THE LEARNED TALES OF MEDIEVAL IRELAND

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THE LEARNED TALES OF MEDIEVAL IRELAND

BY

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PREFACE

This monograph was originally written as part of a comprehensive study of the historical organization of Irish learning and literature, but on reflection it seemed that it would be more useful if published separately from the larger work. Its core is the text of the two Middle Irish catalogues of tales which Thurneysen designated as lists A and B and its substance the further description and analysis of their content and structure. At present these lists can only be consulted in manuscript or in printed sources which in some instances are not easily accessible, and it was felt that it would be a convenience for students of early Irish literature if they were made available with commentary in a separate volume.

ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations used are those adopted by the Royal Irish Academy *Dictionary of the Irish Language* with the following exceptions and additions:

CIH	*Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, ed. D. A. Binchy. Dublin, 1978.
ÉC	*Études Celtiques*. Paris, 1936-.
EIHM	*Early Irish History and Mythology*, Thomas F. O'Rahilly. Dublin, 1946.
GP	*Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid*, ed. G. J. Williams and E. J. Jones. Cardiff, 1926.
GPC	*Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*. Cardiff, 1950-.
MI	*Middle Irish*.
Mod. Ir.	*Modern Irish*.
OI	*Old Irish*.
PKM	*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, ed. Ifor Williams. Cardiff, 1930.
RM	*The Text of the Mabinogion. . . from the Red Book of Hergest*, John Rhŷs and J. Gwenogvryn Evans. Oxford, 1887.
SEBH	*Studies in Early British History*, ed. N. K. Chadwick, Cambridge, 1959.
TYP	*Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, ed. Rachel Bromwich. Cardiff, 1961.
TBC LL	*Táin Bó Cúalnge from the Book of Leinster*, ed. Cecile O'Rahilly. Dublin, 1970.
TBC Rec. I	*Táin Bó Cúailnge: Recension I*, ed. Cecile O'Rahilly. Dublin, 1976.
TBC YBL	*Táin Bó Cúailnge from the Yellow Book of Lecan*, ed. Strachan and O'Keefe, suppl. to *Ériu*, i-iii, vi, 1904-12.

THE IRISH STORYTELLER

Storytelling is one of the most social of all arts, and in Ireland to tell the history of the traditional storyteller is, in substance, to tell the history of traditional Gaelic society. The two flourished together and together they declined and withered, and if the role of the storyteller in the nineteenth century seems narrow and undifferentiated by comparison with that of his predecessor of the ninth, the reason is not so much that his position within his society had altered as that the society itself had in the meantime become drastically reduced and levelled. As long as Irish-speaking Ireland withstood the encroaching tide of urbanization and anglicization, so long did the storyteller continue his primal function of entertaining his local community while at the same time fostering and transmitting to the coming generations his inherited repertoire of oral traditions. In the end, it was the rupture of this functional bond with his own local society that led in so many instances to the social isolation of the storyteller deprived of an audience and, consequently, to the gradual and inevitable atrophy of his art.

The ever-increasing penetration of the Irish-speaking areas over the last fifty years by the English language and by the literacy, the bureaucracy and the Anglo-American culture which were both the cause and the consequence of its dominance have created an ambiance in which the storyteller and his art are an irrelevance that can survive only in exceptional circumstances or by grace of special patronage. In the rationale of this change the primary if not the principal factor was literacy, for it is literacy which makes bureaucracy and cultural colonialism possible in the first place and the modern concept of universal literacy is, almost by definition, intolerant of the attitudes and mental processes which characterize societies dominated by the oral mode and which are themselves of the very essence of the storyteller's craft.

The process of acculturation of the last two or three centuries has steadily devalued the role of the storyteller and the rapid urbanization of our own time has made of him a social anachronism whom even the swings of fashion cannot reinstate, as it can the folksinger for example, for the reason that the storyteller's art is bound up so much more intimately with the Irish language and with the kind of culture and social organization that expressed itself through the Irish language for over two thousand years. There are, it is true, good storytellers who still practise their craft, but mostly they do so for specialized, occasional, and non-local audiences and these are but a poor substitute for the appreciative circle of neighbours for whom storytelling with its whole wide range of traditional resonance and allusion was part of normal experience. The unforced, and informed, reciprocity of teller and listener is the lifeblood of traditional storytelling, and while it survived the storyteller telling his tales for a local audience stood firmly in the succession of the medieval narrator. His repertoire, comprising hero-tales, romantic tales, genealogies, placename legends, *märchen*, prayers, songs, rimes, proverbs, and so on, was probably not radically different from that of the typical storyteller of pre-Norman times, and the general testimony suggests he was no less conscious ' of his responsibility as guardian of inherited tradition.'[1] Many of the tales he told (and in some exceptional instances still does) are closely related to tales written into our medieval manuscripts and in certain cases derive directly from them. Some contain elements which are so primitive that they mock chronology: ' echoes out of the vast silence of a still more ancient time, of which hitherto the archaeologist has been the only chronicler.'[2]

In this the modern storyteller reflects not merely the innate conservatism which is a feature of Irish social usage and belief, but also the remarkable cultural shift which was brought about by the Elizabethan and Cromwellian conquests and usurpations. By these cataclysmic changes Irish society was beheaded of its

[1]Cf. J. H. Delargy, *The Gaelic Story-teller*, The Sir John Rhŷs Memorial lecture, British Academy, 1945, p. 20.

[2]Delargy, op. cit., 4.

institutions, both cultural and social, and deprived of the privileged class who maintained and patronized them, and the strange and unintended consequence was that the inherited cultural forms—or such of them as remained viable in these grievously changed conditions—became the recreation and the responsibility of the people at large. Obviously, to state the matter so briefly is to oversimplify what must have been an extremely complicated phase of cultural history, but it is, I think, generally accepted that the peculiar quality and content of modern Irish folk-tradition may be traced back in large measure to the political upheaval of the seventeenth century and to the dissolution of the social hierarchy which followed from it. It has been pointed out that the great love-songs which are still sung where the Irish language is spoken are not ' folksongs ' in the normal accepted sense of that term, but rather art-songs composed by men learned in literary and musical forms and techniques at a time when the vitality of Gaelic society was relatively unimpaired;[3] similarly, many of the tales told by the modern storyteller—hero-tales, romances, and such like—were once told by storytellers of greater pretension to while away the idle hours of princes and noblemen.

In the same way much of the convention—one might almost speak of ritual—which attends the practice of the storyteller's art in modern times is inherited from his medieval forbears. The telling of heroic tales by women is infrequent and evidently regarded with some disfavour, though generally women excel men in reciting local and family tales, folk-prayers, and tales about ghosts, fairies and other supernatural beings;[4] this distinction is common, though not universal, in other societies and obviously it has to do with the fact that men were generally the custodians of the sacred traditions of the tribe or community and women were often expressly excluded from direct knowledge of them.[5] Storytelling (at least in so far as the hero-tales are concerned) tends to be restricted to night-time and to the winter half of the year and is often associated with ceremonial

[3]Cf. Seán Ó Tuama, *An Grá in Amhráin na nDaoine* (Dublin, 1960), 263 ff.

[4]J. H. Delargy, op. cit.

[5]See for example Raffaele Pettazzoni, *Essays on the History of Religions* (Leiden, 1967), 14 and nn. 13-15.

occasions such as wakes, ' stations ', and vigils at holy wells. *Feadail san oíche nó Fiannaíocht sa ló, sin dhá ní nach bhfuil buan* ' Whistling at night or telling stories of the Fianna by day, these are two things which are unlucky '—so says the proverb, and the prescription which it implies may be matched from many other cultures throughout the world. Among the Ashanti, for example, storytelling was normally confined to night-time: ' These stories . . . may be told only after dark, with one exception, i.e. they may be related in the daytime at the funeral of one who, during his life, was famous as a story-teller.'[6] In general a distinction seems to have been made between ' true ', that is to say, mythological, stories and ' false ' stories, or those which deal with profane matters: the latter may be told anywhere and at any time, whereas the former are told almost exclusively in winter and autumn, and always at night or in the evening, in other words in what Mircea Eliade would define as ' a period of sacred time.'[7] To contravene established usage in this regard is to court misfortune: among the Yuki of California myths are called ' night stories ', because they are told only at night in winter, and to tell them or even think of them during the day is to risk becoming hump-backed; among the Thonga of the southern Bantu to tell stories during the daytime is to risk becoming bald; and Jeremiah Curtain tells of an old Munsterwoman who fell ill and was taken to hospital and who attributed her illness to the fact that she had told stories in daytime.[8]

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[6]R. S. Rattray, *Akan-Ashanti Folk-tales* (Oxford, 1930, 1969), p. vi, n.1. Cf. Daniel P. Biebuyck, *Hero and Chief: Epic Literature from the Banyanga* (Univ. of Calif. Press, 1978), p. 5: ' The Nyanga tend to classify epics as *kakoro* (things of daytime), that is, as usually devoid of danger. They are not the sacred or esoteric texts that belong only to an exclusive group of people; they can be heard, enjoyed, and understood by all.'

[7]Pettazzoni, op. cit., 14; M. Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (London, 1964), 10. The latter notes that this restriction survives among peoples who have passed beyond the archaic stage of culture: ' Among the Turco-Mongols and the Tibetans the epic songs of the Gesar cycle can be recited only at night and in winter.' Among the Pawnee and the Wichita mythological tales, but not ' false ' tales, are narrated during cult-ceremonials (Pettazzoni, op.cit., 13, citing G. A. Dorsey, *Mythology of the Wichita* (Washington, 1904), 252 ff.).

[8]Pettazzoni, op. cit., 14, n.15; J. Curtain, *Tales of the Fairies and of the Ghost World* (London, 1895), 143 (' Her sickness was caused, as she said, by telling me tales in the daytime. Many of the old people will tell tales only in the evening; it is not right, not lucky, to do so during daylight ').

It might, of course, be argued that the restriction of storytelling (particularly the telling of mythological tales) to night-time and to winter is in some measure a matter of social convenience. Clyde Kluckhohn mentions that the Navahos ' have a keen expectation of the long recital of myths (or portions of them) around the fire on winter nights,' a remark which, given Kluckhohn's interpretation of the word ' myth ', might be applied with equal appropriateness to rural Irish-speaking Ireland of fifty years ago; and he goes on to comment:

> Why may the myths be recited only in winter? In Navaho feeling today this prohibition is linked in a wider configuration of forbidden activities. There is also, as usual, an historical and distributional problem, for this same prohibition is apparently widely distributed in North America. . . . But I wonder if in a certain ' deeper ' sense this prohibition is not founded upon the circumstance that only winter affords the leisure for telling myths, that telling them in summer would be unfitting because it would interfere with work activities? '[9]

There are indeed sound practical reasons why it is inappropriate in many societies to indulge in frequent storytelling during the summer season, but to suggest that this by itself is sufficient explanation of the more or less ritual association of storytelling with winter is surely an excess of rationalism; for one thing, it would be odd that so many peoples should quite independently elevate social utility to the level of a sacred ordinance. But in any event, whether we opt for the rational or the mythological explanation in this case, the fact is that in modern times in Ireland storytelling has been regularly attended by certain quasi-ritual conventions and that these are in direct continuation from the usage of medieval times.

And yet notwithstanding this considerable element of continuity from medieval to modern times, it is inevitable that the storyteller's role should reflect some of the changes which affected Gaelic society as a whole. The most significant of these was the virtual disappearance of the native landed nobility and of the order of learned and literary men to whom they dispensed patronage. In medieval

[9] *Harvard Theological Review* xxxv (1942), 64, n. 75.

times the signs are that the learned storyteller at least was a professional, and so probably were the more humble practitioners of the craft, in the sense that they lived wholly or in part from the fruits of their calling: one of the misfortunes brought about by the rule of an unjust and ungenerous king is that ' storytellers will go unrewarded ', *cen díl dámi resi* (*.i. scelaigi*).[10] No doubt many of them were of the wandering fraternity, *aes imthechta nó taistil sliged*, and may be seen as the forerunners of the travelling storytellers of more recent times who earned their food and lodging and perhaps something extra by entertaining their host and his neighbours.[11] The condition of this rather amorphous category can have altered little over the centuries. That there were also settled storytellers of fixed abode is attested already in the person of Feidlimid mac Daill in *Longas mac nUislenn* (*c.* 800 A.D.). He was storyteller to Conchobar king of Ulster and was clearly a man of some substance, perhaps by virtue of his service to the king. It is possible, perhaps even probable, that there were other resident storytellers who catered for a less privileged audience, who, in other words, corresponded more closely to the typical storyteller of the nineteenth or early twentieth century; but if there were we have no direct information about them, in particular we do not know whether or to what extent they derived material profit from their art.

Probably the most important difference (because in a sense it subsumes the others) between the medieval and modern storytellers is that the latter, subject to minor qualifications, belonged to the one social class, as did their audience. This is in marked distinction to the medieval situation where the storytellers and their audience covered the whole spectrum of a politically and economically independent people. There was, it is true, a certain counterbalance

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[10]*RC* xiii (1891), 70, in the text *Cath Maige Tured.* Cf. *LU* 558 ff.; Corm. Y 1099; O'Dav. 602; *YBL* 137b43.

[11]Cf. Delargy, op.cit., 26 ff. According to Tadhg Ó Murchú, a full-time collector for the Irish Folklore Commission in Co. Kerry until 1957, storytelling did not provide a livelihood nor was it usual for storytellers to be paid for their stories, apart from such hospitality as they might receive (*Éigse* xvi, 121). However, particularly gifted storytellers from among the travelling folk were sometimes lodged and fed throughout the winter in a given neighbourhood in return for the entertainment they provided (op. cit., xvi, 129 n.19).

to this in the relative universality or identity of taste: in the matter of popular entertainment the disparity between the preferences of prince and proletariat would have been much less considerable in medieval times than in our own, as Professor Kenneth Jackson has quite properly emphasized: ' The fact is, however, that the rigid distinction drawn in modern times between the popular literature of the ' folk ' and the popular literature of other classes was to some degree unreal and without meaning before the close of the Middle Ages. The spread of general literacy among the upper and middle classes that came with the Renaissance, and the increasing sophistication which it involved, was the beginning of a split between them and the rural classes which has persisted in its effects ever since. . . . '[12]

But equally is it true that the medieval story in Ireland had other functions besides that of mere entertainment. Origin legends, for example, had a strong political significance which required to be interpreted—and as changed circumstances demanded, to be reformulated—by those qualified to do so, and similarly most if not all of the other tales which have survived from the Old and Middle Irish periods had dimensions of reference and connotation which were fully accessible only to those who were learned in native tradition, most especially those—the *filid*—whose professional responsibility it was to conserve and to cultivate the whole wide range of traditional learning. That the *filid* took their responsibilities seriously they never permitted their contemporaries, or posterity, to forget, and when they themselves told tales or had them told in their presence their sense of professional commitment must inevitably have affected their choice of tales and the manner of their telling. Moreover, it is probably not unreasonable to suppose that the very existence of these storytellers associated with privilege and learning exerted its own influence on the style and repertoire of less distinguished performers. It is this learned and privileged dimension of storytelling which is our primary concern in the present essay, and naturally it is a dimension which survives only residually after the seventeenth century.

[12]Kenneth Jackson, *The International Popular Tale and Early Welsh Tradition* (Cardiff, 1961), 2 f.

Indeed it had undergone a certain attenuation even earlier as a result of the cultural reorganization that flowed from the Norman settlements and from the twelfth-century ecclesiastical reforms. Those changes which helped to bring into being the post-Norman hereditary schools of poetry and learning and their impressive system of eulogistic verse seem also to have affected the art of storytelling, though in a rather different fashion. Professor Gerard Murphy believed that the *fili's* traditional repertoire of tales fell into disuse because of the altered pattern of kingship and of patronage in the post-Norman period, and also because the great provincial assemblies like Aonach Tailten and Aonach Carmain, at which the traditional *prímh-sgéla* or ' major tales ' were told, ' were no longer held with the old solemnity '.

Henceforth these tales tended to be restricted to the learned, to be preserved in manuscripts but seldom to be retold in public. Thus the *prímh-sgéla* which had formed an important part of the *fili's* stock-in-trade in pre-Norman times made way for a kind of composition that was more congenial to the spirit of the time and more in keeping with contemporary fashions elsewhere. Storytelling probably lost none of its vigour as a social art, but in adapting itself to its changed environment it seems to have shed some of its associations with learning and to have become more frankly and more fully a medium of entertainment, even when performed by the *ollamh* or master-poet. It gave itself over unreservedly to themes of love and wonder and romance, and, as Professor Murphy observed, the tales which survived best and continued in circulation from the old period to the new were those which embodied these elements most notably, for example the story of Deirdre, that of Cú Chulainn's training in arms (*Foghlaim Con Culainn*), and of course the Fionn cycle as a whole.[13] In folklore and mythology it found a source rich in themes of magic, romance and wonder, and it exploited them with rare enthusiasm. Speaking of the Romantic Tales Gerard Murphy sums up by saying that they ' are often, either in whole or in part, a raising of the simple folktale suited for

[13]Gerard Murphy, *Glimpses of Gaelic Ireland* (Dublin, 1948), 34; *Éigse* ii, 206 f.; *Studies* xxix (1940), 22-26; *The Ossianic Lore and Romantic Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1955), 30 ff.

peasants, with its anonymous hero and unsophisticated background, to a form which could please an audience accustomed to stories about a hero defined by name, place, and period, and with a background in which the higher ranks of society would not object to find themselves.'[14] As a class these tales only become prominent in the late fifteenth or sixteenth century, but, as he remarks, their tendency to elevate elements of popular oral tradition to 'literary' status is characteristic of most of the prose literature written from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century.

It is possible that Murphy oversimplified the very complex processes which produced the characteristic prose tales of the post-Norman period and in some respects he may have foreshortened the period of change,[15] but that the typical prose narrative of the Early Modern Irish period as preserved in writing is notably different from that of the Old and Middle Irish periods, or that the twelfth century is the crucial time of change, is of course beyond question. When Frank O'Connor asserted with characteristic hyperbole in *The Backward Look* that 'after the year 1200 there is no prose worth discussing' and that by the thirteenth century 'Irish prose was dead' he can hardly have expected his words to be taken at their face value; if what he really meant was that there is a palpable disparity in kind and quality between the written prose of the pre- and post-Norman periods, then he is merely restating in rhetorical language what is established and observed fact.

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[14] *The Ossianic Lore and Romantic Tales of Medieval Ireland*, 44.

[15] Cf. Alan Bruford, *Gaelic Folktales and Mediaeval Romances = Béaloideas: The Journal of the Folklore of Ireland Society* (1966 [1969]), 5:

> None of the romances which have passed on into folk tradition are derived from texts copied, and few of them are from texts first composed before the end of the period of linguistic transition known as Middle Irish, which is thought to have been complete by about 1200 A.D. The definition of the Romantic tales as Early Modern Irish is therefore a convenient one: it is not a very significant one in point of style and form, which show a continuous development from the later Old Irish period on. The subject matter was extended under the influence of foreign romances and translations from Latin to include stories in which Irish princes encounter foreign champions at home or abroad, or even to romances without one significant Irish character: but all of these are to be found occasionally in earlier periods, though it is in the Romantic tales that they become normal.

But it is important to remember here that we are thinking primarily, if not entirely, in terms of written literature—for the very good reason that we know Middle and Early Modern Irish storytelling only through the medium of writing—and that one of the most important effects of the social and cultural changes centred on the twelfth century was that the actual writing of the literature, which for centuries had been carried on in the congenial environment of the scriptoria of the old native monasteries, now became the responsibility of families of hereditary scribes unconnected with the new monastic centres. There was thus a physical dislocation of the written tradition which naturally had no parallel in the oral tradition. The effect of this on written prose style was very marked: whereas many of the classical tales of Old and Middle Irish are literate compositions in the sense that they can hardly have been told orally in the form in which they are written, the typical Early Modern Irish romance was evidently written to be read more or less verbatim. If it were possible for us to compare these later tales with the actual oral versions of the tales told by the learned storytellers of the pre-Norman period, we should probably find that the stylistic disparity was rather less than it appears to be from the written texts. In other words, while the altered environment of post-Norman Ireland undoubtedly brought changed fashions in the kinds of stories told in the houses of noblemen, as Gerard Murphy has remarked, this should not lead us to underestimate the essential continuity of Irish story*telling* from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, and this within a greater continuity which has persisted unbroken since before the beginning of history.

With the passing of the centuries Irish storytelling has undoubtedly assimilated exotic motifs and themes and fashions, and social change and crisis have affected profoundly its range and variety and its role within Irish society as a whole, but, still the fact remains that within the microcosm of his own local community the role of the nineteenth-century Gaelic storyteller as entertainer and tradition-bearer does not seem to have differed radically from that of his forerunner of a thousand years earlier. Even in matter and

style there are certain constants which have evidently been features of the storyteller's art at all periods of the tradition, so that one may find it in some respects useful, and certainly justifiable, to seek to bring the early Irish storyteller to life by pairing him with those of our own time, whose performance we may have had the good fortune to observe directly or whom we view at second hand in the many vivid and detailed accounts by modern collectors and commentators. If it is valid for Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord to review the composition of Homeric epic by reference to the *guslars* of modern Yugoslavia, then it would surely be valid—*a fortiori*, since they belong to the same unbroken, if somewhat bruised, tradition—to see the modern Irish storyteller as a humble and relatively passive exponent of the same narrative tradition which produced the well-known tales that rest in frozen permanence in the great medieval manuscript compilations.

In modern times the storyteller is normally formed by a combination of personal talent and inherited interest, but he is not a professional; in his workaday life he is hardly distinguishable from the small farmers, labourers and fishermen who are his neighbours. But if he is a storyteller of quality and repute, he is probably something of a specialist in the art who is known primarily as a storyteller and not as an entertainer who happens to include storytelling among his other talents. On the other hand, the medieval storytellers whom we glimpse in the literature were, as I have already remarked, professionals of one kind or another and as a general rule they seem to have practised storytelling merely as one part of a more extensive repertoire of talents. The story of Deirdre, *Longas mac nUislenn*, makes her the daughter of Feidlimid mac Daill ('son of the blind man'), who is described as the storyteller of Conchobar king of Ulster. The story opens with the Ulster heroes gathered in Feidlimid's house, presumably for an evening's entertainment. The implication is that Feidlimid was a man of considerable social standing, but there is nothing to indicate whether his professional activities were really as restricted as the title *scélaige* might seem to imply. Certainly there is little evidence elsewhere in the literature for the storyteller *tout court*.

The tale of the battle of Allen, *Cath Almaine*,[16] tells of an encounter in the early eight century between Fergal king of Ireland and the men of Leinster. The army of the Uí Néill brought with them a certain Donn Bó, a widow's son, who was beloved of them all. He was, we are told, an incomparable source of idle and entertaining quatrains as well as of the great tales (*as uadh budh ferr rainn espa ⁊ rígscéla for domhon*)[17]; he also excelled in retailing ancient lore and performing on the pipes and, indeed, in every other kind of entertainment (*ar is é Dond Bó fer airfidig as dech baí in nÉrinn iter senchas ⁊ rundu ⁊ cuslinn ⁊ cach ciniul airfidig archeana*). But when Fergal asked him to entertain them on the night before the battle, Donn Bó confessed that he could not utter a single word that night but that, whatever the circumstances, he would do so on the following night. Meanwhile he suggested that Ua Maiglinni, the king-buffoon (*rígdrúth*), should amuse them in his stead, and this he did, reciting for them the battles and exploits of Leth Cuinn and Leinster. It is told later how on the following night after the northern army had been routed and Fergal slain, the severed head of Donn Bó fulfilled his promise and made music for his king, raising such sweet melody for the Leinstermen as left them weeping and sad. One thing that emerges clearly from this account is that storytellers were not all of a kind—Donn Bó was evidently not a *drúth* like Ua Maiglinne, but both told stories—and that they were as versatile as they were varied.

Moving on to a later period we learn from the thirteenth-century poet Giolla Pádraig Mac [C]náimín that his patron Brian Mág Shamhradhráin, who died in 1298, was accustomed to listen to stories about the Fianna and that these were told by ' tympan '-players (*tiompánaigh*, those who played the *tiompán*, a stringed instrument of some sort), a term which is no doubt used here as elsewhere to refer to the motley class of rhymsters and musicians who were regarded with professional disdain by the *filid*. If these lesser entertainers are rewarded by Brian with a horse, says the poet, then

[16]Ed. Stokes, *RC* xxiv 41 ff. [also Pádraig Ó Riain (ed.), *Cath Almaine* (Dublin, 1978), 5, 11 f.; Joan Newlon Radner, *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* (Dublin, 1978), 66 ff.]

[17]This sentence is found only in MS. 5301-20, Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, but it is none the less relevant for our purpose.

surely he deserves at least equal reward for his praise-poetry.[18] Whatever the justice of his claim, he makes it abundantly clear that storytelling and music-making were commonly performed by the same class of entertainer.

In *Cath Almaine* we have a reference—and there are others— to the telling of tales on the eve of battle. On the other hand, there are relatively few references to the more normal circumstance in which tales were told, namely as entertainment in the homes of the people, both rich and poor; presumably the reason was that storytelling was such a normal and unremarkable part of life that it rarely merited specific mention. It is significant that one of the most explicit references to the domestic storyteller is by an Englishman, Edmund Campion, in his *History of Ireland* which was published in 1571: ' One office in the house of great men is a taleteller, who bringeth his Lord on sleepe with tales vaine and frivolous, whereunto the number give sooth and credence.'[19] The custom of telling tales as a prelude to sleep is attested in a more incidental fashion in the Early Modern Irish tale *Tóraigheacht an Ghiolla Dheacair.* Oscar and Goll seek to contrive the escape of Taise Taoibhgheal, daughter of the king of ' Athens ', from her father's custody so that she may become the wife of Fionn mac Cumhaill. They gain access to the royal household disguised as poets (*fileda faobhracha focailcherta*) and when the time comes for sleep Taise Taoibhgheal asks that the visiting poets, whom she has recognized, be allowed to accompany her to her room to entertain her with storytelling (*dochum scélaigechta do dénam léi*).[20] By this stratagem they are enabled to plot her escape. In the sixteenth century the poet Tadhg Dall Ó

[18]*The Book of Magauran* (*Leabhar Méig Shamhradháin*), ed. Lambert McKenna S. J., (Dublin, 1947), 11. 825-830:

A Bhriain bhuilidh bhionnghláraigh
a ríoghthaoisigh go réidhe
each uaid do na tiompánchaibh
ar sgéalaidheacht na féine;
córa ní ar [a n-]iomráidhmid
maith dá rádha riot féine.

[19]James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland* (New York, 1929), 35; David Beers Quinn, *The Elizabethans and the Irish* (Ithaca, New York, 1966), 43.

[20]Standish H. O'Grady (ed.), *Silva Gadelica* II, 274.

hUiginn recalls an occasion when he told a tale to a distinguished company in the house of Maol Mórdha Mhac Suibhne of Sligo: ' When we had gone to our couches of rest to slumber, ere the coming of day, . . . To the blossom of Tara and his three companions I relate a tale in return for reward.'[21] In the early seventeenth century Eóghan Ruadh Mac an Bhaird mourns the Flight of the Earls in 1607 and the changes in Irish life which followed upon it, for example:

Gan rádha rithlearg molta,
gan sgaoileadh sgeól gcodalta;
gan úidh ar fhaixin leabhair,
gan chlaisdin nglúin gheinealaigh

' No reciting of poems of praise, no relating of stories at sleeping time, no interest in consulting books, no hearkening to genealogies,'[22]

It was generally accepted that the proper time for storytelling was at night, and it is clear from these latter references that in the houses of the well-to-do a good story was considered a standard night-cap. This was true also of other medieval societies,[23] and indeed

[21]Eleanor Knott (ed.), *The Bardic Poems of Tadhg Dall Ó Huiginn* (London, 1926), no. 25 §§20-22.

[22]Ed. Eleanor Knott, *Ériu* viii, 192. A longer text of this poem is printed by Fr Paul Walsh in his edition of Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh's Life of Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill (Dublin, 1957) II, 140 f. In the second line his text reads *gan sgaoileadh sgeóil chodalta* which he translates ' no telling of sleep-inducing story '.

[23] 'Tsar Ivan the Terrible could not fall asleep without hearing stories; at his bedside there were always to be found three blind old men, to whose stories he listened until sleep overtook him. There have been preserved in the documents even the given names and family names of the storytellers of the succeeding tsars, such as Vasil Shuysky, Michael Romanov, and others. Both these tsars and Tsar Aleksis Mikhailovich rewarded their storytellers with cloth, caftans, and other gratuities. This tradition survived for a long time, even at the " Europeanized " imperial court of the eighteenth century. Empress Anna Iannovna, being fond of all kinds of diversions, kept jesters and storytellers about her person. Empress Elizabeth had an expert in tales, an old man, a court footman, who " frequently told stories to the empress in her leisure hours of rest." ' (Y.M. Sokolov, *Russian Folklore* (New York, 1950), 457.)

The same author, loc. cit., quotes from a twelfth-century ecclesiastical discourse an account of the rich man's retiring to sleep: ' When he lies down and cannot sleep, his friends rub his feet, others stroke his hips, others scratch him across the shoulders, some play a tune, others fabulize and tell blasphemous tales.' Cf. J. E. Caerwyn Williams, *Y Storiwr Gwyddeleg a'i Chwedlau* (Cardiff, 1972), 23 f.

it is hardly surprising, given the popularity of storytelling among all classes of the community, that the privileged status of the nobility should have expressed itself in this fashion.

The first essential of the storyteller's art is that he should remember the materials which he has accumulated over the years, and commentators on many widely varied cultures have described in impressive detail the remarkable feats of memory performed by those trained in the oral transmission of literature. Outstanding storytellers were respected for the extent of their repertoire as well as for the quality of their narrative. According to a little tale which was probably composed in the eighth century, when Forgoll the *fili* came on visitation to the royal house of Mongán mac Fiachna, he told a tale each night to Mongán and such was his learning that they continued thus from Samain ('Halloween') to Beltaine ('May-day').[24] The phrase *ó Shamhain go Bealtaine* is still widely used, or was so until recently, to refer to the period traditionally regarded as the 'season' for storytelling, and old people tell of storytellers of earlier days who were so gifted that they could recite a new tale every night the whole winter through.[25] This is a familiar kind of homely hyperbole, all the more effective in this instance because it is not beyond the bounds of possibility—the repertoire of some of the storytellers of our own time ran into hundreds of items[26] and it

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[24]Kuno Meyer and Alfred Nutt, *The Voyage of Bran son of Febal* (London, 1895) I, 46, 49.

[25]J. H. Delargy, *The Gaelic Story-teller* 20; Tomás Ó Broin, *Béaloideas* xxiv (1955 [1957]), xxiii.

[26]J. H. Delargy, op. cit., 15 f. Linda Dégh reports that in Hungary one heard of storytellers who had a different story for each day of the year (*Folktales of Hungary* (London, 1965), p. xxxiv). A less immediate analogue, and one which evidently lacks the touch of hyperbole, is mentioned by Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), 15: 'Among the Moslems in Yugoslavia there is a special festival which has contributed to the fostering of songs of some length. This is the festival of Ramazan, when for a month the men fast from sunrise to sunset and gather in coffee houses all night long to talk and listen to epic. Here is a perfect circumstance for the singing of one song during the entire night. Here also is an encouragement to the semiprofessional singer to attain a repertory of at least thirty songs. It was Parry's experience that such Moslem singers, when asked how many songs they knew, frequently replied that they knew thirty, one for every night of Ramazan.'

is surely reasonable to suppose that the professional memory-men of the middle ages would at least have equalled and probably far surpassed the unschooled performance of these modern amateurs.

Forgoll was a *fili*, in other words a learned poet and scholar in the native tradition. The anecdote concerning Mongán and him is probably the earliest explicit reference confirming that the *fili* included storytelling with his other professional activities. It tallies neatly with the preface to the tale-list which is printed below on p. 41 and which I refer to as list A: ' What follows here below concerns the professional qualification of the *fili* as regards stories and *coimcne*[27] to be narrated to kings and princes . . . . ' That it reflected normal practice is borne out by the setting contrived for tale-list B in the story entitled *Airec menman Uraird maic Coise* (p. 34 infra). Here the poet Urard mac Coise visits the king of Tara and straightaway offers to narrate for him whichever story he may choose. Obviously this was one of the services expected of a visiting *ollam filidechta*, and as late as the sixteenth century the poet Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn tells of the lavish rewards he claims to have received for telling a tale in the house of Maol Mórdha Mhac Suibhne (see p. 14 supra). The same usage seems to have obtained in Wales. For this the *locus classicus* is a passage in the tale of *Math uab Mathonwy*, the fourth branch of the *Mabinogi*. Gwydion and Gilfaethwy visit the court of Pryderi *yn rith beird* ' in the guise of poets ' and as soon as they have been made comfortable they are invited by Pryderi to entertain him with a tale: ' " Why," said Pryderi, " gladly would we have a tale from some of the young men yonder." " Lord," said Gwydion, " it is a custom with us that the first night after one comes to a great man, the chief bard (*penkerd*) shall have the say. I will tell a tale gladly." Gwydion was the best teller of tales in the world. And that night he entertained the court with pleasant tales and storytelling till he was praised by everyone in the court, and it was pleasure for Pryderi to converse with him.'[28] The clear inference here is that the *pencerdd*, who was the Welsh correspondent to the Irish *ollam*, was known to include the role of storyteller among his other professional activities.

[27]On the meaning of *coimcne* see p. 123 ff. infra. In any case this term may not have been included in the original form of the preface; see p. 116, n.128 infra.

[28]Ifor Williams (ed.), *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* (Cardiff, 1930), 68 f.

But, at the same time, it is probably significant that Pryderi's initial request is directed to the young men of Gwydion's company, as if it were they who would normally be expected to provide the story-telling, and Gwydion has to point out that, contrary to normal usage, when they visit a person of high rank it is the *pencerdd* who holds the floor on the first night (see Appendix A infra). In other words it was no concern of the *pencerdd* to tell stories except when the nobility of his hosts warranted it; there were others in his entourage who could more appropriately discharge that responsibility in less exalted company.

The text says that Gwydion ' was the best teller of tales in the world ' and the word it uses for this métier is *kyuarwyd* (ModW *cyfarwydd*). It does not specifically associate it with the office of *pencerdd*, and indeed Sir Ifor Williams and those who have followed him draw a clear distinction between the *cyfarwydd* and the *pencerdd*, the one purveying entertainment—albeit of a literary kind—, the other learning.[29] However, if this be true, and it appears to be, then there is some reason to think that the term *cyfarwydd* had come down in the world by the Middle Welsh period. Its common, and probably primary, meaning ' well-informed, expert (person) ' etc., and its use in the sense of ' guide, leader ' indicate that the whole semantic field of *cyfarwydd* is centred on the notion of knowledge (see p. 139 infra). If the word derives from the root **u̯eid-* ' see ',[30] the basic notion is knowledge deriving from or combined with vision and there is an obvious analogy with the Irish *écess* ' seer; learned and mantic poet'. The inference is that *cyfarwydd* was once the term applied to a person who had won recognition as an expert in native tradition and to whose authority one might have recourse where there was dispute or uncertainty. As an expert in tradition, he would have been conversant with the whole corpus of narrative which embodied the mythology and the ' history ' of his people and no doubt, like the Irish *fili*, he would have told his tales where the occasion and the company were appropriate, but it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the apparent Middle Welsh conception of the

[29]Cf. Ifor Williams (ed.), *Canu Llywarch Hen* (Cardiff, 1953), lxxxviii; Rachel Bromwich (ed.), *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Welsh Triads* (Cardiff, 1961), lxxxiii ff.

[30]See *GPC* s.v. *cyfarwydd*.

cyfarwydd as a mere storyteller constitutes a serious contraction and devaluation of his original role. One suspects that in an earlier period the *cyfarwydd* would have been less concerned with traditional tales as narrative than as source-material for the study and recollection of the past.

In this he would have been true brother to the Irish *fili*. For while, as we have seen, the *fili* did on occasion don the mantle of storyteller, clearly this was peripheral to his main professional interest in traditional narrative. He was a learned man, not an entertainer. Counsellor of kings, conservator of social order, guardian and interpreter of tradition, his protracted training was designed to set him apart from lesser men and to equip him adequately to discharge these responsibilities.

This has not always been appreciated by commentators. For Jan de Vries the *fili's* schooling was primarily a matter of perfecting the memory; his words are like a vague paraphrase of Caesar's celebrated remark on the Gaulish druids: 'The training of a *file* took a long time: in his first year of training he had to learn twenty tales by heart and in the seventh year he managed no fewer than a hundred and forty. Such a long training is only understandable if he was required to recite the legends in their prescribed form—and word-perfect.'[31] In point of fact the metrical tracts make no mention of learning by heart and it is inconceivable that this was the only, or the main, reason for the length of the *fili's* training, as witness the remarkable feats of memory recorded of modern storytellers who were removed from any such exclusive and concentrated discipline. For the *filid* the tales were primarily part of the *coimcne* (see p. 123 ff. infra), the body of inherited knowledge on which the authoritative view of the past depended, and as such they meshed closely with law, genealogy, customary ritual, and the several other branches of traditional learning that served to define the origins and history of the social order and of the tribal and ethnic elements

[31]Jan de Vries, *Heroic Song and Heroic Legend*, OUP Paperback (London, 1963), 178.

comprised within it. It was the *fili's* responsibility to preserve, authenticate and interpret these traditional documents and it is in this light that one must view his interest in the body of traditional narrative.

THE TAXONOMY OF ORAL TRADITION

The highly developed powers of memory of the traditional storyteller are abundantly documented. We read of men and women who could commit lengthy texts to memory at a single hearing and who, in some instances, were able to recall them word for word after a lapse of many years.[1] We also read of, and may even be fortunate enough to have known, storytellers whose repertoire comprised hundreds of separate items that were partly inherited and partly accumulated over a lifetime of zealous enquiry and social eavesdropping. But such a repertoire revealed itself only in actual performance, when the experienced narrator could summon up, occasionally with the aid of judicious prompts from members of his audience or family, all the separate items of his store as they were required; but it in no way follows from this that he would have had any very clear or systematic notion of their complete tally. It would scarcely have occurred to the Irish storyteller of the nineteenth or twentieth century to quantify his repertoire in statistical terms: probably the first time he would have had it so defined for him was when an experienced collector attended him over an extended period and drew up a more or less complete register of the capacious storehouse of his mind, and in such an undertaking the prompting and selectivity of the collector armed with his notebook would have been the indispensable complement to the retentive memory of the storyteller.

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[1]Dr Seán Ó Coileáin has recently called into question the accuracy of some of these accounts (*Studia Hibernica* 17/18 (1977-78), 7ff.), and I have no doubt that his reasoned scepticism is well based and that some of these claims require closer investigation. On the other hand it is an observable fact that some people are gifted with remarkable powers of memory, and when these are reinforced by specialized training the results can be very impressive indeed. Naturally one must also draw a distinction between dramatic or entertainment narration and quasi-canonical narration, where verbal consistency is essential to the purpose of the text. But this is a discussion which may be deferred to another occasion.

But there were also less occasional—and less autonomous—mnemonic devices at the disposal of the oral storyteller and antiquarian in preliterate societies where his role was socially institutionalized. The most elaborate of these was the Peruvian *quipu*, ' a tangle of knots and strings and colours that could keep a narrator going for days with letter-perfect renditions of myths, genealogies, poetry, and legends in the same way that a rosary is used to tally the 180 prayers in that garland of Catholic devotion.' Many peoples employed pictographic aids, which might be scratched on bark rolls, as was done by the Midewiwin priests, or traced in sand, as in the beautiful sand painting of the Navaho. Others used notched sticks to prompt the memory of priest and poet.[1a]

In general, a mnemonic system to be effective must incorporate an element of classification, and this already presupposes a certain faculty for abstraction which is commonly taken to be more characteristic of relatively sophisticated than of primitive societies. However this may be, it is clear that, irrespective of their degree of civilization, societies vary widely in the way they categorize tradition. Some peoples seem to lack any notion of literary types, others appear indifferent to their use.[2] Some adopt classifications which at first glance seem rather capricious to western eyes, as for example when the Winnebago Indians divided their prose narratives into two kinds: *worak*, ' what-is-recounted ', which dealt with the present world and mainly with humans, which must end tragically and which could be told at any time, and *waikan* ' what-is-sacred ', which dealt with divine beings in an irretrievable past, which must not end tragically and which could not be told in the Summertime or, at least, when the snakes were above ground.[3] Others recognized categories which seem immediately logical to the outsider: as for example when the Dahomeans identify two broad categories of

[1a]Some early Irish texts speak of tales being inscribed in Ogam on wooden staves and tablets, which, for practical as well as historical reasons, seems quite impossible. However, the analogy of the notched sticks used by the Polynesians and others suggests that such references in Irish texts might conceivably be a distorted reminiscence of a similar usage.

[2]Cf. Melville Jackobs, ' Titles in Oral Literature ', *Journal of American Folklore* 70, 158.

[3]Paul Radin, *The Trickster* (London, 1956), 118.

narrative, the *hwenoho*, literally ' time-old-story ', in other words traditional history or lore, and the *heho* or invented tale, or the Trobriand Islanders three: *kukuwanebu* (entertainment tales), *libwogwo* (legends), and *liliu* (sacred tales).[4] The Polynesians were evidently quite exceptional among primitive peoples, for they are credited with distinguishing such categories as myth, cosmogony, legend, traditional history, folktale, animal tale, explanatory tale, cante fable, riddle, riddling tale, proverb, hero saga, charm, oration, and artistic conversation.[5] Needless to say, such terms can be no more than broad approximations and in using them one inevitably introduces an element of misrepresentation in describing an indigenous tradition, since they come ready loaded with assumptions and connotations that may have no place in the living culture and often imply distinctions more absolute than the material itself warrants.

This problem of description and terminology is as relevant to early Irish tradition as to the various primitive traditions recorded by modern students of literature and anthropology. Irish has a seemingly inexhaustible terminology defining types, sub-types and individual features within the literary corpus on the basis of style, metrics, function, and content. Some of it seems to have enjoyed fairly general currency, but much of it was evidently the restricted coinage of the exponents of traditional learning, and at its most specialized it merges in the esoteric vocabulary of the druid/*fili*—priest, poet and erudite custodian of the tribal memory. This diversity of origins and usage accounts for some of the ambiguity and overlapping in the reference of individual terms, but still more important is the fact that much of the social and artistic nuance which was part of the connotation of the several terms can no longer be retrieved from the written record; consequently one's notion of their significance within the living tradition is at best only a reasonable approximation. This applies even to the handful of

[4]Melville J. and Frances S. Herskovits, *Dahomean Narrative* (Northwestern Univ. Press, 1958), 13 ff.; Bronislaw Malinowski, *Myth in Primitive Psychology* (New York, 1926), 26 ff.

[5]Katherine Luomala, in R. M. Dorson (ed.), ' Folklore research around the world ', *Journal of American Folklore* 74, 421.

general terms which designate major areas or categories of the learned literature, such as *senchas*, *filidecht*, *scéla*. In their denotational range these terms coincide to a very considerable degree, but in their connotational range and in their primary emphasis they remain quite distinct, rather in the manner of overlapping eccentric circles. *Senchas* relates to the adjective *sen* ' old ' and embraces all of traditional knowledge: law, genealogy and historical lore whether in prose or verse. *Filidecht* is the term for the art and learning of the *fili*. It refers primarily to the art of poetry and to verse compositions, but it can also take in the ritual and divinatory faculties of the *fili* as well as the several branches of traditional knowledge which gave him prestige as teacher and counsellor and furnished him with the matter of his verse. *Scéla* ' tales ' includes historical and mythological lore cast in the form of separate narratives. It will be seen that all three terms cover much of the same material without being coextensive. Another term whose range of reference must once have approximated fairly closely to that of *senchas* is *coimcne*, originally perhaps ' knowledge held in common ' or ' comprehensive knowledge ' (see discussion p. 123 ff. inf.), though its early denotation seems to have become rather obscure or uncertain by the time of the late MI commentators.

One thing that these instances have in common, and indeed this holds true for virtually the whole of native ' literary ' terminology, is that they belong primarily to oral tradition. For this they were created, long before the Latin alphabet was adapted to the writing of literature in the Irish language, and many of them sit uneasily in a written context. *Léigenn*, from Latin *legendum*, was used later to designate the Latin ecclesiastical learning developed in the monasteries, which, as the derivation of the word itself makes abundantly clear, was regarded primarily as a written literature in contradistinction to the characteristically oral native tradition. Writing played a prominent role in the preservation and development of Irish literature from the sixth and seventh centuries onward, but, apart from the rather special case of legal studies, its use seems to have been confined for the most part to the monastic environment until the cultural situation was radically altered in the aftermath of the Norman invasion and the Church reform which preceded it. The

obvious importance and extent of the written sources should not therefore be allowed to obscure the fact that Irish tradition was wholly an oral one before the sixth century and that the bulk of it continued to be transmitted orally even after the introduction of writing and for as long as the tradition retained something of its vigour and integrity. For reasons which are obvious, this deep and intimate association with the spoken word had a particular relevance for the narrative art, the art of the storyteller.

For this the generic term is *scél* (W. *chwedl*), pl. *scéla*, which relates to the IE root **sek̑u̯-* ' say ' (among other meanings) and has English *say* and German *sagen* as its cognates.[6] It is a comprehensive term: in itself it makes no distinction between mythic-historical and invented or entertainment tales such as is expressed by the Dahomean *hwenoho* and *heho* or the Trobriand Islanders' *liliu* and *kukuwanebu*. It suggests the notion of entertainment, as does its derivative *scélaige* ' storyteller ', but often it has the meaning ' knowledge, information, tidings '—*is maith an scéalaí an aimsir* ' time will tell ', lit. ' time is a good informant ', says the modern proverb. This conjunction of learning and entertainment is one which was especially appropriate in the case of the *fili*, part of whose academic formation consisted in the study of a large corpus of traditional tales and whose privilege and duty it was to narrate these at the pleasure of the kings and princes who were his patrons (p. 41 inf.). Precisely how it was decided which tales were to be told on such occasions one can only surmise. The story has it that the poet Urard mac Coise named all the titles in his repertoire so that king Domnall mac Muirchertaig might have his choice of them (p. 34 inf.). It may be that some particular tales were held in especially high regard by storytellers and audiences and therefore tended to dominate such sessions, as indeed is still the case where the storyteller holds court in the Gaeltacht. The suggestion has also been made that certain tales, or certain types of tales, were considered appropriate to particular occasions and circumstances. We have already remarked that story-telling was a feature of religious and

[6]The word *ris* occurs sometimes as a near synonym of *scél* in consciously learned or poetic contexts. Cf. p. 6 supra.

social gatherings such as took place at wakes, weddings and seasonal festivals, and the Rees brothers have taken this a step further by surmising that, while in general the choice of tales was probably unrestricted, nevertheless particular places and events required the telling of suitable narratives: exemplary battle-tales before engaging in actual conflict, ' cattle-raids ' before setting out on one, conception and birth tales at births, ' wooings ' at weddings, and so on.[7]

There are parallels for this kind of thing in other literatures. Among the Luapula peoples of central Africa some traditions were recited only when passing the places mentioned in them.[8] The same kind of association has been noted among the Bahaya of Northern Tanzania:

> The Bahaya draw on many aspects of their natural environment as mnemonic devices which are explicitly tied to folklore, mythology, and political oral tradition. Fields, cliffs, trees, streams, and crossroads are among features that have extensive oral traditions associated with them—ranging from myth about Bacwezi gods to the origins of villages, many of which have taken their names from trees. Place names in Bahaya are very often associated with historical events, and these names often precipitate local folklore about the origins of villages. The former *kikale* [royal palace] and the *gashani* [royal burial house] are particularly instrumental in developing stories that are mentioned only in the presence of the burial site. Marking trees and other physical structures near the *gashani* evoke tale telling. The plenitude and variability of physical aspects of the environment, both natural and those modified by man, tied to mnemonics for oral tradition, are a commentary on the omnipresence of the past—in myth, folklore, and other oral tradition—in Bahaya life. These ever-present mnemonics are essential to an understanding of the Bahaya world view and historiography. . . .

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[7] *Celtic Heritage* (London, 1961), 210 f.

[8] I. Cunnison, *History of the Luapula. An essay on the Historical Notions of a Central African Tribe.* Rhodes-Livingstone Papers (Oxford, 1951), 35-9. For example, among many peoples those engaged in a hunting expedition tell famous stories of hunting in order to ensure their success, as it were by association with the heroic or mythical events narrated by the storyteller; cf. R. Pettazzoni, *Essays on the History of Religions* (Leiden, 1967), 19.

> The Bahaya conceptualization of the past is woven into their perception of their everyday surroundings. . . . A *Muhaya* trained in oral tradition and mnemonics virtually is able to read his cultural history by viewing his contemporary physical environment. So in fact, the past was preserved by reverence for sacred places such as shrines that are respected now because they belong to the past, any not for religious reasons. The continued presence of mnemonics confirms that mythology is ubiquitous and functional in some Bahaya lives.[9]

In other words, among these African peoples the actual landscape in which the tribe had its existence itself functioned as a perennial mnemonic of the tribal memory. There is nothing really very surprising about this, though it seems to be only fairly recently that it has impinged upon cultural anthropologists and others as a phenomenon of some importance.[10] The analogy with Irish tradition is obvious, and even if, as it appears to the uninformed reader, the actual narrative matter reflecting the mnemonic process is rudimentary and unsustained by comparison with that in Irish, it still has the great advantage that it can demonstrate the process at work in a living contemporary context.

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[9]Peter R. Schmidt, *Historical Archaeology: A Structural Approach in an African Culture* (Westport, Connecticut, 1978), 111-123. Schmidt makes the interesting if very speculative suggestion that there may be a connection between the density of mnemonic tradition and the density of prehistoric settlement:

> The fact that the Buhaya landscape is a collage of mythology, folklore, and local legends of untold permutations may ultimately prove to be a guide for further work in studying prehistoric settlement patterns. It is apparent that some geographic locales have a much heavier density of physical objects and places associated with oral tradition. These areas also are those in which surface survey has revealed the heaviest density of Early Age sites. It may be that a mnemonic density index might be an important key for judging the geographical extent of prehistoric settlement as well as the time depth of interaction with the immediate environment.

This suggestion might merit some consideration in the Irish context, though one obvious objection is that it does not appear to take sufficient account of the spatial diffusion of common and basic mythological themes resulting from the movement of population.

[10]The importance of aetiological traditions relating to natural features has, of course, long been recognised (cf. for example Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition* (London, 1965), 158); it is the mnemonic role of the natural features themselves that has only more recently been adverted to.

So far as the medieval Irish material is concerned, there can be little doubt that the Irish landscape and the *dindshenchas* ' the history of places ' which was its collective reflex in tribal myth and history served together as an effective mnemonic index and treasury of a great part of native tradition. *Dindshenchas* had its place in the curriculum of the schools of *filidecht* and presumably it was in these schools that it was assembled and arranged in the systematic frame that provided the basis for the great compilations of place-lore which were edited and recorded in writing during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. At least some of this placename lore belonged originally to ritual, the area *par excellence* in which tale and circumstance are wedded. Instances are found throughout the world where tales were told in the context of ritual ceremony; such, it has been suggested, was the role of the great martial legends of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana* before they were worked over by their many editors: ' Their religious importance lay at first in the royal sacrificial ritual, part of which involved telling stories of the heroes of the past.'[11]

However, the evidence for this kind of association is mainly indirect and inferential, only rarely explicit, in Irish as elsewhere. For example, we know that before opposing armies joined battle tales were told of the great conflicts and victories of the past. In recalling the deeds of their forebears they fortified their own hearts by the desire to emulate their valour and the hope of being favoured by the same good fortune. This was no doubt the origin of the stipulation in the Welsh Laws that the *bardd teulu* ' household poet ' should sing the poem called *Vnbeinyaeth Prydein* ' The Chieftainship of Britain ' for the king's warriors when they were preparing for battle.[12] In Irish, however, though there are many oblique indications of the custom, only one instance comes readily to mind in which it receives explicit expression. This is in the tale that is told of the battle of Almain (772 A.D.) between Fergal mac Máele Dúin, king of Ireland, and Murchad mac Brain of Leinster. The story goes that on the night before the battle in which Fergal was to fall, he requested

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[11]A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India* (London, 1969), 409.

[12]*Llyfr Blegwyryd*, ed. S. J. Williams and J. E. Powell, 22; T. Gwynn Jones, *Trans. Cymm. Soc.*, 1913-14, 219.

that ' the battles and triumphs of Leth Cuinn and Leinster from the Destruction of Tuaimm Tenbath . . . down to that time ' should be recited to him and his men.[13]

Does this mean that the tales were to be told *in extenso*? Or merely a selection of them? Or that they were simply to be enumerated item by item with a brief comment on each? On purely practical grounds the first might seem rather improbable, while the second appears to be excluded by the wording of the text. In any event both surely presuppose the existence of some such enumeration as is suggested in the third, and in point of fact this has survived in several poems which are nothing more than itemized recitals of the exploits and conflicts of the Leinstermen. One such poem, that which begins *Échta Lagen for Leth Cuind* ' The exploits of the Leinstermen against Leth Cuind (the Northern Half) ', actually opens its recital with the killing of Cobthach by Labraid Loingsech in the *bruiden* or hall of Tuaimm Tenbath and seems in its original form to have ended with the death of Fergal in the battle of Almain.[14] Similarly the poem on the victories of the Leinstermen attributed to Fland mac Maelmaedóc (+979)[15] and that by Broccán Cráibdech on the graves of Irish heroes slain by the Leinstermen[16] are likewise virtual catalogues of historical tales and both open with the stories of Tuaimm Tenbath (or of Dinn Ríg as it is called in Broccán's poem).

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[13]Ed. Whitley Stokes, *RC* xxiv, 50. In *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, during the initial stages of the Connacht advance into Ulster, king Ailill asks to be told about the deeds and traditions of their opponents: ' *Is tabartha do airi*,' *ol Ailill*, ' *indass in c*[*h*]*eniúil cosa tíagam. Érgnad cách uaib a bíad. Nírbo sám dúib irrair lasin snechta. Ocus innister dún ní do imt*[*h*]*echtaib* ⁊ *airscélaib in c*[*h*]*eniúil cosa tíagam.*' ' We must have regard to the kind of people we are approaching,' said Ailill. ' Let all of you get your food ready, for you had a restless time last night with the snow. And now let us be told some of the adventures and stories of the people to whom we are going ' (*TBC Rec.* I, l. 365 ff.).

[14]*LL* 6980 ff. The story of Cobthach's death, which was regarded as an origin legend of the Lagin, normally goes by the title *Orgain Denna*/*Dinn Ríg* ' The Destruction of Dinn Ríg '.

[15]*LL* 6158; ed. M. E. Dobbs, *ZCP* xxiv, 139 ff.

[16]Ed. K. Meyer *ZCP* viii, 117 ff.

Lists of battles are relatively common in the manuscripts, whether of those fought by an individual leader, as for example the seven battles of Cú Chorb king of Leinster against Munster,[17] or the seven battles of Amalgaid son of Nath Í,[18] or by a tribe or province, as in the poem attributed to Orthanach ua Coílláma (+840?) on the battles of the Leinstermen.[19] This must have been a stock mnemonic device, in Celtic Britain as well as in Ireland. Nennius (cap. 56) in a celebrated passage that has generated much discussion and not a little argument lists twelve battles fought by Arthur of Britain. Most scholars would now agree with the Chadwicks that Nennius's source was probably a catalogue poem similar to that which lists the fifteen expeditions of the seventh-century king Cadwallon.[20] Kenneth Jackson adverts to several other instances from the earliest Welsh verse which tell of the battles of the heroic North British leaders Cynan Garwyn, Urien of Rheged, his son Owain, and the latter's contemporary Gwallawg, and he agrees that Nennius must have ' had before him a written text, or knew an oral version, of a Welsh poem cataloguing Arthur's deeds in similar vein.'[21]

The corollary of war is death, and it is in his death that the hero finally attains his apotheosis. In the creation of the heroic identity of the hero it is in a sense ultimately more important to be killed than to kill, which is why the character of an heroic tradition may be charted as faithfully in the traditions of the deaths of its heroes as in the endless concatenation of their battles and exploits. The *oitte/aideda* ' death-tales ' are at the very core of the heroic ethos and it was essential for those who were deemed to be expert in native antiquity that they should be able to recall instantly the manner and the circumstance in which each hero perished; which is

[17]Ed. K. Meyer, *ZCP* xiii, 435 ff.

[18]*LU* 2797 (in the hand of M).

[19]*LL* 6067 (and other MSS).

[20]H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature* (Cambridge, 1932) I, 155.

[21]*Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Roger Sherman Loomis (Oxford, 1959), 7. See also Thomas Jones, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* xvii, 241 f.; *Nottingham Med. Studies* viii (1964), 10; Rachel Bromwich, *Studies in Early British History*, ed. Nora K. Chadwick (Cambridge, 1959), 124.

why, presumably, we find a number of poems which are in effect catalogues of such heroic obituaries. The poem by Flannacán mac Cellaig († 896) lists the deaths of famous Irish heroes according to the days of the week on which they died.[22] That by the tenth-century Cinaed ua hArtacáin, *Fianna bátar i nEmain* . . . , records how the heroes of tradition met their deaths and where they were buried.[23] Again the genre is Celtic rather than merely Irish, and Welsh has a famous verse sequence of a similar kind which is known as *Englynion y Beddau* 'The Stanzas of the Graves' or *Beddau Milwyr Ynys Prydain* 'The Graves of the Warriors of the Island of Britain' and was probably composed in the ninth or tenth century. Professor Thomas Jones, the most recent editor of the *englynion*, has noted the correspondence with the poems of Broccán Cráibdech and Cinaed ua hArtacáin, observing further that the Welsh stanzas and Cinaed's poem agree in not confining their register of heroes and graves to any particular region of the country.[24]

Given the existence of such verse catalogues of battles and heroic deaths—and one need not assume that the form was confined to these genres—it is hardly surprising that when the Irish *eruditi* set about producing an extensive list of traditional tales, they should have adopted this same thematic arrangement, dividing the titles into groups with a common type of subject: *aitheda* 'elopements', *togla* 'attacks, destructions', *oircne* 'plunderings, massacres', and so on. It is possible, as suggested by the Rees brothers, that this system was partly suggested or motivated by the custom of reciting particular types of tale on appropriate occasions. In any event, it had been adopted at least by the MI period: there are in fact two such MI lists, variant derivatives of a common prototype, which purport to register the complete repertoire of the *ollam filidechta*, the fully qualified master of traditional learning.

These lists purport, then, to be an index of traditional narrative literature, and it may therefore be of interest, before proceeding to discuss them in detail, to examine briefly the rather different approach

[22]Ed. Kathleen Mulchrone, *Journal of Celtic Studies* i, 80 ff. See p. 108 ff. inf.

[23]Ed. Whitley Stokes, *RC* xxiii (1902), 303 ff.

[24]Thomas Jones, *The Black Book of Carmarthen* 'Stanzas of the Graves'. Sir John Rhŷs Memorial Lecture, British Academy, 1967.

to this same end adopted by the Welsh counterparts of the *filid*. Rachel Bromwich has shown that the original nucleus of the Welsh Triads also constituted an index of oral narrative, ' formed for the benefit of those whose professional duty it was to preserve and hand on the stories which embodied the oldest traditions of the Britons about themselves; stories which concerned the national past alike of the people of Wales and of the lost northern territory which was still remembered in the Middle Ages as a former home of the British race.' According to the version of the poetic grammar preserved in the Red Book of Hergest (c. 1400) ' The three things that give amplitude to a poet are knowledge of histories, the poetic art, and antique verse ' (*Tri pheth a beir y gerdawr uot yn amyl: kyfarwydyt ystoryaeu, a bardoniaeth, a hengerd*), and Mrs Bromwich is probably correct in assuming that the word *ystoryaeu* (sg. *ystorya* < L. *historia*) here is nearly synonymous with Irish *senchus* and that it meant ' the national inheritance of ancient tradition.'[25] However, if the Irish tale-lists and the Welsh triads were both intended as catalogues of oral narrative it must be said that they are based on very different principles. Whereas the Irish lists deal in whole narratives, the Welsh triads—and this is a function of their triadic form—are concerned rather with persons, incidents and other individual elements excerpted from such narratives. Though the analogy is not perfect, one might compare the difference to that in the domain of folklore between a type-index and a motif-index.

The question is whether catalogues which are structured so differently were intended to be used in quite the same way or for quite the same purpose. The Irish tale-list caters for the *fili* in his role of learned storyteller and *senchaid*, and this is neatly pointed up in the story of the poet Urard mac Coise passing off a version of the list as his own repertoire. On the other hand, it seems more plausible to regard the Welsh Triads as a thesaurus of allusions for the use of the *bardd* in his role of court poet and learned panegyrist. If this be accepted, then one might proceed a step further (as I have done elsewhere) and suggest that the Welsh *beirdd* of the period, concentrating their attention on their more specifically poetic

[25]Rachel Bromwich (ed.), *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Welsh Triads* (Cardiff, 1961), p. lxxi f.

functions, particularly that of eulogy, did not accord the same status to prose narrative as a literary and learned genre as did the Irish *filid*. This does not mean that early Welsh lacked a rich and varied oral narrative comparable to that of Irish, but rather that it was not maintained and cultivated at the same level as in Ireland, in other words by the learned class, down to the period when secular prose began to be written extensively. If the suggestion is correct, part of the explanation may lie in the fruitful liaison that existed from an early period between the Irish monastic scribes and the *filid* and in the creative enthusiasm with which the former preserved and developed in written form the rich resources of oral narrative literature.[26]

[26]Dr Brynley Roberts suggests as a possibility that terms such as *cyfranc*, *mabinogi*, and *ymddiddan*, which all appear to be used in MW more or less as synonyms of *chwedl* 'story, tale', may once have had more particularized meanings. Thus *cyfranc* might have meant 'attack, personal combat, adventure', *mabinogi* 'enfances, macgnímartha', and *ymddiddan* 'stories laced with *englynion*' (*BBCS* xxvi, 17 n. l). It is not indeed impossible, nor unlikely, that terms like there were used at one time to indicate different thematic types of tale, as the analogous terms in early Irish were; but if so, this mode of classification has left little trace in MW literature.

One must also take account, of course, of Eric P. Hamp's more recent explanation of *mabinogi* as a collective noun based on the stem **mapono-* which originally meant 'material or doings pertaining to (the family of) the divine Maponos' (W. *Mabon*), *Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymm.* (1975), 243 ff.

THE IRISH TALE-LISTS

We have seen that there are two major medieval lists of tales in existence. By more or less established usage they are designated A and B, and I shall follow this usage in the present essay. These lists purport to catalogue the repertoire of the *fili* and for that reason their testimony has been noticed and cited time out of number; but, nevertheless, until Thurneysen turned his attention to them in his *Irische Helden- und Königsage* they were generally taken on trust and were exempt from serious scrutiny since O'Curry and O'Looney edited the two manuscripts of A a century ago.

List A stands independently and is furnished with preface and colophon; which no doubt explains why it is rather better known, or at least more often cited, than its companion list. It survives in two copies, LL 189 b[1] and TCD MS. H. 3. 17, col. 797 (which will be referred to as H)[2], the former a manuscript of the twelfth century, the latter of the sixteenth. According to the preface (see p. 41 inf.) A should contain either 250 or perhaps rather 350 titles, depending on how precisely we read it (see p. 111 ff. inf.), but in point of fact LL has only 187 titles and H. 3. 17 182; the latter has three titles which do not occur in LL.[3]

List B is found embodied in the text entitled *Airec menman Uraird maic Coise* ' The Stratagem of Urard mac Coise ', which is preserved in three manuscripts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: RIA, 23 N 10, p. 29 (N); Bodleian Lib., Rawl. B. 512, f. 109 (R); and British Lib., Harl. 5280, fo. 47 (Hl).[4] The point of

[1]Ed. E. O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History* (Dublin, 1878), 584 ff.

[2]Ed. B. O'Looney, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 2 ser. I (1870), 215 ff.

[3]Thurneysen, *Heldensage* 22, says that A contains 204 titles. It is not clear how he arrived at this figure.

[4]Ed. from the three MSS. by Mary E. Byrne, *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts* II (Halle, 1908), 42 ff. The list of tales was published by d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Essai d'un catalogue de la littérature épique de l'Irlande* (Paris, 1883), 260.

departure for this tale is the injustice and hardship inflicted on the poet Urard (Airard) mac Coise when he was despoiled by the Cinél Eogain maic Néill, who carried off his cattle, horses and other possessions and ravaged his dwelling-place (*dún*) at Clártha. This may be the same as the Cláthra (Clártha) in the modern county of Westmeath which is mentioned already in *Táin Bó Cuailnge*.[5]

Being in no position to exact compensation on his own behalf, Urard determined upon a stratagem and set off to visit Domnall mac Muirchertaig (+ 980), the king of Tara. The king bids him welcome and presently asks him for his tidings (*Iarmifocht in righ scéla do-sum iar tairisiem*), whereupon Urard, awaiting his cue, conveniently misinterprets *scéla* 'tidings' as *scéla* 'stories' and replies that he has them in abundance and that he remembers *coimgneda*,[6] tales, historical traditions and all the invasions of Ireland from the first invasion which took place after the Flood down to his own time (*Isbert som fri sodhain rocuala scela mora, ar batar mebra laisium coimgneda agus sceoil agus senchusa ocus gabala Erenn do neoch forcaomnacair dibh o chetgaphail Erenn iar ndilinn cusin n-aimsir sin a mbui feisne*). He offers to narrate the tale of the king's choice and at the latter's bidding proceeds to enumerate the titles in his repertoire, taking care to close his list with *Orgain Cathrach Mail Milscothaig* 'The Destruction of Mael Milscothach's Fort', a title which refers obliquely to his own calamity. This catalogue of titles constitutes our list B. For Urard's purposes, however, the final title was the important one, and inevitably this is the tale the king chooses to hear.

The narrative which follows is a version of his own unhappy experience told in the high-flown language of the learned poet and decked out with fanciful incident and an array of allegorical names including that of the poet Mael Milscothach (meaning roughly 'Man of Sweet Words'). In this tale within a tale Mael Milscothach brings his plaint to the king of Tara of the time, and the latter promises him full reparation for the outrage done to him, nor is the hint lost

[5]See Rev. Paul Walsh, *The Placenames of Westmeath* (Dublin, 1957), 22 and n., 350-352. Also *TBC LL*, ed. C. O'Rahilly, ll. 4144, 4229.

[6]See p. 123 ff. inf.

upon Domnall mac Muirchertaig when Urard informs him in due course that he, Domnall, is the king in question and that Mael Milscothach is but a soubriquet doing office for his own name, Urard mac Coise. With commendable dispatch the king has the wrongdoers apprehended and the nobles of Cinél Eogain convoked in council on the matter. Their decision is that they will make good the poet's loss without prejudice to the king's own verdict; they will give him a cow for every petty lord and royal mercenary among them. The king then seeks the united council of *filid* and *brethemain* for the purpose of determining the compensation and honour-price to be paid to the poet, and they in turn refer the problem to Fland, *fer léginn* of Clonmacnois. The upshot of the matter is that Mael Milscothach *alias* Urard mac Coise receives full restitution of his losses as well as an honour-price equal to that of the king of Tara, for it was formally laid down by this learned assembly that henceforth every *ollam* should enjoy equal honour-price with the king of Tara, provided that he was expert in the three arts of *iomus forasna*, *dichetal do chollaib cenn* and *teinm laida*.[7]

Urard mac Coise is an important name in the history of Irish literature and especially the history of the learned fraternity of poets, but the date of his death remains uncertain. According to AU he died in 990, and this receives general confirmation from the other annals. The one exception is FM, which has him survive until 1023. Bergin suggests resolving the difficulty by accepting 990 as the true date and treating those of Mac Coise's poems which refer to events like the battle of Clontarf ' as fictions written in the name of an old poet and later on taken to be genuine.'[8] Alternatively one might assume that Urard mac Coise was confused with Airbertach mac Coise (Dobráin), *airchinnech* and *fer léginn* of Ros Ailithir in the present Co. Cork, whose obit is given in AU at 1016. This might help to

[7]The story of Mac Coise's approach to King Domhnall is recounted as an apologue by Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn (*The Bardic Poems of Tadhg Dall Ó Huiginn*, ed. Eleanor Knott (London, 1922), no. 3, §§25-39). In this version, however, the destruction of the poet's home remains a threat, not an accomplished fact, and his account of it is therefore a clever fiction which nevertheless achieves the same profitable recompense as in the *Airec Menman*.

[8]*Ériu* ix, 174.

explain the later dating ascribed to Urard.[9] The latter is the acknowledged author of *Abair damsa re Der Báil*, a poem of consolation to Der Báil, daughter of Tadg son of Cathal, on the death of her son Aed,[10] and Kuno Meyer and James Carney agree on grounds of language and style in crediting him also with the well known poem to Mór daughter of Donnchad on the loss of a goose.[11] Carney points out that Der Báil was a daughter of Tadg son of Cathal, king of Connacht (+956), that she married Domnall, king of Ailech and of Ireland (+980) and that their son Aed fell in the battle of Craeb Tulcha in 1004; consequently, if the poem is a contemporary one as he believes, it must have been written in 1004, and, if Urard mac Coise was the author, then equally he must still have been alive then. Carney does not come to a firm decision on the matter, but his acceptance of the two poems as Urard's work clearly predisposes him to accept a later date for his death.

As for the *Airec Menman*, its ascription to Urard is not contradicted by the internal evidence. My examination of the language, particularly of the verbal system, suggests a date of composition not far removed from the year 1000, but this can be no more than a rough approximation. Meyer[12] and Marstrander[13] date it towards the end of the tenth century, implying acceptance of Urard's authorship. Carney is of the opinion that it was ' composed by the poet himself before 980 ', and he makes the very relevant point that the two short poems which have been taken to be Urard's work both include a series of references to extant stories which in

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[9]H. Zimmer, *Kelt. Beiträge* I, 200, falls into this very error when he speaks of Mac Coise of Ros Ailithir as the person who made the tale-list.

Urard is credited with a number of poems on Brian Bóruma and the battle of Clontarf which are, however, linguistically of a much later period. One wonders whether there may not be some connection between this spurious minor cycle of poems and the event recorded in AI sa. 990: ' Ros Ailithir was invaded by foreigners, and the *fer légind*, Mac Coise Dobráin, was taken prisoner by them, but he was ransomed by Brian at Inis Cathaig '.

[10]Printed by K. Meyer, *ZCP* vi, 269.

[11]Ed. Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, Todd Lecture Series XVI (Dublin, 1910), 42 ff. (see also p. xxiv); Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics* (Oxford, 1956), 88 ff.

[12]*Zur kelt. Wortkunde*, *Kgl. Preuss. Akad. der Wissensch., Sitzungsber. phil.-hist.* Cl. 1912, §78.

[13]*RC* xxxvi, 383.

fact constitute short tale-lists.[14] More precisely, they are lists of *aideda* or death-tales. Robin Flower was inclined to assign the *Airec Menman* to the eleventh century, presumably on the assumption that it was composed after Urard's death.[15] T. F. O'Rahilly is rather non-committal when he refers to the list in his discussion of the legend of Cairbre Cattchenn:

> A tale, entitled " The Massacre of the nobles by Cairbre Cenn Cait " [*Orgain Coirpri Chinn Chait for shoerchlannaib Érend*], is named in both saga-lists, from which one may infer that a prose version of the story was in existence in the eleventh century, and possibly as early as the tenth. Other evidence, to be mentioned below, goes to show that this story of a massacre by Cairbre cannot have come into existence much earlier than the eleventh century.[16]

In later centuries Urard mac Coise came to figure as a kind of exemplar or archetype of the *fili* in his role of eulogist, confidant of kings and princes, and paragon of learning. In particular, poems are fathered on him which stress the extraordinary favour and generosity shown to himself and other poets by their patrons, and evidently they were intended to bring home to contemporary society—in a rather unsubtle fashion it might seem—the status and privileges that were accorded the *filid* in a less decadent era. But these poems were composed after Urard's time, some of them several centuries after, and the role they ascribe to him is to that extent retrospective and fictitious. However, if the *Airec Menman* is Urard's own work—and, as we have seen, there is no important reason to doubt it—this means that the legendary cycle of Urard as the archetypal *fili* was, to begin with, of his own invention. The deference shown to him by the king of Tara and the abundant compensation granted him for his injury already provide the leit-motif for the subsequent legend. The adjudgement of equal honour-price with the king of Tara to every *ollam* who was expert in the arts of *imbas for-osnai*

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[14] *Ériu* xiii, 309 n. 11, 310.

[15] *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum* II (London, 1926), 318.

[16] *Féil-sgríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill*, ed. Rev. John Ryan (Dublin, 1940), 105. Cf. also O'Rahilly, *EIHM* 159.

' the knowledge which illuminates ', *díchetal de chollaib cenn* (more usually *díchetal de chennaib* ' incantation from heads (ends) '), and *teinm laída* ' the chewing (or breaking open) of the pith ' has the effect of once more emphasizing the privileged status of the *fili* while at the same time linking it firmly with the acquisition of professional qualifications recognized by the *filid* as a corporate body. The triad of ritual methods by which the *fili* acquired inspiration and hidden knowledge is referred to frequently in the literature, though not defined as adequately as one might wish, and in several texts they are spoken of as ' the three things which confirm the *fili* in his professional status ' (*in treide neimthigius filid*); according to the commentary on the law-tract entitled *Uraicecht Becc* this formulation was already in *Bretha Nemed*,[17] which if true would establish it as early as the seventh century.

Its particular use in the *Airec Menman* is well calculated: at one stroke the author contrives to assert the professional status of the *filid* and their corporate solidarity and exclusivity. The evidence suggests that it was Urard mac Coise himself who delivered himself of this essay in vocational propaganda. He was acting as the defender and spokesman of his own order in thus vindicating its traditional dignity and privileges in the face of certain tides of change that threatened to erode the basis of social usage and ideology on which they had been erected through the passing of endless centuries. The historical significance of Urard's initiative I discuss more fully in a forthcoming work. What is interesting—and in its own way significant—is that later advocates of the learned poetic order should have recognized and remembered the significance of his initiative.

Lists A and B are printed below. They are followed by the text of two minor lists, one from a fifteenth-century manuscript in the National Library of Scotland, Gaelic MS. 7, fo. 7r, b, the other from the late introduction to the *Senchas Már*. Neither of these appears to be derived from the other, but their close similarity even in the matter of corruptions leaves little doubt that they have a common source.

[17] *Laws* V, 56; also *Lec.* 168a.

A comparison of the texts of the two manuscripts of list A seems to show that H is not simply an inaccurate copy, whether at first or second hand, of L, but that it derives independently from a common source.[18]

As for the manuscripts of B, their mutual discrepancies do not argue a simple relationship. R and Hl have certain distinctive features in common, e.g. *coimgniudha* R (preface) *coimhciudho* Hl, *coimgneda* N; *do rádha* R (preface) *do radha* Hl, *do radh* N; *Longus Ulad* RHl, *L. nUlad* N; *Fiacalgleo Finntai* R, *F. Findtai* Hl, *F. Finntain* N; *Tochomlad Muscraide di Maig Bregoin* (*Breogain*) RHl, *T. . . . di Maig Uregh* N. The omission of the final *n* of *Finntain* is particularly noteworthy and might seem to point to a common source. There are on the other hand a number of points where R stands alone as against N and Hl, e.g. *Mellgleo nIliach* R (*mellgleo* is masc., but *Mellgleo nIliach* occurs in TBC[19]), *M. Iliach* NHl; *Tochustal Ulad* R, *T. nUlad* NHl (*tochustal* is masc.);[20] *Tochomlad Neimid dochum nErend* R, *T. N. co hErind* NHl. R also includes two titles not in N or Hl, *Feis Tige Gnen* and *Tochmarc Étaíne*, and one cannot simply assume that these (and particularly *Tochmarc Étaíne*) were lacking in the parent list from which list B derives and that they were inserted for the first time in R. R diverges also by including minor extensions to the wording of several titles and by its total omission of the second group of *togla*. In all these points mentioned so far Hl is coupled either with N or with R, but there are at least two notable instances where Hl stands apart from the other two: where NR have *Aithed Bláthnaite ingine Puill meic Fidaig la Coin Culaind*, Hl has *Aithed Bláthnaite ingine Mind meic Fidaig la Coin Culaind*, and where NR have *Orgain Dondāin Ega*, Hl preserves the genitive form *Dondan* in agreement with A (LL). Finally, in the miscellaneous opening section N has *Serglige Con*

[18]Note particularly infra pp. 41 n.3; 42 n.6; 43 n.14; 44 nn.16, 17, 19; 47 n.32; 49 n.40; but also 48 n.34.

[19]*TBC LL*, ed. Windisch, 4589, 4628; ed. C. O'Rahilly, 3894; *TBC YBL*, ed. Strachan and O'Keeffe 2929.

[20]This title also occurs with nasalization in *TBC*, and in her edition of Rec. I (p. 282) Cecile O'Rahilly notes that there is a certain tendency ' to prefix *n-* to proper names beginning with a vowel in titles.'

Culaind corresponding to R's *Aiged Con Culaind* and Hl has both, and among the *tána* R includes *Táin Bó Darti* and (*nó*) *Táin Bó Dartada*, Hl has the latter and R has neither.[21] One could, no doubt, construct a tentative stemma to accommodate these and other variants, but its practical value would be questionable even if it were not positively misleading.

With the exception of the prefactory matter, I print the several texts of the lists in full. Admittedly, to have given a single text of each list accompanied by sets of variants would have been less prodigal of space, but inasmuch as it cannot be demonstrated that any single text is derived directly from one of its fellows and remembering that the lists are likely to be referred to for the most varied reasons, it seems on the whole preferable to print the several texts *in extenso*, even though the discrepancies of substance between LL and H on the one hand and N, R and Hl on the other are relatively few. I have taken few editorial liberties. Expanded abbreviations and compendia I have indicated exhaustively; where, however, a head-word is represented by a single letter accompanied by a point or by a point and a suspension mark, I have left this unexpanded (e.g. *T. Etaine*). I have not normalized the text by supplying marks of length and lenition or by inserting letters omitted in the MSS., but I have dispensed with the points which are used in the MSS., to separate succeeding titles where these are written continuously throughout the line instead of in tabular form; since I print the titles in tabular form throughout and since the MSS. do not employ the points consistently, their retention in the printed text would be merely a source of confusion.

[21]These are presumably variant forms of the same title, though this is obscured by the fact that R links all its titles by *nó* in this part of the list.

LIST A

(LL 189b45) Do nemthigud filed i scélaib ⁊ i comgni*m*aib[1] inso sís da nasnís do rigaib ⁊ flathib .i. uii. coícait scél .i. coic cóicait de *p*rimscélaib ⁊ dá cóicait do foscél*aib* ⁊ ní hármit*er* na fosceóilsin acht do chethri *g*rádaib *tantum* .i. olla*m* ⁊ anrath ⁊ cli ⁊ cano. Ac*us* iss iatso na prímsceóil .i. Togla ⁊ tána ⁊ tochmarca ⁊ catha ⁊ uatha ⁊ i*m*rama ⁊ oitte[2] ⁊ fessa [⁊] forbassa ⁊ echt*r*ada et aithid ⁊ airggne.

'What follows here below concerns the qualification of poets in regard to stories and *coimcne* to be narrated to kings and chieftains, viz. three hundred and fifty tales, viz. two hundred and fifty major tales and one hundred sub-tales, but these sub-tales are reckoned for four grades [of poet] only, viz. *ollam*, *ánrath*, *clí*, and *cano*. And these are the major tales, viz. destructions, cattle-raids, wooings, battles, terrors, voyages, death-tales, feasts, sieges, adventures, elopements, and plunderings:'

.i.[4] It iatso t*r*a na togla .i.	It iatso na togla .i.
Trechuairt Tigi Lir. Et	Treachuaird Tigi Lir
Tunide Tige Burig ⁊	Tui*n*ide Tigi Buired
Smutgal Tige Duma et	Smutgal Tigi Du*m*ach
Deochair Tige Cathbath et	Deochairi Tigi Caf*ath*
Togail Tige Nectai*n* et	Togail Tigi Nec*ht*ain
Tog*ail* Bruidne Uí Dergga	Tog*ail* Bruidne Da D*e*rga
Tog*ail* Bruidne Broi*n* m*aic* Briui*n* ⁊	Tog*ail* Bruidne Daile
Tog*ail* Bruid*ne* hUí Duile et	Tog*ail* Br*uidne* Branai*n* m*aic* Br*i*ui*n*
Tog*ail* Br*uidne* Da Choca	Tog*ail* Br*uidne* Da Choca

V.ll. from H. 3. 17: a congnib; dia naisneis; ⁊ ni hairmidear na fosgea[l]so; ceithrib[3] *g*radaib; anruth; na primsgela[3]; feasa ⁊ forbasa; athaid.

[1]*leg.* comgnib. *For the meaning of the term see p. 123 ff. infra.* [2]*Glossed* .i. báis *above line in LL.* [3]*Note that in these two cases H has older forms than those in L.* [4]*in left margin.*

	LL	H. 3. 17
.ii.[5]	Tana *t*ra i*n*so .i.	Tana *t*ra in*n*so .i.
	Tái*n* Bó Cualg*ne*	Tai*n* Bo Cuailg*ne*
	Tái*n* teora n-erc Echdach	Tai*n* teora n-erc nEach*ach*[6]
	T. Bó Rois	T. Bo Ruis
	T. Bó Regamai*n*	T. Bo Ragamai*n*
	T. Bó Flidaisi	T. Bo Flidais
	T. Bó Fraích	T. Bo Fraich
	T. Bó Fithir	T. Bo Feithir
	T. Bó Faílín	T. Bo Faillin
	T. Bó Gé	T. Bo Gae
	T. Bó Da*r*tada	T. Bo Da*r*tadha
	T. Bó Crebai*n*	
.iii.[7]	Tochmarca i*n*so sís	Tochmarca in*n*so
	Tochma*r*c Meidbe	Tochmarc Nei*m*e
	T. nEmire	To*ch*marc Eimiri
	T. Ailbe	To*ch*ma*r*c Aillme
	T. Etai*n*e	T. Edaine
	T. Faefe	T. Fea
	T. Feirbe[8]	To*ch*ma*r*c Feirbe
	T. Fi*n*nine	To*ch*ma*r*c Fi*n*inde
	T. Gre*i*ne Fi*n*ne[9]	T. Gre*i*ne Fi*n*de
	T. Gre*i*ne Dui*n*ne	T. Gre*i*ne Dui*n*de
	T. Saidbe i*n*gine Sesci*n*d	T. Saidbe i*n*gi*n*e Seisci*n*d
	T. Fithirne ⁊ Darine da i*n*gen Tuath*ail*	Tochmarc Figiri ⁊ Dairi*n*e da ingein Tuath*ail*
	T. mna[10] Crui*n*n	To*ch*ma*r*c mna Cru*i*nd m*a*ic Agnomai*n*
	T. Eithne Uathaige i*n*gi*n*e Cri*m*thai*n*d	T. Eithne Uath*aige* i*n*gi*n*e Cremtai*n*d
.iiii.[7]	Catha dā i*n*so .i.	Catha dā in*n*so .i.
	Cath Maige Tu*r*ed	Cath Muigi Tu*r*id
	C. Talten	Cath Taillten

[5] *in r. margin.* [6] *Note that H has nasalization of the personal name after the gen pl. though it is not in L.* [7] *in r. margin.* [8] f *repeated in margin; slightly smudged in text.* [9] *This title is written twice in MS.; the first instance appears to have been partly erased.* [10] n *written over* a *and repeated in margin.*

LL	H. 3. 17
C. Maige Mucr*ima*	C. Muigi Mucroma
C. Dro*mma* Dólach da*r*a díta Cruthnig	C. Dro*ma* Daloch[11] dar dithaig C*ruithnig*
C. Maige Rath	C. Muigi Rath
C. Corai*n*d	C. Coraind
C. Cláire	C. Clairi
C. Tóiden	C. Boinde
C. Temrach	Cath Temrach
.u.[12] Uatha ī̃ inso .i.	Uatha ī̃. in*n*so .i.
Uath Angeda	Uath Ai*n*geada
Uath Ecalsa.[13] I*m*chu*m*mai*r*	U. Egailsi i*n* Co*m*air
Uath Bel*aig Con* Glais	U. Beal*aig Chon* Glais
U. Licce Blada	U. Lice Blatha
U. Maige Uatha	U. Muigi Uatha
U. Maige I*m*bolg	U. Muigi Bolg
U. Beinne Etair	U. Beinde hEdair
U. Locha Lurga*n*	U. Locha Lurgan
U. Dercce Ferna	U. Deirci Fearna
U. Úama Crúacha*n*	U. Uama Cruchan
.ui.[12]Imrama dā i*n*so .i.	Imrama an*n*so .i.
Imro*m* Maele Dui*n*	Imra*m* Cu*r*aid Mail Duai*n*
Imro*m* hua Corra	
Imro*m* Luiṅge Murche*r*taig ma*i*c Erca	Im*r*a*m* Luin*g*e Mu*r*cer*t*aig ma*i*c Earca
Longes Breg Léith	Loi*n*ges Bri Leith
Longes Brecai*n*	Loi*n*ge*s* Bracain
	Loi*n*ge*s* Eithne Uathaige
Longes Labrada	L. Labrada
Lon*g*e*s* Ḟothaid	Lon*d*e*s*[14] Fothaid

[11] *Perhaps this is to be read as* Da Loch *in H.* [12] *in r. margin. Marginal numerals interrupted after .ui.* [13] *The point seems to be used merely to separate the two words.* [14] *The scribe has evidently misread* g *as* d, *cf. supra* Imram Curaid (*r.* Curaig) Mail Duain *and infra* Tochomlad Clainne Eathach Muidmedoin (*r.* Muigmedoin). *The MS. has no dot after the preceding title,* L. Labrada, *which is written on the same line, and this suggests that the scribe did not notice the transition to a new title.*

LL	H. 3. 17
Oitte dā inso .i.	Aided dō annso
Aided *Con* Ruí	Aided Co*n* Ri
Aided *Con* Cul*aind*	A. *Con* Cul*aind*
Aided Ḟir Dead[15]	A. Fiadmai*n*[15]
A. *Con*aill	A. *Con*aill
A. Celtchair	A. Cealtcair
A. Blai Briu*gad*	A. Blad Briugad
A. Loegaire	A. Laigaire
A. Ferg*us*a	A. Fearg*uis*
A. *Ch*o*n*chob*air*	A. *Con*cobair
A. Ḟiamai*n*	A. F*ir* Diag[16]
A. Mael Ḟatharl*aig* m*aic* Ronai*n*	A. Maile[17] Fadartaig m*a*ic Ronain[18]
A. Taidc m*aic* Cei*n*	
A. m*aic* Ṡamai*n*	
	A. Fi*n*d
	A. Taidg m*aic* Ceı*n*
Fessa iṁ i*n*so .i.	Feasa iṁ ann*s*o .i.
Fess Tige Fir Blai	Feis Thige Fir Blaid
F. Tige Bichair	F. Tige Bicair
F. Tige Tulchi*n*ne	F. Tige Tulcai*n*d*e*
F. Tige Trichim	F. Tigi Treithim
F. Tige Lí	F. Tige Li
F. Tige Line	F. T*ige* Lin*n*e
F. Tige Guit	F. Thige Guid
F. Tigi Gnaair	F. T*ige* Gnair
F. Tigi t*r*í m*a*c Demonchatha	F. T*ige* t*r*i m*a*c nDea*m*ai*n*cathi[19]
F. Tigi Auscle	F. T*ige* Uic*h*tcle
F. Tig*i* Mell Dolaig[20]	F. T*ige* Meall Dalaig

[15]*This pair of titles recurs in reverse order later in the group of* aideda. [16]*The scribe has misread* d *as* g; *in L however the* d *is unmistakable.* [17]*H's* Maile *can scarcely derive from L.* [18]*Between this and the following title O'Looney includes an* Aided Fithail (*see p. 33 n. 2 supra*). *Evidently he has transcribed Fi*ō *twice and misread the* d *as a* t *in the first instance.* [19]*Note that H has nasalization after g. pl.* mac, *though it is not in L.* [20]*There seems to be a dot over* g *in MS.*

LL	H. 3. 17
F. Cruachan	F. T*ige* Cruachan
F. Emna	F. T*ige* A*m*na
F. Ale*n*d	F. T*ige* Tailith[21]
F. Temra	F. T*ige* Teamra
F. Dúin Bolgg	F. T*ige* Dun Bolg
F. Dú*in* Buchet	
Forbossa dā i*n*so .i.	Forbaisi an*n*so .i.
Forbais Fer Fálga	Forbais F*er* Falga
F. Etair	Forbais Edair
F. Aichle	F. Oichli
F. Dú*in* Bárc	F. Du*n* Barc
F. Dúin Bi*n*ne	F. Du*n* Bi*n*de
F. Fer Fidga	F. Fear Fidga
F. Life	F. Life
F. Ladra*n*n	F. Ladra*n*d
Forb*ais* Dro*m*ma Da*m*gaire	F. Druim*e* Dai*m*gaire
Echtrai im̄ i*n*so .i.	Eachtrada im̄ andso sis .i.
Echtra Nera	Eachtra Neara
E. Fiamai*n*	E. Fiamain
E. *Con* Ruí	E. *Con* Ri
E. *Con* Cula*ind*	E. *Con* Cula*ind*
E. *Con*aill	E. *Con*aill
E. *Con*chob*air*	E. *Con*cob*air*
E. Crimtha*ind* Nia Náir	E. Crimtai*n*d Nia N*air*
E. Macha i*ng*i*n*e Aeda R*uaid*	E. Macha i*ng*i*n*e Aeda R*uaid*
E. Nechtai*n* m*aic* Alfroi*n*n	Eachtra Nech*tain* Alfroi*n*d[22]
E. Ailchi*n*d m*aic* Amalgaid	E. Eilci*n*d m*aic* Amalgada
E. Fi*n*d i nDerc Ferna	E. Fi*n*d a nDeirc Fearna
E. Aedai*n* m*aic* Gabrai*n*	E. Aedai*n* m*aic* Gabrai*n*
E. Mael Uma m*aic* Baitai*n*	E. Maile U*m*a m*aic* Baedain
E. Mo*n*gai*n* m*aic* Fiachna	E. Mongai*n* m*aic* Fiachna

[21]*Most likely this is a corruption of the title given as* F. Alend *in L. The initial* t *is perhaps from* Teamra *of the following title, while* th *may be due to misreading* t̄ *as* t̄. [22]*The word* maic *has been omitted before* Alfroind.

LL	H. 3. 17
Aithid im̄ inso .i.	Aithead[23] im̄ annso .i.
Aithed Mugaine re Fiamain	Aithid Mumaine re Fiadaine
A. Derdrinne re macaib Uislenn	Athad Deirdrinde re macaib Uisnech
A. Aefe ingine Eogain re Mes Dead	A. Aife ingine Eogain re Meis Deagad
A. Naise ingine Fergusa re Nertach mac ui Léith	A. Naise ingine Fergusa re Neartach mac Cuilein
A. mna Gaíeir maic Deirg re Glass mac Cimbaetha	A. mna Gaiar[24] maic Deirg re Glas mac Cimaith
A. Blathnaite ingine Puill maic Fidaig re Coin Culaind	A. Blathnaite ingine Paill maic Figaig re Concobair
A. Grainne re Diarmait	A. Grainde re Diarmaid
A. Muire re Dub Ruis	A. Muire re Dub Ruis
A. Ruthcherni re Cuanu mac Cailchin	A. Ruithcearnn re Cuana mac Cailcin
A. Eirce ingine Looirn re Muridach mac Eogain	A. Eirce ingine Logairnn re Muredach mac Eogain
A. Díge re Laidcnén	Athad Creide re Laignen[25]
A. mná Ailella maic Eógain re Fothud Canann	A. mna Oilella maic Eogain re Fothad Canann
.xii.[26]Airgne dā inso .i.	Airgne im̄ annso dō .i.
Argain Maige Cé[27] Gala m̄ Febail	A. Muigi Ce Dala[28]
A. Átha hÍ	
A. Dune Dubglaisse	
A. Dinn Ríg	A. Dindaraig[28a]
A. Atha Cliath	A. Atha Cliath
A. Duine Delga	A. Duine Delga
A. Tuir Chonaind	A. Tuir Conaing
A. Ailig for Néitt mac Indui	A. Neid maic Indaig a nAileach

[23]*Second* a *subscript; perhaps intended to follow* d, *viz.* aitheda. [24]*This word written above line.* [25]*Note the discrepancy between L* and *H with regard to the lady's name.* [26]*In l. margin.* [27]*This could be read either as* cé *or* té. *Perhaps the prep.* la *has fallen out before the following name; cf. list B.* [28]*Or* Cedala. [28a]*This probably represents* Denda (*the older gen. of* Dind) Ríg.

LL	H. 3. 17
A. Belcon Breifne	A. Bel*con* Brthbne[29]
Arg*ain* Cairp*ri* Cin*d* Caitt *for* saerchla*nn*aib hEr*end*	A. Cairb*ri* Cin*d* Cait *for* saercla*nn*aib Erend
A. Echach *for* a ma*cc*aib	A. Each*ach for* a ma*cc*aib
A. Chaille *Chon*aill	A. Cuile *Con*aill
A. Donnán Ego	
A. Ma*ic* Da Thó	A. M*aic* Da To
A. m*ac* Magach	A. m*ac* Magach
A. Side Nenta	A. Siga Nenta
A. Sratha Cluada	A. Ratha Cluata
A. Sleibe Soilgech	A. Sleibe Sealgach
A. Ratha Rigbaird	A. Rata Rigbaird
A. Ratha Ruis Guill	A. R*atha* Rig[30] Guil
A. Ratha Túaige	A. R*atha* Tuaige
A. Ratha Tuaisle	A. R*atha* Tuaisle
A. Ratha Tobachta	A. R*atha* Tobachta
A. R*atha* Timchill	A. R*atha* Timill
A. R*atha* Cuiṅge	A. Ratha Cui*n*ge[31]
A. R*atha* Cuillend	A. R*atha* Cuilli*n*d
A. Cróchan	A. R*atha* Cruachan
A. Cathrach Boirche	A. Cathrach Borce
A. Ratha Blai	A. R*atha Con*lai[32]
A. Ratha Gaila	A. R*atha* Guanlai
A. R*atha* Uillne	A. R*atha* Uillne
A. R*atha* Náis	A. R*atha* Naiss
A. Be*n*ne Cé[32a]	A. Bei*n*de Ce[32a]
A. R*atha* Granaird	A. R*atha* Granaird
A. R*atha* Búirig	A. R*atha* Burich
Braflang Scóine	Braflang Scoi*n*e
Aigidecht Artúir	Aigse Airdu*us*

[29] *i.e.* Br[ei]thbne. [30] *The scribe seems to have repeated inadvertently the word* Rig *from the preceding title.* [31] *This word is preceded by a* t, *written through dittography, which the scribe has erased.* [32] *The scribe of H has obviously misread* ƀ *as* ɔ, *but his exemplar cannot have been L, where the* ƀ *is quite clear.* [32a] *For a suggestion that this title may be a misreading of an original* Orgain Béc(c)e *see* Celtica *xi, 128 ff.*

LL	H. 3. 17
Is amal phrímscéla dā ármither na scelasa sís .i.	Is am*al* p*r*imsgel dō airmither sū sgelso sis .i.
Tomadma ⁊ físi[33] ⁊ serca ⁊ sluagid ⁊ tochlada[34] .i.	Togmaid*m* ⁊ fis ⁊ searca ⁊ sluageada ⁊ tochlada[34] .i.
Tomaidm Locha Echach	Tomaidm Locha Eachach
T. Locha Éirne	Tog*m*aid*m* L*ocha* Eirne
Fís mná Ne*m*id	Fis mna Ne*m*id
Fís *Con*chob*air*	Feis *Concubair*
F. Cuind .i. Baile in Scáil	F. Cuind ł Baile a*n* Sgail
F. Fursu	F. Ursa
Serc Caillige Berre do Ḟothud Chana*n*d	Searc Caille[35] B*err*a do Fothad Canand
S. Dubi Lacha do Moṅgan	Serc Duib Lacha do Mo*n*gan
S. Gormlaithe do Niall	Serc Gor*m*laithe do Niall
Sluagid t*r*a so .i.	Sluaigida t*r*a andso .i.
Sl*uagad* Augaire Móir co hEtáil [36]	Sluaiged Da Ti co Sliab nEalpa
Sl*uagad* Da Thí co Sliab nElpa[36]	S. Ugaine Moir co hEadail
Sl*uagad* Neill m*aic* Echach co Muir nIcht	S. Neil m*aic* Eath*ach* co M*uir* nIcht
Sl*uagad* Fiachna m*aic* Baítá*in* co Dún nGuair*e* i Saxanaib ⁊ p*r*imsluagid hEr*end* archena	S. Fiachna m*aic* Baedai*n* go Du*n* nGuaire i Saxanaib ⁊ P*r*imsluaiged Er*end* arcea*n*a
Tocho*m*lod Partholo*in* dochum ṅhEr*end*	To*m*comlada Pa*r*thaloi*n* docu*m* nEr*end*
T. Nemid co hEr*ind*	T. Neimid co hEirind
T. Fer ṁBolg	T. Fear mBollg
T. Tuathe D*e* D*anand*	T. Tuatha D*e* D*anand*

[33]*Final* i *barely legible.* [34]*The omission of* om *from* tochomlada *in both MSS. suggests that the error was already present in their common source.* [35]*Evidently a suspension mark has been omitted.* [36-36]*These two titles have been transposed by one or other scribe.*

LL	H. 3. 17
T. Míl m*aic* Bile co Espái*n*	T. Mile m*aic* Bile co hEaspai*n*
T. m*ac* Mil*ed* a hEspai*n* *in* hEr*ind*	T. Milid a hEsp*ain* co Er*ind*
T. Cruithnech a Tracia co hEr*ind* ⁊	T. Cruithneach do[37] a Traicia co Breatnaib ⁊ co hEirind
a thoc*homlod* ó hEr*ind* co Albai*n*	T. nEr*end* co hAlbai*n*
Tocomlod Loṅgsi Ferg*us*a a hUltaib	T. Lo*ingse* Ferg*us*a a hUll*taib*
Toc*homlod* Mus*c*raigi de Maig Bregoi*n*	T. Mus*r*aige do Maig Breag
Toc*homlod* na nDési ó Themraig et	T. na Neissi o Teamraig
Toc*homlod* Clai*n*ne Echach Mugmedoi*n* a mMide et	T. Cl*ainne* Eathach Muidmedoi*n* .i. a Mide
Toc*homlod* Céi*n* ó Chassiul et	T. Cein o Caissil
Toc*homlod* Dáil Riatai i *n*Albai*n*	T. Dal Riada i nAlbai*n*
Et i*nn*í rohort ⁊ robith ⁊ atbath	⁊ inni roort ⁊ robith ⁊ adbath
Ni fili nad chomgne co*m*athar na[38] scéla uile.	Ni fuil inad congne datarnaid[39] na sgela uille:[40] Finid

[37] *Perhaps the scribe wrote* do *in error and forgot to delete it when he added the correct prep.*, a. [38] *The scribe wrote* nad, *but the* d *has evidently been erased.* [39] *Most likely* da *has resulted from misreading* ɔa, *in which case H cannot be a direct copy of L, which has* cɔa *in this position.* [40] *For the doubling of the* l *cf. perhaps* T. Bó Fáilín *L*=T. Bo Faillin *H*, Cath Talten *L*=Cath Taillten *H; on the other hand* Argain Chaille Chonaill *L*=A. Cuile Conaill *H*, Sluagad Neill meic Echach *L*=S. Neil meic Eathach *H*.

LIST B

(RIA, 23 N 10, p.29)... Iarmifocht[1] in righ[2] scé*la* dosum iar tairisie*m*.[3] Isb*er*tso*m* fri sodhain rocuala[4] sc*e*la mora, ar bat*ar* meb*r*a laisiu*m* coi*m*gneda[5] ┐ sceoil ┐ senchu*s*a ┐ gabala Er*end* do neoch f*or*caomnacair dibh o chétgaphail Er*end*[6] iar ndilin*n* cu*s*in n-aim*s*ir si*n*[7] a mbuí feisne.[8] Isb*er*t iaro*m* in ri ara n-in*n*isiodh dó[9] ni do*n*a[10] sc*e*laibh scoitegda[11] si*n*, ar rop*d*ar[12] mebhra laiss iat. [13]Isb*er*tsom f*r*isi*n* ri[g]:[13] ' Dogóasi ',[14] ol se, ' do t(h)ogha do p[h]*r*imsc*e*luiph Er*end* ┐ cidhbe sc*e*l dibh dogóa[15] adfiassarsa duit.' Isb*er*t in righ f*r*issiu*m* in tiuphr*ad*[16] a rogha ndo.[17] ' Dober em,' ol[18] eisidhe. ' A*cht*[19] tuirimsi du*n* anman*n*a[20] na[21] sceul si*n* at[22] meb*r*a lat, co feasamar iar siuidhiu[23] cid sc*e*l dibh[24] dogoafam[25] do faisneis dui*n*.' *Con*ad iar*om* roairmist*air* an*m*an*n*a[26] coimghne ┐ p*r*imsgeul nEr*end*[27] do neoch dibh bat*ar* meb*r*a ndó[28] do radh,[29] *co n*-epert:

' ... Presently the king asked him for tidings*. He replied that he had heard many tidings*, for he could recall the *coimcne*, tales*, historical traditions and takings of Ireland such as had come to pass from the first taking of Ireland after the Flood until the time in which he himself lived. The king then asked him to recount some of those Scottic tales, since he remembered them, and he replied: " Take your choice of the prime-tales of Ireland and whichever tale you choose I shall narrate to you." The king asked him would he grant him his choice. " I will indeed ", he said. " Then enumerate for me the titles of those tales that you remember, so that I may then know which story I shall choose to have told to me." And so he enumerated the titles of the *coimcne* and prime-tales of Ireland which he was able to narrate:'

V.ll. from Rawl. B 512 and Harl. 5280: [1]iarmifoacht *R*, iarmofo*acht Hl* [2]ind rí *R*, ind *ri Hl* [3]tairisim *R*, tairisiu*m Hl* [4]ro chuala *R* [5]coi*m*gniudha *R*, coimhciudho *Hl* [6-6]do neoch ... Erend *om. R* [7]sin *om. R.* [8]fessin *R* [9]dó *om. Hl* [10]donaib *Hl* [11]scoticdaib *R*, scoiteacoib *Hl* [12]bat*ar R* [13-13]Asb*er*tsom dō f*r*issiu*m* in rig *R*, Isb*er*tsom iar*om* frisand *r*icch *Hl* [14]toga *R*, dogoso *Hl* [15]toga *R*, doghu *Hl* [16]ar tibhred *R*, in dtiobradh *Hl* [17]ndo *om. R* [18]ar *R* [19]acht *om. Hl* [20]anmand *R*, anman*n Hl* [21]ina *Hl* [22]ata *R* [23]iar suidiu *R*, *om. Hl* [24]cia dibh sgél *Hl* [25]togfamait *R*, dogofum *Hl* [26]an*m*and *RHl*, anmand *Hl* [27]┐ p*r*imscela Er*end Hl* [28]mebair dó *R* [29]do ráda *R*, do radha *Hl*

**Scél*, o, n., pl. *scéla*, later *sceóil*, means both ' tale ' and ' news, tidings.'

N	R	H1
Cid gnathscela hEr*end* b*us* maith lat atfiasarsa duit .i.	Cid gnathscela Er*end* b*us* maith lat atfiasarsa duit. edhon	Cid ccnathsg*e*la hEr*end* bus mait latt attfiasursa .i.
	Oighidh *Con* Culaind. nó	Aig*ed Con Culaind.* no
Ser*g*lighi *Con* C*ulaind*		Sercclidhe *Con Culaind.*
Tromdam Ech*ach* Aireman	Tromdam Ech*ach* Aireman. nó	Trom*da*mh Echuch Airemain.
Sc*el* Uath h*Ec*ailsi	Scél Uath Ecalsi. Cid	Scc*el* Uath Eaccailsi.
Gab*ail* in tSidhe	Gab*ail* an tŠída. Cid	Gab*ail* an tSio*dha*
Aislingi i*n* Ma*ic* Oig.	Aislingthi an Ma*ic* Óic. Cid	Aisling[1] in Ma*ic* Oig. Cid
Tain Bo Cuailng*ni*.	Táin Bó Cuailngi. Cid	Tai*n* Bo Cuail*nge*.
Cupar in da Mucadha	Cupar na da Muiceda. Cid	Cup*ur* an *da* Mucc*ada*.
Long*us* nUl*ad*	Long*us* Ul*ad* . Cid	Longus Ul*ad*.
*Con*gala *Con*aild C*er*naigh	*Con*gala *Con*aill C*er*naig. Cid	Congalo *Con*aill Cernuicch.
Cathbuadha *Con* Roi.	Cathbuada *Con* Raí m*eic* Dare. nó	Cathbuadhu Con Roi.
Cal*ad*hgleo C*e*thir*n*	Calathgleo Cethern. *nó*	Caladhgleo Cetharn.
Mellgleo Iliach.	Mellgleo nIliach. *nó*	Meillgleo Iliach
Fiac*al*gleo Fin*n*tai*n*.	Fiacalgleo Fin*n*tai. nó	Fiacailgleo Findtai.
Airecar nAr*ad*h	Airecar nArad. *nó*	Aireccar nArad.
Brisl*e*ch Moighi Murthei*m*ne	Breislech Moigi Murthe*m*ne. *nó*	Breislech Muidhe Muirteimhne.
Imslighi Glen*n*amn*a*ch	Imsligi Glenda*m*nach. nó	Imslighe nGleandamhnac.
In Cath f*or* Gai*r*ich ⁊ Irgairich.	An Cath f*or* Gáirig ⁊ Irgáir*i*g. *nó*	In Cath for Ccairigh. ⁊ Irgairigh.

[1]g *added above line.*

N	R	H1
Ús in Duiu *Chu*ailngne dia Thir.	Aús *in* Duib Chualngi dia Tír. *nó*	Auss in Duib Chuailne dia Tír
*Da*mghal ina Tarbh a Tardba	Damgal na Tarb hi Tarbgae. *nó*	Damhgal na dTarb.
Toch*ustal* nUl*ad*	Toch*us*tal Ul*ad*. *nó*	Toch*ustal* nUl*ad*.
F*ercuitred* Medhba	Ferchuitred Medbha. nó	Fercuidr*ed* Medba.
Mesca Ul*ad*.	Mescad Ul*ad*. nó	Measca Uladh.
Boithrei*m* Ul*ad*.	Baethre*m* Ul*ad*. *nó*	Baoithreim Ul*adh*.
Forbuis bF*er* bFalg*ae*	Forbais Fer Falgae. *nó*	Forfeis Fer Falgó.
Toicheim i*n*a Buidhe*n*	Toichim na mBuiden hi Slemain. nó	Toitceim na mBuidhen.
Airne Finghin.	Árne Fi*n*gin. nó	Arne Fincci*n*.
Sce*l*a Alax*andair* m*aic* Pilip ac gab*ail* righi ⁊ imp*erichta* in domai*n*.	Scela Alaxandair m*aic* Pil*ip* Chaic oc gab*ail* rigi ⁊ imp*e*rechta an do*m*ai*n*.	Scc*e*la Alax*andair* m*aic* Pilip oc gabail ricche ⁊ i*m*pere*chta* an domain.
Mad f*err* lat atfiasarsa duit na tanadha .i.	Mad ferr lat atfiasar duit na tana .i.	Mad f*err* lat atfias*ur*sa duit na tana .i.
Tain Bo Cuailnge	Táin Bu Cualngne. *nó*	Tain Bo Cuail*ngne*.
Tain Bo Fraich.	Táin Bó Fraich. *nó*	T. Bo Fraoic.
	Táin Bo Darti. *nó*	
	Tain Bo Dartada. *nó*	T. Bo Ragamain.[2]
Tain Bo Regam*ain*	Táin Bó Regamai*n*. *nó*	T. Bo Dartad*ha*.[2]
Tai*n* Bo Regamne	Tain Bó Rega*m*na.	T. Bo Raga*m*nao

[2]*Note that these two titles are inverted by comparison with the arrangement in R.*

N	R	Hl
Mad *ferr* lat atfiasarsa duit na he*cht*radha .i.	Mad ferr lat atfíasarsa duit na hectrada .i.	Mad farr lat atfiasarso duit na hechtr*ada* .i.
E*chtr*a Brain m*aic* Febail.	Ectra Bro*in* m*aic* Febail. *nó*	Echtra Brain m*ic* Feabail.
Eachtra Fergussa m*aic* Lete.	Ectra Ferg*us*a mic[3] Leiti. nó	E. F*ercus*o m*aic* Leide.
Echtro Nero m*aic* Niat*ain*.	Ectra Nera m*aic* Niadai*n* m*aic* Tacai*m*. *nó*	E. Nera m*ic* Niadai*n*.
Echtra Oengusae m*aic* Fergusa Fi*n*n.	Ectra Oengu*s*a m*aic* Ferg*us*a Find. *nó*	E. Ae*ncc*u*s* m*aic* F*ercus*a Find.
Echtro *Chon* Cul*aind*	Ectra *Con* Cul*aind*. *nó*	Ectra *Con Culaind*.
Echtro Chri*m*thoi*n*n Niad Nai*r*.	Ectra C*r*imthain*n* N*iad* N*air nó*	E. C*r*imtain*n* Nia Nair.
Echtro Chui*n*n C*etcathaig*.	Ectra Cuind C*etchathaig nó*	E. *Cu*ind .100. *ca*thoigh.[4]
Echtro Airt m*aic* Cui*n*d.	Ectra Airt m*aic* Cuin*n*. *nó*	E. Airt m*aic Cu*ind.
Echtro Muirq*er*toig m*aic* h*Er*co	Ectra Corm*aic* h*ui* Cuin*n*.[5] *nó*	E. Corbm*aic* m*aic* Airt.[5]
Echtro Chorbm*aic* ui Chui*n*n.	Ectra Murc*er*taig m*aic* Erca.[5]	E. M*urcer*taig m*aic* Erco.[5]
Mad ferr lat atfiasarsae duit na cui*mper*to .i.	Mád ferr lat dā atfesar na coi*mper*ta .i.	M*a*dh f*err* lat atfias*ur*sa duit na coimp*er*ta .i.
Coi*m*pert *Con*chob*air*.	Coi*m*pert *Con*chab*air* m*aic* Nessa.	Coimp*er*t *Con Culaind*.[6]
Coi*m*pert *Con* Cul*aind*.	Comp*ert Con* Cul*aind*.	C. *Concubair*[6]

[3]mic *added above line.* [4]ca *written as* K. [5-5]*These two titles have been transposed either in RHl or N; but while R and Hl agree in regard to sequence, N and R have* C. uí Chuinn *as against* C. maic Airt *in Hl.* [6]*These two titles have been transposed in Hl or in NR.*

N	R	Hl
Coim*pert Con*aill Cher*naig*	Com*pert Con*aill Cer*n*aig. *nó*	C. Conaill Cer*n*ach.
Coim*pert* Cheltchar m*aic* Uithechair.	Com*pert* Celtch*air* m*aic* Guth*echair*. *nó*	C. Celtcuir m*aic* Uith*echair*.
Com*pert* Chorbm*aic* h*ui* Cui*n*d.	Com*pert* Corm*aic* h*ui* Cuind.	C. Cor*m*aic i Cuind.
Mad ferr lat atfiassorsae deit dō p*r*imchatho h*Erend* .i.	Mád ferr lat dā atfiasarsa duit p*r*imcatha hEr*end* .i.	Mad f*err* lat dā atfias*ur*sa duit pri*m*catha Er*end* .i.
Cath Moig Tuir*ed*	Cath Muigi Tuired. *nó*	Cat Muicche Tuired
Cath Cind Fheu*r*ot.	Cath Cin*n* Abrat.	Cat Cind Feabrat.
*Ca*th Moigi hItho.	Cath Muigi hItha. *nó*	C. Muighe hIthe.
*Ca*th Moigi Muc*r*omae	Cath Muigi Muc*r*oime *nó*	C. Muighe Muicri*m*e
*Ca*th Cilli Osn*aide*.	Cath Cilli Osnada. *nó*	Cat[h] Cille hOsnadha.
*Ca*th Aichli.	Cath Aichli. *nó*	C. Aithcle.
*Ca*th Duphchomair.	Cath Duibco*m*air. *nó*	C. Dubcum*uir*.
*Ca*th Fre*m*an*n*	Frémand.	C. Fremand.[7]
Mad ferr lat na toghla do in*n*isi*n* duit .i.	Mád ferr lat na togla do indis duit .i.	Mat ferr lat anfiasursa duit na togla
Tog*ail* Traei.	Tog*ail* Traí.	T. Trai.
T. Dio.	Tog*ail* Dio.	T. Dio.

[7]r *added above line.*

N	R	Hl
T. in T*uir*.	Tog*ail* an Tuir.	Togail an T*uir*.
T. Larisa.	Tog*ail* Larisa.	Toccail Larisa.
T. Elcluaidhi.	Tog*ail* Eal cluade.	Tog*ail* Ealcluaidhe.
T. Du*in* Aeng*us*a.	Tog*ail* Du*in*e hOeng*us*o. *nó*	Tog*ail* Duin Aenc*us*.
T. Br*uidn*e *Da* Derga.	Tog*ail* Br*uidn*e Dá Derga.	Tog*ail* Pruidne *Da* Dercca.
T. Br*uidn*e *Da* Choga	Tog*ail* Br*uidn*i Da Choga.	Tog*ail* Pruidne *Da* Cogo.
T. Br*uidn*e Belc*on* Breifne.	Tog*ail* Br*uidn*i Bélc*on* Brefni.	T. Bruidhne Belcon Breiffne.
T. Br*uidn*e *Dá* Thi	Tog*ail* Br*uidn*i Dá Tí.	Tog*ail* Br*uidn*e *Da* Thi.
Mad f*err* lat dā[8] atfiasa*r*sa duit na fesa .i.	Mad ferr lat atfessar duit dona fessaib .i.	Mad f*err* lat atfiasarsa duit na fesa .i.
Feis Tighe Bricren*n*.	Feiss Tigi Bricrend.	Feis Tighe Bric*r*eand.
Feis Tighi Mo*n*duirn.	F. Tigi Monduir*n*.	Fes Tiche Mondhuirnd
Feis Tighi hI*cht*air.	Feis Tigi Ichtair.	Feis Ticche Icht*air*.
Feis Tighi Caire	F. Tigi Cairi.	Fes Tige Caire.
	F. Tigi Gne*n*.	
Feis Tighi Gnoain	F. Gnoain. *nó*	F. T*ige* Ccnóáin.
Feis Tighi Nucl*in*	Fes Tigi Nuclin. *nó*	F. T*ige* Nuiclin.
Feis T*ighi* Melladhain	Feis Tigi Melladain.	F. T*ige* Mealladain.

[8]dā *added above line.*

N	R	H1
Mad f*err* let atfias*ur*sa duit do*n*a builibh .i. Buili in Scail B. Bric*i*ne B. Bic m*aic* De B. Cimbaoith Fatha B. Mo*c*huda	Mad ferr lat atfessar duit dona bailib .i. Baili an Scáil. *nó* Baili Bricine. *nó* B. Bic m*aic* Dé. *nó* Baili Cimbaith Ḟátha. *nó.* B. Mochuta.	Mad ferr let atfias*ur*so duit ni dinibh builiuh .i. Buile an Sccail Buile Pricine. B. Bicc m*aic* Dé. B. Cimbaith Fátha. B.[9] Mocuatta.
Mad fea*r*r let atfias*ur*arsa duit na tochmarca .i.	Mad ferr lat atfesar duit na tochmarca .i.	Madh ferr lat atfias*ur*sao ttuit na tochmarcao .i.
Tocm*ar*c Eimiri la *Coin* Cul*aind.*	Tochm*ar*c Edai*n*e Tochmarc nE*m*iri do Choi*n* Cul*aind.*	Tochmarc Eim*i*re la *Coin* Culaintt.
Tocm*ar*c Aillbhe i*ngin*e Corm*aic* la Fi*nn*	T. Aillbhi ingi*n*e Corm*aic* h*ui* Cuind lá Find úa mBaíscne.	To*chmarc* Ailluhe i*ngin*e Corbmaic la Fiond.
Mad f*err* lat atfias*ur*sa deit na haithigh .i. Aithe Blathnaiti i*ngin*e Puill m*aic* Fidhaigh la *Coin* Cul*aind.*	Aitheda dā .i. Aithed Bláthnaiti i*n*gine Puill m*aic* Fidaig le Coi*n* Cul*aind.*	M*a*d f*err* lat adfiasursa duit na haithedhu .i. Aitheth Blathnaite i*ngin*e Mind[10] m*aic* Fiodh*aig* la Coin *Cu*laittn.

[9] *After* B *the scribe of Hl began to repeat* Cimbaith *of the preceding title. He stopped in the middle of* m *and deleted his error.*
[10] *Cf. Held. 436 f., 438, 441.*

N	R	Hl
Aithi Graine *ingin*e Corbm*aic* la Diarm*aid* ua nDuibne	A. Graine *ingin*e Corm*aic* ri Diar*m*aitt h*ua* nDuibni.	Aith*ed*[11] Gran*n*e *ingin*e Corbm*aic* la Diarmaid ua Duibhne
Aithi Mairi la Duph Ruis	A. Máiri ri Dub Ruis.	Aith*ed* Maire re Dubh Rois.
A. Ruithceirne la Cuana m*ac* Cailcin	A. Ruich*er*ne ri Cúana m*ac* Cailcin.	Aith*ed* Suithcherne re Cuana m*ac* Cailchine.
A. Eirc *ingin*e Loair*n* le M*u*redach m*ac* Eog*ain*	A. Eirci *in*gine Loairne ri Muiredach m*ac* nEog*ain*.	Aith*ed* Erce *ingin*e Lodhairn re Muir*ed*hach m*ac* Eocch*ain*.
A. Dighe la Ladhgnen	Aith*ed* Dici ri Laidgnéan.	Aith*ed* Dicche la Laidhgnen
A. mna Oililla m*aic* Eog*ain* la Fothadh Canan*n*	A. mna Oil*e*lla m*aic* Eog*ain* ri Foth*ad* Canan*n*.	Aith*ed* mna Ail*e*l*la* m*aic* Eucch*ain* la Fathadh Canand.
Madh f*err* lat toghla .i.		Mad f*err* lat adfiasarsa
T*r*eochair Tighe Lir ⁊		duit na tocchla
Tuinighe Tighe Buirich		Trechur[12] Ticche Lir.
Smutgal Tighe D*um*a		Tuinidhe Buiricc.
Deochai*r* Tighi Cathbad.		Smudccal Tichi Dumha.
Togail Tighe hEchadha		Deoair Ticche Cathpadh.
		Togh*ail* Ticche nEcha*da*.

[11]ait *written below line.* [12]⁊ Treochair *is written in above the line.*

N	R	Hl
Tog*ail* Bruighne Briain m*aic* Briui*n*.		Tog*hail* Pruicchne Brian m*aic* Briain[13].
Tog*ail* Br*uighn*e Udili.		Tog*hail* Bruicch*n*e ua Dili.
Mad f*err* lat tomad*m*ond ⁊ fisi ⁊ serca ⁊ sluag*id* ⁊ tochomladha .i.	Mad ferr lat tomadman*n* ⁊ físi ⁊ serca ⁊ sluag*id* ⁊ toco*m*lada .i.	Mad ferr lat atfias*ar*so duit tomad*m*man*n*a oc*us* feissi ocuss s*er*cca ⁊ sluaigh*id* ocoss toccomladae .i.
Tomaid*m* Lacha hEch*ach*.	Tomaidm Locha hEch*ach*.	Tomaidm Locha Eachach.
Tomaid*m* Logha hErne.	Tom*aidm* Locha Éirne.	Tomaid*m* Locha hErne.
Tomaid*m* Bri.	Tom*aidm* Brí.	Tomaid*m* Brí.
Fis m*n*a Nem*id*.	Fis mna[14] Neimid.	Fís mna Nemedh.
Fis *Con*cob*air*.	F. *Conchobair*.	Fís Chonchob*air*.
Fis Chuind C*etcath*aig .i. Baili in Scail.	F. Cuin*n* C*etchathaig* .i. Baili an Scáil.	Fís Choin*n* Cetchath*aig* .i. Uuile in Scail.
Fis Fursa.	F. Furrsa.	Fis Fursa.
Searc Caill*ig*i Berre do Focha Canainde	Serc Chaillighi Bérre do Foth*ad* Canain*n*e	Serc Caill*ig*e Berrae do Foth*ad* Canoin*n*e.
Serc Crede do Canan*n* m*ac* Gartnain	Serc Creidi do Canaind m*ac* Gartnai*n*.	Serc Credi do Chanon*n* m*ac* G*ar*tnain.

[13] ł u *is written above the* a. [14] mna *added above line.*

N	R	Hl
Ser*c* Duibhe Lacho do Mong*an*.	Serc Duibi Lacha do Mongan.	Serc Duibe Lacho do Mongan.
Ser*c* Gormlaithi do Nia*ll* Glu*n*duph	S. Gor*m*laithe do Niall Glúndub.	Serc Gormlaite do Niall Glu*nn*dub.
Sluagid dā .i.	Sluaig*id* dō .i.	Na sluaiged[15] dna .i.
Sluag*ad* Ugaine Moir co hEtail	Sluag*ad* Ughai*n*e Móir cu hEdail.	Sluaig*ed* Ugoi*n*e Moir co hEtoil.
Sl*uagad* Da Ti co Sliab nElpa	S. Dá Tí co Sl*iab* nElpa.	S. Da Thi co Sliau nElpo.
Sl*uagad* Ne*ill* m*aic* Echach co Muir nIgt.	S. Néill m*aic* Ech*ach* co Muir nIcht.	S. Neill mic Ech*ach* co Muir nIo*cht*.
Sl*uagad* Fiachna m*aic* Baotain co Dun nGuaire i Saxanch*aib* ⁊ primsluag*id* Er*end* olchena	S. Fiachnai m*aic* Baetain co Dún nGuairi i Sax*anchaib* ⁊ p*r*imsluaig*id* Er*end* olchena.	S. Fiacnae m*aic* Baetai*n* co Dun mGuaire i Saxonchoib occos p*r*imsluaicc*id* Erin*n* olche*no*.
To*chomlad* Par*tholain* co hEr*ind*	Tochomlad Parrthal*ain* cu hEr*ind*	Tochchomla*d* Partoloin co hErin*n*.
To*chomlad* Nem*id* co hEr*ind*	To*chomlad* Neimidh doch*um* nEr*end*,	Tochomlad Nemed co hErin*n*.
To*chomlad* Fer mBolg co hEr*ind*	T. Fer mBolg co hEr*ind*.	T. bFer mBolcc co h*Erinn*.

[15]*This form is perhaps a simple error rather a relic of the* o*-stem neuter n. pl. without flexional ending.*

N	R	Hl
To*chomlad* Tuaithi D*e* D*anann* go[16] hEr*ind*	T. Tuaithi De D*anann* co hEr*ind*.	T. Tuaithe De Danon*n* co hErin*n*.
To*chomlad* Mil*ed* m*aic* Bil*i* co Espain.	T. Mil*ed* mic Bili co hEspai*n*.	T. Mil*ed* mic Bile co hErin*n* no co hEspain.
To*chomlad* m*ac* Mili a hEspai*n* co hEr*ind*	T. m*ac* Mil*ed* a hEsp*ain* cu hEr*ind*.	T. m*ac* Mil*ed* a hEspain co hE*rinn*.
To*chomlad* Cruithnech a Tracia co hEr*ind* ⁊ a nAthto*chomlad* a hEr*ind* co hAlb*ain*	T. Cruthnech a T*r*acia cu hEr*ind* ⁊ a nAthto*chomlad* cu hAlb*ain* a hEr*ind*.	T. Cruithnech a T*r*accia co h*Erinn* occos a nAthtocoml*ad* a h*Erinn* co hAlb*ain*.
To*chomlad* Lo*i*ngsi Ferg*u*sa a hUllta	T. Lo*i*ngsi Ferg*u*sa a hUllt*aib*.	T. Loingsi Ferccu*s*o a hUlltoib
To*chomlad* Muscr*aid*e di Maig Uregh	T. M*u*scraide di Maig Breogai*n*	T. M*u*scraide do Muid mBre*g*oi*n*.
To*chomlad* na nDeissi a Temr*aig*h	T. na nDesi a Temr*aig*.	T. na nDeisi a Temr*aig*.
To*chomlad* Clo*inn*i Ech*ach* Mugm*ed*hoi*n* a Midhi	T. Clo*inn*e Mug*medoin* a Midi.	T. Cloin*n*e Ech*ach* Muig*medoin* a Mide.
To*chomlad* C*éin* a Caisil	T. Céin a Caisil.	T. Cein a Caissil.
To*chomlad* Dal Riata a nAlbain ⁊ ani ro hort ar*aile* cin*ed*ha imdha fo Er*ind* archena	T. Dal Ríata a hAlb*ain* ⁊ i*nn*i ro ort araile ci*n*eda imda fo Er*ind*.	T. Dail Riado a hAlboi*n*. occ*us* anndí ro ort aroile cinedae imdae fo hEri*n*d.

[16]*The* g *appears to have been written over a* d.

N	R	Hl
Ma ferr lat dā orcne .i.	Mad ferr lat dō oircni .i.	Mad ferr lat itfiasorso dna na oirccne .i.
Org*ain* Maighi Ce la Galo m*ac* Fephail	Orca*in* Muigi Cé.[17] Gala m*ac* Febail.	Orcco*in* Moighe Cé la Galae mac Feboil.
Org*ain* Atha hAi	Orc*ain* Atha hÍ.	Orgu*in* Atho hI.
Org*ain* Duin Dubgl*aisi*.	O. Duini Dubglaisi.	Orgo*in* Dui*n* Dubglaise.
Org*ain* Din*n* Rig.	O. Din*n* Ríg.	Org*ain* Din*n* Riocch.
Org*ain* Atho Cliath.	O. Atha Cl*iath*.	O. Atha Cliath
Org*ain* Dune Delgo*n*.	O. Dú*in*e Delga.	Orcuin Duine Dealcan.
Org*ain* Donain Egai.	O. Dondain Ega.	Org*ain* Dondan Ega.
Org*ain* Ma*ic* Da Tho.	O. M*eic* Da Thó.	Org*ain* Me*ic* *Da* Tho.
Org*ain* m*ac* Mághach.	O. m*ac* Mágach.	Org*ain* m*ac* Macchach.
Org*ain* Sidae Nento.	O. Side Nen*n*tan.	Org*ain* Sithe Neanta.
Org*ain* Srathae Sluado.	O. Sratha Slúaga.	Org*ain* Srata Sluagha
Org*ain* Slebi Soilgech.	O. Slebi Soilgech.	Org*ain* Sleibe Solgech.
Org*ain* Tuir *Con*aing.	O. Tuir *Con*aing.	Org*ain* Tuir *Con*aincc.
Org*ain* Oilig f*or* Net m*ac* Indoi.	O. Oil*ig* for Néit.	Org*ain* Eilig for Neid m*ac* In*n*dai.
Org*ain* Belch*on* Bre*if*ne.	O. Bél*con* Breifne.	Org*ain* Bel*con* Breiffni.

[17] *The scribe of R has placed a dot after* Cé *as if that were the end of the title, unless it is merely intended to separate* Cé *and* Gala.

N	R	Hl
Or*gain* Coirp*r*i Chi*n*d Chait for shoerclan*n*aib Erend.	O. Cairpri Cin*n* Cait.	Or*gain* Cairbri Cin*n* Cait for hsaorcl*ann*oib Er*end*[18]
Or*gain* Ech*ach for* a m*a*coibh.	O. Ech*ach* for a m*a*caib.	Orccain Ech*ach* fuor a m*a*coibh.
Or*gain* Cailli *Con*aill.	O. Cailli *Con*aill.	Orccai*n* Chaille Conaill.
Or*gain* Ratho Rigbaird.	O. Rátha Rigbaird.	Or*gain* Ratha Ricchbard.
Or*gain* Ratho Ruis Guill.	O. Rátha Ruis Guill.	Or*gain* Rata Ruis Ccuill
Or*gain* Ratho Tuaghi	O. Ratha Tuaigi.	Or*gain* Rata Tuaithe
Or*gain* Rathi Tuasle	O. Rátha Tuaisli.	Or*gain* Ratha Tuaisli.
Or*gain* Ratha Tobachta	O. Rátha Tobachta.	Or*gain* Ratha Tobachta.
Or*gain* Ratha Timcell	O. Ratha Cuillin*n*[19]	Or*gain* Ratha Ti*m*cill.
Or*gain* Ratha Cuinge	O. Ratha C*r*uach*an*	Or*gain* Ratha Cuincce.
Or*gain* Ratha Cuillen*n*[19]	O. Ratha Ti*m*chill.	Or*gain* Ratta Cuille*nn*[19]
Or*gain* Ratha Cr*uach*an	O. Ratha Cui*n*ge	Orgain Ratha Cruachna[20]
Or*gain* Cathrach Boirche	O. Cat*r*ach Boirchi.	Or*gain* Cathrach Boirchi
Or*gain* Ratha Blae	Orc*ain* Ratha Blae.	Or*gain* Ratha Blae
Or*gain* Ratha Guale	O. Ráta Gualae.	Or*gain* Ratha Guala
Or*gain* Ratha Uilne	O. Ra*tha* Uilne.	Orcain Ratha Uilne
Or*gain* Ratha Nais	O. Ratha Nais.	Orgain Ratha[21] Nais

[18]*Only* ē *is visible in inner margin in photostat, but* r *may be hidden by curve of MS. page.* [19]*Note that this and the following title occur two places earlier in R than in NHl.* [20]*The* a *is not visible in the photostat, but is no doubt hidden in the curve of the inner margin in the MS.* [21]*The second* a *of* ratha *is not visible in the photostat, being concealed presumably by the curve of the inner margin of the MS. page.*

N	R	Hl
Or*gain* Bene Ce[21a]	O. Bein*n*e Cé.	Orcain Binde Cé
Or*gain* Ratha Granaird	Or*gain* Ratha G*r*anairit.	Or*gain* Ratha G*r*anaird
Or*gain* Ratha Buirig	O. Ratha Burich.	Or*gain* Ratha Buirigh
S*echt* Orcai*n*[22] Lindais.	Secht Orc*ain*[22] Linnuis.	Secht nOrgain Lindais
Or*gain* Dui*n* Sobairce	Or*gain* Dui*n* Sobairchi.	Or*gain* Duin Sophairci
Or*gain* Dui*n* Cearmna	O. Dui*n* Cermna.	Or*gain* Duin Cermna
Or*gain* Dui*n* Bolg	O. Dui*n* Bol*c*.	Orc*ain* Bolg
Or*gain* Dui*n* Bice	O. Dui*n* Bici.	Orcai*n* Duin Bice
Or*gain* Dui*n* Bin*n*e	Or*gain* Dui*n* Bin*n*e.	Org*ain* Dui*n* Binde
Or*gain* Catrach *Con* Roi	Or*gain* Catrach *Con* Rai.	Org*ain* Cathrac Con Roí
Or*gain* Catrach Mail Millscothaigh . . .	Orc*ain* Catrach Mail Milscoth*aig*	Orgain Cathrach Maoilscoth*aig* . . .

[21a] *See p. 47, n. 32[a] supra.*

[22] *N and R suggest that the original reading may have been* Secht-orcain.

THE LIST IN ADVOCATES LIBRARY, EDINBURGH, MS. VII, FO. 7R, B.*

Dliged ollaman ⁊ airdfiled ⁊ saersenchada, lucht fodluma na healadna, .víi .l. scel do primsgelaib ⁊ tri .l. fosgel aige da n-indisin a ndaledhaib ⁊ a[1] n-oirechtasaib da rigaib ⁊ do ruirechaib ⁊ do rigdamnaib, do thriat[h]aib ⁊ do thaisechaib ⁊ d'espugaib dá n-urgairdiugud.[2] Daid ise diles na filidechta .i. lesin anlucht[3] sin grenad ⁊ glan[a]d na Gaedeilge ⁊ ni dlesda acht do lucht chethre ngrad sin do reir dligid .i. ollam, ansruth, clíi, cana.

Agso na primsgeoil indestar ann .i. togla ⁊ tana ⁊ tochmarca, catha ⁊ uatha ⁊ irgala, fuithe[4] ⁊ fesa ⁊ forbusa, echtrada ⁊ oideada[4] ⁊ oirgne.

Is iat na tana traath[5]: Tain Bó Radhumna ⁊ Tain Bó Cuailnge, Tain Bó Rois, Tain Bó Fraich, Tain Bó Flidais, Tain Bó Darta, Tain Aidne.[6]

Is iad na todla tra: Todail Tige Nechtain, Smutgal Tigi Dumach, Togail Bruidne Daberg, Togail Bruidne Dachog.

Is iat immorro na tochmarca .i. Tochmarc Meidbe ⁊ Tochmarc Emeire ⁊ Tochmarc Edaine ⁊ Tochmarc Aillbe, T. Fithire ⁊ Dairine da ingin Tuathail Techtmair ⁊ Tochmarc mna Cruind meic Agnamain.

Is iat na catha thra: Cath Muige hItha la Parrtalon, Cat[h] Nemhed la Fomorchaib, Cath Muige Turead ag Feraib Bolg re Tuatha De Danonn, Cath tanaisde Tuath De Danonn. FINIT.

This list is contained in a tract on the functions and qualifications of the several grades of poet in a MS. which was probably written in the fifteenth century (see J. Mackechnie, Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts, p. 144.) *The list has already been published by Thurneysen,* ZCP *14.1-2. I have collated his text with a photocopy of the MS. and corrected it in a few instances.* [1]aa *MS.* [2]*Thurneysen reads* dántirrgairdiug-, *but the MS. seems to me to have* dánururgairdiug-, *with* ur *reduplicated by suspension mark and the* u *retouched by a later hand to look like* ti. [3]*leg.* lucht? [4]*The corresponding order of the rubrics in the introduction to list A would identify these two terms as* oitte *and* aithid (aitheda?) *and Thurneysen accordingly reads the second as* oiteada. *However,* aithed *is treated as a m. o-stem in list A (except possibly for one instance in the H. 3. 17 text; see p. 46, n. 23 supra). If* oideada *is the correct reading, then the source of the Edinburgh list and that in Harl. 432 (see p. 66B n.1 infra) have simply transposed the two terms.* 5. *leg.* tra. [6]*Thurneysen equates this with* Tain Be Aingen, *the title given in YBL 60 a 42 to the tale otherwise known as* Echtra Nerai; *cf.* Heldensage *311.*

THE LIST IN BRIT. LIB., HARL. 432, FO. 3D (=*CIH.* ii, 349: *Laws* i, 44-46).

- - - scelug*ud* co laidib .i. uii.l. la holl*amain* ┐ t*r*i .l. co leth la hanruth, .uiii. *moga* la cli, sesca la ca*na*, .l. la dos, .xl. la m*ac* furmid, .xxx. la fochluc, .xx. la d*r*isac, .x. sceoil acin tamui*n*, .uii. sceoil ocin oblaire; do pri*m*scela ┐ do foscel*aib* andsin. Is iat im̄ primsceil indises and .i. togla ┐ tana ┐ tochmarca, catha ┐ urtha ┐ irgala, faite[1] ┐ fesa ┐ forbasa, echtra ┐ aideda[1] ┐ airgne.

Is iat na tana .i. Tain Bo Cuailg*ne* ┐ T. Bo Reg*amna* ┐ T. Bo Flidas ┐ T. Bo Dar*tada*, Tain Bo F*r*aich ┐ rl̇.

Is iat na togla .i. Trecuairt Tighe Buradaig ┐ Smutgal Tighi Dumach, Togail Tigi Nechtain ┐ B*r*uidne Da B*e*rg[2] ┐ Da Choc.

Is iat na tochmarca .i. Tochmarc Meidbi, T. Etaine, T. Eimire, T. Saidbe ingine Seiscind, T. Ailbe, T. Fithir ┐ Dairine da ingin Tuath*ail* ┐rl.

Is iat na catha .i. Cath Muighe Itha ria Partholon ┐ .C. Ne*m*id re Fomorchaib ┐ .C. Taillten re clandaib Mil*ed* ┐ da Chath Muigi Tuire ┐rl̇.

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[1]*See p. 64 n. 4.* [2]l d *inserted over* b *by later hand.*

THE STRUCTURE AND EVOLUTION OF THE TALE-LISTS

THE COMMON SOURCE OF A AND B

A comparison of lists A and B seems to confirm Thurneysen's conclusion that both are based upon an older list, which he would assign to the tenth century.[1] Later tales are not represented among the titles common to A and B, and it is to these common titles that we must look for some idea of the contents of the older list. As a criterion by which to judge the antiquity of any particular tale naturally this can be used only in a positive sense. Thus if a title is common to both lists, it is almost certain that it was included in the parent list; but the fact that a title is found in only one of the later lists—or in neither—is far from proving that the tale to which it refers did not exist during the period of the early list. Zimmer's statement that ' Die Cataloge enthalten offenbar eine Aufzählung aller um die Wende des 10 und 11 Jhs. in irischer Sprache bekannten Erzählungen ' is unacceptable on this as on other counts.[2] Individual titles and indeed whole sections may have been omitted by one or other of the derivative lists, and one could compile a respectable collection of early tales which are not included in either, e.g. *Esnada Tige Buchet*, *Longes Chonaill Chuirc*, *Tochmarc Becfhola*, *Aided Aenfhir Aife*, *Echtra Conlai*, *Comrac Liadaine ocus Chuirithir*, not to mention the early items of Fian literature listed by Gerard Murphy in the third volume of *Duanaire Finn*.[3] A couple of other early tales are included only in the newly compiled group of miscellaneous titles at the beginning of B (p. 91 inf.).

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[1] *Held.*, 24. Unless stated otherwise subsequent references in this chapter to Thurneysen's examination of the lists will relate to *Held.*, 21-24.

[2] *Kelt. Beiträge* II, 315.

[3] Op. cit., lv ff.

The very system of classification, by grouping titles under common subject-headings (*togla*, *oircne*, etc.), must have presented a problem in certain cases: what was to be done with titles which did not fit easily into one of the recognized categories? It is true that in the section of *togla* common to A and B clear affinity of subject-matter appears to have been deemed a sufficient bond and four titles are included which begin with variant head-words, while the section of *imrama* in A includes four titles beginning with *imram* and four with *longes;* but that such licence was felt to be strictly limited is evidenced by the changes wrought upon certain other titles in order to accommodate them in the lists: *Fochonn Loingse Fergusa meic Róig* > *Tochomlad Loingsi Fergusa a hUltaib* (AB),[4] *Fled Bricrenn* > *Feis Tige Bricrenn* (B), *Baile in Scáil*[5] > *Fís Chuind* (AB, but with the former title appended for the sake of clarity), *Fingal Rónáin* > *Aided Maelfhathartaig maic Rónáin* (A), and *Scéla Mucce meic Dathó* > *Orgain meic Dathó* (AB, all the more noteworthy this in that *orgain* usually takes an objective genitive). Other instances of early tales with anomalous titles are *Serglige Con Culaind*, *De Gabáil in tSída*, *Mesca Ulad*, and *De Chophur in dá Mucado*, and very significantly these four titles are found only in the late miscellaneous group at the beginning of B.[6]

The contents of the parent list, which for convenience we may refer to as X, are best preserved in those sections which come together at the end of B. The *aitheda* ' elopements ' of B are found in A and in the same order, but are there preceded by five other titles. Next in B come the *togla* ' attacks, destructions ', which correspond to the opening section of A. The only discrepancy is that B here lacks *Togail Bruidne Uí Dergga* and *Togail Bruidne Dá Choga*, but these

[4]There can be little doubt that *Tochomlad Loingsi Fergusa* is an adaptation of another title and *Fochonn Loingse Fergusa* seems the most likely of those which are attested elsewhere; cf. *Held.* 321. *Longus nUlad* in the miscellaneous section of B may refer to the story of *Fochonn Loingse Fergusa* (*Held.*, ch. 24) or to the Deirdre story (*Held.* ch. 25); the latter is included in A as *Aithed Deirdrinne re macaib Uislenn.* It is also possible, though not capable of verification, that *Feis Emna* (A) refers to the story of *Fochonn Loingse Fergusa.*

[5]Which is included as such in the later section of *baili* in B.

[6]*Mesca Ulad* is there followed immediately by its variant, *Boíthréim Ulad;* presumably a connecting *.i.* has been omitted inadvertently between them.

are included in B in an earlier section likewise headed *togla*. Since the tales in question are old, it seems reasonable to suppose with Thurneysen that the two titles were separated accidently from the rest of the section of *togla* in a source of B and that eight other titles were then added to them to form a new group. Thurneysen observes that these additional titles include the Destruction of Troy, 'die kaum vor dem 12. Jahrhundert ins Irische übertragen ist'; but in this he is rather more definite than subsequent research would warrant: according to Professor Gearóid Mac Eoin the Destruction of Troy was first done into Irish during the tenth century[7] and certainly there is nothing in the listed title that necessarily indicates a later version of the tale. Nor does there appear to be any decisive evidence that the additional titles are later than the date, *c.* 1000, at which the *Airec Menman* was composed. It may be noted that the other, and older, group of *togla* has been omitted from the Rawl. text of B, perhaps in an ill-judged attempt to rectify the duplication of this rubric.

In the cluster comprising *tomadmann* 'inundations', *físi* 'visions', *serca* 'loves', *sluagid* 'hostings', and *tochomlada* 'migrations' there is complete agreement between A and B except for the titles *Tomaidm Brí* and *Serc Créde do Chanainn mac Gartnáin* which are found only in the latter list, and there can be little doubt that *Serc Créde* at least was in list X and was accidentally omitted from A: the preceding title in B is *Serc Caillige Bérre do Fhothud Chanainde* (v.l. *Chanand*), and obviously the similarity between *Chanainde* and *Chanainn* could have deceived the scribe. Finally, the *oircne* 'plunderings, massacres' are substantially the same in both lists; there is a common block of thirty-five titles (with a slight difference of order which is obviously the result of a copyist's error), and to these B appends seven, and A two, additional titles.

One approaches the remaining sections more diffidently. That immediately preceding the *aitheda* in B contains three *tochmarca* (of which *Tochmarc Étaíne* is found only in Rawl.); these recur together in A, where however they are accompanied by ten other titles. Since

[7] *ZCP* xxviii, 202.

they are linguistically old, it seems most probable that the three tales common to both lists were already included in X. Of the ten extra items in A two are fairly certainly late, namely *Tochmarc Feirbe* and *Tochmarc mná Cruinn*,[8] and all have no doubt been added by the compiler of A. Of the five[9] *tána* in B four recur in A, and since the fifth, *Táin Bó Regamna*, follows immediately upon *Táin Bó Regamain*, Thurneysen is probably justified in suggesting that A may have omitted it because of the similarity of the two titles. A has seven additional titles, but they do not stand *en bloc* as one might perhaps expect them to do if they were a later addition to a pre-existing group. One of these extra titles, *Táin teora nErc Echdach*, apparently refers to the tale known otherwise as *Aided Con Roí*, in Thurneysen's Fassung I, which he assigns to the eight or ninth century; whether the title *Orgain Cathrach Con Roí* (B) refers to this or to another version of the Cú Roí story is uncertain.[10] In this connection it may be observed, at the risk of underlining the obvious, that later additions to the titles of either list do not necessarily denote texts of recent origin. It may also be worth noting that all the *tána* in B are found in one or other of the lists of *remscéla* to TBC, but not so the extra titles in A, with the sole exception of *Táin Bó Flidais*.[11]

The *echtrai* are similarly doubtful; they include only three titles common to both lists, while there are eleven additional titles in A and seven in B. It is not impossible, however, that these titles represent an original nucleus (as in the case of the *tochmarca* perhaps) which has been added to generously in A and B. It may be noted that the common titles are in the same order, though not in immediate sequence, in both lists. Furthermore, one of the extra items in B, *Echtra Muirchertaig meic Erca*, is paralleled in A by *Imram Luinge Muirchertaig meic Erca*, and it may be that it was borrowed from the *echtrai* in order to augment the newly assembled group of *imrama*.

[8]See Thurneysen, *Held.*, 331, 360, 668 f.

[9]That is if we include *Táin Bó Dartada* which is found in two of the MSS. of B.

[10]See Thurneysen, *Held.*, 432. *Aided Con Ruí* occurs among the *aideda* in A, but it is impossible to say which version is intended.

[11]See p. 87 ff. infra on the composition of the miscellaneous opening section of B. For a convenient presentation of the lists of *remscéla* see Thurneysen, *Held.*, 248-251.

A rather surprising omission from A is the ' Voyage of Bran ', which appears in B as *Echtra Brain maic Febail*, its older and more accurate title;[12] one might at least have expected it to appear among the *imrama* of A and it is just conceivable that it dropped out as a result of the uncertain demarcation between the later group of *imrama* and the older *echtrai*.

Thurneysen remarks of the titles listed in B as *fessa* and *baili* that they are completely different from those under the same heading in A. This is no doubt merely a slip on his part since in fact there is no group of *baili* in A; moreover that the *baili* are a later addition to B is indicated fairly clearly by the fact that *Baile in Scáil* is included among them even though it occurs also as *Fís Chuind Chétchathaig .i. Baili in Scáil* in the older section of *fisi* common to A and B. As regards the *fessa* there are several titles common to both lists, assuming that *Fess Tigi Gnaair* (A) is to be equated with *Feis Tighi Gnoain* (B), *Fess Tige Bichair* (A) with *Feis Tighe Bricrenn* (B), *Fess Tigi Melldolaig* (A) with *Feis Tighi Melladhain* (B), and *Fess Tigi Auscle* (A, LL; leg. *Auchtcle*, cf. *Uichtcle*, H. 3. 17) with *Feis Tighi hIchtair* (B). The rubric of this group is echoed in a poem by Cinaed ua hArtacáin (+987) addressed to one Óengus mac Ócáin.[13] This is a metrical retelling of the first of the three tales of the cycle of Étaín and her lovers, and, as the editor observes, the poet appears to flatter his patron by confusing him with Óengus Mac ind Óc. He praises his liberality, claiming that ' every true poet knows of the Feast of Óengus' House ', *Feis tigi Oengossa áin / ro-fitir cach fili fír*. Here is at least confirmation that the category of *fessa*, and probably the list containing it, was familiar to our poet in the middle of the tenth century.

The *coimperta*, which are found only in B, contain for the most part titles of older tales, and Thurneysen suggests that A may have omitted them by error, but as we shall see later (p. 90 inf.), other considerations make it seem more likely that this group was

[12]In only one MS of the tale, YBL, is it given a title, viz. *Imram Bruin meic Febuil andso ⁊ a eachtra annso siss.*

[13]Ed. Lucius Gwynn, *Ériu* vii, 210 ff. The reference is in stanza 7.

assembled by the compiler of B. The *uatha* ' terrors ' (?), the *imrama* ' sea-voyages ', and the *forbossa* ' beleaguerings ' are found only in A and it is clear that they were not part of X; the only titles amongst them which are represented in B are *Imram Luinge Muirchertaig meic Erca*, which, as we have seen, may have been borrowed from an older group of *echtrai* in X, and *Forbais Fer Fálga*, which, significantly, is one of the later miscellaneous group of titles at the beginning of B.

Another section peculiar to A is that of the *oitte/aideda* ' violent deaths ' (forms occur with and without syncope),[14] but this one cannot dismiss quite so readily as a later compilation. In the first place, with one or two probable exceptions, the tales which it comprises are relatively early. Most of them appear already in the ninth-century poem of Flannacán mac Cellaig, *Innid scél scailter n-airich* (see p. 108 inf.), and it might seem strange that the type of tale which is perhaps most representative of Irish literature did not itself appear in list X. We have seen that there is a number of poems dealing with history and legend which are veritable catalogues of *aideda*, for example the poem by Flannacán just mentioned, which registers the deaths of Irish heroes according to the days of the week, or Cinaed ua hArtacáin's *Fianna bátar i nEmain* (10th cent.),[15] which records how the heroes of tradition met their deaths and where they were buried, or Flann mac Maelmaedóc's *Eol dam i ndairib dréchta* (10th cent.),[16] which names many heroes who fell at the hands of the Leinstermen.[17] It might be argued, of course, that death-tales in one form or another were so very common that it was felt unnecessary, or impractical, to attempt to catalogue them as a single group within a general tale-list. Is this perhaps what is implied by the words that occur at the end of the *tochomlada* (which very probably came at the close of list X as they now do of list A):

[14] See p. 26 supra.

[15] *RC* xxiii, 303; cf. *Ériu* xv, 151.

[16] *ZCP* viii, 117.

[17] One might add to these certain regnal lists in prose and verse which, as remarked recently by Professor F. J. Byrne (*Studia Hibernica* iv, 60), tending as they do to ' specify the exact circumstances of the death of each king ', are really ' a scries of summarised *aideda*.'

(*Tochomlad Dáil Riatai i nAlbain*) *et inní rohort ⁊ robíth ⁊ atbath* '. . . and those who met their deaths in various circumstances,' lit. ' and those who were slaughtered, were slain, or died,' as in A, and . . . *aní rohort araile cinedha imdha fo Érinn archena* ' and those whom numerous peoples slew throughout Ireland besides ', as in B?[18] Unless these words are related to the immediately preceding title—and it is not clear how they can be—then they must surely be read as a rider to the entire list, in which case their purpose may be to acknowledge the existence of the innumerable tales of death and slaughter which find no place in the body of the list.[19]

Of the *catha* ' battles ' only two, *Cath Maige Tuired* and *Cath Maige Mucrime*, are in both A and B, though *Cath Aichle* in B is probably to be equated with *Forbais Aichle* in A and therefore it is conceivable that this title was removed from the *catha* by the compiler of A in order to supplement his new section of *forfessa*. Thurneysen on the other hand concludes that the two common titles are merely the result of coincidence, but I am not entirely convinced that he is right; for one thing he ignores the additional coincidence that *Cath Maige Tuired* heads the *catha* in both lists. Assuming however that he is right and that the *catha* have been added latterly to the list, it may again be argued, as in the case of the *aideda*, that tales of battles were felt to be too numerous for inclusion under a single rubric of the original list. The function of such a catalogue of battle-tales might just as easily have been discharged by the mnemonic lists of battles which I have already mentioned (p. 28 f. supra). Where the genre was so numerous, these lists had the advantage of being selective, in that they normally brought together the battles and victories of a single hero, or tribe, or province.

The opening section of B, which bears no heading except the rather general designation *gnáthscéla* ' ordinary/familiar tales ' and consists of miscellaneous titles, has obviously been newly prefixed

[18]Note the sg. verb with a pl. subject in B. It is possible that A has the older form of the sentence and that B's is a later adaptation retaining the same verb.

[19]There is another possible explanation of the words in question, as I point out p. 92 n. 58 infra.: they may originally have come immediately after the *oircne* ' plunderings, massacres ' and may have had reference to these. But even in that case the phrase must have been intended as a general notice of the many tales of heroic death not included in the list.

to the list. It includes *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, which also occurs among the *tána*, and other titles which merely refer to segments of that tale, such as *Caladgleo Cethirn*, *Mellgleo Iliach*, and *Fiacalgleo Fintain*. The genesis of this section is discussed later (p. 87 ff. inf.).

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE TALE-TYPES

A and B are manuscript lists and belong to an immediate context of written literature. Their redaction and their secondary expansions, particularly in the case of A, suggest the manipulation of a written tradition rather than the recording of an oral one. When we get back to list X, however, in so far as we can identify its contents, we find the nexus with written literature less evident and that with oral tradition correspondingly greater: the very fact that so many of the titles in X cannot be identified in the extant literature may be significant in this regard. The concept and the form of the tale-list are ultimately part of the same mnemonic device that is embodied in the various metrical lists of *catha*, *aideda*, and so on, and there can hardly be any doubt that this belonged primarily to the oral tradition (see p. 28 ff. supra). Similarly the listed tales, though they include several which appear to have originated in a monastic and literate environment, are based on themes which, with one or two possible exceptions, are obviously the continuation of an ancient Celtic inheritance. It may be useful to review briefly the rubrics of the extant lists in this light. I take them in alphabetical order:

Aided ' death-tale, violent death '. Pedersen, followed by Vendryes, suggests that this may be the verb noun of *ad-eth-*' goes against, attacks ',[20] but Marstrander prefers to relate it to *ped-*, Skr. *pádyate* ' falls, perishes '.[21] I have already commented on the central role of the death-tale in Irish, as in other heroic traditions. Mrs Chadwick has suggested that the genre of the *aided* or death-tale in Irish literature ' probably arose from the stories of the Christian martyrs' and that it was due in some measure to the influence of literary refugees who came to Ireland from Gaul during the fifth and sixth

[20] *Vergl. Gramm. d. kelt. Sprachen* II, 514; *Lexique étym. de l'Irlandais ancien* A 27.

[21] *Lochlann* ii, 206.

centuries.[22] This is an ingenious suggestion, but, apart from the fact that there is very little hard evidence for the famous 'learned refugees' from Gaul,[23] one may well question the wisdom of seeking problematical external origins for a genre which can be easily and adequately explained as a development of native literary tradition.

Aithed 'elopement'; verb noun of *aith-eth-*'escapes' (Ped., *Vergl. Gramm.* ii, 514). Obviously the *aitheda* and the *tochmarca* 'wooings, courtings' are thematically related, though they are distinguished by a marked difference of emphasis. In the *aitheda* it is normally the woman who takes the initiative and compels the man to follow her, like the goddess of sovereignty courting her chosen spouse; but in the *tochmarca* the man is the active suitor and generally he carries off the woman without the consent of her kinsmen, though with her own collusion. Predictably, since these are mythic narratives, neither *tochmarc* nor *aithed* reflect the normal marriage favoured by social and pragmatic usage (as part of the suspension of violence and dissension which marked the holding of the great assembly of Carmun, elopements and irregular liaisons were prohibited[24]), though evidently the latter was once well enough attested in practice to be accorded recognition in traditional law. It would appear that marriage by abduction was already in-

[22] *Studies in Early British History* (Cambridge, 1959), 240-242.

[23] *ÉC* xiii (= *Actes du quatrième congrès international d'études celtiques*), 96 f.

[24] *Met. Dinds.* III, 18.225:

> *Cen dul fer i n-airecht mban*
> *cen mná i n-airecht fer findglan*
> *mad aithed and, nír' chluinter,*
> *cid athfer cid athmunter.*

In one of the love poems attributed to Gerald Third Earl of Desmond several *aithed* tales are referred to, including those of Deirdre and Gráinne. See *Studia Hibernica* 3 (1963), 49-51.

The word *aithed* often conveys the notion of restless movement, of flight and pursuit from place to place, as in the story of Deirdre and the sons of Uisliu. Thus St Mo-chuta (or rather the medieval poet who fathers his poem on him) uses it as a simile for his own homelessness on being expelled from his monastery of Rathan:

> *Ni bia oram fairisiumh*
> *Acht mar bhis ben ar aithed*

'I shall have no resting-place, no more than an eloping woman' (*Bethada Náem nÉrenn*, ed. Charles Plummer (Oxford, 1922), I, 313 §6).

stitutionalized before the break-up of Indo-European society, since it is exemplified in the Indian marriage ' of the *rākśasas* ' and the Irish *lánamnus foxail*, literally ' marriage by abduction ', as well as in the Latin technical term *virginem rapere*.[25] It is particularly appropriate to a warrior society, and indeed Louis Renou has inferred from the literary evidence that the eight forms of marriage recognized in Indian tradition are ' founded on a triple division which may in origin have arisen from the divergent usages of the three social classes: the religious marriage for the Brahmans, the marriage by capture for the warriors, and the marriage by purchase for the ordinary people.'

Clearly, therefore, the *aitheda* and *tochmarca* are the diversified reflex of myths which are as old, and older, than the Celts and it is arguable, at least in the case of the *aitheda*, that they give dramatic expression to the ethos of the second function of Dumézil's analysis of Indo-European social structure.

Baile/buile ' vision, frenzy '. The term itself is old, but its extended use to denote a category of tales may well be a late development. All but one of the five titles under this rubric in B have ecclesiastical associations.

Cath ' battle '. Tales of battles are the staple of heroic and primitive literatures and the antiquity of the genre is self-evident (see p. 28 f. supra).

Compert ' conception, begetting, procreation '; verb noun of *con-beir*. The birth-tale is an important element of the hero's life-cycle in mythologies throughout the world and it is particularly common in Celtic tradition. The antiquity of the genre is therefore beyond question, but nevertheless the group of *comperta* was probably introduced into the list by the compiler of B.

Echtra(e) ' expedition, journey (to the otherworld), adventure ' (lit. ' outing ', from **ekster-* ' outside '). The *echtrai* tell of the hero's incursion into the world of the supernatural, whether this is thought of as being beyond the sea, under the earth or a lake, within the

[25]Cf. Calvert Watkins, in G. Cardona and others (ed.), *Indo-European and Indo-Europeans* (Philadelphia, 1970), 324; *Cáin Lánamna* §§4, 34 in R. Thurneysen (ed.) *Studies in Early Irish Law* (Dublin, 1936).

depths of a cave, or simply within the confines of a magic mist. He may set forth at the invitation of one of its inhabitants, or one of its factions, in which case the otherworld realm is normally pictured as a land of wonder and beauty and joy, but when he is the aggressor in an act of heroic self-assertion, then the otherworld inevitably stands in a different relationship to the world of mankind and is often conceived of as the home of hostile forces whose power and possessions are a challenge to the hero's prowess.

Fess/feis ' feast '. This is probably the same word as *fess/feis*, the verb noun of *foaid* ' spends the night '.[26] The communal feast is an important feature of life in tribal and heroic society, and in Irish literature it often provides the *point de départ* for the action of a story.

Fís ' vision '; from Latin *visio*. As its derivation indicates, *fís* cannot be a traditional notation for a category of tales. However, it is sometimes used as a synonym for the native term *baile/buile*, as in the listed title *Fís Chuind C[h]étchathaig .i. Baili in Scáil*.

Forfess/forbais ' beleaguering, siege, night-watch.' This is a compound of the preposition *for* and *fess/feis*, verb noun of *foaid* ' spends the night '.[27] One of the listed tales, *Forbais Fer Fálga*, seems to have been in existence by the eight century,[28] though the group as a whole is evidently a late addition to the tale-list.

Im(m)ram ' sea-voyage ', verb noun of *imm-rá* ' rows around, navigates.' The group in A which appears under the rubric *imrama* is obviously an innovation. In fact only three of its items have the head-word *imram*; the other four have the term *longes*, which may mean—among other things—' exile, banishment; band of exiles ', and which despite its etymology does not necessarily refer to a sea-voyage: with the exception of *Longes Brecáin*, the titles with *longes* have no evident connection with such a voyage, and even that particular title has no relationship to the kind of *Odyssey* implied by the term *imram*.[29]

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[26]So Pedersen, *Vergl. Gramm.* II, 524, 559; however, Vendryes *RC* xxxv, 89-90; Loth, ibid., xxxviii, 297.

[27]Cf. R. Thurneysen, *Zu ir. Handschriften und Litteraturdenkmälern* I, 54; K. Meyer, *Zur keltischen Wortkunde* §214.

[28]See Thurneysen, *Held.* 529 ff.

[29]For the story of *Longes Brecáin* see Appendix C, p. 146 ff. inf.

The *imram* as a genre of narrative seems relatively late. The earliest tale known as such is *Imram Brain* ' The Voyage of Bran ', and it may have been the example followed by later tales which are named as *imrama*.[30] Of the three *imrama* named in A one, *Imram Luinge Muirchertaig meic Erca*, is seemingly a mere variant, most likely an *ad hoc* one, of the title *Echtra Muirchertaig meic Erca* in B. The other two, *Imram (curaig) Máele Dúin* and *Imram (curaig) ua Corra*, have a markedly ecclesiastical slant in their content and inspiration which is in contrast to the essentially indigenous and mythological cast of the *echtrai*. As a genre the *imram* are later than the *echtrai*, they include an incomparably greater admixture of untraditional material, and by all indications their historical matrix is the learned environment that obtained in certain monastic foundations from the seventh or eight century onwards.

Orcain/orcun ' murdering, ravaging '; verb noun of *oirgid* ' kills, ravages, devastates '. That the theme was familiar and traditional requires no demonstration, and, as already noted, the rubric was already in list X. The genitival object of the verb noun may be a person or a place, and the meaning may alternate accordingly between ' murder/slaying ' and ' ravaging/plundering '. Both usages occur in the listed titles. In three instances the genitive after the verb noun is nominative, not accusative: *Orgain Meic Da Thó* ' The slaughter [instigated] by Mac Da Thó ', *Orgain Cairpri Chind Chait for saerchlannaib Érend* ' The slaughter of the noble families of Ireland by Cairpre Cind Chait '. and *Orgain Echach for a maccaib* ' Eochu Feidlech's slaying of his sons'. A genitival subject is regular with the verb noun of a transitive verb where this has become concrete in meaning, e.g. *tabairt espuic, tabairt ríg .i. gach tabairt do-bera in rig ⁊ int espoc . . .* ' the gift of a bishop, the gift of a king, that is every gift which king or bishop gives;'[31] but otherwise it is unusual, though not unknown.[32]

[30]In fact the title of the tale is lacking in all the manuscripts except *YBL*, where it reads: *Imrum Bruin meic Febuil ⁊ a Eachtra annso síss.* However, one of the prose passages within the tale (§64) refers to it as *Imram Brain.*

[31]Thurneysen, *Cóic Conara Fugill* (Berlin, 1926), p. 49, §91.

[32]A possessive pronoun may, however, function as a subject genitive before the vn where the latter is itself followed by an objective genitive (see *GOI* 679, n. 103).

Serc ' love '. It is an abstract noun and fulfils some of the functions of a verb noun to *caraid* ' loves '. The normal syntactic usage is that *serc* is accompanied by an objective genitive, and this seems the most appropriate way to interpret the title *Serc Duibe Lacha do Mongán* ' Mongán's Love for Dub Lacha ', if one may judge the content of the listed tale by that of the extent modern version. For the other titles, however, the argument from content is not conclusive. There is the further difficulty that unambiguous instances of *serc* and objective genitive followed by the agential use of the preposition *do* and noun are hard to come by. In Wb. 18b21 the words *caritas Dei* are glossed by *serc dáe dúibsi et far serc si do dia*, which the editors of the *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus* translate in rather wooden fashion as ' God's love to you and your love to God '. This appears to run counter to the normal eight-century use of *serc*. If correct, it may be due to the influence of the Latin phrase, and the double gloss in Irish may be an attempt on the glossator's part to repair the disparity between the Latin and Irish syntaxes.

The brief group of *serca* was evidently added to list X in the tenth century and cannot be older than that (see p. 82 f. inf.).

Slúagad/slógad ' a hosting, a military expedition ' etc.; from *slóg/slúag* ' host, army '. It is a familiar term in historical and literary texts. For its legal force cf. D. A. Binchy, *Críth Gablach*, 106: " hosting ", military service, which is a public duty for the freemen of the *túath* once it has been proclaimed by the king at an *óenach* [the periodic assembly of one or several *túatha* or petty kingdoms]. There are three kinds of *s.* to which the king may ' pledge ' his subjects: (1) a hosting in the interior of the territory to repel an invading force, (2) a hosting to the border in order to meet a threatened invasion, ' so that he (the king) may have either battle or treaty ' with the opposing army, (3) a hosting by an over-king, to whom several territories owe allegiance, against a *túath* which rebels or refuses tribute. The ' rising out ' which so frequently figures in the Tudor State Papers among the prerogatives of a Gaelic chief is doubtless a survival of *s.*'

It may be noted that all four of the titles given under this rubric in the lists relate to campaigns outside Ireland. Though the term

slúagad is traditional, at least in the senses outlined by Binchy, it is clear that the rubric, like the *serca*, is not older than the tenth century (see p. 82 f. inf.).

Táin ' driving off, cattle-raid ' etc.; verb noun of *do-aig* ' drives off, drives away '. The *tána* are the literary reflex of a social practice which was not merely Irish, but Celtic and Indo-European, and which is found elsewhere among cattle-rearing peoples. The cattle-raid is well attested in Greek epic and myth, it loomed still larger in the tradition of India where it was part of the controlled disorder of social order among both the Aryans and the Dravidians, and in Africa it plays—or did so until very recently—an important and often a central role in the heroic traditions of many distinct peoples including the Nuer, the Masai, the Shilluk, and the Bahima of Ankole. Much, if not quite all, of what E. E. Evans-Pritchard says of the Nuer might be applied with equal aptness to the early Irish:

> Fighting about ownership of cattle and seizing cattle for what are claimed as debts and compensation for losses are of a somewhat different order to raiding for cattle over which no rights, other than the power of the strong, are asserted. War against foreign peoples, as distinct from warfare within a tribe, is almost entirely for plunder. Nuer war against the Dinka, therefore, differs from most primitive warfare in that the primary object is acquisition of wealth, for cattle are a form of wealth that not only lasts a long time and reproduces itself, but is, also, easily seized and transported. Furthermore, it enables invaders to live on the country without commissariat. Crops and dwellings can be destroyed, but cattle can be confiscated and taken home. This quality, which has given pastoral peoples a bias in favour of the arts of war rather than the arts of peace, has meant that the Nuer are not entirely dependent on their own cattle, but can augment their herds and restore the ravages of rinderpest, and have, in fact, for a long time increased their stock, and hence supplemented their food-supply, by raiding; a condition that has shaped their character, economy, and political structure. Skill and courage in fighting are reckoned the highest virtues, raiding the most noble, as well as the most profitable, occupation, and some measure of political agreement and unity a necessity.[33]

[33] *The Nuer* (Oxford, 1968), 50.

For the Celts the successful cattle-raid was an assertion of the integrity of the tribal community vis-a-vis its neighbours and a vindication of its leader's claim to primacy over his people. The same root, **ag-* ' drive, pursue ', from which Irish *táin* derives, gives also Irish *ár*, Welsh *aer* ' battle-slaughter ' and has been taken as the source of Ir. *ág* ' battle, valour '; and this lexical nexus points up the importance of cattle-raiding in the heroic ideology of the Celtic warrior class. It was, at least on certain occasions, something of a ritual exercise: we know that in India a ritual cattle-raid was an integral part of the initiation to the kingship and there is a great deal of evidence which indicates that it once had the same function in Ireland.[34] It is no mere accident, therefore, that the greatest of Irish tales, *Táin Bó Cuailnge* ' The Cattle-raid of Cuailnge ', belongs to the category of the *tána*.

Tochmarc ' wooing, courting '; verb noun of **do-comairc*. See the remarks under *aithed* (p. 74 supra).

Tochomlud ' setting forth, proceeding, advancing '; verb noun of *do-comlai* ' sets forth ' etc. The *tochomlada* introduce us to the origin legends which ' explain ' the provenance and the actual distribution of the tribes and peoples of Ireland: typologically they are old, but in the context of the list they are secondary and were probably compiled in the tenth century (see p. 82 f. inf.).

Professor Francis J. Byrne has categorized the contents of the *tochomlada* (*Ériu* xxii (1971), 142) as follows:

> 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. The next, *Tochomlad 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. The ninth is entitled *Tochomlod Mūscraigi*

[34]Since this was written Professor Pádraig Ó Riain has discussed the *crech ríg* or ' regal prey ' in *Éigse* xv (1973-74), 24 ff.

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 Dáil Riatai i nAlbain* alone of the series may have had some firm historical basis.

Togail 'attack, destruction; attacking, destroying'; verb noun of *do-fich* 'attacks, destroys, takes by storm'. The theme is of the commonest both in history and tradition, and it is not surprising that the *togla* should have featured in the earliest discernible form of the tale-list.

Tomaidm 'bursting forth of lake or river'; verb noun of *do-maid* 'bursts forth, breaks forth'. The *tomadmann*, like much of *Lebor Gabála*, evidently represent the detritus of an Irish cosmogony which traced out the shaping of the land of Ireland: the origin of its physical features and of the names from which they derive their identity and their mythic reality. As a rubric in the list, however, they belong to a secondary section which was appended in the tenth century (see p. 82 f. inf.).

Úath 'terror, horror' etc. This category occurs only in A and seems to be a late *ad hoc* compilation (see p. 97 inf.).

THE DATE OF THE PARENT LIST

Thurneysen held that the *terminus post quem* for the composition of list X was fixed close to the beginning of the tenth century by the common title *Serc Gormlaithe do Niall Glúndub* 'The Love of Niall Glúndub (+919) for Gormlaith (+948)' (but see p. 77 f. supra). On

the other hand he regarded the fact that so many of the tales common to A and B had not survived as testimony to the considerable antiquity of X, and accordingly felt justified in assigning it to the tenth century.

Now it will be readily agreed that the two points mentioned by Thurneysen are relevant to the problen of the dating and composition of the list, but it is questionable whether they invite the same conclusion as he draws from them. In the first place the inclusion of *Serc Gormlaithe* in both A and B proves nothing more than that this title became part of list X at some time after the period during which the events of the story were supposed to take place; it does not in any way exclude the possibility that *Serc Gormlaithe* was merely added to a list already extant. Indeed if Thurneysen's second point has any meaning for the dating of the list,[35] it surely argues that those sections which contain a high proportion of titles belonging to tales that have not survived, namely the *togla*, the *fessa* and the *oircne*, were compiled even earlier than the tenth century. Moreover, it is not immediately clear how Thurneysen, basing himself on this criterion of titles *sans* tales, was enabled to decide so confidently (*ohne Bedenken*) upon the tenth century as the latest possible date. Supposing, for example, that list X had been compiled during the first half of the eleventh century instead of, as Thurneysen seems to have believed, the second half of the tenth, I doubt whether this would have had any appreciable effect upon the proportion of tales which have failed to survive. A much more telling argument for a tenth-century date is the fact that the ascription of the *Airec Menman* to mac Coise seems likely to be genuine.

Furthermore it is clear that Thurneysen does not envisage the possibility that list X was itself a composite, though this is scarcely open to doubt. The position is that A explicitly distinguishes between the main body of the list and the final sections which comprise

[35]Personally I accept that it has, but obviously it is a criterion which must be treated with some caution; after all there are quite a few titles among those not common to A and B which nevertheless have not as yet been identified with any extant tale.

tomadmann, fisi, serca, slúagid and tochomlada; the titles in the former are introduced as *prímscéla*, whereas those in the latter are merely said to be ' reckoned as *prímscéla* '. That this distinction is not expressly stated in B is doubtless due to the editing undergone by list X when it was being incorporated in the *Airec Menman*; but despite this it is clearly implied in the rubric which precedes the sections named above, for this (as in A) names all the several sections together (*Mad ferr lat tomadmond ⁊ fisi ⁊ serca ⁊ sluagid ⁊ tochomladha*), contrary to the usage in the remainder of the list. Thus lists A and B themselves make it abundantly clear that these sections were an addition of some sort to the *prímscéla* of X, and as I point out later (p. 116 f.), there are other considerations which indicate that they may have been compiled in the tenth or eleventh century and appended to an earlier list. In that case the title *Serc Gormlaithe do Niall Glúndub* does not provide a *terminus post quem* for list X as a whole but merely for this appendix.

When we come to consider at what date approximately the last titles may have been added to list X, we must rely on *Airec Menman Uraird maic Coise* to give us a *terminus ante quem.* We have already reviewed the evidence and the authorities in favour of accepting the text as Urard's work (p. 35 ff. supra), and if these are deemed conclusive the date of the redaction of list B becomes fixed within fairly close limits: before 990 A.D., the date generally given for the poet's death, or in the early years of the tenth century if it be accepted that he was still alive and composing after the turn of the century. Thurneysen evidently assumed that the *Airec Menman* was written after Urard's death (in 990 A.D.), for he remarks that it must belong to a time when his name was still well known; but, considering that Urard figured perhaps more prominently than any other pre-Dán Díreach poet in the learned tradition of later centuries, this in itself is not a very useful yard-stick. However, even if the evidence for Urard's authorship of the *Airec Menman* is not conclusive, the language of the text suggests a date of composition not substantially later than his period. It is reasonable, therefore, to assume with Thurneysen that the common core of lists A and B belongs to the tenth century.

One may venture therefore to sketch in the history of lists A and B as follows: To begin with, there was a basic list of uncertain antiquity, which I shall refer to as list O. To this were added, probably in the tenth century, the several categories which were ' reckoned as *prímscéla* '. The resulting list, list X, may have received additional titles until such time as it was incorporated in *Airec Menman Uraird maic Coise*. At that point it underwent certain changes to conform with its new context and thenceforth it pursued an independent course, perhaps acquiring further titles before the archetype of the extant manuscripts was written, Thurneysen refers particularly to *Togail Troí* ' The Destruction of Troy ' which occurs in the later group of *togla* in B and which ' was scarcely translated into Irish before the twelfth century,' However, as Professor Gearóid S. Mac Eoin has pointed out, this view is based on the text of *Togail Troí* (2) in the Book of Leinster, which is later than that of *Táin Bó Cuailnge* in the same manuscript; the title, he notes, might equally refer to an earlier text of the tale, *Togail Troí* (1) for example, which he assigns to the eleventh century, or its exemplar.[36] Another title, *Togail Larisa*, has not been identified, though the city of Larisa features in *Togail na Tebe*, the Irish version of the *Thebaid*, which was probably written in the twelfth century.[37] On the other hand, it might be significant that *Togail na Tebe* itself is not included in B. In any event, with or without additional titles subsequent to the composition of the *Airec Menman*, this constitutes our list B. Meanwhile, the parent list, list X, was preserved separately and in the course of time received many expansions which will be dealt with in some detail in the following pages. Its final expanded form is our list A.

THE LISTS AS AN INDEX OF CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Since A and B, and even X, were constructed upon the basis of older lists, it follows that their several compilers would have had no need to verify the existence of the tales included except in regard to those new titles which they themselves added. Most likely the titles

[36] *ZCP* xxviii (1961), 199 §305, 202.

[37] *Togail na Tebe: the Thebaid of Statius*, ed. George Calder (Cambridge, 1922), ll. 316 ff., 545, 688.

of the source-list would have been copied seriatim, regardless of whether the tales existed then or not, and often perhaps without any conscious attempt to identify them. It is not surprising therefore that we should find what is obviously the same tale referred to as *Togail Tige Nechtain* in A and *Togail Tighi nEchadha* in B, the superfluous *n* in the latter making it quite clear that A has here the correct form and that the personal name in B is the result of faulty expansion.[38]

The first of the *oircne* in B is *Orgain Maighi Cē la Galo mac Fephail.* In A this becomes *Argain Maige Cégala m. Febail* (LL) and *Argain Muigi Cedala* (H. 3. 17). The origin of these latter forms is suggested by the Rawl. B 512 copy of B which inadvertently omits the preposition *la.* Presumably the same error occurred in the source of LL and H, and the fact that neither of these corrected it suggests that their scribes or compilers were quite ignorant of the tale in question and consequently transformed a mere slip of the pen into a gross blunder.[39]

A useful illustration of the corruption which infects unfamiliar titles is to be found in the section devoted to *fessa.* The high proportion of these titles which are now unidentifiable may be, as Thurneysen suggested, an indication of the relative antiquity of the tales themselves, and certainly this seems to be confirmed by the significant variation in the form of those titles for which we have some basis of comparison. Already in the ninth century Flannacán mac Cellaig refers to *Fes Tigi Gniain, Fes Tigi Muiclin Maíne* and *Fes Tigi Caíne,* and there can surely be no doubt, despite the discrepancy of spelling, that these are to be equated with *Feis Tighi Gnoain, Feis Tighi Nuclin* and *Feis Tighi Caire* in B. Of these only the first appears in A, this time as *Fes Tigi Gnaair,* but in all probability the other two were also in X and were dropped inadvertently. In

[38]Cf. also p. 39 n. 20 supra.

[39]The implication of ignorance remains the same of course even if A were nearer to the correct form, which seems less likely.

That the Rawl. B 512 copy of B and the source of A should both have omitted the preposition *la* would appear to be a coincidence; at least I cannot see that it presupposes any textual relationship between them.

addition, there are several other titles in A and B (see p. 70 supra) which obviously correspond but which have diverged more or less seriously in their orthography. It seems a reasonable inference then that a number of the *fessa* had become unfamiliar, and indeed unknown, by the twelfth century and perhaps even as early as the tenth or eleventh century.[40]

It follows that lists A and B are not to be thought of as indexes, even incomplete ones, of the living repertoire of the *filid* at any particular time. By their very nature they tend to be antiquarian and unrealistic: Urard might have been seriously embarrassed had King Domnall mac Muirchertaig availed himself of the wide range of choice extended to him, but of course he would have been too astute in reality to leave himself in such a vulnerable position.

On the other hand, in several instances the inclusion of a tale in both A and B serves to confirm its existence *c.* 1000, even though it may survive only in a much later form. *Togail Bruidne Da Choca* 'The Destruction of Dà Choca's Hostel' is a case in point. The listed version has been lost, the extant version being considerably later in language (Thurneysen assigns it to the thirteenth century[41]). The problem in such cases is to decide how much of the content of the lost narrative is recovered in the extant one: in the present instance Thurneysen suggested that most of the content of the extant tale might have been composed by its redactor to go with the old title,[42] but O'Rahilly declared himself unconvinced by this view.[43] Similarly, the story of the elopement of Diarmaid and Gráinne is listed in A and B as *Aithed Gráinne re Diarmait*, but the extant version of the tale is in Early Modern Irish: according to

[40]It might be argued of course that *Feis Tighe Bricrenn* of B has been corrupted to *Fess Tigi Bichair* in A and that this obviously cannot mean that the story of Bricriu's Feast had been forgotten in the twelfth century or earlier. This is true; the point is however that *Fled Bricrenn* might not have been automatically recognizable as such when *fled* was substituted by *feis tige* and *Bricrenn* abbreviated.

[41]*Heldensage* 586. The early version is mentioned already by Orthanach ua Coílláma (+ *c.* 839), *ZCP* xi, 109.

[42]Op. cit., 587.

[43]*EIHM* 132 n. 6.

Gerard Murphy, it can hardly be older than the fourteenth century and may not be much older than the earliest extant manuscript, which was written in 1651.[44] There are, however, a number of earlier references to incidents in the story which establish that the modern tale, however much it may differ from the early tale in volume and style, nonetheless retains the same basic narrative framework.[45]

THE SOURCE OF THE OPENING SECTION OF B.

As already mentioned, the first section comprises a miscellaneous collection of titles which quite obviously has been newly assembled by the compiler (or a redactor) of B. These *gnáthscéla*, as they are termed, constitute a rather odd medley, but it is clear that they have been culled from two main sources, of which the more conspicuous is *Táin Bó Cuailnge*. Not only is *Táin Bó Cuailnge* itself included, though it figures already in the separate group of *tána*, but it is accompanied by eleven other titles which refer merely to episodes of the same tale. Obviously these have been taken directly from TBC and there is no question of their referring to separate narratives. They do not derive from the second recension, that of LL, but rather from the LU-YBL or a related recension.

It is true that this atomic treatment of extended narratives is not entirely without precedent in Irish literature. It is a fairly common practice in written texts to list their several sections or episodes in a composite title without necessarily implying that these existed as separate narratives. In the earliest manuscript of *Fled Bricrenn*, LU, the tale is introduced as follows: *Incipit Fled Bricrenn ⁊ in Curathmír Emna Macha ⁊ in Briatharchath ban Ulad ⁊ Tochim Ulad do Chrúachnaib Ai ⁊ Cennach ind Rúanada i nEmain Macha* 'The Feast of Bricriu, and the Champion's Portion of Emain Macha, and the Ulsterwomen's War of Words, and the March of the Ulstermen to Cruachain Ai, and the Champion's Bargain in Emain Macha,' and in the only manuscript preserving the end of the tale intact, Edinb. XL, it is closed by a slightly variant form of this

[44]G. Murphy, *The Ossianic Lore and Romantic Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1955), 14.

[45]Cf. J. H. Lloyd, O. J. Bergin, G. Schoepperle, *RC* xxxiii (1912), 41 ff., 157 ff.; K. Meyer, *RC* xi (1890), 125 ff.; G. Murphy, op. cit., 11 ff.

composite title. In *Táin Bó Cuailnge* itself many of the episodes are titled separately, and in one instance the titles are grouped in series.[46] In some instances where a title relates to an episode of a longer narrative one cannot be certain whether or not this episode had ever a separate existence. A case in point is the text edited by T. P. O'Nolan under the heading *Mór Muman ocus Aided Cuanach meic Ailchine*.[47] ' The tale is untitled in the manuscripts, but a substantial part of the contents deals with the elopement of Suithcern/Ruithcern, sister of Mór Muman, with Cuanu mac Cailchíne, and is covered by the title *Aithed Ruithceirne la Cuana mac Cailchín* (AB). The story of Mór Muman, which is told in the opening section,[48] may also have been told separately. In any event it is evidently this story which is referred to by the title *Neman Fír Móire Muman* ' The True Frenzy of M.M.' which occurs in *Airc Menman Uraird maic Coise*, though not in the tale-list proper. It is in a list of *seoit* ' treasures ' which seem to be abstract attributes ascribed to certain mythical and historical characters, with perhaps a story implied in some instances at least.[49] Another of these *seoit* is given as *Linne Laich Liathmuine* ' the history (?)[50] of Laech Liathmuine ', the latter epithet being a familiar soubriquet of Cuanu mac Cailchíne, Suithcern's lover.

The second source was a list of the *remscéla* to TBC, that is to say of those subsidiary tales which were written around the main theme of TBC and which dealt in particular with the preparations preceding the great expedition from Connacht to Ulster. At least two such lists are extant, one in LL 245 b and the other in RIA, D. 4. 2 (15th cent.?), while a third is as it were embodied in an actual collection of the *remscéla* themselves which precedes the text of TBC in Eg. 1782. Despite certain discrepancies it is clear that they all comprise essentially the same group of tales, and for our purpose it will be sufficient to quote that which appears most relevant, LL, particularly since all of them may be consulted easily in Thurneysen's *Heldensage*, 248-251.

[46] *TBC YBL*, ed. Strachan and O'Keeffe, ll. 2747-2752.

[47] *PRIA* XXX C (1912), 261-282.

[48] Cf. P. Mac Cana, *ÉC* vii (1955-56), 76-114.

[49] *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, ed. O. J. Bergin and others, II (1908), 53.

[50] *DIL* L 164, s.v. 3 linn.

LL 245 b recounts the story of the recovery of TBC (*Faillsigud Tána Bó Cuailnge*) and then proposes to enumerate the twelve *remscéla*, though in fact it gives only ten titles.[51] These are: (i) *De Gabáil int Ṡíd[a]*, (ii) *De Aslingi in maic Óic*, (iii) *De Chophur na dá Muccida*, (iv) *De Tháin Bó Regamain*, (v) *De Echtra Nerai*, (vi) *De Chompert Chonchobair*, (vii) *De Thochmurc [Ferbe]*, (viii) *De Chompert Con Culaind*, (ix) *De Tháin Bó Flidais* (x) *De Thochmurc Emiri*. As to the two missing titles Thurneysen refers tentatively to *Táin Bó Dartada*, which is found in the other lists, and *Táin Bó Regamna*, which may very easily have been omitted beside (iv). On the other hand he points out that *Tochmarc Emire* does not occur elsewhere in this context.

For us the arresting fact is that the first three titles in this list recur in the miscellaneous section of B and in the same order (but for the intrusion of *Táin Bó Cuailnge*), that is, *Gabáil in tSídhe*, *Aislingi in Maic Óig* and *Cupar in Dá Mucadha;* it seems more reasonable to attribute this to a textual relationship of some sort than to mere coincidence. Furthermore, the immediately following title in B is *Longus nUlad*, which may refer either to the tale otherwise entitled *Fochonn Loingse Fergusa meic Róig* or to the better known *Longas mac nUislenn [nUisnig]*,[52] and since these are included among the *remscéla*, in D. 4. 2 and Eg. 1782 respectively, one must at least admit the possibility that *Longus nUlad* represents one of the two titles missing from LL. Incidentally, if we make a tally of the different titles comprised by the three lists of *remscéla*, we find that apart from the three above titles which recur in the opening section of B,[53] almost all are included in other sections of B or are at least represented by alternative titles for the same tales; thus, for example, *Tochmarc Ferbe* of LL and Eg. 1782 is equivalent to *Do Aislingthi Conchobair* of D. 4. 2,[54] which in its turn is included elsewhere in B (and also in A) as *Fís Conchobair*, and *Compert Con Culainn*, which

[51]The list has been printed by Thurneysen, *Held.*, 248 f.; Müller, *RC* iii, 343; Windisch, *TBC* liii; Zimmer, KZ xxviii, 434.

[52]Cf. *Held.* 321 n. 1.

[53]I omit *Longus nUlad* since it may refer to either of two tales and may or may not be equivalent to *Tochomlod Longsi Fergusa a hUltaib* (AB).

[54]Cf. *Held.*, 351.

figures in all three lists of *remscéla*, appears also in B, while *Do Feis Tigi Beccfholtaig* (D. 4. 2), another version of the same tale,[55] goes unrecorded there. The only three titles not represented elsewhere in B are *Faillsigud Tána Bó Cuailnge* (D. 4. 2), *Táin Bó Flidais* (in all three) and *Do Comairle Connacht o ro-ghab Medhb lind* (MS. *liudh*) ⁊ *biadh dí* (D. 4. 2); of these the last has not been identified, unless, as suggested tentatively by Thurneysen, it refers to *Echtra Nerai*, and as regards *Táin Bó Flidais*, Thurneysen has remarked that it is also strangely absent from the group of tales designated *Tána Bó* in YBL 63a-62a.[56]

Naturally these observations are not intended to suggest that the compiler of the miscellaneous section of B had the several lists of *remscéla* before him as he wrote; most likely he drew upon a single list, one that was similar to, though not necessarily identical with, LL. The important point to be noted is that the three (perhaps four) *remscéla* included in the opening section of B are precisely those which are not recorded elsewhere in the list.

It would seem therefore that the compiler of the opening section glanced through the remainder of the list to ascertain which titles were not already included there. Several of these he incorporated in his new group of titles—but not all of them. Two of the extant lists of *remscéla* (LL and Eg. 1782) include *Compert Conchobair* and *Compert Con Culainn*, while the third (D. 4. 2) has the latter title. It seems a reasonable assumption therefore that both were in the list of *remscéla* used by our redactor-compiler. He however, instead of including them in his new group of titles, simply added three other *comperta* to them to form a new section which he inserted in the body of the tale-list.[57] It is significant that these two titles head the *comperta* in B and occur in the same order as in LL and Eg. 1782.

[55]Op. cit., 271.

[56]Op. cit., 317.

[57]Extant forms of *Compert Conchobair* and *Compert Con Culainn* have been ascribed to the early Old Irish period. Of the three additional titles *Compert Celtchair meic Uithechair* and *Compert Conaill Chernaig* have no corresponding texts in the extant literature, though the latter is presumably related to the etymological story attached to the name Conall Cernach in the *Cóir Anmann*

If we exclude those titles deriving from TBC and the list of *remscéla*, we are left with the following ten titles in the opening section of B: *Serglighi Con Culainn, Tromdam Echach Aireman, Scel Uath Ecailsi, Congala Conaild Cernaigh, Cathbuadha Con Roi, Fercuitred Medhba, Mesca Ulad* [*.i.*] *Boithreim Ulad, Forbuis bFer bFalgae, Airne Finghin,* and *Scela Alaxandair maic Pilip ac gabail righi ocus imperichta in domain.* It will be observed that these are all titles which could not be accommodated as they stand under any of the rubrics in the body of list B.

OTHER EXPANSIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO LIST X

In both A and B the parent list has undergone considerable alteration, but it is in the latter that its structural outline has been most markedly affected, as a consequence of its being incorporated in *Airec menman Uraird maic Coise.* For instance it is clear that the *oircne* did not comprise the final section of X as they do of B; they belong to the *prímscéla* proper and must have come before the appendix of *tomadmann, fisi, serca, sluagid* and *tochomlada* (see p. 83 supra), in other words at the end of the original list (O). However, since the whole point of incorporating the list in the *Airec menman* was to lead up to the tale of the plundering of the poet's homestead, *Orgain Cathrach Maíl Milscothaig,* the compiler of list B had no choice but to transfer the *oircne* to the final position. As a result the phrase ⁊ *aní ro hort araile cinedha imdha fo Érinn archena,* which seems to have stood at the close in X as the

(*IT* III, 2, 392 §251). *Compert Cormaic* does not exist independently in OI form, but doubtless it corresponded to the part of the OI text entitled *Scéla Eogain ⁊ Cormaic* which comprises ll. 404 ff. of *Cath Maige Mucrama,* ed. Máirín Ó Daly, Irish Texts Society, vol. L (1975), and was presumably the source of the later (thirteenth century?) tale with the synonymous title *Geneamuin Chormaic,* ed. S. H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica* I, 253; II, 286; Vernam Hull, *Ériu* xvi (1952), 79 ff.

With regard to the form of the titles, it may be noted that nominal genitives are not consistently lenited after nominal forms which may cause lenition. In MS. RIA 23 N. 10 the name following *compert* (ā, f.) is lenited in those instances where it is uncontracted, but in Rawl. B. 512 and Harl. 5280 it remains unlenited.

corresponding phrase does in A, now stands before the *oircne* in B,[58] and the words which introduce the *tomadmann* etc. in A (as no doubt they did in X), *Is amal phrímscéla dano ármither na scéla-sa sís*, have had to be omitted. Similarly, the nature of its new setting within the *Airec menman* meant that the list had to be shorn of its preface.

In addition to these changes the author of B, as we saw already, has not scrupled to add new titles and even new categories: he it was who introduced the miscellaneous opening section as well as the *comperta*, the *baili* and the second group of *togla*. On occasion he even twists a title already included so as to render it suitable for insertion under another rubric. In his new group of *togla* built around *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* and *Togail Bruidne Da Choca* he includes *Togail Bruidne Bélchon Bréifne* and *Togail in Tuir* which are no doubt merely variants of *Orgain Bélchon Bréfne* (AB) and *Orgain Tuir Conaing* (AB), and among the *baili* he gives *Builí in Scáil* although this was already included among the *físi*, viz. *Fís Chuind C[h]étchathaig .i. Baili in Scáil.*

A is of course even more given to multiplying titles and it includes a number of fairly obvious duplicates, e.g.

Táin Bó Rois (A) probably=*Aided Chonchobair* (A) or another version of the same story;[59]

Tochmarc Eithne Uathaige ingine Crimthaind (A)=*Loinges Eithne Uathaige* (A, H. 3. 17 only)=*Tochomlad na nDési ó Themraig* (AB), or part of it;

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[58]I have already discussed the probable significance of these words in A and B (p. 71 f. supra). Another possibility is that they originally came immediately after the *oircne* in list O and that it was to these they really referred. They would thus have stood in final position and it may be that the redactor of X retained them there even after he had added his new groups of titles. A possible argument against this, particularly if A preserves the original form of the words, is the fact that in the great majority of the titles comprising the *oircne*, the word *orcain* itself means 'destruction, plundering' rather than killing as such, but this objection is far from being decisive.

[59]Cf. *Held.*, 535.

Aided Fhiamain (A) probably=*Forbais Dúin Binne* (A)=*Echtra Fiamain* (A)=*Aithed Mugaine re Fiamain* (A)=*Orgain Dúin Binne* (B);[60]

Argain Rátha Blai (A)=*Aided Blai Briugad* (A), or a different version of it;

Aided Con Ruí (A) perhaps=*Táin teora nErc Echdach* (A) perhaps=*Orgain Cathrach Con Roí* (B);

Echtra Con Culaind (A) perhaps wholly or partly=*Tochmarc Emire* (A) or *Serglige Con Culaind* (B, late opening section);

Uath Dercce Ferna (A) perhaps=*Echtra Fhinn i nDerc Ferna* (A).

But apparently this duplication did not begin with A and B, for one can only assume that *Orgain Rátha Būrig* (AB) refers to the same tale as *Tuinide Tige Búrig* (AB), and therefore that already in list X the same tale was entered twice.

This same expansionist tendency also brought into being the several sections added by A to the earlier list, viz, the *imrama*, the *uatha* and the *forbassa*. The *imrama* (+*loingsi*) seem to have been assembled around the old tale *Imram Curaig Maile Dúin*, which according to Van Hamel was first written down in the early part of the old Irish period (eighth or ninth century).[61] That the early list did not include a section of *imrama* is easily understandable considering that they were so few in number and obviously derived from the more numerous *echtrai*. Similarly the section of *forbassa* is no doubt founded upon *Forbais Fer Fálga*, which incidentally is the only one of the *forbassa* included in the miscellaneous group at the beginning of B; it is significant that the tale which is almost certainly the oldest in each of these two sections is also the first in each.

[60]Cf. *Held.*, 446 f. As Thurneysen observes, the burden of the story seems to have been that Mugain, Conchobor's wife, was carried off by Fiamain mac Foroi, and that Fiamain was then attacked and slain, probably by Cú Chulainn, in his own fortress of Dún Binne.

[61]*Immrama*, Med. and Mod. Irish Series, 24.

Moreover we can confidently follow O'Curry and d'Arbois in identifying A's second title of the latter section, *Forbais Étair*, with *Cath* (or *Talland*) *Étair*, the well-known tale of Athirne's wilful demands upon the king of Leinster; the change of title served to provide some much needed substance to support the new rubric. Doubtless the same consideration accounts for the fact that *Cath Aichli* in B appears in A as *Forbais Aichle*, and if we had more precise grounds for comparison we should probably find that most, if not all, of the remaining titles in the group have been similarly adapted. An apparent exception is of course *Forbais Dromma Damgaire*, which is also the title borne by the extant text.[62] The modern text as edited by Sjoestedt-Jonval is relatively late, but Thurneysen (who was not concerned in this instance with the composition of the lists) suggested that it had merely borrowed the older title.[63] There is a short text in the Book of Lecan which deals in summary fashion with some of the events related with such prolixity in Mme Sjoestedt-Jonval's text; this bears no title, though it does use the term *forbais* of Cormac's attack on Munster (*tanic Cormac hua Cuind for sluaiged a Mumain co Druim n[D]amgairi . . . cor'gob forbaisi and sin for Muimnechaib*).[64] One cannot then entirely exclude the possibility that the longer text acquired its title directly from list A. In any case this particular point is incidental to our general conclusion, namely that the compiler of list A, commencing with the titles of two old tales proceeded to furnish each of them with a retinue of titles under the same general rubric.

The problem of the *uatha* is a little more complicated, not merely because of the difficulty of identifying the titles, but rather because the very meaning of the term *uath* in this context has been a matter of uncertainty. O'Curry was none too sure what it meant, but he was willing to hazard a guess: ' *Uatha*, plural of *Uath*, a word not easily translated. *Uath* is evidently formed from *Uaimh*, a cave, or cellar; and signifies some deed connected with, as the attack or plunder of, a cave '.[65] O'Looney follows O'Curry and translates *uatha* as

[62]Ed. Marie L. Sjoestedt-Jonval, *RC* xliii, 1-123; xliv, 157-86.

[63]*Zu ir. Handschriften und Litteraturdenkmälern* I, 54.

[64]*RC* xi, 42.

[65]*MS. Mats.* 586 n. 141.

' caves '.[66] D'Arbois follows them both and renders it ' cavernes ',[67] and in due course Thurneysen adds the German equivalent ' Höhlen '.[68] Meyer on the other hand prefers ' tales of hiding ', on the strength of *uath*, ' retirement ', in O'Reilly's Irish-English Dictionary,[69] though, as far as I am aware, this meaning is not attested elsewhere. What strikes one as particularly odd is that they should all have ignored so completely the commonest use of *uath*, that is in the sense of ' terror, horror ', etc., which seems to tally reasonably well with such information as we can glean concerning the tales in question. One scholar did, however, accept this meaning; Zimmer's translation of *uatha* was ' Furchtgestalten, Gespenstererscheinungen '.[70]

The first title of the group, *Uath Angeda*, has been identified by O'Curry, O'Looney and d'Arbois de Jubainville with the tale *Echta Nera*, which bears the title *Tain Be Aingen* in YBL,[71] but this can hardly be correct. It is much more likely to be related to the episode in the Irish Life of Molling which tells how the saint was molested by *Fuath Aingeda*, ' the Evil Spectre ' in Stokes's translation, and his wife and retinue. Molling requested permission to make his ' three leaps of pilgrimage ' and when this was granted he promptly made his escape by leaping the whole way to his own church with the evil spectres in furious, but unavailing, pursuit.[72] In another MI text, one of the Molling poems from the Brussels manuscript of Mícheál Ó Cléirigh,[73] the saint's adversary turns up as a woman named Aingid, and there are some grounds for believing

[66] *PRIA*, 2nd series, I, 222.

[67] *Catalogue*, 254 ff.

[68] *Held.*, 24.

[69] *RC* xi, 125.

[70] *Kelt. Beiträge* II, 144.

[71] This, Thurneysen supposes, must be an error for either *Táin Bó Aingen* or *Táin Bó Bé Aingen* (*Held.* 311).

[72] Op. cit., §§14-22, *RC* xxviii, 269-273. *Fuath* o, n ' form, likeness; hideous or supernatural form, spectre ' is a different word from *uath* u? ' fear, horror; horrible or terrible thing ', but semantically they converge, and from MI onwards one cannot always distinguish between them, particularly when *uath* develops a prosthetic *f-*.

[73] *Anecd.* II, 32.

that a hag also occupied this role in the original tale. In this instance she and her children (*cona claind*) seek Molling's blessing, but obviously the incident must belong somehow to the context of the story told in the Irish Life. As to the form *aingeda* in the latter, Stokes takes it to be a variant of *andgedae*, ' a sister-form of *andgid* ', in other words as an adj., ' evil, wicked ', etc., qualifying *uath*;[74] the form *Aingid* in the poem would then be merely a variant of *andg(a)id* meaning ' evil, wicked one '. This appears a reasonable enough explanation, though it must be added that it leaves *Uath Angeda* as an exception among the titles in its section; in all the others the word *uath* is followed by the name of a place in the genitive. In any event, assuming that the passage in the Irish Life preserves some resemblance to the tale referred to in A,[75] then it is quite clear that *uath* in the title *Uath Angeda* cannot mean ' cave ' or ' concealment ', but rather ' terror ', ' horror ', ' horrible being ' or ' monster ', a range of meaning which also suits those of the remaining titles in the group which can be given a context in the literature. Moreover, it is one which is well attested elsewhere in the literature, notably in the *fianaigecht* where there are tales of Fionn or Goll encountering terrible phantoms described as (*f*)*uatha*.[76]

It is true that some of the narratives in question deal with caves, and one or two with lakes, but this is hardly surprising considering that throughout Irish tradition caves and lakes have been commonly conceived of as entrances to the domain of the supernatural. Indeed in this instance I suspect that O'Curry and those who followed his lead have in fact reversed the type of semantic development suggested

[74] *RC* xxvii, 306. *Aingeda* might also be the genitive of *aingid*, but in that case there would be difficulty as to the interpretation of *Uath Aingeda*.

[75] The extant Irish Life of Molling belongs perhaps to the twelfth century, but it incorporates material dating from an earlier period: cf. Jackson, *Féil-sgríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill*, 541, 538; Carney, *Studies in Irish Lit. and Hist.*, 136. Thus it seems probable that the title in list A refers to an earlier, and perhaps fuller, version of the story which is told in the Irish Life.

[76] See *Duanaire Finn*, vol. I, ed. E. Mac Neill, nos. xxiv, 79-80, xxxv, 99-102; vol. III, ed. G. Murphy, 84. The water-monster slain by Fergus mac Leti is also described as an *uath* ' horror ' in the OI version of the tale (*Ériu* xvi, 39 §9). On the etymology of *uath*, see J. Loewenthal, ' Untersuchungen zur ältern Geschichte der Indo-Germanen ' III, 1. Ir. *uar*, ' kalt ', *uath*, ' Schrecken ', *Wörter und Sachen* XI, 54-63.

by O'Grady for the word *bruiden*, which from designating the house or hall which was so often the scene of fighting finally came to be used of the fight itself.[77]

The second title in the group of *uatha* in A, *Uath Ecalsa Imchummair* (v. *in C[h]omair*), obviously corresponds to *Scél Uath Ecailsi* in the opening section of B, and the fact that the latter is *sui generis* in B does seem to suggest that the title *Uath Ecalsa Imchummair* had reference to a reasonably well-known tale. Thus it is possible—though not so obvious as in the case of the *forbassa* and *imrama*—that the compiler began with a couple of familiar titles containing the word *uath* and that he then chose a number of tales of a similar character and adapted their titles for inclusion under the same rubric. Thus while *Uath Beinne Étair* (A) evidently denotes the little tale of Diarmaid and Gráinne edited by Meyer in *RC* xi, 125 ff.,[78] it does not necessarily follow that Meyer is correct in assuming this to be the title missing in the manuscript; so far as the evidence goes, this tale may have been arbitrarily pressed into service by the compiler and its original title altered accordingly. Another of the *uatha*, *Uath Dercce Ferna*, may be merely a duplication of *Echtra Fhinn i nDerc Ferna*, which is also in A.

Our conclusions as to the lateness of the groups of *imrama*, *forbassa* and *uatha* and their rather *ad hoc* character are confirmed by occasional references in the literature to the categories of tales. In the MI text *Suidigud Tellaig Temra* Fintan mac Bóchra declares, *am éolach ina fesaib ⁊ ina táintib ⁊ ina toglaib ⁊ ina tochmarcaib*, ' I am expert in its (Ireland's) *fesa*, its *tána*, its *togla* and its *tochmarca* ',[79] and in the tragic story of Baile Binnbérlach it is said that the yew which grew over Baile's grave was cut down and a poet's tablet made

[77]O'Grady, *S. Gad.* II, p. xvi: cf. G. Murphy, *Ossianic Lore and Romantic Tales*, 53; also *Met. D.* III, 20. 252, where *bruidne* is used in the sense of ' tales of the sacking of halls '.

[78]Though not precisely in its present form, it would appear; cf. G. Murphy, *The Ossianic Lore and Romantic Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1955), 11; ' *Uath Beinne Étair* . . . seems to be extant to-day as a thirteenth or fourteenth-century anecdote in archaised language of an incident which could have occurred during the Elopement of Gráinne with Diarmaid '.

[79]*Ériu* iv, 128.

from it and that upon this were written the *físe* and the *fese* and the *serca* and the *tochmarca* of Ulster.[80] The poem on the Leinstermen attributed to Flann mac Maelmaedóc (+977) mentions *fessa*, *tána* and *togla*,[81] and according to the LL text of the famous poem on the *oenach* of Carmun the activities of that assembly included the narration of *togla*, *tána*, *tochmarca*, *fessa*, *aitte* and *oirgne*.[82] In three of these four texts the categories mentioned were probably already present in the earliest recoverable form of the list (O), and in the exception, the story of Baile Binnbérlach, they were part of the common source of A and B, that is list X. In the twelfth century Gilla in Choimded ua Cormaic declares roundly, though not necessarily accurately, that the five types most widely represented in Irish storytelling were *tochmarca*, *fessa*, *catha*, *togla and tinngene*.[83] Apart from the *tinngene* these were present in the O-form of the list. If, as seems likely, *tinngene* is used *metri gratia* as a synonym for *comperta*,[84] then this may betray acquaintance with a copy of B, though not inevitably so since several of the *comperta* were well-known tales of respectable antiquity and may have been mentioned in their own right rather than as a segment of a list.[85]

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[80]Ed. Meyer, *RC* xiii, 223; O'Curry, *MS. Mat*, 473: cf. Myles Dillon, *Early Irish Literature*, 85 f.

[81]*ZCP* viii, 119 §34.

[82]*Met. Ds.* III, 18. The poem, which is attributed to Fulartach (date unknown) and to Flann, presumably Flann Mainistrech (+1056), probably belongs to the eleventh century (Gwynn, op. cit., III, 471). The references to the story-types are found in the First Recension of the Met. Ds. (represented by LL) in a passage which seems to have been deliberately omitted by the reviser responsible for the Second Recension (Gwynn, op. cit., V, 74 §7), and was therefore probably part of the original composition.

[83]*LL*, ed. Best and O'Brien, 18155-18158:

Tochmarca fessa ferr de
catha. togla. tingene.
iss e sin fri fute fecht
in cuicde is lia i scelaigecht.

[84]The word *tinngene* is glossed by *nuagene* in the manuscript, but no doubt it is correctly interpreted in *Contribb. s.v.* as ' bright, illustrious births '.

[85]It might be argued of course that this could apply equally to the other story-types mentioned, but in fact, with respect to such categories as the *fessa*, *físe* and *serca*, which are by no means conspicuous in the great manuscript *bibliothecae*, one can be quite certain that the several references cited above are based directly upon catalogues of tales.

Naturally, the fact that the allusions in Flann mac Maelmaedóc's poem and that on Carmun are referable to the O-form of the list does not necessarily mean that both poets actually used this primary form. In Flann's case this may well have been true, since it is not quite certain that list X had come into being before the end of the tenth century (p. 82 supra), but it is at least more likely that the later poet would have had this secondary form of the list at his disposal.

What does emerge clearly from our brief survey of the several texts noted above is that MI writers, when they had occasion to mention several of the listed story-types, tended to confine themselves to those types which had been included in the parent list (O); thus every single one of the texts in question names the *fessa*, despite the fact that these figure hardly at all among the tales contained in the great manuscript anthologies of the twelfth and succeeding centuries. The author of the tale of Baile Binnbérlach knew list X and made use of it; the authors of the other texts, if they had list X at their command, drew only upon the older corpus of the list and ignored the later rubrics which followed. None of our texts mention the *imrama*, *forbassa* or *uatha*, and in all probability these sections of list A had not been compiled when the texts were written. But even in later times, when list A and B had long been in existence, poets continued to restrict their references to the old classical—or canonical—story-types. Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn tells of a book with which he had been rewarded and which contained numerous *tána, tochmarca and togla*,[86] while in the following century Aodh Ó Domhnaill remarks to his opponent in argument:

> *Do shaoil mé gur léigheadh libh / gabaltais, dinnseanchas dil, leabhair irse Innse hAirt / bruighne, toghla 's tochmhairc.*[87]

ON THE RANGE OF THE LISTED TALES.

D'Arbois de Jubainville made much of the almost total absence from the lists of titles referring to historical persons or events belonging to the eighth and ninth centuries and indeed regarded it as

[86] *The Poems of Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn*, ed. Eleanor Knott, no. 25 §§28-9.

[87] *Iomarbhágh na bhFileadh*, ed. McKenna, XV §9. Cf. *Bruighean Bheag na hAlmhan*, ed. Nessa Ní Shéaghdha in *Trí Bruidhne*, 19: ⁊ *aduphuirt sē bruighne* ⁊ *toghla* ⁊ *tochmharca, duana* ⁊ *dreuchta* ⁊ *deagh-dhana a sean* ⁊ *a sinnsear dáibh.*

significant evidence for the antiquity of the original list.[88] The latter, he concluded, must date from the end of the seventh or the beginning of the eight century, from which time it remained unaltered until the title *Serc Gormlaithe do Niall* was interpolated sometime early in the tenth century. In reality, however, the presence or absence of titles referable to the eighth or ninth centuries provides no guide as to the date at which the original list was compiled.

It is true that no historical event of the period from the seventh century to the early tenth is indicated in the parent list, but this is also substantially true of the numerous additions made by A and B down to the twelfth century; apart from *Cath Coraind* (see n. 88 infra) the only recognizable exception is *Braflang Scóine* (A), which dealt with an event which took place in the middle of the ninth century.[89] Two of the latest titles in point of historical reference, *Aithed Ruithcherni re Cuanu mac Cailchín* and *Serc Duibe Locha do Mongán*, are found in both A and B and therefore must have been part of the parent list. Both these tales are set in the first half of the seventh century, and apart from *Cath Maige Rath*, *Braflang Scóine* and perhaps *Cath Corainn* and *Orgain Sratha Cluada*[90] the additions in A and B contain no later titles. Therefore it is clear that the vacuum extending over the eighth and ninth centuries is due to quite other causes and has no relevance for the date of composition of the original list. It is certain that d'Arbois would have reasoned very differently had he realized that A and B had resulted from a process of wholesale interpolation.

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[88] *Introd. à l'étude de la litt. celt.*, 356-366. He accepts the battle of Mag Rath (*FM* 634) as the latest historical event commemorated in the lists, viz. *Cath Maige Rath* (A). However there is a strong probability that the title *Cath Coraind* (A) refers to the battle fought in A.D. 704 at Corann in Co. Sligo between Loingsech mac Oengusa of Tír Conaill and Cellach king of Connacht. For the correct date of this battle see O'Rahilly, *EIHM* 255.

[89] See Appendix B.

[90] During the second half of the ninth century and the early part of the tenth northern Britain was constantly threatened by the Vikings who had their bases in Ireland. AU records *s.a.* 865 (=866) that Olaf the White and Ivarr, kings of Dublin, crossed to northern Britain to harry and to take captives, and several years later they organized a more extensive campaign to the same area. They besieged the fortress called Ail Cluaide in Irish or Al Clud in British for four months and plundered and ravaged it after its fall. *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* has the following account:

Nevertheless the vacuum to which he adverted is a matter of considerable interest. The question arises as to why the long expanse of time between the first half of the seventh century and the early tenth should be virtually unrepresented among the titles of list X. It is not sufficient to assume as a sort of literary principle that there must be a respectable lapse of time between the death of king or hero and the rise of his legend; otherwise we should expect to find the eighth and ninth centuries better represented among the late additions to the titles of A and B, and indeed among the many tales preserved in extant manuscripts. In this case the simple answer is the correct one: after the seventh century historical persons and events no longer became the subject of literary narrative to the extent that they had done previously. The period of Diarmait mac Aeda Sláine and Guaire Aidne is the last to have inspired any considerable body of literature and after the battle of Allen in A.D. 722, which has its literary reflex in the tale of *Cath Almaine*, there is an almost complete break. It is true that we are concerned here with the date of the subject-matter and not of the writing, but at the same time it is clear that the actual chronological distribution of the subject-matter is in some measure a guide to the temper of contemporary society in this respect. For instance, one can reasonable infer from other evidence that by the end of the seventh century the old heroic attitudes had become attenuated, and that they were felt more and more as belonging to the past and to literary tradition rather than to the living experience of contemporary society.

Nor is it merely a matter of inference, for we have it on the direct testimony of Flannacán mac Cellaig (+896), who in his dual role of king and poet was better fitted than most to observe such things.

In this year the Norwegian kings besieged Srath Cluada [Strathclyde; here evidently used for Ail Cluaide] in Britain, camping against them for four months; finally, having subdued the people inside by hunger and thirst—the well that they had inside having dried up in a remarkable way—they attacked them. First they took all the goods that were inside. A great host was taken out into captivity (ed. Joan Newlon Radner (Dublin, 1978), p. 142 *s.a.* 870).

It may be that these annals have drawn here upon a longer description of the Scandinavian expedition, and this in turn may have been the narrative referred to by the listed title (cf. B. G. Charles, *Old Norse Relations with Wales* (Cardiff, 1934) 11).

'It is', he comments at the beginning of his catalogue of heroic deaths, 'a very long time since there were champions in showery, dapple-green Banba',

Cian mór hua bátar trénfhir
for Banba brecglais broenach.[91]

and indeed it is not unreasonable to suppose that it was this changed perspective on the heroic past which gave rise to Flannacáns' catalogue-poem and those of his predecessor Orthanach ua Coílláma (+c. 839); in other words these represent the antiquarian's attempt to record an heroic age which for him belongs irrevocably to the past.[92]

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[91] *Journ. of Celt. Studies* i, 83 §7.

[92] This requires a rider, at least with regard to Orthanach ua Coílláma. Meyer is probably correct in ascribing to him (*ZCP* viii, 600) the poem *Hail Brigit*, with its eloquent contrast between the transience of the court of Alenn and its kings on the one hand and the permanence of Christ and his Church on the other. As Meyer has remarked (*Hail Brigit*, p. 5), the poem reads like an amplification of these lines from the Prologue to *Féilire Oengusso:*

Borg Ailinne uallach *atbath lia slóg mbágach*
is mór Brigit buadach, *is cáin a rruam dálach*

'Alenn's proud citadel has perished with its warlike host: great is victorious Brigit, fair is her multitudinous cemetery.' In his poem beginning *Masu de chlaind Echdach aird*, Orthanach again points this contrast, though rather more briefly (*ZCP* xi, 110 §31).

It is clear therefore that Orthanach was susceptible to the teaching of the religious reform movement which produced the *Féilire*; the question is whether, like the author of the Féilire, his only purpose in listing heroes and heroic traditions is to consign them the more effectively to the past and to replace them by the traditions of the Church and of her saints. To find the answer one need only read Orthanach's poetry, and especially his *Hail Brigit*. He handles his material with too much loving care for a puritan sceptic, he recreates far too cunningly and successfully the virtues and delights of the old heroic way of life, and his deference to the Christian order which has displaced them is perhaps too perfunctory and too strongly redolent of provincial patriotism. In short, one can only agree with Professor David Greene's impression of *Hail Brigit*: 'that a lover of the old tradition was making his poem conform outwardly to the prevailing religious fashion' (*Early Irish Poetry*, Thomas Davis Lects., ed., James Carney, 78).

As for Flannacán's poem, there is no internal evidence to indicate that it was influenced in any way by the contemporary movement towards religious puritanism.

(The date I have given for Orthanach's death depends on the assumption that he is the bishop of Kildare of that name who died in 839, but it should be said that Professor James Carney expresses some doubt on this score; *Ériu* xxii, 58 n. 2.)

The great author of change was of course the Church, which had already consolidated its position throughout society and was now exerting a powerful and pervasive influence on social attitudes as well as upon the forms of literary and intellectual expression. The very extension of the use of writing to all types of native composition, whether didactic or 'artistic', must inevitably have been accompanied by a considerable intellectual reorientation, even among men of learning who did not actively participate.

But if the considerations which are touched upon here help us to appreciate why the period from the seventh to the tenth century is so sparsely represented among extant tales and so completely unnoticed among the titles of list X, the result is merely to render all the more intriguing the sudden appearance of the story of Gormlaith and Niall Glúndub, which is included in X as *Serc Gormlaithe do Niall Glúndub*. Without doubt their story (at least in so far as we can judge from the later cycle of poems which it inspired[93]) was a poignant one, but the problem remains as to why it should have been composed in the first place, so soon after the deaths of the historical persons concerned, and why it should have been included so promptly in the list of tales. The answer is, I believe, that the story of Niall and Gormlaith came into existence as part of a politico-literary context which was particularly meaningful in the tenth century.

One of the great perennial themes of Irish literature is that which concerns the ritual marriage between king and goddess through which the union of the ruler and his kingdom is, as it were, consummated. By its very nature this theme had a strongly political aspect and was liable to be interpreted and exploited in terms of a given political situation, just as happened in the grim aftermath of

[93]Eleven poems were edited by Bergin in the *Miscellany presented to Kuno Meyer* (Halle, 1912) 343-369, ten from RIA. 23 F 16 and one from RIA. 23 D 4. In his review of the *Miscellany* (*Gadelica* I, 294) O'Rahilly pointed out that another collection of poems similar to that edited by Bergin was contained in a manuscript in the National Library of Ireland (MS. No. 200, p. 140), written by Peadar Ó Gealacáin in the parish of Moynalty, Co. Meath, in 1839. This collection, which is entitled *Triamhuin Ghormlaithe*, contains sixteen poems, including ten of the eleven poems edited by Bergin; O'Rahilly observes that the missing poem is the most obviously ungenuine one of the series. The six additional poems have since been edited by Anne O'Sullivan, *Ériu* xvi, 189-199.

the Treaty of Limerick when the Irish poets took up the cause of the exiled Stuarts and imagined them as the lawful spouses of Eire. I have suggested elsewhere that the theme of king and goddess as used in the story of Mór Muman may have had a political motivation connected with the claims of the Eoganacht upon the kingship of Munster and—what is more to our immediate purpose—that the conception of the goddess-heroine has had a marked influence upon the form of the Gormlaith legend.[94] Niall Glúndub was king of Tara—or according to the orthodox terminology, king of Ireland—for three years before he died fighting against the Norse of Dublin in 919, and in that capacity he continued a monopoly of the kingship of Tara which, according to the accepted teaching, had been enjoyed by the Uí Néill since the death of Ailill Molt in 482. Moreover his reign came at a time when the doctrine of the High Kingship was being elaborated for the benefit of the Uí Néill: ' the arguments for the High Kingship, or rather for the kingship of Tara being of right the over-kingship of Ireland, had been building up for at least a century and a half before Brian's [viz. Brian Bóroimhe] usurpation.'[95]

During this period, when it appears that the annals and other historical sources were being systematically revised so as to impose the idea of a Tara kingship with suzerainty over the whole of Ireland,[96] it would have been a strange oversight had the professional propagandists neglected to make use of the historical tale. A good instance is the story of *Echtra mac nEchach*, the metrical version of which is the work of Cúán ua Lothcháin (+1024), the friend and partisan of Mael Shechnaill (+1022),[97] who was the last descendant of Niall Noígiallach to hold the High Kingship; in this a sub-type of the king and goddess theme is used to restate the claim of the Uí Néill to the High Kingship in a form which is all the more effective for being itself so redolent of hallowed tradition. What I would suggest is that the story of Gormlaith and Niall Glúndub had a

[94] *EC* viii, 61-62.

[95] John V. Kelleher, *Studia Hibernica* 3, 122; cf. Binchy, *Procs. of the International Congress of Celtic Studies*, 1959 [1962], 125 ff.

[96] Op. cit., 119 ff; cf. Donncha Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin and London, 1972), 125-6.

[97] Cf. Gwynn, *Met. Ds.* IV, 386, 413.

similar political motivation and that this explains its ready acceptance by the orthodox school. This acceptance, we have seen, is indicated by the inclusion of *Serc Gormlaithe do Niall Glúndub* among those groups of titles added to the original list during the tenth or early eleventh century; it is perhaps not without significance therefore that this same appendix also includes *Tochomlad clainne Echach Muigmedóin a Mide* (AB), which must refer to one or other version of the tale recounted by Cúán ua Lothcháin.[98]

Mac Néill[99] and Meyer[100] and others after them have remarked how few are the titles in A and B which are related to the Finn cycle. Meyer in particular contrasts their meagre tally ' in the tenth-century list of tales ' with the statement made by Gilla in Chomded ua Cormaic in the twelfth century that there were 120 stories about the *fiana* which every genuine *fili* could recite,[101] and sees in this convincing evidence of the growth of the cycle in the two intervening centuries. It must be pointed out however of Meyer's conclusion that, while it contains no serious error, it is nevertheless misleading to the degree that his premise is inexact.

In the first place it is clear that ' the tenth-century list ' did not mean the same thing to Meyer as it did later to Thurneysen, that is, in practical terms, the sum of the titles common to A and B. Had he realized the extent of the additions made to both the derivative lists during the eleventh and perhaps the twelfth century, he must surely have wondered why these later titles did not include a higher pro-

[98]Cúán is also the author of the well-known poem on the *Oenach Tailten* (*Met. Ds.* IV, 146 ff.) which he apparently composed to celebrate the holding of the *oenach* or ' assembly ' by Mael Shechlainn in 1006, after a lapse of seventy-nine years. In this poem he again refers to the long line of the Uí Néill kings, and as Gwynn remarks (op. cit., iv, 418), he pointedly makes no mention of Brian Bóroimhe, who had a few years earlier compelled Mael Shechlainn's submission. It is perhaps worth recalling that Niall Glúndub, in 916, had also held Oenach Tailten after a long interval (*quod multis temporibus pretermissum est*, AU). It is unlikely that an event so pregnant with political inference would have been allowed to pass unnoticed by Cúán and his learned associates.

[99]*Duanaire Finn* I, xxxiv.

[100]*Fianaigecht*, xxix.

[101]*LL*, ed. Best and O'Brien, 18161-2, *se fichit findscél na Fiann | foclas cech fili fírial* (for *fírfial* say the editors).

portion relating to the Finn cycle, in other words why they did not reflect something of the great expansion which the cycle experienced from the tenth century onwards; for the fact is that, of the five titles which can be definitely connected with the Finn cycle, two were already in list X, Thurneysen's ' tenth-century list ', and only three were added later, all of them in A.[102] Even allowing for several doubtful titles which may possibly pertain to the Finn cycle, there is little here to suggest a dramatic surge of recognition within the period from *c.* 1000 to the first half of the twelfth century.

The inclusion in list X of the titles *Tochmarc Ailbe* [*ingine Cormaic la Finn*] and *Aithed Gráinne* [*ingine Corbmaic*] *la Diarmait* [*ua nDuibne*],[103] means in effect that the learned men of literature had already by *c.* 1000 accorded a measure of formal recognition to the Finn cycle and that they had already contrived to associate Finn and his *fían* with the reign of Cormac mac Airt, king of Tara, thereby drawing them within the framework of the pseudo-historical scheme which, we saw earlier, was being elaborated during these centuries.[104] But while it may have been a relatively simple matter thus to edit a few of the more prominent Finn titles, doubtless the great mass of nondescript oral traditions would have proved much less tractable, and it is therefore not surprising that the written literature of the eleventh century should have produced little in the way of fresh narrative material related to the cycle. The accumulation of popular stories and traditions had not as yet been worked up into articulated narratives by skilled *littérateurs*, but, at the same time, it provided a rich quarry for the antiquarian scholars of the eleventh and twelfth centuries and, as Gerard Murphy has remarked, ' there is an extraordinary number of references to Fionn in poems of the Dindshenchas type and in other poems and prose jottings of the pseudo-historical school.'[105]

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[102]Of these three later titles two may in fact refer to the same story, namely *Echtra Fhind i nDerc Ferna* and *Uath Dercce Ferna.*

[103]The words in brackets are found only in B, but doubtless the titles have been abbreviated in A.

[104]Cf. Gerard Murphy, *Duanaire Finn* III, lx f., lxxxvi.

[105]Gerard Murphy, op. cit., lxi.

In the course of the twelfth century, however, these popular Finn traditions achieved a new status in Irish literature; their youthful vigor, their wealth of fresh allusion and association, and perhaps the fact that they were better attuned to the contemporary situation, all exerted an irresistible attraction, so that an ever-increasing number of them was redacted and written by men of literary pretensions, and surely and inevitably they began to displace the Ulster cycle from its position of pre-eminence. But this development came too late to make any considerable impression upon the tale-lists.

As one might expect, the lists contain only a few titles with a religious reference, and even in these cases it can be safely assumed that it was not primarily for their religious interest that they were included. Common to A and B are the titles *Orgain Donnán Ego*, ' The Killing of Donnán of Egg ', referring to an account of an historical event which took place in A.D. 617 (AU), and *Fís Fursa* ' Fursa's Vision ', which is the earliest attested example of its genre: it is mentioned already by Bede in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* and evidently he was drawing upon a text very similar to the seventh-century life of Fursa edited by B. Krusch, *MGH Script. Rer. Mer.*, IV 34-40.[106] The latter title stands in the appendix comprising *tomadma*, *físi*, etc., and therefore belongs to list X, whereas the former was already present in the original list (O). Apart from these two, the only titles in A and B with religious associations are those included in the section of *baili*, ' ecstasies, prophecies ', peculiar to B; but of course this is a genre which transcends the normal distinctions between secular and religious literature.

We have noted that A adds two titles to the collection of *oircne* taken over from list X. These are *Braflang Scóine* and *Aigidecht Arthúir*. The former title relates to the conquest of the Picts in the ninth century by Cinaed mac Ailpín and may have existed before the end of the eleventh century (see Appendix B, p. 142). The latter almost certainly refers to a legend of King Arthur of Britain, in which case, as has been pointed out by Dr Alan Bruford, one might expect the tale in question to be later than Geoffrey of Monmouth's

[106]Bede, op. cit., III, xix. Cf. Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources*, (London, 1972).

popularization of Arthur and his elaboration of the cycle about 1135.[107] This suggests the possibility that the two extra titles, *Braflang Scóine* and *Aigidecht Arthúir* were added to the *oircne* in A—perhaps from some British source—sometime in the twelfth century.

THE POEM BY FLANNACÁN MAC CELLAIG

Flannacán mac Cellaig was king of Brega as well as being a poet of some note. He and his sons figured prominently in the long-enduring conflict with the Norse of Dublin, and it was in the course of these hostilities that he met his death in 896: *Flannacán mac Ceallaigh, ri Breagh, a Normannis iugulatus est* (AU). According to the annals he was predeceased by three of his sons, each of whom prior to his death had been in the position of *rígdomna*. In a tract on poets and poetry Flannacán is described, along with three other kings, as a *ríoghbhard* or ' royal poet ',[108] and the poem with which we are concerned here, *Innid scél scailter n-airich*,[109] is cited in the first two of the metrical tracts edited by Thurneysen.[110] We have no means of knowing how prolific a poet he was, but three of his poems appear to have survived, which when all things are considered probably represents a literary fate not very much better or worse than that of other early poets.

Thurneysen believed that, since his *rígdomna* had died before him, Flannacán must have been advanced in years when he was slain, and that the poem here in question may therefore have been composed

[107]Alan Bruford, *Gaelic Folktales and Medieval Romances* (Dublin 1967) = *Béaloideas* xxxiv (1966 [1968]), 45. He also remarks, op. cit., p. 11, that the inclusion of *Aigidecht Artúir* in list A ' suggests that Arthur became a hero of romances in Ireland almost as soon as in any other country outside Wales ' The tale to which the title refers has not been identified, but Dr Bruford has noted the possibility that it refers to the literary original which he postulates for the Irish version of the ' werewolf's tale ' related to the Latin *Arthur and Gorlagon* and the Old French lays of *Melion* and *Bisclavret* (op. cit., 163, n. 7).

[108]Ed. E. J. Gwynn, *Ériu* xiii, 42. As explained here, the title *ríoghbhard* implies that its bearer possessed both kingship and *bairdne*.

[109]Ed. with introduction by Kathleen Mulchrone, *Journal of Celtic Studies*, i, 80 ff.

[110]*IT* III, 15 §36, 44 §61.

rather earlier. In any event we shall be in little danger of serious error if we assign it to a date *c.* 750. The purpose of the poem is simply to catalogue the deaths of famous Irish heroes according to the days of the week on which they are supposed to have taken place. This arrangement, which may have been suggested by the tradition that Cú Chulainn died on a Wednesday,[111] has been allowed to determine the formal plan of the poem, which comprises seven introductory quatrains and the actual catalogue of twenty-one quatrains. Despite the extreme succinctness of the enumeration the contents are of the greatest importance as evidence for the existence of many of our heroic tales at or before the time the poem was composed; with the exception of *Cín Dromma Snechta* and the poem by Orthanach ua Coílláma, which do not of course cover quite the same range, these provide the earliest index of heroic literary traditions.

One reaction to reading Flannacán's poem and other catalogue-poems of its kind is to wonder how exactly the poet may have assembled his materials. Did his catalogue take shape *pari passu* with his couplets or did he in fact draw up a guide-list before embarking upon the actual work of metrical composition? The fact is that in most cases we do not know, and have no means of knowing, but in Flannacán's case there are at least certain indications that he had to hand some form of tale-list, whether or not he drew upon it systematically for his catalogue of *aideda.*

In his introductory quatrains, and before opening the catalogue proper, Flannacán refers to several tales of a rather more miscellaneous character. The first of these is a story about Cú Chulainn and the death of Cú Roí. Most likely it is the old tale known as *Aided Con Roí* (A), though it might conceivably be *Aithed Bláthnaite ingine Puill maic Fhidaig la Coin Culainn* (AB) or another of the several recensions of the Cú Roí traditions.[112] There may therefore be some significance in the fact that *Aided Con Roí* heads the *aideda* in A, for as we have noted already, this rubric, while

[111] *Held.*, 556 n. 6.

[112] Cf. *Held.* 431 ff. Flannacán also mentions Cú Roí's death in his main catalogue (§112) where it is one of the *aideda* assigned to Tuesday.

lacking in B, may nevertheless have been part of the parent list. Next Flannacán mentions *Cath Maigi Tuire* (*:uile*), and this time he chooses a tale which heads the *catha* in both A and B.[113] Then, in his third quatrain, he names three *fesa*, viz. *Fes Tigi Gniain*, *Fes Tigi Muiclin Maine* and *Fes Tigi Caine*,[114] which are represented in B by *Feis Tighi Gnoain*, *Feis Tighi Nuclin* (leg. *Muclin?*[115]) and *Feis Tighi Caire;* A has only *Fes Tigi Gnaair*, which is clearly to be equated with the first of these, but presumably the other two have been omitted accidentally. Again, it may be significant that the three titles which Flannacán chooses stand together in B; they are not in the same order, it is true, but in the poem the order is determined by the fact that two of the titles are required to provide a ryhme. Finally he refers to the story of Mac Dathó's hound, which is included among the *oircne* in A and B, and to *Aided Chonchobair*, which is one of the *aideda* in A.

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[113]A and B have *C. M. Tuired.* Flannacán's use of the form *Tuire*, which occurs also in the tale-list in Laws i, 46 (p. 65 supra) may have been a matter of metrical convenience.

[114]The vocalism of *Maine* and *Caine*, which rhyme together, is uncertain. Professor Mulchrone reads them as *Maíne* and *Caíne* on the strength of *Caíni* (*Caínbrethach*) which is written with an accent in *Mesca Ulad*, l. 768.

[115]It may be, as suggested by Dr Mulchrone, that *Nuclin* is an error for *Muclin*. From this Dr Mulchrone goes on to consider the possibility that *Muiclin Maine* is to be equated with *Muicin Maighne* which occurs in a later poem in *Anecd.* ii, 36, and *maighne muccin* (v.l. *mhuighi muiccin*), *IT* iii, 83 (in a quatrain cited in *Metrical Tract* III). If it is, and if *Muclin* is an error common to Flannacán and B, then, she suggests, B may be a borrowing from Flannacán.

This is an interesting collocation, and certainly the two expressions or cognomens are strikingly similar, but there are obvious, though not insuperable, difficulties in the way of identification. Apart from the emendation required in B, one would have to suppose that both *Muiclin* and *Maine* were incorrect in Flannacán's poem. Moreover, even if we assume that Flannacán and B are thus linked by a common error, this need not mean that the one has borrowed from the other. If Flannacán made use of a list of titles, as I have suggested he did, then we should have to suppose rather that the error was already present in the list, whence it was taken over by both Flannacán and B.

As to *Muiccín Maigne*, he is associated with Molling and is said to have had several churches dedicated to him in Ossory: cf. Martyrologies of Gorman, Donegal and Tallaght at March 4 and that of Donegal at July 11; Rawl. B 502, 129 a 12; Ir. Texts iii, 93 §186; Colgan, *Acta Sanctorum*, 457; W. Carrigan, *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory* ii, 65, 203-4, iii, 281, iv, 9; Miss Dobbs, *Journ. of Celt. Studies* i, 229-30.

This evidence is less than conclusive, but it does suggest very strongly that Flannacán had at his disposal a list of tales from which he borrowed a few conspicuous titles for his introductory heptad of stanzas. Whether he also used it in compiling the subsequent catalogue of death-tales which was his main concern is a much more doubtful matter—and for our particular purpose one which has no extra relevance. Of the *aideda* in A which are demonstrably as old as the ninth century all—with one possible exception—are alluded to in the poem,[116] but since there are only nine such *aideda* and since they are all well-known tales in any case, the coincidence carries little weight.

If the inference drawn here from the opening quatrains is correct, it means that already in the ninth century Flannacán possessed a list of tales which had several features in common with the parent-list of A and B. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that this was our list O.

THE PREFACE TO A: THE 350 TALES

' What follows here below concerns the professional qualification of the *fili* in so far as it consists of stories and *coimcne* to be narrated to kings and princes, viz. seven fifties of tales, or five fifties of *prím-scéla* and two fifties of *fo-scéla*, and the *fo-scéla* are accounted only to four grades, that is to the *ollam*, the *ánruth*, the *cli* and the *cano*.' Thus the preface to list A. It will be seen that two specific assertions are made here, one concerning the number of tales in the *fili's* repertoire, the other formulating a distinction between *prím-scéla* and *fo-scéla*. Both are still frequently cited in works dealing with Irish or Celtic literature and both, but especially the latter, still tend to be accepted at their face value. In reality, however, they are unsupported by the evidence and it seems clear that they are merely another instance of the early Irish proclivity towards learned invention and pedantic hairsplitting. Let us turn first to the numerical estimate of the *fili's* repertoire.

[116]The possible exception is *Aided Fhergusa*, which in the context of the list probably refers to Fergus mac Roich. The poem does indeed mention a *Fergus fodbad* (leg. *fodbach*), ' Fergus of the accoutrements ' in §10, but Dr Mulchrone identifies him as Fergus *fogae* who was slain in the battle of Achad Lethderg. At the same time it is not impossible that Fergus mac Roich is intended.

The most conclusive argument against the preface is the list itself: it should, if the preface is to be trusted, comprise three hundred and fifty titles, whereas in fact, despite all the additions it had received since c. 1000, it still has less than two hundred. Obviously the parent list, even allowing for the accidental omission of some titles or even of whole rubrics, must have been a still more modest one. The figures of 350 is therefore patently unrealistic;[117] the only question is to decide if possible how it was arrived at—unless one simply assumes that 7×50 is self-explanatory within the Irish tradition of numbers. The explanation which I put forward here is based upon a text very much akin to the tale-list and one with which the author of the preface must have been familiar, namely the second of the metrical tracts edited by Thurneysen.[118]

Thurneysen first thought to ascribe this second tract or poet's manual in its earliest form (that is comprising §§2-31 and 113-120) to the end of the eighth century,[119] but later, realizing that it evidently included citations from the verse of Flann mac Lonáin (+920) and Cormac mac Cuilennáin (+908), he was forced to conclude that the old tract could not have been compiled before the beginning of the tenth century;[120] it then reached its final expanded form sometime in the eleventh century. In its extant form it combines materials of diverse origin and date.[121] It reflects in its content and structure the lengthy course of study that was the lot of the aspiring *fili*, though the pattern it presents is neither unified nor consistent. Thurneysen has shown that the extant text combines three versions of the professional curriculum, or at least three stages in its expansion. His main conclusions may be resumed as follows: The tract is based upon the seven-grade system of *filidecht* and evidently in its earliest form the curriculum envisaged the student-poet as passing through

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[117]The Senchas Már list follows A in assigning 350 tales to the *ollam*. The redactor of the Edinburgh list, however, seems to have got his figures badly confused; he speaks of 350 *prím-scéla* and 150 *fo-scéla*!

[118]*Mittelirische Verslehren*, Text II, *IT* III, 1, 31 ff.

[119]*Zu ir. Handschriften und Litteraturdenkmälern* I (Berlin, 1912), 86.

[120]*ZCP* xvii, 265. See also Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Metrics* (Dublin, 1961), p. v-vi.

[121]*IT* III, 1, 110 ff.

these grades in a period of seven years. But the curriculum was gradually lengthened, at least in theory, and in the next stage which may be inferred from an analysis of the tract it extended over ten years. The subjects to be studied during the additional three years were inserted between the *ánroth's* year and that of the *ollam*, in other words they were supposed to occupy the seventh, eighth and ninth years. The next stage was that represented in the extant tract; here two more sections were added, one being inserted as the course of study for the eighth year and the other appended at the end. Thus in its final form the tract purports to cover a course of twelve years.

Among the subjects to be studied in the first year there is one item which is described simply as ' twenty *dréchta* ', that is, ' twenty tales '.[122] In each of the following five years the *dréchta* appear regularly, being increased each time by ten, so that by the sixth year the student's pensum includes seventy *dréchta*. But here the continuity is interrupted, for, as we have seen, it is after this year that the original form of the tract has been substantially altered by addition and interpolation. Assuming however that the seventh and final year of the basic tract had followed the same pattern in this

[122]The word *drécht* has the primary meaning ' portion, section ', and thence by a familiar semantic extension (cf. E. *piece*, Fr. *pièce*) it comes to be used of a literary composition. It may refer to prose as well as to verse, though the latter usage is naturally more familiar. In Lec. 168 vb 18 the statement that the *oblaire* has seven tales allotted to him is worded as follows in Irish: *oblaire . . . secht ndréchta lais do scelaib* (where *do scelaib* is used predicatively). Cf. also O'Clery's Glossary, *drécht* .i. *sgél; Ériu* xiii, 38-39, *i ndluimh fa ndréchtaibh .i. as i sgéluibh, no in aondluimh*; ibid., 52, *dréuchta coimhghne* glossed by *sgeoil no duána, no laoidhe ⁊ rosgadha* . . . . Indeed this last reference suggests the possibility that *dréchta* in the metrical tract stands for *dréchta coimcni;* note the coupling of *scéla* and *coimcne* in the preface to A (and also in the prefatory matter preceding B).

A modern analogy to the old use of *drécht* is that attested for the word *píosa* in the area around Claregalway in the vicinity of Galway city. According to Mr Ciarán Bairéad *píosaí*, or *sean-phíosaí*, is the term applied to old tales, songs, *seanchas* (*sagen*), etc. (*Béaloideas* xxxii, 135 n.).

Thurneysen at first believed that *dréchta* as used in the metrical tract could not mean ' tales ', since the *prímscéla* are given as part of the pensum for the eighth year (*IT* III, 115 f., 120); but later he withdrew his objection on the grounds that the eighth year with its reference to the *prímscéla* ' is erst von dem letzten Bearbeiter eingeschoben, der den Widerspruch nicht bemerkt haben wird' (op. cit., 170). Thurneysen's change of mind is not taken sufficient note of in *DIL* s.v. *drécht* II, nor indeed is the general evidence for *drécht* meaning ' tale '.

respect as the preceding years, it would then have included eighty *dréchta*. Moreover, since the *dréchta* show a regular increase from year to year, it seems reasonable to infer that the number for any given year is inclusive of that of the preceding year; in other words, that the *fili* in his seventh and final year was supposed to have eighty *dréchta* at his command.[123] But this interpretation, however reasonable it may appear, is not the only possible one. For the author of the preface of list A in particular it might have seemed a more straightforward procedure (and one which produced a very much more impressive result) simply to add up the series of figures which he found in the tract.[124] At all events this is evidently what he did, for the total he would thus have arrived at is 350. The implication is of course, in the light of the above analysis of Metrical Tract II, that this particular item in the preface to A is based upon the original unexpanded form of the tract.[125]

However, lest this explanation should appear suspiciously tidy, it must be admitted that there is a possible objection. My supposition was that the seventh year was allotted eighty *dréchta* in the primary form of Tract II, but this might seem to be contradicted by the fact

[123]One's immediate reaction is to compare this with what we know of list O. A tally of the titles common to A and B, excluding those of the 10th-11th century appendix, reads approximately as follows: *aitheda* 7, *togla* 9, *oircne* 35, *tochmarca* 3, *tána* 5, *echtrai* 3, *fessa* 3, *catha* 2, total 67. Allowing for errors of inclusion and omission (in so far as this is at all feasible) this figure might appear to come reasonably close to the eighty tales studied by the fully qualified *fili*. Nevertheless it would be rash to assume without further evidence that list O was an index of the *dréchta* mentioned in the curriculum of the *filid;* apart from its curious lack of balance, it is doubtful whether it would have constituted a reasonably comprehensive register of native *scéla* and *coimcne*.

[124]And indeed this is the procedure adopted by Thurneysen, *IT* III, 170; see n. 126 infra.

[125]It is true that we have no direct evidence that this primary form of the *fili's* curriculum existed in writing: ' Die ältere Anschauung war also vermutlich, dass der *fili* nach einem Studium von 7 Jahren die Stufenleiter durchschritten hatte und zur obersten Würde befähigt war. Und es mag schon für diese siebenjährige Lehrzeit Lehrbücher oder Leitfäden gegeben haben; derart konnten etwa die älteren *cerda* ' artes ' gewesen sein, deren Studium II, 121 dem *ollam* im 12. Jahre anempfolen wird ' (Thurneysen, *IT* III, 113).

However, if the basic curriculum, complete with verse examples, was drawn up in the tenth century as Thurneysen supposes (p. 112 supra), then it is virtually certain that this compilation was in the form of a written text.

that in the extant form of the tract the pensum for the twelfth year concluded with ' 140 *dréchta* ' (IT III, 64).[126] The problem is to decide whether this item originally rounded off the final pensum of the seven-year curriculum and remained anchored in final position as the tract expanded. This would mean that the 140 *dréchta* were moved first from the seventh to the tenth year and subsequently from the tenth to the twelfth year, a progression which is by no means inconceivable but perhaps a little improbable. There is, I suggest, a simpler explanation: The final redactor of the tract observed on glancing back over his handiwork that the *dréchta* increased by ten in each of the first six years, but that they were completely absent over the remaining six. He therefore doubled the figure for the sixth year and added this at the end of the twelfth, forgetting that the first year opened with twenty, not ten, *dréchta.*

PRÍM-SCÉLA AND FO-SCÉLA

It seems likely then that the figure of 350 derives from Metrical Tract II in its primary unexpanded form. According to Thurneysen's dating this was compiled probably in the first half of the tenth century and reached its present form sometime in the eleventh;[127] but even if our explanation of 350 were beyond all doubt it could not be used as a chronological criterion, since for all one knows texts of the primary recension may have continued in existence side by side with those of the later augmented recensions (see Thurneysen as quoted p. 114 n. 125 supra); in other words the number 350 may have been already in the preface to the parent list, but this is not certain. With this proviso in mind one may venture tentatively to isolate the older form of the preface attached to the parent list X. It probably contained some form of the opening sentence of the present preface: *Do nemthigud filed i scélaib ⁊ i comgnib inso sís dia n-aisnís do rígaib*

[126]I suggested above that the medieval redactor-commentator of the tale-list had got his 350 by totting up the *dréchta* assigned to the seven years in the primary tract. This is in fact the procedure which Thurneysen adopts in a comment on the 140 *dréchta* of the twelfth year: ' Nach unserem Texte würde also der ausgelernte *fili* 410 Erzählungen kennen ' (*IT* III, 170). The only difference is that Thurneysen's total includes these 140 *dréchta* in place of the 80 *dréchta* which I postulate for the seventh year of the primary tract.

[127]See p. 112 supra.

⁊ flathib (*.i. vii coícait scél*),[128] It may also have contained—though this is less certain—the closing sentence of the present preface: *Acus issiatso na prím-scéla .i. togla ⁊ tána . . . ⁊ airggne* (see infra), but of course without those rubrics which were inserted later in list A.

In due course, however, the list of tales underwent an important change which was to leave its mark in turn on the preface. This came in the form of an appendix comprising the *tomadmann, físi, serca, sluagid and tochomlada.* The distinction between this group of rubrics and the main body of the list is stated explicitly in A and is at least implicit in B (p. 82 f. supra), and the evidence of the titles themselves suggests strongly that this appendix was compiled in the tenth or even possibly in the eleventh century. A number of these titles are drawn from *Lebor Gabála*[129] and are no doubt to be set in the context of the pseudo-historical learning which was carried on so diligently during the tenth century and after; they include all five invasions and evidently represent an advanced stage in the elaboration of the LG synthesis. Another title, *Tochomlad clainne Echach Mugmedóin a Mide*, refers to a tale which may have originated, and certainly was accommodated, within this edifice of pseudo-history, in particular that part of it directed to buttressing the claim of the Uí Néill to an ancient monopoly of the High Kingship of Ireland (p. 103 ff. supra); as we saw already, the extant

[128]In the first place it is reasonable to assume that the list was introduced by some brief preface or heading, and this sentence seems to be eminently appropriate. Secondly the phrase *i scélaib ⁊ i comgnib* appears to have its reflex in B, viz. *roairmistair anmanna coimghne ⁊ primsgeul nÉrenn*, the inference being that it was already present in the preface or heading of the parent list.

On the other hand, if I am correct in suggesting that this coupling of *scéla* and *coimgne* derives from a misinterpretation of the sentence which now closes list A and no doubt once closed list X (see p. 127 infra), it would then seem extremely unlikely that the opening sentence of the preface to A could, in its present form, have been part of list O. At the same time, the words *⁊ i comgnib* could very easily have been inserted in imitation of the closing sentence, in which case the introduction to list O may have read simply: *Do nemthigud filed i scélaib inso sís dá n-asnís do rigaib ⁊ flathib.*

[129]I follow O'Rahilly and others in using the title *Lebor Gabála* of the growing complex of pseudo-history which finally culminated in the eleventh century in the earliest recension of the extant *Lebor Gabála.* Despite Thurneysen and Dillon, I see no useful purpose in meticulously restricting the title to the latter compilation.

metrical version of this tale was composed by Cúán ua Lothcháin (+1024), no doubt for the benefit of his patron, Mael Shechlainn mac Domnaill (+1022), the High King of Niall's line who was superseded by Brian Bóraimhe. To approximately the same period belongs the tale which is included in the appendix under the title *Serc Gormlaithe do Niall Glúndub*, and, if I am not mistaken, this belongs also to the same climate of political thought and propaganda; Niall died in 919 and Gormlaith as late as 948, and one can only conjecture how much time may have elapsed between their deaths and the creation of their legend. Two other titles,[130] *Sluagad Fiachna meic Baitáin co Dún nGuaire i Saxanaib* and *Serc Duibe Lacha do Mongán*, refer to a seventh-century historical environment which seems to have been scarcely represented in list O itself,[131] and finally there is *Fís Fursa*, which as one of the only two tales of a religious character included in the parent list points perhaps to the gradual integration of secular and religious literature which becomes evident in the tenth and later centuries.[132]

In list A the collection of titles comprising the appendix is preceded by the brief statement that ' these tales are reckoned as *prím-scéla* ' (*Is amal phrím-scéla dano ármither na scélasa sís*). There can be little doubt that this was already in list X and that its omission from B is due to the contextual demands of *Airec menman Uraird maic Coise*. Its meaning is quite clear. Just as the *prím-aisti* were the most important metres,[133] so presumably the *prím-scéla* were the most important tales, that is to say those which were considered worthy of inclusion in the *fili's* repertoire—and in the tale-list. Most probably the early form of the preface to the list referred to its

[130]Three if I am correct in believing that *Serc Créde do Chanainn mac Gartnáin* (B) has been omitted inadvertently from A (see p. 68 supra).

[131]So far as one can judge, the only relevant title in O was *Orgain Rátha Guala* (AB), which evidently refers to an exploit of Fiachna mac Baetáin's.

[132]Moreover the other title, *Orgain Donnán Ego*, may have been included for its historical rather than its religious interest.

[133]In point of fact the epithet *prím-* is in a sense redundant, since it merely underlines the obvious; it was the inclusion of the tales in the list which affirmed their importance. A more obvious pleonasm is the rubric *prím-chatha Érenn* in B where A has simply *catha*. As we noted earlier, B designates the tales in its opening miscellany as *gnáth-scéla;* this is clearly an *ad hoc* term devoid of any particular significance and formed on the analogy of *prím-scéla*.

collection of titles by this term, and so it is not surprising that when someone added the final series of titles as an appendix, he felt it necessary to explain that these also were now accepted as *prím-scéla* (which explanation, of course, became inappropriate in the context of the *Airec menman*, particularly since the very purpose of this tale required that the titles of the appendix be moved from the end of the list to its interior).

But when after a lapse of time, the redactor of A took the list in hand, this presented him with a neat little ambiguity of a kind to delight the heart and challenge the hair-splitting ingenuity of the average medieval Irish commentator. If, he reasoned, it is necessary to stress the fact that these extra tales may be reckoned as *prím-scéla*, then it follows that they are not really so; but if not, then what are they? The answer was of course self-evident in the term *prím-scéla*. The prefixed adjective *prím-*, by virtue of its basic meaning, generally conveys some notion of comparison or contrast; so what was more natural, or logical, than to assume that opposed to the *prím-scéla* there was a category of *fo-scéla*. It is true that the adjective *prím-* in composition with a noun normally had selective force ('first, foremost, eminent', etc.) and did not presuppose a close pairing of contrasting categories—the fact that there was a clearly defined class of *prím-aisti* or 'principal metres' does not mean that there was a corresponding class of *fo-aisti*—but if such a thought ever crossed our redactor's mind, it is all too clear that he did not permit it to interfere with his elaboration of a specious theory.

However, once he had interpreted the introductory note of the appendix in this fashion, he had to proceed to explain in what circumstances these *fo-scéla* were 'reckoned' as *prím-scéla*, and therein originated the statement that they were reckoned only for the four highest grades. And lest it appear that I presume too much upon a mere inference in thus accepting that the redactor of A identified the tales of the appendix as *fo-scéla*, it may be noted that the extant preface contains two clear indications to this effect. In the first place it can hardly be doubted that the sentence ⁊ *ní harmíter na fo-sceóil sin acht do chethri grádaib tantum* . . . is intended to echo and to complement the note prefixed to the appendix, *Is amal*

phrím-scéla dano ármither na scélasa sís. And secondly, when in the following sentence the redactor lists the rubrics which comprise the *prím-scéla*, he makes no mention of those in the appendix, despite the fact that he includes such late rubrics as the *uatha* and the *forbassa*; in other words, for him the *prím-scéla* are confined within the older limits of list O, *togla . . . airggne.*

The burden of my argument is therefore that the *fo-scéla* as a category of tales was the invention of the redactor of A,[134] and consequently that all conjectures as to their special character are mistaken and irrelevant from the outset.[135] The fact is that we know which tales the redactor of A had in mind when he used the word *fo-scéla*: those listed in the appendix.

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[134]I admit that my interpretation would fall to the ground if it could be shown that *fo-scél* was used of a category of tales prior to the formation of list A, and for that reason it is necessary to advert to the several instances of the term which occur separately from the tale-lists. In a passage attached to Leb. Gab. the *fo-scéla* are coupled with the *scéla* (*Leb. Gab.* ii, 54), but the whole passage betrays familiarity with some form of the tale-list, most likely a late form, since it mentions the *forfessa* beside the *fessa* and *togla*. Another version of the passage has *rogér* instead of *fo-scél* (*Leb. Gab.* ii, 56; *ZCP* x, 133 f.), but, as Seán Mac Airt observes (*Ériu* xviii, 145 n. 2), there does not appear to be any other instance of this word.

DIL cites two instances of *foiscél* (s.v. *foscél*). In the first of these, *foisgēl* agam ar Choin cculuinn (*Rel. Celt.* ii, 220.25), it evidently means ' a little tale, an anecdote '; in the second *foiscēl fallsa . . . ar chrích Néill* (Ó Bruadair ii, 266), the combination of noun and adjective is inadequately translated as ' slander ' by the editors of the Dictionary. In *RC* xxxi, 302 ff., Vendryes edited three short tales of piety each of which has the word *foscél* in its title (*Foscél ar Bannsgail*, etc.). His translation is ' historiette '. Linguistically these tales can hardly be later than the twelfth century, but one cannot assume that the titles are contemporary. In any case the actual date at which the word was used in this sense need have no relevance to its function in the preface to list A, for it is quite in order that *scél* should occasionally occur qualified by prefixed *fo-* in its customary diminutive sense. This is a very different matter to employing it as a recognized term for a special class of tales, and in any case the tales designated by the redactor of A as *fo-scéla* are in no conceivable sense anecdotes or *historiettes*.

In Modern Irish I have noted only one text in which the term *fo-scél* occurs, viz. *Béaloideas* xxxi (1963 [1965]), 51, 53, 54 (bis), 56, 65, 94. This is Donegal Irish but I have not been able to ascertain whether it reflects traditional usage. *Fo-scél* is employed here more or less in the sense of *eachtra* or ' anecdote '.

[135]For example the late Seán Mac Airt compares them to the apologues of later *dán díreach* verse and comments as follows: ' On this account probably the *fo-scéla* (' anecdotes ') were required of the four highest grades of poets only, since these alone were likely to have the ear of the more important nobles' (*Ériu* xviii, 150).

As to what—if anything in particular—may have given him the idea of assigning the *fo-scéla* to the four highest grades of *filid*, I can at the moment make no suggestion. I could however hazard a guess, for what it is worth, as to how he arrived at the division of the 350 tales into 250 *prím-scéla* and 100 *fo-scéla*. We saw earlier (p. 114 n. 123) that the total of titles common to A and B is 67 (or thereabouts). The appendix itself contains 27 titles in A (with two extra in B). Thus the totals of the *prím-scéla* and of the *fo-scéla* (or what the redactor of A regarded as *fo-scéla*) are in a ratio of almost exactly 5 : 2. And since early Irish storytellers, and scholars, liked to deal in fifties, and since in any case our redactor had probably already arrived at his gross total of 350, it was a simple matter to resolve this ratio into the rounder figures of 250 : 100. This is neat, disconcertingly so in fact, and, mindful of the proverbial fallibility of statistics, I put it forward with all possible reserve, even though I feel that it reflects faithfully enough the ' methodology ' of the medieval commentators.[136]

Their peculiar enthusiasm for pedantic analysis and classification is well illustrated in the preface to the short list of tales in the *Senchas Már* (p. 65 supra). This reveals little enough resemblance to the A-preface despite the fact that the list which follows it evidently derives from list A. It prescribes 350 tales to the *ollam*, 175 to the *ánroth*, 80 to the *clí*, 60 to the *cana*, 50 to the *dos*, 40 to the *mac fuirmid*, 30 to the *fochluc*, 20 to the *drisac*, 10 to the *tamon* and 7 to

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On the other hand, Professor Eleanor Knott obviously does not perceive any disparity between *prím-scéla* and *fo-scéla* in respect of this poetic function: ' In the inaugural odes and in poems of remonstrance or appeal, the argument is in most cases clinched by an apologue, drawn from the store of *scéla* and *foscéla* prescribed as part of the curriculum of the poetic schools ' (*Irish Classical Poetry*, p. 57).

[136]It should perhaps be emphasized once more that the total of the titles common to A and B, 67, is not necessarily the same as the sum of the titles in the parent list exclusive of the appendix, though probably it approximates to it. Furthermore, if the figures 250 and 100 came about as I have suggested above, this implies that the redactor who re-wrote the preface had before him a copy of list X, that is the parent list. There is nothing improbable in this; indeed the various interpolations which transformed list X into list A may well have been the work of this one redactor.

the *oblaire*.[137] These, we are told explicitly, comprised both *prím-scéla* and *fo-scéla*, and this is of course in flat contradiction to A's assertion that the *fo-scéla* belonged to the four higest grades only.

A rather similar scheme is found in the commentary on the legal tract entitled *Uraicecht Becc*.[138] Here A's ratio of 5 : 2 as between *prím-scéla* and *fo-scéla* is stated explicitly to hold true for each of the seven grades defined in UB. Indeed this commentator's passion for fractions leads to some odd results and not a little confusion. In the case of the *fochloc* and the *mac fuirmid*, as in that of the *ollam*, the number of tales ascribed here is the same as in the preface to the Senchas Már list, but from there on there is a discrepancy: the *dos* is allotted a fifth of the *ollam's* stories, the *cano* a fourth, the *cli* a third and *ánroth* a half. The discrepancy does not escape the commentator, however: after his note on the *dos* he quotes part of an account similar to that in the Senchas Már preface and himself poses the question why the *dos* should be assigned only fifty stories in one and a fifth of the *ollam's* complement (i.e. 70) in the other. The explanation is, he goes on, that the smaller number relates only to *prím-scéla* while the larger comprises both *prím-scéla* and *fo-scéla*. But then how is one to reconcile this with the clear statement in the Senchas Már preface that its figures (including the fifty assigned to the *dos*) include *fo-scéla* as well as *prím-scéla*? And if one resolves the other fractions given by our commentator, one finds that the *ánroth* has 175 stories, as in the Senchas Már preface, while the *cano* has $87\frac{1}{2}$ stories and the *cli* $116\frac{2}{3}$. It's no use our pondering the problem of the missing half and the missing third. The secret lies in the medieval Irish commentator's propensity for reducing all the normal untidiness of reality to the semblance of a neat and orderly abstraction.

In this kind of second-hand systematization error proliferates whether through miscalculation or misinterpretation, and no doubt this is how we must explain the further confusion in the preface to the Edinburgh list, which speaks of 350 *prím-scéla* and 150 *fo-scéla*.

[137]The three last grades are of course relatively late additions to the older sevenfold system of *filidecht;* cf. Thurneysen *IT* III, 120; also p. 112 supra.

[138]*Laws* v, 56-70.

What is perhaps of more interest is the fact that this writer drops, or at least misinterprets, A's statement that the *fo-scéla* were confined to the four highest grades of the *filid.* Instead, he assigns to these four grades, as their special obligation and privilege ' the refining and purifying of the language '.

' . . . *to be narrated to kings and princes* '.

The pensum laid down for the *fili's* eighth year of study in the second metrical tract is as follows: *fiscomarca filed*[139] *.i. duili berla*[140] ⁊ *clethchor choem* ⁊ *reicne roscadach* ⁊ *laide .i. tenmlaida* ⁊ *immas forosnai* ⁊ *dichetal do chennaib na tuaithe* ⁊ *din[n]shenchus* ⁊ *primscéla hÉrend olchena fria naisneís do ríghaib* ⁊ *flaithib* ⁊ *dagdhoínib. Ar ni comlán fili chena, sicut dixit poeta:*

Niba dúnad cen rigu, / niba fili cen scéla,
níba ingen manib fial, / ní maith ciall neich nat léga[141]

Does this contain an echo of the opening of the preface to list A, *Do nemthigud filed i scélaib* ⁊ *i comcnib* (sic leg.) *inso sís dá n-asnís do rígaib* ⁊ *flaithib* (and perhaps of the sentence by which A is concluded, *Ní fili nad chomgne comathar . . .*)? Obviously there is some connection between the phrase *primscéla hÉrend* etc., in the tract and the beginning of the preface, whether they have a common source or one is borrowed from the other. As we have already seen, the sentence in the A-preface is probably relatively old, going back to the original unexpanded form of the preface which was prefixed

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[139]Cf. Thurneysen, *IT* III, 117.

[140]These *dúili bérla* seem to have been independent glossaries, perhaps legal glossaries; cf. Thurneysen, *IT* III, 182; Eleanor Knott, *Measgra Mhichíl Uí Chléirigh*, 66 n. 7.

[141]*IT* III, 49-50; ' . . . and the *prím-scéla* of Ireland besides to be narrated to kings and princes and nobles. For a *fili* is not complete without them, as the poet said: ' You cannot have a court without kings, nor a *fili* without tales, nor a maiden without modesty; and poor is his understanding who reads not '.

The last line of this sententious quatrain has an almost exact correspondent in Welsh: *Nid doeth ni ddarlleno* ' Not wise is he who does not read.' It is possible that these both derive from a classical source which I cannot at the moment recall. Similar proverbial expressions are found in other European languages, for example ' Reading maketh a full man ' in English and ' Blindur er bóklaus maður ' in Icelandic.

to the parent list. On the other hand, according to Thurneysen the eighth-year pensum was inserted in the metrical tract sometime in the eleventh century: on chronological grounds, therefore, the reference to the narration of the tales before kings and nobles may well have been taken over into the metrical tract from the preface of the tale-list.

'HE IS NO POET WHO DOES NOT . . .'

List A is brought to a close by a sentence which has inspired much conjecture: *Ní fili nad chomgne comathar nad scéla uile* (LL; H. 3. 17 has *ni fuil inad congne da tarnaid na sgela uille*). O'Curry translated this as, 'He is no poet who does not synchronize and harmonize all the stories',[142] and his translation has until recently been accepted by commentators and has been used as a basis for more than one generalization on the subject of early Irish learning and literature. In more recent times MacNéill set the fashion of referring to this statement when he erected upon it a theory of the *fili's* purpose in studying these tales. 'The essential qualification', he asserted, 'was capacity to "synchronize and harmonize all the stories", to give them a chronology and a correlation in other words, to weave them together into a web of ostensible history'.[143] Thurneysen for his part takes *comgne* to mean 'synchronism',[144] which presumably implies acceptance of O'Curry's translation.

In actual fact, however, this translation entirely ignores the syntactical peculiarities of the Irish sentence. As the late Seán Mac Airt pointed out, we have here an instance of *tmesis*, and he accordingly amended the complete sentence to read as follows: *Ni fili nad chomgne comathar nad* [*na*] *scéla uile* (with *na* supplied from H. 3. 17), 'He is no *fili* who does not preserve *coimgne* or all the stories'.[145] Furthermore, he concluded that the original statement comprised only the first five words and that the remainder

[142] *MS. Mat.*, 593.

[143] *Celtic Ireland* (Dublin, 1921), 37.

[144] *Held.*, 22.

[145] *Ériu* xviii, 141-142.

was added subsequently, ' as the late form *nad* (*naid*) suggests '.[146] This, if true, may indicate that the basic sentence belonged originally to some semi-legal tract on the duties and obligations of the *filid*, whence it was extracted and appended to the tale-list; that the word *comgne* would have been chosen on its own to describe the tales catalogued in the list seems doubtful (see infra).[147] However, since reasonable suggestions all too often take on the guise of immutable laws, it is perhaps well to add that Mac Airt's analysis of the Irish sentence, though it appears extremely likely, is nevertheless not established beyond all doubt. The fact is that it depends entirely on the lateness of the form *nad* (*naid*), though this is itself open to more than one interpretation. For instance Dr Binchy has suggested that if the variant *uille* (H. 3. 17) is genuine, this may be a form of a simple verb *uillid* (apparently unattested), corresponding to deponent *ollaigidir*, ' amplifies ';[148] the sentence would then consist of two parallel clauses, *nad* would be simply the relative negative particle repeated,[149] and the whole would give reasonably good sense. But even if we disregarded Binchy's suggestion, there is no certainty that an original *ná*, 'nor ', was not formally assimilated to the preceding *nad*. In short, the sentence may be a composite as Mac Airt believed, but without some independent evidence, the matter must be left open.

' He is no *fili*, the statement says, ' who does not preserve the *coimgne* '. For us the difficulty is to determine more or less precisely what this latter term means. Seán Mac Airt attempted to do just

[146]Cf. *DIL* N, col. 4, s.v. 4 *ná:* ' In later Mid. Ir. *ná* ' nor ' is somet. confounded with *ná*, ' than ' . . . and the analogical form *náit*, *náid* is sometimes used before a plural noun.'

[147]This is particularly the case if *comgne* is used here as a singular, which seems probable, though it is impossible to prove, since *coimgne* (*-io*, n.) would have the same form in the nom. sg. and pl. It is true that the preface has the pl. (dat.), but this may be merely an indication of later date (see p. 125 n. 152 infra).

[148]Cited by Mac Airt, *Ériu* xviii, 142 n. 3. Of course *uille* may be a mere corruption; cf. p. 49 n. 40 supra.

[149]This might have been changed to *naid* by H. 3. 17 either through confusion with the late form *náid*, ' nor ', or, perhaps more likely, because it was mistaken for a verbal ending.

Binchy's suggestion would also account for the absence of the article before *scéla* in LL.

this in the article already cited, but despite his careful scrutiny of numerous instances of the term, it must be admitted that its semantic development is still not entirely clear.[150] Assuming that Meyer's derivation of the word *coimcne, comgne,* from *com-* and *ecne* is the correct one,[151] the original meaning may have been something like ' knowledge held in common ' or ' comprehensive knowledge '. At all events, it seems probable that initially it had general reference to learned knowledge of the past, as narrated by those persons whose proper function it was to preserve it intact by the power of memory, and that only secondarily was it applied to the particular types of professional composition which reflected such knowledge.[152]

Remembered knowledge of the past was, of course, essential to most branches of learning. For example it lay at the basis of native jurisprudence: ' What has preserved the legal tradition (*senchas*) of the men of Ireland? ', asks the old introduction to the *Senchas Mór,* and goes on to answer, ' the common [that is, concordant] memory of the elders, transmission from ear to ear, the chanting of the *fili* . . . .'[153] It is therefore not surprising that some instances of the term *coimcne* seem to bear a legal connotation. Remembered knowledge also provided the material for dynastic and tribal history, and notably for the science of genealogy; significantly perhaps, genealogy and *coimgne* are sometimes found closely

[150]Some thirty years age, when writing the thesis upon part of which the present work is based, I included an appendix on this subject. My intention was to incorporate an expanded version of this in the present volume, but since the late Seán Mac Airt subsequently published the results of his independent study of the term *coimgne,* it is hardly necessary for me to do more than summarize the probabilities and refer the reader to his article. Though not perhaps in complete agreement with all his interpretations of instances of the word, nevertheless I feel that he has given on the whole a fairly accurate outline of its semantic evolution. In my brief remarks I advert to certain apparent allusions to the functional structure of *coimgne* which he has perhaps not sufficiently stressed, though admittedly these are difficult to evaluate in precise terms.

[151]*Contribb.* 416, 443.

[152]In the earlier instances *coimgne* seems to be used regularly in the singular; in the later instances the plural becomes relatively common.

[153]Thurneysen, *ZCP* xvi, 175, 177.

associated.[154] In one instance we are told that Luccraid moccu Chiara provided the basic genealogical materials (*dúili sluinti na ngenelach*) with ' a thread of *coimgne* through the medium of his poetry ' (*snāithi coimgne tria filidecht fōithib*), this with reference to his versified pedigree of Eoganacht Caisil.[155] But here it would almost seem that *coimgne* relates to the particular form in which the genealogical material was presented by Luccraid: recalling the various instances of *glóshnáithe filidechta*, ' a thread of poetry ', employed in much the same way as *snáithe coimgne* is here, one wonders whether Rawl. B 502, as quoted above, is not perhaps a little tautological; at all events the words *tria filidecht* are not found in Lec. and BB. This suggests that *coimgne* may have referred to items of traditional historical knowledge cast in such a form as to render them easily memorized and to ensure that they would be preserved with literal accuracy. Is this what was intended by the phrase *dréuchta coimhghne, cátaidh gach fis* ' items of *coimgne*, the dignity of all knowledge ' in the Tract on the Privileges and Responsibilities of the Poets edited by Gwynn,[156] and by the statements that *coimgne* and *filidecht* were first recited (*lasa cét-gabtha*) by Road Rothchenn or, alternatively, by Cas Cétchoimgnech (Cetchuimnech)?[157]

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[154]For example, in the enumeration of the *ceithre srotha déc* in the second metrical tract, *IT* III, 57 f., *coimgne* and *genelach* are coupled. Cf. also *IT* III, 199 §57: . . . *do thinoilit sin* ⁊ *seanchada Erenn, im Findtan mac mBochra* ⁊ *im Fit*[*h*]*al Fili, coro scribad coimgnedha* ⁊ *craeba coibniusa* ⁊ *remind a righ* ⁊ *a ruireach* . . . . This refers to the Psalter of Cormac and therefore invites comparison with the following lines on *Saltair Temrach*, which is evidently the same compilation: *Is inde atá* . . . / *Coimgned* (v.l. *coimgne*), *comamserad cáich,* / *cech ríg diaraile do ráith* (*Met. D.* i, 14). In the well-known poem on Carmun the manifold literary and learned activities of the *oenach* are said to include *coimgne cinte cóem-cheneóil,* / *a réim ríg, rath dar Bregmag*, ' exact *coimgne* of a fair race, its royal succession, a blessing over Bregmag ' (*Met. Ds.* iii, 20. 266). Note again the association of *coimgne* with, as it would appear, genealogical information and also with regnal lists.

[155]O'Brien. *Corp. Gen.*, 199.

[156]*Ériu* xiii, 52. l. I take the second part of the phrase to be in apposition to the first.

[157]O'Brien, *Corp. Gen.*, 199; *ZCP* viii, 302-303; *Cóir Anmann IT* III, ii, 292 §16; *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, ed. Tadhg Ó Donnchadha 43.

Assuming that *coimcne* formerly referred to the structure as well as the content of the transmitted materials, one might perhaps compare the semantic shift reflected in the use of *miotar* (presumably from English *metre*) in south Donegal

At all events one suspects that later commentators had no very clear conception of the form and function of *coimgne*, and one can only conjecture what the redactor of the tale-list may have had in mind when he paired *coimgne* and *scéla* together. The redactor of B states explicitly that the listed titles comprise both *coimgne* and *scéla*, and this is at least implicit in the preface to A. Does this mean that these redactors thought of *coimgne* as historical traditions which might be preserved in the form of narrative tales? This seems likely enough, but if so, it was probably the result of a misunderstanding on their part, or rather on the part of the redactor of list X; for it seems to me that the pairing of *coimgne* (pl.] and *scéla* in the prefatory matter of A and B (and thus probably of the parent list X] was taken over more or less mechanically from the sentence which now stands at the close of list A. But in this latter sentence *coimgne* was probably intended as a singular noun denoting a general body of tradition or a learned discipline rather than a plural noun applied to a number of individual items in the preceding list.[158] In other words it may not have referred at all specifically to the contents of the preceding list; instead the complete sentence would have meant roughly: He is no *fili* who does not preserve the general corpus of traditional *documenta*, and, particularly in this context, all the tales. This is all the more probable if the reference to the *scéla* is a later addition, for in that case the initial sentence may originally have belonged in a quite different context.

FROM MNEMONIC TO MANIFESTO

I have suggested that the extant tale-lists are the final product of the practice of occasionally listing together for mnemonic purposes a number of narratives that shared a common theme. We saw that by the tenth century, and probably still earlier,[159] a relatively extensive catalogue of titles had come into being, and that in the

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Irish; e.g. *Suidh agus cuir do chuid eachtraí i míotar domh* (Seán Ó hEochaidh, *Sean-Chainnt Theilinn* (Dublin, 1955), p. 40, no. 164) ' Sit down and tell me all that has happened to you ' (said to a person who had been away from home and might be expected to have many interesting experiences to relate).

[158]Cf. pp. 124 n. 147, 125 n. 152 supra.

[159]See p. 108 ff. supra on the poem by Flannacán mac Cellaig.

course of the tenth century this was extended by the addition of a substantial supplement. This composite catalogue is our list X and it was the common source of the two extant lists, our A and B. These purport to provide a comprehensive index of the tales at the command of the master of traditional learning, the *ollam filidechta*, but this is little more than a pious fiction: if proof be needed, then it will be found in the familiar titles which are missing from both lists, in the numerous discrepancies between them, and finally and most importantly in the individual titles and complete rubrics, which in many instances seem contrived and even spurious, which they have added to list X. Urard mac Coise paraded the contents of list B as his own repertoire in the *Airec Menman*, but this is but a part of the larger fiction, or allegory, which he has created in this text. In the context of his own composition he professes to accord the king of Tara the free choice of whichever tale he might wish to hear from his repertoire, but in real life one knows that he would have been more circumspect. As we have observed, both the parent list and the extant lists came about through a process of accretion and addition, and the indications are that the several redactors of the written lists, far from checking the identification and content of each individual tale in their source list, took these for granted and proceeded forthwith to add their own contribution. Thus already by Urard's time some parts of the early list must have appeared a little antiquarian, perhaps even fossilized, and one suspects that even this our knowledgeable and worldly-wise poet would have found himself in a quandary had he been asked to tell one of those *fessa* which can no longer be identified and which, by all appearances, were unknown even to the scribes of the extant manuscript texts.

To regard lists A and B as constituting, or even closely approximating to, the actual repertoires of learned storytellers in the Middle Irish period would therefore be mistaken and misleading. When Dr Alan Bruford in his penetrating study of the Early Modern Irish Romantic Tales states that ' the stories and even classes of story are different in the two tale-lists [A and B], showing that the repertoire was by no means fixed even within a short period,'[160] I am

[160] *Gaelic Folktales and Medieval Romances* (Dublin, 1967) = *Béaloideas* xxxiv (1966 [1969]), 45.

afraid he ignores the role of conscious manipulation in the development of the lists and shows too much respect for the pretensions expressed in the explanatory prose which accompanies them. In *Airec Menman Urard maic Coise* list B is the core around which the author has contrived quite a remarkable piece of professional propaganda. Its purpose is to point up some of the exclusive professional qualifications which distinguish the *filid* as a corporate body and guarantee them their privileged status and perquisites. List A, however dissimilar its immediate setting to that of list B, appears to have essentially the same object: to confirm the *fili* in his role of custodian and interpreter of native learning.

The tendency towards exclusivism and corporate protectionism is inherent in all tightly organized professional sodalities. It is an almost ubiquitous feature of the traditions of the Irish *filid* and is sometimes ventilated in highly extravagant terms. There is, however, some evidence that it was particularly pronounced from *c.* 900 onwards when the *filid* appear to have become deeply apprehensive of various threats to their exalted and hitherto seemingly impregnable position in Irish society. Though historians are far from being unanimous in their estimates of the precise effect of the Viking invasions on Irish society and institutions, their historical importance is not open to question. And if their physical impact was, to say the least, not inconsiderable, there can be little doubt that the psychical repercussions which they generated among the Irish people, and notably among the learned and professional classes, went deeper still and evoked responses of self-preservation and self-vindication which were to influence profoundly the shape of Irish learned institutions down to the seventeenth century.[161] One of the tangible evidences of the *filid's* response may be seen in their attempt to document and codify the learning most closely associated with their office. Most of our information concerning the prosodic theory and practice of the early *filid*, and indeed the general curriculum of the schools of *filidecht*, derives from the metrical tracts edited and commented on by Thurneysen under the title *Mittelirische Verslehren.*[162] According to Thurneysen's views on the date of these

[161] I discuss this matter in some detail in a forthcoming work.

[162] *IT* III, 1-182.

texts, Tract I was probably compiled about the end of the ninth century and further elaborated during the first half of the tenth, and Tract III was evidently composed *c.* 1060. But it is Tract II which shows most clearly the professional self-interest and expansionism of the *filid* and this seems likely to have been compiled originally in the early tenth century and to have reached its final form sometime in the eleventh (see p. 112 supra). It contains citations from the verse of Cormac mac Cuilennáin (+908) and Thurneysen suggests that this scholar poet may have been trying his hand at the old metrical forms which had long been superseded by the bardic prosody (*bairdne*). His comment on this is not without relevance in the present context: ' Vielleicht war es ein Versuch, die alte *fili*-Kunst zu retten.'

Assuming then that the codification of the curriculum and prosody of the schools of *filidecht* was at least in part a response to the challenge of historical circumstance, it seems not unreasonable to assign the tale-lists to the same general type of propagandist literature. The very manner in which the parent-list was introduced (*Do nemthigud filed i scélaib . . .*)[163] accords well with the self-assertive note that characterizes the second of the metrical tracts. These tales, so it affirms at the outset, are part of the professional qualification and repertoire of the *fili* and are intended to be recited to kings and princes; to which is added the dictum which rounds off the catalogue of titles in list A. ' He is no *fili* who does not preserve *coimgne* and all the stories ' (the exclusive negative of this latter statement becomes something of a commonplace in referring to branches of knowledge which are held to be in one sense or another the preserve of the *filid*).[164] There is no hint here of the role of the *baird* or of the monastic *littérateurs* in the cultivation of prose composition in Irish. Rather does it give the impression, as no doubt it was designed to do, that the world of saga belonged to the *fili;* and just how well this single short text has succeeded in

[163]See p. 115 f. supra.

[164]E.g. *Lebor na Cert*, ed. Dillon, 1782, *Ní dlig cuairt ná ceandaigeacht | ar ní fili fireolach . . . | menib co féig feasara | císa tenda is tuaristla*; Trans. of Philol. Soc., 1891-4, p. 20 (*Forus Focal*): *Ni heolaigh, ni hughdar ard, ocus ni file fiorgharg, | ni sencha ag nach biadh a bhfios, | foillsighidh feasa forus.*

establishing such a belief among modern scholars will be evident from even the most cursory examination of the references made to the tale-lists and to the *fili* as storyteller, from the time of Eugene O'Curry down to the present day. For Thurneysen the *fili* is not only the conservator and interpreter of the older tales, but he is also the creator of the new ones: 'Es ist aber nicht zu bezweifeln, dass auch die meisten Verfasser und Erfinder neuer Sagen in ihrem Kreise zu suchen sind.' That the great Thurneysen should have permitted himself such a sweeping, not to say indefensible, statement, is surely eloquent testimony to the *fili's* success in imposing his own conception of himself upon generations of modern scholars.

APPENDIX A

THE WELSH *cyfarwydd*

In his *Studies in Early Celtic Nature Poetry* (Cambridge, 1935) Kenneth Jackson noted that some of the early Irish seasonal poems were, quite gratuitously, 'attributed to Finn mac Cumaill or given a Fenian situation', and according to him the real significance of this may be 'that the poems were transmitted and even composed by the same class of author as those that put together the Fenian tales. These authors were not clerics, nor were they official bards of the type who earlier composed such works as the genealogical poems and the various royal eulogies; they were probably a kind of story-teller, like the Welsh *cyfarwyddiaid* who composed the Mabinogion and the Llywarch Hen elegies.'[1] But thereby hangs another problem. Who exactly were the *cyfarwyddiaid*? What were their functions and their status? On one point at least the evidence is quite clear: *cyfarwydd* (sg.) as a literary term meant 'a storyteller' and the abstract *cyfarwyddyd* 'a story', 'history', or 'narrative'. What is rather less clear is the position of the *cyfarwydd* vis-à-vis the *bardd* proper (that is to say, the counterpart of the Irish *fili*); was his a quite separate and inferior order or were the two literary functions combined ordinarily in the same person?

One can get some idea of the complexity of the problem by examining, however cursorily, the conclusions arrived at by Sir Ivor Williams from his analysis of the early *englyn* verse. He found (and his findings have been—until recently—endorsed more or less universally by Celtic scholars)[2] that the *englynion* 'now jumbled together' in the Black Book of Carmarthen and in the Red Book of Hergest 'must be regarded as a collection of the verse element in

[1]Op. cit., 172 ff. For a later qualification in respect of the Mabinogi, see his *The International Popular Tale and Early Welsh Tradition*, 124 ff.

[2]Recently Professor Patrick K. Ford has subjected Sir Ifor Williams' theory to close scrutiny and found it unacceptable (*The Poetry of Llywarch Hen* (University of California Press, 1976), p. 48 ff.). In particular he points out that

the oldest Welsh sagas'. 'Before we can really understand them', he goes on, 'we must discover the old prose setting of each group, or else invent one of our own, as best we may . . .'[3] In other words these *englynion* are the sole remains of a saga-literature composed on the familiar pattern of a prose narrative interspersed with passages of verse. Once this is accepted, one will probably have little difficulty in also accepting Sir Ifor's conclusion that the authors of the Llywarch Hen and Heledd poems and the three Juvencus englynion

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it cannot easily be reconciled with the structure of the Four Branches of the *Mabinogi*, where we have four lengthy tales but only five *englynion*. However, it seems to me that this criticism is less telling than it may appear at first glance, for the simple reason that the two bodies of composition are not in fact strictly comparable: even though Sir Ifor and others cited the Four Branches in the context of his theory, they are not in fact a lyric composition like the *englynion* attributed to Llywarch Hen, and the function of the *englynion* within the Four Branches is evidential rather than lyrical.

More recently still Professor Ford's criticism has been taken up and extended by Dr N. J. A. Williams (*Astudiaethau ar yr Hengerdd: Studies in Old Welsh Poetry* (Cardiff, 1978), p. 239 ff.). For example, he invokes the evidence of the twelfth-century *Acallam na Senórach* in criticism of Sir Ifor's interpretation. As he observes quite rightly, here we might seem to have a pendant for the Llywarch Hen poems—'a prose narrative punctuated by dramatic verse'—and yet Professor James Carney has argued convincingly that several of the poems are earlier compositions which had originally no connection with their present context. But here again I would suggest that the comparison is not wholly relevant. Very briefly, the *Acallam* is a massive compilatory text composed in a period of compilation. It draws material from many sources both written and oral, and it is therefore hardly surprising that it should have included unrelated poems which were felt to be appropriate to the context in theme and temper. The significant thing is, surely, that the author of the *Acallam* should have adopted the *prosimetrum* form in the first place and it can hardly be doubted that in this he was following a well-established pattern.

A full discussion of Sir Ifor's theory and of the criticisms put porward by Professor Ford and Dr Williams must be reserved for another place, but briefly it seems to me that Sir Ifor's interpretation still holds water even if it stands in need of minor repair here and there. For example he seems to have envisaged the prose context of the *englynion* as being more comprehensive, more stable and more clearly defined than may have been the case.

[3] *Lects. on Early Welsh Poetry* (Dublin, 1944), 23; cf. also his *The Poems of Llywarch Hen*, Rhŷs Mem. Lect., 1932, pp. 7 ff. It should be noted, however, that the French scholar Joseph Loth had already, quite independently, reached the same conclusion as Sir Ifor, at least with regard to the Tristan *englynion* in the Black Book of Carmarthen: 'Il est évident que ces morceaux poétiques devaient etre accompagnés chez les conteurs gallois de récits ou commentaires en prose, comme chez les Irlandais . . .' (*RC* xxxiii (1912), 403 ff.).

were *cyfarwyddiaid*[4] 'storytellers', not *penceirddiaid* (who in the general sense correspond to the Irish *filid*, in particular to the *ollamain*);[5] for, other things being equal, it is not entirely unreasonable to suppose that the authors of the native sagas were to be found among the tellers of saga. However, Sir Ifor's train of thought is not quite so simple. It is true that this appears to be his immediate reason for assigning the Llywarch Hen and Heledd cycles to the *cyfarwyddiaid:* but, on the other hand, when he proceeds to compare these poems with the three Juvencus *englynion* and to assign the latter to the same class of author, his criteria are first prosodic and secondly qualitative, in other words both are in the old *englyn* form and represent the same stage of general metrical development, and in addition both obviously belong to the same *genre* of lyric-elegiac verse.

Obviously this is to introduce new elements of distinction as between *pencerdd* and *cyfarwydd.* No longer is it a simple differentiation between learned poet and storyteller, but one which is realized, more subtly perhaps, but no less clearly, in the *cyfarwydd's* use of certain characteristic metres and in the subject-matter and the very temper of his verse. (Is it necessary to remind the reader in passing how close we are drawing here to the conception of the Irish *bard* which emerges from the metrical tracts and early Irish literature in general?)

Professor Jackson, we saw, ascribed the composition of the Welsh Llywarch Hen elegies and the Irish Finn tales to similar types of storyteller-author: Mrs Rachel Bromwich takes up this suggestion

[4]It will be at least certain that they were storytellers; that they were known as *cyfarwyddiaid* is of course a supposition, though it might be thought a fairly reasonable one on the whole. At the same time it is well to keep in mind that nowhere in the extant literature is the early *englyn* literature assigned to, or associated with, the *cyfarwyddiaid;* this lack of reference may be fortuitous, but it cannot be entirely ignored. Subject to this qualification, however, it is no doubt permissible to use the term *cyfarwyddiaid* as a convenient, and perhaps correct, tag for the class of poets and storytellers who produced such literature of entertainment as cannot for one reason or another be attributed to the *penceirddiaid.*

[5]*Canu Llywarch Hen* lxxxviii.

and visualizes a lower order of poets (equated very tentatively with the *bardd teulu* class) who composed the early nature poetry and saga characterized by the use of the *englyn* form, but 'who did not aspire to the composition in strict metres of elegies and eulogies to princes and their families'.[6] However she is not satisfied that this represents faithfully the original distinction between the literature of the *pencerdd* and that of the *cyfarwydd*. For her the primary disparity was one of subject-matter.[7] Initially the *penceirddiaid* had a proprietory interest in 'the stories of the ancient gods and kings of the Welsh nation, including the reputed ancestors of some of the dynasties extant in later times', and it was their especial privilege and function to narrate these tales. But at some undetermined date 'the function of the *penkerdd* class became restricted to the composition of panegyric (and religious) poetry of great technical intricacy, and the gulf widened between these and the story-telling class, or *cyfarwyddiaid* proper, while the 'ancestor' stories were absorbed into the common stock of narrative material exploited for the purposes of entertainment: thus the *Pedeir Keinc* in its final form became a mixture of mytho-heroic and popular elements . . .

'With the narrowing of the functions of the *penkerdd* class there grew up an order of *cyfarwyddiaid* who did not deal in formal panegyric, but used simpler metres, chief of which was the *englyn*, for poetry of a wider range: both gnomic and nature poems, and the speech passages in the sagas which they likewise composed and transmitted. They drew their material for these tales from popular traditions current among all classes of the people about the heroes of ancient times, and from widespread folklore *motifs*. To this popular tradition belonged many of the earliest stories of Arthur, and of the northern saga heroes. It is, however, impossible to draw too fine a distinction here, since the *cyfarwyddiaid* rapidly made use of all story material that came to hand, so that in *Kulhwch ag Olwen*, for instance, fragments of ancient mythology are blended with tales of a distinctly popular cast. It was the gift of these *cyfarwyddiaid* to absorb and transmute into their own coin materials of widely

[6] *SEBH* 129.
[7] *SEBH* 129-135.

diverse origin: thus in turn they made their own tales of every type from all parts of the British-speaking world—and even drew upon the sagas of Ireland and Pictland—and freshly localised these tales in a new setting.'

My excuse for quoting Mrs Bromwich at such length is that, as far as I am aware, hers is the most thorough-going attempt yet made to define the relative positions and functions of the *pencerdd* and the *cyfarwydd*. I do not propose to discuss her conclusions exhaustively in this context, but merely to comment on a few specific points which have relevance for the present study. As we have seen, *cyfarwydd* and *cyfarwyddyd* are sufficiently well attested in Middle Welsh in the sense of 'storyteller; story, narrative'. At the end of *Breudwyt Ronabwy* (13th c.?) a sentence has been appended purporting to explain 'why no one, neither *bardd* nor *cyfarwydd*, knows the Dream without a book';[8] it is perhaps reasonable to infer, with Mrs Bromwich,[9] that this implies some kind of distinction between the learned poet and the storyteller. There is also the well-known passage in *Math Uab Mathonwy*, by now something of a *locus classicus*, describing how Gwydion and his companions came to the court of Pryderi in the guise of poets; Gwydion himself assuming the role of *pencerdd*:

> They made them welcome. Gwydion was placed beside Pryderi that night. 'Why', said Pryderi, 'we should gladly have a tale (*kyuarwdyt*) from some of the young men yonder'. 'Lord', said Gwydion, 'it is a custom with us that the first night after one comes to a great man, the chief bard (*penkerd*) shall have the say. I will tell a tale gladly'. Gwydion was the best teller of tales (*kyuarwyd*) in the world. And that night he entertained the court with pleasant tales and storytelling (*cyuarwydyt*) till he was praised by everyone in the court.[10]

Mrs Bromwich comments that this is the only evidence 'that in Wales the highest classes of bards concerned themselves with the narration of stories' and suggests that it may possibly preserve

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[8] *RM* 161.5; ed. Melville Richards, p. 21.

[9] *TUP* lxxxiv.

[10] *PKM* p. 69; for transl. see Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, *The Mabinogion*, 56-57.

'a memory of the older state of affairs, when the *penceirddiaid* did entertain their patrons in this way, just as we are told that the *filid* did in Ireland'; but immediately she qualifies this by pointing out that the *Four Branches* in their final form are comparatively late and that it might be unwise to lay too much emphasis on the 'equation' made in *Math* between *bardd* (*pencerdd*) and *cyfarwydd*.[11]

This is perhaps too cautious. The Irish evidence makes it clear that, while storytelling was not one of the *fili's* main functions, nevertheless he did narrate tales for the benefit of 'kings, princes and noblemen',[12] and this is almost precisely the situation represented in *Math*: Pryderi's initial request is directed to the young men of Gwydion's company, as if it were they who would normally be expected to provide the storytelling, and Gwydion has to point out that, contrary to normal usage, when they visit a person of high rank it is the *pencerdd* who holds the floor on the first night. This is, if anything, borne out by the note attached to *Breudwyt Ronabwy*, for this in turn presupposes that the *bardd* as well as the *cyfarwydd* had at his command a repertoire of tales for oral delivery—the *Breudwyt* being the exception in both cases. However, to intimate that the *pencerdd* or *bardd* knows tales and narrates them on occasion is not necessarily to equate him with the storyteller *qua* storyteller, whether the latter goes by the name of *cyfarwydd* or by some other title, and indeed, as we saw, in *Math* it is to the *pencerdd's* retinue rather than to the *pencerdd* himself that storytelling is assigned as a normal, characteristic function. And here one may perhaps pause to ask oneself who exactly were the members of his retinue. Clearly Gwydion intended that he together with Gilfaethwy and their ten companions should appear to the unapprised observer exactly like any regular poetic company of *pencerdd* and lesser poets (the kind of company that is well attested in Irish literature). The use of the word *gwreinc*, 'young men', to refer to these latter might conceivably suggest that they were thought of as apprentice-poets; in any event they are probably to be equated with the *cerddorion* mentioned in

[11] *TYP* lxxxiii f.

[12] See p. 16 supra.

the Welsh laws as being subject to the *pencerdd*.[13] This is not without significance in the present context, for the only three categories mentioned in the Laws are the *pencerdd*, the *bardd teulu* and the *cerddor*, and it is generally accepted that this reflects a division of the poets into three classes. Such a division is found again, and stated more explicitly, in the fourteenth-century poetic grammar attributed to Einion Offeiriad, but by now the titles have changed and the three classes are defined as *prydydd*, *teuluwr* and *clerwr*.[14] Assuming therefore that the witness of the Laws and of the grammar is not entirely valueless, the implication is that the *cerddor* was comparable in status to the later *clerwr*.[15] In other words one might reasonably conclude that Gwydion's retinue consisted of lesser poet-entertainers such as normally followed in the train of a *pencerdd*; in the laws and in *Math* these were designed by the term *cerddor*, which presumably constituted an adequate marker of their social and professional context, but no doubt, were it necessary to stress their storytelling function, they could have been referred to equally well as *cyfarwyddiaid*.

The point is that the term *cyfarwydd* is an occasional title which primarily denotes a function rather than a social or professional class. Such a distinction may seem a little academic considering that storytelling as entertainment was generally—though not exclusively—provided by the more popular kinds of literary artist, thus lending some justification to the common view of the *cyfarwyddiaid* as a recognizable class whom one can most easily define by contrasting them with the learned poets or *penceirddiaid*. On the other hand it is to be remembered that *cyfarwydd* (as indeed *cyfarwyddyd*) is of relatively infrequent occurrence as a literary

[13]Cf. *Llyfr Blegywryd*, ed. Stephen J. Williams and J. Enoch Powell, p. 25. This correspondence has also been noted by Mr Eurys I. Rowlands, *Llên Cymru* vi, 226.

[14]*GP* 17. 6.

[15]Cf. Old Breton *cerdoran* gl. *parasitaster*, *ÉC* xi, 123; see also Fleuriot, *Dict. des Gloses en Vieux Breton* 103. It is of course possible that the diminutive suffix has affected the meaning of the base-form *cerdor*.

However, like many other of these professional titles, *cerddor* appears to have two distinct connotations determined by context and by period. Thus it is commonly employed in the later grammars as a general term for ' poet ' without any inference of inferiority; cf. *GP* 17-18, 135-6.

term and that there is no real evidence that the Welsh *literati* ever thought of it as a class-title; if we choose to follow Sir Ifor Williams and others in using it as such, then this is merely a matter of convenience which may be justified on the grounds that there is in fact no other apt title available for the particular category which these scholars have in mind.[16]

Furthermore, so far we have been considering *cyfarwyddyd* in the sense of storytelling designed to give amusement or pleasure, since this appears to be its meaning in *Math*, but there is no certainty that it was so used at an earlier period, say in the ninth century when the Llywarch Hen *englynion* were composed. The basic form is the adjective *cyfarwydd*, which derives evidently from the root **veid-*, 'to see', and comprises the meanings 'well-informed, learned, expert, skilful, skilled in magic' (see GPC); as a noun it has the corresponding meanings 'guide, well-informed person, expert' as well as, in the laws, 'witness, spectator (of a crime)', while the derivative *cyfarwyddyd* normally denotes 'guidance, direction, instruction, information, knowledge, skill, art' etc. There can be little doubt that the meanings 'storyteller' and 'storytelling' are secondary to these. What may have happened is that the semantic range of the word *cyfarwydd* used as a quasi-literary term became gradually narrowed until in the end it was virtually confined to one, and that a lesser one, of its older connotations. Its etymology inevitably suggests a comparison with the Irish *fili* and *écess*, and it may be that the *cyfarwydd's* interest in traditional narrative was of a similar nature to theirs, in which case his primary concern would have been not so much to recite the old tales as to be capable of interpreting them in terms of history and genealogy.[17] This may have been the type of knowledge originally connoted by the expression *kyfarwydyt ystoryaeu*,[18] though by the fourteenth century when it is employed in the poets' grammar it may already have been drained of most of its earlier significance. One might perhaps compare this

[16]In other words, unlike the terms *cerddor* and *clerwr*, *cyfarwydd* is relatively free of old-established literary connotations; it is as an empty receptacle ready to receive what one chooses to pour into it.

[17]See p. 18 f. supra.

[18]*GP* 18.13.

with the way in which the technical connotations of Irish *coimcne* (probably from *com* + *ecne*, 'knowledge') gradually became neutralized, so that it finally came to be used more or less in the sense of an historical tale.

Mrs Bromwich, we saw, regarded the distinction between the literature of the *pencerdd* and that of the *cyfarwydd* primarily as one of subject-matter; and indeed this assumption is central to her whole discussion of Welsh literary tradition. That such a disparity did exist between 'learned' and 'popular' themes is in itself a reasonable assumption which is amply confirmed by the situation in Irish, and notably by the distinction between Ulster and Fenian cycles (to which Mrs Bromwich adverts), but it is not the only factor which differentiates between the literary functions of the 'learned' and the 'popular' poets, nor is it quite as clear-cut as Mrs Bromwich makes it appear. In this regard she has, I fear, been somewhat misled by the Irish evidence: 'In Ireland, on the other hand, a period can be distinguished when the narration of sagas, particularly of the older Cycles, was the closely guarded privilege of the *filid*. The stories were divided into classes, and those belonging to certain of these classes were permitted only to the highest orders of the *filid*. These older Cycles were aristocratic as distinct from 'popular' in their inception: they dealt with the gods and kings of the race, the Ulster heroes and the *Tuatha Dé Danann*—and their milieu was the court of kings'.[19] The *fo-scéla*, to which Mrs Bromwich alludes here, have already been discussed (p. 119 ff. supra); as evidence for a hypothetical copyright on certain types of tale they are as a broken reed. Nor is there evidence of any kind to suggest that stories of gods and of kings and of the Ulster heroes were restricted to the *filid* (though no doubt the latter had a special interest in them); for instance, when Ua Maiglinne the king-buffoon (*rígdrúth*) entertained King Fergal and his army on the eve of battle with tales of the past battles and exploits of the men of Leth Cuinn and Leinster, he was following one of the highways of dynastic history. In fine, there is nothing to show that Ua Maiglinne and his kind were subject to any externally imposed limitation of their repertoire of tales. What

[19] *SEBH* 129-130.

seems to have differentiated them from the *filid* in this connection was not so much the subject-matter of their tales as the use they made of them; they were tellers of tales, the *filid* their learned commentators.[20]

[20]In a recent article in *Studia Celtica* x/xi (1975/1976) Professor Patrick Ford has also taken up this question of the meaning of *cyfarwydd* and *cyfarwyddyd*. In some respects his argument and conclusions are consistent with those put forward here, as for instance when he suggests that *cyfarwyddyd* was once conceived of as ' inspired wisdom ' and that it was associated with poetry. However, I would suggest that the association is primarily with poets rather than with poetry, and it must be kept in mind that the schooled poets of the Celtic countries encompassed virtually all learning within their repertoire and that the materials they composed and transmitted, while characteristically in verse, were not confined to it. Professor Ford's concentration on poetry rather than on poets has led him to define *cyfarwyddyd* as ' materials of poetry ' and to deny the use of the term in MW prose in the sense of ' tales, stories '. This, I feel, is too static and restrictive an interpretation of the term's reference. In support of his argument he draws an analogy between Gwydion's encounter with Pryderi (see p. 136 supra) and the female seer Feidelm's encounter with Medb in *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, but this is hardly convincing in terms of context or motivation and is certainly not sufficient to invalidate the generally accepted interpretation of the *Math* passage as articulated by Gwyn and Thomas Jones in their Everyman translation. It seems to me that Professor Ford's very useful discussion takes too little account here of the changes in status and connotation which have effected the use of Celtic learned and literary terms with the passing of time.

APPENDIX B

BRAFLANG SCÓINE 'The Treachery at Scone' (A); see p. 107 supra.

The tale referred to by this title has not been preserved independently, but the event which it commemorates is described in several Scottish historical documents, notably in the chronicles of the Scottish kings.[1] These accounts relate to Cinaed mac Alpín (+858), first king of the united kingdom of Picts and Scots; indeed the tale seems to have been designed to explain how he, a Scot of Dál Riata, came to hold dominion over the Picts.

According to Skene the Picts had completely conquered Dál Riata by 741, the remnants of the latter being forced to seek settlements elsewhere, and he held that this situation persisted for a century until the sudden appearance of Cinaed mac Alpín with his army of Scots.[2] This interpretation is refuted by most scholars, for example by Alexander Mac Bain in his edition of Skene's *The Highlanders of Scotland* (Stirling, 1902), 387 ff., by H. M. Chadwick, *Early Scotland*, 128-133, and by T. F. O'Rahilly, *EIMH*, 372, n. 1. O'Rahilly here argues that the supremacy of the Scots of Dál Riata came about gradually and that 'the accession of Cinaed merely gave political sanction to a cultural transformation that had begun long before.'

It is stated in several versions of the chronicles that Drust son of Ferath, the Pictish king who preceded Cinaed, 'was killed by the Scots at Forteviot or, according to others, at Scone.' Having thus

[1]For an analysis and evaluation of the different versions of these chronicles see William F. Skene, *Chronicles of the Picts* etc. (Edinburgh, 1867); A. O. Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History A.D. 500 to 1286* (Edinburgh, 1922), I, xlv ff.; H. M. Chadwick, *Early Scotland* (Cambridge, 1949), xxvii ff. et passim; T. F. O'Rahilly, *EIHM*, 358, n. 1.

[2]*Celtic Scotland: a History of Ancient Alban* (Edinburgh, 1876) I, 292 ff.; *Chronicles of the Picts* etc., cxxxii, cxlix, et passim.

destroyed the Picts, Cinaed then reigned for sixteen years over the Scots (*regnavit super Scottos, distructis Pictis . . . . Hic mira calidate duxit Scotos de Ergadia [Argyll] in terram Pictorum*).[3] The chronicles are agreed that Cinaed reigned over the united kingdom, or Pictavia, for sixteen years. According to the Chronicle of Huntingdon (late thirteenth century) he succeeded to his father's kingdom and, in the seventh year of his reign, invaded the territory of the Picts at a time when they were greatly weakened by an incursion of Danish pirates. 'In the twelfth year of his reign,' it goes on, 'he fought seven times in one day with the Picts, destroyed many, and confirmed the kingdom to himself; and he reigned for twenty-eight years.'[4] This implies that his rule over the united kingdom lasted for sixteen years, but also that he had to weather five years of Pictish opposition before that.

The Old French version in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, notes that Drust was killed at Scone, but it attributes his death to treachery. As the result of a conspiracy the Scots came to a general council secretly armed and slew the king and all the leaders of the Picts. Afterwards they sent for others and slew them as they arrived, and it was in this way that the kingdom of the Picts perished.[5] This is reminiscent of the account given by Giraldus Cambrensis in his *De Principis Instructione*, which was completed about the year 1217 and is perhaps the earliest extant text containing the conspiracy legend:

> After the island had been occupied by the Saxons, as we have said, and peace had been established with the Picts, the Scots, who were allied to the Picts and had been invited by them to the land, seeing that although fewer in number, because of the nearness of Ireland, the Picts were yet far superior in arms and valour, they betook themselves to their customary and as it were innate treacheries, in which they excel other nations. They brought together as to a banquet all the nobles of the Picts, and taking advantage of their perhaps excessive potation and

[3]Skene, *Chronicles of the Picts* etc., 151, 174, 288. Skene and Anderson date these versions from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries.

[4]*Chronicles of the Picts* etc., 209.

[5]Op. cit., 202 f. This text is a translation of a Latin original which was probably composed from 1292-1296.

gluttony of both drink and food, they noted their opportunity and drew out the bolts which held up the boards; and [the Picts] fell into the hollows of the benches on which they were sitting, [caught] in a strange trap up to the knees, so that they could never get up; and [the Scots] immediately slaughtered them all, tumbled together everywhere and taken suddenly and unexpectedly, and fearing nothing of the sort from allies and confederates, men bound to them by benefits, and companions in their wars. And thus the more warlike and powerful nation of the two peoples wholly disappeared; and the other, by far inferior in every way, as a reward obtained in the time of so great treachery, have held to this day the whole land from sea to sea, and called it Scotland after their name.[6]

In Berchán's prophecy one of the four quatrains devoted to Cinaed evently refers to this legend:

Is lais bréctair tair na buirb
tochlait talmhan, trén an chard (leg. *an chuird?* Anderson)
bródlainn (leg. *brathlang?* Anderson) *badhbhdha, bas n-airgne*
for lár Scóine sgiaith-airde.

In Anderson's translation: 'The fierce men in the east are deceived by him. They dig the earth (mighty is the art!), a deadly pit (?), death by wounding, in the middle of Scone of the high shields.'[7] There seems to be little doubt that this is the same incident as is described by Giraldus Cambrensis, even though his account has no reference to digging.

In another text of the Scottish chronicle, which may indeed be the oldest one, we find this entry: *Kinadius igitur filius Alpini, primus Scotorum, rexit feliciter istam annis xvi. Pictaviam. Pictavia autem*

[6]Convocatosque tanquam ad convivium magnates Pictorum cunctos, captata tam cibi quam potus crapula et ingurgitacione forsan nimia et, oportunitate notata, clavorum extractione qui tabulata tenebant, in bancorum concavitatem quibus sedebant, mira decipula poplite tenus, ita quod se nullatenus erigere possent, communiter undique lapsos, de subitos quidem et improvisos, nec ab affinibus et consideratis suoque beneficio confeodatis et bellorum sociis quicquam tale timentes, statim trucidaverunt universos. . . . (*Chronicles of the Picts* etc., 165; the translation is taken from A. O. Anderson, op. cit., I, 273, n. 4.). The legend is given also in the Polychronicon of Randolph Higden (+1364), ed. Babington and Lumby, II, 154-6, and in the version of the chronicle of the Scottish kings in Cottonian MS. Vitellius A XX (*Chronicles of the Picts* etc., 298).

[7]Ed. Anderson, *ZCP* xviii, 38-9; *Early Sources* I, 273; Skene, *Chronicles of the Picts* etc. 84.

a Pictis est nominata; quos, ut diximus, Cinadius delevit.[8] As Skene points out (op. cit., xx), the words *ut diximus* imply that an account of the destruction of the Picts has been omitted from the preceding text, and he would relate it to the legend told by Giraldus. It seems more likely, however, that the omitted passage described an overwhelming defeat of the Picts such as in related in the Chronicle of Huntingdon. Cinaed mac Ailpín is named as 'the first king from among the Gaels that assumed the kingdom of Scone',[9] and the tradition was that he attained his rule of the united kingdom through conquest. But, as has been pointed out by O'Rahilly and Chadwick, and as is implied in the account of the Chronicle of Huntingdon, this conquest must have come about gradually. This tradition later found expression in two forms: one, the earlier and more historical, describing Cinaed's achievement as a victory in arms, the other presenting it as an act of treachery. The latter version, which seems to have been inspired by a strong dislike of the Scots of Dál Riata may have been in existence before the end of the eleventh century, if Anderson's dating of the Scottish part of Berchán's hymn is correct. In any event, it must have been fairly well known by the middle of the twelfth century, since it is included in the LL text of the tale-list. The motif of the treacherous attack during a feast or friendly gathering was a fairly commonplace one in medieval insular tradition, and the evidence shows that it was not without a firm basis in history. In Irish narrative literature there are instances such as the killing of Cobthach Cael and his company in the tale of the destruction of Dind Ríg in Leinster, in Welsh the treacherous attack planned by the Irish visitors against their Welsh hosts in the story of *Branwen*, and in Nennius (§§45, 46), followed by Geoffrey of Monmouth (VI, 15), there is the massacre of the British nobles of Vortigern's entourage by Hengist.[10] Clearly the theme was a familiar one in medieval times, ready to be adapted to any given political situation.

[8] *Chronicles of the Picts* etc., 8. Chadwick suggests that it represents a text written before the end of the tenth century.

[9] Anderson, *Early Sources* etc., I, cxlvii.

[10] In the ballad of 'Fionn's Journey to Lochlann,' where the king of Lochlann prepares just such a trap for Fionn and his company, the setting is very similar, but in this case the plan is thwarted by the Fiana, who, like Hengist's men, have secreted knives upon their persons; see Reidar Th. Christiansen, *The Vikings and the Viking Wars in Irish and Gaelic Tradition* (Oslo, 1931), 184 f.

APPENDIX C

Longes Breccáin (A)

The tale to which this title evidently refers is found in Cormac's Glossary in the article headed *Coire Brecáin.* This begins with a description of the whirlpool named Coire Brec(c)áin and goes on to tell the tale of how it got its name.[1] In the YBL text this latter section is as follows:

> Breccán was a famous merchant of the Uí Néill who had fifty currachs trading between Ireland and Scotland. They happened upon the whirlpool and it swallowed them all up, so that there did not survive even a bringer of tidings to tell of their destruction.

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[1]There are in fact two places which bear this name. In Cormac's Glossary and in the other texts mentioned below it refers to a whirlpool situated between Rathlin Island and the Antrim coast in the north-east of Ireland (W. J. Watson, *The History of the Celtic Place-names of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1926), 63; he states that it is now called *Sloc na Mara*, op. cit., 94; cf. Reeves, Adamnán, 29 f.); but as early as Fordun's time it was used of the tidal whirlpool between Jura and Scarba off the Scottish coast. This has its own popular legend which has been summarized as follows by Dr P. H. Gillies: ' According to popular tradition, the gulf owes its name to Brecan, a son of the King of Lochlin. This prince, to prove his devotion to his love, agreed to pass three days and nights in his galley at anchor in the Coire. Acting upon the advice of the wise men of Lochlin, he had three ropes made, one of wool, another of hemp, and a third of the hair of women of spotless fame. With the aid of these he anchored in the terrible sea. During the first night the hempen rope parted, and—alas for Brecan and his hopes!—his fearful vigil was almost completed when the hair of some frail one proved unequal to the strain, the remaining strands gave way, and the true lover and his ship were engulfed in the sea which has ever since borne his name. The body of the prince was afterwards dragged ashore by his faithful black dog which had accompanied him, and was buried in Uamh Bhreacain on the shores of Jura ' (P. H. Gillies, *Nether Lorn and its Neighbourhood*, 102; cf. A. Alpin MacGregor, *The Peat-fire Flame* (Edinburgh and London, 1937), 119. Nicolson, *Gaelic Proverbs*, 194 gives the following proverb: *Ge b'e nach stiúir coire bhrochain, cha stiúir Coire Bhreacain*).

(Breccán mac Maine m. Néill according to other books used to trade between Ireland and Scotland with fifty currachs, until they fell together into the whirlpool, so that there did not survive even a bringer of tidings to tell of their destruction.)

And their fate was not known until Lugaid Dall-éices came to Bennchur [the modern Bangor in Co. Down]. His followers went to the strand of Inber Bice, where they found a small bare skull which they brought to Lugaid. They asked him whose it was and he told them to put the end of the poet's wand upon it, whereupon he explained that it was the head of Breccán's lap-dog and that it was the only trace of the disaster of Breccán's drowning in the whirlpool with all his people.[2]

It will be seen that the passage I have placed in round brackets is a doublet of what precedes. It agrees with the corresponding passage in the Leabhar Breac text,[3] while the preceding version agrees with that of the Book of Uí Maine.[4] In other words a passage from a text of the Leabhar Breac type was interpolated into a text that was similar to Uí Maine. It may be noted that Thurneysen regarded the Uí Maine text of the glossary as being particularly important. From his close examination of the two long articles on *Prull* and *Mug Éme* he found that Uí Maine was an indirect copy of Laud 610, which is preserved as a fragment lacking the article on Coire Breccáin and which the scribe, Seaan Buidhe Ó Cléirigh, copied directly in 1453 from Saltair Chormaic (Saltair Chaisil), in other words from what was presumably the original manuscript of the glossary.[5]

The discrepancy between the duplicate passages is minimal: one of them gives Breccán's immediate ancestry; but the very fact of the reduplication may have some bearing on the version of the tale given in the dindshenchas of *Coire Breccáin*, I give the relevant quatrains from the Metrical Dindshenchas in E. Gwynn's translation:

No generous chieftain that reached it ever returned hither again from its white-paven floor, since Breccán of Bérre went his way.

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[2] *Anecodota from Irish Manuscripts* IV, 27.

[3] Ed. Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries* (London, Edinburgh, 1862), 14.

[4] Ed. Meyer, *Sitz.-Ber. der Berl. Akad.*, 1919, 303.

[5] In his article ' Zu Cormacs Glossar ', *Festschrift Ernest Windisch* (Leipzig, 1914), 8-37. See also Frazer, *Féilsgribhinn Eóin Mhic Néill*, 37 ff.

Breccán son of Partholán, that seer of old, drank no wholesome draught: he was drowned here with his fifty ships by the crowding waves of the whirlpool.

I know the tale sages tell of the mighty whirlpool's home, whence comes, to denote it perpetually, the familiar name and its clear reason.

I have heard of famous Breccán, whose is the loud-roaring grave—him that enriched every hearth of Uí Néill, busily plying in his vessel a brisk trade.

Breccán son of Maine, rich in graces, the Cauldron drowned with its red spray, and he lies under the heavy high-piled strand with his ship and his valiant following.[6]

The prose dindshenchas follows closely the wording of Cormac's Glossary, particularly in its brief description of the whirlpool, and must be derived from the Glossary, or from its source. It also speaks of two different Breccáns: 'Into it came Breccán son of Parthalón, who went with pride and wilfulness from his father out of Ireland (*v.l.* to Ireland), and it drowned him with fifty curachs. It was there also that Breccán son of Maine son of Niall was drowned with fifty curachs while on a trading venture, and nothing of them survived save the tidings of their destruction.'[7]

The dindshenchas has therefore two Breccáns of whom more or less the same tale is told,[8] but obviously they result from the splitting up of the single Breccán of whom Cormac wrote, in the same way that Manannán mac Lir was multiplied in *Tochmarc Luaine*.[9] It is

[6]Op. cit., IV, 83.

[7]*RC* xvi, 157 f. The prose also records that Breccán mac Maine's bones were thrown up by the whirlpool to the view of Colum Cille when the saint passed close by, whereupon he identified them and addressed his words to Breccán. Cf. *Betha Coluimb Chille*, ed. G. Schoepperle and A. O'Kelleher (Chicago, 1918), §352; the preface to Ultan's hymn *Brigit bé bithmaith* in *Liber Hymnorum* I, 107; *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus* II, 323; Martyrology of Gorman, ed. Stokes, p. xi.

[8]I assume that Breccán Bérre and Breccán mac Partholáin of the Metrical Dindshenchas are one and the same: the former title may conceivably have resulted from a combination of metrical convenience and the tradition in *Lebor Gabála* that Partholán landed in Ireland at Inber Scéne (the estuary of the Kenmare river) in the south-west.

[9]Cf. *Held.*, 516, n. 3.

possible that they originated in the kind of duplication by conflation or interpolation that we noted in the YBL text of the Glossary. In that case one would have to suppose that the author of the dindshenchas sought to substantiate the distinction between the two namesakes by ascribing different affiliations to the second of them.

Gwynn has already pointed out that l. 29 of the Metrical Dindshenchas, *Breccán cen sam-thodáil sláin*, 'Breccán drank no wholesome draught', is almost the same as the phrase used in Leb. Gab. of Partholán himself, *ní slán sam-todáil*, when he and his people died of the plague.[10] It would seem, therefore, that the author was drawing upon *Lebor Gabála* when he composed his reference to the death of Breccán mac Partholáin. It is scarcely possible to identify the version of *Leb. Gab.* which he used, but there is perhaps a clue in a tale found in some texts of *Leb. Gab.*; according to this when Partholán discovered that his wife Delgnat was unfaithful to him, he was seized with fury and killed her lap-dog (*oircni*), which was called Saimér.[11] Assuming that the author of the dindshenchas used a version of *Leb. Gab.* containing this tale, it may be that the mention of a lap-dog, *oirc(n)e*, both in the *Leb. Gab.* tale and in the article on Coire Breccáin in Cormac's Glossary suggested the linking of Partholán with one of the two Breccáns; at all events I have found no other reference to a Breccán son of Partholán in *Leb. Gab.* or elsewhere. Furthermore, the sentence in the prose dindshenchas which says that Breccán departed from his father with pride and wilfulness (*doluid co fuaill ⁊ imtholtain oa athair a* (v.l. *co*) *hErind*) looks suspiciously like an improvization based on the passage in *Leb. Gab.* in which Partholán flees to Ireland after killing his mother and father.[12]

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[10] *Leb. Gab.*, ed. Macalister, III, 52; LL 6a3.

[11] *Leb. Gab.*, ed. Van Hamel, III, 38, 40; also the dindshenchas of Inis Samér, *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, ed. E. Gwynn, IV, 288. Van Hamel believed that this tale was some centuries older than the Book of Lecan, in which it occurs in Leb. Gab., and that it preserved an ancient tradition (*RC* L, 224 ff.). The tale may well be older indeed, but Van Hamel's general argument, namely that Partholán was originally a deity or corn-demon, has been criticized effectively by Thurneysen (*ZCP* xx, 375 ff.); cf. O'Rahilly *EIMH* 75, 344, where he describes the story of Partholán's invasion as a learned invention.

[12] *Leb. Gab.*, ed. Macalister, III, 8.

As for the article in Cormac's Glossary, there is an obvious similarity between Lugaid Dall-éices' divination and that performed by Moen mac Etnae in the article under *Mug Éme*: both are pronounced over the skull of a dead lap-dog. It is very probable that one was patterned on the other and, if so, the article on Coire Breccáin may well have been the borrower. After its brief account of the death of Breccán mac Maine m. Néill it adds the comment that 'there did not survive even a bringer of tidings to tell of their destruction' (*ní térna cidh sciula orcne as*, YBL).[13] However, one might easily—whether by accident or design—interpret the word *oircne* to mean 'lap-dog' rather than 'destruction', and this is what I suggest a redactor of the Glossary did; and, having done so, he then composed the divination episode on the model of the Mug Éme article and added it to the original Glossary note on Coire Breccáin.

As for the title *Longes Breccáin*, it is clearly a late addition to the list of tales, and most likely it refers directly to Cormac's Glossary, if not to the dindshenchas.

[13]Cf. *DIL* s.v. *sceola*.

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