINSTER (c. 400—500)

* Cathaír Már

Bressal Enechglas

—X—

*Mac Cáirthinn

* Fiachu Aiccid

* Bressal Bélach († c. 436)

Dáire Barrach

* Muiredach Mosníthech

* Móenech

Énna Nía

Daig

Labraid

Corc

Nad-Fraích

Óengus (c. 494)

* Erc Buadach

* Nad Buidb

Énna Censelach

Crimthann († c. 484)

=

Eithne

Eochu
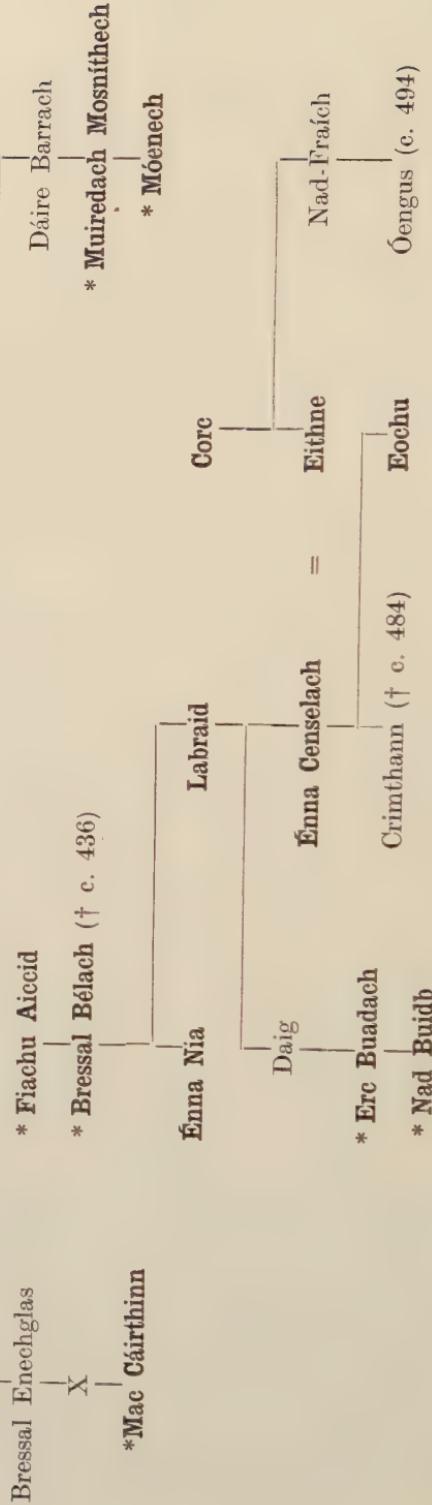
as *Domnon, trebun,* with single *n.* Note also the place-name *Rout Tarsunu* (v.l. *tarsna*).[1] There are a number of names that are pre-syncope, and some that are probably to be explained as such. Note the corrupt place-name *Sodchobe* (v.l. *Scothbae*); the personal names *Deilgine* (v.l. *Delgene, Deilgne*), *Bruinniuchon* (v.l. *Branchon*), gen. of *Bruinniuc* (also the curious gen. *Bruinnica*), the genitive *Echdon* (v.l. *Eachadon,* etc.), *Odorán* (v.l. *Odrán*). These suggestions of an underlying pre-syncope prose text are supported by similar phenomena in the verse where trisyllabic forms required metrically are occasionally found written, e.g. *Caramuin* for *Carmun, aracoin* for *árchoin* (*Corpus,* p. 73).

The dynasts belonging to the fifth century who are addressed or referred to in these poems are given in the accompanying genealogical table, together with persons not mentioned in the poems, but whose annalistic dates may help to fix the probable *floruit* of the others. Those mentioned are shown in black type. Those who were reckoned kings of Tara in *Ni dū dir / dermait* (*Corpus,* p. 8) are marked with an asterisk[2]. In one of the poems Eochu son of Énna Censelach is addressed with verbs in the present tense, e.g. *Eochu art / arachridethar cathrai*[3]. 'Eochu, the bear who embraces a battlefield.' Also in the present tense is the stanza to Bressal Bélach, or rather *Bressual Béoliäch,* which is given in an edited and partially restored form:

> Án grén gríssach / goires breo Bressuail,
>
> Bress Elce, aue Luirc / lathras bith beoliach[4]

> (*Corpus* p. 71).

'A splendid fiery sun that burns is the flame of Bressual Beoliach, strong one of *Elcae,* descendant of Lorcc, who lays waste the world'.

None of the Latin loanwords in these poems is of a specifically ecclesiastical character—for reasons which will appear, I except certain portions of *Énna Labraid / luad cáich* and of *Nuadu Necht / ni dámair anflaith.* The following are the Latin borrowings: *arm* (arma),

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[1] Cf. *tarsainniu* gl. *adverso,* Ml. 100[b]2.

[2] Mac Cáirthinn cannot be traced in the genealogies. But if he claimed to be king of Tara in the fifth century he must, one would think, have been a descendant of Cathaír Már. He would appear to be the dynast whose name is found in the genitive in an ogam inscription (from the barony of Duleek Lower, Co. Meath): *Maqi-cairatini avi ineqaglas.* (Macalister, *Corpus Inscriptionum,* I, p. 45). The *Ineqaglas* referred to would be Bressal Enechglas, son of Cathair Már. Unfortunately neither poem nor inscription records his father's name, and he is given in the table as x. Bresal is shown as having five sons (*Corpus,* p. 67). The ignoring of *Mac Cáirthinn* could be due to his having had no important issue.

[3] Meyer, *AID* II, p. 22.

[4] Six stresses in line, *caesura* after the third, trisyllabic ending. The epithet *Bélach* in these poems is apparently to be taken as a trisyllable as implied in spellings such as *Beoiliach.* Cf. *For-bris Bresal / Bélach / bethir borb / buaidgniad, Corpus,* p. 9, where *Bélach* forms a complete phrase. The separation of the epithet from its noun is important, and instanced frequently in these poems.

legión (legio), *míl, cathmílid* (miles), *trebun* (tribunus) *Gall* (Gallus), *Alpión* (gen. pl., Alpes). *bárc* (barca), *long* (navis longa), *múr* (murus); *drauc* (draco), *gríb* (grypho), *leo* (leo), *Mercúir* (dies Mercurii), *Saturn* (dies Saturni), *cland* 'offspring' (planta), *rómdae* (adj. from Roma), *ór* (aurum).

Aingil 'angels' is found in the secondary part of *Nuadu Necht | ni dāmair anflaith* (*Corpus*, p. 4), *Él*, from the Hebrew word for 'God', and *bár*, which has been associated with the Aramaic word for 'son', are found in the secondary part of *Énna Nia*. This last word may also occur in Ferchertne's *Dind Ríg*; but the text is not quite certain. It is found in *Ni dū dīr | dermait* (*Corpus*, p. 9). The Latin borrowings show a non-Christian Ireland, having very close contacts with and knowledge of the Roman empire. Of particular interest is the use of *Mercúir* for Wednesday, instead of the later *Cétaín* 'first fast', which was to become universal under the influence of sixth-century monasticism.

There are some signs of pagan thought. In the poem *Móen Óen* we read:

> Grīb indrid / iath n-anēoil
> hua Luircc / Lōegaire,
> arddiu dōenaib / acht nemrī nimi. (*Corpus*, p. 1).

This stanza is quite convincing from *Grīb* to *dōenaib*. But the second phrase of the third line and the whole of the last line seem to have been suppressed, apparently because of a statement somewhat offensive to Christian thought. A half-line has been added which is metrically out of keeping with these poems as a whole, lacks alliterative linking, and which uses the word *acht* for 'but', where we would expect *inge*. I translate, italicizing the substituted phrase : 'A griffon attacking unknown lands was Lóegaire, grandson of Lorcc, higher than (all) men *except the shining king of Heaven*''. The statement of Christian belief is as dubious as the metre. The stanza as given above is found only in Rawlinson B 502. The only other manuscript of any value for this poem seems to be the late portion of the *Book of Leinster*, and here the second couplet and the stanza following have been dropped. The next stanza, for which the Rawlinson MS. is thus the only source, is given here with an obviously correct emendation of *dōenib* to *dōene* first suggested by Thurneysen[1]:

> Ōr ós grēin / gelmair
> gabais for dōene / domnaib,
> scēo deëib / día óen
> as Mōen mac Āine / ōenrīg (*Corpus*, p. 1).

[1] Meyer, *ÄID* II, p. 30.

'Gold over the bright sun, he took sovreignty over the lands of human beings; and amongst the gods, he is one god, who is Mōen son of Āine, the sole king'.

In another poem Móen, here called the 'son of Áine' and 'grandson of Lóegaire Lorc' is compared with or perhaps identified with 'Lug, the fair phantom'. It is said;

Airddiu deeïb / dōen dron / daurgrāinne /

glan gablach / hua Luircc / Lōegaire (*Corpus*, p. 19, and quoted above, p. 56).

'Stout mortal, oak-seed, higher than the gods, pure, branching, grandson of Lóegaire Lorc'.

In many of the examples of verse forms given above, it has been shown clearly, I think, that in verse of this type disyllables with a medial cluster of consonants are metrically equivalent to trisyllables. It has also been noted that in verse-contexts where a trisyllable was metrically necessary, a pre-syncope vowel was sometimes written, e.g. *Caramuin* (BB, ÄID II, p. 22), although the metrical necessity could hardly have been felt by the late scribes. In *Corpus*, p. 8, there are, as the text is printed, 26 line-endings. Of these 24 are disyllabic to the eye, with a medial cluster, and in this superficially disyllabic context there are 2 trisyllables. This proportion would probably hold for all the poems[1]. Outside the Leinster poems, and those of Colmán mac Lénéni this phenomenon seems to be found only in the poetry of Luccreth Moccu Chíara, whose surviving poems we will discuss briefly in the next section[2]. Amongst the trisyllabic forms in the Leinster poems, in a superficially disyllabic context, are: *Alpión* (*sic leg.* with LL; other MSS. *Eilpion*, to provide a rhyme for the eye with *legión*), *Ailpion*, *ÄID*, I, p. 6, *Gabruān*, later *Gabrán* (*Corpus*, p. 21). In all these poems, including those of Colmán mac Lénéni, and, perhaps, those of Luccreth moccu Chíara, I have only

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[1] Experiment shows that, in poems with disyllabic endings, words with a simple medial consonant usually outnumber those with medial consonant clusters. The first poem with disyllabic endings in Murphy's *EIL* is *Rop tú mo baile* (No. 18). Of the 64 line-endings 39 are in words with a simple medial consonant, 25 in words with medial consonant clusters. This proportion is quite usual, and underlines the significance of a virtual 100% of words with medial consonant clusters amongst the disyllabic endings in the Leinster poems.

[2] A thorough investigation of the archaic verse preserved in the Laws is desirable. In *Celtica* viii, 148–9, Binchy presents a reconstruction and translation of eight lines of 'heptasyllabic' verse with trisyllabic line-endings. (The first line, as presented, is octosyllabic: *Fri benna baise búirethar*). Amongst the trisyllabic endings *othrus* stands alone as a disyllable. Binchy has the following comment, which is relevant to the explanation of consonant clusters advanced above: 'One could emend to *othrusu* (acc. pl.) in order to secure an orthodox trisyllabic ending. But *othrus* is generally, though not invariably, used in the singular. Moreover I have noted elsewhere in this archaic type of versification occasional lines ending with a word which is disyllabic after syncope, though the only example I can quote at the moment is *othrus* itself: *aithgin indraic*, *othrus* AL iii, 536.4. Is it overbold to suggest that these mnemonic verses date from a period when syncope was not yet fully operative and that we should restore **otharus*?'

noted a few examples of line-endings that cause difficulty, for example, Colmán mac Lénéni's *calg oc mo chailg-se* (III (*c*), above) where it can hardly be maintained that a vowel has been lost between *g* and *s*. Possibly with this heavy consonant group a degree of epenthesis, sufficient to count syllabically, would arise between *l* and *g*[1].

Words which before syncope would have had four syllables are found in these poems as trisyllables. This matter is difficult, because many of these words have the typical consonant cluster, and almost invariably have *ia* (= *io*) in the last syllable: *fuingniad, fuilniciad* (four syllables, meaning?), *Corpus*, p. 1, *flaithniad, aithgniad*, p. 2, *aithgniath, flaithgniad*, p. 8, *Cathriach, cocriach, buaidgniad, cruaidgniad*, p. 9. These words seem to constitute a special case. Are we, for instance, in a word like *flaithniad* to restore the composition vowel (**wlathi-niod*) and see a syllabic reduction in the second element?

The problem of accretion may be dealt with very briefly. If we examine *Énna Labraid / lúad cáich* we will notice certain significant features. There are, as we have seen, 56 stanzas. The poet has a habit of ignoring metrical sense-boundaries: when giving a name and epithet they may be separated by the *caesura*, or the line; he may even ignore the stanza border as he does (*Corpus*, p. 5) when the name *Cormac* appears in the last phrase of a stanza, but his epithet *Gelta Gáeth* is not given until the second phrase of the following stanza. We have seen something like this above (p. 71) in *Án grén gríssach* where the name *Bressual* is found in the second phrase, but his epithet *Béoliach* is given in the fourth; another example has been quoted above (p. 66) in the stanza beginning *Conchubur, File*. In the first 21 stanzas there are at least 10 examples of this practice. Very significantly the last example is found in the stanza dealing with Lóegaire Lorcc, the ultimate ancestor of the Laigin. The remaining 35 stanzas extend the pedigree, including in the extension the doctrine that unifies the Irish, descent from Míl, and that which unifies the Irish with all the races of the world, descent from Adam. We can notice something very similar in *Núadu Necht / ni dámair anflaith* (*Corpus*, p. 1). This is a fine poem up to about the 33rd stanza: it is vigorous and uses verbs freely. Then there is a stylistic break. The last 19 stanzas consist almost exclusively of names,

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[1] Compare also the following disyllables which are in trisyllabic position: *anflaith, farflaith, Corpus*, p. 1, *amraid* (neg. of *réid*), p. 3, *Labraid*, p. 3 and elsewhere, *deirgus* (= *dergus* 'who reddens'), p. 8, *domnaib*, p. 20. All these forms raise the question of the existence of an epenthetic vowel in Irish or in Irish dialects in the sixth century or earlier. Certain similar examples in *ogam* have been dubiously explained by McNeill as 'non-syllabic' or as 'wrongly restored': *Coribiri* for *Corbri*, *Sagarettos* for *Sagr-*, *Eracobi* for *Ercobi*, *Anavlamattias*, etc. ('Archaisms in the *ogham* inscriptions', PRIA, vol. xxxix, Section C, No. 3, p. 34 ff.) For a criticism of McNeill's interpretation of the evidence see Marstrander, *NTS* V., 261 ff. See further Greene, *Ériu* xvi, p. 217. On *Labraid*, where it is not certain whether or not a vowel has been lost between *b* and *r*, see O'Rahilly *EIHM*, pp. 10, 455.

presented in a dull mechanical fashion. Apart from the copula, either present or implied, only one verbal form is used in the whole of this section: *Ādam . . . duine delbas Dia*, ('Adam . . . a man whom God shaped'. Here we meet the very same theory as in *Énna Labraid / lúad cáich*: the unity of Ireland through Míl, and of the world through Adam. In the earlier Leinster verse the godlike human, Labraid Móen, grandson of Lóegaire Lorc, is the invader of an *íath ainéoil*, 'an unknown land'; he seizes 'the headship of the Goídil', and slays 'the descendants of renowned Augaine' (*flaith Goedel, gabsus, Corpus*, pp. 1, 334, *oirt Moen maccu áin Augaini*, p. 18). In the additional parts the ancestors of Labraid's enemies have become his own. The early editor and extender of these poems had a complete understanding of the metre: pre-syncope trisyllables are consistently represented by disyllables with medial consonant clusters. The tentative view advanced here is that the editor and extender was Senchán Torpéist, writing about 630 in his *Cocangab Már*. We can reasonably regard him as the inventor of the politically, and perhaps theologically, useful idea of the common descent of the Irish from Míl of Spain which held its place in Irish historical thinking down to the present century. When these poems are re-edited, the ancient nucleus will, I think, provide something very close to contemporary documentation for the Laigin and their enemies in the years separating Cathaír Már (c. 400) from Nad-Buidb and Eochu son of Énna Censelach (c. 480–500), the latest dynasts mentioned. Politically they will give a picture of a dynastic group in Leinster, the Laigin or Gálióin, exercising power as far as the borders of Ulster. They are conscious of being invaders and of different ethnic origins to the rest of the country; they are given to overseas raiding, extending as far as Gaul, and are very conscious of Roman civilization; in Ireland they claim for themselves the type of superiority that is conceded to them in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.

4. Luccreth moccu Chíara.

The archaic portions of the Genealogies, which are likely to have derived from the *Cocangab Már* of Senchán Torpéist, give considerable attention to *forsluinnte*, that is, families of inferior social and political status. It might be expected that Senchán would include his own pedigree amongst these, and this I think he did. I would identify him with Senchán, son of Úarchride, son of Adóer, of the Araid, that is, a people living in parts of present-day Cos. Limerick and Tipperary (*Corpus*, p. 386). The name Senchán is the last in the pedigree.[1] It is perhaps important to note that these people regarded

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[1] The little we can gather of traditions of Senchán's origins are suggestive of Munster origin. In *Scéla Cano Meic Gartnáin* he is shown as a dignified but difficult old man

themselves as descendants of Fer Tlachtgae, a son of Fergus mac Roig, and their presence in Munster would necessarily have to be related to the political background of Táin Bó Cúailnge[1].

The poet Luccreth moccu Chíara, although not named there as a poet, may also appear in the Genealogies. The name Luccreth is exceptionally rare, and only two examples are found in the *Corpus*. One of these is Luccrad (a later form of Luccreth) of the Cíarraige. So far as one can see he would have belonged to the generation of Senchán's father or grandfather. In other words his approximate *floruit* would be that of Colman mac Lénéni, the second half of the sixth century, and extending into the first quarter of the seventh. This Luccrad son of Áine, fictitiously or otherwise, is a descendant of Mug Airt, otherwise Cíar, son or descendant of Fergus mac Roig. Although genealogically of no apparent importance, this Luccrad must have distinguished himself in some way. He is the last named of six sons, and we are told that he left no issue. Yet it is thought worth-while to give the exact location of his home: *is[s]í a ráth fil ar bélaib Cilli Cluaine andess*, 'His dwelling-place faces the church of Cluain on the south'. Being a man of no great social status, and obviously the occupier of a modest dwelling, he could bear the somewhat plebeian title: Luccreth moccu Chíara, 'Luccreth of the Cíarraige'.

The name of Senchán is consistently associated with the origin of Táin Bó Cuailnge. He is in fact, in one tradition, shown as recording events from the resuscitated Fergus mac Roig, who, if our assumptions above are correct, would have been counted an ancestor. Here we face an interesting and peculiar fact. The earliest version of the political situation that we know in *Táin Bó Cúailnge* is that given by

at about the time of the battle of Carn Conaill (*AU* 649). He arrives at Gúaire's territory passing from the present day Co. Clare into Co. Galway by way of Slieve Aughty. When he arrived at the 'border' he had an escort of Munstermen. In the article *Prull* in Cormac's Glossary he is shown as finding in the Isle of Man a poetess of the Uí Fidgeinte, one ingen Uí Dulsaine, who had been lost to her people for many years. The Uí Fidgente and the Araid were neighbouring peoples in North Munster. In *Tromdám Gúaire* he is shown as succeeding Dallán Forgaill as chief poet of Ireland. Since Dallán is credited with the authorship of *Amra Coluim Cille*, in or about the year 597, we may with some confidence regard the first half of the seventh century as the period of Senchán's maturity, and there are not, so far as I know, any traditions conflicting with this. I tentatively regard his life as falling in the years 580–650, and would date his *Cocangab Már* to about 630. The tentative dating of his great genealogical work is based in the first place on some observations of terminal dates in archaic sections of the genealogies, and to a lesser degree on a feeling that the age of fifty is normally that of greatest scholarly maturity. Senchán obviously lived at the period of transition from accentual verse to the new syllabic forms. The following quatrain, ascribed to him, is a perfect example of a syllabic metre ($8^2 + 7^1 + 8^2 + 7^1$) and has at the same time the rhythm, phrasing and alliterative linking found in accentual verse:

Cethri meic / la Sētna Sithbac
    suabais n-athmet / imbaid argg:
Ōengus Aucha, / Art Mes-Telmann
    Nuadu, Augen / Aurgnaid ardd.   (*Corpus*, p. 19).

[1] There is some confusion in the genealogies as to whether Fer Tlachtgae is a son or a brother of Fergus (see *Corpus*, Index of Personal Names).

Luccreth moccu Chíara in his poem *Conailla Medb / míchuru*, which we may reasonably date to c. 600, or shortly after. In this poem he is explicitly recording 'ancient knowledge' (*seneolas*). Taking this statement at its face value it is reasonable to conclude that he is presenting us with a tradition that must have been formulated over a century before his time, that is, very near if not within the Irish pagan period. Comparison with the extant *Táin* will suggest that, at any rate in the late pagan period, the characters in the *Táin* were regarded as historical individuals; if any of them were ever gods (which I doubt) the shedding of divinity was anterior to Christianity. Before considering the form and matter of this poem we will make some comments on Luccreth's only other extant poem *Ba mol Midend / midlaige*.

This poem resembles *Conailla Medb / míchuru* in that it is a tradition of origin, claiming remote Ulster descent for a number of ethnic groups in Munster called the Corcu Ché. It describes how the descendants of Dubthach Dóel, the shadowy and doubtless intrusive Dubthach Dóeltengad of the *Táin*, were compelled to leave Ulster, and seek refuge in Munster. These people became landless refugees, not through political circumstances, but as the result of a mythic calamity: the kingdom of Eochu Már mac Máiretho was submerged by a great flood, becoming what is now Lough Neagh (*Loch nEchach*). All were drowned except four 'packs' (*conchuiri*) who were to be the ancestors of specific ethnic groups in Munster.

Apart from certain details of difference and similarity in the traditions of Luccreth and those of the extant *Táin*, which will be mentioned below, these general genealogical facts or theories seem to shed light on the epic tale. The central figure of the *Táin* is Fergus mac Roig. The saga that has survived is not, it would appear, directly or wholly an 'Ulster' saga: it is rather in the main the tradition of Ulster as it survived amongst people in the south who claimed to be of remote Ulster origin. In other words, this central epic belongs in its genesis to the well-known class of 'origin-tale'. We can also see from the genealogical material some reasons why an epic dealing with a more or less defeated people could become central to Irish tradition. As a result of ancient political conditions, many groups of people throughout Ireland appear to have had an emotional attachment to ancient Ulster, and in Leinster Ulster traditions would command respect. When the epic, in the time of Senchán, started on its career of literary growth the dominant political power in Ireland were the descendants of Conn, especially those who descended from him through Niall. To many groups these were powerful, but *parvenus*, and for them the concept 'Ulster' would connote not merely 'real aristocracy' but 'people of our blood'.

Ba mol Midend / midlaige may be described as *deibide* in the sense that the stanzas consist of four lines, with rhyme between *a* and *b*, and between *c* and *d*; also in that rhyme is most frequently, though not invariably, between words of different syllabic length. There are normally—this may be a matter involving discussion— four stresses in the line. The syllabic length of the line is of no importance. As the text stands the shortest line has four syllables and the longest eleven. We may quote the first stanza with slight orthographical changes:

> Ba mol Midend / midlaige;
> 'Memais Linnmuine / dar Líatbmuine';
> lia háirim / [is] slúag ad-bath
> i linnmaig Mis / i murbrath.

'It was the prophetic utterance (*mol*) of Midend, the fool: "Linnmuine will burst out over Liathmuine". It may be reckoned that a host died in the pool-plain of Mis in a sea-doom'.

There are two phrases in each line, each phrase linked to the next by alliteration. In the first line *midlaige* may be taken as having two stresses, similarly *Líathmuine* in the second. The rhyme, it will be noted, is between the final syllable of each word, a feature rarely found in *deibide* as we know it, even in patently early examples such as the verse portions of *Immram Brain*. The word *murbrath*, like other apparent disyllables in many of the poems discussed in the present article may be treated as a pre-syncope form; hence, so far as concerns the stress pattern, it is not different from *Líathmuine*. This type of rhyming trisyllable, bearing an initial stress, and a secondary stress, suggests a plausible explanation of the origin of rhyme between stressed and unstressed syllables. A rhyme such as *dó*: *Máiretho* could be regarded as 'correct', because the trisyllable had a secondary stress on the last syllable. But Máiretho was nevertheless ambiguous, and when read or heard as ⊥ _ _ rather than as ⊥ _ ˌ there would be rhyme between an accented and unaccented syllable. The ambiguity would have made such rhymes possible, and they would gain favour because of their aural subtlety.

There are certain difficulties, such as in the lines:

> mrogais clíathaire / cíabu sen
> co ríg Muman / hi Femen.

'a branch, though ancient, moved into Femen to the king of Munster'.

It would be as easy to regard this as a rhyme between stressed and unstressed (*Sen*: *Femen*), of the kind that we know in later poetry. But *hi Femen* occurs in a metrical context where two stresses are

normal. We would appear to have two choices: either to regard the pre-
position *hi* as stressed, and to regard the rhyme as between stressed
and unstressed; or, on the other hand, to think of the possibility
that, when an unaccented syllable was allowed to rhyme, it had an
artificial metrical stress. Another, at first sight, similar example is:

> Do Dáil Ocha / uathmar ndeilm
> Loch [n]Echach / do thomaidm.

'For the Dál Ocha it was a terrible sound, that Loch nEchach
should burst forth'.

Here, however, it is likely that we are to restore the longer dative
form *thomaidmimm* and the question of rhyme between accented
and unaccented does not arise[1].

Luccreth's other poem, *Conailla Medb / míchuru*, offers many
more difficulties to the translator and all comments made here are
on the basis of a very imperfect understanding. The metre is that
given above as II (c), 2. The line normally consists of two stressed
words, followed by a trisyllable. The syllabic variation may be
illustrated by the following lines, where syllabic length is indicated:

> naisc nuall / fuatachtae   (5)
> cechaing céim / cimbetho   (6).
> timgart cuici / cairdine (7).
> Fo-gert guss / gaile Fergusa   (8).
> For-rácaib fora c[h]laind / croaithlich   (9).

There are in all 72 lines, or 18 quatrains. Lines *b* and *c* rhyme
when the poet finds it convenient: rhyme in this poem is a desirable
ornament not an essential. Phrase is joined to phrase, line to line,
stanza to stanza, by alliterative linking. Of the 71 complete lines
64 end in trisyllables. Of the remaining 7, four, at least, end in words
which were trisyllabic before syncope, e.g. *Nassad ainéoil / airm i
n-ansat*. The other lines offer such textual difficulties that it is not
possible to discuss them at the moment.

Throughout the poem, the poet allows himself to alter the more
general pattern of two stressed words, followed by the *caesura*, followed
by a trisyllable, to the pattern given above as I (c), the metre of *Luin
oc elaib / ungi oc dírnaib* and of *Domhnall Óg*, e.g. *ó Themuir aird /
adbail sochaidi* and the example just quoted *Nassad ainéoil*, and
earlier *Fo-gert guss*, etc. It will be noted that in both types of line
the *caesura* boundary is almost invariably marked by alliteration.

Conailla Medb / míchuru is presented with an interesting prose
comment. Much of the substance of the poem is given in prose,

[1] On the whole it seems best to regard *Femen* as having two stresses and to compare
lines such as *gabálach fiam / Foglas* (:*glas*), for which see above, p. 66.

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but there is additional and very useful information.   The sept dealt
with is the Corcu Solchind and the title of the section is *De causis
quibus exules Aquilonensium ad Muminenses adducti sunt.*   The
Compiler speaks contemptuously of the pronunciation of the ignorant.
He says: *Ba gleorderc in Solchenn, unde rectius Corco Solgind dicti
sunt a poetis, nunc autem ab imperitis Corco hAlchind dicuntur*:
'Solchenn was luminously red, so that they were more correctly
called *Corco Solgind* by the poets; now, however, they are called
Corco Halchind by the unlearned'[1].

This sounds very like Cormac.   Cormac had an excellent knowledge
of Irish and Latin.   He was a keen student of language and when
occasion demanded could also draw upon Greek, Hebrew, Welsh,
Pictish, Scandinavian, English and Frankish.   The comment quoted
above, with its regard for what is said and what is 'correct' is like certain
other entries in the Glossary usually, and doubtless correctly,
attributed to him.   Of the name *Corbmac* he says in his Glossary:
"This now is the correct spelling of the name, that is, with *b* in the
first syllable of the name, not Cormac without *b*"[2].

In tradition Senchán Torpéist is shown as discovering that none
of the poets of Ireland knew *Táin Bó Cúailnge* in its entirety, although
they knew scraps of it.[3]   Luccreth's poem is a perfect contemporary
illustration of such a state of affairs, and lends support to the view
that Senchán played an important role in the evolution of the epic.
His role would be that which I would suggest he played in the
whole genealogical scene: harmonizing the various traditions and
creating some kind of acceptable unity.

Luccreth gives us a side-glimpse into the emotional and political
background to *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, which, however, he does not name
as such.   I try here to give the substance of the poem but a number
of passages are passed over for lack of complete understanding.   In
this abstract amplifications drawn from the accompanying prose are
shown in square brackets.   Seven characters are mentioned and they
may be given in the order of their appearance: Medb, Fergus mac
Roich, Ailill, Conchobor, Fíacc, son of Fergus, Cethern [son of Fintan],
Solchenn [son of Cethern].   The following events are related: Medb
makes evil contracts with Fergus by which he betrays Ulster.   There
is an obscure reference to cattle.   Fergus is a rival to Ailill.   [He

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[1] *ZCP* viii, p. 305.   The author of this etymology is contrasting *Solchenn* or *Solgenn*,
supposedly meaning 'sun-head', with *Salchenn* or *Salgenn* which could only mean
'dirty-head'.   The latter, the interpretation of the *imperiti*, is probably correct.   As
to the form *hAlchind* we may note the use of *h* for *s* in *ní bu hen*, in the same tract
(p. 308).   It is hardly quite certain that this use of *h* goes back to the compiler of the
tract.

[2] *Sanas Cormaic*, 204 (*Anecdota from Irish MSS* iv, p. 18).

[3] The various forms in which this tradition appears is discussed in my *SILH*, p.
166 ff.

fights against his own people for the sake of a woman's body (*ar imthóin mnā*)]. He and his associates were proclaimed by Conchobor and they left Ulster and came to Tara. Fiacc, the fierce warrior-son of Fergus, fought against his father's battalions, and was taken prisoner. Fergus was eventually to die at Látharna. The chain of events leading to his death began in this manner. Fergus through treachery brought about the death of Cethern [son of Fintan]. He did this [through the agency of his son Fer Déodae and] by means of the wood of the rowan tree; [druidic warnings (*tescoscaib*) to Cethern were thereby justified, and a prophecy of his daughter was fulfilled]. In revenge Solchenn [son of Cethern] slew Fiacc. The Ulstermen were outraged at his death, and the family of Cethern was expelled. When they parted from Brí Airige in Ulster they came to an unfamiliar place of assembly [which was Tara. They remained there until the time of Niall mac Echach]. They left Tethba, crossing the river Eithne. They were received all the more readily by Oengus, grandson of Conall Corc, because Tara was thereby deprived of great hosts.

The content of the poem lends support to certain aspects of O'Rahilly's view of the *Táin*[1]. Connacht plays no part. It seems to be implied that Ailill and Medb are king and queen of Leinster, and that the seat of their power is Tara. Most surprising of all, however, is that there is no reference to Cú Chulainn. His part, that of the young defender of Ulster, is here played by Fiacc, son of Fergus. We may, perhaps, assume an early stage in the evolution of the *Táin* where *Cú Chulainn* was a title borne by Fiacc, son of Fergus. This was carried over into the extant *Táin* by creating a deeply sentimental bond between Cú Chulainn and his *poppa* Fergus. This material, and the rhetorics in the extant saga (which are also, I think, to be explained on an accentual basis) are clearly the type of material that Senchán is represented as collecting, the bits and pieces known to one poet-historian or another. Fiacc plays no part in the extant saga, but we may with liklihood see a reference to him in the rhetoric uttered by the Morrígain in which she uses the words *iar Féic muintire do égaib*, 'after the death of Fiacc's people'.[2] But it seems clear that Cú Chulainn, under that name, existed as the Hero in the 'rhetoric' stage. Medb, too, had some connection with Mag nOí,[3] which may connote the geographical area of Connacht, but avoids the historical anachronism implicit in a term meaning 'descendants of Conn'. It is clear that Luccreth knew a tale that showed Fergus dying at Látharna in Ulster which suggests that the extant version of *Aided Fergusa* (with its Connacht location) is secondary.

1 See O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology*, p. 176.
2 *TBC²*, p. 86.
3 Note Medb's reference to Mag nOí, *TBC²*, 1016, and the poet Amargind's reference to Cú Chulainn, 3472.

The tale of a fated death brought about by an enemy, not directly, but treacherously through an agent, and with such an unlikely weapon as the wood of the rowan tree, is at once a reflection of the Nordic story of the death of Balder, and an early stage in the evolution of *Táin Bó Fraích*. The rowan tree, we might hold, is used in the Irish scene, because the mistletoe, the weapon in the Nordic story, was unknown in Ireland. The impression of the tale behind Luccreth's verse is of one with power and dramatic impact. Much of this has survived into the early *Táin*: but the great tale, like much in Irish history, fell victim to the 'harmonizing' of the scholars.

Finally we may come back for a moment to the poem *Cétamon*. The story of the youth of Fionn, in which this poem is incorporated, is found in the MS. Laud 610, which is the sole source for the material with which we have been just dealing, as, indeed, it is for the *Macgnímartha Finn*. Laud 610 claims to draw material from the lost Psaltair of Cashel, allegedly written by Cormac mac Cuilennáin. Senchán is known, from a reference in the Leinster genealogies, to have spoken with authority on the ancestry of Fionn and of Caoilte, and a number of references to Fionn in the genealogies are of such a nature that I would regard them as deriving from the *Cocangab Már*.

It is possible that *Cétamon* too (which is a Leinster poem) has the same line of ancestry as we have supposed for the Genealogies: that is, that it was preserved by Senchán, with other Fionn material, in his *Cocangab Már*, transmitted by Cormac, and (like the material in the Laud genealogies), saved for posterity by the scribe of Laud 610. It may be significant too, that, like Luccreth's verses, the story of the youth of Fionn, has some close affinities with Nordic mythology.

I should like to thank Gordon Quin and the editor of *Ériu* for reading this article and making many helpful suggestions.

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<div align="center">ADDITIONAL NOTE</div>

In emending *buirither* to *buirrithir* (p. 43, § 12 d) I have followed Pokorny, *ZCP* 27, p. 326.

TÍR CUMAILE

THE text printed in *Ancient Laws of Ireland* IV 276–8 under the (factitious) title *Fodla Tíre* was dismissed by Thurneysen, *ZCP* xvi (1926) 191, as 'als Ganzes kein alter Text.' There are, of course, various degrees of antiquity, but I would suggest that Thurneysen was to some extent misled at that time by the mangled form in which the text has been transmitted. The text (most of which was printed in the *Laws* in commentary-size type) contains a number of Old Irish forms, such as *do-formaig* (repeatedly), *donecma*, *ad-cuma*, *cis lir*, and (if the text be sound) the uncommon plural of this, *cid* (= *cit*) *lir*. Further examination of the text reveals, lurking behind scribal garblings, the 3 sg. consuetudinal present of the verb *remi-tá* which is attested, though not abundantly, elsewhere, in *Críth Gablach* (ed. Binchy) ll. 248, 258, and in the Irish Penitential edited by Gwynn, *Ériu* vii 162, iv § 3; other parts of the same verb are to be found in Wb 25ᶜ15, and in the same Penitential iii § 19. All these are of the eighth century. In the circumstances, then, we may justifiably treat the text as Old Irish. Since it is of some interest to the student of early Irish economy, I have re-edited it and translated it afresh, introducing such corrections as seemed necessary and defensible. It has survived in only one manuscript, Trinity College, Dublin, H. 3. 18 pp. 146*b*–147*b*, which at pp. 324–5 supplies a further short text on the same subject, also printed and translated here. This latter, however, cannot be dated with any great probability. It contains two certain O.Ir. forms, both in the same sentence, viz. *midhiter* and *disgnaiter* (a metathesized form of **dichsnaither*, which could be the old prototonic form, deponent, of *di-coissin*)[1]. Against this, the valuation of appurtenances in cows, rather than in *sét*s, would suggest a later date than Text I, and the sentence in which these O.Ir. forms occur may be a quotation, or have been preserved as in amber from an O.Ir. ancestor of the present text. There the question must, unsatisfactorily, be left.

Square brackets indicate editorial insertions; ambiguous and arbitrary abbreviations in the manuscript are indicated by italics.

TEXT I

H.3.18 pp. 146*b*–147*b*.

Cis lir fodla tire? Ni *annsa*: di fhodail. Cadeat? Eatham & aineatham.

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[1] I owe this suggestion to Dr. D. A. Binchy, to whom I am indebted for reading a draft and suggesting a number of improvements to text and translation.

Cis l*ir* [fodla] *for* eatham[ain]?   A teora: eatham remi-bi[a] eatham-[naib] & eatham tulcach & eatham frichnama.

Eatham[b] remi-bi[c] eatham[n]aib cetamus: tir fosad a mbi maith cach maith itir ith & mlicht[d] & lín & glaisine[e] & mil & rú[f] & cumrad, nach eicin do frichnam tuair na slige, na biat glama ann.   Leictir [g]ech allmar ind[g], na toiglean dris na droigean na glesligi — .i. lus lenus a n-ed(h)ach—na (h)om[th]an[n] a moing nach a lai: is[h] e innraic and sin.

Etham taulchach im*murgu*, bid uisci i suidiu[j] & is fuinnside cach 'la maigen[k] and.   Os e[l] maith do cach cloinn & da cach torad olchena.

Etham frichnama: tir inbela son i mbi maith cach clann.

Cid lir fodla antrenni?   A teora[m].   Cadeet? Ni *annsa*: antrenn & anmin & andomain.

Anmin, cote[n]?   Tir rathenmag & ogmag.

Antrenn .i. sliab fhraich & aiteann a suidiu[o].

Andomain: duibtir & moin son.

Cesc: co toimsither[p] tir cumaile?   A grainni[b].   Tri grainne i n-ordlach in[n]raic, se ordlaige i ndorn[q], & da dorn a traigid; se traigtbi i ndeisceim, se deisceimeanda a n-inntrit, se inntrit a lait, se laiti a forraig, se foirrge[r] i n-airceand.   Tir cumaili, da forrach .x. dia fot.

Na se fodla tiri so asrubartmar, cosmail[s] a tomus, ecosmaili a loigi. Etham rem[i]-bi ethamnaib[t], cumal .iiii. bo fichit mblicht a log; etham taulcach, cumal fichit mbo mblicht; etham frichnama, cumal[u] se mbo ndec mblicht a log.   Ainmin, cumal .ui. bo ndec seisc n-aire.   Antren(n)d, cumal da bo ndec seisc n-airi.   Andomain, cumal ocht mbo seisci n-airi.

Cis lir do-formaige*t* loigi forsna tiraib seo?   Ni *annsa*: a oen dec.

Cateatsaide[v]?   Ruud[w], airgetlach, lathrach mailaind, slige, rot, romuir, [s]ruth, roillbe, inber, gelestar, bothar.

Cia mét do-formaige*t* loigi cach ae?

Ma[d] rud cetamus beas ime di clud no coraid, mad[x] in[n]raic do-formaig .x. *seotu*, mad[x] [eis]in[n]raic do-formaig .u. s*eotu*.

Mad argetlach do mein uma no iarainn, do-formaig .u. s*eotu*.

Mad lathrach senmuilaind, do-formaig .u. s*eotu*.

Mad sligi ad-cuma[y] o thir co flaith no mainistir, do-formaig .iii. bu.

Mad romuir [z]con tacma carrac[z] tor[th]ach a tir, cumme do-formaig.

Mad sruth a toib no [i n]-aircind co mbi dira[i]nd lais, is cumma doformaig.

Mad roilbe dano ad-cuma, is cum[m]a do-formaig.

Ma[d] inber don-ecma, it .u. s*eoit* do-formaig.

Mad gelestar nemtraig, it leth .u. sét[a].

---

a reambi   b *followed by erasure*   c reambi   d blicht   e glainsine
f roid   g-g echall ina rind   h as   j suidiug*ad*   k maigin   l ise
m tri   n cotat   o suidiug   p toimsib   q ordl-   r forraig   s cosmaili
t ethamamaib   u cumala   v caitiatsaide   w rund   x ac *added*   y adcumaid,
corrected by Meyer, ZCP xviii 326.   z-z conta cinaid cairac   a s.u

Mad rot n-airceand ro-saig^b rud no romuir no roillbe, is bo do-
formaig.

Mad bothar sl*an*(?) do ascnam geilestar no tire^c bis [i n]-itircein
no slige maire, is colpach do-formaig.

Ite inso^d comperta mbroga fo a luibi^e & a scotha buidi, rath &
ograth. Finit do tir cumaile.

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TEXT II

H.3.18 pp. 324–5.

</div>

.IIII. bai *fich*it ar tir cum*ail*e don etham is ferr, *fich*e bo ar tir
cum*ail*e don etham meodonach, .ui. ba .x. ar tir cum*ail*e don etham
is taire. .II. bo .x. ar tir *cumaile don anetham* is ferr, .x. mbui ar t*ir*
cumaile don [a]netham m*edh*onach .uiii. mba ar t*ir cumaile* don
anetham is taire; uair cach anetham, is a leith re hetham ata, & in
anmin isedh do-ni dethbir a loge: cach anmin otha sin amach do neoch
na fil a tir cum*aile* am*ail* ata cach fid cach seiscend cach moin cach
sliab, is a reir cubuis maithe cach tuaithe lasi ndisg*n*aiter midhiter
mesa: ardmes comaighthech orra.

.IIII. bae ar lanimbe, claide no corad; tri ba ar slighe ma[d] cuma
ro-soich rudh roilbe, & maine roich acht nech'tar de is bo & sam*aisc*(e)
.i. ar lethredh^a; da bai, ar sod muil*inn*, .ii. ba ar mein iarainn, bo ar
sruth cen iascc & bo ar tobur na traighe*n*d ra tuinithe m*eic* nach ui,
cona[d] tri ba decc uile sin d'[fh]orloighib.

Se ba .x. & *fich*e bo & .iiii. ba *fich*it logh tire cum*ail*e dona tri
hethamn*aibh* is ferr; in tan^b imorro is diablad don anmin is comaicenta
dar eisi in etha[i]m is comaicenta, no diablad don anmin is ferr tar
eis in etha[i]m is taire no in anetha[i]m is taire no is comaicenta do,
ocht mba & deich mba & da ba .x. logh tire cumaile dona tri haneth-
main; in ta*n* is diablad don anmin is ferr tar eis an ethaim is taire,
ceitri ba & .u. ba & .ui. ba logh tire cumaile dona tri hanethaimh.

<div align="center">

TRANSLATION I

</div>

How many kinds of land are there? Answer: two kinds. What
kind are they? Cultivable and uncultivable. How many kinds of
cultivable are there? Three: first-class[1] cultivable, and upland
cultivable, and land cultivable by labour.

First-class cultivable firstly: level land in which every good
thing(?)[2] flourishes, both corn and pasture[3] and flax and woad[4] and

---

b -said   c no tir *added*   d andso   e luibid, *with* b *added above*   a lethrudh   b *interlin*

[1] The emendation to *remi-bi* here and below is imposed by the context and supported
by Text II. 'Cultivable land before which there is [other, i.e. better] cultivable' (so
the manuscript text) is clearly unacceptable in a context which requires that the best
cultivable land be referred to.

[2] We might perhaps emend to *torad*, as found below with the middle-grade of culti-
vable land.

[3] Literally 'milk' yielded by pasture. Binchy has suggested that *etham* is a noun
of agency from *ith* 'corn'; its extension to other types of cultivation would be natural
enough. For contexts in which *etham* seems to be grassland, see *Laws* iv 80, 90, 92, 94.

[4] For flax and woad as cultivated plants, see *Studies in Early Irish Law* 36–8.

honey and madder[1] and sweet fruit[2], which requires no application of manure or clearing, in which there are no *glama*[3]. An unbroken(?)[4] horse is loosed into it, and neither briar nor thorn nor burdock(?)[5]— that is, a plant that adheres to clothing—nor thistle[6] sticks to its mane or its tail: it is of full legal standard then.

Upland cultivable land, however, is well-watered, and every other plot therein has ash-trees(?)[7]. And it is good for every plant and every fruit.

Land cultivable by labour: that is land clearable with an axe, in which every plant flourishes.

How many kinds of uncultivable land[8] are there? Three. What kind are they? Answer: rough and very rough and shallow.

Rough [land], what kind is it? Land of ferny plains and untouched(?)[9] plains.

Very rough [land]: e.g. heathery mountain with furze on it.

Shallow [land]: that is black land and turf-bog.

Query: how is land of a *cumal* measured? By grains. Three grains in a standard inch, six inches in a fist and two fists in a foot; six feet in a pace, six paces in an *inntrit*, six *inntrit* in a *lait*, six *lait* in a *forrach*, six *forrach* in an end [of the land of a *cumal*]. The land of a *cumal*, its length is twelve *forrach*[10].

[1] For the cultivation of madder, see *Laws* v 500.

[2] 'Sweet herbs' according to the translators of the *Laws*, but Binchy informs me that it occurs elsewhere in law texts which make it clear that such fruit as blackberries, wild apples and so forth, is meant.

[3] Unexplained and unidentified; in *Laws* translated vaguely as 'sticking plants'; but it is difficult to dissociate this word from *glám (dicenn)*, 'a satire which produces a blemish or blister'. It may here refer to plants whose touch can cause pain or discomfort, exemplified in the following sentence.

[4] *allmar* is found elsewhere as an attribute of horses, see *Contributions s.v.*; it would seem to be based on *allaid* 'wild', compare *altamail* TBC 1351.

[5] So the *Laws*: there seems to be no other example.

[6] For this emendation I am indebted to Professor D. Greene.

[7] No other example of *(f)uinnside* is known, and the translation is that of *Laws*. On general grounds, since ash flourishes on damp ground of middling quality, the meaning seems likely, and for the form compare *dairde, daurde* Sg. 33b13, 38a10. It would seem on this basis that the three-fold division of cultivable land is (a) land completely cleared of timber (b) land of which timber forms half, and (c) land which has all to be cleared. For other examples of such tripartite divisions, see *Liber Hymnorum*[2] I 25 *(móin. min. caill)* and *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* I 113 *(terra plana, aspera, silua)*.

[8] Perhaps we should *anethaman* instead of *antrenni*, though the latter seems an unlikely mistranscription of the former.

[9] I am far from certain that this is the correct translation. It seems to be the same as the place-name *Oghmagh*, but if so, an examination of a soil-map of the Omagh area gives no clue as to why it should be classed as uncultivable.

[10] Atkinson, *Laws* vi 407 *s.v. forrach*, has drawn attention to the grotesque improbabilities of this passage, pointing out that on this basis the 'land of a *cumal*' works out at a little over 2776 statute acres; a *bóaire*, the 'normal person' of early Irish law, is elsewhere *(Crith Gablach* 172) credited with the possession of twenty-one times this quantity of land. If we accept the measurement of the *forrach* given elsewhere *(Laws* III 384) as 144 feet, the 'land of a *cumal*' works out between 34 and 35 statute acres— a rather more plausible figure. Whether figures have been miscopied in this passage, or extra stages intruded from some other source, or both, seems now impossible to determine. *Inntrit* seems not to be attested elsewhere, and *lait* only as a borrowing of Lat. *latus*, with no measurement in question. The pace *(deiscéim)* also is elsewhere *(O'Dav.* 1048) defined, rightly or wrongly, as two and a half feet.

The six kinds of land we have enumerated, their measurement is alike, but their values are dissimilar. First-class cultivable land, its value is a *cumal* of twenty-four milch cows; upland cultivable, a *cumal* of twenty milch cows; land cultivable by labour, its value is a *cumal* of sixteen milch cows. Rough [land], a *cumal* of sixteen dry cows for it. Very rough [land], a *cumal* of twelve dry cows for it. Shallow [land], a *cumal* of eight dry cows.

How many [things] increase the values of these lands? Answer: eleven.

Of what kind are they? A wood, a mine, the site of a mill, a way[1], a road[2], a sea, a stream, a mountain, a river-mouth, a cattle-pond, a cattle-track[3].

How much do the values of each one add?

If it be a wood, firstly, which has a ditch or stone fence, if it be of legal standard[4], it adds 10 *sét*s, if it be not of legal standard, it adds 5 *sét*s.

If it be a mine of copper or iron ore, it adds 5 *sét*s.

If it be the site of an old mill, it adds 5 *sét*s.

If it be a way that extends from [the] land to [the dwelling of] a lord or to a monastery, it adds 3 cows.

If it be a sea, such that productive rock touches its land[5], it adds the same.[6]

If it be a stream at the side or head [of the land], and it has un-appropriated land by it, it adds the same.

If it be a mountain that is there, moreover, it adds the same.

If it be a river-mouth that is there, it is 5 *sét*s it adds.

If it be a cattle-pond that never dries up, it is half of 5 *sét*s.

If it be a fixed road(?)[7] road that goes as far as a forest or the sea or a mountain, it is one cow it adds.

If it be a safe(?)[8] cow-track giving access to a cattle-pond or a remote piece of land or a highway, it is a yearling calf it adds.

These are the criteria of land according to its herbs and yellow flowers, its fern(?) and permanent fern(?).[9] The end of 'land of a *cumal*.'

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1 This is defined, *Cormac* Y § 1082, as one in which two chariots can pass one another.

2 This is defined, *ibid.*, as equal to twice the width of a chariot plus the space occupied by two horsemen.

3 Defined (*ibid.*) as having room for two cows, with their calves, one lengthways, the other athwart the track.

4 I have eliminated the intrusive *ac*, on the grounds that there is no reason to suppose that the extra value added by a fence varied with the legal standing of the possessor (nor is such a limitation given in the case of the other appurtenances): the specifications of the fence are a much more likely basis for variation.

5 Doubtless a rock from which a good harvest of seaweed for fertiliser might be gathered. For the use of the verb *do-acmaing*, cf. *Laws* v 484 'cairge na tacumainget tir'.

6 *Laws*, here and in the three following cases, read *cumaile/cumala* for *cumme/cumma*, and translate accordingly. The context renders this highly improbable.

7 I do not know what is meant by *airceand* 'fixed' in this context.

8 The translation is conjectural. *Laws* reads *slige* and translates 'road-way'.

9 Translation conjectural.

TRANSLATION II

Twenty-four cows for land of a *cumal* of the best cultivable land, twenty cows for land of a *cumal* of middle-grade cultivable land, sixteen cows for land of a *cumal* of the lowest-grade cultivable land. Twelve cows for land of a *cumal* of the best uncultivable land, ten cows for land of a *cumal* of middle-grade uncultivable, eight cows for land of a *cumal* of the lowest grade uncultivable. For all uncultivable land is [assessed] by reference to cultivable, and the rough land is what makes the difference in their value: all other rough land apart from that, insofar as it is not in the land of a *cumal*, such as any wood, any marsh, any turf-bog, any mountain, it is according to the conscience of the men of standing of every *tuath* in which it lies that [their] assessments are made: the arduous assessment of neighbours [falls] on them.

Four cows for a full fence, ditch or stone wall; three cows for a way if it goes equally as far as a wood [and] a mountain, and if it goes only as far as either of them, i.e. separately, a cow and a two-year-old heifer; two cows for a mill-weir, two cows for an iron-mine, a cow for a stream without fish and a cow for a spring that does not dry up while in the possession of son or grandson[1]: all of which amounts to thirteen cows in additional value.

Sixteen cows and twenty cows and twenty-four cows are the value of land of a *cumal* of the best cultivable land; when equivalent rough land is doubled in quantity in lieu of the equivalent cultivable land, or the best rough land is doubled in quantity in lieu of the worst cultivable land or its equivalent, eight cows and ten cows and twelve cows is the value of land of a *cumal* of the three kinds of uncultivable[2] land; when the best rough land is doubled in quantity in lieu of the worst uncultivable, four cows and five cows and six cows is the value of land of a *cumal* of the three kinds of uncultivable land.

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[1] That is, for a period of three lives.

[2] Read perhaps *ethamain*? The general sense of the passage seems to be that a doubling in quantity of the 'rough' land (which here seems to be distinct from that in question in Text I) entails halving the value of the land. But I have been unable to work out the precise arithmetical basis of the passage.

TOPOGRAPHICAL NOTES—I

CERMNA IN MEATH[1]

1. Cermna and Cerna

An inland district in eastern Meath, situated several miles north-east of Tara, was known as Cerna.[2] It is mentioned in several early sagas[3] and is given good recognition in the two recensions of the Dindshenchas.[4] In the Rennes Dindshenchas the article on Cerna not only offers an etymological explanation of the name but also adds that Cerna was the place of burial of a (legendary) warrior named Cerna Cas mac Cairpri.[5] The LL recension gives the place an equally imaginary eponym, Cerna mac Ailella Olcháin. In a stanza which follows a short prose passage (in accordance with the general pattern of the earlier recension) nine other sons of Ailell Olcháin are enumerated with Cerna[6]. These ten names are well attested as place-names and probably all belong to Mag mBreg. The first of the nine names listed after Cerna in the LL stanza is Cermna. This name, which is echoed in Irish literature down to the seventeenth century, is (to my mind) one of the most interesting of ancient Irish place-names. It refers to an unidentified territory that is often mentioned in association with Tara.[7]

In the LL recension of the Dindshenchas the article on Cerna reads:

Cerna. Unde nominatur. Ni handsa. Cerna dano mac Ailella Ólcháin ro hadnacht [and]. Unde poeta.

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[1] I am indebted to the Editor for some useful suggestions.

[2] The name is preserved, as first suggested by O'Curry, in the anglicised form *Carnes* in the names of two adjoining townlands in the barony of Duleek Upper, see Hog. *Onom*. s.v. Cerne; P. Walsh, *Irish Men of Learning*, 233–4; see also Ordnance Survey, Meath, Sheet 27 (South).

[3] References given in Hog. *Onom*.

[4] First Recension, represented in full by the LL text only, and Second Recension, preserved in BB, Lec. and other MSS, see Gwynn, *Met. Dinds*. v 11 ff.

[5] Cerna .i. caer nia, daig is and atá primreilicc airthir Midhe ⁊ Breg, ⁊ dano is and roadnacht Cerna Cas mac Cairpri mhic Etaini ⁊ a athair (see Stokes, *The Rennes Dindsenchas* § 115, 66–7).

[6] The place-name Cerna is evidently also the source of the name of one of the reputed sons of Eremón, see O'Brien, *Corp. Gen. Hib*. 137 b 18. The Dindshenchas is related to parts of the onomastic system used by the pseudo-historians, see, e.g., *Lebor Bretnach* (ed. Van Hamel), § 4 . . . et is e ainm cach fir dib fil fora fearand; cf. LL 1727 Cúalo ⁊ Blad ⁊ Ebliu ni fargabsat cland acht a n-anmand for prímsliabaib. See esp. *Met. Dinds*. v 100–114.

[7] The territory in which the well-known Dún Cermna (in Corco Loígde) was situated was sometime known as Cermna, see *Suidigud Tellaich Temra* § 27 ' . . . a Clériu, a Cermnu, a Raithlind . . . a Loch Léin' (*Ériu* iv 148). O'Rahilly in his well-documented article on Dún Cermna in JCHAS XLIV (1939) 16–20 seems to have failed to recognise the territorial name Cermna. In a reference to the battle of Cermna fought by Tuathal Techtmar against Caicher (see *Geneal. Tracts* 66; Lec. 9 r. col. 2 l. 1.) he adds (p. 18) the note 'Here Cermna = Dún Chermna'.

Cerna Cermna Coprach cá[1]
Calland Mellend Daphilla
Crinna Cerrend co roí rot
Cuillend cairpdech is chaemCholt[2]
da cóiciur sin sēgda maín
do šíl Ailella Olchaín

(LL 22327–34).[3]

A quatrain in a long poem which belongs to the second recension
of the Dindshenchas is based on the above stanza. The author of
the poem took nine of the ten place-names (or supposed eponyms)
in ll. 1–4 of the stanza and re-arranged them to form ll. 1, 3, 4 of
the quatrain in question. He omitted one of the first two names
(Cerna, Cermna) which he found before him in the original (= LL)
stanza, and the fact that he was merely enumerating place-names
(and was not concerned with eponyms) probably influenced his choice.
Gwynn in editing this poem, which he entitled *Temair V* went against
the evidence of all but one of the MSS by giving preference to the
variant Cermna over Cerna. His text (*Met. Dinds.* i 38, 9–12) reads:

Cermna, Caprach, is Callann
Mag mBreg co n-ilar drummann[4]
Cnoc Dabilla, Mag Mellenn
Crinna, Cerrenn, Colt, Cuillend[5].

With the introduction of one new name, *Mag mBreg*, this re-cast
verse contains the same number of place-names, but while we cannot
say that the author of *Temair V* wished to maintain a count of ten
place-names the omission of one of the names given in the original
stanza can hardly have been either casual or due to metrical require-
ments. Cerna and Cermna occur as variants also in two other texts
to be discussed below. The retention by the author of *Temair V*
of only one of these two names probably indicates that their confusion

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[1] The word *cá* is obscure. There is a word *ca* (possibly a reduced form of *cáe/cái*)
which is explained in glossaries as 'house' (see RIA *Contributions* C 10.5) e.g. 'cāi nō
ca .i. teach' (and considered to be the second element in the compound *cerdcha*). As
Coprach (later *Cabrach*) looks like a genitive perhaps the ending of the first line might
be explained (though with diffidence) as a case of inversion 'common in archaic Irish
verse' like *i nEchdromma dairiu*; *i ndúleman dáil* (see *Ériu* vii 239) and that *Coprach
ca* (= *cái Coprach*) would mean something like *tech/ráith C(h)oprach*.
[2] The phrase *co roí rot* and the adj. *cairpdech* would seem to show that ll. 1–4 originally
formed a quatrain which simply enumerated place-names without any reference to
eponyms. Ll. 5–6 were probably added by a reviser whose purpose it was to derive
these place-names from eponyms he claimed to be buried (*ségda maín* 'fair the treasure!')
in Cerna.
[3] The stanza was printed by Stokes in *The Bodleian Dinnshenchas* 46.
[4] For the metre, see *Met. Dinds.* i 75.
[5] Gwynn when he published *Temair V* did not know that this quatrain was adapted
from the stanza on Cerna in the earlier recension, see *Met. Dinds.* v 126.

had begun in the tenth century, as the poem apparently is to be assigned (on internal evidence) to the late tenth or early eleventh century.[1] Which of the two names (Cerna, Cermna) did the author of *Temair V* retain? We should expect it to be Cerna since this is the name that the original article treats of, and consequently is the leading word in the accompanying stanza. As Cermna (in Meath), which gets only a passing mention in the earlier recension of the Dindshenchas, appears (as far as the official poets and historians were concerned) to have been a name of no importance by the time that the second recension was compiled it is possible that the author of *Temair V* substituted the better known name Mag mBreg.[2]

In the Dindschenchas poem on Carn Conaill it is related that some of the Fir Bolg from the territory of the Picts (*a crích Cruithne*) came to the high-king Cairbre Nia Fer in Meath (*Mide*) and asked him for a grant of the best lands in Mag mBreg to settle on:

> Conaitchetar ferand find
> a n–as dech Breg, búaine dind:
>
> . . . .
>
> Óenach Tailten, treb $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Cherna} \\ \text{Chermna} \end{array} \right.$
>
> . . . .
>
> ba hed íath conaitchetar
> (*Met. Dinds.* iii 440, 13–20).

LL is the only manuscript of those used by Gwynn that reads Cerna (in the third line above) and as the LL text is by far the oldest its authority on such a question as the variants *Cerna/Cermna* must, I believe, at least balance the evidence of the later manuscripts[3] (all, incidentally, written by Northern-Half scribes).

The confusion of the names Cerna and Cermna in copies of the Carn Conaill poem was probably more general than the present

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[1] The poem is to all intents and purposes an eulogy of a king named Maelsechlaind, presumably Maelsechlaind Mór who reigned from 980 to 1022 (see *Met. Dinds.* i 79, n. on l. 73; also *Ériu* xxi 142). It consists mainly of an array of place-names intended to convey an idea of Maelsechlaind's dominion (note that the same method is used in part (ll. 29–36) of an elegy on Maelsechlaind Mór published by J. Carney in *Ériu* xxi 142–7). The 'prose' Dindshenchas is generally considered to belong to 'the earliest part of the Middle Irish period, perhaps between 950 and 1000 A.D.' (see *Early Irish Poetry* (1965) ed. J. Carney, 62). If *Temair V* was compiled sometime during the reign of Maelsechlaind Mór the article on Cerna in the LL Dindshenchas might reasonably be assigned to the Old Irish period.

[2] The author of *Temair V* must have been familiar with the Mag mBreg region for he made the significant change of adding topographical detail to some of the names: *co n-ilar drummann* (l. 10), *cnoc* and *mag* (l. 11). The expletive *co n-ilar drummann* probably shows that the author did not know the derivation of the name Mag mBreg.

[3] In the second recension of the Dindshenchas the name Cermna occurs only in the phrase *co Cerainn Cermna* (*Met. Dinds.* iii 40, 22) and as a variant of *Cerna* (ibid. 440, 17).

position of LL versus the other MSS would suggest.   This confusion
is expressed in the variation *Cermna nó Cerna* in a late text of the
introductory prose summary which some reviser prefixed to the Carn
Conaill poem in the second recension of the Dindshenchas.   The
passage is cited by the genealogist Duald Mac Firbis from his grand-
father's text of LG as part of the history of the Fir Bolg:

> . . . agus ar ttecht go Cairbre dhóibh iarraid an ferann ba ferr sa
> Midhe air, mar do bhí, Ráith Cealtchair, Ráith Comair, Cnodhbha,
> Brug Mná Ealcmhair, Taillte[1] Cermna[2] nó Cerna, Tlachtgha,   ⁊c
> (*Geneal. Tracts* 102).[3]

This MacFirbis text of the poem on Carn Conaill is, as far as I
know, the only place where *Cermna* and *Cerna* are set down together
as variants.   The reviser of this passage when faced with the regular
confusion between these two place-names in copies of *Carn Conaill*
and in other verse texts decided to add the variant *Cerna* to *Cermna*
of the original version (= e.g. Lec. 495r a l. 2).   Whether he under-
stood Cermna and Cerna as different place-names or as variant
forms of one name need not concern us here.

The LL Dindshenchas and the genealogies contain only incidental
references to Cermna in Meath.   Likewise, Cermna in Corco Loígde
is a very sparsely attested name; it has survived in a reference to the
battle of Cermna (fought by Tuathal Techtmar against Caicher),[4]
also in a list of places given in *Suidiugad Tellaich Temra* (see p. 87 n. 7)
and of course in the name Dún Cermna.   Cerna, on the other hand,
was a place that received clear recognition in the Dindshenchas and
its name may have contributed to the survival in the literary tradition
of the similar name Cermna (in Meath).   In the Middle Irish poem
attributed to Fland Mainstrech († 1056) on the descendants of Aed
Sláine (in Meath) there is no reference to Cermna, but Cerna is men-
tioned twice (see LL 24067, 24166). By the eleventh century is seems
that, as far as the litterati were concerned, Cermna in Meath was an
unrecognised name or a name of no importance.   Its survival in the
literature, as an echo of an ancient territory that was associated with
the kingship, with Tara, and with Mag mBreg, is due to its later
emergence as a poetic name in Northern-Half compositions[5] and
is an interesting example of the archaism of the Irish literary
tradition.

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[1] Comma omitted in MS., see also O'Curry's transcript RIA 23 P I 66, 17–8.
[2] Hog. *Onom.* defines Cermna as 'ferann i Mide.'   The phrase refers to all the lands
sought by the Fir Bolg.
[3] Printed also by Seán Ó Hógáin in *Conntae an Chláir* 3.
[4] *Ro fich cath Cermna fri Caicher*, Lec. 9r a 1 (cited by O'Rahilly, *loc. cit.*, see p. 87 n. 7
above); cf. *Geneal. Tracts* 66.   Cermna is said to have been killed in his fort during a
battle known as Cath Dúin Chermna, see LL 2104; cf. *Corp. Gen. Hib.* 147 a 16.
[5] There are also two instances (cited below) in Fenian literature: *Duan. Finn* xxix
31; *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne* (ed. Ní Shéaghdha), 179, 1584.

2.   Cera in or near Cermna

A statement in the Dindshenchas poem on Cnogba gives us some idea of the location of Cermna in relation to the Boyne.   Óengus mac in Óc, whose dwelling was at Newgrange, 'came southward to Ceru Cermna' at Samain to play with his fellow-warriors:

> Dolluid Mac in Óc ergna
> fodess co Cerainn Cermna
> 'sin tsamuin teintig thríallaig
> do chluiche fri comhḟiannaib
> (*Met. Dinds*. iii 40, 21–4)

As Gwynn records no variant reading for *Cermna* (l.22) we can assume that the text gives the authentic reading of the second part of the name of the place meant by the author.   Our difficulty then is mainly with *Cerainn*.   Gwynn, as his translation shows, takes *Cerainn* to be the acc./dat. form of *Cera*.   While it seems quite likely that Cera (in Meath) is the place intended, the form Cerainn presents some difficulty, for there is sufficient evidence available from other texts to show that the place-name Cera is not a nasal stem but probably an -*io*-stem.[1]   The phrase *co Cerainn Cermna* implies some connection between the two places intended, but though the identification of the first name as *Cera* may appear doubtful in view of the nasal ending we have, I believe, independent evidence to suggest that there was some association (or perhaps confusion) between Cera and Cermna. This evidence is in the form of two references which appear in a small section of the tract on *forsluinte* in the Lagin genealogies. In Rawl. B 502 this section reads (in part):

Forsluinte Húa Téig: Dál ṁBirnn di Osairgiu .i. Húi Laíg . . . Húi Móenacháin a Ceru . . . .

Instead of the last name here the Lec. version gives the variants Húi Maíli-dubáin a Cermna nó Húi Manandáin a Cera (*Corp. Gen. Hib.* 125 a 30–3).

The association of the two place-names Cera and Cermna as suggested by the verse *fodess co Cerainn Cermna* may be expressed as 'Cera in Cermna' or 'Cera of Cermna'.   The townlands of Carnes (< Cerna) E. & W. lie almost directly south of Newgrange (the dwelling of Mac in Óc) and since 'Cera Cermna' lay in the same direction (as is clear from the last quatrain cited above) we can see that geographical position as well as similarity of name-forms contributed to the scribal confusion of Cerna and Cermna.   The location

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[1] Exx. are: *acc.* dar Cera, LL 19598; *gen.* Cath Cera, *Geneal. Tracts* 68, crích C(h)era, LL 30387, *Geneal. Tracts* 71 (cf. 76), Findloch Cera, LL 21017, Partaridi Cera, *Geneal. Tracts* 178, rí Cera, LL 14883, sechnón Cera, CCellaig 163; *dat.* a Cera (Ceru), *Corp. Gen. Hib.* 125 a 33, i Cera, LL 23603.

of Cera and Cermna, which (unlike Cerna) were names of larger
regions and had fallen into disuse before the introduction of the
baronies, cannot now be precisely determined.[1]

3.   Cermna and the kingship

The 'palpably artificial legend' of two brothers, Cermna (al.
Cermna Find) and Sobairche, jointly ruling Ireland from their respec-
tive forts is told in *Do Flaithiusaib hÉrenn* and in the genealogies.[2]
In view of the existence of two places named Cermna, one in the
Corco Loígde territory, the other in Mag mBreg, and considering
that several personages are duplicated in the Érainn genealogies and
in the list, or pedigrees, of the kings of Ireland (or Tara)[3] one would
expect the possibility of some reference to the reign of Cermna Find
(of Dún Cermna) being attracted by the place-name Cermna in Meath.
Such attraction may indeed be the source of the following two
references which connect the supposed joint-ruler in the South in
some way with Tara:

(1) It is stated in LG that the joint-ruler Cermna killed Eochu
Étgudach in the battle of Tara (*is lasin Cermna darochair Eochu
Étgudach i cath Temra*, LL 2101–2).

(2) The other reference to Cermna (al. Cermna Find) in association
with Tara is found in *Cath Ruis na Ríg*.   In the episode dealing with
the reconciliation of Conchubar mac Nessa and his grandson Erc
mac Cairpri the third quatrain of a poem spoken by Conchubar to
Erc runs:

> Do gessaib ríg Temrach tair
> a flaith Cermna can ni clé—
> airdairc scél scaílter fá chách—
> cocad ruind co bráth ce bé.[4]
>
> (LL 23249–52).

These two references are probably the earliest indications of the
development of the idea of the existence of some connection between
the personal name Cermna and Tara.   Cermna in Meath, situated
near or perhaps around Tara, must have been the attracting element
between the personal name Cermna and Tara.   This attraction to

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[1] In the late version of *Oided Con Culainn*, *Ceura* occurs for *Cerm(n)a* of the earlier
version in the account of the districts in Meath pillaged by Queen Meave's army (see
Van Hamel's ed., 76).

[2] See LL 2098 ff.; *Corp. Gen. Hib.* 156 a 32.   The origin of the legend is briefly
discussed by O'Rahilly in his article on Dún Cermna (see n. 7 above).

[3] See O'Rahilly, *EIHM* 202–3; cf. L. Gwynn's Introd. to *De Síl Chonairi Móir*, in
Ériu vi 130–33; P. Walsh, *Irish Men of Learning* 233–34.

[4] '[It is] of the prohibitions of the king of Temair in the East/since the reign of
Cermna without partiality—/famous the tale which is spread through all—/to fight
against us till doom, howsoever it be' (Hogan's trans. in his ed. of the tale in RIA
Todd Lect. Ser. Vol. iv 57).

Tara followed, as an apparently natural result, the personification (by false eponymy) of the second element in Dún Cermna as a joint-ruler of Ireland. The next stage in the history of the place-name Cermna (in Meath) seems to have developed quite late—it is the use of the name in sixteenth and seventeenth century verse to denote an ancient kingdom with which, according to the poets, some Northern-Half families could claim association; indeed in one instance the name Cermna is, like Banba, a poetic name for the whole of Ireland. Examples of this figurative use of the name Cermna occur in three well-known late poems, viz. two of the late sixteenth- or early seventeenth century, and another composed in 1653 or soon after. Probably the earliest of these is a poem by Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird on Cormac Ó hEadhra († 1612), lord of Leyney in Co. Sligo. Here the name Cearmna signifies an ancient kingdom over which the O'Hara is considered to have sovereignty; and the Northern-Half connection is further indicated by the parallel reference to the Leamhain (an old name for the Upper Erne)[1]:

> Dlighidh Luighne na learg bhfionn
> tre a ndearna dhí do dhíchioll
> guidhe le Cormac Cearmna,[2]
> donnshlat muighe mínLeamhna.[3]
>
> (*O'Hara*, 3107–10)

A clearer example of the poetic use of the place-name is found in a poem addressed by Gofraidh Mac an Bhaird to the wife of Brian Mac Mathghamhna (*ob. post* 1622). In this case, Cearmna denotes an ancient territory over which the MacMahons, a Northern family, could rightly claim to be lords. In fact, the feminine gender in *na seinChearmna* suggests that the name may be used here as an equivalent (or at least on the analogy) of Éire[4] (or Banbha):

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[1] For other references to the northern Leamhain in poetic appellations, see *O'R. Poems* 305; and for the location of this river see *Celtica* iii 174–5 and *Ériu* xi pt. i, 31 (§ XV).

[2] The alliteration suggests that the title may be an echo of a description in the Ossianic lay on the battle of Gabhair:

> Cruinnighit Ulaidh Eamhna
> fa Cairbri chosgrach Chearmna . . .
> (*Duan. Finn* xxxix 31).

Here 'Cormac Chearmna' is just a variation of the description 'Cormac na . . . Teamhrach', ibid. 30.

[3] 'Fair-sloping Luighne should pray for Cormac of Cearmna owing to the devotion he showed for her, the plain of the smooth-gliding Leamhain' (McKenna's trans. ibid.).

[4] e.g. slóg sádal na senHerend, LL 25543. Other exx. of the (mainly alliterative) use of the adj. *sen–* with place names are: tar senBregmaig, *SG* 95.21; dar slimgruad saer senCharmuin, LL 25136; cuire saorchlann seinEamhna, *Éigse* xiii 205; Sengarmun, LL 25090; i cend Sleibe senMairgge, LL 25473; with population names, senConnachta, *Geneal. Tracts*, Index.

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Fir dár chóir cáin na seinChearmna[1]
slóigh cleithreamhra do-bhir do dháimh an dagh-tharbha
ó tád bhar ndá chrú 'n-a rian riothchobhra
do chlú is ionchomhdha do Bhrian Mhág Mhathghamhna.

                                    (*Aith. D.* I **19**, 13).

The third example I have of the figurative use of Cearmna is in accentual verse, in a kenning which seems to indicate a wider application of the name than that in the foregoing two quotations. The suggestion that Cearmna in this instance is a poetic name for Ireland is supported by the reference to Banbha which precedes it in a similar context. This poem is a lament on the departure from Ireland (in 1653) of Philip O'Reilly, a leader of the 1641 rising in Ulster; and the Northern-Half association is evident in the names. The passage in question runs (in part):

        ó rí Franc fuair geall na Banbha

           . . . .

        fuair go haoibh ó rí na Sbáinne
        muirn is onóir, comhól is cádhas,
        nach bhfuair aoinneach don chraoi-se[2] Chearmna[3]
        ó d'imigh Ó Néill nó séun Síl Dálaigh
                   (*O'R. Poems*, 3322–27).

The name Banba, as pointed out by M. A. O'Brien in *Ériu* xi 167–8, was originally applied to Mag mBreg (or the part of it between Tara and the sea). Other place-names in Mag mBreg are, like that name itself, often used in verse to denote the whole of Ireland e.g., Bóinn, Colt, Cerna and Tailtiu.[4] The use of Cearmna in the O'Hara poem as a poetic name for an unidentified region in the Northern-Half evidently carries with it an echo of the association of Cermna with Tara and Mag mBreg,[5] for the O'Haras claimed an ancient connection with Tara and Mag mBreg.[6] This connection is alluded to in the fourth quatrain of the same poem:

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[1] The primary use of the adj. *sein-* here is metrical, but it also aptly conveys the idea of Cearmna as being an ancient patrimony (of a leading Northern-Half family). McKenna's trans. of the quatrain is: 'Since the families of you both are quick in giving help, heroes whose due is the tribute of ancient Cearmna, hosts stout of spear who give good profits to poets, it is Brian Mág Mathghamhna's duty to maintain thy fame'.

[2] Perhaps for *chrígh-se*. The MS. reading, cited by Carney, is *crí*.

[3] The metre would suggest that the pronunciation of the name here is Cheárma [X'aːrmə]. For this form see also notes 22 and 37.

[4] See Hog. *Onom.*, O'Hara 2761, LL 16994, 24067, 24080, 24103, 24144.

[5] An association expressed also in *Duan. Finn* and in *Tór. Dhiar. agus Ghráinne*, see n. 20 above.

[6] The two branches of the Luighne (>'Leyney'), 'the Meath one and the Sligo one', had, no doubt, at some earlier epoch formed a single people, situated one knows not where, which had broken into two parts' (see *O'Hara* xvi); see also *Ériu* xiv 146 n. 1.

Bheith lán do ghuasacht ma a ghoimh
fiu an chomaoin do chur orthoibh
clanna úirEadhra ó iath Bhreadh
fan fiar clúimhearla coillteadh.[1]

Banba became a literary name for Ireland during the development
of the LG pseudo-history but the name Cermna owes its survival to a
more gradual evolution.   Cermna appears to have disappeared in late
medieval times as a place-name but survived precariously in literary
allusions, and eventually emerged as a poetic name for the kingdom
of Ireland (or at least as a name associated in the minds of the poets
with the kingship).   Just as the personification (in the form of king
Cermna) of the second element in the name Dún Cermna resulted
in the attraction of the personal name Cermna into association with
Tara, owing to the proximity of Cermna in Meath, so also (it seems)
the association of Cermna (both as a personal name and as a place-
name) with Tara and Mag mBreg brought about the poetic extension
of the place-name Cermna to mean something like the equivalent
of Mag mBreg, or even the whole of Ireland.[2]   Another factor which
contributed not only to the literary survival of the place-name
Cermna (in Meath) but also to the poetic extension was the mention
of Cermna in association with Tara and its king, with Mag mBreg
and   Mide   in   formulae   like   the   following   from   *Tóruigheacht
Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne* (see ed. Ní Shéaghdha, 177, 1583):

Agus do éirigheadar Fiana Éireann ar thaoibh Mhic
Lughach do éirgheadar fir Bhreagh ⁊ Mhidhe ⁊ Chearmna ⁊
Colamhna na Teamhrach ar thaoibh Chairbre . . . Agus táinic
Cairbre Lifeachair mac Cormaic ⁊ fir Bhreagh ⁊ Mhidhe ⁊
Chearmna ⁊ Colamhna tinniosnacha na Teamhrach timcheall
na bruighne ort-sa.

[1] 'That the vigorous race of Eadhra from the Land of Breagha are full of anxiety
about his (i.e. Cormac's) affliction should make us love that folk, a folk before whom
the forests bow down their shaggy brows' (McKenna's trans. ibid. p. 251).

[2] A series of laments for Niall Glúndubh († 919), ascribed to his widow Gormlaith,
includes the well-known poem beginning *Folamh anocht Dún Chearmna* (see *KMMisc.*
350–2; *Irish Syllabic Poetry*, 24–5). This is the only poem in the series that does not
contain a reference to Niall, but its diction is clearly in harmony with the style of the
other poems (see also *Ériu* xvi 189–99). Bergin suggested (but his MS read Dún
Chearma) that *Cearma* might be a mis-reading for Cerna in Meath. He could not, of
course, have been unaware of the existence of the famous Dún Cermna in the Corco
Loígde territory and his suggestion of a Meath setting for this lament was undoubtedly
based on the associations of Gormlaith with Tara and on the opening lines of the poem
itself:

> Folamh anocht Dún Chearm(n)a
> do Ráith Teamhra is cúis bhaoghail.

If this poem belongs to the original series put in the mouth of Gormlaith, 'bean . . .
Laighneach Mhidheach' (*KMMisc.* 352, 6), then the name Dún Chearmna is here a
poetic title for the fort of the dead Niall and carries an echo of the name of that ancient
territory frequently associated with Tara.

In view of the association of the vague name Cermna (in Meath) with the much more specific names Temair, Mag mBreg and Mide it can reasonably be suggested that the author of *Temair V* substituted *Mag mBreg* for *Cermna* (and that he accordingly retained the well-defined and well-attested name Cerna). In the passages quoted above from *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne* the names Breagha and Cearmna appear to be not much more than elegant variants of *Midhe*. The author of *Temair V*, writing almost a thousand years ago, must have had a much better idea of what territory was originally meant by Cermna.[1] He evidently understood the then familiar *Mag mBreg* as a legitimate poetical, if not a geographical, equivalent of the ancient name Cermna.

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TOMÁS Ó CONCHEANAINN

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[1] The name Cermna has not been explained. In RIA *Contributions* C, fasc. i col. 141.14 it is suggested that the word may be a gen. sg. form. It occurs as a variant gen. form of the place-name Cerman (al. Cermun, Carmun [al. Cairmen, see *Met. Dinds.* iii 2 ff]) in the Dindshenchas poem on Bairend Chermain, see *Met. Dinds.* iii 88, variae lectiones.

TOPOGRAPHICAL NOTES—II

MAG FEMIN, FEMEN, AND SOME EARLY ANNALS

IN an etymological note (*ZCP* xiv 323–4), the late Professor M. A. O'Brien suggests that Mag Femin (Femen) derives from L. *fēmina* and that here we have a later substitute for early Mag na mban. Cf. Slíab na mban which lies close by. O'Brien holds that 'this nomenclature is no doubt connected with the arrival of Latin speaking Gauls at a late period into this part of the country'.[1] It seems that this etymology is open to objection on four counts. (1) The form Femen by itself occurs frequently in both prose and verse in the earliest texts (LL 328 b 28; Murphy *EIL* 76.14; AU 446, 490; 573 LU 10969; *Anecd.* iii 57.10; 60.5; 61.25; Lec 287 Va 5 etc.). That the appearance of Femen alone is merely the use of a shortened form of Mag Femin for poetical purposes, as O'Brien suggests (*ZCP* xiv 330), is highly unlikely in view of the examples from early prose texts. Needless to say Femen (< L. *fēmina*), standing alone as a placename, would give little sense. (2) Femen < *fēmina* should give an ā-stem in Irish. Femen, however, is an ō-stem throughout (g. Femin, AU 446, 490, 573; AI 447; 573; LL 328 b 28 etc,; d. Fem(i)un, Femon, LU 10969; Murphy *EIL* 76.14; O'Dav. 51, 99; *Anecd. loc. cit.* etc.). (3) Femen was an extensive and densely populated area and it is highly unlikely that a late Latin borrowing would gain currency as the general name for such an extensive region. (4) The implication of O'Brien's etymology and of its further explanation is that Femen (Mag Femin) is unique as a placename. This is not so. There is at least one other Femen lying in the territory of Brega. It may be added that while Mag na mban is a typical *bérla filed* kenning for Mag Femin, the reverse is most unlikely. O'Brien's etymology is then seriously open to question; unfortunately, I have no alternative suggestion.

Femen in Brega is well attested though the more important annalistic examples seem to have escaped Hogan (*Onomast.* 409a). His only example is from the Lec. Lebar Gabála, which I give in full.

> *An bliadain iarsin dochear Fulman ⁊ Mantan i cath*
> *Femin a mBreagaib la hEremón* (Lec 287 V a 5).

This may well correspond to LL 1960:

> *Aided Fulmán co feraib | la hÉrimón ic Slemain.*

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[1] Here O'Brien appears to be under the influence of MacNeill's theory that the Éoganacht arrived in Ireland after the Roman conquest of Gaul, *Journal of the Ivernian Society* iii (1910–11) 158–9; *Phases of Irish history* (Dublin 1919) 127–8. T. F. O'Rahilly, *Goidels and their predecessors* 42 f.; *EIHM* 199–200, rejects these 'speculations' in favour of equally speculative views.

There is a number of annalistic references to Femen in Brega. The first occurs in AU s.a. 446 (*prima manus*):

> *Bellum Femhin in quo cecidit filius Coerthin filii Coelboth.*
> *Alii dicunt de Chruithibh fuisse.*

An inflated version of this entry occurs in *Ann. Inisf.* s.a. 447:

> *Cath Maige Femin eter Mumnechu ꝟ Laigniu in quo cecidit*
> *Mc. Cárthinn meic Coelbath qui iecit genus la(gin).*

The annals are in disagreement as to the identity of Mac Cárthinn. Some (CS, AClon) seems to identify him with a son of Cáildub (= Cóe-lub), son of Niall Nóigiallach (cf. R 139 b 52 = *Corp. Gen.* 133; *ZCP* viii 293.4). Others, such as AU, hold him to be of the Cruithne. Now, as the late Liam Ó Buachalla pointed out (*JCHAS* lvi 88), there are some persons called Cóelboth in Munster genealogical texts, especially one Cóelboth who was ancestor of the Múscraige of Femen. A person called Níall occurs as the common ancestor of the Múscraige Treithirne and Múscraige Airthir Femin (LL 324 b 31–61; 326 g 37 = *Corp. Gen.* 373; 386; Lec. 106 Rc 8–43). Cóelboth and Mac Cáirthinn occur as his grandsons but their *floruit* is to be placed no earlier than *circa* 600 A.D. It is not possible then to identify this Cóelboth or any other of the name in the Munster genealogies with the Cóelboth of the annalistic text. There is another reason for suggesting that this entry does not belong originally to Munster. No Munster entry occurs in the subsequent annals for another fifty years and even that (AU s.a. 490, 491 etc.) seems to be an interpolation from saga material.

A more plausible explanation is that of Seán Mac Airt (*Annals of Inisfallen* 589) who suggests that he may be connected with the Leinster dynastic family Úi Enechglais. Mac Airt points to the Ogam inscription found near Duleek a few miles from Slane and Knowth (*Corpus inscriptionum insularum celticarum* i No. 40) which is to be rendered Mac Cáirthinn of the Úi Enechglais. The Úi Enechglais were a powerful Leinster dynastic family but they were later displaced and greatly reduced. It seems that in this entry we have a very early historical reference to a struggle waged in Brega by a leading Leinster dynast. The redactor of the Munster annals confused Femen in Brega with the much better known Femen in Munster and wrongly elaborated the entry in an attempt to fill in the vacant space in early Munster history. Whether or not the Múscraige genealogies already referred to came under the same influence is difficult to say.

Another entry which has reference to Femen occurs in AU s.a. 573 (*prima manus*):

> *Bellum Feimhin in quo uictus est Colman Modicus filius*
> *Diarmado ꝟ ipse euasit.*

Ann. Tig. (*RC* xvii 150) state that the battle was won by Cairpre
Cromm mac Criadáin (mac Crimthainn, CS), king of Munster and it
adds a quatrain of *Cóir Anmann* type on Cairbre's name-getting.
(Cf. Lis L. 96–97.) In *Ann. Inisf.* s.a. 573 the entry has reached an
even more elaborate form. It is stated that Colmán Bec was slain
by the Munstermen and the battle was won by Corpre mac Feidlimthe
m. Óengussa, king of Munster subsequently. From the slaughter,
Loch Cenn previously known as Loch Sílenn (T. F. O'Rahilly,
Hermathena xlviii 208, 220) was named. At this point *Ann. Inisf.*
depend on *dindshenchas* material and actually quote from a *dind-
shenchas* poem (*RC* xvi 164; *Met. Dind.* iv 258.21–4 has a different
version of the text).

Here we see three stages in the elaboration of an annalistic entry
or rather three stages of accretion. What began as an entry con-
cerning a battle amongst the Úi Néill at Femen in Brega is elaborated
step by step into an account of an important defeat inflicted on the
Úi Néill by the Éoganacht king of Munster. Starting from the same
point, the coincidence of placenames—a coincidence that may
stretch also to Loch Sílenn (Siglenn). a placename which occurs
both in Munster and Brega (*Onomast.* 504a; *L. Muimneach* 82; 122;
Met. Dind iv 258)—the Munster redactor elaborated the entry drawing
material from the available non-annalistic sources. This type of
activity is well in keeping with the tendentiousness of the redactor
of *Ann. Inisf.* s.a. 721 in regard to a similar matter.

A further reference to Femen in Brega occurs in a quatrain quoted
in AU s.a. 576 (*sec. man.*) and in Ann. Tig. (*RC* xvii 148) in regard
to the death of Ainmire mac Sétnai of the Cenél Conaill, king of Tara:

> Femen an tan ro bui ri
> Nirbo mennot nech detlai
> Indhui is fordherg a lí
> La hAinmire mac Setnaí.

Finally, the king of Tara is referred to in a *dindshenchas* poem as king
of Femen (*Met. Dind.* iv 116.102–3).

Femen must have been an important centre of Úi Néill activity
at an early period as indeed was this whole area of Brega; and the
annalistic entries in question here refer, in-so-far as they are historical,
not to any events in Munster history but to the penetration of the
Úi Néill into Brega.[1]

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[1] For a detailed account of Úi Néill activity in Brega, see F. J. Byrne, 'Historical
note on Cnogba (Knowth)' in G. Eogan, 'Excavations at Knowth, Co. Meath 1962–65'
in *PRIA* 66 C 383–400; and Professor Byrne's forthcoming book, *Irish kings and
high-kings*.

TOPOGRAPHICAL NOTES—III

ROSNAT, *ROSTAT*, AND THE EARLY IRISH CHURCH

IN a small group of Irish *Lives*, reference is made to a place called *Rosnat*, and on one occasion *Rostat*, at which certain traditionally very early saints received an education. *Rosnat* is clearly outside Ireland, and this has been generally assumed to represent Whithorn, in Galloway (south-west Scotland).[1] Whithorn has had an embarrassing plethora of names, including one—*Futerna*, in the Preface to the 'Hymn of Mugint'[2]—which can only be an Irish form of the Old English equivalent (*hwít ærn*) of Bede's eighth-century *Candida Casa*.[3]

Practically every aspect of the Whithorn problem—archaeological, historical, and linguistic—has undergone radical re-examination in the last few decades; in many cases with the effect of clarifying our views in the light of recent advances in knowledge, and in all cases with the concomitant questioning of ideas first formulated in the nineteenth century. In 1964, Mr. P. A. Wilson subjected the long-held *Rosnat* = Whithorn equation to prolonged scrutiny in a paper[4] whose complexity defies any summary here, and gave therein compelling and fully-argued reasons for dismissing this particular identification. He would not discount the possibility that some early Irish ecclesiastics were trained at a religious centre at Whithorn (Finnian of Moville, for instance) or that Whithorn itself occupied a special place in Irish esteem. I have elsewhere argued[5] that Whithorn, initially an episcopal church of the late fourth or early fifth century, was probably refounded as a monastery, by Irish settlers, somewhat before the Anglian domination of Galloway at the end of the seventh century. Wilson would however see *Rosnat* as being in some other part of Britain. In his own words[6], 'The cult of Ninian, which developed after the appearance of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and more especially, of Ailred's Life in the 12th century, caused the later editors of old lives of Irish saints known to have received their religious training in Britain to identify *Rosnat* and *Maucannus*, names by then meaningless to them, with Candida Casa and Ninian respectively'.

[1] Forbes, A. P., *Lives of S. Ninian and S. Kentigern* (Edinburgh, 1874), xlii ff.; Skene W. F., *Celtic Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1887), II. 48; and practically all subsequent Scottish writers.

[2] Kenney, *Sources*, 263 (90); Bernard, J. H., & Atkinson, R., *The Irish Liber Hymnorum* (1898), II. 112.

[3] *H.E.* iii. 4 ('ad Candidam Casam').

[4] Wilson, P. A., 'St. Ninian and Candida Casa: Literary Evidence from Ireland', *Trans. Dumfries & Galloway N.H.A.S.*, xli (1964), 156–185.

[5] Thomas, C., 'Ardwall Isle: The Excavation of an Early Christian site of Irish type', *Trans. Dumfries & Galloway N.H.A.S.*, xliii (1966), 84–116, at 109–112.

[6] Wilson, *art. cit.*, 185.

The purpose of the present paper is to suggest that *Rosnat* was neither in Scotland nor in Wales, but was the extensive and very early monastic establishment at Tintagel, on the north Cornish coast. The name 'Tintagel', which is locally pronounced [tin^ˈtædʒəl], or sometimes almost a disyllable, as [tin^ˈtædʒl], is first recorded in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*[1], c. 1140–1145, where it is *Tintagol*. As a name, it refers specifically to the medieval structure, the 'castle of Tintagol on the sea coast'. Subsequent forms are 1200 *Tintaiell*, *Tintagell*; c. 1200 *Tintajoel*; 1207 *Tintaiol*; 1211, and so with only minor variations to today, *Tintagel*. The present accentuation merely copies that of the great majority of trisyllabic Cornish place-names, but the unusual stability of the written forms suggests that the spoken version has remained constant.

Attempts to explain the first element as Co. *din-*, 'stronghold, large fortress, cliff-fort', lack force when it is realised that all the other numerous Cornish place-names with this prefix, not a few of which are recorded before 1145, have retained their initial *d* throughout. Nor does the second element readily suggest any known Cornish word, or find any local parallels. Henry Jenner put forward[2] an ingenious idea, on the quite reasonable premise that 'Tintagel' originated in a Norman-French *milieu*, comparing it with '. . . a rock called *Tente d'Agel* or *Tente d'Ageau* in the Island of Sark [Channel Isles] which is locally said to mean "the Castle of the Devil" . . .'[3]

The ecclesiastical parish of Tintagel was formerly called Bossiney, after the manor of that name (Domesday Book *Botcinnii*), and the present village of Tintagel, a distasteful straggle of knick-knack shops and spurious Arthurian peepshows, is only a re-named extension of the original hamlet of Trevena. The evidence thus implies that the twelfth-century *Tintagol*, whatever its meaning, was a name originally confined to the castle and outworks constructed about 1140, conceivably a decade earlier, to replace the older motte and bailey at Bossiney (attributed to Robert de Mortain, half-brother to William I)[4].

Excavations (for the then Office of Works) commenced at Tintagel in 1933, under the direction of Dr. C. A. Ralegh Radford. As a postscript, some further work took place in the 1950s in the castle ditch, but only interim reports[5] are yet available. These, alongside

[1] viii. 19.
[2] Jenner, H., 'Tintagel Castle in History and Romance', *Journ. Roy. Inst. Cornwall*, xxii. 2 (1927), 190–200.
[3] I have been unable to confirm the existence of this place-name, which is presumably in the Guernsey patois.
[4] Summary in Radford, C. A. R., *Tintagel Castle, Cornwall: Official Guide* (H.M.S.O., 1935 and repr.).
[5] Radford, C. A. R., 'Tintagel: The Castle and Celtic Monastery, Interim Report', *Antiq. Journ.*, xv (1935), 401–419; 'Tintagel in History and Legend', *Journ. Roy. Inst. Cornwall*, xxv, *appendix* (1942).

study of the prolific finds from the many seasons of digging, make it
clear that two separate occupations are involved. The first, which
on the strength of imported Mediterranean pottery began *c.* 470–480,
within the so-called 'sub-Roman' period, pertains entirely to a very
large monastic establishment. The monastery comprised groups of
contiguous buildings, scattered over what must at the time have
been a long and precipitous headland rather than, as it is now, a near-
island; and the landward bound of this monastery was defined by a
bank and ditch of the Early Christian *vallum monasterii* kind. When
the medieval castle was erected the castle ditch nearly obliterated
the monastic ditch, but a small section of the latter (yielding appro-
priately early pottery) was found by Dr. Radford. Among the finds
from the first occupation, there is little or nothing which suggests
a date later than the eighth century; there is nothing among the
finds from the second, medieval occupation which indicates a date
earlier than the twelfth century.

This is not an archaeological quibble; for the conclusion to be drawn
is that, during the better part of four centuries, the headland was
deserted and the abandoned monastery was given over to the abun-
dant grass and vegetation. Under such conditions, and in this
exposed and sparsely-populated coastal shelf, an original place-
name would surely have been lost. The name 'Tintagel' is not so
much a replacement as a fresh creation. It is significant that else-
where in Cornwall, where continuity from some pre-Norman (and
pre-Viking) religious foundation to the present-day parish church
can be plausibly demonstrated, some form of the pre-Norman place-
name can almost always be found—usually as the title of the glebe
farm of of a churchtown tenement (e.g., at St. Kew, olim *Landocco*,
with the present farm of 'Lanowe').

W. J. Watson's statement that *Rosnat* '. . . is a diminutive from
Ross and means "Little Cape" '[1] is not borne out by other evidence.
No place-name of this form, nor any with a supposed diminutive
termination *-nat*, is apparently known from Scotland.[2] Even the
expected *Rossan* seems a great rarity—Watson himself lists none
such in his own index—and such a name could, as in the case of the
farm of that name near St. David's, Pembroke (Rhoson, Rhosson,
or Rhossen), be derived from the plur. of ONo. *hross*, 'horse'.

The proposed emendation of *Rosnat* to a British **Rosnant* may
seem facile. It has two strong points in its favour. In the first place,
assuming this to be a simple locative—'promontory of (or by) the
valley'—it does exactly describe the topography of Tintagel.

Envisaged in terms of fifteen centuries ago, before the friable slate-beds which constitute the present 'neck' had eroded to the V-shaped saddle which now makes access to the 'island' difficult, the site would have been an elevated headland, flanked by a long narrow gorge which still leads down to the beach. No full analysis of the element *ros* in Cornish toponymy has yet been made[1]; as in other Celtic languages, it clearly developed a range of secondary meanings, but in terms of purely coastal place-names, Co. *ros* would appear to have denoted something substantially larger than the far more common *pen* (*sensu* 'headland, point')[2].

In the second place, and this point deserves more development than is possible here, the nomenclature of early monasteries in both Ireland and Britain tempts one to formulate a hypothesis—namely, that early (pre-eighth century) monasteries, especially those of large physical extent, are more likely to have possessed straightforward locative or secular names than to have had names compounded from specifically religious terms (e.g., *cill*, *llan*, *lan*) and the personal names of saints or of their founders. This is not an invariable rule, but examination shows a distinct bias towards it. Thus we have Clonard and 'Iona' (Í, Hy), rather than any modern 'Killinnan' or 'Kilcolm', on our maps; we could adduce the further cases of Derry, Clonmacnoise, Durrow, and Kells, in either their Irish or anglicised guises, or of Abercorn and (Old) Melrose, and all the seventh-century foundations in Northumbria. In certain circumstances, as those of Ard Macha and Ceanannus Mór, history and archaeology reveal that the name was taken over from some place of secular fame, a fortification or a shrine, and the Northumbrian Coldingham (*Coludesburh*, Bede's *urbs Coludi*) is another of this group. In others, some purely local and generally obscure label, as at *Clúain moccu Nois*, or at *Hagustaldes-ea* (Hexham), was extended to a subsequent and major religious foundation.

Given the nature of the first monastic establishments in (particularly) the highlands, islands, and isolated coasts of Ireland and Atlantic Britain, there are bound to be very many instances where no immediately preceding human activity can be shown to have occurred on the same site, and where a basic, descriptive, place-name would quite naturally follow. One that springs to mind is Bede's *Mailros*[3], 'bald promontory', a great tongue of land at Old Melrose

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[1] Partial discussion by Gover, J. E. B., 'The element *ros* in Cornish place-names', *London Medieval Studies*, I (1938), 249–264; continued in Thomas, C., 'Place-name notes, I; the meanings of *hal*, *gun*, and *ros*', *Old Cornwall*, vi. 9 (1965), 392. I cannot find a modern 'Rosnant' or 'Rosenance' anywhere in Cornish toponymy.

[2] The peninsula of Roseland (opposite Falmouth), containing four or five parishes, is probably the *Ros* of a charter of king Egbert (815 x 839): Finberg, H.P.R., *The Early Charters of Devon and Cornwall* (Leicester, 1953), 16(74).

[3] *H.E.* iv. 27 ('monasterium Mailros').

(Roxburgh) cut off by an oxbow formation of the river Tweed. *Rosnant*, if that was really what the post-Roman Cornish peasants called the Tintagel headland, offers a closely similar construction. Deerness, the present form of a (Norse) name for a headland monastery in Orkney,[1] putatively early, and not unlike a smaller version of Tintagel, is yet another. So, too, is *Streanæshealh* (Whitby, Yorks.), a headland monastery whose name was explained by Bede[2] as *Sinus Fari*, 'the bay of the lighthouse', and which cannot have been so named much over a century before its foundation in 657.

The historical, and more narrowly the hagiographical, implications of any proposed *Rosnant* = Tintagel identification need only be sketched. Insofar as Sts Enda, Eugene of Ardstraw, and Tigernach of Clones possess realistic dates, they are figures of the late fifth or sixth century, imprecisely located in pseudo-history. This is wholly without prejudice to the surviving versions of their appropriate *Vitae*, which are, at best, medieval recensions of late compilations. It cannot be assumed, on the strength of these *Vitae*, that these or any other named persons actually went to *Rosnat* or *Rostat*, if such place-names be taken to imply the monastery of Tintagel before *c.* 800. On the other hand, it is important that the tradition of this particular transmarine education features in not just one Life, but in a handful of them. P. A. Wilson's statement that '. . . it seems more than merely probable that it was under . . . *Maucannus* [and thus at *Rosnat*] that St. Enda, St. Eugene, and St. Tighernach studied during their sojourn in Britain'[3] is fair enough. His further demonstration, from the same evidence, that *Rosnat* lay south-east rather than north-east from Ireland, led him to look to St. Davids in Pembroke; to follow Colgan in identifying *Rosnat* with the Latin *Vallis Rosina*, but to express his own doubt because of the statement *id est Rosinam Vallem quam uulgari nomine Hodnant*[4] *Brittones uocitant*, found in the Brit. Mus. Vespasian A. xiv MS of Rhigyfarch's *Life of St. David*.[5]

There is nothing intrinsically objectional to the idea of a thin, but direct, cultural connection between the north coast of Cornwall, and almost any part of Ireland or of south Wales, from the late fifth century onward. One major lesson of archaeological research

[1] Strictly 'Brough of Deerness'; no other name has survived. but the visible vallum is almost certainly pre-Norse.

[2] *H.E.* iii. 25; *pace* Bede, this meaning is not universally accepted.

[3] Wilson, *art. cit.*, 184.

[4] Presumably *Vallis Rosina* translates *Hodnant*, allowing the latter to be a genuine record of a 12th-century name. The equation is not entirely clear; 'shady valley' or 'rose-shaded valley' might be implied. The Co. *Huthnance* is quite common both as a place-name and surname, but I do not know if a W. *Huddnant* has the same currency.

[5] James, J. W., *Rhigyfarch's Life of St. David* (Cardiff, 1967), 9; for the date of this MS, *op. cit.*, xxiv–v.

in the last decade is that the distributions of objects and ideas, the sharing in common trade patterns, and the artistic and architectural borrowings, are all most economically explained on the assumption that such seaborne contacts were commonplace. Some such link between the southern half or Ireland, south Wales, and north-east Cornwall (the very region whose coastal focus lies around Tintagel) is demonstrated, notably during the sixth century, by the spread in eastern Cornwall and a part of Devon of ogham-inscribed memorial stones, and of others bearing in Latin letters names which could be Irish rather than British.[1]

The monastery at Tintagel must assume special importance in the history of the insular Church. Unlike the great contemporary foundations of south Wales, it has escaped all subsequent urban or ecclesiastical development; and if not fully excavated, it is likely that most of it has been archaeologically exposed. This work has raised it own problems. The individual cells and rooms, for example, are basically *rectangular*[2] and suggest a continental or Mediterranean prototype rather than adherence to the circular-hut tradition found in the majority of British and Irish monasteries. Insofar as present knowledge of the various imported wheel-made wares permits any close dating, the Tintagel site was occupied in the generation before A.D. 500, and may well be the oldest of all the insular monasteries. The internal lay-out is also peculiar, with isolated groups or clusters of cells unevenly distributed throughout the area enclosed by the vallum ditch. The north Cornish coast is historically a landfall from both Ireland and Wales on the long sea journey southwards, and one can suppose that this large and impressive monastery enjoyed a corresponding prestige over a wide area.

Finally, it is necessary to seek for a Cornish equivalent of the famous teacher who appears in the Irish sources as *Maucenus*, *Monend*, *Monennus*, *Maucennius*, and *Nennyo qui Maucennus dicitur*. If we follow Wilson[3] in distinguishing this person from Bede's *Ninia*, or from any later bearer of the same name—*simpliciter* or in any supposedly hypocoristic form—we must at once look to the *Maucannus*, of the mysterious 'Monastery of the Deposit', who is found in Rhigyfarch's *Life*.[4] *Contra* Wilson here, there seems to be little or no direct evidence at all in the text as to the location of the *depositi monasterium*; nor any real reason to place it, *Maucannus*, and through him *Rosnat*, 'in south-west Wales' as opposed to (say) north Cornwall. The nature and former extent of a cult in Cornwall of St. Mawgan,

[1] Cf. Jackson, *LHEB*, chap. v.
[2] Best shown in Radford, C. A. R., 'The Celtic Monastery in Britain', *Archaeol. Cambrensis* (1962), 13–15, figs. 2 and 3.
[3] *Art. cit.*, and more recently, his 'St. Ninian: Irish evidence Further Examined', *Trans. Dumfries & Galloway N.H.A.S*, xlvi (1969), 140–159.
[4] James, *op. cit.*, 1, 29.

eponym of the parish of Mawgan in Pydar (17 miles from Tintagel) and perhaps also of Mawgan in Meneage (in the Lizard), was discussed some time ago by Canon Doble. He concluded [1] that '... Maugan ... was an Abbot, probably an Abbot-Bishop, of an important monastery in Demetia', but he did so on the assumption that this man was also the Meugan who appears as the eponym of a number of Welsh churches. The connection may well have existed, but the earlier forms of this name at Mawgan (in Pydar) are 1257 *Mauchan*, 1288 *Maugani*, and one could perhaps add the *sancte Maucanne* from a group of four Cornish saints in an eleventh-century Exeter litany.[2] In no sense conclusive, the foregoing demonstrates that, if the Tintagel monastery was once *Rosnant*, there is at least an acceptable trace of an appropriate *Maucenus* in the same district.

<div align="right">CHARLES THOMAS</div>

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[1] Doble, G. H., *St. Mawgan* (= *Cornish Saints*, no. 39) (Long Compton, 1936), 11.
[2] Doble, *op. cit.*, 7–8.

THE TÁIN AND THE ANNALS

TRADITIONALLY Táin Bó Cuailgne took place during the Pentarchy when for a time there was no king of Ireland and rule was divided among the five provincial kings. This is not specifically stated in the Táin itself, but the two kings who figure prominently in the story, Conchobar mac Nessa of Ulidia and Ailill mac Máta of Connacht—like Conchobar, Ailill is known as the son of his mother, Máta Muirisce—are named in all versions of the Pentarchy list. There are also references to Ailill's nephew, Ercc son of Cairbre Nia Fer, as being in Tara. It is not made clear, however, whether he has become king of Tara or is still only son of the king, or indeed whether Tara in this case implies a provincial kingship of Mide or over-kingship of the Laigin. As for the king or kings of Munster, LU and YBL give Lugaid mac Nóis that title, but LL does not.

In the Pillow Talk which prefaces the LL Táin we are told that when Medb of Connacht chose Ailill as her husband she was being wooed by his two brothers, Find [Fili], king of Leinster, and Cairbre Nia Fer, king of Tara, sons of Russ Ruad of the Laigin. A mysterious third suitor, Eochu Bec, may thus be understood as king of Munster. It would seem that the author of the Pillow Talk ignores or rejects the doctrine that the original five provinces included two Munsters and no Mide. Significantly he also calls Conchobar, not *mac Nessa*, but *mac Fachtna*, as in the prehistoric genealogy of Síl Ír.

In the tract appended to Lebor Gabála, on the kingship of Ireland after the Milesian invasion—which we may refer to as DFE from its title in LL, *Do Fhlathiusaib hÉrenn*—we find in the older version[1] that the Pentarchy followed the five-year reign of the 84th monarch, Eterscél Mór moccu hIair, of the Érainn, during whose time Christ was born. The five kings were Conchobar mac Nessa, Ailill mac Máta, Cairbre Nia Fer (presumably ruling the Laigin from Tara), and, in the two Munsters, Cú Roí mac Dáire and Tigernach Tétbannach.[2] In this case the duration of the Pentarchy is not specified. It is followed by the reigns of Nuada Necht, the great-grandfather of

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[1] See Macalister's Recension I—LL., B. Fermoy—Lebor Gabala v. The acephalous *Ríg Ērenn* in R 502 (*CGH*, 117–22) is closely related to DFE.

[2] *Ríg Ērenn* has *Tigernach Tētbuillech mac Luchta*. See *Geneal. Tracts*, § C 187, for a pedigree attaching his brother Eochaid mac Luchta to the pre-Eoganachta Munster stem at Duach Dalta Dedaid. As for Tigernach Tétbannach, see ibid., C 162, and also Macalister's Recension 3 (cf. note 7 *infra*) for a pedigree which tries to reconcile the statement that he and Dedad mac Sin reigned after Eterscél Mór with a claim that they were of the Érainn. The pedigree is full of self-contradicting repetitions. All efforts to resolve the confusion in DFE illustrated in Plate I were of course hopeless. Yet the genealogies and pseudohistorical documents are full of vague, inadequate attempts at resolving such dilemmas. The Lecan Miscellany is essentially an anthology of them.

Ailill and his brothers, who ruled but half a year, and of Conaire Már mac Eterscéil who ruled for seventy years and fell at last in Dá Derga's hostel. After the article on Conaire LL has *nō combad and so na cōicedaig* and RB 502 has *Cōic bliadna iar do hĒrend cen ardrīg*.[1] Then comes the 87th king, a nephew of Medb, Lugaid Ríab nDerg son of the three Finds of Emain sons of Eochaid Feidlech.

It may be as well to note right here that the reign of Conaire Már is probably either an interpolation in DFE or has been greatly lengthened. The Pentarchy in either location, after Eterscél or after Conaire, may also be an interpolation. If Christ was born in, let us say, the last year of Eterscél, the subsequent reigns to the fourth year of Lóegaire mac Néill, traditionally the beginning of Patrick's mission, should add up to something like 432 years. In the following table the first column of figures is for the longer reign-lengths given in DFE; the second, for the shorter. The variation it will be observed, is almost all in the reigns of the Síl Éremóin kings of whom most are ancestral to the Uí Néill, The Pentarchy, being of uncertain duration, is omitted from the calculation.

Síl Éremóin	...	...	...	...	555·5	431·5
Síl Ébir (Crimthann mac Fidaig)	...	...	16	13
Síl Ír	...	...	...	...	20	20
Síl Lugdach maic Ítha	...	...	...	30	30
Other	...	...	...	...	6	6
				627·5	500·5
Subtracting Conaire	...	...	...	−70	−70
				557·5	430·5

If Conaire be left out, the first king in DFE whose reign falls wholly within the Christian Era is Nuadu Necht. The first whose reign is of significant length is Lugaid Ríab nDerg. Since there seems no room for the Pentarchy, it may be that DFE originally ignored the Táin.

In the prehistoric portion of the annals—the fullest text for this period being the first fragment of Tig.[2]—the first king of Ireland mentioned is Conaire, and the Pentarchy follows his death in 30 B.C. Two differences in the annals Pentarchy list from that in DFE are that Ailill is called *mac Mágag* and that instead of Cú Roí mac Dáire we have his grandfather, Dedad mac Sin, over one of the Munsters. Immediately following the list is an entry interpolated by the "H" hand of LU, which states that Lugaid Réo Derg (the difference in epithet is significant) became king in the seventh year after Conaire and which thus seems to give us the duration of the Pentarchy.

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[1] Cottonian Annals have *Togail Bruidne da berca for Conairi Mor. v bliadna d'Erind chen ric*(h). *RC* xli, 314. *Bruidhen Da Berga* also occurs in the Rawl. B. 512 text of *Scél mucci Maic Dáthó*, ed. Meyer, *Hibernia Minora*, 1894.

[2] See *RC* xvi, 405–14, for the section discussed here.

However, simplicity exists nowhere in Irish history, and it is not surprising to find in the same annals, at 44 A.D., another notice of the death of Conaire in *Togail Bruidne da Berga* [sic], and, at 49 A.D., the beginning of the twenty-six (*read* twenty-three) year reign of Lugaid Réo Derg. Lugaid's death is then reported at 72 A.D., and again we find two accounts: that he was slain by the three Ruadchinn of the Laigin, or, it may be, that he fell on his own sword in grief for his wife, Derb-forgaill. The first of these, which is undoubtedly the older, relates to the tradition that the three Ruadchinn Laigen slew both Conaire Már and Lugaid and that because of the slaying of Lugaid the Laigin forfeited the land between Áth Cliath and the Boyne.[1] The second refers to *Aided Lugdach occus Derforgaille* and related stories in which Lugaid is accounted fosterson of Cú Chulainn.[2]

In the later version of the tract on the post-Milesian kings of Ireland[3] an attempt is made to resolve the contradictions by placing the Pentarchy after Conaire and by using the list found in the annals, but this only means that whoever attempted such minor surgery was unaware of how deeply rooted the discrepancies were.

DFE, then, mentions the Ulster Saga only by naming Conchobar as one of the Pentarchs and in its secondary account of the death of Lugaid—both quite likely being interpolations. The annals, on the other hand, have quite a lot to say about the Ulster Saga and the Táin—if anything, too much. Not only are we given widely varying dates for the death of Conaire and the accession of Lugaid, but with regard to the reign of Conchobar in Emain, the life-span of Cú Chulainn, and the date of the Táin exactitude also evades us, though for no lack of data.

Here are the relevant Irish entries from the first fragment of Tig. The italicized passages are added by the "H" hand of LU.[4] The dates are reckoned by counting kalends before 1 A.D., and thereafter by kalend-count and from the ferials of the solar-cycle.

*c.*39 B.C. Fergus mac Leti, qui conflixit contra bestiam hi Loch Rudraige et ibi demersus est, regnauit in Emain annis .xii.

34 B.C. *Natiuitas Con Culainn maic Soaltaim.*

30 B.C. Hoc anno cepit regnare in Emain Conchobur Mac Nessa, qui regnauit annis .lx.
Rorannad Hériu iarsin hi cóic, iar n-árcain Conare Mór mic Etarsceóil hi mBrudin Dá Dergga, etir Conchobur mac Nessa ocus Coirpre Nia Fer ⁊ Tigernach Tétbannach ⁊ Dedad mac Sin ⁊ Ailill mac Mágag.
Isin tsechtmad bliadain iar ndith Conaire rogab Lugaid Reo Derg rigi.

[1] *EIHM*, 94, 119; LL 51 b 49.
[2] *Ériu* v, 201–18; Hull, *Cuchullin Saga*, 82, 230–34; *ZCP* iii, 259, § 84.
[3] Macalister's Recension 3 = Lebor Gabála in BB and H. 2.15, and the second text in Lec.
[4] R. I. Best, *Ériu* vii, 45–49. A twelfth century date is much more likely, see H. P. A. Oskamp, 'Notes on the history of Lebor na Huidre', *PRIA* 65, sect. C., no. 6.

H

19 B.C.   [Under same kalend as the death of Virgil] *Slógad Tána Bó*
           Cúalgni.
2 A.D.   Mors Con Chulaind fortissimi herois Scottorum la Lugaid mac
           tri con (*.i. rí Muman*) ⁊ la Ercc (*.i. rí Temrach*) mac Coirpri Niad
           ⁊ la trí maccu Calattin de Chonnachtaib.   Uii. mbliadna a áes
           intan rogab gaisced, xuii. mbliadna dano a aes intan mboi inde-
           gaid Tána Bó Cuailg[n]e, xxuii. bliadna immorro a aes intan
           atbath.
              [marg.] *Mors Emiri uxoris Con Culaind.*
              [marg.] *Mors Eirc maic Corpri rig Temrach ⁊ Lugdach mac*
           Conroi la Conall Cernach ⁊ inriud cethri coiced nErenn la sechtu
           Maini ó Ultaib.
21 A.D.   Conchobur mac Nessa in uii. anno Tiberii quieuisse dicitur.
33 A.D.   Conchobur mac Nessa obiit, cui successit filius cius Cuscraid,
           qui regnauit in Emain annis tribus.
              Cath Artig for coiced nOlnecmacht la Cuscraid mac Concobair.
           Cuscraid obit la Mac Cecht.   Mac Cecht do thuitim fochetoir la
           Conall Cernach ic Crannaig Maic Cecht.   Glasni mac Conchobair
           .ix. annis regnauit.
43 A.D.   Íriél Glunmar mac Conaill Chernaig regnauit in Emain annis .xl.
44 A.D.   Togail Bruidne da Berga (ut alii aiunt, *sed certe falluntur*) for
           Conaire Mor[1].
49 A.D.   Lugaid Réo Derg mac na trí Find nEmna regnauit in Temoria
           annis xxui.   Tricha ríg do Leith Chuind óthá Lugaid co Diarmait
           mac Cerbaill.
62 A.D.   *Tomaidim Locha Rib maic Maireada dar Mag nAirbthen.*
              Tomaidim Linmuine tar Liathmuine. edón Locha Echach
           áitt dollégad síl nDubthaich Dóeltengad acht Curcu Fóche nama;
           combrathair-side in Dubthach do Fergus mac Roaig.
72 A.D.   Lugaid Réo Derg occissus est óna trib Rúadchennaib (.i. de
           Laignaib).   Nó commad im claideb dodolécad conn-abbad de
           chomaid a mná .i. Deirbe Forgaill, *nodechsad.*
73 A.D.   Cremthann Nia Náir regnauit annis .xiii.
78 A.D.   Iriél Glúnmar (.i. mac Conaill Cernaig) die dominica hi Semniu
           occissus est o *Cremthand* Nia Náir (uel a Gallis, ut alii dicunt).
              [o *Cremthand* added in space left blank by RB 502 scribe.]
79 A.D.   Fiacha Findamnas mac Iriel Glunmair regnauit in Emain dieis a
           athar annis .xx.
85 A.D.   Cremthand Nia Nar mortu[u]s est.

Though we are told here that the Táin occurred at 19 B.C., if we
accept the entry on the death of Cú Chulainn, the date should be
8 B.C., and Cú Chulainn would have been born seventeen years
earlier, in 25 B.C. If instead we go by the entry on his birth at 34
B.C., he would have died in 7 B.C., and the Táin would be at 17 B.C.
We may also note that any of these dates for the Táin would require
that the Pentarchy, if it began in 30 B.C., have lasted much longer
than the five or seven years otherwise allotted to it. Or, if we accept
the statement that Lugaid Réo Derg began to reign seven years after

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[1] The same Latin gloss occurs a number of times in the so-called Dublin Fragment
of the Annals of Tigernach, a text actually closely related to AU.

the death of Conaire, the Pentarchy would have been from 30 to 23 B.C., and the Táin have taken place sometime during those years. It may also be observed that the five-year gap from 44 to 49 A.D., between the second entries on the death of Conaire and the accession of Lugaid, corresponds to the alternate location for the Pentarchy in DFE, which might give us another approximate date for the Táin were not the chief actors long since dead.

Then there is the question of how long the reign of Conchobar lasted. The entry on his accession says that he ruled for sixty years, that is, presumably from 30 B.C. to 30 A.D., but neither date for his death, 21 or 33 A.D., squares with this. The latter, however, is consistent with the story that his death was caused by a vision of the Crucifixion.

As for the other Pentarchs, the interpolations associated with the entry on the death of Cú Chulainn imply that at least two of them, Cairbre Nia Fer and either Tigernach Tétbannach or Dedad mac Sin were dead by 2 A.D., since new kings are named. And the lack of any formal reference in the annals to the existence of a king of Ireland from the first entry on the death of Conaire to the second on the accession of Lugaid, raises the possibility that at least one redactor conceived, perhaps rather vaguely, of the Pentarchy as lasting for seventy-nine years, from 30 B.C. to 49 A.D., and with slowly changing personnel.

One thing seems certain, that all or most of this confusion was in the annals from quite an early date. Best thought that the "H" hand scribe of LU was probably of the thirteenth century. "H's" interpolations in Tig. were scarcely his own invention. Rather he must have been resupplying material he felt was very significant and which the Rawl. B 502 scribe had omitted in abridgment or because, as at 78 A.D., he was uncertain of the reading in his exemplar. In all likelihood "H" copied in his additions from another text of the same annals which he had before him, for a number of his passages are paralleled in AI, written in 1092, and also in the Cottonian Annals (formerly the Annals of Boyle) which are more closely related to AU than to Tig. In other words, these entries were characteristic of the pre-Patrician section of the annals long before Rawl. B 502 was written in the late twelfth century. And as is shown by the treatment of that section in AI, it was old, out-moded stuff which some scribes were not inclined to treat with much patience. Too many unremembered hands had tampered with it for too many forgotten reasons.

Another sign, however, that these entries belong to the source of all our existing texts of the early annals is the presence of the following in AI, CS, and AU at a period when Tig. is lacking.

AI §389   [After entry on Palladius = 431 A.D.] Ab Incarnatione Domini
           nostri Iesu Christi usque hunc annum .ccccxxxii. anni sunt.
           A morte Con Culainn herois .ccccxxxiiii. A morte Conchobuir
           Meicc Nessa .ccccxiii.
CS–431   Ab Incarnatione Domini cccc.xxxii°.
CS–432   A morte Con cCulaind herois usque ad hunc annum cccc.xxxi;
           a morte Concupair mic Nessa cccc.xii. anni sunt.
AI §391   [= 432 A.D.] Item illo tempore Loegare mc. Neill Hiberniam
           regnauit annis .xxxuiii. Quarto autem anno regni eius Patricius
           peruenit ad Scottos. Praefátus item Loegare .xuiii. rex erat ex
           quinque regum tempore qui Hibern(iam) in quinque diuisserunt
           partes. id est Conchobur ⁊ Corpre ⁊ Tigernach Tetmanach [⁊]
           Dedad mc. Sin ⁊ Ailill mc. Mágach.
CS–482   [After entry on the battle of Ocha in which Ailill Molt mac Nath
           Í mic Fiachrach, the last Connacht king of Ireland recognized
           by the annals and regnal lists, was slain by the Uí Néill and Dál
           Araide.] A tempore Concuphair mic Nessa usque ad Cormac
           mac Airt, ccc.uii. anni sunt. A Cormac usque ad hoc bellum
           cc. uii.
AU–482   [After same entry.] A Conchobro filio Nesae usque ad Cormac
           filium Art .ccc.uiii. A Cormac usque hoc bellum .cxui., ut
           Cuana scripsit.

The figures here, especially in 482 entry, present several puzzles.[1]
What counts, however, is the evidence that the originals seem to have
been composed by the same hand as those given earlier. Thus AI
gives the same list of Pentarchs found in Tig. at 30 B.C.; and the
statement that Lóegaire was the eighteenth king after the Pentarchy
agrees with the pre-Patrician sections of Tig. and CS, where, with
the exception of Crimthann mac Fidaig of Munster, whose story
is wound up with the origin-legend of the Uí Néill, only Lugaid Reó
Derg and his descendants are recognized as post-Incarnation kings
of Ireland, a view much at odds with DFE. The reckoning of dates
both from the Incarnation and from the deaths of Cú Chulainn *heros*

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[1] According to the figures in AI § 389 Cú Chulainn would have died in 2 B.C. and
Conchobar in 19 A.D. I cannot make out the purpose of that emendation.
   In the second fragment of Tig. the reign of Cormac mac Airtt is put at 219–63 A.D.
The ferials in this part of the text are much disturbed, but are well enough preserved
at the beginning and end of the reign for these to be dated securely. The dates, more-
over, are corroborated by the associated entries on Roman matters. The figures in
AU–482 indicate a span of 424 years from the death of Conchobar to the battle of
Ocha, which agrees exactly with the kalend-count in the first and second fragments
of Tig. and in CS, if eight demonstrably extra kalends in CS be omitted. But the kalends
are deficient. The AU figures would thereby put the death of Conchobar at 60 A.D.
and that of Cormac at 366 A.D. The figures in CS give a span of 514 years and place
Conchobar at 32 B.C. and Cormac at 275 A.D. This might mean that the original
calculation was from the accession of Conchobar to the death of Cormac. If we take
30 B.C. and 263 A.D. as the proper dates for these, the figures in the entry should be
cccxc.iii and cxix. Anyone who has worked with the chronography of the annals knows
how easily the lower-case Roman numerals can be misread, if blurred or rubbed, or
could be deliberately corrupted by learned emendators. A 'u' is readily altered to 'ii'
or vice-versa, and unwanted letters can easily be dropped. I have seen where so careful
a transcriber as Whitley Stokes has read 'x' as 'c'. However, I admit it would take a
lot of accidental corruption to produce the figures in CS and AU.

and Conchobar mac Nessa shows the annalist again stressing the importance of the Ulster Saga. Perhaps most interesting of all is that AU attributes the 482 entry to Cuanu, that is, to the author of *Liber Cuanach* which is cited as an authority in AU eleven times from 467 to 629.

It seems certain that DFE is older than the common source of the annals *as we have them*, but not much older, perhaps no more than a few decades. The chief political doctrines that underlie both DFE and the prehistoric portion of the genealogical corpus are that there had been an over-kingship of Ireland from the time of the Milesian invasion, that until the time of Christ succession to this kingship had followed no particular pattern, but that from there on— from Nuadu Necht or Lugaid Riab nDerg to the death of the last pagan king, Diarmait mac Cerbaill, in 565—there had been a nearly regular pattern of alternation (*selaigecht*) in the kingship.[1] This alternation was meant to be understood as the political arrangement proper to Ireland in the Sixth Age of the World which had been initiated by the Incarnation. After the death of Diarmait there came a long period of uncertain succession, a time of troubles, which was brought to an end when the alternation was "restored" by the Mide and Ailech kings in 734 or 743, depending on whether Áed Allan mac Fergaile of Ailech or Domnall mac Murchada of Mide be counted as the first of the new series.[2] It was also, of course, to be understood that the alternation was ordained by God and that all Irishmen thus owed gratitude and loyalty to those royal kindreds by which it had been so happily revived.

It is fair to assume that when DFE was composed the actual alternation was a successfully established fact—that is, some time well after 743. The earlier alternation was of course a fiction deliberately manufactured to provide justification and sanction. Mostly it was sheer invention, but as it approached the fifth century and the period of detailed tradition the compiler would have had to suppress the reigns of known kings of Tara who were not of Dál Cuinn and, after the emergence of the Uí Néill, perhaps of one or two Connacht kings of Tara as well, while the reigns of the Dál Cuinn would have

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[1] From Lugaid to Crimthann mac Fidaig the alternation is between Dál Cuinn and non-Dál Cuinn kings. From Níall to Ailill Molt it is between Uí Néill and Connachta. From there on it is between the ancestors of Cenél Éogain and Clann Colmáin Móir (and of course of Síl Áeda Sláine) and those of the less successful Cenél Lóegaire and Cenél Cairbre.

[2] I think there is a strong likelihood that the alternation became a fact, that is, that it was reluctantly accepted by Cenél Éogain, only with the reign of Donnchad mac Domnaill. There are only eight entries in the annals about Domnall mac Murchada from 733 to 763, and one of these, a premature entry on his death (Tig. FM − 761) calls him Domnall mac Muirchertaig, *rí Úa Néill*. It is also curious that having entered religion in 740 he should have done so again in 744, the year after the beginning of his reign. He may have been at least temporarily deposed, for he is not mentioned again till 756. By contrast, his son's reign is very well reported.

had to be lengthened to cover the gaps. In the annals this would produce consequent displacement of other events relative to the new dates for each remaining king's accesion and death. This, I think explains a good deal of the confusion in the fifth and early-sixth century annals.[1]

If, as seems likely, the older annals were reworked by the same men who compiled DFE, and at the same time, the common source of the early annals as they now exist reflects still another revision. In this, I take it, two major alterations were made, First, the entries about the Ulster Saga, the Pentarchy, the reign of Conaire Már, and those which date events from the deaths of Cú Chulainn and Conchobar were added. Second, in the regnal list of Tara after the Incarnation, though in the annals it is clearly taken from that in DFE, the reigns of all other non-Dál Cuinn kings before Crimthann mac Fidaig are omitted, or, if like Cairbre Cattchenn, Éllim mac Condrach, and Catháir Már, the kings are named, no space or insufficient space is left for their reigns. From Crimthann on, except for some unnecessary confusion about where to place Nath Í mac Fiachrach, the annals offer the same list as DFE.[2] I used to think that this deletion of non-Dál Cuinn names was late and was perhaps a strident over-assertion of Uí Néill claims in the late-tenth or eleventh centuries when Uí Néill fortunes were in marked decline. But I was wrong. It was characteristic of the common source. And the purpose evidently was to provide room for the Pentarchy and the

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[1] Confusion was compounded by the necessity of pegging the fourth year of Loégaire at 432 which by then had become the accepted date for the beginning of Patrick's mission. That, by the way, is a well-known magic number which can be divided nine ways with no remainder and has several other remarkable properties. We may also note that in Hindu cosmogony the Kali Yuga is a period of 432,000, years, and that the Krita, Trita, and Dvapara yugas are multiples of it by, respectively, 4, 3, and 2, while the Maha Yuga which is closed by the apparent destruction of the world is 4,320,000 years. My guess is that the learned were delighted to find in Prosper's notice of Palladius at 431 an excuse for putting Patrick at 432.

Placing the beginning of the reign of Loégaire at 428 meant putting Níall still earlier. An analysis of Uí Néill death dates indicates that, if Níall was the common ancestor, his death should come between 428 and 463—say, at a mean of about 445. Loégaire would thus come correspondingly later. This would also remove the difficulty about accepting the tradition that Crimthann mac Énnai Chenselaig was Níall's slayer.

Much more confusion resulted from moving the fall of Emain Macha back to 327 A.D. from some time in the latter half of the fifth century. The new doctrine required that Fergus Foga, the last king of Ulidia in Emain, should be made contemporary with Muiredach Tíreach and the three Collas. In the Dál Araide genealogies he is first cousin of Fiachra Lonn who is mentioned in the annals of 482.

Needless to say, the shearing actions caused by such relocations of important events and of the persons associated with them is felt in the genealogies as well as in the annals.

[2] As in DFE Nath Í should come between Níall and Loégaire, but see the entries on his death at 445 in AU and AI. It is possible that these come from a much older annalistic text than any we now possess. If so, the fourth year of Lóegaire would be 449. The ferials in Tig. and CS can be reconstructed from 1 A.D. to 652 A.D. where they end. They indicate 443 A.D. for the coming of Patrick. A number of such oddities in the early annals may derive from notes and glosses inserted by men who had access to texts compiled long before 790.

reign of Conaire, since the omitted reigns total somewhat over seventy years.[1]

I would suggest that DFE was composed, Lebor Gabála and the prehistoric portion of the genealogical corpus given approximately the shape in which we have them now, and a large annalistic text running from Creation to what was then the present was assembled, all at about the same time and in the same workshop. The time would have been toward the end of the reign of Donnchad mac Domnaill (c. 770–797), the second Mide king in the alternation. The chronological framework of the early annals is chiefly based on Bede's Chronicle which ends in 726, the ninth year of Leo III, emperor of Byzantium. In the annals there is a good deal of confusion about the final Bedan entries, and it seems to be assumed that Leo's ninth year was his last, though he actually died in 741. Thus Bede's Chronicle was most likely incorporated long enough after 741 for memory of Leo to have dimmed. Again, there is the matter of the Iona Chronicle which was inserted wholesale into the annals from the early seventh century to 736, apparently to compensate for large excisions of Irish material which, it may be suspected, conflicted with the claims of the newly (and to us, mysteriously) exalted Mide kings.[2] But perhaps the most telling evidence is statistical. If we take all the annalistic texts together, the number of entries per decade rises rapidly from an average of about twenty-five in the latter half of the sixth century to nearly a hundred and forty in the decade 741–50. Over the next two decades it falls to about a hundred and ten (761–70), then mounts sharply to nearly a hundred and sixty in 781–90, after which it again falls to about a hundred and ten in 801–10. The two peaks seem to have some correspondence to the reigns of the first two Mide kings of Tara. The statistics, of course, are somewhat obscured by the fact that the third fragment of Tig. ends in 766, while CS is lacking from 723 to 803 where it resumes as rather a thin chronicle. If, however, we assume that an annalistic text is likely to be fullest for the period just before it is revised or brought up to date, the figures would indicate a year around 790.

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[1] In the table of reigns from Eterscél to 432 it will be noted that the total of Síl Éremón alone can be 431.5 years. But to use only these reigns would do away with the alternation while still admitting Laigin, Érainn, and Dál Fiatach kings of Ireland.

[2] If the Scottish entries are subtracted from the annals a remarkably thin chronicle of Irish events is left, and in this a significant number of entries have been rendered useless by deleting what would identify the persons mentioned. Particularly in the sixth and early seventh centuries there has been much deliberate suppression of information on Tethba, Cenél Cairbre, Cenél Lóegaire, and Cenél Fiachach. We are left with no adequate account of what was certainly the most significant political process in early Christian Ireland, the rise of Clann Colmáin Móir and the emergence of Mide as a major state.

As has often been pointed out, the common source of the existing early annals ends in 911/912.[1] From 766, where Tig. breaks off, to 911 we have to depend mostly on AU and FM since the other texts offer only a small number of entries not found in these. FM is the latest of our texts, compiled in the seventeenth century from a number of sources, several now lost; and, since it also draws on AU, comparison of the two texts is not as clear as it otherwise might be. However, I think it can be said with much confidence that one of the now lost sources of FM was a quite full copy of a Clonmacnoise Version text, not improbably an unbroken copy of Tig. Down to 835 AU is our fullest text by a considerable margin, though before 766 Tig. does contain a large number of entries not preserved in AU. In the forty-five years from 766 to 811 FM has about sixty entries not found in AU, thirteen misplaced relative to AU, and twenty-one additions to entries common to both, while AU has about a hundred and fifty entries not found in FM and many additions to common entries. This proportion, however, is soon reversed. The figures for the last hundred years of the common source, 812–911, illustrate the decline of AU after 835 and the rising importance of FM.

Decade	Shared AU & FM	In AU only	Total AU	In FM only	Total FM	Combined total
811–21	76	31	101	26	102	133
822–31	76	36	112	24	100	136
832–41	101	20	121	31	132	152
842–51	88	13	101	39	127	140
852–61	51	12	63	35	86	98
862–71	72	11	83	42	114	125
872–81	69	12	81	35	104	116
882–91	65	11	76	46	111	122
892–901	36	8	44	60	96	104
902–11	41	4	45	53	94	98

It will be noticed that, despite the dwindling of AU, FM stays pretty close to its average of 107 entries per decade during the century. Also, if six entries found only in AI in the decade 832–41 be added to the above, we have another peak equal to that at 781–90, with a number of entries not approached again before 911. Other signs that something happened to the common source about 835 are also forthcoming. For example, from 664 to 826 we have frequent

[1] As Hennessey suggests, the entry *Finis Cicli* in CS s.a. 910 (= 911) may refer to the end of a 19-year lunar cycle—if it be assumed that such a cycle began in 1 A.D. Thus in AI, at 798, we have *Initium Cicli*; *secunda feria*, *.ix.luna*. Use of the lunar cycle, however, is not characteristic of the Clonmacnois Version annals. It may be that the CS entry, which is the last entry in the common source, was originally *Finis Cronici*, and that it was emended by someone who was puzzled to find it where the continued text he was using most certainly did not end.

entries on diseases and plagues, but thereafter none till 907. Even more indicative is that the large amount of information about monasteries and ecclesiastical families from the late seventh century on, particularly those in east Mide and Brega, falls off very markedly about 835. For some the entries cease altogether; others are mentioned infrequently thereafter.[1]

The existing texts of early annals can be roughly assigned to three versions: the Ulster Version which is chiefly represented by AU and the Cottonian Annals; the Clonmacnois Version which includes Tig., CS, Annals of Clonmacnois, Annals of Roscrea, TFrag., and the short annals from Egerton 1782 printed in *Silva Gadelica*; and, as the third version, AI, first written in 1092, which is considerably closer to the Clomnacnois Version than to AU, but which shows affinities with both. It is of interest that after 911 AU and the Clonmacnois Version texts also have a common source which, however, accounts only for a percentage of all entries varying from almost nothing in the years immediately after 911 to twelve or fifteen percent in some later decades.[2] Before 911 the percentage of common entries is of course immensely higher.

The three versions represent different abridgments of and selections from the common source, or more likely from a prior abridgment of it, possibly a teaching-text made by a *fer léiginn* for his own use sometime after 911. Even when all texts are taken together, I am sure that we cannot reconstruct the early annals in anything like their original fullness. Too many screening and filtering operations, all too often haphazard, intervene between us and whatever may have existed in 790 or 835 or 911, not to mention the smaller effects of scribal corruption, ill-advised "correction," and the addition of material from non-annalistic sources. On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence that the ultimate source was more diverse and was wider in its coverage than are any of the versions drawn from it. Each of our versions contains numbers of entries one would

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[1] Of course this might have been due simply to the Viking raids, but I do not think so. The entries on the eastern monasteries were made by local annalists who were much interested in the network of ecclesiastical families there, and this sort of information practically ceases after 835.

[2] This later common source was probably the Book of Dub-dá-leithe cited in AU at 629, 963, 1004, and 1021. The author was most likely Dub-dá-leithe mac Máel Muire, of Clann tSinaich of int Airthir, the family that tended to monopolize the abbacy of Armagh from the early eleventh century on. He was *fer léigind* of Armagh from 1046 to 1049, and then abbot till he was ousted in 1060. He died in 1064.

If, as I think is possible, the Book of Dub-dá-leithe was the source of AU and the so-called Dublin Fragment of the Annals of Tigernach, it was probably a revision of the common source in terms of the curious chronological scheme one finds in both those texts. A great many of the glosses and multiplied entries one finds in AU are attributable to attempts to harmonize the text with the Clonmacnois Version. Since the latter has plenty of chronological oddities of its own, though these are less obvious, the attempts were not very successful.

think more characteristic of the others, and which in fact are charac-
teristic of the source. Thus though AU contains many of the sort of
entries which the Four Masters customarily, though not regularly
omitted—entries on storms, eclipses, plagues, great falls of mast
insufficiently identified persons, events abroad, and matters con-
sidered scandalous—enough such are found only in FM or CS to
show that they are not basically typical of AU. A study of the geo-
graphical distribution of entries unique to each version points to the
same conclusion. Those in AU, especially after 835, show, as one
would expect, a strong interest in the north, eastern Mide and Brega,
Connacht, and Great Britain. Those in FM and CS relate chiefly to
western Mide, north Leinster, Osraige, north Munster, and eastern
Connacht. In AI the non-Munster entries average about sixty per-
cent for the eighth century and over forty-five percent for the ninth.
In each of the versions there is a considerable overlap with the geo-
graphical purview of the others. FM, for example, has three entries
on abbots of Bennchor and one each on abbots of Othan and Í and
on kings of an Fochla, Conaille, and the Ards, which are not in AU.
It also has at 766 a unique Scottish entry—on the death of Muiredach
mac Ainbhchellaig whose accession as king of Cenél Loairn is noticed
in AU at 733. Some entries unique to CS are also of the sort one
would expect chiefly from AU:

CS–852   Fechtgna a ccomarbus Patruic.
CS–904   Ead Rí Cruithentuaithe do tuitim fri da H. Imair ocus fri Catal.
           go .d. cedoibh.
           Ailech dargain do gallaibh.
CS–909   Caittell mac Ruadrach, Rí Bretan, moritur.

And at 835 AI alone provides an entry on the death of *Indrechtach
mc. Tomaltaich, lethríg Ulad*. From 820 to 907 CS and AU share
thirty-three entries omitted in FM, mostly on northern events.
Three of these are also shared with AI. Thirteen of the entries
found in CS and FM, but not in AU, are reflected in AI. Most of
these refer to Munster and Leinster, but one is what might be con-
sidered typically an AU entry:

CS–854   Inrachtach H. Finnachta, heres Coluim Cille, sapiens optimus,
           .iiii. Id. Martii apud Saxones martizatur.
AI–854   Indrechtach hua Fínechta, abb Iae, hi martra dochoid oc dul do
           Roim (la Saxanu).

Finally it may be noted that, especially before *c.* 880, quite a few
entries in AI are paralleled only in AU. One could go on multiplying
instances, but these, I think, are enough to show that the existing
versions draw from a single fount and that their differences are
mainly characteristic of themselves, not of their source.

Let us turn now to the annalistic text which I think was constructed about 790 and of which the common source was a revision. The compilers of this, following the doctrine of DFE that Emain fell to the three Collas more than three generations before the time of Lóegaire mac Néill, set the event at 327 A.D. However, they had also to take notice of the tradition that Emain was founded and fell at times equally distant from the birth of Christ. In Senchus Síl Ír, the genealogical tract on Dál Araide origins, and in the Emain king-list associated with it, the statement is that Emain was founded in 450 B.C. and fell in 450 A.D.[1] In this list there are forty-four kings of Emain from Cimbáeth mac Finntáin to Fergus Foga. Conchobar mac Fachtna is the twentieth—not the midmost—apparently with a reign of forty years. In the annals the list is abridged to thirty-two names and the foundation of Emain is put at about 305 B.C.[2] Conchobar mac Nessa is the sixteenth king, with a stated reign of sixty years.

In Senchus Síl Ír the heroes of the Ulster Saga, with the exception of Cú Chulainn, descend from Rudraige mac Sittride, the seventy-fifth king of Ireland and tenth of Emain. It speaks, not of Fergus mac Ro-eich and Conchobar mac Nessa, but of Fergus mac Rossa mic Rudraige and Conchobar mac Fachtna mic Caiss mic Rudraige. In the annals the list is shortened before Conchobar by omitting Rudraige and four of his descendants, including Fachtna and Fergus mac Rossa. Evidently the excisions totalled too many years, for we find in the annals that a name, Fíac mac Fíadchon, not found in the long list, is inserted between the seventh and eighth reigns. Fíac is said in the annals to have reigned for seventy-five years, but the kalend-count would indicate about fifteen and the *annus-mundi* dates, thirty. If we omit Fíac altogether, the sum of the stated reign-lengths in the annals from Cimbáeth down to, but not including, Conchobar is two hundred and seventy-three years, which reckoned from 305 B.C. would put the beginning of Conchobar's reign at 32 B.C.[3] However, so many uncertainties are involved that I do not think we can accurately recover the original mathematical reasoning or say where Conchobar's accession was then placed in the annals. It may, however, be quite significant that in the poem *Cimbaeth cleithe n-óc nEmna* in DFE, which is based on the same shortened list as in the annals, Conchobar is called *mac Cathbath*. In the annals he may also originally have been thus named.

In shortening the Emain king-list to accommodate the new date for the fall of Emain, the annalists created other problems for themselves. Since the annals, like Bede's Chronicle, began with Creation,

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[1] Cf. *CGH*, 269–86.

[2] This explains the effort to re-date the fall of Emain in Tig. where the ferials are deliberately corrupted to make it seem that the year is 307 A.D.

[3] See p. 112 n. 1 where CS also indicates 32 B.C.

and since the coming of the Gaels was set at about 1500 B.C., there
should have been plenty of room for them to mark the reigns of all
eighty-four kings of Ireland from Éremón to Eterscél Mór. In fact
they did nothing of the sort. Apart from a few entries related to
Lebor Gabála, one on the destruction of Dind Ríg, which is set at
about 705 B.C., and an entry at 77 B.C., à propos of nothing at that
date, which says that seventy Laigin kings reigned in Tara from
Labraid Loingsech to Catháir Már, all we get till the entry on the death
of Conaire at 30 B.C. is the new Emain king-list. That this is quite
deliberate is indicated by the often-discussed statement after the
entry on the beginning of the reign of Cimbáeth at 305 B.C., *Omnia
monimenta Scottorum usque ad Cimbaeth incerta erant.* What the
remark really means is that the annalists were trying to get off the
hook presented by the statement in DFE that Cimbáeth was also
the fifty-third king of Ireland. If they were to attempt to harmonize
this with their Emain list, they would have had to cram thirty-one
kings of Ireland, some with very long reigns, into the same two
hundred and seventy-three years (plus whatever we should add for
Fíac mac Fíadchon) they had allowed for the fifteen Emain kings
from Cimbáeth to Conchubar. Their solution was simply to imply that
the Tara list was dubious and to leave it out. I presume that, if
they mentioned Eterscél at all, it was simply to observe that Christ
was born during his reign. They would then have picked up the
Tara list with Nuadu Necht or Lugaid Ríab nDerg, probably at 2
A.D. Their strategy with regard to the previous kings would be the
more excusable in that no one knew better than they the dishar-
monious mess presented by the prehistoric genealogies on which
DFE had been based.

Here we may pause for a moment to take note of the peculiar im-
portance of Lugaid Ríab nDerg. He was, as we observed earlier,
Medb's nephew. Her brothers, the three Finds of Emain, Bress,
Nár, and Lothar, begot him by triple incest upon their sister Clothra.
Shortly afterwards they were slain by their grieving father, Eochaid
Feidlech, the eighty-second king of Ireland, in the battle of Druim
Criaich. In token of his somewhat unusual conception Lugaid was
born with a red stripe round his neck and another around his waist
to indicate which part of him derived from which sire (or uncle).
His head was like Nár's, his breast like that of Bress, and from the
waist down he resembled Lothar. When grown to manhood he begot
his own son, Crimthann Nia Nár, also incestuously upon his mother.
Crimthann married outside the family. The purpose of this interest-
ing tale is not what one learned psychoanalyst has imagined. It
makes Lugaid a sort of ultimate ancestor of Dál Cuinn, for I would
suggest that the result of the three-fold incest is meant to symbolize
the union of the Uí Neill, Connachta, and Airgialla, in a federation,

while the second incest, as it were, shows them fused into one people. Thus, too, Lugaid is the ideal figure to initiate that *selaigecht* in which his descendants were increasingly, and at last totally dominant.

In the annals his epithet is Réo Derg which is of uncertain meaning. O'Rahilly in *EIHM*, takes it as the sounder, presumably older form, and suggests that it may denote "of the red sky." He also says that it could be shown that Lugaid is fact "was none other than Cú Chulainn himself," but he does not offer the proof. It may, however, be remarked that in the tale just cited Ríab nDerg, "Red-stripe," has a clear function. I know of no tale in which Réo Derg has any function. If, as I would guess, it was introduced into the annals by the reviser, he may have had two reasons for doing so. In relocating Lugaid's reign he could refer inferentially to stories in which Lugaid Réo Derg was the fosterson of Cú Chulainn and, at the same time, imply that these stories were a better authority for such ancient history than DFE and the annals associated with it. The use of the epithet may also point to the reason for the introduction or exaggeration of the reign of Conaire, that is, because of the tradition that both Conaire and Lugaid were killed by *na trí Rúadchinn Laigen*. In poems referring to that story we find a variant of the epithet, as, for example, in *Do chomramaib Laigen*, attributed to Flann mac Máel-máedóc, abbot of Glenn Uisenn, who died in 979:

Hit hē cauraid clōite ferg   robeotar Lugaid rēo n̊derg
na trī Rūadchind, rēim n̊gaile,   hit ē beotais Conaire.[1]

and again in *Masu de chlaind Echdach aird*, attributed to Orthanach úa Cáelláma (? bishop of Kildare, died 840):

Guin iar Lugdach Reo n̊Derg. ríg   rucad a tír thoirthech tríath
anim dóib túath iarna rath   otá Boind co Ath Cliath.[2]

The fact that in DFE and the genealogies Lugaid Ríab nDerg is related to Medb and connected with Emain through his fathers may have offered sufficient temptation for the reviser to try to associate the Táin also with the Dál Cuinn origin legend. However, he had too many implied affinities and correlations in mind to succeed wholly with any of them. The attempt to present Lugaid Réo Derg as succeeding Conaire after the Pentarchy and, at the same time, to bring him into a temporal relation with Cú Chulainn which would permit Lugaid to be his fosterson was bound to fail if, as was obviously important, the death of Cú Chulainn was to be placed at 2 A.D. The choice of that date—like 33 A.D. for the death of Conchobar—was clearly to associate these heroes with Christ. Thus the lives

[1] Ed. Meyer, from R 502 88a, *ZCP* viii, 117.
[2] LL 51 b 49.

of Christ and Cú Chulainn overlap by one year—to which may be added that each has a life-span divisible by three; each has a divine father but is known as the son of a mortal father; each dies for his people, erect and pierced by a spear. By such manipulations the pre-eminence of the Táin was again asserted, but at the cost of blurring the other intended associations.

The reviser may also have had in mind the need to overrule the authority of Senchus Síl Ír, for in that tract, at least as it stands in LL and RB 502, there seems to be no certain mention of the Táin, as if to the compiler it was not the supreme tale of the Ulster Saga; Fergus and Conchobar are referred to differently; and the attached pedigree of Cú Chulainn, instead of making him half-Ulsterman, half-divine or half divine, half-Briton, has him a Gael of the line of Éremón.

To whom, then, was the Táin so important, and why? One clue is that the central body of the tale was clearly composed in what is now north County Louth and by a person or persons who knew the local landscape intimately. My guess—and I am by no means the first to make it—is that the reviser was Cuanu, abbot of Louth, who died in 825. I would further suggest that his revision of the annals was the *Liber Cuanach* cited in AU, and that it was brought to Clonmacnoise from Louth in 835, where it became the basis of the common source of the annals discussed before.[1] Another, and very tentative, suggestion is that in the early ninth century the Táin, which till then may not have been widely known outside Conaille— or not in the form in which it has come down to us—was brought forward and refurbished to serve as a heartening political allegory for a cause in which Cuanu was deeply involved. When the cause failed, the new popularity of the Táin—assuming that it was popular —was eclipsed, but a copy was also brought to Clonmacnoise in 835, and there lay dormant for nearly three hundred years.

One of the curiosities of Irish history is the uncertainty about the place and manner of death of the Cenél Éogain king of Tara, Áed Oirdnide mac Néill Frossaig. Most annals say that he died in 819, at Áth dá Ferta in Mag Conaille, a ford somewhere near Louth, which figures prominently in the Táin and in Táin Bó Regama. FM states piously that he died after a victory of penance. The Cottonian Annals have him slain: *Aed mac Neill interfectus est*. AI, off on its own tack and probably confusing two separate entries, says that he died on a hosting in Scotland. The regnal lists, *Baile in Scáil*, and Keating say that he fell at Áth dá Ferta (or *i cath Da Ferta*) by Máel-Cánaig—*Baile in Scáil* stating explicitly, *at bath*

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[1] Note AU-471: *Praeda secunda Saxonum de Hibernia, ut alii dicunt, in isto anno deducta est, ut Maucteus (.i. Mochtae) dicit. Sic in Libro Cuanach inueni.* As the gloss observes, Maucteus is Mochta, patron of Louth.

per conflictionem Māel Cānaigh. The implication is that he was killed by the miracles of a saint—as is usually the case, of a dead saint—obviously because of the violation of a monastery with which the holy man had been connected. Later on such chastisements are a positive speciality at Clonmacnois, accomplished *per uirtutem Dé ocus Ciaráin.* Since *fert* 'grave' and *fiurt* 'miracle' have similar inflected forms it is not surprising to find in AU that the place-name is translated *iuxta Uadum duarum Uirtutum.* This stress on the miraculous nature of the cause and the place of death, when combined with the fact that the exact location of Áth dá Ferta is uncertain—for it is not clearly defined in the Táin—may raise some doubt as to whether Áed actually did die there or whether it was simply deemed an appropriate place for him to suffer the saint's wrath. In the Táin Áth dá Ferta is where Cú Chulainn, by agreeing to make a mock flight from Fergus, gets the promise that Fergus will fly from him at another time. That promise, redeemed in the last battle, ensures the victory of the Ulstermen.

As for Máel Cánaig, he was an anchorite of Louth who had died in 815. From the martyrologies we learn that his feast was the 18th of September and that he was from Rúscach in Cuailgne—now Roosky, half a mile south of Carlingford and of course in the Táin country. The violation for which he punished Áed took place in 818, when we learn from AU that Cuanu, abbot of Louth, went in exile to Munster, with the shrine of Mochta. AI says that the shrine of Mochta came to Lismore, in flight from Áed mac Néill. Since Lismore was a center of the reform movement, we may assume that Cuanu was associated with the Céli Dé. Whether he ever recovered his abbacy is uncertain. He was replaced at Louth, however, by a man of whom he would presumably have approved, Eochu úa Tuathail, a noted Céli Dé reformer, who died in 822. At his own death, in 825, Cuanu is called *Cuanu Lugmaid,* sage and bishop, but in the annals it is customary to give an ex-king or ex-abbot his former title in the entry on his death.

In the quarter century or so before the full onset of the Viking raids a struggle seems to have been going on between the reformers and the traditional churchmen for the control of Armagh and thus, too, of its associated monasteries of which Louth was one of the chief. It concluded in the battle of Leth Cam, in 827, in which Níall Caille mac Áeda Oirdnidi, king of Ailech, defeated the Airgialla and Ulaid. Flanngus mac Loingsig, the abbot of Armagh, had died in 826 after ruling for fourteen years. He was probably a first cousin of the reigning king of Ulidia, Muiredach mac Echdach; and Muiredach was certainly a first cousin once-removed of Diarmait úa Áeda Róin (d. 825), the founder of Dísert Diarmata in Leinster, a monastery

also associated with the reform movement.   Flanngus was succeeded,
obviously through the influence of Níall Caille to whom he was
anmchara, by Éogan Mainistrech mac Ainbhthig, then or later also
abbot of Clonard and Monasterboice.   The king of Airgialla, Cum-
mascach mac Cathail, preferring the claims of his own half-brother,
Artrí mac Conchobair, the bishop of Armagh, ousted Éogan and in-
stalled Artrí.   Éogan appealed to Níall who came with Cenél Éogain
and Cenél Conaill to oppose the Ulaid and Airgialla, and in the
resulting battle Cummascach was killed.   Éogan resumed the abbacy
tré neart Néill and retained it till his death in 834.   Interestingly,
the mother of Cummascach and Artrí was Lann, a sister of Níall.[1]
I suspect that she was also the wife of the reigning Mide king of Tara,
Conchobar mac Donnchada, and that Artrí was their son.

The first notice of Artrí is at 818, when he went to Connacht with
the shrine of Patrick.   AU then calls him *airchinnech* and CS, *princeps*,
but at 823, when he and Fedelmid mac Crimthann, king of Cashel,
proclaimed the *lex Patricii* over Munster, and in 825, when he pro-
claimed it over *na Teóra Connacht*, glosses in AU identify him as bishop
of Armagh.   In the other annals no title is given, as if he were too
famous to require one.   At 832 AU notes in a single entry, *Artri
mac Conchobair, abbas Aird Machae, et Conchobair mac Donncodha,
rex Temhro, uno mense mortui sunt*—which would seem to reinforce
the suggestion that he and Conchobar were closely related.   That
may also explain why, in 831, Conchobar had profaned Éogan
Mainistrech *hi foīgiallnaig* (whatever that may mean) and made
prisoners of his *muinntir* and carried off his horse herd.   As for
Artrí, there is one other interesting scrap of information.   CS and FM
provide a quatrain attributed to a senior of Armagh, lamenting the
results of the battle:

> Ní ma ruccsam ar mbáire,   ní ma lodmar sech Léire,
> Ní marggabhsam Eogan   sech cech ndeoraidh ind Ére.

O'Donovan translates:

> Not well have we gained our goal, not well have we passed by Leire,
> Not well have we taken Eoghan in preference to any pilgrim in Ireland.

The meaning is that they were foolish to have gone past Lann Léire,
Dunleer in Louth, to fetch Éogan from Monasterboice, but since
deoraidh presumably refers to Artrí, it may carry not only the con-
notation of "pilgrim," but also the more usual meanings of "stranger"
or "outlander," which, if he were of Clann Colmáin of Mide, he would
most certainly be in the Armagh context.   It may also imply one who

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[1] Ban-Shenchus, *RC* xlvii, 310; xlviii, 186, 225.   She is said to be mother of
Cummascach and of Fogartach mac Máel Bressail of Uí Fiachrach Arda Sratha,
king of Airgialla who died in 853.   Cummascach was of Síl Duibthire of Uí Cremthainn.
Artrí is not mentioned in Ben-Shenchus.   The statement that he was half-brother of
Cummascach is in the annals.

embraced exile and poverty for the love of God, in other words, a Céle Dé.

If Conchobar was backing Artrí, and through him the reform movement, his failure to appear at the battle was no doubt disappointing, but perhaps not unexpected. If, as I think possible, the Táin was being put forward in the year or so immediately preceding as an allegory of the situation, it might have been read in some such sense as this: A king of Ulidia intent on defending Emain Macha (read Ard Macha) against a threat from the west, and a Conaille champion, Cú Chulainn (Cuanu himself?) saving the situation by fighting in his own territory while the other heroes, for some reason or other, are prevented from coming to his aid. The fact that Cuanu sought refuge in Munster might also explain the name and the friendly depiction of Lugaid mac Nóis, the king of Munster, who, as far as I know, appears only in the Táin. He might possibly stand for Flann mac Foirchellaig, abbot of Lismore from 814 to 825, who may have been the son of Fóirchellach Fobair, abbot of Clonmacnois (Cluana mac Nóis), who died in 814. All this is, of course, so speculative that I hesitate to push it any further, as I have long hesitated even to propose it. However, it may help to explain why Cuanu, or whoever was the reviser of the annals, set such great store by the Táin.

The Viking attacks which began in full force about 825 upset everything in Ireland, lay and ecclesiastical, and surely reduced concern with the reform movement. Armagh and Louth were both plundered for the first time in 832. Louth was plundered again in 840, and its bishops, priests, and sages made captive. For a hundred years thereafter we have little information on it. In the Clonmacnois Version annals, however, we can find a curious sequence of entries about a family which came from Louth. For no other family in Ireland below the top ranks of royalty do we have anything like such information. The sequence begins with Gormán, abbot of Louth, who died on pilgrimage at Clonmacnois in 738. His son Torbach, a scribe, was briefly abbot of Armagh before his death in 808.[1] Torbach had a son Áedacán, abbot of Louth, who went on pilgrimage to Clonmacnois with his son Éogan and died there in 835. I presume that he belonged to the same ecclesiastical family as Cuanu and may perhaps have been a brother or cousin. Éogan remained at Clonmacnois and founded a family of scribes and clerics, which seems for a long while to have kept up its connections with the old home, for we find, for instance, that Cáencomrac, abbot of Louth, who died at Inchenagh in Loch Ree in 903, was tutor of his great-grandsons.[2]

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[1] See Kenney, 338, for his association with the Book of Armagh.

[2] See the story *Imthecht Caenchomraic* from the Book of MacCarthy Reagh in *Silva Gadelica* i, 87–9. Here *comarba Mochta* has been changed to *ocus Mochta a ainm ar tús*. His two pupils, Dúnadach and Óenacán, sons of Ecertach, have become *Eogan ocus Ecertach dá mac Aedacán d'ib Máine*, by confusion with Maic Áedacáin, the famous Uí Maine learned family of post-Norman times.

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The family later became known as Maic Cuinn na mBocht, from Conn na mBocht who died in 1031 as head of the Céli Dé at Clonmacnois and warden of its poor. One of Conn's grandsons, slain by raiders in 1106, was the chief scribe of LU. An entry at 37 b asks "a prayer for Máel Muire mac Céilechair, grandson of Conn na mBocht, who copied and searched out this book from various books." The books may well have belonged to his own family and have been brought from Louth in 835. In Máel Muire's hand we have most of the oldest text of the Táin, a number of other important Ulster tales, some devotional material, and legends connected with the royal families of Mide and Ulidia.

That this family also maintained the annals at Clonmacnois is strongly suggested by the detailed and often flattering entries about them, generation after generation, which were surely supplied by themselves and were sometimes embellished by elevating deceased members of the family to offices at Clonmacnois they had in fact not held. Occasional hints are also dropped that they were a branch of the royal family of Brega, Uí Chellaig, but unfortunately for that the earliest instance adduced, Torbach himself, died long before the eponymous Cellach was born. At other times they admit to being of Mugdorn Maigen which is probably correct, for Mugdorn Maigen was very close to Louth and Conaille. It is likely that several other ecclesiastics at Clonmacnois, who had the epithet *Conaillech*, also belonged to the family, though they cannot be attached to the genealogy. The genealogy, as it can be reconstructed from the annals, runs from 738 to 1034, covers twelve generations, and includes nineteen certain names. There are seven other names that may belong to it, and three that do belong but for which the linkages cannot be made. We have, then, an actual line connecting the LU Táin with Louth and, I think, with the Clonmacnois Version annals and *Liber Cuanach* as well.

I have long been puzzled to account for the presumed popularity of the Táin in pre-Norman Ireland, and have not been satisfied by the explanation that while the Fenian tales found wide acceptance among the ordinary folk the Ulster Saga, and especially the Táin, was preferred by the *filid* and by aristocratic audiences. There are to be sure, many stirring passages and quite a few amusing ones in the Táin, but what could a Munster or Connacht man, aristocrat or not, have made out of the many short place-names stories it also contains, some of very small literary merit, about how this ford or that hill or fort or dolmen in Cuailgne or Muirthemne got its name? But indeed, how many independent mentions of the Táin are there before the twelfth-century or in Ulster tales of which our earliest copy is not also in LU? In Cormac's Glossary, for instance, there are three

Gormán, abb. Louth, d. at Clonmacnois on pilgrimage, 758

*Torbach, scribe, abb. Armagh, d. 808

Áedacán, abb. Louth, d. at Clonmacnois on pilgrimage, 835

Eógan, anchorite of Clonmacnois, d. 847

Luchairén, scribe, d. 865

Ecertach, *airchinnech* of Eclais Bec, d. 898

Óenacán, *airchinnech* E.B., d. 949   *Do Mugdorn Maigen*
?

*Dúnadach, bishop of Cl., d. 955   Conaing, bishop, d. 1010   *Do Mugdorn Maigen*

Dúnchad, *fer-léiginn*, anchorite, d. 1006

Ioseph, *anmchara*, d. 1024

Conn na mBocht, *cend Céledh nDé*, anchorite, d. 1031

Célechair, bishop, d. 1064   Máel Ciaráin, abb., d. 1079   Gilla Críst, d. 1085   Cormac. *tánaisi abb.*, d. 1103   Máel Iosa, d. 1103

                                                                        Máel Ciaráin, *uasal-*
                                                                        sagart, d. 1134

*Máel Muire, scribe, slain 1106   Célechair, *sruith-*
                                        senóir, d. 1134

Ferdomnach, *do Mugdornaib*, abb. Clonmacnois, d. 872
Colmán *Conaillech* mac Ailella, *do Conaillib Muirthemne*, abb., do. 926. (It was he who, with the king of Tara, Flann Sinna, built the *daimliac*
in 909, and who is doubtless depicted on Flann's Cross.)
Diarmait *Conaillech, fer léiginn*, d. 1000.
Bressal *Conaillech*, abb., *árd-sui*, d. 1030.
?Ailill mac Bressail, *saccart fois Chuana mic Nóis*, d. 1044.
Maolán úa Cuinn na mBocht, *airchinnech* of Eclais Bec, d. 1097.
Gilla an Choimdedh úa Cuinn na mBocht, *tánaisi* abb., d. 1128.
?Máel Mochta, *comarba Ciaráin*, plundered at Cluain Fínnloch by Síl Anmchada and Delbna, 1141. (He probably was not the abbot.)
Máel Muire Mac Cuinn na mBocht, *primshenóir Érenn*, d. 1180.

TABLE I—*Relationships of some of the chief non-Ulidian figures in TBC and related tales. Numbers indicate kings of Ireland in DFE*

LAIGIN	LETH CUINN	ÉRAINN *

Dedaid mac Sin

Iar — Dáire

Ilntán (Finntán)

Ailill — Cú Roí

Éogan

≠85 Nuadu Necht

Find

Fergus Fairrge

≠82 Eochaid Feidlech — ≠83 Eochaid Airem = Étaín

Bress, Nár, Lothar na trí Find Emma

Étaín Óg

Mess-Buachalla ** = ≠84 Eterscél Mor

Ross Ruad

= Clothra

Find Fili | Cairbre Nia Fer | Ailill mac Máta = Medb Cruacháin

≠87 Lugaid Ríab nDerg

≠86 Conaire Már

≠88 Conchobar Abratruad | Erce

Findabair and the seven Maines

≠89 Crimthann Nia Nár

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* In the genealogies which attach the Érainn pedigree to that of Leth Cuinn at Óengus Turbech Temra, the 70th king of Ireland, the linkage is made eleven generations before Eochaid Feidlech and twelve generations before Dedaid mac Sin. Though on this chart the Érainn pedigree is moved up in order to make Eterscél Mór and Mess-Buachalla contemporaries, in the genealogical scheme Eterscél comes two generations later than Crimthann Nia Nár.

** Mess-Buachalla was the daughter, by incest, of Eochaid Airem and Étaín Óg—cf. Tochmarc Étaíne, *Ériu* xii.
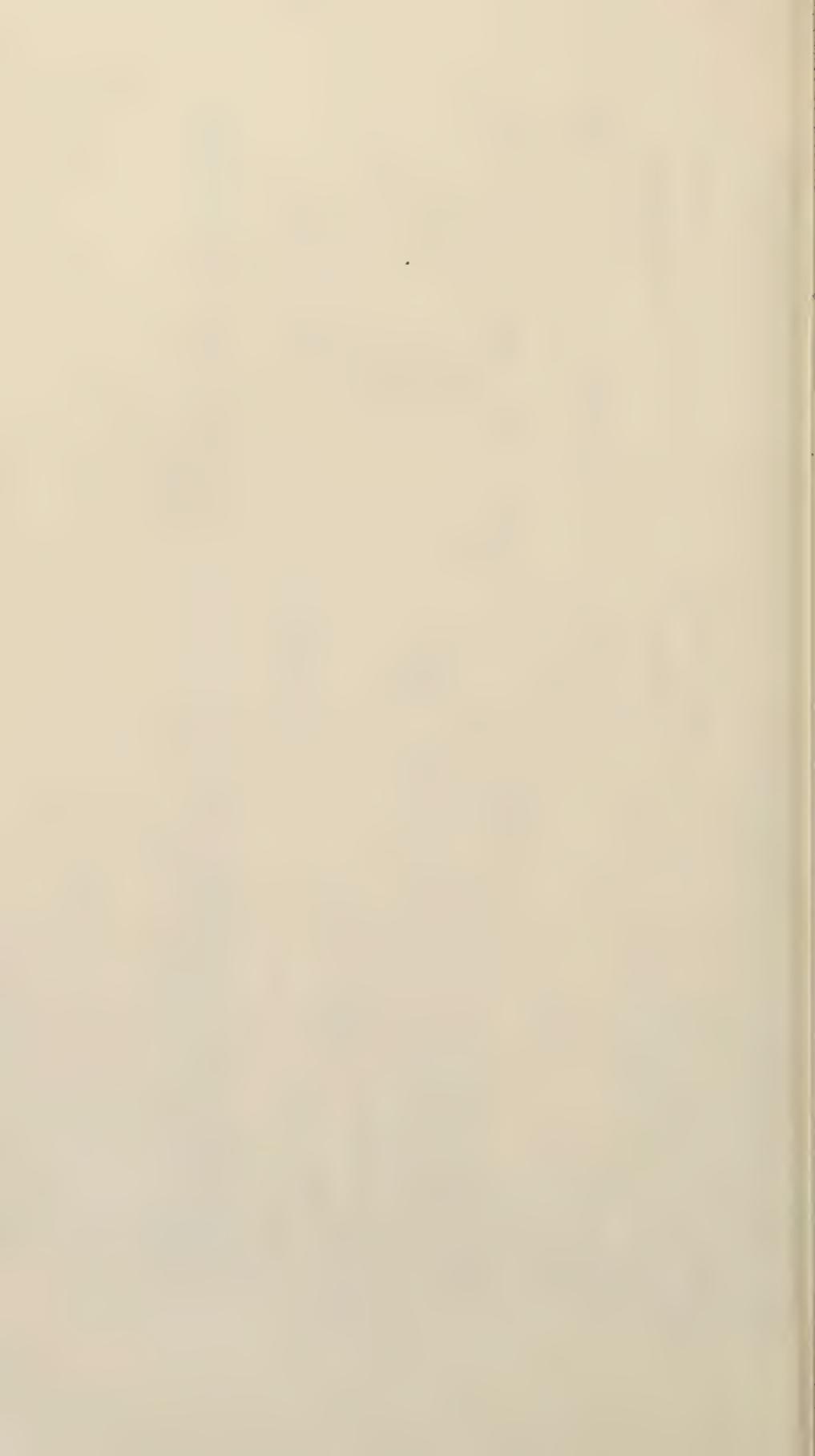
references to Cú Chulainn, one of which also speaks of Conchobar as *mac Cathboth*. None of these relate to the Táin. There are also single references to Sencha, Cormac Cond Longass, and Mess Gegra—again enough to show that Cormac mac Cuilennáin, slain in 908, knew some Ulster Saga stories, but not that he knew the Táin. I do not know what the answer is, but I think that we must consider the pre-twelfth century reputation of the Táin a moot question. May it not be possible that the sudden appearance of the full text of this huge story, along with the other old Ulster tales, in LU triggered a wave of interest among the learned somewhat comparable to the excitement over the "rediscovery" of Ossian in the eighteenth century, and comparable also in its results? In any case, whether the learned knew the Táin or not, or were familiar only with some shorter or less impressive version, or were aware of *reim-scéla* and *iar-scéla* which postulated it, the important siting of the references to it in the annals would have been enough to prepare them to receive it with enthusiasm.

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TRIBES AND TRIBALISM IN EARLY IRELAND[1]

IN a definition which has already become classical Dr. Binchy has described early Irish society as 'tribal, rural, hierarchical, and familiar'.[2] By so reintroducing into the vocabulary of respectable scholarship a term which MacNeill had flatly rejected he has opened a field of inquiry which must be of interest, not merely to the historian of Ireland, but to all students of comparative civilisation. Irish historians have rarely been in a position to benefit from close collaboration with social anthropologists and the challenge posed by Binchy's statement has not yet been seriously faced. This paper can be no more than tentative prolegomena : a series of suggestions and an attempt at definition.

Defending his usage against MacNeill's interdict Dr. Binchy says 'Whatever about the earlier connotations of the word "tribe", its modern use given in the Oxford Dictionary as "a primary aggregate of people under a headman or chief" conveys exactly the sense of the Irish word.' More recently he has quoted the definition in fuller form (it is in fact but the third of six) : 'when for want of a better word we translate *tuath* by "tribe", we must use this word only in the more general sense attached to it in the Oxford English Dictionary : "a primary aggregate of people in a primitive or barbarous condition under a headman or chief." '[3]

Here indeed lies the rub. The word 'tribe' in ordinary English usage has distinctly derogatory overtones. This is perhaps the main, though not the only, reason for MacNeill's abhorrence of it. We are faced with the eternal dilemma of the translator, whose implications for the historian have been so admirably discussed by Bloch,[4] that words of another language or epoch bear a semantic range for which no exact equivalent can often be found in our own. The historical accident of nineteenth century colonialism has doubtless contributed much to the unfortunate colouring acquired by the English word 'tribe'. The German word *Stamm*, on the other hand, its conventional dictionary equivalent, has a positive rather than a pejorative ring. Interestingly, it carries some of the same variety of meaning as the Hebrew

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[1] The kernel of this paper derives from a lecture given to the Colloquium on Welsh medieval law organised by the Welsh Law Sub-committee of the Board of Celtic Studies of the University of Wales at Gregynog between 14 and 16 September 1970, but it owes much to the contributions of the other participants, notably Professor Ioan M. Lewis, Dr. Glanville Jones, Sir Goronwy Edwards, C. E. Stevens and Mr. T. M. Charles-Edwards, and to the stimulating discussion under the chairmanship of Professor Idris Foster which wound up the proceedings. Apologies are owed to others whose suggestions I may have unconsciously assimilated: many such lines of research I have not since had the leisure to pursue, and can only hope that others may be encouraged to do so.

[2] *Early Irish society*, ed. Dillon (Dublin, 1954), p. 54.

[3] *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon kingship*, The O'Donnell lectures for 1967–8 (Oxford, 1970), p. 8.

[4] *The historian's craft*, trans. Putnam (Manchester, 1954), pp. 156–89.

maṭṭeh 'branch, twig; rod, staff, stick, sceptre, spear; stem, tribe';
another Hebrew word (that most commonly used for the tribes of
Israel), *šebeṭ*, has an even wider range: 'stick, staff, rod, thrashing-
stick; ruler's staff, sceptre; stem, tribe, division; lance, spear'.   All
this is very interesting, as Bloch would say, but it does not tell us
the causes of tribalism.[1]

MacNeill in fact used the term 'tribe' on occasion, and seems to
have tacitly admitted its validity for the prehistoric period.[2]   But
he was aroused to something approaching fury by the employment of
this ill-defined word as a mere label which seemed to absolve the
historian from further consideration of the polity of Gaelic Ireland.
Not only ascendancy or unionist historians, such as Orpen, but also
nationalists before MacNeill had been all too content to speak with
condescension or romantic nostalgia of the 'clan system' or 'tribal
system'—'convenient terms with which modern writers contrive to
fill up the vacuum of their knowledge in regard to the general political
condition of ancient and medieval Ireland.'[3]   The basis of MacNeill's
antagonism is best illustrated by some of his own words, but the
passages from which they are culled will repay reading in extenso:
'I have been reproached with avoiding the word "tribe".   I have
avoided it, and for two reasons; first, because some have used it in
so loose a sense as to make it meaningless; and second, because
others have used it with the deliberate intent to create the impression
that the structure of society in Ireland down to the seventeenth
century finds its modern parallel among the Australian or Central
African aborigines.'[4]   'When I was attracted to the study of Irish
history it was natural that I should come to it imbued with the
notions in vogue at the time, especially with the notions in vogue
about the form of government and society that were supposed to
have prevailed in ancient and medieval Ireland and among other
peoples who were classed as Celtic.   I soon discovered that these
notions, so far as Ireland was concerned, were not based on anything
that could be called study, on any kind of systematic investigation.
I discovered also that the same notions were quite modern and had
come into vogue among educated people in the course of the nine-
teenth century mainly.   As they were not based on systematic study,
so also they were not reduced to any form of intelligible description
in detail . . .   We were told on all hands that Irish social and political
life took the form of the Clan System.   As evolutionary theories
regarding human society became more fashionable, writers who wished
to appear learned sometimes preferred to say the Tribal System.'[5]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 34,.
[2] Cf. *Celtic Ireland*, pp. 4f.; *Phases of Irish history*, p. 229.
[3] *Phases*, pp. 183f.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 289f.
[5] *Early Irish laws and institutions*, pp. 1f.

The scorn implicit in these remarks is directed as much by scholarly impatience at slovenly workmanship as by the indignation of a nationalist. Today, in our very different world, no Irish student would feel that he was derogating from his own dignity or that of his subject in turning with interest to Africa for enlightenment: in such phenomena as the sacred kingships of West Africa or the cattle-loaning nexus of clientship in Ruanda-Burundi he will find obvious analogies. But he will ignore at his peril MacNeill's strictures against glib acceptance of evolutionary theories, a priori arguments, and neglect of the Irish primary sources studied in their own immediate context. And MacNeill's chief objections still remain valid: previous writers had totally confused the *tuath* or tribal kingdom with the *fine* or kindred or again with the narrower joint family, the *derbfine*; even translations with some pretensions to scholarship had rendered these indiscriminately as 'tribe', 'clan', or 'sept', thus reducing to a facile and deceptive simplicity the complex structure of Irish society.

Nevertheless, we must at least provisionally accept Binchy's rehabilitation of the word 'tribe'. Not because it represents a contradiction of MacNeill's thesis, but rather because it points the way to a synthesis arising naturally out of the confrontation between him and his predecessors. For it is based on precisely that systematic study of the original sources that MacNeill had called for. Moreover, Binchy's usage is exact: the tribe is nothing more nor less than the Old Irish *tuath*.

Why not then use the Irish term *tuath* itself? Here again Bloch can provide us with at least a partial answer: 'To reproduce or copy the terminology of the past might, at first sight, seem a rather safe course. In application, however, it would encounter manifold difficulties. In the first place, changes in things do not by any means entail similar changes in their names. Such is the natural consequence of the traditionalist character of all languages, and of the lack of inventiveness common to most men . . . the transformations in such cases almost always take place too slowly to be perceptible to the very men affected by them. They feel no need to change the label, because the change of content escapes them.'[1]

As we shall see, the term *tuath* does indeed change its meaning, and it is more correct to say that Binchy's 'tribe' corresponds to one of its commonest meanings within a particular epoch of early Irish history; the vaguer adjective 'tribal' may be used to describe many aspects of law, polity and kingship over a somewhat longer time-span. No terminology can be wholly satisfactory, yet it is useful to describe Irish society as tribal in these respects, because

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[1] Bloch, op. cit., p. 160.

we can so highlight its significance for the study of comparative law, social anthropology and universal history, against the criteria of which disciplines the validity of the term itself may hopefully be measured—a task not altogether so easy as it may seem. 'We merely group facts, as concrete as we could wish, under an expressive name. The similitude of these facts, which the name quite properly seeks to signify, is itself a reality. In themselves, therefore, these terms are perfectly legitimate. Their true danger derives from their very convenience. If ill-chosen or too mechanically applied, the symbol (which was there only to assist in the analysis) ends by dispensing with analysis.'[1] The last sentence serves to remind us of MacNeill.

In his great work *La société féodale* Bloch protested against the loose usage of the term 'feudalism' to cover societies from that of Homeric Greece to that of modern Tibet, contending for its strict application to that particular system which developed in parts of western Europe from the tenth century onwards. Nevertheless, in the absence of any alternative term to designate the real phenomenon which the Marxists label 'feudalism', we must probably resign ourselves to the inaccuracy or anachronism, while remaining aware that it is such. Similarly, the term 'tribalism' is used to describe a large number of societies, ancient and modern, which exhibit varying degrees of likeness. How far does it suit early Irish society?

Unfortunately, anthropologists seem to be as much at variance with one another in their use of terms as are historians. Their usage is individual and eclectic, and such Anglo-Celtic words as 'clan' and 'sept' have been adopted in senses which are not always helpful to the Irish historian. Professor Ioan Lewis gave the Gregynog conference two alternative definitions of the word 'tribe' which might find approval among some anthropologists. The first was its use to describe a community which forms a recognisable linguistic and cultural entity, but which need not necessarily be united politically. In this sense both Ireland and Wales in the early medieval period might properly be termed 'tribes'—which is hardly useful to anyone. Otherwise, 'tribe' might denote the largest political unit in a given community. This leaves 'community' undefined and seems to run counter to Binchy's equation of tribe and *tuath*, since the latter is surely the smallest of Irish political units; and if it be not permissible to identify *tuath* and tribe there is little point in calling Irish society tribal. Most modern anthropologists seem wary of adopting the classical view of Sir Henry Maine that the tribe was based essentially on blood relationship, whether real or fictional, although Lucy Mair seems to feel that this concept has a certain validity.[2] It is significant, however, that Dr. Binchy has gone to pains to deny such as

[1] Ibid., pp. 172f.
[2] Mair, *Primitive government* (London, 1962), p. 13.

basis for the Irish *tuath*, or even for the primitive Indo-European *teutā*.[1] He therefore rejects the first definition of 'tribe'. in the Oxford English Dictionary, viz.' 'A group of persons forming a community and claiming descent from a common ancestor ... (*b*) A particular race of recognized ancestry; a family.'

We may go further and question the aptness of the Dictionary's third definition, favoured by Binchy, in that scholar's own terms. We remember the phrase 'under a headman or chief'. Now the Irish tribe with which Dr. Binchy is dealing was a kingdom. The correlative of *tuath* is *rí*. *Ni ba tuath tuath gan egna, gan egluis, gan filidh, gan righ ara corathar cuir* (leg. *curu?*) ⁊ *cairde do thuathaibh*, says an archaic text:[2] 'That is no *tuath* which has no scholar, no church, no poet, no king to extend contracts and treaties to [other] *tuatha*.'[3] *Egna* is explained here as referring to a scholar of canon law, while *egluis* is defined *ni ba heagluis eagluis gan oifreann* 'that is no church which has no mass', though one might have expected it to imply the presence of a bishop, since we learn elsewhere that each *tuath* should have its own bishop.[4]

The distinction between king and mere headman or chief is important. The multiplicity of minuscule *tuatha* in Ireland may make the modern reader smile when he hears that the ruler of each was a king. But the term *rí* in the laws normally refers to such a tribal king. The over-king and the provincial king—designated variously as *rí tuath, rí mórthuaithe, ruiri* on the one hand, and *rí ruirech, réithe, triath, rí cóicid, ard-rí* on the other—were certainly more powerful, but the essence of their royalty depended on their kingship of a small *tuath*. Their sway over their sub-kings (*fuirig*) was accidental to their kingship : a result of military might or personal and dynastic influence rather than of inherent right.[5]

In this respect, therefore, early Ireland was distinctly tribal—a conclusion which is corroborated by the fact that a person was an *aurrae* or *urrad*, a 'citizen' in possession of his full legal rights, only within the bounds of his own *tuath*: outside of these he was a *déorad* a stranger, exile or even outlaw. How far this rigid delimitation of

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[1] *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon kingship*, p. 7.

[2] 'An Old-Irish tract on the privileges and responsibilities of poets', ed. E. J. Gwynn, *Ériu*, xiii, p. 31.

[3] Or perhaps: '... to represent [his *tuath*] in contracts and treaties with [other] *tuatha*'; cf. Binchy, *Críth Gablach*, p. 34. Gwynn gives the translation 'A *tuath* is not such without a scholar, a church, a poet, a king, who may arrange (?) for *tuatha* as to contracts and treaty law', *Ériu*, xiii, p. 224.

[4] 'Riaguil Pátraic', ed. J. G. O'Keeffe, *Ériu*, i, p, 218.

[5] Cf. MacNeill, *Early Irish laws*, p. 110: 'We can trace clearly in the Irish law tracts an older tradition which regards hegemonies and the subordination of kings to higher kings and of individual states to provincial headships as extra-legal and as matters of political transience, and recognises only one grade of king and one form of political community and jurisdiction, the *tuath*.' He would, however, relegate this situation to a remote prehistoric period.

legal status remained valid within the great provincial over-kingdoms of the ninth century is open to doubt : probably the operation of traditional *cairdde* over many centuries had helped to blur old tribal distinctions. For in spite of this tribalism, when from the seventh century onwards we are enabled by the growing volume of documentation to construct a narrative of political history, it is clear that no *tuath* exists in splendid isolation: all are linked together in a network of alliances and hegemonies, just as the tribes of Caesar's Gaul were grouped under the leadership of the Aedui, Sequani or Remi.

Nevertheless, in the Old Irish period the *rí tuaithe*, however insignificant on the national scale, was the true king. Even the most powerful of high kings was ultimately ruler of a single *tuath* and exercised no direct authority beyond its borders. Relations between kings were conducted along personal lines very much according to the pattern of society within the *tuath*. The sub-kings were in effect in the position of *céli* or clients to the overlord. It is thus somewhat difficult to speak of politics or of the state as such. Just as Irish law, in common with most primitive systems, did not distinguish between civil and criminal cases, so there was little differentiation between public and private affairs. The king entered into a contract with other kings, and this was formally ratified by his *tuath*, on whose behalf he had acted.[1] He would engage to pay a certain amount of tribute to his overlord, attend his *óenach*, and lead the forces of his own *tuath* on a lawful hosting called by the overlord. Hostages—usually members of his own family—guaranteed that he would fulfill these obligations. It is easy to see how the people's loyalty was thus concentrated on the person of their own king. If they were a traditionally subordinate vassal state they might accept it as right and proper that their king should pay tribute to the king of Cashel or of Tara and support him in battle, but it was hardly to be expected that they would feel any personal bond with the latter, particularly if a mesne king intervened between him and their tribal king. If the suzerain attempted to assert his direct rule, or even to exert his influence in matters of dynastic succession within the subordinate kingdom, he was sure to meet with their hostility.

The supremacy of an over-king was symbolised not so much by the tributes he received (which might even be waived) as by the formal gifts he gave. The late Middle Irish *Book of rights* terms these *tuarastal* and they are distributed to *sáer-thuatha* (normally kingdoms whose rulers belong to the same dynasty as the over-king and are thus exempt from tribute) and to *dáer-thuatha* alike. Here again we have an analogy with the ordinary civil order within the *tuath* : the

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[1] Cf. the formula quoted above, n. 15: *ar-cuirethar curu ⁊ cairdde*. For what follows see Binchy's remarks, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon kingship*, pp. 31f.

two grades of subject kingdoms correspond to the 'free' and 'base' clients (*sóer-chéli* and *céli giallnai* or *dóer-chéli*) of a lord. The analogy is more explicit in older texts where instead of *tuarastal* we find *rath* used for the king's gifts—precisely the same term is as found in the laws for the 'fief' of stock granted by a *flaith* to his *céle*.[1]

So too, since tribute was reckoned in cattle, the wars of the Irish annalistic records tended to take the form of cattle-raids. Although one cannot deny the occurrence of wars of conquest resulting in the expansion of major kingdoms and the political disappearance of the vanquished tribes, the majority of 'wars' were of this simpler nature. Properly understood in their social and legal context they are not symptomatic of 'tribal anarchy' but being conducted according to a set ritual and conforming to a code of accepted obligations may be surmised to have helped in cementing a fissiparous polity. They merely represent an elevation onto the political plane of the normal legal process of *athgabáil*—the formal distraint of a debtor's movable property. Tribute demanded but unpaid was thus exacted with interest. We find the Airgialla claiming a third of every tribute they exact on behalf of their Uí Néill overlords, in accordance with the legal maxim *cach thobaig a thrian*.[2] Again, as the nobles billetted themselves on their base clients between New Year and Shrovetide,[3] so a prerogative of the over-king was the right to make a royal circuit of his vassal *tuatha* and to be entertained by his sub-kings.

So loose a system of tribal federations left little room for government or direct control by the highest of over-kings. But it did ensure a certain amount of cohesion over a relatively wide area. In general the tributary *tuatha* were more prone to offer their support to a rival over-king than to attempt to claim total independence. An interesting early tract from Munster purports to tell how in the sixth century the Ciarraige Luachra led a confederation of west Munster tribes—the Corco Duibne, Múscraige, Corco Óchae and others—to shake off the over-lordship of the king of Éoganacht Locha Léin and to transfer their allegiance directly to the king of Cashel. The writer has no doubt projected back into the past the conditions of his own era when the mesne lordship of West Munster once exercised by the Éoganacht Locha Léin had decayed, and he has invested this political change with the authority of a 'synod' convened by the saints of West Munster origin.[4]

[1] Ó Buachalla, *Cork Hist. Soc. Jn.*, lvii, pp. 81–6.

[2] *Anc. laws Ire.*, iii, p. 316. For the claims of the Airgialla see the early poem edited by Máirín Ó Daly, *Ériu*, xvi, p. 182 and Dillon's edition of the *Book of rights*, pp. 72f., 77f.

[3] Binchy, 'Aimser Chue', *Féilsgríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill*, pp. 18–22.

[4] The tract occurs in the Laud genealogies, edited by Meyer *ZCP* viii, pp. 315f. The last king of Éoganachta Locha Léin to bear the title *rí Iarmuman* is Cú Chongelt mac Coirpri (†791). In the text St. Brendan of Clonfert (Brénaind moccu Altai) prophesies that no king of Iarmumu shall rule over the Ciarraige after the days of Máel Dúin (†661): Crimthand Odor, the king against whom the prophesy is directed, is probably

The question of the antiquity of the traditional provincial over-kingdoms, the *cóiceda* or Fifths, raises problems too large for consideration here, but which serve to warn us against easy acceptance of simplistic evolutionary theory.   The existence of the *cóiceda* (whatever their exact number, and whatever the position of Mide in the scheme) seems, as MacNeill said, to be the earliest and best-attested fact in Irish history.   Yet it is only by the eighth century that the provincial kings seem to be approaching a situation in which they can wield effective authority over their sub-kings.   Furthermore, the tradition of the extent of their power in prehistoric times is confirmed by the size of the great hill-forts of the Iron Age which remained emblematic capitals throughout the historical period. These imply a more highly organised and centralised authority based on military power than was to appear again in Ireland before the Anglo-Norman invasion.   It seems probable that we should ascribe these to a similar invasion or series of invasions carried out by Celts from Britain or the continent.   Should we then regard the collapse of this prehistoric society and the fragmentation of the Fifths into hundreds of loosely connected tribal kingdoms as a reversion to the pre-Celtic polity in some respect?   But if any of our documents are Celtic and indeed Indo-European in their archaism it is surely the laws, which as we have seen, although they recognise the over-kings and the *ríg cóicid*, nevertheless regard the petty tribal king as the norm of their politeia.

It has been all too commonly assumed by scholars who have sought to correlate the findings of modern archaeology and linguistics with the medieval Irish genealogies and the *Lebor Gabála* that the so-called *aithech-thuatha* and *fortuatha* represent aboriginal pre-Celtic inhabitants while the great dominant dynasties and tribal federations, such as the Ulaid, Connachta, Laigin and Éoganachta, are Celtic conquerors.   It is as well to remind ourselves that any such theory presupposes the existence of a strong historical memory which could bridge the gap of some six hundred or even a thousand years between the hypothetical Celtic invasions and our earliest written genealogies. The fact that the early Irish had little or no awareness that they were Celts does not strengthen our faith in such a supposition.   It also

identical with Máel Dúin's grandfather Crimthann mac Cobthaig. It is further stated that the west Munster tribes then gave their allegiance *for Crimthan mac nDercomanath maic* [leg. *mac*] *Feidlimthe ríg Caisil*. This person may be the same as the *Crimthann mac Dercco* (*Dearcu .i. banchāinti*, Lec.; *Dercu meic Nath*, BB) *i nDaurlus* whom the genealogists regard as son of Eochaid son of Óengus mac Nad Froích and ancestor of the Éoganacht Airthir Chliach (O'Brien, *Corpus geneal. Hib.*, i, p. 208), and who is said to have had a brother, also named Crimthann (with the epithets Srem or Feimin), ancestor of the Éoganacht Glendamnach, as well as a first cousin Crimthann mac Feidlimthe, ancestor of the Éoganacht Caisil. Of these only Crimthann Srem mac Echach is usually regarded as king of Cashel. Either our tract has hopelessly confused the three Crimthanns or, as is very likely, it preserves an earlier stage in the genealogical tradition.

ignores the Celtic nomenclature of most of the subordinate tribes and their monopoly of that highly respectable Celtic element *-rige* or *-raige* (from **rīgion* 'kingdom'), exemplified by countless tribal names of the type Ciarraige, Dartraige, Gamanraige, Múscraige, Partraige, Sordraige. The rise of the great provincial dynasties is a relatively recent phenomenon and their genuine pedigrees hardly go back beyond the fourth century of our era.

A great measure of cultural unity in Ireland is apparent from the time of our earliest records. This cannot have been imposed by political means. The Connachta or Uí Néill were certainly not in a position to impose their rule, let alone their language, over the Ulaid and Laigin even as late as the eighth century. O'Rahilly's theory that the former are in fact the Goidels, the last wave of Celtic invaders, cannot therefore be seriously maintained. It was the Dál Riata who introduced the Gaelic language to Scotland; yet according to O'Rahilly they should have been P-Celts, as were the tribes of the south-west in whose lands are clustered the thickest concentrations of ogham inscriptions—the earliest records of the Goidelic tongue.[1] The laws, it is true, distinguish the Féni from the Ulaid and also from the Gáilióin or Laigin,[2] while the genealogists preserved separate traditions of the Cruthin and Érainn. It is a matter for speculation whether one should describe these early divisions of the population as tribes. Certainly they were not mere *tuatha*. Race is perhaps a better, though not a perfect, term. But too zealous a pursuit of what Bloch called 'the idol of origins' should not blind us to the total lack of linguistic or cultural criteria by which they can be differentiated in early Christian times. The genealogies, annals and regnal lists afford ample evidence to illustrate the working of the peculiar Irish law of dynastic succession in many different *tuatha* and over-kingdoms, thus revealing an interesting uniformity of practice all over Ireland. Even the Cruthin, whom it seems impossible to dissociate racially from the Cruthin or Picts of Scotland and who might therefore be expected to show symptoms of matrilinear succession, follow the same pattern as the other Irish.[3] It is true, as Binchy has said, that the *Senchas Már* is not in the true sense a national law code but merely an ambitious compilation by one school of jurists which came to

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[1] Cf. M. A. O'Brien, 'Irish origin legends', in *Early Irish society*, ed. Dillon, pp. 50f. For O'Rahilly's efforts to save his theory from the evidence of the oghams see *Early Irish history and mythology*, p. 495.

[2] Cf. *Anc. laws Ire.*, iv, p. 178 (*Bech-bretha = Senchas Már*, facsimile, 13a 10): *nochisi breth inso bretha la Ultu ⁊ Finiu* (leg., *Féniu*) *imbi*, allegedly referring to an incident in the early seventh century; the sage of Fergus mac Leiti refers to the Féini, Ulaid and Gáileóin as the three *prím-chenéla* in Ireland in the heroic period of prehistory *Ériu*, xvi, p. 36; F. J. Byrne, 'The Ireland of St. Columba', *Historical Studies V*, p. 53, n.20.

[3] F. J. Byrne, '*Clann Ollaman uaisle Emna*', *Studia Hibernica*, iv, regnal table opposite p. 56.

acquire particular prestige, and that varying legal traditions can be distinguished, some of which can be assigned to a Munster provenance.[1] Similar divergences exist in the Hindu law schools. But it seems safe to speak of a basic and highly individual body of tradition, subject to the modification of local custom and scholastic interpretation, which is recognisable as Irish law.

Irish Christianity exhibits the same peculiarities of organisation and culture in every tribe and territory. Here again there are differences in emphasis. Some of these may be illusory, resulting from the uneven spread of our documentation in time and space. Some, however, we might venture to attribute to differing attitudes in Leth Cuinn and Leth Moga. Such seem reflected in the stands taken by north and south during the paschal controversy. The south moreover in the seventh century cultivated a more normal standard of Latin than that favoured by the Hispericists of the north; it is barren of early annalistic material but has preserved archaic genealogical poems. Politically too Munster displays a style of its own. Its supposedly peaceful character in the early centuries may simply result from the absence of annalists to record its petty and even its greater wars : happy indeed may that country appear that has no written history. On the other hand the early tracts on the mutual obligations of the king of Cashel and his subject *tuatha* do lay stress on the privileges and exemptions enjoyed by the latter rather than on the victories of their overlord,[2] and the author of the origin tale *De bunad Éoganachta*, whose purpose it is to demonstrate the antiquity of the Éoganachta relative to the northern dynasties, emphasises the peaceful nature of their rule since their ancestor Éogan Taídlech won the kingdom by his foresight and generosity (the story is modelled on that of Joseph in Egypt); he states quite explicitly his poor view of the cruder basis of Dál Cuinn power : the second Míl Espáne invaded Ireland and won land there by the sword —*is amlaid rogabsat flaith ar chiund ⁊ bid samlaid dogrés, tria hécin gabait flaith*, 'that is how they won lordship at first, and it will always be so : they take lordship by force.'[3]

It remains true to say, however, that in spite of the extreme political fragmentation of early Ireland, the application of the adjective 'tribal' can be misleading if it be taken to imply that the country was divided between communities differing radically in language, religion or culture.

[1] Binchy, 'Ancient Irish law', *The Irish Jurist*, i. p. 89; id., 'The date and provenance of *Uraicecht Becc*', *Ériu*, xviii, pp. 44–54.

[2] '*Fritholad ríg Caisil fri thuathaib*', Lec. 192b 36; 'Dál Caladbuig and reciprocal services between the Kings of Cashel and various Munster states', *Irish Texts*, i, pp. 19–21; Ó Buachalla, *Cork Hist. Soc. Jn.*, lvii, pp. 81 ff.

[3] *ZCP* viii, p. 313.

There is another sense in which an anthropologist might use the term 'tribal'. Did early Ireland have a tribal economy? Fuller investigation of early Irish economic history must depend largely on cooperation between the student of the laws, the archaeologist and the geographer. Here the Welsh have set a splendid example. At the present state of knowledge one is tempted to answer in the affirmative, at least for the centuries before the tenth, when the economic impact of the Norse settlements began to affect Irish society and political development. Gluckman points out that tribal societies are characterised by the possession of primary goods only, without luxuries, so that the standard of living of the wealthy could not differ radically from that of the ordinary tribesman. 'A man with a thousand head of cattle could not himself consume all their milk, meat and skins. He could only use them to attract and support dependants and thus acquire power over people.'[1] This relevance of this observation to the Irish system of *giallnae* or *célsine* will be immediately obvious. Polybius says too of the Celts of Transalpine Gaul: 'they lived in unwalled villages, without any superfluous furniture; for as they slept on beds of leaves and fed on meat and were exclusively occupied with war and agriculture (τὰ κατὰ γεωργίαν), their lives were very simple, and they had no knowledge whatever of any art or science. Their possessions consisted of cattle and gold, because they were the only things they could carry about with them everywhere according to circumstances and shift where they chose. They treated comradeship (τὰς ἑταιρείας) as of the greatest importance, those among them being the most feared and most powerful who were thought to have the greatest number of attendants and associates (θεραπεύοντας καὶ συμπεριφερομένους αὐτῷ).'[2] Gluckman also stressed the effects of simple technology: 'though the poor might work for the rich, they cannot be employed to give the rich an elaborate level of life above their own.'[3] So in Ireland the *céli giallnai* of a king expended labour on erecting the *drécht giallnai* —an additional earthwork around his ring-fort, of little practical value but demonstrating in concrete form his wealth and prestige.[4]

The remarks of Polybius relate to the period of Celtic *Völkerwanderung* and should not be applied too strictly to the Irish of the early middle ages, nor even to the Gauls of Caesar's day. Moreover they do not imply a wholly pastoral economy, as is witnessed by the words τὰ κατὰ γεωργίαν, and they must be read in conjunction

[1] Max Gluckman, *Politics, law and ritual in tribal society* (Oxford, 1965), p. 14.
[2] Polybius, ii. 17 8–12 (Loeb edition), translated W. R. Paton. 'Comradeship' seems an inadequate translation for the plural τὰς ἑταιρείας here: ἑταιρεία, like Latin *sodalitas*, had also the meaning of political association or club.
[3] Gluckman, op. cit., p. 15.
[4] Cf. Binchy, *Críth Gablach*, pp. 27, 38, 96.

with his glowing description a few pages earlier of the prosperity of Transalpine Gaul.[1]

The economy of the Irish *tuath* is a subject requiring much further research, but it is quite certain that any imaginative picture of nomad pastoralists roaming about the country at will cannot correspond to historical reality.   The laws are explicit that both noble and commoner were engaged in tillage as well as pastoral farming—a fact not contradicted by the use of cattle as a medium of exchange. Ireland was then as always predominantly pastoral, and the commonest form of moveable property was the most convenient unit of value.[2] Practice no doubt varied from region to region and from century to century: then as now more intensive tillage must have been commoner in some areas than in others. The legal tracts, compiled in the seventh and eighth centuries and excessively schematic in form, can give us no hint of such differences. But on the whole, primitive conditions could not have afforded the economic sub-structure for real specialisation and mixed farming must have been the norm. The possibility might well be examined whether the growth of the Norse towns in the middle Irish period may not have encouraged a new emphasis on pastoralism and whether the disturbed political conditions and endemic warfare of the twelfth century might not have accelerated such a tendency. One might also envisage that in the heroic age the Celtic overlords were cattle raisers dominating a more settled agricultural population.[3] This is a phenomenon attested in several African countries; but the insistence of the laws on the nobleman's possession of a full plough team shows that any parallel between the Irish clientship system whereby a noble lent cattle to his *céli* and the situation wherein the dominant pastoral Tusi warriors of Ruanda hired out their cattle to be herded by the agricultural and subordinate Hutu must be inexact for early Christian Ireland.[4]

According to *Crith Gablach* only the *mrugfher*, the highest grade of *bóaire*, has the complete outfit for a plough, whereas the other commoners must pool their resources in order to practice tillage.[5] Although these lower grades of freemen might naturally belong to a *fine* whose head was of higher status, and in any case the individual members of a *fine* probably ploughed the *fintiu* in common, the usual idea that the early Irish dwelt exclusively in isolated farmsteads is

1 Polybius, ii, 15.
2 Cf. ch. 4, 'Le bétail et l'argent: *pecu et pecunia*' in É. Benvéniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* (Paris, 1969).
3 So, for instance, T. G. E. Powell, 'The Celtic settlement of Ireland', in *H. M. Chadwick memorial studies*, ed. Fox and Bruce Dickins (1950), pp. 171–95.
4 Mair *Primitive government*, p. 135; across the border in Tanganyika, however, 'in Buha political authority is exercised by Tusi, who will not intermarry with the rest of the population, but Tusi do not follow a distinctive way of life; everyone in Buha is both a cultivator and a cattle owner.' Ibid., p. 136.
5 *Crith Gablach*, §§10, 13, 14.

probably an over-simplification. It is possible that the lower orders
lived in hamlet clusters similar to the Welsh bond-settlements,
which would leave no obvious trace for the archaeologist to identify.
The development of the technique of aerial photography may throw
light on this problem: they have already demonstrated that fairly
intensive agriculture was practised around the monastic settlements.[1]

The common practice of moving cattle from winter to summer pas-
ture has lent colour to the nomadic fallacy, as has the presumption
that the 'tribe' was pre-eminently a population group rather than a
territory. The latter belief has, I think, some justification in sub-
jective terms, but it must not be taken to mean that the tribe had no
territorial sense.[2] As for 'tribal nomadism', it can only be a con-
tradiction in terms when we consider the large number of tribal
kingdoms in Ireland and the consequent Lilliputian extent of their
territories. Only in certain *tuatha* can summer pasturage on the
mountains have been a practical proposition or indeed a geographical
possibility. I know of only one clear reference to pastoral transhu-
mance involving a long journey, and that is in the third Irish *Life*
of St. Kevin of Glendalough, where we are told that Dímma mac
Fergna was a rich cattle-owner (*brughaidh bóichéadach*) who discovered
the hermit when he came from Meath 'on a grazing tour' (*ar cuairt
bhuailltechuis*).[3] However, the *Life* is late and possibly corrupt,
for the Dímmae mac Fergnai recorded in the Book of Leinster geneal-
ogies was almost certainly of the Uí Máil, and therefore a native of
the district.[4]

The differentiation between summer and winter pastures need not
imply any great physical distance between the two: in many cases
they could well have existed on the same farm. Nor should we be
misled by the Ulster 'creaght' of the sixteenth century. It is too
commonly assumed that Gaelic society in Elizabethan times, and
specifically that of Ulster, was an exact replica of society in early
Christian Ireland somehow fossilised in its own archaism. In fact
it had undergone many changes and much erosion.

It may well have been the case that in pre-Norman Ireland a
dominant dynasty such as the Cenél nÉogain owned herds which
were tended in the mountain pastures of their vassal tribes over a
wide area of the North, but I know of no positive evidence for such
an extra-territorial arrangement (which would be an extension of the
célsine relationship within the *tuath* whereby the *céle* tended stock on

[1] E. R. Norman and J. K. S. St. Joseph, *The early development of Irish society*, pp.
106ff. and for field systems associated with secular raths pp. 59–65.
[2] Cf. Mair, op. cit., p. 14.
[3] Plummer, *Bethada Náem nÉrenn*, i, p. 157.
[4] Cf. LL 316 marg. inf., 317c 60 (O'Brien, *Corpus geneal. Hib.*, i, pp. 346, 356). In
the earlier Irish *Lives* Dímma is said to have been living in Leinster but as an exile
from Mide, Plummer, op. cit., pp. 127, 137, 140.

semi-permanent loan from his lord). Similarly, it might be tempting to venture the hypothesis that the scattering over the country of isolated groups of *aithech-thuatha* of the same name and with identical genealogical traditions—the various Calraige, Conmaicne, Dartraige, Delbna and others—might have some economic basis; that they might complement one another in the natural aptitudes of their terrain, providing perhaps alternate pasturage one for the other. But this is a mere speculative fancy which has no apparent basis in the literary evidence.

It remains nevertheless possible that such real or imaginary ties of kinship may have served a useful purpose in time of emergency. For instance, it is conceivable that one group of the Calraige might have felt an obligation to sustain members of a homonymous *tuath* fleeing the effects of famine or murrain in their own, perhaps distant, territory. As Gluckman says: 'Hunger, due to drought and flood and crop-blight or stock-epidemic, always threatens these people who are subsistence husbandmen, so that they are constantly in danger of famine. Their simple technology makes it easier to move people to food, than food to people: in times of shortage tribesmen move towards those of their relatives who have escaped disaster.'[1] Such an 'emigration' is in fact attested in the eleventh-century annals, albeit in the more sophisticated context of a political alliance. In the 1040's Niall mac Eochada, king of Ulaid, is several times found acting in conjunction with Diarmait mac Maíl-na-mBó, king of Laigin; a circumstance which no doubt forms the basis for the claim in the Book of Leinster that Diarmait was *rí Érenn co fressabra*, since he had the allegiance of all Leth Moga and of several provinces of Leth Cuinn, including Ulaid.[2] In 1047, so we are informed by 'Tigernach', *Chronicum Scotorum* and the Four Masters, there was a great famine in Ulster so that the Ulaid abandoned their lands and migrated to Leinster. *Chronicum Scotorum* adds that the famine was a punishment for their treachery towards two sons of Bran mac Máelmórda, north Leinster rivals of Diarmait mac Maíl-na-mBó.[3] Earlier, in 1005, the Annals of Innisfallen state curtly that there was such scarcity in Ulster that the Ulaid scattered throughout Ireland.[4]

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1 Gluckman, op. cit., p. 14.
2 LL 3158ff.
3 *Ann. Tig.*, s.a. 1047: *Ulaidh do fhassugud acht becc ⁊ a teacht a Laigniu). Chron. Scot.*, s.a. 1045: *Gorta mor do tiachtain i nUlltoibh, gur fagsat a ttir condechattur i lLuignib* [sic]; *et as tria milledh cataigh tainig an gorta sin .i. feall for dha mac Brain mic Mailmordha do mac Eochadha et do maithibh Ulaid, iarna mbeth i ccumairque friu, et as ar mac Maoilnambo do ronsat Uladh* [sic] *an feall sin. AFM* spoil the sense by adding the words *ulc fri* after *ar* in the last phrase. The same annals record joint expeditions by Ulaid and Laigin against Mide in 1048 and 1049. *AU* do not mention these events but do note the murder of Conchobar Ua Loingsig king of Dál nAraidi by a member of his own family in 1046 as having taken place in Leinster and *AFM* add: (.*i. i nUibh Buidhe) dar sárucchadh Néill mic Eochadha, .i. Ri Uladh, ⁊ Dhiarmada mic Maelnambó*.
4 *Ann. Inisf.*, 1005: *Ulaid do fhássugud a tire ar terca co ndechatar ar cech leth fo Herind.*

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Such emergency measures are to be distinguished from *tairired*, *immirge* or *tochomlad*, the genus of saga recording prehistoric migrations or tribal wanderings, of which the best-known is the story of the migration of the Déisi from Tara through Leinster until they found a permanent home in Múnster. Of the thirteen instances of the *tochomlad* tale enumerated in the Book of Leinster saga list the first seven relate to the *Lebor Gabála* material on the prehistoric invasions of Ireland.[1] The next, *Tochomlod longsi Fergusa a hUltaib*, deals with the Ulster cycle and the genealogical theory derived therefrom that the Ciarraige, Conmaicne and other peoples were descended from the exiled Fergus; of this a very archaic version has survived in a seventh-century poem by Luccreth moccu Chérai preserved in the Laud genealogies.[2] The ninth is entitled *Tochomlod Mūscraigi de Maig Bregoin*, and must have related why the Múscraige are found scattered over a wide area in Munster and even beyond from what was considered their original home south and west of Cashel. Next comes *Tochomlod na nDési ó Themraig*. *Tochomlod Clainne Echach Mugmedón a mMide* no doubt purported to narrate the dynastic spread of the Uí Briúin, Uí Fiachrach and Uí Ailello in Connacht (though historically it seems more likely that it was the Uí Néill or their immediate ancestors who conquered the midlands from Connacht, rather than that the Connachta were an off-shoot of the midland dynasty). *Tochomlod Céin ó Chassiul* would have told the story familiar from the genealogies and the saga *Cath Crinna* of how the Ciannachta, Luigni and Gailing, descended from the Munster prince Tadc mac Céin, are found in the lands of the Uí Néill and Connachta. *Tochomlod Dāil Riatai i nAlbain* alone of the series may have had some firm historical basis.

While such stories may preserve genuine memories of a period of *Völkerwanderung* before the dawn of recorded history, it would be dangerous to take them all at their face value. Some are probably mere fictions, aetiological tales explaining why tribes of the same name are found in varying geographical locations and in varying degrees of political independence or subjection. Branches of the Déisi were to be found at Tara and of the Múscraige around Mag mBregoin long after the dates of the supposed migrations, indeed throughout the historic period. As the name *Déisi* merely means 'vassals', it is probably generic, like *Airgialla*, and there is no need to assume that the 'vassal peoples of Tara' were racially akin to the 'vassal peoples of Munster'. As for the Múscraige, their distribution pattern in a broad diagonal band running from West Cork to Nenagh, divided from one another by branches of the Éoganacht dynasty,

[1] LL 24999 ff.
[2] *ZCP* viii, pp. 306f.

makes it quite clear that they formed the main population group of central Munster into whose lands the Éoganacht had penetrated: as far as the Munster Múscraige are concerned there is no need for a 'migration' hypothesis.

We must again distinguish between such traditions, genuine or spurious, relating to the prehistoric period and the perennial dynastic movements which characterise the political history of Gaelic Ireland. Here it is not so much a question of migration as of the displacement of a dominant dynasty from a favourable geopolitical locale and their relegation to a narrower or less desirable area. Although signalised by defeat in battle or assassination of their kings, such a process normally spanned several generations during which the successful dynasty outbred their rivals and infiltrated their lands. Thus in Leinster the upper basins of the Liffey and Barrow formed for centuries the crucial area from which the province could be dominated. The fortress of Dinn Ríg near Leighlinbridge apparently marks the dispersal area of the Laginian dynasties. Although the Middle Irish regnal lists project the Uí Dúnlainge high-kingship back to the fifth century, study of the earlier documents has shown that they did not achieve permanent control over the Liffey plain until the middle of the eighth. The Uí Failgi, Uí Garrchon, Uí Enechglaiss, Uí Bairrche, Uí Máil and Uí Cheinnselaig had all contended for the provincial kingship and each in turn was forced to withdraw from the royal plains. The unfortunate Uí Garrchon and Uí Enechglais had to content themselves with kingdoms among the *fortuatha Laigen* in the mountains and on the coast of county Wicklow.[1]

Such movements hardly involved wholesale migration but merely the unsettling of a few royal families. They belong to dynastic politics rather than to pure tribalism. The basic population remained undisturbed, merely exchanging one set of overlords for another, and even the noble families of the displaced dynasty usually left some branches clinging to remnants of property in the scenes of their earlier supremacy, thus leaving their mark on the toponymy and appearing in the genealogical tracts as those *forsloinnte* which so upset any attempt to discover in the historical Irish *tuatha* a neat pattern of tribal homogeneity.

To return for a moment to the effects of tribal economics on the institution of kingship, the *rath* or gifts of the suzerain can also find their explanation in Gluckman's terms. 'These economic limitations influence all forms of relations in tribal society. This appears most markedly in the situation of chiefs. Many well-authenticated records describe how African chiefs distributed the tribute which

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[1] The early dynastic polity of Leinster has recently been elucidated by Mr. Alfred P. Smyth in his unpublished M.A. dissertation on *The Laigin* (N.U.I., 1969).

flowed in to them from their people, back among the people, whether as individual gifts or in huge public feasts.'[1] And, quoting Hogbin on the Solomon Islanders : ' "The house of a wealthy man may be larger it is true, and better built than that of one who is insignificant, and he may have several wives; but the difference otherwise is negligible.   Reputation is accordingly enhanced not by accumulating possessions in order to use them oneself, but by giving them away." '[2] Poseidonios attests that lavish feasts and bardic praise for royal generosity, prominent features of Gaelic society down through the middle ages, were equally characteristic of Gaul in the first century B.C.[3] He noted also the similarities between contemporary Gaulish habits and those of the Homeric Greeks.[4] The important role played by the exchange of gifts among the latter has been brilliantly expounded by Finley in similar sociological terms.[5] while the barbarian king as 'ring-giver' is familiar from the early Germanic literatures.

But in an institution so archaic and ritualistic as kingship, many primitive features may long outlive their original function.   Even in so sophisticated a milieu as that of Achaemenid Persia we can find analogies to the Irish *rath*.   When Xenophon in the first book of his *Anabasis* tells how Syennesis King of Tarsus finally submitted to Cyrus, he says that Cyrus gave him a horse with a golden bit, a golden chain and arm-rings, a golden dagger and a Persian robe—'gifts which are regarded as honorific coming from the king' (δῶρα ἃ νομίζεται πάρα βάσιλεῖ τίμια).[6] Cyrus guaranteed the immunity of Cilicia from plunder in return for subsidies for his army.   By accepting the gifts Syennesis had in effect publicly acknowledged Cyrus to be king of Persia.

The tribal nature of Irish kingship is best demonstrated by its intensely local character, symbolised by inauguration at the sacred site.   The sacral *gessa* and *buada* were relics of paganism, but also bound king and people by their social nature.   They take the place of the regal insignia of feudal kingship.   Not what the king owns or wears but what he does reveals his kingship.   It is the drinking of the ale of Cualu, not the seizing of a non-existent crown, that marks a man as king of Leinster.   The *buada* or prerogatives of the king are enjoyed in the sight of his people.   By presiding as the Óenach Tailten he is recognised as high king of Tara, as the kingship of Leinster is taken only by him who can assemble the Óenach Carmuin.

    [1] Gluckman, op. cit., p. 15.
    [2] Ibid., p. 16.
    [3] J. J. Tierney, 'The Celtic ethnography of Posidonius', *R.I.A. Proc.*, lx (1960), pp. 225f., 248.
    [4] Ibid., pp. 227, 250. Cf. also Diodorus Siculus, v. 21, 5.
    [5] M. I. Finley, *The world of Odysseus* (London, 1956).
    [6] Xenophon, *Anabasis*, i. 2, 27.

Gluckman would also trace the importance of the kindred to the economic neccesities of tribal society.   He points out that in order to acquire help to support themselves under subsistence conditions men call upon their distant kin and may even treat them as close kin; moreover, fictitious kinship relations may be forged in order to win the right to enter into a contract of reciprocal obligations.[1] It seems clear that tribal societies everywhere are characterised by the pre-eminent position they attribute to the kindred group.   It is probably this phenomenon which has given rise to the common error that the tribe itself is such a group or is necessarily composed of a definite number of such.

The ambiguity of Irish terminology makes it difficult to assert whether or not the primeval Irish *tuath* regarded all its members, or at least those of free status, as of common blood.   Whether or not this may have been the original position (and we have seen that Binchy denies it), we find that in the historical period most if not all *tuatha* contain *forsloinnte* or families of different descent from the dominant kindreds, who are yet distinguished enough to merit mention.   Furthermore, the *tuath* as a kingdom nearly always has subsumed older population groups, who presumably once formed kingdoms of their own.   But the habit of naming a *tuath* after its ruling family can be confusing.   Just as the biblical Benjamin can refer to a person, the real or mythical ancestor of the tribe, to his descendants, or to the whole territory over which they rule and to all the inhabitants of that territory, so an Irish dynastic name such as Uí Echach refers strictly to a family claiming descent from an individual Echu, but more commonly to the kingdom they rule and the dwellers therein.   In fact the personal name of the ancestor without any prefix such as *Uí* or *Cenél* is quite often used in biblical fashion of the Uí Néill kingdoms of Cairpre, Ardgal, Maine and Lóegaire. To make matters more confusing the name may remain fossilised as a territorial designation after it has ceased to correspond to any political reality.   MacFirbhisigh shows himself aware of such ambiguities when he discusses the problem of whether Cú Chulainn and Finn mac Cumaill belonged to the Fir Bolg, as is stated in a poem he has quoted: 'If it be *the* Cú and the famous Fionn, that might be true also, or false, in different ways:— true, if Cúchulainn and Fionn chanced to be in hereditary possession among those *tuatha* to which the poem ascribes them.   They could thus be ascribed to the same *tuatha*, though they were not of them according to genealogies.   The poem would be false, however, if it were to say, as it does not, that those were their true denominations, for Cúchulainn is of the seed of Éreamhón son of Míl . . .'[2]

[1] Gluckman, op. cit., p. 14.
[2] *Genealogical tracts, I*, ed. Ó Raithbheartaigh, p. 85.

The genealogists often found themselves in such an embarrassing situation when they were faced with the continued existence of respectable families or dynasties which earlier schemes had classed as not of the noblest blood and which were in fact subordinate, paying tribute to an alien overlord. The fiction of emigration was a useful device: the family in question was in fact noble, but had taken over lands formerly inhabited by Fir Bolg or other *aithech-thuatha* and had thereby inherited the liabilities and burdens which encumbered those 'unfree' lands. Such was the explanation adduced for the tributary condition of the Uí Maine of Connacht and the Déisi Muman.[1] Otherwise, they were of the noblest blood in their own native province, but by settling outside it had put themselves in the position of *fortuatha*—that is, peoples alien in ancestry to the dominant local dynasty, as was the case with many of the subordinate *tuatha* in Uí Néill territory.[2]

Sixty years ago MacNeill declared in the course of his paper on early Irish population groups, which still remains the most valuable discussion of the origins of Irish tribal and dynastic names, that the genealogical doctrine 'must be taken as often expressing political status rather than racial origin. For this fact, which otherwise might be inferred from a study of the genealogies, we have the testimony of Gilla in Chomded Hua Cormaic, a twelfth-century poet', and he goes on to quote a remarkably frank acccount from the Book of Leinster of the possibilities of forgery.[3]

MacNeill was certainly correct in his inference, although the study of early Irish history since he wrote those words has diverged from that path in search of the 'idol of origins'. He himself in the same passage had started the hare by surmising that 'the *aithech-thuatha* were regarded as of unfree race, descended from the pre-Gaelic inhabitants.'[4] A new study of the genealogies, a new approach to their doctrines is now needed. Just as the genealogical scheme set forth in Genesis x and the opening chapters of I Chronicles do not accord with the classification of modern linguists when they record those races descended from Shem and Ham, reflecting rather the geographical and political relations current at their own time, so too the Irish genealogists were concerned to explain why certain dynasties were dominant and why other tribes were subject to them or enjoyed a favoured position. Thus *Cath Maige Muccrime* explains why the Uí Néill and Connachta are supreme in Leth Cuinn and the

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[1] *Book of rights*, ed. Dillon, pp. 12:151; 16:198ff.; 48:685; 52:766ff. Cf. also the references to the Luigni and the Delbnae, pp. 46–52.
[2] Rawl. B 502, 140a 52–b 37; LL 318b 28–c 17; (= O'Brien, *Corpus geneal. Hib.*, i, pp. 137f., 358).
[3] MacNeill, 'Early Irish population-groups: their nomenclature, classification, and chronology', *R.I.A. Proc.*, xxix (1911), pp. 59–114. Cf. LL 17903–14.
[4] MacNeill, op. cit., p. 93.

Éoganachta in Leth Moga, why the Airgialla, Luigni and Corco Fir Thrí are favoured vassals of the former and why it is a crime for a man of the Éoganacht to slay a man of the Grecraige.[1] Similarly *Cath Crinna* can hardly be relied upon as an historical account of events in the third century, but tells why in the eighth the Ciannachta should rule territory which formerly belonged to the Ulaid and why they are nonetheless subordinate to the Uí Néill.[2] The story of Corc of Cashel's adventures in Scotland and of the arrival in Munster of the son the Pictish princess bore to him is a piece of dynastic propaganda directed against the Éoganacht Locha Léin in favour of the eastern Éoganachta whose maternal ancestry is respectably Irish.[3]

Genealogical relationships can be altered to suit changing political circumstances. The Fir Thulach Midi claimed descent from Brandub mac Echach, the famous king of Leinster who died in the early seventh century, but they were a tributary *tuath* of the Southern Uí Néill. Presumably they had settled in lands which Brandub had temporarily regained from the Uí Néill but which later fell under their control. The Fir Thulach retained their status as a kingdom, however, and in later sources we find them sufficiently well established to be awarded a pedigree deriving them from a totally fictitious Fer Tulach son of Niall Noígiallach.[4] We can only guess how far this practice had been pursued in centuries whose darkness defies the criticism of scientific history. It has recently been pointed out that the Calraige of north Sligo and Leitrim, whom the main body of genealogical lore regards as commonly descended with the other Calraige from Lugaid Cál son of Dáire Sírchréchtach, are in a later source treated as Uí Néill, sprung from a patently non-existent Cal son of Cairpre son of Niall Noígiallach, simply because they occupied territory in the Uí Néill kingdom of Cairpre Dromma Cliab. Here the forgery is obvious, but the descent from Lugaid Cál, one of six brothers headed by Lugaid Lóegde ancestor of the Corco Loígde, may well be equally fictitious: an attempt to affiliate the Munster branch of the Calraige to the Corco Loígde at an early period when the latter were a widespread and dominant group in that province.[5] Thus by merely surviving as a distinct entity a tribe might eventually win promotion in the genealogical scale, for an early tract specifically states that the Calraige of Sligo-Leitrim were an *aithech-thuath* paying tribute to the

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[1] O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, pp. 310–18; see Dillon, *The cycles of the kings*, pp. 16–22, and Carney, 'Cath Maige Muccrime', in *Irish sagas*, ed. Dillon, pp. 148–61. The phrase *is de sin is chol do cach fhir d'Eoganacht goinfes fer do Chrecrugu* occurs in the version *Scéla Éogain ┐ Chormaic* given in the Laud genealogies, *ZCP* viii, p. 309.
[2] F. J. Byrne, 'The Ireland of St. Columba', in *Historical studies V*, ed. McCracken (1965), pp. 49–52.
[3] Meyer, 'Conall Core and the Corco Luigde', *Anecdota from Irish manuscripts*, iii (1910), p. 59f.; Hull, *PMLA*, lxii (1947), pp. 898f.
[4] See Walsh, *The place-names of Westmeath*, pp. 162–5.
[5] Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Lugaid Cál and the Callraige', *Éigse*, xiii (1970) pp. 225f.

Uí Néill (*i ngēillni Hua Nēill*) and were not reckoned as Connachta.[1]
The Calraige were also to be found in the lands of the Southern Uí
Néill, under the overlordship of the Cenél Maine in the barony of
Ardagh in county Longford around Sliab Calraige (Slieve Golry),
and in the baronies of Brawny and Clonlonan in county Westmeath.
Another late genealogy claims that the latter, the Calraige Bregmaine,
descend from Maine son of Niall.[2]

The Cenél Maine ruled southern Tethbae, but their suzerainty
seems to have stretched southwards as far as county Offaly.[3] Maine's
own place among the Uí Néill, however, is not above suspicion.
There are some indications that there once existed a single over-
kingdom of Maine lying east and west of the central reaches of the
Shannon which was fragmented when the Uí Néill finally organised
themselves in the sixth century as a separate dynasty from the rest
of the Connachta. In 538 Maine mac Cerbaill of Mide (the coincidence
of his name is purely fortuitous) fell at the battle of Clóenloch near
Gort in County Galway. According to 'Tigernach' he was slain by
Goibnenn mac Conaill king of Uí Fiachrach Aidne while attempting
to assert his hegemony over the Uí Maine of Connacht (*ac cosnom
gēlsine Hua Maine Condacht*).[4] In the event the Uí Maine west of
the Shannon remained an important kingdom in Connacht and were
awarded a pedigree of flattering affinity to the true Connachta.[5]
If our suspicions be justified the Cenél Maine of Tethbae were even
more successful, for they were accepted as Uí Néill *pur sang*, although
none of them attained the high-kingship of Tara: their success may
have owed something to the hostility with which the Clann Cholmáin
and Síl nÁedo Sláine regarded the dynasty of Cairpre, which was now

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[1] The text is preserved corruptly in *Lec.* 125b and *BB* 170b; cf. *Rawl. B 502*, 143a
(O'Brien, *Corpus geneal. Hib.*, i, p. 153, where the variants from *Lec* and *BB* are not
given). The by-form *géillni*, for the dative of *giallnae*, which occurs in all three manu-
scripts, is not noticed in the *R.I.A. Contributions*.

[2] *O Clery genealogies*, ed. Pender, §§816, 818, p. 65; cf. §851, p. 70 and §2052, p. 160.
I owe these references to Mr. Kenneth W. Nicholls.

[3] Southern Tethbae did not extend south of the river Inny, as was pointed out by
Paul Walsh, *Ériu*, xiii, 88–94. But Maine seems to have been overlord of the West-
meath tribes of Calraige and Cuircni, and Áed mac Brénainn (†589) is said in an
interpolated entry in *AU* to have given Durrow to Colum Cille: contradictory forms of
his pedigree are given in the early sources (O'Brien, *Corpus geneal. Hib.*, i, p. 162; see
Paul Walsh, *Leaves of history*, pp. 35f.), which increases our doubts concerning the
genuine character of Maine's descent from Niall. After the encroachment of the Con-
maicne Réin into Tethbae under the aegis of the Uí Briúin Bréifne, the Cenél Maine
moved south. From an early period both kings of Tethbae and of Uí Maine Connacht
were buried at Clonmacnoise in the teritory of the Delbna Bethra (the cognate tribe of
Delbna Nuadat west of the Shannon was under the suzerainty of the Uí Maine). The
tract on the division of Niall's territories among his sons, quoted by Walsh, *Ériu*, xiii,
pp. 92f., is late, and typically tries to explain the presence of branches of Cenél Lóegairi
and Cenél nÉndai in Westmeath by postulating the existence of an 'Énna Ilcrothach'
and a 'Laegaire Bec'; the tract cited in note 66 above shows that branches of the Cenél
Éndai and Cenél Lóegairi were also to be found west of Loch Erne before the rise of
Bréifne.

[4] *Ann. Tig.*, (*RC* xvii, p. 136); cf. *AU* 538.

[5] O'Rahilly, *EIHM*, pp. 97f., 406f., 479f.

confined to northern Tethbae around Granard.[1] It is noteworthy that the date given for Maine mac Néill's death in 440 is the earliest of the annalistic obits for the sons of Niall Noígiallach, which suggests that the affiliation had been forged after the floruit of Niall had been deliberately ante-dated by the synthetic historians.[2]

Hagiographical sources have preserved an anecdote that another distinguished sept of the Southern Uí Néill, the Cenél Fiachach, had been satirised by poets who claimed that they were in fact of plebeian origin.[3] We may also permit ourselves certain doubts as to the truth of the identification of the semi-legendary high king Macc Ercae, whose obit is given in 534, with the Muirchertach mac Muiredaig of the Cenél nÉogain pedigree. Macc Ercae is neither a patronym, nor (as the later tradition tried to explain) a metronymic, but a proper name in its own right. The conflate personality of Muirchertach Macc Ercae looks very like an attempt by the Cénel nÉogain to interpolate an early king of Tara into their ancestry after they had gained ascendancy over the Northern Uí Néill.[4]

But we must beware of hyperscepticism. Dubious affiliations presuppose the existence of a genuine stock on which they may be grafted. The Uí Néill were neither a tribe nor a federation of tribes, but a dynasty which hived off from the parent tribal stem of the Connachta, and by so doing introduced a new force into the Irish polity which overlaid and eventually destroyed pure tribalism. They organised their conquests in the North and the midlands on a territorial and dynastic basis. They seem to have taken over the hieratic kingship of Tara as a symbol of suzerainty which cut across the ancient provincial divisions. The original functions of that pagan kingship were soon rendered obsolete by the advent of Christianity, but under ecclesiastical influence it was to germinate into a high-kingship of all Ireland, particularly after Armagh (situated in the Uí Néill vassal kingdoms of Airgialla) had won recognition as the primatial church in Ireland, thus establishing an ecclesiastical unity to which a national monarchy seemed the natural corrollary.

Although partible inheritance was the rule in Irish land law, it did not extend to the succession to tribal kingship: indeed the size

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[1] See my remarks in G. Eogan, 'Excavations at Knowth', *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxvi (1968), p. 396, and in *The rise of the Uí Néill and the high-kingship of Ireland,* O'Donnell Lecture (Dublin, 1970), pp. 18f.

[2] The fact that Niall's own obit does not occur in *AU* which commence with the year 431, shows that the compiler of the fifth-century section (who may have lived as late as the ninth century) accetped this doctrine.

[3] See Plummer, *Bethada Náem nÉrenn,* ii, p. 361.

[4] This dated from the reign of Áed Állan, 734–43; the *Baile Chuind* includes the reign of Macc Ercae (Mac Ercéni), of Aid Olláin (Áed Allán *alias* Uaridnach, †612; if the identification be correct he is misplaced), and of Suibne, †628, but omits the other high-kings ascribed to the Cenél nÉogain by the later regnal lists (see Murphy, *Ériu,* xvi, pp. 146ff; Byrne *Ir. Cath. hist. comm. Proc.*, 1965–1967 [1968], p. 9). *AU* accepts the identification of Muirchertach with Macc Ercae and the entries relating to him seem taken from a *caithréim* tradition.

of the *tuath* would have rendered such a principle nugatory. But
Niall Noígiallach was said to have divided his kingdoms among
his sons, and when a similar dynastic polity evolved in Munster and
Leinster, such divisions were ascribed to the ancestral figures of Conall
Corc and Catháir Már.[1] Naturally these traditions are retrospective
rather than strictly historical, but the evidence does suggest a wide-
handed distribution of lordship over large areas among the sons of
Niall, later breaking down into a pattern of small dynastic kingdoms
exercising hegemony over semi-autonomous tribal *tuatha*.[2]

The archaeological evidence of the abandonment for normal
purposes of the great hill-forts, and the testimony of the annals and
other documents that the wide-ranging conquests which presumably
marked the rise of Niall and his sons in the proto-historic period
were succeeded by more modest border warfare and campaigns of
attrition, show that in the aftermath of the raids on Roman Britain
and the consequent depletion in supplies of easy wealth there was no
longer room for a society of great war-lords.

The military resources of an early Irish over-king were modest
enough and depended on the free hostings of his own *tuath* for limited
and specific purposes, and of such of his sub-kings as he could per-
suade to fulfil their obligations.[3] In the extremely interesting
archaic poem on the Airgialla which was later adapted by the author
of the *Book of rights*, the rights and duties of this federation of tribes
vis-à-vis their overlord, the high king of the Uí Néill, are laid down
in detail: they are bound to military hostings for three fortnights
every three years, but not in springtime or in autumn; they claim a
third of the spoils of battle; they claim a *cumal* in compensation for
every night spent by Uí Néill hosts in their territory.[4] In Munster
the kings of Uí Fidgenti, Iarluachrae and Raithlenn will only go on
a hosting in order to protect the honour of Munster against the
Laigin or Leth Cuinn, and they each claim seven *cumala* from the king
of Cashel for this service if they return alive; if not, the king of Cashel
or his successor must pay recompense to their heirs.[5] The Ciarraige
Luachra make the excessive claim that they will not go into the king
of Loch Léin's encampment before he has assembled therein all the
other tribal forces of Iarmumu, that they will not engage to serve for
more than four days and four nights, and furthermore they that
will not go to war on behalf of the king of Loch Léin against any of

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[1] Cf. 'Conall Corc and the Corco Luigde', *Anecdota*, iii, pp. 59 ff.; *Timna Chatháir
Máir*, ed. Dillon, *Bk. of rights,* pp. 150–78.

[2] Cf. the evidence for extensive lordships once exercised by Cairpre, Lóegaire and
Éndae cited in nn. 66, 68, 71 above.

[3] Cf. *Críth Gablach*, §37, p. 20, and p. 106.

[4] *Ériu*, xvi, pp. 181f., 186f.

[5] 'Dál Caladbuig and reciprocal services between the kings of Cashel and various
Munster states', *Ir. texts*, i, p. 21 (= *YBL* col. 339); cf. *Lec.* 192va 35ff.

the West Munster tribes with which they have sworn brotherhood.[1]
The Munster tracts lay much stress on the rights and privileges of
the tribal sub-kings, and we have seen that the Munster historians
had a low opinion of the aggressive policies of the Uí Néill.   There
can be little doubt that the looser form of hegemony exercised by
the Éoganachta was the ultimate cause of their decline.   Scattered
throughout Munster they were strategically well placed to dominate
the province in an age when high-kingship involved little more than a
primacy of honour, but they were ill-fitted to survive in the harsher
climate of the Viking period.   They failed to build up a compact
territorial power base and the individual Éoganacht dynasts were
evidently very dependent on the good will of their vassal kings.   For
a century and more between about 620 and the death of Cathal
mac Finguine in 742 the high-kingship of Cashel alternated between
three groups, the Éoganacht Caisil, the Éoganacht Áine and the
Éoganacht Glendamnach, whose territories outlined a strategic
triangle in the heart of Munster, but at the same time the king of
Éoganacht Locha Léin ruled a practically independent province as
over-king of Iarmumu.   When the confederation of West Munster
tribes led by the Ciarraige Luachra succeeded in shaking off his
suzerainty and, playing on the jealousy of the eastern Éoganachta,
offered their allegiance directly to the king of Cashel the result was
no accession of real power to the latter, and no branch of the Éogan-
achta was thereafter able to establish a monopoly of the provincial
high-kingship.

The Uí Néill were more dynamic.   Their very name is symbolic
of a new political principle.   As MacNeill pointed out, names in *Uí*
appear late in the chronological series of nomenclature types, only
earlier than those in *Cenél*, *Clann* and *Síl*, all of which denote descent
from an ancestor living within the documentary period.   These
names and those in *Uí* refer to septs, dynastic families, and not to
tribes.   The *Uí* names (latinised as *nepotes*) generally refer to an an-
cestor who lived or was presumed to have lived in the fifth century
or later.[2]   Apparent exceptions to this rule are the Uí Brigte of the
Déisi and the Uí Bairrche of Leinster, whose names claim descent
from a goddess (though the Uí Bairrche certainly later regarded
themselves as a sept within the Laginian dynastic group descended
from Cathaír Már), and the Uí moccu Uais of Airgialla, if such be the
correct original form of their name.[3]

[1] *ZCP* viii, p. 316.
[2] MacNeill, 'Population-groups', *R.I.A. Proc.*, xxix (1911), pp. 82–7.
[3] MacNeill, ibid., pp. 82f., for the Uí Brigte and Uí Bairrche and other apparently
feminine forms following *Uí*; further O'Rahilly, *EIHM* pp. 37f.   For the Uí Macc
(or *moccu*) Uais see Walsh, *Ériu*, ix, pp. 55f.   O'Brien expands the contractions in the
twelfth-century genealogical manuscripts as Uí Meic Cuais; see further p. 165 below.

It must be remembered that in the sixth century the Uí Néill would have been few enough in numbers to constitute a legal *fine*. This obviously reduces to absurdity the idea that they were a 'tribe'. The parent Connachta, however, may be regarded as such, though the collective in -*acht* may be considered as either the latest in the 'tribal' series or the earliest in the 'dynastic'. The Éoganachta certainly appear to display the characteristics of a dynasty rather than of a tribe, and the *moccu* formula denoting tribal origin does not occur among them.[1] On the other hand *moccu Chéin* is used frequently with reference to members of the Ciannachta, and occasionally *moccu Chuinn* for the Connachta.[2] St. Colum Cille is termed *moccu Chuinn* in the *Amra*, and the early poem *Colum cáid cumachtach* cited in the appended commentary to that text is genealogically exact in its phrase *induae Néill* 'great-grandson of Niall'.[3]

The *moccu* formula is hardly ever found with names in *Uí* or the later sept-names.[4] An example from Adomnán is instructive: speaking of four famous saints who founded churches in Scotland, Comgall of the Dál nAraidi, Cainnech of the Corco Dálonn, Brendan of the Altraige, and Cormac of the Uí Liatháin, he says *quorum inlustrium uocabula Comgellus mocu Aridi, Cainnechus mocu Dalon, Brendenus mocu Alti, Cormac nepos Leathain*.[5] Adomnán often glosses the term for his Latin readers: *Fintenus gente mocu Moie*; *Trenanum gente mocu Runtir*; *Lugbeus gente mocu Min*; *Mailodranus . . . gente mocu [Cu]rin*.[6] As MacNeill showed in 1907, the formula represents a falling together of *mac* with the etymologically obscure ogham MUCOI (in the inscriptions it always appears in the genitive, MAQQI MUCOI).[7] MacNeill rescued many examples of the formula

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[1] In spite of their name the Éoganachta proper all descend from Conall Core; the Uí Fidgenti and Uí Liatháin also claimed descent from Ailill Flann Bec, grandson of Éogan Már and grandfather of Conall Core, but were not normally styled Éoganachta; the Uí Fidgenti only provided one rather doubtful claimant to the kingship of Cashel—Ólchobar mac Flainn, abbot of Innis Cathaig, ob. 796/7—and the Uí Liatháin none at all.

[2] Cf. *Sinech mater uirorum mocu Cein Cúile Aque . . . et Conrii mocu Cein qui sepultus est in Daurmaig*; *auia To-Cummi mocu Cein . . .* in the list of Colum Cille's relatives appended to the B manuscripts of Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* (see the Andersons' edition, p. 548; *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, ii, p. 281); *Inis moccu Chéin* (Binchy, *Scéla Cano meic Gartnáin*, p. 1); *Inis moccu Chuind*, Inisquin in Loch Corrib (*Onomasticon*, p. 467); MacNeill, 'Population-groups', pp. 76f. lists eight further examples of *moccu Chéin* and eight of *moccu Chuinn*—chiefly saints' names from calendars.

[3] *LU* 1053, 1157.

[4] MacNeill, loc. cit., p. 77 quotes *AU* 603: *Quies Finntain filii nepotis Echdach* (presumably as an example of the misunderstanding of *moccu* as *macc huí*), but this is not a case in point, as Fintan of Cluain Eidnech was in fact a great-grandson of Echu mac Bressail (O'Brien, *Corpus geneal. Hib.*, i, p. 84). Muirchú, however, refers to Dromore, county Down, in the territory of the Uí Echach Cobo, as *Druim moccu Echach* (*Bk Arm.*, 5b; *Thes. Pal.*, ii, p. 260), although the obit of the supposed eponym Echu mac Conleid occurs as late as 553 in *AU*. (This identification, however, which is an interpolation into the annalistic text, is not supported by all the genealogies—see O'Brien, op.cit., pp. 324f. and O'Rahilly, *EIHM* p.348).

[5] *Adomnan's Life of Columba*, ed. A. O. and M.O. Anderson, p. 500.

[6] Ibid., pp. 212, 242, 262, 250.

[7] 'Mocu, maccu', *Ériu*, iii, pp. 42–9.

from the later manuscripts whose scribes had misinterpreted it as *macc huí* or had perpetrated such ghost-words as *mac-Curetai* for *moccu Ret(a)i* ('of the Dál Riata'). In view of the fact that the best manuscript evidence for the formula in the post-ogham period comes from the works of Muirchú and the saintly Adomnán, Macalister's theory that its disappearance later was due to ecclesiastical censorship, because it denoted descent from a pagan tribal deity, is hardly tenable.[1]

A more likely explanation for the disappearance of the *moccu* formula is simply that it reflects a decline in tribal feeling. There is a curious parallelism to be observed in various fields of activity during the first third of the eighth century in Ireland. The compilation of canon law, the final fossilisation of the brehon tracts, the first redaction of the annals and the earliest stratum of the genealogical corpus all seem datable to this generation, which also saw the flowering of Old Irish literature in prose and verse and the perfection of Irish art under the patronage of the great monasteries which were now paradoxically the most important institutions in secular society.

The plagues of the 660's and 680's had had a traumatic effect on Irish society. The golden age of the saints was over, together with the generation of kings who could fire a saga-writer's imagination.[2] The literary tradition looks back to the reign of the sons of Áed Sláine (Diarmait and Blathmac who died in 665) as to the end of an era. Antiquaries, brehons, genealogists and hagiographers, felt the need to collect ancient traditions before they were totally forgotten. Many were in fact swallowed by oblivion: when we examine the writings of Tírechán we encounter obscure references to tribes which are quite unknown to the later genealogical tradition.[3] The laws describe a tribal society that was obsolescent, and the meaning and use of the word *moccu* dies out with archaic Old Irish at the beginning of the new century.

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[1] The idea, first proposed by MacNeill, was later rejected by him; see Macalister, *Corpus inscriptionum insularum Celticarum*, i, pp. xi, xvii.

[2] The latest historic king to become the subject of saga was Fergal mac Máele Dúin (710–722); in the Middle Irish period a new literary genre arose, not pure saga but historical fiction or dynastic propaganda which used the annalistic records when they suited its purpose.

[3] Cf. e.g., *Bk Arm.*, 11a: *in insola generis Cothirbi*; ibid., 12a *et mater eius de genere Sai . . . Domnach Sairigi . . . in loco Curcu Sai* (cf. *Onomasticon*, s.v. *Sairige*—an identification with the Saitni would seem to pose linguistic difficulties); ibid., 15a: *in Duin Sebuirgi* (almost certainly a *-rige* name); ibid., 15b: *et fecit multas aeclessias quas Coindiri habent* (the genitive is nearly always spelt with final *-e* as a genitive plural in the late but usually faithful Ms A of *AU*—o.g., *AU* 506, 514, 659, 726, 778, 832, 867, 901; but contrast *AU* 617: *loscadh Condiri*; cf. also the dative plural in *Fél. Oeng.*, 3 Sept.: *Mac Nissi co milaib / ó Chonderib máraib*). Tírechán however, treats *Eilne*, which may originally have been a tribal name in *-ni*, as a singular place-name—loc. cit., 15a/b: *in Eilniu, in campum Eilni*. Similarly the *Vita Tripartita* treats the tribal names *Latharna* and *Seimni* as singulars: *Glúaire hi lLatharnu . . . Glenn Indechta ⁊ Imlech Cluanae hi Simniu* (Mulchrone, *Bethu Phátraic*, i, p. 98). Again Muirchú speaks of the *regiones Coolennorum* (*Bk Arm.*, 2b), thus showing that the Old Irish nominative *Cualu* is a mistaken reformation from *Tír Cualann* (cf. O'Rahilly, *EIHM* pp. 25 f.)

Our manuscripts are filled with traditions purporting to explain
the origins of the polity which came to fruition in this generation
and which often baffle attempts to see the earlier centuries of Irish
history as they really were.   For it was an age of remarkable political
consolidation.   Now there emerged those provincial dynasties which
were to dominate Ireland for three hundred years and more.   In
Leinster the Uí Dúnlainge and in Connacht the Uí Briúin each
effectively ousted its rivals and monopolised the over-kingship.   The
Uí Néill had long ceased to be a single *fine*, and new kindred-groups
distinguished themselves by adopting sept-names such as Cenél
Conaill, Cenél nÉogain, Sil nÁedo Sláine and Clann Cholmáin.   After
730 the Cenél nÉogain established their supremacy in the north and
the Clann Cholmáin in the midlands, and for the next few centuries
the high-kingship of Tara was shared alternately between them.   This
involved a territorialisation of lordship so that the Northern and
Southern Uí Néill emerged as separate power blocks.   Their alienation
one from another was reinforced over the centuries by such extraneous
forces as the expansion of the Uí Briúin into Bréifne and the varying
effects of the Viking raids and Norse settlements on the two areas.
The northern lands of the Airgialla were encroached upon by the
Cenél nÉogain, while some of their southern tribes, the Uí moccu
Uais Midi, Uí moccu Uais Breg and the Mugdorna Breg were absorbed
as subject kingdoms within the territory of the Southern Uí Néill;
after 827 the remnants of the Airgialla became, not clients to the
high-king of a loose Uí Néill federation, but vassals of the Cenél
nÉogain in a compact and well-defined territory: the development
of a mesne kingship of all Airgialla (though it was not confined to any
single dynasty) no doubt made it easier for the Cenél nÉogain king
of the North (*In Fochlae*) to retain these satellite states under his
control.[1]

The later sources, particularly the genealogies, the Middle Irish
regnal lists and the interpolated later redactions of the annals, all
conspire to preserve this classical picture of Old Irish polity, which is
dynastic rather than tribal, and to create the impression that it had
existed from time immemorial by some natural law.   Thus the early
regnal succession in Leinster has been utterly falsified by the Middle
Irish regnal lists in favour of the Uí Dúnlainge: something approaching
a truer version of history is recoverable from the early annals, the
archaic regnal poems and the hagiographical sources.   Similarly,
an unreal picture of tidy succession to the kingship of Dál nAraidi
in Ulster has obscured what the early sources reveal to have been a
more fluid confederation of Cruthin tribes.   Having finally in the
course of the seventh century lost their lands west of the Bann, the

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[1] Byrne, *The rise of the Uí Néill*, pp. 20 f.

Cruthin are now reorganised in Antrim under the Dynasty of Dál nAraidi, who after 776 drop the name 'Cruthin' altogether, as redolent of foreign origin, and claim to be *fír-Ulaid*. Meanwhile, the Dál Fiatach, whom the annals (contradicting the genealogies) show to have been the Ulaid proper, were expanding their dynastic lands so that by the end of the eighth century the Cruthin of west Down were divided from those of Antrim: they were ruled by the Uí Echach Cobo, whose pedigree was tied rather unconvincingly to that of the Dál nAraidi. For some time, until the tenth century, the three dynasties shared in the over-kingship of the reduced *Cóiced*.[1]

An uneasy equilibrium had now been established between the temporarily satiated Uí Néill and the southern half of Ireland. The Éoganachta, alarmed at Uí Néill claims to the high-kingship of the whole country, seemed happy to settle for the theory of the division of Ireland into Leth Cuinn and Leth Moga, which was consecrated as a natural law by the men of learning. It was destined to prove illusory. As we have seen, the Éoganachta failed to respond to the challenge of the new era. Their outlying vassals, the Dál Cais (Déis Tuaisceirt) and Osraige, were better placed to take advantage of the trend to territorialisation of power.

This territorialisation was of course a gradual process, and indeed it can be argued that tribalism never fully disappeared. The feudalisation of Irish kingship in the eleventh and twelfth centuries seems to usher in its final doom: strong provincial kings, although they do not succeed in their ultimate goal of achieving a monarchy of all Ireland, do in the process build up their regional hegemonies into real kingdoms; they patronise art and architecture; they preside over synods and advocate the ecclesiastical reforms which are the natural concomitant of the feudalisation of society; they cease to set much practical store on pedigree and genealogy;[2] their sub-kings are found acting as mere officers in a feudal host consisting of cavalry and naval forces capable of spending long periods on campaign (thus contributing to the apparent chaos of Irish politics and warfare in the century preceding the Anglo-Norman invasion);[3] they regard Dublin as the effective capital of Ireland, to be controlled by any successful aspirant to the high-kingship; they even reside in the Norse towns, as did the Ua Briain kings in Limerick and Cork, or build themselves castles and stone houses, as did Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair and

[1] Byrne, 'Clann Ollaman uaisle Emna', *Studia Hib.*, iv, pp. 54–94; *Hist. studies V*, p. 43.
[2] Cf. Kelleher, 'The pre-Norman Irish genealogies', *IHS* xvi, pp. 138–53; it is perhaps revealing that the two twelfth-century genealogical manuscripts disagree totally as to the pedigree of Mac or Ua Lochlainn, the leading family of the Northern Uí Néill—see Hogan, *R.I.A. Proc.*, xl, pp. 210 ff; id., *Féilsgríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill*, pp. 425 ff.; Ó Ceallaigh, *Gleanings from Ulster history*, pp. 73–87.
[3] Cf. such entries as *AU* 1170: *Diarmait Hua Ainbfheith, rí Hua Meith ⁊ toisech marcsluaighi righ Ailigh.*

Diarmait Mac Murchada. But the Anglo-Norman invasion results in the colonisation of the most progressive parts of the country. Gaelic Ireland is thrown back upon itself; it becomes regressive and genealogies resume their previous importance, although the precise structure and ramifications of the Old Irish *fine* has long ago become obscure even to the brehons, while the introduction of surnames, which began in the eleventh century as an attempt to define the *rígdamnai* within the royal *derbfine* (accompanied by a noticeable narrowing of the circle of eligible candidates to the kingly succession), soon ceases to perform that function and helps to bring about a vaguer sense of kinship which by the sixteenth century is on the point of assuming the character of the 'clan system' as exemplified in early modern Scotland.[1]

All this is another story, and one which warrants a full series of investigations. But in the period with which we are mainly concened here, the seventh to ninth centuries, we can see that territorial boundaries took some time to solidify, even after dynastic power had consolidated its grip on the ancient tribal polity. Old tribal groups stubbornly persisted, often clinging to the poor lands near bogs and on mountain slopes, and in isolated survival areas separated from their nearest kin. Many remained as fully-formed tribal kingdoms (*for-tuatha*); others left only their names in the local landscape. Some were forgotten; some, for reasons obscure to us, were remembered by the learned or kept some shreds of their separate identity in real life. In some cases, as with the Síl nÁedo Sláine and the Ciannachta Breg in the eighth century, or Ua Catháin of Cenél nÉogain and the Ciannachta Glinne Geimin in the eleventh, a branch of the overlord dynasty took over a tribal kingship and retained its name though not its pristine form.[2] Elsewhere, as in the northern angle of county Meath, where it seems impossible to delimit the overlapping lands of the Uí moccu Uais Breg, the Mugdorna Breg, the Gailing and Luigni, and the branch of the dominant Síl nÁedo Sláine known as the Fir Chúl Breg, a more primitive tribal polity may have survived under the mantle of the Uí Néill overkingdom of Brega: the population groups may not have formed a coherent settlement pattern that can be neatly delineated on a map, but may have lived intermingled with their neighbours under kings who represented them as peoples (*tuatha* in the original sense of the word) rather than as territorial units.[3] Sometimes, indeed, the under-dogs were able to make a recovery: when the Fir Chúl Breg died out, apparently early in the

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[1] Cf. Binchy's remarks, 'The passing of the old order', *Internat. Congress Celt. Studies Proc.*, 1959, ed. Ó Cuiv (1962), p. 132. An early example of a surname is provided by the prominent ecclesiastical family of Ua Brolcháin, whose eponymous ancestor apparently lived in the eighth century—see MacNeill, *ZCP* viii, p. 413.

[2] Byrne, *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxvi, pp. 396 f.; Ó Ceallaigh, *Gleanings from Ulster history*, p. 23.

[3] Cf. Byrne, *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxvi, p. 394.

ninth century, their kingdom was taken over by the Gailing; the Luigni too re-established their own kingdom on the extinction of their immediate Uí Néill overlords, the Cenél nArdgail about the same time; and when the Síl nÁedo Sláine had been weakened by by the persistent hostility of the Clann Cholmáin of Mide, various members of the Gailing, Luigni and Saitni were able in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to assume the title * rí Breg*; while the Déisi Temro re-emerged as a kingdom after having suffered apparent eclipse since the eighth century.[1] Meanwhile, however, the principle of territorialisation is expressed by the extension of the name Mide, the homeland of the now triumphant Clann Cholmáin, to cover the whole of Brega.

In Munster, if we are to judge from the often rather artificial lists of the *aithech-thuatha*, old tribal groups survived to a remarkable extent, even if not enjoying political rights as true kingdoms. In particular the area of the Golden Vale presents a most extraordinary palimpsest of various strata of tribes and dynasties each overlaying its predecessors without ever totally obliterating them. The Irish genealogies are full of references to obscure tribes and minute septs which never find their way into the annalistic record and whose precise status remains uncertain. The tracts have an irritating habit of giving us a vast amount of information without supplying the necessary clues to its interpretation. A much more satisfying picture of ancient Irish polity could be drawn were it not for the host of awkward questions posed by the mass of uncomfortable facts. Too many scholars have in the past been content to speak airily of tribes and kingdoms occupying certain areas without troubling to actually reconstruct a map or to visualise the situation on the ground. This failing is particularly notable in the case of O'Rahilly, who despite his great learning showed no awareness that history is primarily and ultimately concerned with human beings. Much of the trouble is no doubt due to the telescoping of evidence relating to a period of seven centuries and more, as will be obvious to all users of Hogan's invaluable *Onomasticon Goedelicum*. Because so many of our sources, and particularly the genealogies, are compilatory in character, it is often extremely difficult to sort out the different layers of evidence. Sometimes even a late source, such as a saint's *Life*, can preserve valuable pieces of early information which have become as it were fossilised and have escaped the attention of the learned who wished to bring everything into harmony with the *senchas coitchenn*.

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[1] Walsh, 'Meath in the Book of Rights', *Féilsgríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill*, pp. 519 f.; Byrne, *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxvi, p. 398. The latest reference in the annals to the Cenél nArdgail seems to be the obit of Tuathal mac Fiangalaig *AU* 837. References to kings of Calatruim (Galtrim), e.g. *AU* 842, 846, may in fact indicate the survival into the ninth century of the Déisi Temro.

The genealogical tracts rarely tell us the relative importance of the peoples they mention. As has been pointed out, they devote disproportionate space to the lesser tribes—possibly because the latter had little beyond their genealogical pretensions to recommend them to men's attention.[1] We are left to deduce a people's significance from other sources, notably the annals; but the latter do not give us anything like complete and impartial coverage of the whole country, especially before the ninth century. We can rarely tell from the genealogies whether the Corcu A, the Uí B, of the Síl C are tribal or dynastic kingdoms, territories or septs. In many cases we may suspect that they consisted of no more than a few families within a territory who retained a sense of common identity and who were afflicted with certain disabilities or claimed certain privileges by virtue of some remote tribal origin or consciousness of being different from their neighbours. The Conailli Muirtheimne of northern Louth were a sub-kingdom within Ulster, but apparently only achieved that status in the late seventh century, probably as the result of a compromise between the Ulaid and Uí Néill whereby Louth was divided into buffer zones among the Fir Ardda Ciannachta of Brega, the Fir Rois of Airgialla and the Conailli. But there were other branches of the Conailli whom we learn of from the genealogists though they never appear as kingdoms in historic times.[2] The jurists may well have formulated the definition *ni ba tuath tuath gan ríg* precisely to protest against loose popular usage of the word *tuath* in connection with such groups who had lost real political status.[3]

Indeed by the Middle Irish period one may well doubt whether the word *tuath* did normally mean a kingdom in any real sense of the word. Perhaps because Ireland shared in the population expansion general to Europe in the eleventh century, the *tuatha* seem to have been sub-divided until on the eve of the Anglo-Norman invasion the word had come to denote a local district of modest size.[4] *Toísech* rather than *rí* was the name given to the leading personage of such a district.[5] The old *rí tuaithe*, though reduced in importance relatively

[1] Cf. Kelleher, loc. cit., p. 147.

[2] Cf. Byrne, *Hist. Studies V*, pp. 49f.; for the Conailli Fernmaige, Conailli Cerd and the Conailli as an *aithech-aicme* of Uí Echach (Uí Echach Ulad or Uí Echach Ardda of the Ards peninsula, rather than Uí Echach Cobo as erroneously stated in O'Brien's index), see Rawl. B 502, 140b; 157, 17; *LL* 331a 15; *AU* 851, 846.

[3] P. 132 above.

[4] Cf. for instance Ó Buachalla, *Dinnseanchas*, i. 4 (1965), pp. 87 ff.; in the twelfth century the kingdom of Fir Maige contained sixteen *tuatha*; one of these, Tuath Ó Cuain, was approximately seven miles by three or 15,357 statute acres, and was divided into seven official *bailte* or townlands.

[5] Cf. such formulaic phrases as *ri for cach tir uathaib ⁊ toesech for cach tuaith, Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, p. 48; *tuatha cen taisechu, Togail Tebe*, 3049; Hogan, 'The Tricha Cét and related land-measures', *R.I.A. Proc.*, xxxviii (1929), p. 183, n. 97; *hUa Dondghaile toisech tuaithi Cnogba* in a charter in the Book of Kells dated between 1129 and 1146: Mac Niocaill, *Notitiae as Leabhar Cheannanais*, p. 26; contrast *rí tuath Luigne*,

to the over-kings, still ruled a region corresponding to the area of the original *tuath* but now known as a *trícha cét*.[1] The state of our knowledge as to the precise significance of this term has not much advanced since James Hogan wrote his paper on the subject over forty years ago. Although it occurs in early texts normally in a military sense, it is impossible to believe with Hogan and MacNeill that the military hosting of a *tuath* could ever have amounted to 3,000 men.[2]

Because of the ambiguous use of the word *tuath* to denote remnants of old tribal groups as well as distinct territories, it is extremely difficult to calculate the number of *tuatha*, in the strict sense of tribal kingdoms, which existed during any one century of early Irish history. Medieval and early modern sources agree on a figure of between 176 and 185 *trícha céts* or cantreds, and MacNeill suggested that this reflected some original theoretical division of the country into Five Fifths each containing thirty-five *trícha céts*.[3] But the *tuath* was primarily a population-group, the extent of whose territory would vary with its fortunes, whereas the twelfth-century *trícha cét* was evidently visualised as a much more regularly defined district of standard size. We must avoid the temptation to which our medieval sources succumb: that of trying to impose a neat and

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.i. Laidgnēn mac Maelán, ibid., p. 12 (1033 x 1049)—i.e., king of a *mórthuath*. The *toísech* seems originally in the Old Irish period to have been equivalent to the *aire túise* (perhaps to be read *tuíse*, see Cowgill, *Language* 43(1967), 136) of the laws, i.e., the leader of an aristocratic *cenél*; cf. *Anc. laws Ire.*, v. p. 438: *tuisech cacha fine*, and *Crith Gablach*, §27, pp. 16f.: *Aire túise, cid ara n-eperr? Arindí as toisech a ceniul* [leg., *a cheniuil*] . . . *combi lánchongnam i túaith* . . . *do chairdiu tar cenn ceniuil tar crích ⁊ i tech flatha*; he was therefore also leader of a war-band (*buiden*): *cach buden immá túisech*, L.U., 8103; the prose version of the *Immram Máele Dúin* says that Máel Dúin's father, Ailill Ochair Aga, was of the Éoganacht Ninussa and was *tigerna a chenéoil féin* (so the Y.B.L. version—ed. van Hamel, *Immrama*, p. 26; L.U., 1645, has *láechthigerna a thúaithi ⁊ a ceneóil féin*); he accompanies his king (*rí Éoganachta*) on an expedition; in the poetic version, however, he is given no title beyond the vague designation of *óclach*, and the leader of the expedition is *túisech Ninais* (van Hamel, p. 54).

1 MacNeill, 'Population-groups', pp. 102–9; Hogan, 'The Trícha Cét and related land-measures'; Dillon and Chadwick, *The Celtic realms*, p. 95, point out that the term *trícha cét* never occurs in the text of the laws, though the glossators equate it with the *tuath*.

2 In spite of the fact that the literature normally uses the word in the sense of 'regiment' or 'army'. The root of the ambiguity may be seen in the quatrain quoted in the stories about Máel Odráin, where the author is probably deliberately playing on the literal and technical meanings of the word: *Hui Máil | trícha cét ba hed a lín; | nocon fhárgaib Máel Odráin | acht trí nónburu díb*, 'The Uí Máil were a *trícha cét* in number; by the time Máel Odráin had finished with them there were barely three platoons (literally) "three nines") left'—see Greene, *Fingal Rónáin*, p. 51. As suggested below, 3,000 was probably the conventional estimate of a *tuath*'s total population, and the term was applied secondarily to its *sluagad* or 'rising out'. The conventional estimate of the latter seems to have been the more realistic figure of 700: *Crith Gablach*, §32 (p. 18), uses the term *rí buiden* 'king of troops' for the mesne over-king (*rí tuath*)—*secht cét cacha buidne*; similarly *Uraicecht Becc—rí áen-t[h]uait[h]e, secht cét láech lais*, where the Middle Irish glossator makes it clear that he regards the *trícha cét* as a measure of land: *Ri .i. ri ac ata aen tuath .i. xxx. ced d'ferund. Secht cet .i. lin na tuaithi uili edir saerceli ocus daerceli a ler-tinol.* (*Anc. laws Ire.*, v, p. 50; cf. MacNeill, *R.I.A. Proc.*, xxxvi, p. 275). Cf., also Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, p. 77.

3 'Population-groups', p. 102: Keating gives 185 *trícha céts*, Giraldus 176 'cantreds', and an early Tudor document cited by Hogan ('The Trícha Cét', p. 233) states that there are 184 cantreds or baronies in Ireland.

schematic pattern onto the fluctuating political boundaries of early
Ireland. The *Book of rights* only mentions a hundred odd *sáer-thuatha*
and *dáer-thuatha*, but this document is by no means to be relied upon as
a comprehensive survey of the country at any date. It is particularly
arbitrary in its selection of *tuatha* in Ulaid and Laigin. For Munster,
where it was most probably compiled, the information is more
accurate, but the Múscraige for instance are treated as a unit, where-
as we know that they comprised at least six widely separated *tuatha*
scattered from Nenagh to west Cork. Was there a mesne king of the
Múscraige who represented them in the relations with the king of
Cashel,[1] or did each branch pay tribute to its own immediate
Éoganacht overlord? The looser nature of the Éoganacht hegemony
suggests that the former supposition may be correct, particularly
in view of the 'most favoured nation' position occupied by the Mús-
craige under the high-kingship of Cashel.[2] This is but one of the
many obvious questions to which our sources, for all their detail,
supply no immediate answer.

During the reorganisation of the Irish church in the twelfth century
approximately forty dioceses were mooted at one time or another,
although many—such as Inis Cathaig, Roscrea, Clonard, Ráith
Luraig or Glendalough—either never materialised or were soon
absorbed by more powerful neighbours. These dioceses normally
represented the territories of mesne kingdoms or *mórthuatha*. If we
can accept the view that the *rí tuath* had on an average three of four
ríg thuaithe under his suzerainty, we could reckon on a figure of between
120 and 160 *tuatha*.[3] It has been estimated that the population
of pre-Norman Ireland was under half a million.[4] Allowing for the
deduction of the extensive populations inhabiting the great monastic
civitates and the Norse towns (and we may hope that the archaeolo-
gists may soon provide us with reliable estimates for some of these),
we must conclude that the *trícha cét* was perhaps an inflated reckoning
of the actual population of the ideal *tuath*.

[1] Dillon, *Bk rights*, p. 25, n. 1; and the reference to the king of Múscraige receiving
a stipend, pp. 30, 32. The mention in the Kells charters of a *rí tuath Luigne* (see note
105 above) suggests that such mesne kings may have existed.
[2] Cf. the *Frithfholaid* text, *Ir. texts*, i, p. 20, §9; Dillon, 'The story of the finding of
Cashel', *Ériu*, xvi, p. 66.
[3] According to *Críth Gablach*, §32 (p. 18), the *rí buiden* is so called *arindí as n-aurrae
dá buiden nó theora mbuiden, secht cét cacha buidne. Is é rí teora túath nó cetheora túath
insin*. According to the *Uraicecht Becc* an over-king has three kings under him—*rí
ruireac*[h], *tri ríg lais* (*Anc. laws Ire.*, v, p. 50), though there seems some uncertainty
whether this refers to the mesne king or to the highest grade of king (see MacNeill,
R.I.A., Proc. xxxvi, pp. 274 f.). The *Miadshlechta* tract on the other hand, states:
rí rí[g] *.i. rí adgiallat .uii. rígh tuath* (*Anc. laws Ire.*, iv, p. 346); but this bears all the
marks of artificial schemisation—see MacNeill, loc. cit., p. 312.
[4] I owe this estimate to Mr. Liam de Paor, who bases it upon an extrapolation of
the evidence of the Domesday Book survey for the population of England, making
allowances for the less advanced state of Irish agriculture.

We have no reason for assurance that such a *tuath* ever existed. Those that we can observe in the historic period had been segmented by dynastic expansion and themselves embraced the untidy detritus of older *aithech-thuatha* which retained with varying degrees of liveliness a sense of corporate existence. The precise connotation of the terms *aithech-thuath*, *dáerthuath* and *fortuath* needs further investigation. The evidence seems contradictory, but the present state of the question remains as MacNeill left it when he stated that 'three grades of *tuatha* can be distinguished in early documents: (1) *Soerthuatha*, not subject to tributes; (2) *Fortuatha*, retaining internal autonomy but tributary to an external overking; (3) *Aithech-tuatha*, vassal communities paying rent to local chiefs of free race.'[1]

A fresh examination of these problems must take full account of the date and nature of the evidence. It cannot be assumed that statements relating to seventh century are necessarily valid for the twelfth, or even for the ninth. The possibility that legal tracts, annals and genealogies differ in their terminology must not be overlooked, and while literary texts must be considered on a different level their possible witness to looser or popular usage cannot be despised. What was the relationship between the Irish institution and the Welsh *gwlad*, *cantref* and *cymwd* or the Gaulish *civitas* and *pagus*? Or is the pursuit of a common Celtic polity chimerical? Even further afield, in Greece the institution of the primitive joint family for legal purposes survived long after society as a whole had left the tribal stage behind. The Irish evidence may even be of value in elucidating problems obscure to students of ancient history. The ἀγχισεῖς or συγγενεῖς and the γένος show obvious similarities to the *fine*, but do they bear a closer relationship than the kinship systems current among ancient and modern peoples outside the Indo-European language group? And what of the δῆμος, οἰκία, οἶκος, φυλή, φῦλον and the φρατρία?[2] The word δῆμος corresponds semantically to *tuath*, but in fifth-century Athens denotes a rural district which was deliberately designed to replace old tribal and kinship bonds as a political unit. The Latin *tribus* (recently declared to be Etruscan in origin)[3] presents us with the paradox that, so far from being tribal in the anthropological sense 'at Rome it was a conscious creation of the late sixth or early fifth century consequent upon the urbanization of the state.'[4] In fact it is not the Latin for 'tribe' but merely

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1 'Population-groups', p. 93.
2 A good discussion of the history of these institutions is given by C. Hignett, *A history of the Athenian constitution*, (Oxford, 1951), though he gives no attention to the possible use of Indo-European linguistics in determining their relative archaism or innovation.
3 By Calvert Watkins in an article cited by Binchy, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon kingship*, pp. 6f.
4 R. M. Ogilvie, *A commentary on Livy, Books* 1–5 (Oxford, 1965), p. 80.

the etymon of the English word. Caesar styles the Gaulish 'tribes' *civitates* (i.e., 'states', after the model of the Greek πόλεις), and Tacitus calls the Germans a *gens* and their individual tribes *nationes*.[1] The Vulgate, it is true, uses *tribus* for the twelve tribes of Israel, but only because the Septuagint calls them φυλαί. But Greek authors do not normally use the latter term for barbarian tribes. Poseidonios quoted by Strabo, describes the Gaulish bards, seers and druids as φῦλα where φῦλον manifestly does not mean 'tribe' in the anthropological- or political sense, but 'class' or 'caste'.[2] Polybius when speaking of the Celts uses the words γένος and ἔθνος,[3] and Strabo consistently uses ἔθνος for the Gaulish tribes. Just as we have found ourelves in a quandary in regard to the suitability of the word 'tribe' in the case of the Laigin and Ulaid, since they were great confederations of many *tuatha*, so Strabo must use the word ἔθνη for the fifteen tribes of which the Belgae were composed.[4]

I should venture to propound the hypothesis that Irish history between the seventh and tenth centuries presents us with the spectacle of a tribal society being transformed by the introduction of a dynastic polity to a state wherein territorial lordship replaces hegemony over tribes as a political principle. By this I do not mean to imply that the archaic 'tribes' had no territorial sense (in this context it is interesting to note the semantic equivalence between the Irish *crích* 'border', secondarily 'territory', and the Latin *fines*), but merely that 'people' rather than 'district' was the concept uppermost in men's minds when they spoke of the *tuath*. The eleventh and twelfth centuries see a further change, partly a natural development and partly due to external influences, towards a society which may tentatively be termed a native form of feudalism.

The logical culmination of the territorial concept is expressed in the twelfth-century reform of the Irish church—a phenomenon which has too often been studied without regard to its social and political context. The diocese was a territorially well-defined unit based in the main on the *mórthuath* whose king still retained con- siderable importance in the political arena. The monastic *familia* or *muinter* of the early Irish church was an intelligible organ in a

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[1] Rudolf Much, *Die Germania des Tacitus* (zweite Auflage, durchgesehen von Richard Kienast, Heidelberg, 1959), pp. 36f. Tacitus, *Annales*, xii, 34, has also preserved an analogue of the oath familiar from Irish saga, *tongu do dia toinges mo thuath* 'I swear by the god by whom my tribe swears', *tongu do dia toingte Ulaid* 'I swear by the god by whom the Ulaid swear', who speaking of the British tribes rallied by Caratacus against the Romans he says *gentili quisque religione obstringi, non telis, non uulneribus cessuros*.

[2] παρὰ πᾶσι δ'ὡς ἐπίπαν τρία φῦλα τῶν τιμωμένων διαφερόντως ἐστί, βάρδοι τε καὶ οὐάτεις καὶδρυΐδαι. Strabo, iv, 4, 4; J. J. Tierney, *R.I.A. Proc.*, lx, p. 241.

[3] Polybius, ii, 15, 8–9; 17, 4–5; 17, 8; 22, 1.

[4] Strabo, iv, 4, 3; note however that earlier (iv, 4, 2) he calls the whole Celtic or Gaulish 'race' a φῦλον: τὸ δὲ σύμπαν φῦλον, ὃ νῦν Γαλλικόν τε καὶ Γαλατικὸν καλοῦσιν. —Tierney, op. cit., p. 240.

society where the extended family group with its dependents was the normal social unit. The greater monastic *paruchiae*, scattered federations of churches owing allegiance to the coarb of the founder saint in his chief church, reflected to some extent the loose form of suzerainty exercised over tribal groups in the early centuries.[1] Even the primacy of Armagh as established in the eighth century resembled that of a high king.[2] The coarb of Patrick was entitled to primacy of honour and to specific dues and tributes collected during his royal circuit; but he had no jurisdictional authority and so could not, even had he so wished, have instituted a programme of reform for the Irish church. Indeed it would be more correct to speak, with Adomnán, of the Irish churches.[3] The paschal controversy and disputes over the shape of the tonsure seem trivial in comparison with the glaring anomalies presented by the relative position of abbot and bishop in Ireland. Yet in spite of the victory of the *Romani* in the seventh century the ecclesiastical structure was not regularised until the twelfth. Kathleen Hughes has made it clear that the archaic Irish system (as reflected in the laws and the *Riaguil Phátraic*) whereby every *tuath* had its own bishop, equivalent in honour-price to the king, naturally resulted in the minute fragmentation of epis-copal authority, while the organisation of the monastic *paruchiae* delivered power, prestige and wealth into the hands of the abbatial coarbs.[4] It was not until the twelfth century that the territorialisa-tion of over-kingdoms and the growth of strong provincial king-ships provided the secular landscape in which viable dioceses and metropolitan sees could be erected.

When then did territory replace people as the dominant concept inherent in names such as Laigin, Ulaid, Connachta, Ciarraige? A clue might be sought by tracing the first dateable appearance of the words *Laignech, Ultach, Connachtach* to denote inhabitants of those provinces whom the genealogists would not have regarded as belong-ing to the dominant group. On the other hand it might be argued that no such change ever occurred: that in this sense tribalism per-sisted until early modern times. Certainly the local nomenclature of Gaelic Ireland down to the sixteenth century is characterised by the predominance of names denoting population or family groups, but this may well be but a symptom of the regressive nature of Gaelic culture in the later middle ages. The evidence offered by the

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[1] The parallel must not be pressed too far: the most interesting aspect of the monas-tic *paruchia* was the manner in which it transcended tribal and provincial boundaries and created a far-flung network of connections which helped to unify ecclesiastical culture in Ireland.

[2] See Kathleen Hughes, *The church in early Irish society*, pp. 112, 245.

[3] *Vita Columbae*, i, 3; *ob diversitatem paschalis festi orta est inter Scotiae eclesias discordia* (Anderson's edition, p. 218); see Shaw, *Studies* (Summer, 1963), p. 197, n. 1.

[4] *The church in early Irish society*, pp. 57–90.

tribal names in *-rige* might also be interpreted as telling against our hypothesis, for the Book of Armagh, a manuscript of the early ninth century whose scribe preserves the correct Old Irish final vowels, shows that Tírechán (writing at the end of the seventh century) invariably treats these names as neuter singular,[1] although in the *Additamenta*, probably compiled in the eighth century, we find an example of *Ciarraige* conceived in 'tribal' terms as a population name in the masculine plural.[2] This confusion becomes common in the Middle Irish period: the *Book of rights*, for instance, treats the Múscraige as singular, but the Orbraige as plural, the Ciarraige Luachra as singular, but the Connacht Ciarraige as plural (the fact that there were three branches of the latter may not be significant in view of the six-fold division of the Múscraige).[3] But the confusion here may be due to simple analogy with the plural normal in tribal names rather than to any recrudescence of tribal feeling. MacNeill drew attention to continental parallels to the *-rige* names, such as the Rhenish ICORIGIVM and the Scottish CARBANTORIGIVM (comparing Irish *Corbetrige*).[4] But the comparative rarity of continental Celtic names in *-rīgion, rīgium* is notable: here again the plural is usual in tribal names, and Holder's VICANI SEGORIGIENSES seems a Roman reformation of a *-rīgion* name to fit the pattern. It is arguable that the well-known continental tribal names in *-rīges* (which may denote descent from an ancestor deity bearing a *-rīx* name) have in Ireland fallen together with the *-rīgion* names by simple contamination: thus Caesar's *Caturiges* might give Irish *Cathraige* or *Cothruge* and Strabo's Spanish Ἀλλότριγες Alltraige.[5] Such confusion is rendered the more plausible by the fact that our seventh-century sources show easy interchange between forms in *Corcu, Dál* and *-rige*.

However, at the risk of falling victim to what MacNeill denounced as the evolutionary fallacy, I suggest that the eighth century reveals the first symptoms of the decline in tribal feeling. As early as 783

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[1] Tírechán provides us with the following examples of the genitive singular: *ad Domnach Sairigi* (Bk. Arm., 12b 1); *ad tramitem Gregirgi*; *ad Drummut Cerrigi*; *de genere Cerrigi* (13a 1); *per diserta Cerrigi*; *in Imgoe Mair Cerrigi* (13a 2); *ad regiones Callrigi Tre Maige* (15a 1); *in regiones Temenrigi i Ceru*; *Lée Benndrigi* (15a 2); *i nDuin Sebuirgi* (15a 2); *ad montem Miss Boonrigi* (15b 1)—see *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, ii, pp. 266–9.

[2] Bk. Arm., 17a 1: *has omnes oblationes Ciarrichi Superni [et] eorum reges Patricio per aeterna saecula obtulerunt.* The *Additamenta* gives the following examples of the nominative singular: *aicme becc i Cliu Catrige a ainmm* (Bk. Arm., 18a 1); of the accusative singular: *apud Ciarraige Connact* (16b 1; contrast *la Cuircniu*, ibid.); and of the genitive singular: *in finem Calrigi*; *du maithib Callrigi* (17a 2); *in regione Ciarrichi* (17a 1); and the *Notulae* have a dative singular: *.ii. Cheinn[fhin]dán i nDomnuch Cainri i Cothrugu* (18b 2)—*Thesaurus Palaeo-hibernicus*, ii, pp. 238, 240, 270f., 364.

[3] Dillon, *Bk rights*, 313, 317, 319, 678, 679, 720, and p. 47, n. 4. Cf. Middle Irish *tánacas a Ciarraigib* (Murphy, *Early Irish metrics*, p. 59).

[4] 'Population-groups', p. 67, n. 5.

[5] Holder, *Altceltischer Sprachschatz*, i, col. 105—I owe the suggestion that the name might be identical with that of the Altraige to Mr. Donnchadh Ó Corráin.

the annalist had forgotten the meaning of the *moccu* formula when he called Móenach ua Móenaig, king of Uí moccu Uais, *rex nepotum filiorum Cuais*.[1] When we find the Síl nÁedo Sláine kings of northern Brega as early as 742 styling themselves kings of Ciannacht (whose lands south of the Boyne they had apparently taken over after the battle of Imlech Pích in 688), we may suspect that *Ciannacht* had become primarily a territorial designation, for in a truly tribal polity it is hardly likely that an overlord group should demean itself by adopting the name of a subject people.[2] It is of course true that many tribal names had much earlier become fossilised in Irish toponymy after the people themselves had disappeared: it is likely that all names of the type *Aidne, Bréifne, Eilne, Muirtheimne, Treithirne*, represent original population names in *-ni*, although this has been forgotten even in the Old Irish period.[3] But in the eighth century the Ciannachta were still very much alive: north of the Boyne they still maintained autonomous status as a kingdom, albeit of reduced extent—the Fir Ardda Ciannachta; and in 828 they were vigorous enough to foil an attempt on the part of their overlord Cummascach mac Congalaig to intrude his son Cináed as a stranger in sovereignty.[4]

It is always useful to bear in mind that the sources from which we attempt to reconstruct our picture of early Irish society and our narrative of early Irish history are not strictly contemporaneous. The tribal society revealed in the law tracts is primarily that of the sixth and seventh centuries. But the bulk of our historical documentation refers to later times. The annalistic evidence increases in value as the centuries progress: by the eleventh and twelfth centuries it has become quite detailed. Yet we have no description of late Middle Irish society remotely comparable to that provided by the laws for the archaic period. The genealogies are fullest for the eighth century: we have seen reason to suspect that their traditional memory of earlier times was coloured by the limitation of their interest to the fortunes of those who had succeeded. By the twelfth century the case is reversed, and they are disappointingly meagre in their references to the persons who figure most prominently in the annals.

[1] Similarly *A.U.*, 838, 839; only at *A.U.*, 753 is the correct form given: *Echaidh nepos Moinaigh rex nepotum maccu Uais moritur*, though this cannot be taken as an indication that the *moccu* formula was really alive then. See Walsh, *Ériu*, ix, pp. 55ff.

[2] Cf. *A.U.*, 742, 748, 812, 839; *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxvi, pp. 396f.

[3] Cf. note 92 above. As Mr. Ó Corráin has pointed out to me, the name Muirtheimne (preserved in the genitive plural Mag Muirtheimne, Conailli Muirtheimne) probably commemorates a maritime branch of the Corcu Theimne or Temenrige.

[4] The Fir Ardda Ciannachta were defeated by Cummascach mac Congalaig of Knowth in 822; for the death of Cináed see *AU*, 828, and for the return of the native dynasty ibid., 855, 896, and Walsh, 'Meath in the Book of rights', *Féilsgríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill*, p. 519.

The value of early Irish history to the anthropologist and the general historian must lie largely in the detailed information it provides on the everyday working of a tribal polity. But all attempts to paint a synchronic picture of 'early Irish society' must of their very nature be unhistorical and misleading. Irish society was not static, though medieval men of learning and modern historians have conspired to make it seem so. As we perceive it in action (which is the proper function of the historian) it is by that very action changing its own structure: πάντα ῥεῖ. Therefore to label any society as 'tribal' or 'feudal' is in some sense a betrayal of history. History is concerned with living organisms: adequate dissection can only be performed on a corpse.

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THE IRISH WAR-CRY

THE first of the interjections listed by O'Donovan in his *Grammar of the Irish Language*, p. 327, is *abú* or *abó*, explained as 'an exclamation of terror and defiance'. At the end of the list he gives the further information that

> The war-cries of the ancient Irish, and Anglo-Irish, were made of *abó*, or *abú*, and the name, or crest, of the family, or place of residence, as *Grásach abó! Fionnóg abú! Cromadh abú! Seanaid abú!*

This description of *abú* as an exclamation of both terror and defiance has its counterpart in the entry in O'Reilly's *Irish-English Dictionary* under *abu, abo*: 'The war cry of the ancient Irish. Hence *Crom a boo, Butleireach aboo*, &c. *Aboi*, Heb.' The comparison with Hebrew is, of course, quite unjustified, but it is interesting that the word he has in mind means 'alas!' and is in no sense a war cry. We find the same combination in the *OED* discussion of the history of the word *hubbub*, where both *ub! ub! ubub* 'an interjection of aversion or contempt' and *abú* 'the war-cry of the ancient Irish' are offered as possible sources. An interjection of the type of *ub! ub! ubub!* is attested in Irish as far back as the ninth century, for *upp* glosses *ei mihi* 'woe is me' at Sg 120^{b}3; admittedly, the vagaries of OIr spelling make it uncertain whether this represents [up] or [ub], but the prevalence of *ub* in other examples makes this form the more probable.[1] There is also a Middle Irish example in *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne* 85.29, where the interjection *abb, abb, abb* is interpreted by Meyer as being one of defiance; the context, however, suggests rather surprise. In support of this is the use of *ob! ob! obobúna!* in the modern spoken language in a similar sense, cf. *á bobú* 'interjection of surprise', Dinneen, *bú bú* de Bhaldraithe, *Gaeilge Chois Fhairrge; an deilbhíocht*, p. 238. It is true that the boundary between surprise and aversion is often blurred, as de Bhaldraithe has demonstrated in his study of *fubún*, *Éigse* xii 64–6, but interjections of this type seem an unlikely source for a war-cry.

The earliest examples of *hubbub* (see *OED* s.v.), which seem to be most probably of Irish origin, point in the same direction; *Irish whobub* is attested as early as 1555, but there is no question of a war-cry here, but simply of the noise made by a crowd of savages going to drink. Similarly, Fynes Moryson (quoted in Falkiner's *Illustrations of Irish History*. p. 312) says of the Irish: 'They are by nature very

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[1] It is perhaps worth noting that, as Irish as both *uch* and *ub* 'alas', so Welsh has *och* in the same meaning, but also the element *ub-* in the word *ubain* 'lamenting'. An original **uk-* would have given *uch*, *och* in Irish and *ub-* in Welsh; the doublets could then have arisen from mutual borrowing.

clamorous, upon every small occasion raising the *hobou* (that is a doleful outcry), which they take from one another's mouth until they put the whole town in tumult'; a doleful outcry is hardly warlike. Even more cogent is the evidence of John Derrick, who, in his *Image of Ireland* (1581; facsimile ed. p. 67) makes the Irish cry *bobbowe* and *lullalowe* when they are being put to flight, for the latter word is the same as the *aleleu* 'which the meer Irish women are accustomed to repeat with howlings and clappings at the funerals of their friends' (Harris, *Works of Sir James Ware* ii 164) and as the *aililiú* of modern Irish, which can indicate either surprise or sorrow. Only Spenser uses *hubbub* in a way which might suggest it was a battle-cry, most notably in the lines

> They heard a noyse of many bagpipes shrill
> and shrieking hububs them approaching nere . . .
> <div align="right">(FQ iii X 43)</div>

but, to balance that, it should be noted that he uses the word *habbub*, *hubub* in the same passage as that in which he quotes the war-cries *Laundargarbo*, *Crom-abo* and *Butler-abo*, without suggesting any connection between them, see *Spenser's Prose Works*, ed. R. Gottfried (1949), p. 103. The evidence that *hubbub* derives from Irish *ob! ob!* is very strong, but any connection with *abú* must be rejected.

It will be remembered that O'Reilly, although describing the word *abú* as 'the war-cry of the ancient Irish', spelled it as *a boo, aboo* in his examples, for the good reason that it had never appeared in any document in the Irish language before his time. It was no doubt from O'Donovan's *Grammar*, with its mention of *Grásach abó*, that Sheffield Grace, Esq., got the idea of composing the 'ancient feudal war-song entitled Grasagh Aboe (the Cause of the Graces)' which he printed in the 'original Gaelic or Iberno-Celtic language' with metrical versions in English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Greek and Latin, in a volume published privately in London in 1839; the word *abú* became popular after the revival period, in such slogans as *An Ghaeilge Abú*. But it has never penetrated into the speech of the people, where, in most dialects, the formant in partisan cries is English *Up!*, as in the *Up Cuas!* quoted by Muiris Ó Súileabháin in *Fiche Blian ag Fás*. Another English phrase is used in Connemara: we find *High for Blakes and Dalys, agus pléidís féin le chéile é!*, Máirtín Ó Cadhain, *An tSraith ar Lár*, p. 162, and it has even produced the verbal noun *highforáil*, id., p. 67. This formant, which also occurs in Carleton's English, is of interest in that it seems to have been remoulded from English *hey for* which, according to the *OED* s.v. *hey*, has no connection with *high*. Whether there is any completely native formant seems doubtful; de Bhaldraithe's *English-Irish*

Dictionary, s.v. *hurrah*, offers *na laetheanta go deo!* as an equivalent of 'hurrah for the holidays!', and phrase *Éirinn go brách!* 'Ireland for ever' may well be a genuine formation. What the relation of these to 'Scotland for ever!' and *Cymru am byth!* may be, I am unable to say; just as 'up' and 'high' are regular formants in many languages (cf. *Hoch der Kaiser! Arriba España!*), so are phrases like *vive le roi!* or Japanese *banzai!* 'ten thousand years!'. It should be noted that the formant *suas le,* while well established in both literature and common speech, does not really fall into the category we are discussing, for it is imperative in force; thus *suas leat, a cheinnbhile cháigh,* L. Cl. A Buidhe 132.51, is an exhortation to be up and doing rather than a partisan cry. Tomás de Bhaldraithe points out to me that Brian Ó Nualláin used the slogan *Suas leis na Gaedhil!* in the first edition of *An Béal Bocht*, but changed to *Na Gaedhil abú!* in the second; both are, of course, entirely compatible with the post-revival Irish of a speaker at the feis in Corca Dhorcha.

It is to the records of the English administration[1] that we must turn for examples of this 'Irish war-cry'; the earliest occur at the beginning of the fourteenth century. In the *Calendar of Justiciary Rolls* 1308–14, p. 244, there is a record of men being charged with frightening the inhabitants of Hughstown, Co. Kildare, by shouting '*Fennockabo, Fennock-abo,* quod est signum de O'Tothils'. There is another entry of the same period in the *Annales Hiberniae* for 1316 (*IAS* 1842, p. 72), where it is recorded that the Irish of Imayle (who were, of course, O'Tooles) lost 400 men in a battle at Tullow; the heads of the dead were cut off and brought to Dublin, but the dead bodies rose and fought again, '*fennacabo* signum suum pronuntiantes'. The word *signum* here is probably a translation of English *ensign* in the meaning 'a rallying or battle-cry, watchword', which the *OED* describes as obsolete and mainly Scottish. *Fennacabo* is identical with the *Fionnóg abú* given by O'Donovan, and presumably refers to a 'crest', since *fionnóg* means 'scald-crow'. There is a long gap between these two examples and our next piece of datable evidence, which, however, shows us that the use of the formant *abo* was by no means confined to the O'Tooles; it is ch. xx of the enactments of Poyning's Parliament of 1495, an act 'abolishing these words *Cromabo* & *Butlerabo*', and laying down:

That no person ne persons of whatsoever estate condition or degree he or they be of, take part with any lord or gentleman, or uphold any such variances or comparisons in word or deed, as in using words these, *Cromabo, Butlerabo,* or other words like, or otherwise contrary to the King's lawes, his crown, and dignity, and peace, but to call only on St. George, or the name of his Sovereign Lord the King of England for the time being.

The enactment was not conspicuously successful; a pavement tile from Bective Abbey, now in the museum of the Irish Genealogical Office, bears the arms of Gerald Fitzgerald, 8th Earl of Kildare, who died in 1513, and the inscription *Si Dieu plet Crom abo*. During the Desmond Rebellion of 1579–80, ·the rebels coined the war-cry *Pape aboo* and, noting this, Burghley, the Lord Treasurer, wrote to the Earl of Ormond that he would have to reply with *Butleraboo*, the prohibited Ormond slogan (*CSPI* 1574–85 p. 206). This was, of course, a mild joke, but the fact that the rebels had utilised *abú* in their war-cry shows how common these slogans must have been at the time; a document preserved in *CSPI* 1601–3, p. 683, lists more than twenty, and it may well be incomplete. Spenser (*loc. cit.*) takes it that the custom was Irish in origin: that the Irish cry *Laundergabo* 'that is the bloddie hand, which is Oneales badge' and that 'to theire ensample the olde Englishe allsoe which theare remayneth have gotten vp theire cryes Scithyan-like as Crom-abo and Butler-abo'.

'Scythian' is Spenser's way of saying 'Irish', and, as we have seen, the oldest examples of this kind of war-cry is that of the O'Tooles, who were as 'Scythian' as possible. The native word *cosmart*, *caismeart* had acquired the meaning 'battle-cry' in pre-Norman translation literature, cf. LL 32505, and it was no doubt used to describe slogans such as that of the O'Tooles. It is attested, though sparsely, in Early Modern classical verse, cf. IGT Decl. ex. 1227. Nowhere in that verse, however, is the word *abú* found. The connection with *hubbub* did not occur to any of the English in close touch with Ireland, and Sir James Ware had a quite different explanation:

> After Ages produced many other shouts and out-cries as signals before engagements which were used in Compliment to the leaders and Heads of several families and intended as incentives to sedition. They chiefly ter-minated in the word *aboe*, which seems to come from an obsolete Irish word *Aba*, signifying *Cause* or *Business* . . .
>
> (Harris, *Works of Sir James Ware* ii 163)

It would be interesting to know where Ware got hold of the word *aba* (see RIA Contribb. A, s.v. 1 *apa*), which was indeed obsolete by his time, but his explanation, though ingenious, is quite untenable, for the word never means 'cause' in the political sense, and the final -*ú* is unaccounted for. However, it was good enough for Sheffield Grace, who, as we have seen, rendered *Grásach abó* as 'the Cause of the Graces'. The armorial bearings of the late Eoin O'Mahony, KM, show an 'etymologising' form in *Lassair romhuinn go buadh*, apparently a translation of *Victoria in flammis*. This explanation of *abú* as *go buaidh* 'to victory' is no doubt older than the first edition of Dinneen's dictionary (1907), but is quite untenable, since the preposition *go*

never loses its initial consonant in anglicised forms, cf. *Erin go bragh*
for the *Éirinn go brách* already mentioned; that such a reduction
could have taken place by the fourteenth century is completely
impossible. I have failed to find in print a theory which appears to
be known to a number of people, that *abú* derives from French
rather than Irish, so that *Butler abú* would stand for 'Butler to the
end'. This has the attraction that it would be a construction of the
same type as *Éirinn go brách* or *Cymru am byth*, but there is no record
of the phrase *à bout* being used in such a way in French, and the
verb *abouter* suggests a rather different semantic range. There is the
further difficulty that final *-t* in French loanwords is preserved as *-d*
in Irish, e.g. the ending *-et* normally appears as *-éad*; it will be remem-
bered that we have a Norman French motto from the sixteenth
century, *Si Dieu plet Crom abo*, where the final *-t* of *plet* is preserved,
but there is no trace of a final *-t* in *abo*.

The remaining possibility is English, and I believe that the true
explanation of *abú* was given nearly four hundred years ago by Lord
Justice Pelham in a letter which he wrote to Elizabeth I on Dec. 28,
1597, defending his action in outlawing the Earl of Desmond who,
'in all his skirmishes and outrages since the proclamation crieth *Papa
abo*, which is the Pope above, even above you and your Imperial crown',
Cal. Carew MSS. 1578–9. p. 191. As a formant, *above* would belong to
the same category as *up*, *high*, *hoch*, etc., and its use with a noun is
regular in such locutions as *the sky above*. In modern English, *above*
is merely an adverb of location and does not convey any idea of
political or military superiority, but there is an obsolete usage
recorded in the *OED* s.v. *above* 5: '*fig.* (From the idea of two wrestlers
or combatants.) In superiority; having the upper hand in a struggle;
victorious'. The examples quoted cover the period 1205–1611, and
the earliest demonstrates the meaning precisely: *Ofte heo fuhten, ofte
heo weren buenne* (*bofe, v.l.*) *and ofte bi-neoðen*, Layamon 3746, where
buenne, bofe 'above' means 'victorious' and *bi-neoðen* 'beneath' means
'defeated'. Formally, there is no great difficulty; an apocopated
*abo from *abofe* is quite possible, and it would have regularly become
aboo in the soundshift from Middle to Modern English. Better still,
the latter form is actually noted by Poole as the form of *above* used in
the archaic English dialect of the baronies of Forth and Bargy as
late as the end of the eighteenth century.

All that is lacking is an example of *above* as the formant of a slogan,
and it is tempting to offer a parallel from Dutch, where the loyal
cry is *Oranje boven*, the second element being etymologically identical
with *above*, so that it could be transposed into **Orange aboo*. Since
boven, however, is not used as a formant in partisan cries in modern
Dutch, any more than *above* in modern English, this interpretation is

not offered in the standard works. I am indebted to Dr. Hans
Oskamp for the following translation of the relevant item from the
8th edition (1961) of Van Dale's *Groot Woordenboek*, s.v. *Oranje* II:

> . . . neut. noun, the colour mentioned sub 1 : . . . *Oranje boven*! exclama-
> tion perhaps dating from the struggle with the Dunkirk privateers, who
> used to turn the flag of a seized vessel upside down; later common cry to
> express the attachment to the House of Orange.

Dr. Oskamp explains that the flag was originally orange-white-
light blue; the theory, then, is that the privateers turned it upside
down when they took a Dutch ship, that the Dutch restored the
correct alignment when the ship was re-captured, shouting *Oranje
boven*! 'Orange above, on top', and that this became the loyal cry.
It would be impertinent for one who has no knowledge of Dutch to
suggest a different solution of the problem, yet, remembering that,
in Irish terms, *Butler aboo* is considerably older than such a fleeting
slogan as *The Green above the Red*, I confess to a suspicion that
Oranje boven may refer to the supremacy of the House of Orange
rather than to the positioning of a stripe on a flag; the identity of
the name of the dynasty and that of the colour admittedly compli-
cates the matter considerably.

For *aboo* as a formant in Irish war-cries, Pelham's explanation
remains by far the most probable. If the word is in fact English,
we must assume that the native O'Tooles had borrowed the custom
from their Anglo-Norman neighbours, and we may hazard the guess
that *Crom abo* was the pattern which they were following. Maurice
Fitzgerald obtained a grant of Croom in 1216; as O'Rahilly pointed
out, *Ériu* xiii 176, the Irish form of this place-name was *Cromadh*,
and there can be little doubt that the final dental spirant had by this
time been dropped in popular speech at least, so that *Croma abo*
would regularly become *Crom abo*. The extension from places of
residence to family names as the first element is easily understood.
The introduction of 'badges' or crests is also in line with Norman
usage, though it is surprising to find that the O'Tooles had adopted
this custom so early; the 'bloddie hand' of the O'Neills seems to be
considerably later. The absence of references to these innovations in
the praise poetry composed both for native and Anglo-Norman
lords is presumably to be explained in the same way as the absence
of reference to innovations in armaments or military technique in
general; the language of this poetry was highly traditional—Eochaidh
Ó Heóghusa's great poem on Aodh Mág Uidhir's winter campaign,
for example, contains only one concept (*múr, cúirt* 'castle)' which
would serve to show what period it belongs to, and the only weapon
referred to is the archaic *ceis* 'spear'. We may take it that the *Pápa*

abú of the Desmond rebellion was the last spontaneous coinage to use this formant, and perhaps also the nearest approach to its becoming a genuine Irish word. The final Elizabethan settlement brought about what Poyning's parliament had aimed at more than a hundred years before, the end of any 'variances or comparisons' which would exalt any individual to the detriment of the English crown, and so the word *abo*, *abú* disappeared from both English and Irish.

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M

VARIA I

The f-future in Stapleton's Catechismus

IN preparing a recent article on the modern Irish *f*-future (*Ériu* xxi 32–41) I omitted, through an unfortunate oversight, the evidence provided by Stapleton. Though this is corroborative only, the *Catechismus* is of such interest that it seems worth while to give in brief the results of an excerpting of all the *f*-futures and conditionals occurring there.

The *Catechismus* was published in Brussels in 1639, and is apparently the first Irish printed book to have used the roman type (the Irish, which faces the Latin, is in fact in italic). But its linguistic interest lies in the fact that Stapleton set out deliberately to 'simplify' the spelling by departing from the classical models and giving spellings more closely representative of the spoken sounds. Thus the *Catechismus* is a document of the utmost value for the history of the language, for it attempts to reproduce the pronunciation of Tipperary Irish for, at a conservative estimate, the first quarter of the 17th century (Stapleton was probably born in 1589), and a linguistic analysis based on a complete index would be of great interest. Since 1945 it has been available in reflex facsimile (Ir. MSS. Commission).

Before turning to the evidence two points are to be noted. First, the book contains a fairly large number of misprints, and a few surprising forms are probably to be accounted for in this way. Secondly, and more surprisingly, Stapleton is far from being consistent, and has in fact failed to carry through in anything like a satisfactory way the purpose referred to above (and see the *Prologus* § 33). This, however, need not inhibit us from using the evidence he supplies. It is clear, for instance, that if he sometimes prints *tuigthear*, and sometimes *tuicear*, as in fact he does (see below), the latter, not the former, must represent his pronunciation.

The evidence is arranged according to the numbered paragraphs in *Ériu* xxi 32 ff. References to Stapleton's forms are to paragraphs (§) of the *Prologus*, where there is no pagination, and to pages of the *Catechismus* proper.

2 Verbs with stem in voiceless consonants are normally spelt with -*f*-, thus *ghlacfus* 6 (*cheasfuas* 30 may be a simple misprint, and hardly contains a survival of OIr. [f]). Note, however, *fheachag* 125, and the interesting *rachthas* 36; *roifeadh* 148 is no doubt a misprint for *roithfeadh*; *caithfeadh* occurs at 97.

3 In verbs with stem in voiced plosives devoicing is shown sporadically; with *ttuigfiodais* 20 *etc.* compare *do thuicidis* § 33 and

the hybrids *ttuigthemais* 128 and *tuicfi* § 27, *ttuicfeam* 23. With
chreidfid § 17 *etc.* compare *ccreitidis* § 4, and note the back-formation
chugtha = *chuca* 26. The future of *tagaim* occurs 14 times with *-cf-*
(*thiocfadh* 158), once with *-c-* only (*tiocas* § 17).

It is interesting that Stapleton is more consistent in his treatment
of the pres. passive in *-thear*: *ttuicear* 29, 45, 60, 67; *ttucar* 96; *chomeatar*
140 as against *tuigthear* 45, *ttugthar* 96. Note also the participial
forms *tuice* 59, *ccreitte* § 21, *druite* 25, *scote* 33, *iarrata* 47 as against
creídthe § 17.

4   For verbs in *r(r)*, *l(l)* and *n(n)* I have noted 41 cases where
-f- is spelt. In five *-f-* is replaced by *-th-* (*chuirtheas* 121; § 7, 36, 110,
137), while in four the future stem is unmarked: *theonsgnas* 107,
chureas 149, 165, *fhilleamaois* 106. In forms other than *f*-futures
voiceless *r*, *l*, *n* are frequently and unmistakably marked. Thus
briarthraibh 138, *dúrthacht* 67, *chailthear* 101, *buailthear* 135 beside
mbuailtear ibid., *taithnthighean* 71, *thaithnthias* 52, *aitheantha* § 8.
Note also the devoicing in *ndearthnas* § 24, 25, *sihrruighe* 68. On
this phenomenon see Ériu xxi 39 n. 7. There is apparent voicing in
cearmhadh 64. I have found no example of an old *ē*-future with
added *-f-*.

6–7   The verb 'to see' has *-f-* in four cases, against *do chidheach*
125. For *guidhim* note *nguidhfeadh* 51, *ghuighfeas* 6. For *thmh*
giving *f* note *fuathfuire* 35, *maifeachas* § 6, *maithfeachas* 34 and the
treatment of *bhth* in *mharathach* § 22, but there is no example of a
future form of this type.

9–11   For fut. pass., condit. pass. and condit. 2 s. I have counted
22 forms with *-f-*. Note *tuicfear* 37 with devoicing beside *tuigfear* 7.

22.   The word *fiarfaighe* is usually spelt with *-f-*: *fiafruí* § 17, *etc.*
But note *fhiathriann* § 28, *fiathfruighe* § 33.

23.   For *céadfaidh* I find *-df-* six times, *-t-* once (*mhicheata* 108).

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VARIA II

1. Periods of time

NUMERAL derivatives indicating periods of time are common in Old Irish, especially in legal texts and in treatises on chronology; there has been little discussion of them and the following notes may be of interest.

In the Laws, the commonest way of describing a period of one day is by the use of the fem. sg. of the cardinal numeral *oen* 'one'; thus we have (nom.) *is aen a anad*, Laws ii 90; (acc.) *itir uīn ocus treise*, i 126. 11; (gen.) *anad huīne*, 120.z.; (dat.) *nī bes īru huīn*, 120.20. The gender is presumably to be ascribed to *dia* 'day', or perhaps to *adaig* 'night' and the formation requires no further comment. However, there are at least three examples of a nom.-acc. *oena* or *oenu* in *oena do nech nesom*, i 78.13; *aenu do neoch neasum*, ii 90.20; *aena tar aile*, i 120.18; in all these the meaning is undoubtedly 'period of one day', but no adequate explanation occurs to me.

For period of two days and upwards, the normal procedure is to use the fem. ordinal; *aile, cóiced, ochtmad, nómad, dechmad* and *aile déc* are all well attested, and forms such as *tríchatmad* '30 days' occur in the commentaries. The gender is to be explained in the same was as that of *oen*; the use of the ordinal no doubt derives from cases such as *co nómaid* 'until (the) ninth (day).'

There are, however, alternative forms which present some difficulty. 'Three days' is always *treisse*, not *triss* or *tress*; others which show iā declension are:

deisse 'two days': *i ndeissi, i treisi, i cóicthi*, CG 167, see also 352, 381, 395, 429.

cethraimthe 'four days'. Mainly attested from commentaries; for examples see RIA *Contribb. C* 161.56–61, where the forms in *-n* should be emended.

cóicthe 'five days': *i cóicthi, i nómaid*, CG 64, see also 206, 270; *iar ndáil teora cuigthe*, Ériu xiii 28.18; *cuicthe fri cond cuindegar* Laws i 78.14. Other examples are given under *cóicde* in RIA *Contribb. C*, where the quite distinct nouns *cóicde* o n. 'five things' and *cóicthe* iā f. 'five days' are confused.[1]

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[1] An even more glaring example of this confusion is the statement by Tomás Ó Broin (*Éigse* xiii 167) that *noíde* is a recognised word in the meaning of 'a nine-fold period'. It may be noted (a) that none of the parallel formations, such as *déde, tréde, cethardae*, is ever used to denote a period of time, and (b) that *noíde* is a very rare word not listed by the *Contribb.* at all. Thurneysen, *Gramm.* § 387, quotes *nœde* from *Auraic.* 1022, where it has the expected meaning of 'nine-ness'.

Any explanation of these forms must begin with *treisse*, for this is the only case where the ordinal never appears; it is true that there is no certain example of *cethramad* 'four days' either, but the four-day period plays no part in the older strata of the Laws. The formation of *treisse* is enough to make it clear that *cóicthe* cannot have anything to do with the non-personal numeral *cóicde*, since *treisse* cannot be explained as containing the -*de* suffix. Much more likely is Binchy's suggestion (*CG*, note to 167) that *cóicthe* is a later formation from the genitive of the fem. ordinal, abstracted from stereotyped phrases such as *anad cóicthe* 'stay of five days'; indeed, in the later language we find clear evidence of a development of this kind in *aíne dec ar fichat* '31 days', *Laws* ii 108.3, a passage of commentary where *aíne* must be a secondary formation. Applying the same argument to *treisse* we might speculate that *tress*, which is not normally declined at any period of Irish, produced a genitive *treisse* to fill in the series *anad oíne, anad aile . . . anad cethraimthe, anad cóicthe*, and that this genitive was then interpreted as a noun precisely because of the normal non-inflection of *tress*; *cethraimthe* and *cóicthe* would then be analogical formations.

The difficulty about this explanation is that such a change could have taken place only in the OIr. period, after the loss of final syllables, and even then would have implied a change of following mutation from *treisse h-* to *treisse L*; it should also be noted that *cóicthe* occurs in texts of undoubted antiquity (see the examples above). Perhaps we should rather assume that *tress*, which is in origin a noun cognate with Lat. *testis* (*Gramm.* § 398), was never inflected at all, and that *treisse* represents the fem. of an io, iā adjectival derivative from it, just as Lat. *tertianus* and *quartanus* show -*ān*- suffixed to the ordinal forms; the pattern would be the neighbouring **alijos, *alijā*, etc. In the closed system of the legal language *treisse* could then have been specialised to the exclusion of *tress*, and the io iā suffix extended to the nearest neighbouring form, giving *cóicthe*; it has already been noted that a four-day period is not part of the oldest texts.

Neither of these approaches will give a convincing explanation of *deisse*, which is a very rare form, apparently not attested except in *CG*. Since the two-day period is also unknown to the earliest strata of the laws, we might conjecture that *aile* was first introduced and that *deisse* was evolved (from *dias*?) at the time when *aile* was being replaced by *tánaise* in the ordinal series. As has been seen, it had very little extension; *aile* is the normal form in the later law-texts.

The terms discussed above belong almost entirely to legal language; *cóicthiges* 'fortnight', on the other hand, does not seem to occur as a legal term, but is attested from other early sources. As Pedersen,

VKG i 487, and O'Rahilly, *Celtica* i 389, point out, it is the only
representative in Irish of a compound teen form (cf. W. *pymtheg*
'fifteen'; *pythefnos* 'fortnight'); formally, it presents some difficulties.
O'Rahilly suggests that it is derived from *coícdech 'fifteen', and his
spelling *coícthiges* is much more in keeping with the evidence of the
later language than the *cóicthiges* of Pedersen and RIA *Contribb. C.*
It is possible that the *-th-* is due to the influence of the *cóicthe* discussed
above, and it is by no means improbable that we should take the
latter word as *coícthe*; the spelling *cuícthe* is common in old legal
material (where length marks are not normally written) and in such
texts *-ui-* often stands for *-oí-* before palatalised consonants, cf.
uin, uine quoted above.   The final element of *coícthiges* is unclear;
Pedersen remarks that it is reminiscent of the suffix of *dias* which,
however, is equally obscure.   Feminine derivatives in *-es* are rare,
lámas (W. *llawes*), *longas* (W. *llynges*) and *sanas* (W. *hanes*) being
among the few examples; the force of the suffix is not easy to de-
termine.

Fiche and the succeeding tens up to and including *cét* form adjec-
tives which can denote periods of time, and from which in turn
abstracts are formed.   Thus *fichtech* usually means 'twenty years of
age' and *fichtige* 'twenty days' or, more usually, 'twenty years'.
It seems likely that the reading *ó chetheoraib blíadnaib co fichtig co
cuairtulchaigi CG* 67 (where the MS has *fichtig, cuairtulchaig*) should
be emended to *fichtigi*, since these adjectives normally refer to per-
sons, cf. *cétach Abracham*, Wb 20ª6.

Finally, we have a learned construction in the phrase *in cicul
noídecde* 'the decennoval cycle', see RIA *Contribb. N* s.v., from which
a masculine noun *noídécde* 'nineteen years' is abstracted.   This
isolated formation is the only case where the suffix *-de* provides a
word indicating a period of time.

2.   Ir. úathad, óthad: W. odid

The word *úathad* has hitherto been misinterpreted by grammarians
and lexicographers.   It is in origin an adjective of the o ā declension,
the neuter nom. sing. of which often functions as a substantive, as
in *húathad ndóine do chretim diib*, gl. *pauci*, Wb 4ᵈ4.   The nom. pl.
is at least once attested in an OIr. form in *uaiti foirbthi dun popul*,
Ml 90ᶜ12, which is of the type to which *ísli, úaisli*, etc. also belong,
discussed by Thurneysen, *Gramm.* § 353.   It is well attested as
úaiti, úaite in MSS of later date; these are wrongly listed by RIA
Contribb. U under 2 *úaite*.   The comparative *úaitiu* is also allotted
to this ghost-word; it is in fact as regular a formation from *úathad*
as *úaisliu* is from *úasal*.   The adverbial formation *ind huathad*, gl.

raro, Sg 137ᵇ2 is listed by *Contribb*. U. under the 'noun' 1 *úathad*, in spite of the fact that the few adverbs formed from nouns show the ending *-id*, *Gramm*. § 380. Even more surprising is the statement, without further comment, that the 'noun' *úathad* can function as predicate to the substantive verb, *Contribb*. U 42.35–8; though the examples are late, they point clearly to the adjectival status of the word. Strange to say, *odid*, the Welsh cognate of *úathad*, was taken to be a noun by Morris Jones, *WG* 104, because of its superficial resemblance to abstracts like *glendid*, etc.; Ifor Williams makes its adjectival status plain when he gives its basic meanings as 'prin, eithriadol, scarce', *CA* p. 273.

The treatment of the meaning is equally unsatisfactory. Thurneysen, *Gramm*. § 387, lists *úathad* among the numeral substantives, with the meaning 'single thing, singular number'; while *úathad* regularly means 'singular number' in grammatical contexts, it is completely unattested in the meaning 'single thing'. It was no doubt inadvertently that Thurneysen translated the *úaithed* of Wb 25ᵃ38 as 'singleness, single number' (*Gramm*. p. 104), for the gloss reads *niba úaithed dondriga* and is correctly translated as 'it will not be with a few that he will come' by the editors of the *Thesaurus*. He has been followed by the compilers of *Contribb*. U, who give as meaning (a) of their 'noun' 1 *úathad* 'a small number, a few, one', in spite of the fact that the third of these meanings is quite unsupported by the examples quoted, which show that *úathad* normally translates Lat. *paucus* or *rarus*, and include such clear cases as *úathed mbeg . . . .i. nónbor nammá* 'a very few . . . only nine', BDD 158 U. Similarly the derivatives *huaitigitir* gl. *rarescunt*, Ml 33ᵃ15 and *óthatnat* gl. *pauculus*, Sg. 49ᵃ14, confirm the equation with *rarus* and *paucus*; by a singular perversity Vendryes, *Lexique étymologique* O–35, translates *óthatnat* as 'petite unité' although Latin *pauculus* can mean only 'very few' cf. *quare dereliquisti pauculas oves istas?*, 1 Reg. 17.28.

It is only when *úathad* is used as a grammatical term that the translation 'singular' is justified; in these contexts it appears to be invariably a noun, and it has evolved a new unsyncopated adjectival derivative *úathatae*, as in *frisna briathra huathaiti ⁊ hilddai* 'to the singular and plural verbs', Sg 71ᵇ12. This is a somewhat strange semantic development from the common contrast of *úathad* 'few' with *ilar* 'many' (as well as with *imad* and *sochuide*, see *Contribb*. U 42.78 ff.): the adjective *ildae* 'plural' is also a new formation restricted to grammatical contexts. An equally strange development was the utilisation of the gen. sing. *úathaid* as a kind of empty genitive to distinguish the units from the tens; thus, on the same page of the Carlsruhe Beda, we find *in choiced fichet* 'the twenty-fifth', Bcr. 33ᵇ5, beside *hi coicid huaithid* 'in the fifth', 33ᵇ7 (it should be noted that

elsewhere in this text ($31^{\mathrm{d}}1$) *huathath* glosses *rarus*). But both these uses of *úathad* belong to technical language; whenever it occurs in a literary text the meaning is 'few'. Thurneysen was well aware of this, as his translation of *nim dersaige fri úathad* as 'do not wake me for a few' (*Gramm.* p. 343) shows; subsequent translators have been less perceptive, cf. 'wecke mich nicht gegen einen Einzelnen', Meid, *Die indogermanischen Grundlagen . . .* , p. 122.

The preservation of initial *ó-* in so many examples of this word is paralleled in *óibéla/huabéla* and *óbar/úabar*, in both of which there is reason to believe that we have the same element as the preposition *ó/úa* 'from'; we know that the corresponding Welsh preposition appears as *o-* in the conjugation *ohanaf*, etc. The theoretical form which would fit Irish *óthath* and Welsh *odid* could be expressed as **au-títos*, and the second element is too short for any certain explanation of its origin. However, remembering W. *prid*, OIr. *críth*, connected with W. *prynu* and OIr. *crenaid* respectively, we might think of similar formations connected with Ir. *tinaid* 'fades away'; the cognate Greek participle *phthitós* differs from the required Common Celtic form only in the quantity of the vowel, and, semantically, 'faded away' is not too far removed from *paucus* and *rarus*.

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VARIA III

1. The Keltic words for 'tear'

In an article entitled 'The Germanic words for "tear"' PBB (Tübingen) 81, 1960, 263–6, I have dealt with the Indo-European range of forms for this word. I have had occasion to return to the problem several times since: In *Studies presented to George S. Lane* (1967: 152–3) I attempted to clarify the absence of *d- in the pre-form *dákru which the Indo-Iranian, Baltic, and Tocharian cognates presuppose. In an article on productive suffix ablaut in Baltic, *Baltistica*, vi (1), 1970, 27-32, I have pointed the way to an explanation of the middle syllable of Lith. *ašarà*. In an essay on the stem forms of IE words for 'bone', appearing in *AOINapoli*, I have tried to clarify the multiplicity of stem suffixations which residually remained after the arguments of PBB 81.263–6; this results from a presumed development within IE dialects whereby an ancient heteroclite class *-$(u)r/u$- was eliminated in favour of the more populous and productive class *-$(u)r/(u)n$-. As a result of these studies, I conclude that the IE word for 'tear' had as its earliest recoverable forms *(*dákru* ~ *drakur* < *drakru(*-r*).

In PBB 81.263–6 I accepted Thurneysen's view, advanced by him in KZ 48, 1917, 66–7, that the Keltic forms are to be derived from a proximate *dakrom. I am now convinced that there is no need to have this otiose form intrude in the historical series, and it is the purpose of this note to outline my reasons.

The gender and form-class of OIr. *dér* are not at all plentifully attested for us. If it is to be neuter, we can of course lay main weight only on earlier texts, although we are forced also to take account of later instances for some indications. An inspection of texts is now facilitated by the appearance of the *degra-dodelbtha* fascicule (1959) of the *Dictionary of the Irish language*. The entry *dér* in that work calls the word a neuter *o*-stem for Old Irish on the authority of Thurneysen *loc. cit.*; notes that it becomes later a feminine *ā*-stem; and mentions the late Mid. Ir. and Mod. Ir. form *deór*. It should further be kept in mind that Mod. Ir. *deór* ~ *déar* Sc. Gael. *deur* is masculine. The acc. sg. *fri déir* (Leb. Gab. 264 n. 2) and the gen. sg. *na dére* (*Seirgligi Con Culaind*, ed. Dillon; found in the presumably earlier B recension) are clear indications of the feminine. A feminine could be easily explained as a back formation from the longer neuter plural forms, which must be so frequent with this word; note that all occurrences of *dér* registered in the *Passions and Homilies* are plural. Eleanor Knott (*Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, p. 113) records

dér as neuter, but the instance at line 1135 is plural: Ro chích Fer
Rogain co tarlaic a déra fola 'F.R. wept so that he let flla his tears of
blood'. Note the similar phraseology of *Passions and Homilies* ll.
3199–3200: déra fola din tarlaiç Petar ... The gen. sg. *deóir* LL
154b21, cited in Kuno Meyer's *Contributions* (p. 615, found in ACL
III 3) and again by Thurneysen *op. cit.* 66, and which would be
a clear *o*-stem, does not seem to recur in DIL. The dat. sg. *do déor
Chathbad* and the instances of dat. pl. could be equally *o*- or *u*-stems.
The phrases *dér do c(h)uaich* 'a drop' (O'Dav. 668) and *am dér gréne*
'tear of the sun, a dew-drop' (IT III. 61, which comes from the second
text of the Mittelirische Verslehren) are ambiguous on the points that
interest us.

The sole clear neuter instance seems to be *robtar lugu na dǽr*
Ml 23ᵃ13 'the tears were fewer', with a short neuter plural. This
agrees with the implications of the feminine development and the
possibilities of the ambiguous *o*-stem forms. But, especially since
the syllabic is a long vowel (which would fail to show a written *u*-
quality *pace* Thurneysen 66), there is no clear proof that we do not
have the remains of an original *u*-stem.

An additional consideration in the argument is the compound
adjective *to-déoir* (later *taidiúir*) 'tearful, sad etc.', which Strachan
(*Ériu* 2.65 § 11) had already explained as *to + dér*. If, as we may see
from the above evidence, there had been a recent shift from an old
u-stem to a neuter *o*-stem (and subsequently from that to a feminine
and a masculine), this *i*-stem compound adjective would have
provided a plausible fulcrum for the change. Old Irish preserves
an old Indo-European derivational rule whereby a particle plus *o*-
or *á*-stem noun yields a compound *i*-stem adjective; thus, as a
parallel to *todéoir*, *to + fochell* 'heed' → *tuachil* 'sly' (see Thurneysen
GOI § 345). Other noun stems once also yielded such compounds,
but the process had become moribund with them; thus, for *u*-stems
this shift in stem class had become obsolescent, as shown by *so/do +
cruth* → *so-*, *dochrud*. In light of this, the survival of *todéoir* could
have motivated the success of an *o*-stem as underlying form. Yet all
of the factors which have been considered in the shift from a *u*-stem
neuter to an *o*-stem are most plausible for a time after final syllables
had been lost and consonant qualities had been adjusted, i.e. at a
very recent period in the development of Old Irish.

I therefore consider it more likely that an Archaic Irish neuter
*dérʷ became *dérᵃ* than that a Primitive Irish or Proto-Keltic **dakru*
became **dakron*.

Is there support in British Keltic for **dakru*? I believe there is,
although not for the usual reasons advanced. The GPC, like Thur-
neysen *loc. cit.*, recognizes a singular *deigr* alongside *deigryn*, and

reconstructs *dakrū* for all of Keltic. This reconstruction cannot be exactly so. Jackson (LHEB 412) lists Welsh *dagrau*, Corn. *dagrow*, Mid. Bret. *dazrou*, Mid. Bret. *daerou* without reconstructing an antecedent. On the other hand, in his *Historical Phonology of Breton* § 706 and § 709 Jackson has Brit. **dacrū*, Pr. Bret. **dagr*, OBret. *dacr*, MBret. pl. *dazrou, daezrou*, Mod. Bret. *daerou*; and in § 727 he speaks of Brit. **dacrū*, pl. **dacroues*, Pr. Bret. **dagr*, **dagrow*, W. *deigr, dagrau*, M. Corn. *dager, dagrow*. Fleuriot (*Dictionnaire des gloses en vieux breton* 126) s.v. *dacrlon* 'u[v]idus' mentions "pour correspondants le gall. **dagr* 'larme', plur. *deigr* . . ."; but this claim for a surface shape of a Welsh singular is not at all certain. What may seem a slight non-sequitur on Jackson's part in HPB § 727, whereby Cornish and Breton fail to show affection from **dacrū*, is set right by Jackson in a footnote which states that their singular "may come from a SW. Brit. form like **dacros*".

This last accounting for the Cornish and Breton singular seems to me to introduce one further otiose form. One possibility is that SW. Brit. **dagr* comes directly from **dakrū*. But a more likely solution is that this, like M. Bret. *lazr* 'thief' and *azr* 'snake' (:Welsh *lleidr, neidr*) beside pl. *lazron* and *aered*, is simply back-formed from the plural.

Simon Evans (*A Grammar of Middle Welsh* 30) gives *deigyr* as a singular, citing *Canu Aneirin* 27. 673, and adds "(sometimes pl., see G[eirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg] 310), *dagreu* (see L & P 108)." The relevant verses of CA are

> o gyvryssed gwraged gwyth a wnaethant
> llawer mam ae deigyr ar y hamrant.

These are rendered by Jackson in his recent translation (*The Gododdin*, 1969, 139); "In battle they made women widows, [and] many a mother with tears at her eyelids." It seems to be an unresolvable question of poetic taste whether one understands this lone instance of *deigyr* as singular or plural.

Out of all of this, however, I do not think it ultimately matters crucially whether or not we can find a true instance of a singular *deigr*; for the reasoning will lead us to the same end point either way.

1. Of course a singular **dakrū* is not in any case ultimately justified on IE grounds; it must be secondary.

2. If such a singular existed it must be supposed to have replaced **dakrū* from the old plural, as Loth saw. This is perfectly plausible in light of what was said above for the pervasive Old Irish plural *déra*. In this connexion see also my remarks in an article currently appearing in *Glotta* on the Latin sg. *genū* 'knee'; cf. also Gk. δάκρυον, back-formed from the plural δάκρυα.

3.   No matter whether the singular was *dakrŭ* or *dakrū̄*, the instances of plural *deigr* point to a plural that is most easily explained as a survival of *dakrū̄*, much more easily than Thurneysen's and Ernault's hysterogenic *dakrī*.   .

4.   Even though -*eu*, etc. < *-ow* was a productive plural class it is significant that this is the class selected by this particular noun. Indeed, since this noun was an old neuter (and therefore pl. *-ū̄), it may well be that *-ow* was generalized on the basis of other case forms of the *u*-stem to relieve the growing ambiguity of a singular and plural *-ū̄.

In short, it is simplest to explain all the observed British facts by assuming a continuation of *dakru*, perhaps latterly replaced by *dakrū̄*.   There seems to be no clear motivation for interposing an extra *dakron*; indeed, if there really was a singular *deigr* (which could not be back-formed from an old plural *dakrā̆* while the neuter was alive). an *o*-stem would scarcely explain it.   Other things being equal, we must employ Occam's razor.

2. The 'bee' in Irish, Indo-European, and Uralic

A. J. Joki has dealt with Uralte Lehnwörter in the Proceedings of the Finno-Ugrist Congress, Budapest 1963.   In discussing the word for the bee and the fly, p. 106, he cites Burrow's opinion to the effect that the Indo-Iranian words (Sanskrit *mákṣ-*, Avestan *maxšī* 'fly') are old borrowings from Finno-Ugric, a theory already discussed by H. Jacobsohn and by Moór (ALH 7. 150).   Joki proceeds to note the recent opinion of H. Wagner, KZ 76, 1959, 81–4, to the effect that Irish shows a cognate to the Indo-Iranian forms, thus allegedly cutting the ground out from under the claim of a specific Finno-Ugric source for the Indo-Iranian by providing an inherited Indo-European etymon.

Wagner's argument, however, on inspection, is not nearly so firmly established as Joki assumes it to be.   In fact, I draw from the data, which I study in brief below, a reverse conclusion from that reached by Wagner.

The essential argument on the Irish data is whether the dialect variants which may be summarized as *beach* (OIr. *bech* [b'ɛx]) or those represented by *meach* [m'ax] are to be regarded as original, i.e. Proto-Irish.   Wagner presents (op. cit., p. 81–2) the following arguments against *meach* as a secondary development from *bech*:

1.   Parallels for such a change of initial are lacking in Irish.

2.   The dialectal area of *meach* is widespread and not limited to a single region.   Between the occurrences of *meach* in West Kerry and the main *meach* area of Connaught we find *beach* in County Clare.

3. Aran *smeach* could get its *s*- from *sbeach* only if the latter actually occurred in Irish, which it does not; it is limited to Scottish Gaelic.

Wagner thinks we have been too normative and classicizing in our study of Irish; we have heeded the written tradition excessively. He sees an untapped mine in the spoken dialects. I agree entirely that we must exploit the modern folk speech as long as it lasts, wherever it leads us, either in deepening our grasp of features registered in the literary language, or in overthrowing prejudices that a one-sided awe for the literary tradition has instilled in us. In the same spirit as Wagner, I therefore examine the dialect evidence which he himself has so lavishly placed before us.

Wagner's first point is an interesting one, but we cannot deal with it here. Even if it is true, we must first follow the dialect evidence where it leads us, and then test the problem further from that point. I argue below against the factuality of his second point. Point 3 depends for its force on the claimed occurrence of *sbeach*, which is admitted not to occur. But that is not the only possible source of a freshly developed *s*-. It is also possible that a form in *sm*- developed analogically by treating the form in *m*- as if it were a product of lenition; this is an old type of analogical development in Irish.

Wagner's second point therefore becomes the crucial basis of his whole argument. Basing ourselves on map # 49 of Wagner's linguistic atlas of Ireland (vol. I), let us therefore reinspect the dialectal distribution of the words for the 'bee'.

Setting aside the few other, and irrelevant, etyma which intrude in isolated or marginal points, we find: The entire south (Munster) is represented by *beach* [b'ax] except for two points 20 and 21 (Dingle, in West Kerry) where we find [m'ax]; I return to these two points below. The isolated point 65 (Omeath), the easternmost recorded point in all Ireland, also shows a form of *beach*. The entire north (Ulster), including point 66 (North Tyrone, in East Ulster), has *beachóg* [b'ahɔg] etc., which is a derivative of *bech*. The eastern fringe of Connaught shows *beach* [b'ax] in four well spread-out points 32, 33, 62, and 60. Point 32 is overlooked by Wagner in his review of the dialect evidence (op. cit. 84); this is a lone point over the Roscommon border and represents a very good speaker. It is worth noting that points 23 and 24 are in Munster, and show *beach* like the great mass of Munster, but that they abut Galway (Connaught). Thus in the south the *beach-meach* line follows closely the Munster-Connaught line.

This leaves Connaught, where, except for clear Ulster intrusions, we find *meach* [m'ax] consistently in almost the entire province. As

I have argued above I derive [sm'ax] of points 41 and 42 (Aran Is.) from *meach* + *s-*.

It is not immediately apparent how in detail one is to explain the appearance of *meach* in 20 and 21, West Kerry. But it is to be noted at any rate that this one stray spot (for the two points adjoin) geographically is the outermost piece of coast in Kerry which directly faces Connemara to the north in Connaught. Moreover, it seems that we may expect to see outside influences or innovations in West Kerry, for it is precisely here that we find, further to the south along the coast, in points 18 and 13, the mysterious form *pux*.[1]   I therefore regard the Kerry instances of *meach* as intrusions, and not as discontinuous retentions.

To summarize in broad terms: Ignoring intrusions (*s(e)illeán* in the far North, and the English word), we find *beach* and its derivatives everywhere in Ireland except in Connaught, where there is a solid area of *meach*. However, I consider it highly important that the *meach* area does not completely reach the easternmost edges of Connaught for which collections have been possible in the Linguistic Survey. Looked at in this fashion, the map presents a classical picture of central and lateral areas. We may see a focus of dispersion for *meach* somewhere in Connaught, but this diffusion has not quite succeeded in effacing all traces of *beach* in the province.[2]   My conclusion, then, is that the *beach* area is the conservative one, and the *meach* area the innovating.

A scrutiny of the modern folk dialect distribution, therefore, upholds the form *bech*, attested in the literary tradition, as the original Irish form. How *meach* arose is not at all clear to me. Wagner makes much (op. cit. 81) of the genitive plural construction *na mbech* [nə m'ex] as a putative source, only to reject it as a likely frequent construction. Another, to me more likely, possibility would be a contamination of the initial (aided by the initial mutations) by that of *mil* 'honey', with which *bech* would be so frequently paired.

Whatever the secondary source of *meach*, we must surely place OIr. *bech* and the modern *beach beachóg* within Indo-European alongside OHG *bini*, OE *béo*, Lith. *bìtè bitìs*, OPruss. *bitte* (Voc.

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[1] Wagner simply remarks, *op. cit.* 84, 'neben dem mir historisch rätselhaften *pux* erscheint in P. 13, 18 auch *b'ax*'. I would suggest that Wagner's perceptive remark for point 68 (Inishowen in Donegal) is here pertinent: 68 shows [fəihog], and Wagner sees this as OIr. *foich* 'wasp' plus the diminutive suffix shown by Ulster *beachóg*. I suggest that *pux* represents a conflation of the Munster reflexes of *bech* and *foich* gen. *focha*; this confusion is obviously culturally easy in the British Isles, since *foich* itself was borrowed from British Keltic (see Thurneysen § 922) and Welsh *gwychi* means 'drones'. That is to say, *bech* (masculine) would occur in lenited forms with *v-* (β-), while *foich focha* was taken as a lenition product of *p-*. Thus, with a broad (non-palatial) *-ch*, we have **poch*, built on the analogy of [vex'] *bheich*: [fox'] *foich* = **phoich*.

[2] If, however, the Survey had not been conducted by Wagner when it was, these precious traces might have been lost to us, and our conclusions seriously skewed. We must be lastingly grateful to Wagner for what he has rescued for us.

787), OCS *bičela*.[1]   Note that we have a markedly European, even North European, distribution for these words quite apart from the fact that Keltic **biko-*, Germanic **bi-*, Baltic **biti-*, and Slavic **bikel-* do not yield a clearly unitary simple stem.   It appears strongly that these forms in **bhi-* represent early borrowing from some North European source(s).

This leaves the Indo-Iranian forms in *m-* (Skt. *mákṣ-* and Av. *maxšī*) again indeterminate.   They could be archaic retentions and thus reflect an old IE etymon.   But they could also easily be early loans from Finno-Ugric.

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[1] Gk. σφήξ 'wasp' certainly does not belong in this group, *pace* Wagner.

VARIA IV

Wb. 28 c 14 and the 'exclusive' use of the equative in Old Irish

IN his discussion of the nature of the equative in Old Irish Professor Meid calls one type of use of the equative the 'exclusive' type.[1] The point about this type is that, not only does the equative, as normally, indicate the possession of some quality to an extreme degree, but it does this without more than an implicit reference to anything to which the object is compared. Used in this way the equative implicitly excludes the possibility of anything else having the quality to a greater degree. This would be entirely natural if the original use of the equative formation with the suffix -tero- was, to quote Dr. Meid, 'eine gegenüber dem Grundwort intensiv-deiktische'.[2] If the primary function of the equative formation was to indicate the possession of a quality to an extreme degree, and the comparison with some other object was only a means to that end, then it would not be entirely surprising if the same formation were used for the same end, but without using the same means.

His first example is (Murphy, *EIL*, p. 84):

> Mé Líadan;
> ro carussa Cuirithir;
> is fírithir ad-fíadar.

He rejects Murphy's translation ('I am Líadan; I loved Cuirithir; this is as true as anything told') on the grounds that there is nothing in the text corresponding to 'anything'.[3] He does not, however, allude to, much less refute, the arguments put forward by Murphy in his notes on the poem, and in particular the arguments of O'Brien, one of which Murphy quotes.[4] One of Meid's versions is 'es ist (absolut) wahr, was man sagt', a translation which implies that the equative is not here being used as a degree of comparison at all, except, perhaps, implicitly[5].

His supporting example is Wb. 28 c 14.[6] The Latin text as given in the *Thesaurus* is:

[1] W. Meid, 'Zur Aequativ der keltischen Sprachen', in *Beiträge zur Indogermanistik und Keltologie* (Pokorny Festschrift) ed. W. Meid (Innsbruck, 1967) pp. 223–242. See especially the final classification on p. 242.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 242.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 235.

[4] M. A. O'Brien, 'Is fírithir ad-fíadar', *Celtica* III (1956) p. 174.

[5] Meid, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

[6] The other examples quoted by Meid as similar to the one from *Líadain and Cuirithir* (TBF. ed. Meid, §22, v.l. to line 278, *Aisl. Óeng.* §12, Ml. 131d 12) are not similar in the matter relevant here, since they are clearly comparative in function.

Spiritus autem manifeste dicit, quia in novissimis temporibus discendent quidam a fide.

On which the gloss is:

Ciaso demnithir so forcomnucuir bieid aimser nad creitfider *et* dosluinfider.

The *Thesaurus* translation is:

'Though it is so certainly that it has happened, there will be a time when it will be disbelieved and denied'.

Here it certainly looks as though no explicit comparison between two equally certain things is intended—until one looks at the full Latin text. In the Würzburg MS. it goes:

Et manifeste magnum est pietatis sacramentum, quod manifestatum est in carne, justificatum est in spiritu, apparuit angilis, praedicatum est gentibus, creditum est in mundo, adsumptum est in gloria. Spiritus manifeste dicit, quia in novissimis temporibus, discendent quidam a fide . . .
(I Timothy III, 16–IV, 1).[1]

The word *manifeste* occurs twice in this passage. *Demnithir* in the Irish gloss refers to the first *manifeste* (the one not given in the *Thesaurus*) and compares it with the second *manifeste*. The glossator's point is that it is just as certain a scriptural truth that Christ was incarnated etc. as that some will lapse from the faith. The two are equally manifest. Once, therefore, one reads the full Latin text, it is clear that this is an entirely straightforward use of the equative. The comparison is explicit. I suggest, then, that, though Meid's main thesis may be accepted, there never was such a thing as an 'exclusive' use of the equative in Old Irish.

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[1] *Epistolae Beati Pauli Glossatae Glosa Interlineali*, ed. L. Chr. Stern (Halle, 1910) f. 28 v. The gloss is written above *quia in novis—*.

VARIA V

1. OI. ad-claid

THE Old Irish verb *ad-claid* has two quite distinct uses:
(1) 'hunts, fishes' (gl. *aucupantes* Ml. 112 b 2, *uenabor* Philarg.
Thes. II 48.6), (2) (legal): 'inculpates, renders liable', (Thurneysen[1] corrects the translation 'sues' of the official edition of the Laws)
e.g. Críth Gabl. 559: *trí aurrach nád accladat ríg*, 'three requisitions
which do not inculpate a king'. The two uses seem irreconcilable
until one compares Gk. κλαδαρός 'breakable', Lat. *clādēs* 'destruction',
Ch. Slav. *kladivo* 'hammer', etc.,[2] where the meaning of the root
(*klā-d- | klə-d-*) is clearly 'strikes', 'breaks', from which, with addition
of preverb, *ad-claid* 'hunts' and *ad-claid* 'inculpates' developed independently.

This root must have passed from the meaning 'strikes' to 'digs up,
excavates' in the Common Celtic period, as the latter meaning underlies most of its derivatives and compounds in Irish and British.
In addition to OI *ad-claid*, the earlier meaning survives in OI *claideb*,
MW *cleδyf* 'sword' and possibly in OW *goglaut, dygoglawd, dygoglat*
'strikes against', MW *goglawδ* 'blow', *cleis* 'wound, bruise'. The
semantic history of these Welsh forms is hard to trace, though not
crucial in the confines of this note. Do they preserve the IE meaning
of the root, or are they merely later developments of the meaning
'digs', of the same type as Lat. *fodio* 'I dig' > 'I stab, strike, cut,
wound' (e.g. *guttera cultro*, Ov.)? The OW verbs *goglaut* [*u̯o-klād-*],
dygloglawd [*di-u̯o-klād-*] and *dygoglat* [*di-u̯o-klad-*], translated
'curo ar', 'strikes against' in the *Vocab. of Early Welsh Poetry*, are
each attested once: (1) Llawysgrif Hendregadredd[3] 46 a 12: *Gorun
morgymlawt ae goglawt glann*, 'The surge of the sea strikes the shore'.
(2) ibid. 9 b 15: *Dy goglat gwenyc gwynn gygreawdyr vynyt*, 'The white
waves strike against the mountain of Kygreawdyr (?)' and (3) Canu
Aneirin[4] l. 658; *Dygoglawd tonn bevyr beryerin*, 'the wave beats,
bright pilgrim' (Sir Ifor Williams suggests in his notes that 'bright
pilgrim' is a description of the wave). As all three occur in the context of waves beating against the shore, the underlying notion may
be 'undermines' as in the cognate OI *fo-claid* [*u̯o-klad-*]. Similarly
inconclusive is the evidence of the noun *goglawδ* [*u̯o-klād-*] in a
satirical poem in the *Red Book of Hergest* 1340.23, which is translated
'trawiad, cnith'; 'blow, slap' in the *Vocab. of Early Welsh Poetry*.

[1] *ZCP* xv 352.
[2] Pokorny: *Indog. etym. Wörterbuch* I p. 546.
[3] Ed. Morris-Jones and Parry-Williams (Caerdydd, 1933).
[4] Ifor Williams: *Canu Aneirin* (Caerdydd, 1938).

It too could be an extension of the meaning 'digs' rather than an archaic survival, cf. Dublin slang 'a dig' = 'a blow with the fist'. The case of *cleis* [*klad-t̯o-] is even more uncertain. It is attested from the 13th c. both in the sense 'groove, rut, ditch, trench', and 'bruise, wound, weal, streak (esp. of dawn)'. It is possible that the meaning progressed from 'ditch > groove > weal > wound etc.' or that both meanings survived from Common Celtic.

In Old Irish, however, there is no question of the original meaning of the root being preserved outside *ad-claid* and *claideb*. The simplex *claidid* and its compounds *do-claid, con-claid,* and *fo-claid* generally contain the notion of throwing up a considerable quantity of earth, and are not used in the simple horticultural sense (for which OI *rúamar* 'to dig (a plot of land)' Mod. *rómhar* 'id.'). The *Contributions* suggestion that *hi claidi*, which glosses *in planta* Sg. 35 a 8, means 'in a cultivated place (?)' is therefore unlikely.

Claidid is used of mining, of the rooting of swine, of undermining or razing a wall or building, of digging a hole, grave or trench, and, with shift of emphasis, of raising a mound, bank or fort. Where the context is specific, it usually appears that the OI nouns *clad* [*klad-os*], *claide* [*klad-i̯ā*], and *class* [*klad-tā*]· refer to the trench dug rather than the bank raised (for which OI *múr* or *doe*). In Modern Irish, however, *claidhe* (which has absorbed the less distinctive *cladh*) always means 'bank, field-wall', while *clas, clais* means 'trench, furrow'.

The compounds *fo-claid, do-claid,* and *con-claid* have substantially the same range of meanings as the simplex. In addition *fo-claid* is used of undermining and hence breaking into a building, e.g. *nech fochlaid daurtach* 'anyone who breaks into an oratory (*Ériu* VII. 156.1). This verb occurs in *AL* V 462.2—probably referring to unlawful excavation—in the form *fodaclaid* with infixed pronoun which the glossator wrongly divides *fo-d-aclaid* and connects with *ad-claid*. The editors, followed by the *Contributions*, mistranslate 'who sues falsely'.

In British the root is present in both full and reduced grades. The reduced grade *klə-d- > Celt. *klad- > W. *cladd*, Bret. *klaz* (OI *clad*). The full grade *klā-d- > Celt. *klād- > W. *clawdd*, Bret. *kleuz* and is not represented in Irish. The meaning 'digs up', 'excavates' is basic to Bret. *klaz*, W. *cladd* 'pit, trench, bank', Bret. *klaza* 'to dig a trench, grave', W. *claddu* 'id.', also 'to stab, pierce', Bret. *kleuz*, W. *clawdd* 'mound, trench, mine, boundary, hedge, fence', Bret. *kleuza*, W. *cloddio* 'to excavate, embank' and Bret. *kleuz* (*klād-os*] 'empty, hollow' *lit.* 'dug out' which has no counterpart in Irish or Welsh.

To conclude—Celtic inherited from Indo-European a number of roots with various shades of the meaning 'strikes' e.g. *be-n-, *bo-n-g,*

*g^won-, *$kl\breve{a}d$-, *$slad$-, *org- etc. In response, perhaps, to the development of a more settled way of life, the meaning of *$kl\breve{a}d$- was narrowed from 'strikes' (with a weapon, surviving in *ad-claid* 'hunts', *claideb*, *cleδyf* 'sword', and metaphorically in the legal term *ad-claid* 'inculpates') to 'strikes the earth with a spade' i.e. excavates the fortifications, drains etc. required by a settled community, cf. Mod. Welsh *torri ffos* 'to dig (*lit.* strike) a ditch', OI *diupa* [*di-uss-ben] 'digging'.[1]

The archaic composition of the legal term *ad-claid* is of particular interest, as it testifies once again to the antiquity of the Irish legal vocabulary.

2. OI. claideb and its cognates.

IN spite of their superficial resemblance, the relationship between OI *claideb*, MW *cleδyf* and MB *clezeff* 'sword' is difficult to establish. As the first element is clearly the root *$klad$- 'strikes', final -*eb*, -*yf*, -*eff* must be an instrument suffix—'that which strikes', 'sword'.

Vendryes[2] advances the ingenious theory that the Celtic form was *$klad\dot{\imath}os$ (borrowed into Latin as *gladius*[3]). Indo-European -$\dot{\imath}o$- is not a regular suffix of instrument or agency[4] (the two categories are closely related), but it has developed the force of an agent suffix in Celtic[5] e.g. MW *prydyδ*, OCorn. *pridit* 'poet', MW *llywyδ*, OCorn. *leuuit* 'pilot', OI *au-gaire* 'shepherd' and perhaps Gaul. -*bōgios* 'warrior'.

Vendryes suggests that *$klad\dot{\imath}os$ gave *$kladi\dot{\imath}os$ and then *$kla\delta i\delta os$ in British (Jackson[6] puts the date of the development $\dot{\imath}$ (j) > δ as 4th–5th c. A.D.); *$kla\delta i\delta os$ was then dissimilated to *$kla\delta i\beta os$ giving regularly MW *cleδyf*, -*eu*, MB. *clezeff*, *euff*, -*ev* etc., Mod. B. *kleze* (Léonais) and Corn. *cledhe*, *cledha*; composition form *cledhev-*.

There are difficulties, however; for one thing, there is no evidence that [δ] could alternate with [β] in Prim. Brit. The earliest examples are from MW, where [δ] regularly alternates with [v] (from Prim. Brit. [β] and [μ]) e.g. *edryδ*, *edryf* 'patrimony' (< Prim. Brit. *$atri\dot{\imath}o$-), *cyfygl*, *kuδygyl* 'cubicle' (< Lat. *cubiculum*) etc.[7] I have found no examples from OW, Breton or Cornish. This is not an insuperable obstacle, however, as the development of [δ] to [v] by dissimilation or substitution is quite widespread in language e.g. Late Lat. *gladium* > OFr. *gladie* (10th c.), *glaive* (12th c.), Class. Ir. pret. pass. -*adh*

[1] *AL* I 162.20; 202.1.
[2] *Mélanges de Saussure* p. 310 (Paris, 1908).
[3] Pokorny: *Indog. etym. Wörterbuch* I p. 546.
[4] Brugmann: *Grdr.* II. i. §§ 111–112.
[5] *VKG* II p. 17, Marstrander: *Présents à nasale infixée* p. 24 n. (Christiania, 1924).
[6] *LHEB* p. 694.
[7] Evans: *Grammar of Middle Welsh*, § 11.

[-əð] > [-əv] in W. Cork, *eidheann, guidhe* > [ev'əN], [giv'ə] in Cois Fhairrge, the place-name *Glas Noíden* > Glasneyvin (as early as 1230)[1], Eng. *mother* [mʌðə] > Cockney [mʌvə], and cf. ODan. *skog, hage* > Mod. Dan. *skov, have.*

Another difficulty is that whereas the variants *edryð/edryf, cyfygl/ kuðygyl* etc. are found in more or less contemporary sources, the form *cleddydd* does not appear beside *cleðyf* until Mod. W., (*Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* gives four examples from the 15th–17th c.) and is thus unlikely to be earlier. The Cornish plurals *cledhydhow, cledhedhyow* (*cledhevyow is not attested[2]) are too late to support Vendryes' theory, and are probably cases of assimilation, as suggested by Pedersen.[3]

A third difficulty is indicated by Loth.[4] He notes the parallel between MW *cleðyf* etc. from the root **klad-* 'strikes' and MW *neðyf*, Corn. *nedha*, MB (*n*)*ezeff* 'adze' from the root **snad-* 'cuts, chips' (> OI *snaidid*, MW *naddu*). It seems likely that the structure of the two nouns is identical, so the attestation in OW of *nedim* (gl. *ascia* 'axe') suggests the existence of an OW *kledim, and casts indirect but serious doubt on Vendryes' reconstruction *klaðiβos. In OW, as in OB, *m* [μ] and *b* [β] are rarely confused[5] so one would expect the final -*m* of *kledim to reflect Prim. Brit. [-μ-] rather than [-β-]. Original [-μ-] is also suggested by the nasality of the Vannetais form *klean* [klə'ã]; Jackson shows[6] that instances where a Prim. Brit. [β] develops nasality are very rare.

There are, however, two cases where OW -*im*(*m*) does seem to go back to an original *b*. One is **vidu-bi̯o-* 'bill-hook' (<**vidu-* 'wood' compounded with the root **be-* 'cuts' + thematic vowel) which gives OI *fidbae*, Gallo-Lat. *vidubium* but OW *uiidimm*[7] gl. *lignismus* ('bill-hook') > Mod. W. *gwyddif, -yf* 'id'. In OB forms with both -*m* and -*b* are found: *guedom, guodob*. The second is '**gu̯olto-bi̯o-* 'shears' (< **gu̯olto-* 'hair' + **bi̯o-*) which gives OW *guillihim* (occurring in the Ox. 2 glosses noted for their peculiar spellings[8]), MW *gwelleu*, Mod W *gwellaif*.

But perhaps in these examples OW -*im*(*m*) is to be explained as a result of analogical rather than phonetic development, the model being the IE agent-instrument suffix -(*a*)*mon-*, ns. -(*a*)*mō*, which would regularly give OW -*im*, MW -*yf*. Unfortunately, though

1 Sommerfelt: *Diachronic and Synchronic Aspects of Language* p. 348 ('S-Gravenhage 1962).
2 Morton Nance: *Cornish-English Dict.* (1938).
3 *VKG* II p. 29.
4 *RC* 37 p. 301.
5 *LHEB* § 97, *Hist. Phon. of Bret.* § 853.
6 *HPB* § 918.
7 Apparently for **guidim, LHEB* p. 387.
8 *Ibid.* p. 55.

the formation is well-attested in OI, there are no clear examples from British, apart from OB *eneff*, Corn. *enef* 'soul' < *anamō*.[1]

These difficulties jeopardise the rest of Vendryes' argument, that *klaδiβos* was borrowed into. Irish, giving OI *claideb*. If true, the borrowing must have taken place in or around the 6th c. i.e. well after the 4th–Early 5th c. development of [i̯] to [δ], and after lenition of [b] to [β] (mid-5th c. Jackson[2]) but before internal *i*-affection in Welsh (7th c. Jackson). A further problem arises from the loss of final syllable in British (a process which started in the late 5th c. according to Jackson's chronology). 6th c. *klaδiβ*, pronounced either with a front [i], or with the retracted short [ï] which developed from it around the middle of that century[3], might be expected to give OI *claidib* gs. *claidbeo* rather than *claideb* gs. *claidib*, particularly as the OW stress would have been on the final syllable. Perhaps an *-ib* ending was felt as more alien to the OI declensional system—I can find no OI polysyllabic nouns ending in *-ib*, whereas final *-eb* occurs in the neuter *o*-stem *indeb* 'wealth'. On the other hand, the nominative plurals (admittedly unattested in OI) *claidbi* (Mesca Ulad[2] 610), *cloidmi, -me* (BB 271 a 47, TTebe 1473, PH 8111) and *claidhmhe* (Ériu xiii p. 35.6) make one suspect that there was originally fluctuation between *i*- and *o*-stem declension.

The theory of a British origin for *claideb* holds considerable attraction, in spite of its difficulties, as the suffix *-eb* does not appear elsewhere in OI, nor does it have any obvious progenitor among IE suffixes. A foreign origin might also explain why the OI word is not *cladab*, in accordance with the general rules set out by Thurneysen,[4] (he suggests influence of gs. np. *claidib*), and perhaps account for the variable declension referred to in the previous paragraph. Liam de Paor has described the pre-Viking Irish sword as a 'flimsy and inefficient weapon', and it is possible that Irishmen came in contact with a superior type in Britain, or from British traders or immigrants. A high proportion of words for weapons in all languages are of foreign origin,[5] as people have naturally tended to adopt the more efficient weapons of their adversaries or allies.

If Vendryes is right that *claideb* did not appear in Irish until 5th–6th c., the earlier word for 'sword' must have been *colg*. The language has no trace of a direct descendant of Celtic *kladi̯os*—perhaps it was too liable to confusion with derivatives of *klad-*'digs'. The basic meaning of *colg* is 'spike, prick' from which developed 'sting, bristle, awn of wheat, blade, sword'. It may be significant

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[1] Watkins: *Celtic Vb.* p. 183.
[2] *LHEB* p. 695.
[3] *Ibid.* § 7 (1) p. 283.
[4] *GOI* § 166.
[5] Buck: *Dict. of IE Synonyms* 20.21–20.34.

that the British cognates did not develop the meaning 'sword' (W. *col(y)* 'awn, chaff, spike, sting, hinge'; Corn. *col(gh)* 'peak, point, awn').

Loth[1] rejects Vendryes' explanation on the grounds that **kladi̯os* could not give *clezeff* in Breton because '*i̯* bref conservé ne produit jamais infection de *a* de la syllabe précédente' and compares **damni̯o-* > OI *damnae*, MW *defnyδ* but MB *daffnez*. Jackson,[2] however, gives an example of this process (**kalmi̯o* > OI *calmae*, MW *celfyδ*, OB *celmed*), while noting[3] that 'internal *i*-affection is by no means rarely lacking where its occurrence would logically be expected'.

Loth postulates a *-bo-* suffix for OI *claideb* which may be a 'phonetic doublet' of the root **be-* 'strikes'. But there is no other evidence for the existence of this suffix in OI[4] and the combination of roots **klad-* and **be-*, both meaning 'strikes' is unlikely. For MW *cleδyf* he suggests an analogical formation based on Celt. **vidu-bi̯o-* > OW *uiidimm*, MW *gwyδyf*, OB *guedom, guodob*.[5] This leaves us wondering what the original British form was, as *cleδyf* could not have been formed *directly* on the root **klad-*, as Loth implies, because the primary meaning of the root had passed from 'strikes' to 'digs' by the end of the Common Celtic period. An analogical **klad-ub(i̯o-)* arisen in this way would be more likely to mean 'spade' than 'sword'. Loth's explanation is only possible if one presupposes some such Prim. Brit. form as **klaδiδ* (< Celt. **kladi̯os*) which became **klaδi̯μ* under the influence of the *-im* suffix characteristic of words for cutting instruments.

Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru offers **kladobi̯o-* as the Common Celtic form, but it would give **claidbe* in OI.

Morris-Jones[6] derives *cleδyf, neδyf* from **klademō, *snademō*, comparing Gk ἀκρεμών. The IE suffix, as Watkins points out, was simply *-mon-* (ns. *-mō*), the *-a-* of Ogh. SEGAMONAS, OI *medam* 'judge', *legam* 'moth' *lit.* 'destroyer' being a generalised laryngeal. Celtic **kladamō* (to revise Morris-Jones slightly) would regularly give **kladamū* > **kladamī* > **kladem* (with final *i*-affection and loss of final syllable c. 500 Jackson) > **kledem* (with internal *i*-affection, 7th c. Prim. W., 8th c. Prim. B. and Corn., Jackson) > OW **kledim* (cf. *nedim*), MB *clezeff* etc.

*kladamō could not, of course, give OI *claideb* directly, and the Prim. Brit. **kladem* could hardly have been borrowed into OI as *claideb*. Original *m* [μ] > *b* [β] in a few Irish words, but always

[1] *RC* 37 p. 300.
[2] *HPB* p. 297.
[3] *Ibid.* § 404.
[4] *VKG* II § 376.
[5] The OB forms do not show *i*-affection; see *LHEB* § 175.
[6] *Welsh Grammar* p. 109.

by dissimilation from a neighbouring nasal e.g. Lat. *memoria* > OI *mebuir* (Wb. 20 a 5), OI *memaid, memais* with variants *mebaid, mebais,* (LU, SR).

It must be admitted that all the above explanations are more or less unconvincing. The plausibility of Vendryes' **kladios* > Prim. Brit. **kladiβos* is shaken by OW *nedim,* by Vannetais *klean,* by the absence of the [δ]/[β] alternation in OW, Cornish and Breton, and by the late appearance of *cleddydd* in Welsh. Clarification of the origins of OW *-im(m)* would remove or endorse the first objection.

Loth's recourse to analogy to explain W. *cleδyf* leaves many questions unanswered, though it is clear that analogy must have played an important part in the tidying-up processes which followed the loss of final syllable in British.

Morris-Jones' **kladamō* is satisfactory for British, but seems irreconcilable with OI *claideb* and Lat. *gladius.*

Gladius, however, is too remote in space and time to be regarded as essential to an explanation of the Insular Celtic forms. It could well have a different suffix, whereas it would be extremely surprising if OI *-eb* and MW *-yf* were shown to be unconnected. *Gladius* is generally accepted as a loan from Celtic; attempts to explain it as a native word have been unconvincing,[1] and its supposed connection with Skt. *khadgáh* 'sword' raises a mass of problems.[2]

It is probably the earliest Celtic loan attested in Latin (Plautus, late 3rd c. B.C.) and was evidently not felt as a foreign word. The change of Celtic *cl-* to *gl-* calls for explanation, as the sound should have presented no problem to the Romans who had both *cl-* and *gl-*. There are a fair number of cases where Gk. κ, π > Lat. *g, b*: e.g. Gk. κυβερνᾶν > Lat. *gubernāre,* Gk. πύξος > Lat. *buxus*; and also where Gk. δ. γ Lat *t, c* e.g. Gk. σπυρίδα > Lat. *sporta,* Gk. Γαλᾶνα > Lat *Calaina.* Gk. ἀμόργα > Lat. *amurca,* This phenomenon is usually regarded[3] as a result of the words being borrowed through the intermediacy of the Etruscan language, for the Etruscans did not distinguish between *k, t, p* and *g, d, b.* Etruscan intermediacy could also account for the *g-* of *gladius*; it was the Celts, after all, who were responsible for the final collapse of the Etruscan empire in the 5th c. B.C.

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[1] See Walde-Hofmann: *Latin etym. Wörterbuch* I p. 604.
[2] Discussed by Vendryes *op. cit.*
[3] e.g. Meillet: *Langue Latine* p. 81 (Paris, 1948). Palmer: *The Latin Language* p. 51 (London, 1954).