A new edition and translation of *Dúan in Chethrachat Cest*

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A NEW EDITION AND TRANSLATION OF *DÚAN IN CHETHRACHAT CEST*[*]

Abstract

This article contains a new edition, translation, and discussion of *Dúan in chethrachat cest* 'the poem of the forty questions' attributed to Eochaid úa Céirín (fl. *c.* 1050) from British Library, Egerton MS 1782 (*s.* xvi^{in}). The text is a sixteen-stanza poem accompanied by interlinear glosses. The stanzas pose questions to the audience, which the glosses answer. These questions primarily regard figures from Irish legendary history, and the answers are of interest for their frequently unique details on the matters which they treat. The introduction includes discussions of the surviving manuscript copies, the poet, some of the material in the text, and the poem's language and metre.

Dúan in chethrachat cest (*DxlC*) 'the poem of the forty questions' is a Middle-Irish poem attributed to the poet Eochaid Éolach úa Céirín (fl. *c.* 1050). The poem consists of a series of questions regarding Irish legendary history, Biblical matters, and miscellaneous lore, accompanied by prose interlinear glosses which answer the questions posed in the verse. It is of particular interest for its divergent and often unique details regarding the invasion legends, which speak to otherwise lost versions of these tales.

Since its first and only modern edition by Thurneysen in 1921, *DxlC* has largely been overlooked in scholarship. Thurneysen's edition includes a brief introduction and a translation into German, but no commentary on the text's language, metre, or content. The most significant recent discussions of the text include that by Jaski (2006) who, in discussing the conflation between the characters Fénius Farsaid and Aeneas, draws on the first three stanzas of *DxlC*, and by McMullen and Darwin (2024), who analysed the poem's metre in an article about the poet Eochaid Éolach úa Céirín. The present edition includes a discussion of the language and metre of the poem, textual notes which aim to elucidate editorial decisions and difficulties with the text, and a stanza-by-stanza commentary on the content of the poem and its glosses.

[*]This article is based on my MA dissertation which was written for Maynooth University in 2025. An earlier version of a portion of this article was presented at the **Widame* conference in Maynooth University on the 8th of November 2025 and at the *Tionól* in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies on the 14th of November 2025. I am grateful to Prof. David Stifter for his advice and supervision both during the MA and as I re-worked the dissertation into this article. I thank Dr Christina Cleary for reading drafts of this article and providing helpful feedback and advice. I also wish to thank the anonymous readers for their suggestions and corrections, and the editors of this journal, Prof. Barry Lewis and Prof. Ruairí Ó hUiginn. I am responsible for any remaining errors or short-comings.

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Many questions about this poem and its glosses remain unanswered and it is my hope that this new edition will generate further scholarly interest in this curious text.

Manuscript copies[1]

There are four surviving manuscript copies of *DxlC*. The oldest is in the sixteenth-century manuscript known as Egerton MS 1782 (hereafter E). Two are in eighteenth-century manuscripts and were copied from E: TCD MS H 5. 12 (1384)[2] (hereafter T) and NLI MS G 130[3] (hereafter G). In the late stages of preparing this article, a third modern copy was brought to my attention, in Longford, Coláiste Naomh Mel, ML 11 (*s.* xix). I have unfortunately not been able to access it, but the catalogue states that its copy of *DxlC* and a number of other poems are all from E (Ó Fiannachta 1980: 68). The text in E is the basis for this edition, and one of its copies, TCD MS H 5. 12 (1384), will be used to aid reading the text where the vellum is stained.

Egerton MS 1782

DxlC is found at fols 53va16–54rb7 of Egerton MS 1782, held in the British Library, London. Digital images of the manuscript have been published online by the British Library.[4] It was discussed most extensively by Flower (1926) in the second volume of the *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum* (pp. 259–98). A shorter entry was later published by Watson (1979) in his *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c. 700–1600 in the Department of Manuscripts: The British Library* (p. 113). Scribal notes indicate that it was written in 1517 (Flower 1926: 262) by members of the Ó Maolchonaire family.

The material in E varies in date from the Old Irish period through to the Early Modern and is grouped by subject or theme. This grouping can be demonstrated by looking at the texts surrounding *DxlC*. Flower (1926: 263) categorises this section as 'a series of school poems bearing on general knowledge, the history of Ireland, etc.' The text immediately preceding *DxlC* is the poem *Fianna bátar i nEmain* (ed. and trans. in Stokes 1902) which recounts how a number of Irish heroes died, with interlinear glosses expanding on the information given in the poem. The poem immediately following *DxlC* is *Ádam athair sruith ar slúag*, which gives an account of antediluvian Biblical history and of the invasion tradition found in *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (*LGÉ*), thus having much in common thematically with *DxlC*. It is also found in two manuscripts

[1] I wish to thank the British Library for allowing me to view Egerton MS 1782 before it was re-digitised and the Library of Trinity College Dublin for giving me access to MS H 5. 12 (1384). I was only able to view NLI G 130 on microfilm.

[2] On this manuscript see Abbott and Gwynn (1921: 245). It was written by Aodh Ó Dálaigh in 1749, and the majority of the material contained in it, including this text, was copied from E. *DxlC* is on pp. 64–5.

[3] On this manuscript see Ní Shéaghdha (1977: 47–51). It was mostly written by a scribe named Michael Ó Broinn, who was writing from 1725 to 1727 (Ní Shéaghdha 1977: 47). *DxlC* is on pp. 58–9, and has been copied from E.

[4] iiif.bl.uk/uv/#?manifest=https://bl.digirati.io/iiif/ark:/81055/vdc_100184117577.0x000001

that are older than E: the Book of Uí Mhaine (RIA MS D ii 1 (1225)), fols 150rb–151rb and the Book of Lecan (RIA MS 23 P 2 (535), fols 30vb–31vb. In E we also find the two other 'question'-poems, *Dúan in chóicat cest* (fol. 49va) (ed. and trans. in Tristram 1985: 285–93; ed. in Meyer 1903: 234–7) and *A fhir thall tríallus in scél* (fol. 50vb) (ed. in Meyer 1921: 3–7), both of which are poems of questions with answers given in interlinear glosses. *Dúan in chóicat cest* is more religious in topic than *DxlC*, while *A fhir thall tríallus in scél* is similar in topic to *DxlC*, mentioning people such as Fénius Farsaid and the sons of Míl, but also more recent figures such as Flann Fína mac Ossu (Meyer 1921: 6).

The title

Despite the title, it seems that there are only thirty-one questions, possibly thirty-two, included in the poem. There are two possible reasons for this discrepancy: either the title of 'forty' questions was used to represent an approximate amount, or some of the poem is missing. As there is a *dúnad* closing the poem, if something is missing it is more likely to be from the middle of the poem. It is also possible, however, that the final stanza was altered or added after the poem's composition to make up for the loss of material at the end. There are four pairs of stanzas with no *fidrad freccomail* (linking alliteration; see Carney 1981) linking them, but in one of these pairs, stanzas 12 and 13, the latter is clearly referring back to the topic of the former, and so the lack of linking alliteration is not a reliable way to identify gaps. The absence of any mention of Nemed could indicate that his section was removed, but there is no clear motivation for removing it.

Dúan in chóicat cest, mentioned above, does have fifty questions as the title states and it mentions its *cóecait cest* 'fifty questions' in the first line (Meyer 1903: 234). These two poems both appear in the same section of E, so they could have been transmitted together and in the course of this transmission, *DxlC* could have been given its title from its association with *Dúan in chóicat cest*. It cannot be confirmed whether or not these poems were associated with each other before the sixteenth century, as there is no earlier copy of *DxlC*, and only one earlier copy of *Dúan in chóicat cest*, which is in the fourteenth/fifteenth-century 'Book of Ádhamh Ó Cianáin' (NLI MS G 3). That copy has no title.

The poet

Dúan in chethrachat cest is attributed to the poet Eochaid (Éolach) úa Céirín in the heading of the poem. As will be discussed below, there is no reason to disagree with this attribution on linguistic grounds. There are three other surviving works attributed to him: the metrical *dindṡenchas* of Loch Garman (ed. and trans. in *MD* iii, 168–83), the poetic retelling of *Esnada tige Buchet* that begins *Cathaír cenn cóicid Banba* (ed. in Greene 1955: 32–41), and the prosimetric *Aided Nath Í* (ed. and trans. in Bănăţeanu 1930), where he is said to be a compiler alongside Flann Mainistrech in the colophon accompanying the *LU* and Yellow Book of Lecan (TCD MS 1316 (H 2. 16)) versions (*LU* p.

39a15–20; Yellow Book of Lecan col. 910 l. 22–8; Bănăţeanu 1930: 178–9, 181). Little is known about Eochaid úa Céirín besides what can be gathered from the references to him in these texts. From the colophon to *Aided Nath Í* we can tell he was a contemporary of Flann Mainistrech, who died in 1056 (Hennessy 1871: 52): *Fland tra 7 Eochaid eolach hua Cérin is iat rothinolsat so* …, 'Fland nun, und Eochaid der kundige, Enkel Cerin's, sind es, die dies sammelten …' (Bănăţeanu 1930: 178–9). This colophon also says that the material for the text came from a number of books in Armagh and in *Manister*, likely Monasterboice (Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Mainistir* 1): *a llebraib Eochoda hui Flandacan in Ard Macha 7 a llebraib Manistrech 7 asna lebraib togaidib archena .i. asin Libur Budi testo asin carcar in Ard Macha 7 as in Libur Girr boí im Mainistir* …, 'von den Büchern Eochaid's, Enkel des Flannachan zu Armagh, und von den Büchern des Klosters und von den andern auserwählten Büchern überdies, d.h. vom Gelben Buche, welches nunmehr in der Zelle zu Armagh fehlt und aus dem Kurzen Buche, welches sich im Kloster befand …' (Bănăţeanu 1930: 178–9). From this, we can say he was probably in the Oriel region at least for the duration of his collaboration with Flann Mainistrech. His family had a connection to the Uí Cheinnselaig, who traced their ancestry to the legendary king Cathaír Már (McMullen and Darwin 2024: 73), a fact which would explain the prominent presence of this king in two of the texts attributed to him, the *dindṡenchas* of Loch Garman and *Cathaír cenn cóicid Banba*.

The format of the text

It is well known that medieval Irish scholars were fond of the question-and-answer format. An extreme example of this would be the Old Irish treatise on the Psalter (ed. and trans. in Meyer 1894), which is entirely structured around a series of questions which introduce each topic under discussion. If we look at the poem as the core text here, what we have in *DxlC* is less like this question-and-answer format and more like a quiz. One voice (the verse/poet) is asking the questions, and another voice (the prose/audience) is answering them. The audience is addressed directly by the poet on a number of occasions through 2 pl. verbs: 1a/13d/14c/16d *apraid* 'speak'; 1c/10b *·fetab*air 'do ye know?'; 13d *ēistig*h 'listen'; 16c *innisid* 'recount'. Further, we find a vocative plural noun and two other collective nouns: 1a *a éolchu Elga* 'O sages of Elg'; 1b *a shlúaig Fōtla fīrergna*' 'O host of truly famous Fótla'; 13c *a áes dāna na ṅdúan dil* 'O artisans of the precious poems'. It is clear that the audience is a group and not an individual because of these plural verbs and vocatives, though in one instance there is a 2 sg. imperative, 8c *ab*air.[5]

Who this audience is meant to be is a question inherently tied to the context that the poem was written for. The poem itself provides very little evidence on this, and the following discussion will be largely speculative. The three possibilities I can see are a didactic context, a performative/competitive context

[5]This may have been the result of a suspended syllable being incorrectly expanded at some point in the poem's transmission, as it is hard to explain why the poet would switch to a singular verb in just this line when the plural, *apraid*, is used everywhere else.

or entertainment: is this a summer exam, a table quiz, or the crossword in *The Irish Times*? A didactic context is possible, but the terms that the poet uses to address his audience (see previous paragraph) seem to be addressing a group of peers, not students. They are almost laudatory, especially the latter example from 13c. As well as this, the line 15b *nī·fhetatar na dóerbaird* 'the lower bards do not know …' sounds like the poet is challenging the professional grade of his audience. This does not entirely exclude the possibility that the poem was written to be used in teaching, but it is a point against that interpretation.

The competitive or performative interpretation is not suggested by anything within *DxlC* itself, but to examine this we need to draw on evidence from *Dúan in chóicat cest*.[6] The first couplet indicates that the questions are to be asked *do clár Temra* (Meyer 1903: 234) 'to the plain of Tara' and the second stanza refers to the audience as a 'host' or 'crowd': *socaide fāgbus a brat / icon cōicait imchomarcc* (Meyer 1903: 235), 'a host loses its cloak at the fifty questions' (Wright 2013: 215). In *A New Commentary on the Old English* Prose Solomon and Saturn *and* Adrian and Ritheus *Dialogues*, these stanzas are interpreted as describing a contest that took place at Tara, and it is suggested that the reference to Tara could be referring to the *Feis Temro* 'feast of Tara' (Wright, Hall and Hill 2024: 50). Evidence for the existence of such contests is difficult to come by, and *Dúan in chóicat cest*, by positioning its audience in Tara, may just be creating an imaginary or dramatic context for the poem. Such contests would be a plausible application for poems such as these, however. Of course, just because we can interpret *Dúan in chóicat cest* as having a certain context for its composition, it does not necessarily mean we can apply the same to *DxlC*. The poems are similar in form, which makes it tempting to think of them as a genre, but the poets who wrote them could have had entirely different intentions for them.

A fhir thall tríallus in scél is a bit different to *DxlC* in that it is addressing an individual, but it is somewhat provocative in tone, challenging the answerer with lines such as *abair frimm masat éolach* (Meyer 1921: 3), 'say [it] to me if you are knowledgeable'; *inniss mas imdo th'ēolus* (Meyer 1921: 4), 'recount [it] if your knowledge is abundant' (my translations); *dotrala f[o] ainēolass* (Meyer 1921: 3), 'thou art ignorant' (*eDIL* s.v. *do-cuirethar* II b). This tone could make it a candidate for the competitive context, but the singular addressee could also be understood as referring to the reader. Perhaps this text was composed simply to be a challenge for whoever wished to answer it. If we understand the plural audience in *DxlC* as referring to the scholarly community as a whole, this interpretation could be applicable to *DxlC* also. There is nothing to support this particular interpretation within the poem, but the idea that it could have been created entirely for entertainment, be that for individuals or groups, seems possible.

[6] I wish to think Prof. Charles D. Wright for sharing his materials on *Dúan in chóicat cest* with me and for pointing me in the direction of some useful publications, including *A New Commentary*.

Commentary[7]

Stanzas 1–3: Fénius Farsaid, Íar son of Néma, and Bélait

The first three stanzas of *DxlC* deal with the deaths of the three characters Fénius Farsaid, Íar son of Néma, and Bélait daughter of Laiten. Fénius Farsaid is well known from medieval Irish legends of the tower of Babel and the creation of the Irish language, and he features in *Auraicept na nÉces* (Calder 1917). For a discussion of his complicated ancestry see Carey (1990) and for different traditions about his role in the creation of alphabets see McLaughlin (2009).

Bélait, Fénius's wife, is mentioned in two other texts which also reference her death from the sun. The metrical *Bansenchas* has *Bás Belbaiti ro fes feli, do thes na gréni sin glind* (Dobbs 1930: 290), 'The death of Bélait from the sun's heat in the glen is known in poetry' (Dobbs 1930: 317). In the prose *Bansenchas*, the parents of Nél are said to be Lavinia and Aeneas rather than Fénius and Bélait (Dobbs 1931: 167). This represents the conflation of the characters of Fénius and Aeneas that Jaski (2006) discusses. Part of this conflation seems to lie in the name of Bélait's father (Fénius's father-in-law) Latinus (here *Laiten*) which is both the name of a figure at the tower of Babel and the name of Lavinia's father (Aeneas's father-in-law) (Jaski 2006: 24). The other reference to Bélait is in a stanza quoted in *Auraicept na nÉces*: *Bellat mathair Niu[i]l neimnigh […] Fuair bas i llo grene glain* (Calder 1917: 60, 213), 'Bellat mother of envenomed Nél […] Died on the bright day of the sun' (Calder 1917: 61). Neither text shares the references to an affair with Íar, her dying 'from love', or her burial in a place named Carn Bélaite which feature in the gloss to stanza 2. Without further details on the story, it is unclear whether or not Bélait's death *do grád* in the gloss to stanza 2 is meant to be a different explanation for her death, or whether it is connected to her death by sunlight. It could be that her love for Íar or Fénius lead to the scenario where she was killed by the sun.

Wherever he is mentioned, Íar son of Néma is associated with Fénius Farsaid. The most attention is paid to him in *Auraicept na nÉces* (Calder 1917: 8, 16, 82–4, 102, 174, 178–9, 229, 244), but there is not much information about him there besides that he worked with Fénius on the *Auraicept* and is associated with *íarmbérla* in the sense of 'cryptic speech' (Calder 1917: 102). In *Lebor Ollaman*, he is said to have brought either Greek or Latin to Fénius (McLaughlin 2009: 11). He is absent from the prose text of *LGÉ*, but is mentioned in the poem beginning *Athair cáich, coimsid nime*, which is included in some recension 2 and 3 manuscripts as well as independently in the Book of Uí Mhaine (*LGÉ* i, 172). There, he is listed alongside other linguists at the school of languages in the city of Ibiténa (= Eipithéna in *DxlC*) on the plain of Shinar (*LGÉ* i, 194). He remains a small part of the legend in later sources, as he is said to have introduced *íarmbérla* (here meaning 'unstressed words') to Irish in *IGT* (i, 4; Mac Cárthaigh 2014: 58) and is mentioned alongside Fénius in *Foras Feasa ar Érinn* (Dinneen 1908: 6). There is little information in these sources about Íar's life, or that of any other character, as the extant texts are more concerned

[7] Stanza 16 will not be discussed as it is lacking a gloss. The reason why it has no gloss is not clear.

with the characters' linguistic activities. However, it is evident from this poem that other stories about these characters existed. Here we have the bones of a narrative about a betrayal and affair that is not attested elsewhere.

Jaski (2006: 31) has a discussion of the material in these three glosses which accounts for the parallels in the manner of Bélait and Íar's deaths with those of Ham and Abel in apocryphal traditions found in Ireland. The reference to Ham being killed *do thes grēne* only features in the copy of the third redaction of *LGÉ* that is found in the Book of Lecan (*LGÉ* iii, 36) and it is difficult to see any connection between the characters of Ham and Bélait. Ham and Bélait are not the only characters to be killed by the sun in Middle Irish sources. Another example is found in the poem beginning *Éstid a éolchu cen on*, where the poet Cairpre mac Etaine is said to have been killed *de gai grēne glaine* 'of a stroke of the pure sun' (*LGÉ* iv, 226–7).

The location of *Eipithéna ciuitas* has not been identified with certainty. In Thurneysen's edition of *DxlC*, he did not comment on the name but directed the reader to *Auraicept na nÉces* (Thurneysen 1921: 134 n. 1). Macalister calls the city 'an echo of the name of the Median city of Ecbatana' in the notes to his edition (*LGÉ* i, 268). Specifically, he is commenting on the poem beginning *Athair cáich, coimsid nime*. There, the city's name is spelled variously between manuscripts: *Ibit(h)ena(e)*, *Imbithena*, *Hebotena*, *Eba tena* (*LGÉ* i, 194). This poem places the city in Shinar.

Jaski (2006: 31) brings *Auraicept na nÉces* into the discussion. He references the text's statement that the five divisions of Irish were created *apud Eotenam (uel Athena) ciuitatem* (Calder 1917: 16). He comes to the conclusion that the city of Eipithéna/Ibithéna etc. resulted from a confusion between Athens (*Athena(e)*) and Achaia, which *Auraicept na nÉces* mentions as a place where writing may have been invented (Jaski 2006: 31; Calder 1917: 20). This would explain why a place with a name derived from the Latin *Athenae* (and not, seemingly, the Irish *Athain*; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Athain*) came to be situated in Shinar. However, an identification with Athens does not explain the *-b-* or *-p-* found in forms of the name in *DxlC* or *Athair cáich, coimsid nime*.

Jawbone of a camel?

The unusual weapon used by Fénius to kill Íar has parallels in Biblical and extra-scriptural sources. The phrase *lecca/glaine chamaill* has been used in Irish sources to describe the impromptu weapon Samson used to kill a thousand Philistines in Judges 15.[8] However, in the Bible and other early Christian

[8]The earliest such reference is found in the Turin glosses: *Tur.* 110a *.i. honglaini inchamul… inna ilslogu .i. na ilfiṡ.. hoglaini inchamul*, 'i.e. with the jawbone of the camel (he laid low) the many hosts, i.e. the many Philistines with the camel's jawbone' (*Thes* i, 492). A further example can be found in the Middle Irish *Scél Saltrach na Rann*: *.i. lecca chamaill boī ina lāim* (RIA MS 23 P 16 (1230), p. 127b6–8), 'i.e. [it was] a camel's jawbone that was in his hand' (my translation). It also features in the tale *How Samson slew the Gesteda*: *7 rogab a airm ningnathach nallmardha .i. a chromchuarcholtur do lecain camaill*, 'and he seized hold of his uncouth, outlandish weapon – to wit, his crooked, bend coulter of the jawbone of a camel' (Marstrander 1911: 156–7; see also Ehrmantraut 2022).

sources, this weapon was the jawbone of an ass (Vulgate *mandibula asini*, Septuagint *σιαγων όνου*). In medieval English art and literature, the jawbone of an ass is also the weapon used by Cain to kill Abel (Wright, Hall and Hill 2024: 186–8). The poem *Athair cáich, coimsid nime* agrees that Cain killed Abel with a jawbone, though again it is that of a camel rather than an ass: *Rogab Cāin n-a lāim luind / lecain cintaig in chamuill* 'Cain took in his savage hand / the guilty jaw-bone of the camel' (*LGÉ* i, 180–1). The second recension of *LGÉ* references Cain killing Abel *do lecain chamaill* (while also providing the alternative theory that he strangled him) (*LGÉ* i, 28) and the third recension is less specific, saying *do fid chnāma chamaill* 'with a shank/shaft of a camel-bone' (*LGÉ* i, 84–5, 144–5). The first-recension text bound with the Book of Fermoy (RIA MS 23 E 29 (1134)) has *co fid cnāma camaill* also, while *LL* may or may not say *lasin cnāim chamaill* (*LGÉ* i, 18–19).[9]

How a jawbone came to be Cain's weapon is not clear. As the Bible does not specify how he killed his brother, there was much speculation on the topic in the medieval period. This issue is too complex to address fully here: see the most recent discussion by Wright, Hall and Hill (2024: 186–8). The use of this motif in the story of how Fénius killed Íar could be transferring the sense of betrayal associated with the Cain and Abel story, if it was that jawbone that was on the mind of the author and not the one Samson used as a weapon. It could also echo the jealousy that Cain experienced when his brother's offerings to God were favoured.

This association could also go further. There was an extra-scriptural legend that one of the reasons why Cain killed Abel was because he was jealous that Abel was intended to marry Cain's twin sister. This legend was certainly known to the medieval Irish as it is alluded to in *Dúan in chóicat cest* and *LGÉ* (Wright 1987: 138; Meyer 1903: 236; *LGÉ* i, 158). It is possible then that Fénius was portrayed as killing his colleague Íar with a jawbone because it represented betrayal or jealousy, both of which make sense considering that Íar had an affair with Fénius's wife Bélait. If the author was thinking of Samson's jawbone, then the use of the motif here could represent an act of revenge for a wrong-doing as it does in the Samson story, perhaps insinuating that Fénius is a righteous figure in this story.

There are few discussions of the discrepancy between the camel-bone in Irish sources and the ass-bone elsewhere. Schapiro (1942: 206 n. 14) suggests that 'it is possible that the connection of the ass and camel as symbols of the giant descendants of Cain in the Book of Enoch is a factor in this substitution', but it seems that he was not aware of the extent of the Irish evidence, nor that the camel's jawbone is also used by Samson. In Macalister's notes to the first volume of *LGÉ*, he asks: 'Did the old Irish historians fully comprehend the difference between an ass and a camel?'. He concludes that because the two animals were 'equally unfamiliar' in ancient Ireland 'it is quite possible that

[9]Due to the condition of the MS, it has not been possible to verify Macalister's reading here. He was uncertain in his reading of *lasin cnāim chamaill*, saying that it 'is the best that [he] can make of the faint traces in L' (*LGÉ* i, 209). The diplomatic edition of *LL* (26–9) has quite a different passage that does not mention Cain's weapon. The passage is left blank in the facsimile.

they were supposed to be similar or identical' (*LGÉ* i, 209). This is possible, but not quite satisfactory. There are few early references to asses in medieval Irish writing, besides those in religious contexts which occur due to the frequent appearance of asses in the Bible. In *Early Irish Farming*, Kelly (1998: 131–2) says the 'earliest explicit reference to an ass on Irish soil' that he is aware of is from the twelfth century. I am not aware of any other examples of asses and camels being confused by the medieval Irish and there is no reason to think they would confuse them, but the issue requires further research.

Stanza 4: Lúam, Medar and Meal

A reference to three men associated with Cessair will immediately lead one to the three men who accompanied her to Ireland in *LGÉ* and related stories of her journey, but those men were named Bith, Ladra, and Fintán, and only one might have been her brother (*LGÉ* ii, 200). The gloss may suggest that they travelled separately to Cessair (if that is what is meant by *nīro·aiccillsit itir Cess*air, 'they did not speak to Cessair at all') so perhaps this is a separate trio that is absent from the tale in other sources.

Medar and Meal remain a mystery, but Lúam has a connection to Cessair's companion Ladra, who is often found with the epithet *lúam* 'pilot. This epithet is found in *LGÉ* (e.g., *LGÉ* ii, 182, 188, 200) and the Prose *Banṡenchas* (e.g. RIA MS 23 P 2 (535), fol. 203v14; TCD MS H 3. 17 (1336), col. 870 l. 44)[10] and he is called *lúam*air*e cach lir*, 'the pilot of every sea' in *Ádam athair sruith ar slúag* (E fol. 54vb11). One could speculate that these men are linked to other figures who took the forms of birds, such as Tuán mac Cairill, who is also associated with (Benn) Boirche (Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.vv. *Benna Bairche*, *Boirche*, *Bairrche*; Ó Riain, Ó Murchadha and Murray 2005: 158) in both the *Martyrology of Tallaght* and *Scél Tuáin meic Chairill* (Best and Lawlor 1931: 29; Carey 1984: 97, 101) or Fintán mac Bóchra and Suibne Geilt in the later texts *The Colloquy between Fintan and the Hawk of Achill* (ed. Meyer 1907) and *Buile Shuibne* (ed. O'Keeffe 1931), but without further information on the story of Cessair's brothers, no conclusion can be reached.

The poem and the gloss disagree with each other about when the men came to Ireland. The poem says it was *d'éisi na díleann* 'after the Flood' while the gloss says *āenadaig rīa ndílin*n 'one night before the Flood'. In *LGÉ* and other accounts, Cessair and her companions, Bith, Ladra and Fintán, arrive in Ireland before the Flood (e.g. *LGÉ* ii, 176) and if this was on the mind of the glossator, it could explain the discrepancy.

Stanza 5: Partholón

The numbers of his party vary, but the story of Partholón's people being wiped out by plague, with or without the detail of it being a punishment for kinslaying, is well-attested elsewhere. The earliest reference to it is in *Historia Brittonum*: *Primus autem venit Partolomus cum mille hominibus, de viris et*

[10]Here the manuscripts are cited rather than Dobbs's edition, as the edition has *luain*, a misreading for *luam*.

mulieribus, et creverunt usque ad quattuor milia hominum, et venit martalitas super eos, et in una septimana omnes perierunt et non remansit ex illis etiam unus (Morris 1980: 61), 'Partholon came first with a thousand, men and women, and they grew until they were four thousand, and a plague came upon them, and in one week they all died, and there remained not a one of them' (ibid., 20). One version of the Middle Irish adaptation of *Historia Brittonum* known as *Lebor Bretnach* gives the further detail that they were killed by plague *a ndigail na fingaili doroindi for a athair ⁊ for a mathair* (van Hamel 1932: 21) 'in revenge for the kinslaying he did to his father and to his mother' (my translation). The story is mentioned in all three of Macalister's redactions of *LGÉ*, but the kinslaying aspect is only present in redactions 2 and 3 (*LGÉ* ii, 272–3 and iii, 8–9). The Lecan *dindṡenchas* of Inber mBúada tells us that Partholón left Greece *iar marbad a athar ⁊ a mathar ⁊ a braithrech um chenn a forba* 'after his father and mother and brothers had been killed for sake of their heritage' (Stokes 1895: 141), with the addition of the detail that his brothers were also killed.

The wording of the gloss in *DxlC* is interesting in that it very closely resembles that of a similar section of redactions 2 and 3 of *LGÉ*. Below are the two passages:

> *LGÉ*: Mad āil a ḟis cid ara tānic Partholōn assa thīr, ninsa. Partholōn ro marb a māthair ⁊ a athair, ic iarraid rīge dia brāthair: co tāinic co Hērind ar teched a ḟinghaile. Conid īarom luid tāimlechta fair ina finghail. Nōi mile fri hāen sechtmain adbath do cinaidh a fingaile. (*LGÉ* iii, 8)

> 'Wouldst thou know wherefore Partholon came forth from his land, 'tis easy. Partholon slew his mother and his father, seeking kingship for his brother: so he came to Ireland fleeing from his kin-murder. And so thereafter plaguings came upon him in his kin-murder. Nine thousand in one week died for the guilt of his kin-murder.' (*LGÉ* iii, 9)

> *DxlC*: *Con*id *air*e at·berar Parrtholōn mac Sera f*r*iss .i. mac fingalach, cera .i. fi*n*gal .i. Parrtholōn ro·marb a athair ⁊ a māthair ac īa*r*air rīg*h*e dia brāt*h*air co·tānicc co Ērinn *ar* teched a f*h*ing*h*aile *con*id īa*r*um luid tai*m*lé*ch*ta ina fi*n*gail .i. noí míli do ēc f*r*i oínshechtmai*n* díb.

> 'So it is therefore that that he is called Partholón son of Sera, i.e. a kinslaying son, *cera*, i.e., 'kinslaying', i.e. Partholón killed his father and his mother seeking kingship for his brother and he came to Ireland fleeing from his kinslaying and afterwards a plague came because of [lit. 'in'] his kinslaying, i.e. nine thousand of them died in one week.'

Ignoring the initial question in the *LGÉ* passage, as this would be superfluous in a gloss that is answering a question in the poem itself, and putting aside the

etymological part of the gloss for a moment, the two passages are strikingly similar. The only significant difference lies in the final sentence, which could have been changed to remove the repeated information in *do cinaidh a fingaile*. In his notes to the text, Macalister states that this 'is what may be called a "germinal" paragraph, which tells the gist of an entire narrative in a few words: and was probably culled by the compiler from some brief historical abstract' (*LGÉ* iii, 90). The similarities between these two passages, the 'brief historical abstract' suggested by Macalister, and the source of the etymology for *Sera* could be explained by another text, one version of which from TCD H 4. 22 (1363) Macalister prints in his notes to *LGÉ* (*LGÉ* ii, 264–5). Another version of that text also appears in TCD H 3. 18 (1339), fol. 46a1–23 (Kobel 2020: 203). Like the passage in *LGÉ*, both copies begin with *mad āil a Ḟis cid ara tānic Partholōn assa tīr*. This text is a longer version of the story of the events leading to Partholón's arrival in Ireland and the plague that followed. It includes additional details such as genealogical information, Partholón's exile, and the injury to his eye. The phrasing of the parts of this text which overlap with the passage in *LGÉ* and the gloss in *DxlC* are, again, startlingly familiar. For the sake of brevity, the entire text is not included here but the parts which correspond to the *LGÉ*/*DxlC* passages have been pieced together to highlight the similarities. The version from TCD H 3. 18 (1337), which has never been published, has also been included as its language is somewhat closer to the texts to which we are comparing it:

> TCD H 4. 22 (1363): Parrtalón do marb [a] athair ⁊ a mathair […] ac iarraid righi da derbrathair […] Ocus tanic fein co Heirinn ar teichim na finghaile sin. Ocus is inand Sera isin berla Grecda 'fingalach' isin berla teibide. Is aire aderar Parrtalon mac Sera fris […] conid aire sin tainic taimlecht forra ina fingail…
>
> (*LGÉ* ii, 264–5)

> 'Partholon slew his father and his mother […] seeking kingship for his brother […] he himself came to Ireland, fleeing that kin-murder. Now *Sera* means in the Greek language what "fingalach" (= parricide) means in the Chosen language [Goidelic]. That is why he is called Partholon son of Sera […] wherefore there came a plague upon him in kin-bloodguiltiness …' (*LGÉ* ii, 265)

> TCD H 3. 18 (1337): P*a*rrt[h]olōn ro·m*a*rb a māthair ⁊ a athair […] ī*a*rair rīge dia b*r*āthair […] co·tai*n*ic co hÉirinn *ar* teithed [a] ḟingaile ⁊ is i*n*an*n* Sera isin tengaid Grégda ⁊ fi[n]ggal isin bērla teipide ⁊ is *air*e si*n* at·ber*ar* Parrt[h]olōn m*a*c Sera f*r*is […] *con*ad*h* ī*arum* luid tamle*cht*a *for*ro …
>
> 'Partholón killed his mother and his father […] seeking kingship for his brother […] and he came to Ireland fleeing [his] kinslaying and 'Sera' in the Greek language is the same as 'kinslaying' in the selected language [Irish] and it is because of that that he is

> called Partholón son of Sera […] and afterwards a plague came upon them.' (my translation)

As well as being similar in wording to our other two passages, this text also provides a source for the etymology of *cera*, abbreviated though it is in *DxlC*. As the text found in TCD H 4. 22 (1363) and TCD H 3. 18 (1337) was transmitted independently, a version of it was likely used as a source for both the compiler of *LGÉ* recension 2 and the glossator of *DxlC*. With the other glosses having such unique details, it can be said with some certainty that the glossator of *DxlC* was not working from *LGÉ*, at least not the compilation as we know it.

Stanza 6: Énna Airgdech

The origin of Énna Airgdech's epithet is explained in *LGÉ*, which says *is leis dorōnta scēith airgdidi ar tūs riam, 7 in Airgedros do rindead, comad dē itā Ēnna Airgtheach fair; 7 dorad do airechaib Ērenn iad*, 'by him were silver shields made first of all, and in Argatros were they made, whence is he named Énna Airgdech; and he gave them to the leaders of Ireland' (*LGÉ* v, 228–9). This is followed by the long version of *Cóir Anmann*, which also associates him with silver shields: *is dó doronta scéith airgdidi a nAirgetros* (Arbuthnot 2007: 2), 'for him silver shields were made in Airgetros' (Arbuthnot 2007: 79). The gloss to *DxlC* is missing any mention of silver shields and is likely referring to a different tradition where he is more generally associated with wealth and abundance. However, the phrase *fross airget* could also be referring to the same event as *LGÉ* and *Cóir Anmann*, just in a more figurative way. An adjective derived from *argat* should have an internal */d/*, i.e. *airgtech*/*airgdech* (cf. *eDIL* s.v. 1 *airgdech*).[11] While there is no mention of Airgetros (Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Airgetros*; Ó Riain, Ó Murchadha and Murray 2003: 46) in *DxlC*, it is possible that *fross airget* was intended to be an etymology for this place-name.

Stanza 7: Óengus son of the Dagda, Conchobar, Cú Chulainn, Conall, Celtchar

These characters do not need much of an introduction, but the tale itself is obscure. I have to follow Thurneysen in saying 'von dieser Sage ist mir nichts bekannt' (1921: 134 n. 3). We can only speculate on the context of this attack. Óengus is not typically associated with these Ulster heroes. While *Aislinge Óengusso* says that he joined Medb and Ailill on the *Táin* (Meid 2017: 59), he does not feature in *Táin Bó Cúailnge* itself. Óengus's attack seems to be personally motivated, since it is spurred by something that Conchobar says, and this and the positioning of the Ulster heroes at Emain Macha (and not 'on the road') might mean that we should understand this tale as taking place outside of the context of the *Táin*, but there is no way of confirming this.

[11] In this entry it is suggested that some of the examples should belong to 1 *aircthech*. The spelling varies between attestations of Énna's epithet: *LGÉ* v, 228: the Book of Lecan (RIA MS 23 P 2 (535)) recension 3 text has *airgtec*h (fol. 290rb8), *airgtheach* (fol. 290rb13) and *airctig* (fol. 290rb16), all in the same passage, while the recension 1 text in *LL* has air*gdec*h (LL 2308).

Stanza 8: Etan daughter of Dían Cécht, Senbecc, Abcán grandson of Ebrecc, Óengus

Etan daughter of Dían Cécht is mentioned in the Prose *Banṡenchas* where she is called *ban-fhile* and is said to be the wife of Cermat Milbéoil, son of the Dagda, and the mother of Mac Cécht, Mac Cuill and Mac Gréne (Dobbs 1931: 168). In *LGÉ* she is said to be a *banfile* or *banéices* and has a son named Cairpre who is also a poet (*LGÉ* iv, 122). The Book of Ballymote's list of famous authors names her and her son Cairpre (Stokes 1901: 16). In the synchronistic tract *Adam primus pater* her death is mentioned as if contemporary with that of her son Cairpre (Mac Carthy 1892: 292), while she is said to have died of grief for Cairpre in the poem beginning *Éstid a éolchu cen on*, found in recensions 1, 3, and *Míniugud* of *LGÉ* (*LGÉ* iv, 226). She is named as one of the nobles of the Túatha Dé Danann who is buried *isin Brug* in *Aided Nath Í* (Bănăţeanu 1930: 176),[12] which, according to its colophon in *LU* and the Yellow Book of Lecan, was compiled by our poet Eochaid úa Céirín alongside Flann Mainistrech (Bănăţeanu 1930: 178, 181). *Lebor Bretnach* calls her *muim**i** na filed* (van Hamel 1932: 22), 'foster-mother of the poets'. None of these sources links her to Abcán or Senbecc.

Senbecc is best-known from the two versions of a story known as *Comrac Con Culainn re Senbecc* in which he meets Cú Chulainn. One version was edited and translated by Meyer (1883–85) and the other is part of *Bretha Nemed Dédenach* (Gwynn 1942: 26–7). In both versions of this story, as well as in the list of famous authors, he is said to be *hua Ebricc* (Stokes 1901: 16; Meyer 1883–5: 182; Gwynn 1942: 26), which is also said of his father Abcán in *DxlC*. He is also mentioned briefly in the *dindṡenchas* of Brug na Bóinde I: *cenn indias ui úabrig úaib* / *Senbic a túaim immais áin*, '… from you of the proud grandson / of Senbec from the stead of noble poesy' (*MD* ii, 16–17).[13]

Abcán's identity is less straightforward. There is a character of this name in *LGÉ* and he is a poet, but his genealogy does not mention Ebrecc: *Abcan mac Bicc Felmais meic Con meic Dein Cecht, fili Loga* (*LGÉ* iv, 130, 156, 194). The same Abcán is mentioned in *Cath Maige Tured* as a harper of the Túatha Dé Danann (Gray 1982: 38). The aforementioned poem beginning *Éstid a éolchu cen on*, attributed to Flann Mainistrech (who, according to the colophon to *Aided Nath Í*, collaborated with Eochaid úa Céirín on that text (Bănăţeanu 1930: 178–9)), states that he was killed by Óengus: *Abcan mac Bicfelmais ūair* / *fili Loga co lān-būaid,* / *do cher la Hoengus cen āil* / *inair Midir mōr-glonnaig*, 'Abcan son of cold Bic-felmais / the bard of Lug with full victory, / he fell by the hand of Oengus without reproach / in front of Midir of mighty deeds' (*LGÉ* iv, 232–3).[14] While this poem agrees with *DxlC* in saying that Óengus killed

[12]i.e. Brúg na Bóinne; see Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Brug* 1; Ó Riain, Ó Murchadha and Murray 2005: 205–7.

[13]Gwynn suggests in his notes to the text that *uaibrig* should be *Ebric* (*MD* ii, 94).

[14]Here Macalister translates *inair* as the adverb meaning 'from the front, before' (*eDIL* s.v. 2 *anair*). An alternative translation of this line is found under *eDIL* s.v. *áer*, where it is understood as the preposition *i* and noun *áer* meaning 'satire/satirising' and translated as 'because he satirised M[idir]'. If we take this alternative interpretation as the correct one, it would indicate that this

Abcán, there is no mention of Etan in this stanza and it may not be referring to the same story. There is also an Abcán *ard-ḟile* mentioned in the *dindṡenchas* of Ess Ruaid (*MD* iv, 4; Stokes 1892: 505; Stokes 1895: 31).

In the version of *Comrac Con Culainn re Senbecc* in *Bretha Nemed Dédenach*, Senbecc refers to himself as *Abhcánsa saoí fealbhais, file a Seghais, Senbhecc mo ainm. ua Ébhric a siodhaibh* (Gwynn 1942: 26), '[I am] Abcán, a sage of sorcery, a poet from Segas, Senbecc [is] my name. Grandson of Ébric from *síde*' (my translation). Gwynn (1942: 222) suggests in his notes to the text that Senbecc's name 'was perhaps originally *Senbecc in t-abacc ua Ebric*' because a monument named *Lighe an abhaic* (Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Lige ind Abaic*) was named after him and suggests two different ways of reading *Abcán-sa*: 'I am A.' or 'I am the dwarf, my name is S. ua Ebric' (Gwynn 1942: 222). The word *abcán* is a diminutive derived from *abacc* 'dwarf' and so does not necessarily have to be a name, but, if this is what is intended, it is possible that this was an alternative name for Senbecc, which got split into a second character or conflated with the Abcán in *LGÉ* who then became the father of Senbecc.

Stanza 9: Three feigned sounds, foxfire, and the Resurrection

There are two questions in this stanza: the first asks for the names of the three 'feigned sounds' (*anmonn na trí son ndoilbthe*) and the second is regarding the origin or cause of foxfire. These are answered in two separate glosses. I have found no parallel to the triad *gó 7 ainfír 7 ainfiss* 'falsehood and untruth and ignorance', nor to the term *son doilbthe* 'feigned sound' elsewhere. As a rule, each stanza of this poem deals with one topic. Even where there are multiple questions in a stanza, those questions are related somehow. One possible exception to this is stanza 12, but at least the answers position both questions as being related to figures from the Book of Genesis. This raises the question of whether the triad should be understood as being related to foxfire, Christ or the Resurrection, but it is impossible to tell with certainty if this is the case without further evidence.

There are some issues in interpreting the gloss regarding Christ and foxfire. These are discussed in the notes to the text, and it will suffice to say here that Christ is either said to have tread on the rotten wood or sang a psalm on it, but either way he is being linked to the creation of foxfire. There are two other references to foxfire in early Irish sources. The first is from *Aided Máelodráin*, where the foxfire is used as a trail of breadcrumbs to follow: *Tucthar lib lān mo chlera-sa do thenid sinnaig ocus at·bēr-sa is ē m'ētach-sa fil ann ocus biat-sa ina diaid et lāifet-sa in tenid im diaid, 7 toīt-si iarmo ślicht* (Greene 1995: 52), 'fill my bag with foxfire and I will say that my clothing is in it and I will go after him and I will throw the fire behind me and you should follow me' (my translation). The second reference to foxfire is from the poem beginning *Nīm·geib format fri fer find* in the Book of Ballycummin (RIA MS 23 N 10 (967)), where it is used in describing the beauty of a person who is false on the inside: *as tine*

stanza is referring to a different tale of Abcán's death from the one accounted in the gloss to *DxlC*, as the latter implies that Óengus killed Abcán because of his assault on Etan.

ṡindaig sechtair / fïad c[h]ách is blāth selestair / lān menge a corp co mbāine / cia rothibe findgāire (Meyer 1908: 267), 'he is foxfire on the outside, in front of everyone he is a yellow iris flower, even though he may laugh a bright laugh, his white/pure body is full of deception' (my translation).

As interesting as these two references to foxfire are in their own right, they do not shine a light on the reference in our gloss. The strong association between Jesus and light could be an element in his association with foxfire here. It might be relevant that in the Old Irish poem beginning *Is ór nglan, is nem im gréin*,[15] a person who does not follow the will of God is described as a 'withered tree': *is én immoniada sás / is nau tholl dianteslinn guas / is lestar fás is crann crín / nad déni thoil ind ríg thuas*, 'he is a bird round which a trap closes, / he is a leaky ship to which peril is dangerous, / he is an empty vessel, he is a withered tree, / whoso doth not the will of the King above' (*Thes* ii, 294). This could be a coincidence, as the *crann crín* is just one of many images employed by the poet, but it could be related to the fig tree which Jesus causes to wither in Matthew 21 and Mark 11. It may be that the image of Jesus literally bringing light to rotten wood is meant to represent his resurrection figuratively bringing light to non-believers or sinners.

Stanza 10: Seth, Adam, Michael, and the Devil

The poem[16] continues with mysterious extra-scriptural references, but now we turn to figures from Genesis. The notion that Seth was the first person to be hospitable (or generous) may be unique to this text. However, the question of Biblical 'firsts' has been noted as a common feature of Irish Biblical exegesis (Bischoff 1976: 102; Wright 1987: 124–5) and of *joca monachorum* texts (Wright 2013: 200). Various items of this sort are found in the margins of Harley MS 5280, including one similar in theme to ours, where the first feast is attributed to Methuselah: *Mathasaleam isē dorigne an cétcuir*m 7 *an cétfleid ar t*ús, 'Methuselah, it is he who made the first beer and the first feast originally' (fol. 41r marg. sup.; my translation). This is also found in TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337), p. 46a24–5, alongside other similar items shared with those in the margins of Harley MS 5280.

The second half of this stanza/gloss pair deals with the archangel Michael warning Adam about the Devil's temptation, as well as the origin of sweetness and bitterness. I have found no source or close parallel to these elsewhere.

Stanza 11: Tríath son of Amur and the battle of Mag Tuired

LGÉ is consistent in naming Eochaid (or Eochu) son of Erc as the final king of the Fir Bolg who was defeated at the first battle of Mag Tuired (e.g. *LGÉ* iv, 8–10, 18, 20, 32). Other sources that mention the final king of the Fir Bolg agree on this name, such as *Cath Maige Tuired* (Gray 1982: 24) and the late

[15]This line is the beginning of the poem only in the longer version found in the commentary to *Félire Óengusso* (Stokes 1905: 156). The Reichenauer Schulheft (St. Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 86a/1) contains the first two stanzas, but in reversed order, beginning *Is én immo n-íada sás*.

[16]Or at least, the glosses. The stanza itself does not overtly reference religious matters.

account of the first battle of Mag Tuired (Fraser 1916). Tríath mac Amuir is an obscure figure. *Tochmarc Étaine* has a character named Tríath, son of Febal or Gobar who is one of the Fir Bolg (Bergin and Best 1938: 142), but besides his name and race there is little connecting him to our Tríath. He also features in *Tochmarc Treblainne*, with the name Tríath son of Faebor (Meyer and Pokorny 1921: 166–75).

Stanzas 12–13: the daughters of Midir and Goibniu and the sons of Míl

Wives of members of the Milesian invasion are occasionally mentioned in *LGÉ*, but none of these names feature in the list we have in *DxlC*. The women mentioned in *LGÉ* are Líben, Fíal, Tea, Fás, Odba, Scota, and Scéne (*LGÉ* v, 72, 98, 130), and they do not correspond to the women named in *DxlC*: Lían, Liphe/Aífe, Lemain, Aillenn, Cuilenn, and Cairche. Unlike *DxlC*, the women in *LGÉ* are not said to be of the Túatha Dé Danann. This aspect of *DxlC* could be related to the implication that the sons of Míl were given women by the Túatha Dé Danann in the Old Irish poem *Can a mbunadus na nGáedel?*: *Nis bátar mná soirbe soíre* / *ce a n-oglea* / *Ar n-gait a m-ban gabsat clemnas* / *Tuath Dea*, 'there were no charming, noble wives / for their young men; their women having been stolen, they made alliance / with the Tuatha Dea' (Todd 1848: 250–1).

There are only two male characters in these glosses who have a named wife in *LGÉ*: Fúat, who is said to be married to a woman named Líben rather than Aífe or Liphe, and Lugaid, whose wife's name is Fíal, not Aillenn, though we do hear of Fíal's death in *LGÉ* (*LGÉ* v, 32, 60, 74, 94, 130). Fíal is also mentioned in *Can a mbunadus na nGáedel?* (Todd 1848: 248). In the gloss to stanza 13, Liphe is replaced by Aífe. Aífe is more likely to be the error here, since it is a very common name, though Midir has a daughter named Aífe in *Acallam na Senórach* (Stokes 1900: 12). The rest of *DxlC*'s Túatha Dé Danann women are unknown to me.

The characters named as husbands to the Túatha Dé Danann women are all attested in *LGÉ* as Milesians. Cúailgne, Fúat and Muirthemne are sons of Bregon (*LGÉ* v, 24). Surge and Sobairche are listed as two of the ten 'champions' of the Milesians (*LGÉ* v, 26). Our Lugaid could be Lugaid son of Íth, who comes to Ireland to avenge his father (*LGÉ* v, 22). Alternatively, in one place in *LGÉ* 'Lugaid' is given as a variant for Aireach, one of the sons of Míl, so there may have been another tradition where one of the sons of Míl has this name (*LGÉ* v, 96).

It is worthy of note that many of the names in this gloss appear to be related to place names. In fact, the section of *LGÉ* about the sons of Míl shows a particularly strong concern with the origins of place names. See, for example, the names of the men mentioned in *DxlC*: Cúailgne is said to be the source of the name Slíab Cúailgne (*LGÉ* v, 22, 62; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Sliab Cuailgne* 1), Fúat of Slíab Fúait (*LGÉ* v, 22, 62; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Sliab Fúait*), Muirthemne of Mag Muirthemne (*LGÉ* v, 22; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Mag Murthemni*), Sobairche of Dún Sobairche (*LGÉ* v, 210, 212; Ó Riain, Murray and Nic Cárthaigh 2020: 132–3; Hogan and Ó Corráin

2017 s.v. *Dún Sobairche*) and Lugaid (son of Íth) of Loch Luigdech (*LGÉ* v, 60, 74, 95; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Loch Lugdach*). The same applies to the aforementioned women named as wives of Milesian men in *LGÉ*, most of whom also have places named after them: Tea is the eponym of a place named Temair (*LGÉ* v, 40, 63, 83, 168; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Temair*), Inber Féile is named after Fíal (*LGÉ* v, 32, 60, 74, 126; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Inber Féile* 2), Odba is the eponym of Odba (*LGÉ* v, 40, 56, 82; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.vv. *Odba* 1–3), Scéne has Inber Scéne named after her (*LGÉ* v, 30, 60, 70–2, 92, 110; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Inber Scéne*) and Fás has Fert Fáise (Ó Riain, Murray and Nic Cárthaigh 2024: 106; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Fert Faise*) and/or Glenn Fáise (*LGÉ* v, 32, 58, 60, 74; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Glenn Fáis*). It could be speculated that the women named in *DxlC* played a similar role in the version of the invasions that the glossator was working from and their names do resemble certain place names. Unfortunately, attempts to link the sons of Míl or these women to places that have names related to theirs have been largely unsuccessful as we do not know their stories. Liphe may be the one exception, as some versions of *LGÉ* mention a *cath Lifi* 'battle of Liffey' where Érimón's steed was killed (*LGÉ* v, 34, 74–6; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Life*).

Stanza 14: Góla, king of the Túatha Dé Danann

I have been unable to identify Góla or the place named Slíab nGóla. He seems to share a name with the Philistine Goliath (*eDIL* s.v. 1 *Góla*). The consonants of the name *Góla* are suspiciously similar to the start of the name *Gáiléoin*, and it might have been the product of a medieval etymology. *LGÉ* says there were only nine kings of the Túatha Dé Danann (*LGÉ* iv, 112–126, 164, 184),[17] not thirteen, and says that Mac Cuill, Mac Cécht, and Mac Gréne were the final three kings, sharing the kingship until the arrival of the Milesians (e.g. *LGÉ* iv, 124–6, 146–52, 164–6). I have not found any sources that disagree with this.

It is interesting that the glossator answers a question about the final king of the Gáiléoin with a Túatha Dé Danann figure. The Gáiléoin are typically associated with the Fir Bolg, this relationship being described in varying ways in *LGÉ*. The Fir Bolg section says that the five sons of Dela, the Fir Bolg leaders, split into three groups, the Fir Bolg, the Fir Domnann and the Gáiléoin (*LGÉ* iv, 6–7 16–17, 28–9).[18] The Fir Bolg, Fir Domnann, and Gáiléoin share Nemed as an ancestor (*LGÉ* i, 22–3, 156–7, 166–7; iii, 146–7, 152–5). The same information is found in *Lebor Bretnach* (van Hamel 1932: 21). Sometimes Séméon, another descendant of Nemed, is named as the ancestor of these groups (*LGÉ* iii, 148–9, 156–7, 178–9; iv, 12–13, 26–7,[19] 38–9). In recensions 1 and 3 of the genealogical material found near the beginning of *LGÉ*, the Túatha Dé Danann are included

[17]This part of the third-recension text describing the lengths of each king's reign omits Bres, though later the names of the kings are given again, in what Macalister considers to be 'an interpolation' (*LGÉ* iv, 310).

[18]The three divisions also appear in the *dindšenchas* of Loch Garman, attributed to Eochaid úa Céirín, though they are not named there (*MD* iii, 170).

[19]Only three of the recension 2 manuscripts say this, and they do not mention the Fir Bolg.

alongside the Fir Bolg, Fir Domnann and Gáiléoin as descendants of Nemed (*LGÉ* i, 22–3, 156–7) and this comes up again in the poem beginning *Éistet, aes écan aíbind* (*LGÉ* iv, 254–6). These latter genealogies may echo the tradition found in *Scél Tuáin meic Chairill*, which says that the Fir Bolg and Fir Domnann are related to Séméon, while the Túatha Dé Danann and Gáiléoin are related to Beothecht mac Iordanen: *Gabais Sémión mac Stairai in n-insi seo. Is díb Fir Domnand 7 Fir Bolg […] Gabais Beothecht mac Iordanen in n-insi seo forsna cenéla bátar inti. Is díib in Gáliún 7 Tuatha Dé 7 Andé* (Carey 1984: 102), 'Sémión son of Stairai took this island. Of them are the Fir Domnann and the Fir Bolg […] Beothecht son of Iordanen took this island from the peoples that were in it. Of them are the Gáilióin, and the Tuatha Dé and Andé' (Carey 1984: 106). Perhaps this gloss on *DxlC* is referring to the same or a similar tradition, which associated the Gáiléoin with the Túatha Dé Danann instead of the Fir Bolg.

Stanza 15: Adair daughter of the Dagda and the Mórrígan, wife of Éber
Adair does not seem to be attested elsewhere. Her husband Éber is most likely the son of Míl, as he and Érimon shared the kingship of Ireland after the Túatha Dé Danann were defeated (e.g. *LGÉ* v, 46, 64, 86, 165) and including him after a stanza about the final king of the Túatha Dé Danann makes sense in the roughly chronological order of this poem. Other sources do not name Éber's wife. As Adair is the daughter of the Dagda and the Mórrígan, this fits in neatly with the account in stanzas 12 and 13 of other Milesians marrying the daughters of other prominent Túatha Dé Danann figures, Midir and Goibniu.

Metrics

Dúan in chethrachat cest consists of sixteen stanzas in *deibide scaílte* (Murphy 1961: 65). The poem has a *dúnad*: *apraid*. This word also ends stanza 13. Four lines require elision to meet a count of seven syllables (5c, 6c, 16a, 16d). *Rinn 7 airdrinn* rhyme is present in all but one couplet (13a/b *trā* : *mnā*) and the tendency is for the second rhyming word to have one syllable more than the first, but there are five instances of an increase of two syllables, all $7^1 + 7^3$ (3a/b, 6b/c, 7c/d, 10c/d, 16a/b).

Alliteration
33/64 or 51.6% of lines have *uaimm*, with nine of those having either three alliterating words in one line or multiple pairs of alliterating words (27.3% of the lines with alliteration and 14% of lines overall). There are only three examples of linking alliteration within a stanza: 1b/c, 3b/c, and 9c/d. *Fidrad freccomail* (see Carney 1981) is present in all but the following stanzas: 4/5, 6/7, 12/13 and 14/15.

Rhyme
a) End-rhyme: The end-rhyme is generally unproblematic throughout the poem, though there are four complicated examples to discuss:

(1*a*/*b*) *Elga* : *fīrergna*: the problem with this rhyme is the *-g-* in *fīrergna*. There are two very easily confused words, *airgnae* (often spelled *ergna*) which is an adjective meaning 'evident, famous' (*eDIL* s.v. *airgnae*) and *érgna*, a noun meaning 'understanding' (*eDIL* s.v. *érgna*). The adjective has an internal -/ɣ/-, clear from a rhyme with *sedlaig* (*MD* iii, 106) (in a form with *-id*) and an internal rhyme with *slemna* in *Saltair na Rann*, ll. 5951–2 (Stokes 1883: 87). There is also an example in this poem that proves that the *-g-* is a voiced continuant, with a different form of the word, in 6a/b *Temraig* / *airdergnaid*. The noun *érgna*, which would be less likely in this case with its long vowel anyway, also seems to have a /ɣ/ as is shown by the rhymes *érgna* : *combérla* (*MD* iii, 386) and *érgna* : *bérla* (*LL* 4423–4).The /ɣ/ cannot rhyme with the /g/ of *Elga*, which is well-attested in spellings with *-gg-* and rhymes like *Elgga* : *bergga* (van Hamel 1917–19: 335) and *ndeirgg* : *Eilgg* (Meyer 1913: 30).

(2*c*/*d*) *·gegai*n : *ilbērlaib*: the *-e-* in *·gegai*n, a 3 sg. reduplicated preterite form of *gonaid*, was short, and thus would not rhyme with the long *-ē-* of *ilbērlaib*. There is the possibility that the first syllable was intentionally treated as long by the poet, as occasionally we find length marks on the first syllable of reduplicated verbs in manuscripts of the Middle Irish period. For example, this length mark is found on *cachain* (3 sg. preterite of *canaid* 'sings') in *LU*: *cách**ai**n* (p. 77a11; p. 121a18; p. 125b8; p. 143b28).[20] The same form, but augmented, is found in Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B 502, fol. 59vb18 *ro·cháchai*n. In *LL* (p. 223a18–19) there is a 3 pl. *ro·réraigset*ar (< *rigid* 'stretches; rules). In the fifteenth-century manuscript Egerton MS 93, there is the 3 sg. form *consélsat* (< *con·slá* 'departs') (Mulchrone 1939: 142).[21]

(3c/d) *sea*n : *ainteam*: this will be discussed further in the notes to the text.

(8c/d) *glicc* : *Seinbicc*: *Senbecc* contains the adjective *bec* 'small' as its second element, and as such, a /*g*/ would be expected for the final consonant, which does not rhyme with the /*k*/ in *glicc*. Murphy (1961: 33) gives such rhyme between a class *g* and class *k* consonant as an example of an 'unusual exception' to the rules of rhyme, whereas in Meyer's (1909: 7) looser classification of rhyming consonants, this would be perfect rhyme. We have visual rhyme here with *-cc*.

b) Internal rhyme: cases where a word is repeated in two consecutive lines like 12a/b *anmunn* and 15c/d *ainm* are excluded from the following as two identical words do not usually rhyme with each other in any position. There

[20]The diplomatic edition has two others at l. 3796o (p. 48b31) and l. 10619 (p. 128b32) but due to the condition of the manuscript, I was unable to confirm the presence of the length mark.

[21]This manuscript is not digitised and I could not verify this reading.

are only three examples of internal rhyme in *DxlC*: 5c/d *līn* : *dīth* is a rhyme between consonants from Murphy's (1961: 32) class *l* and class *χ* but it seems to be echoing the rhyme from the first couplet, which is *th*ír : *mórgním*, 9c/d *sun*d : *crunn*, and 13c/d *ṅdúan* : *úan*.

c) *Aicill*: there are only two examples of *aicill*: 12c/d *múaid* : *th*úai*th*, with rhyme between consonants in class *l* and *χ* and seemingly supporting the rhyme of this couplet through assonance (*múaid* : *d*rech*rúaid*) and 16a/b *allē* : *Dē*. *Aicill* is not a regular feature of *deibide*, so these may be accidental or additional ornamentation.

Language

The language of this poem is unmistakably Middle Irish, and so the discussion below will be carried out with a view to identifying innovative and conservative features and highlighting forms of interest.

Nouns

There is some evidence of case syncretism. The *s*-stem (neuter) noun *glenn* 'valley' has a palatal final consonant in what should be an accusative form with a neutral final consonant in 5c *i nglinn*, implying confusion of the dative and accusative cases. The same phenomenon may explain the nasalisation after a dative singular noun in 7a *co mét ṅglon*n, but this will be discussed further in the notes to the text.

There appears to be nasalisation following a nominative singular neuter noun in 7c *mon*ar *ṅglē*, though I am hesitant to use this as proof of the retention of the neuter gender since it is in a cheville. The *eDIL* entry for *monar* describes it as being 'common in chevilles' and states that it is usually neuter when used in a cheville (*eDIL* s.v. *monar*). Unexpected or ahistorical instances of nasalisation are found in Middle Irish texts (Cleary 2024: 345–6). Chevilles, as stereotyped or stock phrases, are prime candidates for the retention of neuter nasalisation, even after its loss elsewhere in the language. Strachan (1906: 207–8) gave a number of examples of nasalisation in chevilles from *Saltair na Rann*, where it is found seemingly regardless of the gender of the noun. He suggests that the nasalisation spread from neuter nouns such as *búaid*, *érim*, and *réim* which are frequently found in chevilles. In *DxlC*, the only other historically neuter noun that might have shown some evidence of its gender is 8d *ainm athur*, where the lack of nasalisation indicates it is no longer being treated as neuter.

Verbs

The vast majority of verbs in the poem are in augmented past forms, and there is but one example of a preterite form in 14d *boī*. The same applies to the glosses.

The only notably conservative verb form in the poem is the 3 sg. reduplicated perfect of *gonaid* 'pierces, wounds' in 2c *·gegai*n, but the use of a

reduplicated form for this verb rather than the *s*-preterite in Middle Irish is not unparalleled: e.g. *gegnatar* (*MD* i, 50).

Turning to innovative features, compound verbs had declined in use by the time this poem was composed (see Breatnach 1994: 282–3). Examples of simple verbs derived from compound verbs are found in 13d *ēistig*h (*éistid* < OIr *in·túaisi*) and 16c *innisid* (< OIr *ind·fét*). Further examples can be found in the glosses: 4gl. *nīro·aiccillsit* (*aicillid* < OIr *ad·gládathar*); 7gl. *ro·*ch*uimrig* (*cuimrigid* < OIr *con·rig*); 9gl. *dīaro·éirig* (*éirgid* < OIr *at·reig*).

There are also developments to be noted in the endings of verbs. 2c and 10b *·fetabair* shows a Middle Irish 2 pl. past ending (Breatnach 1994: 305). 4c *co·failet* shows OIr *·fil* now using personal endings instead of an infixed pronoun or accusative noun to express its subject (Breatnach 1994: 323). In 8b *ro·*sār*aig*us*tar* shows the Middle Irish tendency for the 3 sg. deponent *s*-preterite ending to spread to non-deponent verbs (Breatnach 1994: 300).[22] The gloss to the same stanza has *ro·*sár*uig*h, the same verb without the deponent ending and *gur*us*·toirrci*us*t*ar, another example of the spread of deponent endings.

Infixed and Interrogative Pronouns

There is only one infixed pronoun in the poem, as the majority of objects are nominal. The 3 pl. class A infixed pronoun in 10d *dos·fucc* is in a relative position after *cid*, where we would not expect a class A pronoun in Old Irish. As such, this is a sign of the simplification of the infixed pronoun system which occurs in Middle Irish; 3 pl. class B and C infixed pronouns are less common than the class A *-s-* in Middle Irish, which is also found in a relative position in this period (Breatnach 1994: 267).

There are three infixed pronouns in the glosses: 1 *r*us*·m*ar*b* (3 sg. feminine class A), 8 *gur*us*·toirrci*us*t*ar (3 sg. feminine class A) and 10 *dot·roa* (2 sg. class A). 1 *r*us*·m*ar*b* is like 10d *dos·fucc* above; one would not expect a third person class A infixed pronoun in a relative clause like this in Old Irish (Breatnach 1994: 265–6).

In 4a *cūi*ch and 7a *cōi*ch, the meaning of this pronoun has extended from 'whose' to 'who are' (Breatnach 1994: 278). The former example also shows a later form of the pronoun with *-ú-* instead of *-ó-*.

Conclusion

Infixed pronouns are still being used as objects and are not entirely proleptic or fossilised yet, but there is some decline in the system as we find a third person class A pronoun being used in a relative position. There are no independent object pronouns, but most objects in the poem are nominal. There have been significant developments in simplifying the verbal system, and the perfect has prevailed over the preterite as the narrative tense. The verbs rule out a very

[22]While this verb *sáraigid*, 'violates', was originally deponent, as early as *Wb.* it is attested with active endings: *Wb.* 1d4 *rósárichset* (*Thes* i, 502), *Wb.* 3c24 *rosariged* (*Thes* i, 513). The example in *DxlC* is more likely to reflect the Middle Irish spread of deponent forms than retention of the earlier inflection.

early Middle Irish date, and the presence of infixed pronouns suggests it is not a very late Middle Irish poem, and so, on linguistic grounds, there is no reason to argue with its attribution to the eleventh-century poet Eochaid úa Céirín. It is, at least, unlikely to have been written much earlier than his time. Unfortunately, a comparative study of the language of the poems attributed to this poet was outside the scope of this article, but is a desideratum and would aid in both judging the date of this particular poem and the validity of the attribution.

Editorial policy

Modern conventions of capitalisation, punctuation, and word-separation are followed. Prosthetic *f-* is retained, even where it appears to not be original on the basis of alliteration. Glides are not added where they are absent from words written in full, but they have been included in cases where a suspended syllable is rhyming and the partner of the rhyme is spelled with a glide, e.g. 2a/b *ęch* : *airl-* has been expanded as *each* : *airleach*. Macrons mark a long vowel where it is not marked in E, and the placement of length-marks has been normalised. Suspension strokes and roman numerals are expanded and underlined. When an abbreviated syllable ends in an unstressed vowel, I use *-a* following a neutral consonant and *-e* following a palatal one. abbreviations are expanded in italics. The Latin abbreviation *q;* / *que* appears in 7d and 10d and is expanded as *-che*. Ligatures are silently separated and *e*-caudata is silently spelled out as *ea*. Marks of lenition are generally indicated by an italic *h*, though I retain *puncta* above nasalising *n* and in the instance in 1c where it appears to be marking the nasalisation of an *f-*. Any emendations to the text not included here are discussed in the footnotes or notes to the text. Readings aided by MS T are noted in the footnotes.

EDITION

Dúa*n* in chethrachat c*est* i*n* sō do·rigne Eochaid *ūa* Cérí*n*.

1. Ap*r*aid, a éolc*h*u Elga,
a s*h*lúaig Fōtla fīrergna,
in·ḟetab*air*, t*híar nō* t*air*,
ainm mná Féni*us*[a] Fárrsaid?

   Bélait ingen Laiti*n*, māthair Niúil meic Féni*us*a. Gāe g*r*éine[23] r*us*·m*ar*b.

2. Cīa fer ro·marb Í*ar* na n-eac*h*?
Cīa h*air*m*m* dia·frīt*h*[24] a airleach?
In bās ro·fuc, cī*ar*·gegai*n*,
int ēoluc*h co n*-ilbērlaib.

   Féini*us* fēin ro·m*ar*b Ī*ar* [macc] Néma do leccai*n* chámaill īar ndula[25] do Īar co Bélait ⁊ m*ar*b Bēlait do g*r*ád. Ro·adnoc*h*t hi C*ar*nn Bēlaite.

TRANSLATION

This is the poem of forty questions that Eochaid úa Céirín composed.

1. Speak, O sages of Elg,
O host of truly famous Fótla,
do you know, in the east or west,
the name of Fénius Farsaid's wife?

   Bélait daughter of Laiten, mother of Nél son of Fénius. [It was] a ray of sunlight that killed her.

2. Which man killed Íar of the horses?
Where was his slaughter carried out?
The death he got, though he wounded,
the scholar with many languages.

   Fénius himself killed Íar [son of] Néma with the jawbone of a camel after Íar's affair with Bélait[26] and Bélait died for love. She was buried in Carn Bélaite.

[23] E: g^{e}éine, with a superfluous *-e-*.

[24] This part in E is badly stained, and the reading *dia* has been aided by that of T, which has *diar*. There is no space for there to be an *-r* in E, but *-ia* is faintly legible.

[25] The reading *īar n-* is from T.

[26] For this translation cf. *eDIL* s.v. *1 dul* II (c).

3. Cīa haiged[27] rucc Féini*us* féin,
i foc*us* i n-eterc*h*éin?
C'āitt ro·adn*acht* in s*h*uí s*h*ea*n*,
Īar macc Nému na n-ainteam?

.i. m*ar*b Fēinius dano īar cóic lāib do dig*h* dermuit coro·adn*acht* hi tuaisciurt Maigi Senair, .i. i nEipithēna ciuitate ro·adnoc*h*t Íar oc*us* nīr·lēc Féinius a ad*h*nocul féin ⁊ Īar marōe*n* i n-ōe*n*cath*air*.

4. Is cūic*h* in t*r*īar tairptec*h* tean*n*,
ro·buī d'éisi na díleann
co·failet, a beinn i mbeinn,
as cach dít*r*ib i nĒrinn.

.i. t*r*ī brāit*r*i do Chessair tāncat*ar* Ērinn āenadaig rīa ndílin*n* ⁊ nīro·aiccillsit itir Cess*air*. Lúam ⁊ Med*ar* ⁊ Meal[28] a n-anmonn, i ndelbuib éon ro·bāt*ar* ⁊ i mBeinn Bairche ro·bātar.

3. What violent death did Fénius himself get,
near or far?
Where was the old sage buried,
Íar son of Néma of the heroes?

i.e. Fénius died after five days from a drink of oblivion and he was buried in the north of the Plain of Shinar, i.e. in the city of Eipithéna Íar was buried and Fénius did not allow his own grave and Íar's [to be] together in one city.

4. And who are the violent, strong trio,
who lived after the Flood
and they are, from peak to peak,
above every wilderness in Ireland.

i.e. three brothers of Cessair came to Ireland one night before the Flood and they did not speak to Cessair at all. Lúam and Medar and Meal [were] their names. They were in the form of birds and they were on Benn Boirche.

[27]Read *aided*.
[28]With an *e*-caudata, possibly *Mael*.

5. Cid thuc P*ar*tholōn ō t*h*ír?
   Cid *ar*a·nderna mórgním?
   Cīa līn ro·buī, a glinn i nglinn?
   Cid *ar*ro·dīth a nÉrinn?

   *Con*id *air*e at·berar Parrtolōn mac Sera f*r*iss .i. mac fingalach, cera .i. fi*n*gal .i. Parrtolōn ro·marb a athair ⁊ a māthair ac ī*ar*air rīg*h*e dia brā*th*air co·tānicc co Ērinn *ar* tech*e*d a f*h*ing*h*aile *con*id ī*ar*um luid tai*m*lé*ch*ta ina fi*n*gail .i. noí míli do ēc f*r*i oínshechtmai*n* díb.

6. Cía rí ro·buí f*or* Temraig,
   dī*ar*·f*h*ear sne*cht*a airdergnaid?
   I*n* ran*n* ro·buī ar Temraig dē,
   ba h*ar*gat fíal find*r*uine.

   .i. hi sechtmad blīadna[29] flatha Éna Airct*h*ig ro·fer f*r*oss *air*get hi Temruig ⁊ fross fína fo Ērinn uile.

5. What brought Partholón from his land?
   For what did he do a great deed?
   What number was there, from valley to valley?
   For what did he perish in Ireland?

   So it is therefore that he is called Partholón son of Sera, i.e. a kinslaying son, *cera*, i.e., 'kinslaying', i.e. Partholón killed his father and his mother seeking kingship for his brother and he came to Ireland fleeing from his kinslaying and afterwards a plague came because of [*lit.* in] his kinslaying, i.e. nine thousand of them died in one week.

6. Which king ruled over Tara,
   when a highly famous snow fell?
   The part of it that fell [lit. 'was'] over Tara,
   it was decorous silver of *findruine*.[30]

   In the seventh year of the rule of Énna Airgdech a shower of silver poured in Tara and a shower of wine throughout all of Ireland.

[29] Or *blīadain*, which is how Thurneysen expands this (1921: 131); on the endingless dative singular see *GOI* §294 and Breatnach (1994: 247).

[30] *findruine* is left untranslated because of the lack of consensus on its meaning. For discussions of its meaning see *eDIL* s.v. *findruine*, Hull (1962–4), Scott (1981a), Scott (1981b) and Whitfield (2010).

7. Cōic*h* in maccóe*m* co mét ṅglon*n*,
rán*i*c Ea*m*uin ci*n* imroll?
Ro·*mar*b deich cēt, mon*ar* ṅglē,
dia muinnt*ir*[31] i n-óenaid*che*.

.i. Āeng*us* dano mac in Dágda, is é ránicc Emuin *ar* brēithir *Con*cobair dīa·n-eipert for·ossna Cú C*h*ulainn cac*h* ōe*n*. ⁊ ro·m*ar*b Ōe*ng*us deich cét isi*n* C*r*āebrūaid ⁊ ro·c*h*uimrig *Coin* Culainn ⁊ do·fuc *Con*all ⁊ Celtc*air* ⁊ *Con*chobar hi súan.

8. Cīa dalta dia daltaib t*hair*
ro·s*ār*aig*us*tar Etai*n*?
⁊ ab*air* rim*m* co glicc,
cade ainm athur Seinbicc?

.i. Abcán *ūa* hEb*r*icc in fili, is ē ro·s*á*ruig*h* Etan ingea*n* Día*n*céc*h*t *ar* brú Bóinne gur*us*·toirrci*ust*a*r*, co·tor*acht* Ōeng*us* ī*ar* sain g*ur*ro·m*ar*b Abcān. *Con*id ī*ar*um ruc Etan Senbec ⁊ Ōeng*us* ro·n-alt Senbec ī*ar* sin.

7. Who is the lad with many feats,
who came to Emain without a mistake?
He killed ten hundred, a famous deed,
of its household in one night.

i.e. Óengus son of the Dagda, it is he who came to Emain because of Conchobar's statement, when he said Cú Chulainn illuminates(?) everyone. And Óengus killed ten hundred in the Cráebrúad and he bound Cú Chulainn and he put Conall and Celtchar and Conchobar to sleep.

8. Which of his fosterlings in the east
violated Etan?
And tell me cleverly,
what is the name of Senbecc's father?

'i.e. Abcán grandson of Ebrecc the poet, it is he who violated Etan daughter of Dían Cécht on the bank of the Boyne so that he impregnated her and Óengus arrived after that and he killed Abcán. And afterwards Etan bore Senbecc and [it was] Óengus who reared Senbecc after that.'

[31]The *t* has the curved hook which represents *-ur*. This MS also uses it to stand for any vowel + *r*; cf. 8gl. *gur*us·*toirrci*us*t*ar; fol. 37ra14 *ráit*er; fol. 52rb1 *bat*ar; fol. 55rb24 *do·rancat*ar.

9. Anmonn na t*rí* son ndoilbt*h*e
nā fácbaid co anf*oir*bt*h*i!
Cid fo·dera, su*n*d co sē,
soillse 'sin crunn is brēnc*h*e?[32]

.i. gō dano ⁊ anfīr ⁊ ainfiss a n-anmonn na so*n* ndoilbthe. .i. dīaro·éirig Crīst asa adnocul, is ann ro·c*h*étsalt*air* f*or* c*r*ann c*rí*n, ut *est* tene s*h*innuig.

10. Cīa do·rigne gart *ar* t*ús*?
In·fetabair a imt*hús*?
Searb ⁊ milis 'mollē,
cid dos·fucc i nd-óenoid*che*?

.i. Seth mac Ádai*m* do·rat fleid dia brāt*r*ib hi Slēib Tabōir ⁊ tuc crod da cach brāthair díb co·f*ār*caibsit benn*acht*ai*n* oca. .i. Mīchēl at·bert fri Ádam: 'benn*acht* lat na tort*h*i *ar* dot·roa Demon aslaig*h* iterum dot mal*air*t i*m*no toirt*h*i'. Cach nī *no*·bennac*h* Ádam, is milis. Cach ní t*ár*all De*m*on, is s*er*b.

9. Do not leave incomplete
the names of the three feigned sounds!
What causes, here and hitherto,
light on the tree that is withered?

i.e. falsehood and untruth and ignorance [are] the names of the feigned sounds. i.e. when Christ rose from his grave, it is then that he first tread on a withered tree, so that is foxfire.

10. Who performed hospitality first?
Do you know its history?
Bitter and sweet together,
what brought them in one night?

i.e. Seth son of Adam gave a feast to his brothers on Mount Tabor and he gave cattle/goods[33] to each brother so that they left a blessing with him. i.e. Michael said to Adam: 'bless the fruits for the Devil of temptation will come to you again to injure you along with the fruits.' Everything that Adam has blessed, it is sweet. Everything that the Devil has touched, it is bitter.

[32]This line is erroneously written *sin crunn soillse is brenc*he in the MS, with transposition marks indicating the correct word order.

[33]Without context, it is unclear which sense of *crod* is intended.

11. Cīa do rīg*r*aidib Fer mBolc
ro·gab Ērinn, cīarb anord?
I *m*Maig*h* T*ur*ed, t*r*ūag*h* in dāil,
tuc cat*h* do Túait*h* Dé dámaig*h*.

.i. T*r*īath mac Amuir in rí déidenoc*h* do Feruib Bolg, in nómad rí díb, oc*us* is hē tuc cath Maig*h*e T*ur*ead do Thúat*h*aib Dē Danonn.

12. Cadead anmunn na sé[34] mba*n*
⁊ anmunn a n-athar
tucsat leo meic Míled múaid
ō T*h*úait*h* Dé Danann d*rech*rúaid?

.i. Līan ⁊ Liphi ⁊ Lemai*n* t*r*ī hingena Midir. Aillenn ⁊ Cuillea*n* oc*us* C*air*ci trí ingena Goibnenn.

13. *Ocus*[35] anmunn na fear t*r*ā
c*us*a·ndeac*h*at*ar* na mnā.
A áes dāna na ṅdúan ndil,
ēistig*h* úan oc*us* apraid*h*.

.i. Līan co Cúailngne, Aīfi[36] co Fúat, Lemai*n* co Murthe*m*ni, Aillenn co Lugaid*h*, Cuillenn co Surg*h*e, C*airch*e ra Sob*a*irche.

11. Which of the kings of the Fir Bolg
ruled Ireland, though it was improper?
In Mag Tuired, wretched the meeting,
he waged battle on the Túatha Dé of many companies.
i.e. Tríath son of Amur [was] the final king of the Fir Bolg, their ninth king, and it is he who waged the battle of Mag Tuired on the Túatha Dé Danann.

12. What are the names of the six women
and the names of their fathers
that the sons of noble Míl took with them
from the red-faced Túatha Dé Danann?
i.e. Lían and Life and Lemain, three daughters of Midir. Ailenn and Cuilenn and Cairche, three daughters of Goibniu.

13. And the names of the men then,
to whom the women went.
O artisans of the precious poems,
listen [to it] from us and speak.
i.e. Lían to Cúailnge, Aífe/Life to Fúat, Lemain to Muirthemne, Aillenn to Lugaid, Cuilenn to Suirge, Cairche to Sobairche.

[34]This is written as the roman numeral *ui*, with a baseline dot on either side. There is an unusually large space between the *-i* and the second dot, and some slight scuffing in the space, which indicates that the scribe originally wrote *uii*, and then erased the second *-i* to fix his mistake.

[35]*Ocus* is written as a ligatured *et*. This must have been seen as an abbreviation by the scribe, since the disyllabic *ocus* is required by the metre. The same sign for *ocus* begins 15a.

[36]Here the manuscript has a *spiritus asper* on the *-f-*, which is most likely a copying error.

14. Cīa rí dīb, déig*h*enac*h* dían,
ro·gab f*or* gasraid Gáilía*n*?
ɼ ap*r*aid rim*m* ce*n* ail,
cīa ainm boī forsin rí*g*h-sain?

.i. t*r*ī rī déc dīb ō T*h*ūat*h*aib Dé Danan*n* for Ērinn co·tāncatar meic Mīled[37] .i. Gōla ō·sluinnter Slīab nGōla hi Cí*ar*aig*h*e, is ē ba rī dēigenach díb.

15. *Ocus* ainm mná Ébir *air*d;
nī·f*h*etat*ar* na dóerb*air*d,
ainm a māthar ce[n] mafath,
oc*us* ainm a degathar.

.i. Adair dano ingen in Dagda mōir, is ī ro·faei la hĒber. .i. in Mórríga[n] dano ai*n*m a *m*māthar Ad*air*i mná Ébir.

16. Caide a ndīl, ō si*n* allē,
Tūait*h*e Dē na t*r*om*m*daī*n*e?
Innisid, ab*us* is t*air*,
caide a n-ord oc*us* ap*r*aid*h*.

Ap*r*aid, a ēolchu...

14. Which king of theirs, final [and] swift,
reigned over the Gáiléoin warriors?
And tell me without reproach,
what was the name of that king?

i.e. thirteen kings of the Túatha Dé Danann ruled over Ireland until the sons of Míl came, i.e. Góla after whom Slíab nGóla in Cíarraige is named, it is he who was their final king.

15. And the name of noble Éber's wife,
the lower bards do not know [it],
the name of her mother without a doubt,
and the name of her noble father.

i.e. Adair daughter of the great Dagda, it is she who slept with Éber, i.e. the Mórrígan was the name of the mother of Adair, wife of Éber.

16. What is their fate, from then until now,
of the Túatha Dé of the numerous people?
Recount, here and yonder,
what is their order and speak!

Speak, O sages...

[37] *meic Mīled* is written above *co·tāncatar*.

Notes

1c. *in·ḟetab*air: (T: *inḟetab*air, G: *infetab*air) E and T have a *punctum* above the *f*-, apparently marking nasalisation following the interrogative.

2c. *In bās ro·fuc*: Thurneysen (1921: 131) replaces *in* with *ni* and translates the couplet 'nicht traf ihn der Tod, obschon er ihn verwundet (erschlagen) hatte, den Kundigen mit den vielen Sprachen (ibid., 133). He also offers the alternative translation 'obschon der Kundige ihn verwundet hatte' (ibid., 133 n. 2). I have to agree with Thurneysen that the stanza is unclear. I interpret *in* as being the article. It may be asking the audience to describe Íar's death, as not every question in this poem has an interrogative (cf. stanzas 13 and 15).

2c. *cīar·gegain*: this appears to be the conjunction *cía* 'although' with a suffixed *ro*- particle and loss of the *-o*, as is frequently found with *día* and *ní* (Breatnach 1994: 279–80).

3c. *in suí sean*: in the manuscript we have marks of lenition on the initials of both *suí* and *sean*. This lenition is explained by *suí* being treated as feminine, a phenomenon found in Early Modern Irish texts or manuscripts which has been discussed by Bergin (1932: 140). The fact a feminine noun is referring to a man does not cause a problem in this case and it is well-attested, e.g.: *ba sai ḟìlidechta he,* about Dallán Forgaill in the Leabhar Breac (RIA MS 23 P 16 (1230): p. 238c53), *soí shenchusa Erenn*, in an annal entry about the death of Flann Mainistrech (Hennessy 1871: 52). The article not appearing as the feminine *int* is problematic, as one would expect the scribe to alter this also. However, the lenition could have been added as an afterthought, while the article was copied faithfully.

3d. *na n-ainteam*: in his edition, Thurneysen ruled out the possibility of the *n*- being nasalisation, '*nainteam* (wegen der Alliteration nicht *n-ainteam*) verstehe ich nicht' (Thurneysen 1921: 133 n. 4), but there are other quatrains in this poem where the final line does not have alliteration (see stanzas 4, 5, 7 and 9). The second syllable has an *e*-caudata, which could result in a reading *-taem*, but this does not rhyme. There is a word *aintem* (*eDIL* s.v. *aintem*), that is found rhyming with genitive singular *Taillte*an in the poem beginning *Éistid cáin cluinebair* in *Lebor na Cert*: *Ó theclait Éireannaig* / *co forum n-anteam,* / *forad ríg Airgialla* / *for deis ríg Tailltean*, 'When the men of Ireland assemble to the brilliant gathering, the seat of the king of Airgialla is at the right hand of the king of Tailtiu' (Dillon 1962: 76–7). This rhyme would indicate the sound at the end of *aintem* is lenited and would rhyme perfectly with *sean*. Dillon (1962: 77 n. 4) derives it from the negative prefix *an*- and the adjective *te(i)m* 'dark'.

The meaning of *antem* has not been established with certainty. In the glossary of his edition of *Aislinge meic Con Glinne*, Meyer (1892: 158) analysed it as *an-timm* 'not feeble', though with some uncertainty, and translated it as 'mighty' (ibid., 82). In his notes to the *dindṡenchas* of Naas, Gwynn references Meyer's interpretation of the word, and expands the meaning to 'a man of

valour' (*MD* iii, 485), translating it as 'hero': *óenach Talten, talci gleós,* / *la cach n-antem beós din bés*, 'the assembly of Taltiu with mighty preparations, / held by every hero moreover according to custom' (ibid., 50–1). It may be rhyming with *Talten* here. Finally, it appears in the poem *Temair Breg, baile na fían*, where it again rhymes with *Taillten* in the preceding line and is translated as 'chiefs(?)': *éirg i férmaig Taillten tall* / *ar bélaib aintem nĒrenn*, 'haste thee to Tailte's grassy plain, yonder in presence of Erin's chiefs(?)' (Joynt 1908–10: 106–7).

Meyer's derivation from *timm* is problematic, as with the unlenited /*m*/ in that word, *antem* would not perfectly rhyme with the /*n*/ found in *Tailten* and *sean*. There is also the issue that we consistently find a neutral final consonant in *antem*, but one would expect an *i*-stem inflection if it derives from *timm*. Dillon's explanation should give us the necessary consonant, but *te(i)m* itself is a rare word. It is essentially limited to glossaries (*eDIL* s.v. *teim*) and derivatives such as *teime* and *teimel* 'darkness', *teimen* 'dark' etc. (*LEIA* s.v. *tem*). It could have been derived from such formations by the glossators. The quality of the final consonant could also be an issue, though Matasović (2009: 378) derives the word from a Proto-Celtic root **temo-*.

5gl. *cera*: the connection being made here is to *κήρ*, Greek for 'death' or 'doom' (Beekes 2010: 688–9). This was first suggested by Thurneysen (1936: 378) and the perceived Greek origin of the word is confirmed by the text about Partholón in TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337) and TCD MS H. 4. 22 (1363), which has been discussed above. This term may also explain the entry *ceara .i. crú no fuil*, '*ceara* .i.e. gore or blood' in O'Clery's glossary (Miller 1879–80: 382; *eDIL* s.v. ? 2 *cera*). The initial *c-* in *DxlC* indicates that the Irish scholars were reading the (apparently) Greek word with a medieval Latin soft *c-*, which would make it sound identical to *Sera*.

6gl. *f*ross airget: *airget* is an unusual genitive singular, but it is not without parallel: *clodib órduirn go féthaidib airget*, 'a gold-hilted sword with inlayings of silver' (Gray 1982: 26–7) in a manuscript roughly contemporary to E (BL Harley MS 5280, fol. 63v9). Another example is found in fourteenth-century legal section of TCD MS H 2. 15a (1316) in *Bretha im fhuillema gell*: *la aithgin arget mbruithe*, 'with compensation of the silver in bullion' (*AL* v, 396–7; *CIH* 468.24; TCD MS H 2. 15a (1316), p. 31b12–13).

7a. *co mét ṅglonn*: the nasalisation on *ṅglon*n cannot easily be explained as being caused by *mét*, which should be dative after the preposition *co n-* 'with'. This could be an instance of syncretism of the accusative and dative cases following prepositions (Breatnach 1994: 240), similar to 5c *i nglinn*, which shows a dative form in place of an accusative. It may also have been influenced by nasalisation in chevilles, such as 7c *mon*ar *ṅglē*.

7gl. *dīa·n-eipert*: the manuscripts have what looks like a 3 pl. present indicative or subjunctive of *as·beir*, E/T: *dianeipret*, G: *dianeipreat*. However, it makes more sense if we have a preterite here and *dīa* meaning 'when' rather than 'if'. As such, it makes sense to follow Thurneysen (1921: 131) in changing the

verb to *-eipert*, assuming there was a copying error or a mistake in expanding a suspension stroke or abbreviation.

7gl. *for·ossna Cú* Ch*ulainn cac*h *ōe*n: the verb *for·osna* means 'lights up, illuminates, brings to light, lights, kindles' (*eDIL* s.v. *for-osna*), but it is unclear what it means here. A figurative interpretation of the verb gives us the translation 'Cú Chulainn illuminates/enlightens everyone'. This does not seem particularly fitting for his character, but we do not have the full context. However, as *cac*h *ōe*n is the direct object, we would prefer to have accusative nasalisation on *ōe*n. It could be something like 'Cú Chulainn reveals everyone' but this is also unclear in meaning. If a word was dropped from the sentence, 'Cú Chulainn reveals X in everyone' would make sense, and if the missing word meant 'weakness' or something along those lines, it would make sense why this would spur Óengus to attack the Cráebrúad. We find phrases similar to this with *gó* 'falsehood' in the legal text *Recholl Breth*[38] and the Heptads: *it e secht mbeocaíndle and so forosnad gae cach rig*, 'these are the seven candles which expose the falsehood of every king' (*AL* iv, 52.9–10; *CIH* 219.19); *atait secht fiadnaise forosnat gae cach re*, 'there are seven evidences which expose the falseness of every battle' (*AL* v, 310.1; *CIH* 52.17). There is also the option that the verb means 'outshines', which seems plausible as a figurative use of *for·osna*. It would make sense if the statement 'Cú Chulainn outshines everyone' spurred Óengus to attack, but there is no other attestation of this meaning.

8gl. *Etan ingea*n *Díancéch*t: the forms *Etan* and *ingea*n here show the Middle Irish development wherein *ā*-stem nouns occasionally adopt an accusative singular form with a neutral final consonant instead of the older form with a palatal final consonant (Breatnach 1994: 243). We would expect a genitive singular *Déin* instead of *Día*n but the lack of apparent inflection here could be due to the writer treating the name as a compound, and so this has been reflected in the edition.

8gl. *ro·n-alt*: the nasalisation in this relative clause would be ungrammatical in the Old Irish period, as a leniting relative clause would be required with a subject antecedent. However, as noted by Ó hUiginn (1986: 74), ahistorical uses of the nasalising relative clause can be found in Middle Irish sources. An alternative explanation is that this nasalisation is from a proleptic 3 sg. masculine class A infixed pronoun. If so, it would be a further example of the decline of infixed pronouns as in 1gl. and 10d there are other third-person infixed pronouns being used in relative clauses.

9gl. *son ndoilbthe*: Thurneysen (1921: 132) treats these words as a compound in his edition. He says in the introduction to the text that the glosses were probably not written by the author of the poem because *son ndoilbthe* in the stanza was misunderstood as a compound word in the gloss (Thurneysen 1921: 130). There is no grammatical reason to read this phrase as a compound word,

[38] *AL* treats this tract as part of *Din Techtugud*, but the heading *Recholl Breth* is found as a marginal note (Breatnach 2005: 293). It is part of *Senchas Már*.

and it seems his interpretation may stem from E having little word spacing here. There is some space between *so*n and *ndoilbthe*, however, and it looks as though the scribe was struggling for space in the line by the end of the gloss. As such, I treat the phrase as two separate words.

9gl. *is ann ro·chétsalt*air *f*or *crann crín*: this passage has been interpreted in at least three different ways. In Thurneysen's (1921: 132) edition, he expands *is̄* as *is ed* with a footnote suggesting it could be read as *is ann*. His translation reads 'da sang er den Psaltar über einen morschen Stamm' (Thurneysen 1921: 135), reading *ro·chét* as the perfect passive sg. of *canaid*, with an active sense and *saltair* as the noun meaning '(the) Psalter.' An alternative translation comes from the notes to Angus McLeod's *Sar Orain: Three Gaelic Poems* where he provides the following translation by W. J. Watson: 'this is what was sung: "Tread on a withered branch" ' (MacLeod 1933: 70), where *is̄* is understood to be *is ed* rather than *is ann*, *ro·chét* is the perfect passive of *canaid*, and *saltair* is an imperative form of the verb *saltraid* 'treads'. The final possibility, and the one chosen for this edition, is that *chét* is the ordinal number meaning 'first' prefixed to a 3 sg. augmented preterite form of *saltraid*.[39] While parallels to this scene in other texts would aid in interpreting this gloss, unfortunately none has come to light yet.

10gl. *ben*nacht *lat na toirthi*: this is an example of an imperative verb with a prepositional pronoun repeating the subject, like the Modern Irish construction *Abair leat* etc., examples of which can be found in *eDIL* (*eDIL* s.v. *la* VI (d)). The verb in use is *bennachtaid* 'blesses', an uncommon variant of *bennachaid* (used later in the gloss in *no·benna*ch) which most likely derives from the noun *bennacht*, 'a blessing'.

10gl. *no·bennac*h: there is a confusion of the *no-* and *ro-* particles here.

10gl. *im no*: I take this as the preposition *imm* (*eDIL* s.v. 1 *imm, imb*) with a plural article. For another example of *imm* + article in *-o* see *Saltair na Rann* l. 4304: *imnolecdai taiblide* (Stokes 1883: 63; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B 502, fol. 30ra7), 'around the stone tablets'. The article in *-o* is unusual, but occasionally found with other prepositions, such as with *co* in the Rennes *dindṡenchas* of Mag nÁi: *is é* con*ataigh cosno moighidib sin coro slectadis magh leis*, ' 'tis he that asked those slaves to clear that plain along with him' (Stokes 1894: 469).

11b. *ro·gab Ērinn*: I follow Thurneysen (1921: 135) in translating this as 'ruled Ireland', though literally it means 'took Ireland'. It could be shorthand for either *gaibid for* 'rules (over)' (*eDIL* s.v. *gaibid* V (e) 6) or *gaibid ríge* 'takes the kingship' (*eDIL* s.v. *gaibid* I (a)). I do not follow Thurneysen in treating the stanza as one sentence as it seems unnecessary and cumbersome in translation. I take this stanza as having the same structure as stanzas 6 and 7, which have a question in the first couplet and information about the answer in the second.

[39] I am grateful to Prof. David Stifter for suggesting this interpretation.

12b. *a n-athar*: as the Old Irish genitive plural *aithre* does not rhyme with *mban*, this is expanded as the Middle Irish form *athar* (Breatnach 1994: 250–1).

13d. *ēistig*h *úan*: the only other example that I have found of *éistid* and *ó* in a construction like this in the active voice is from the early seventeenth-century poem *Mór idir na haimsearaibh* (Williams 1979: 48–57) which, in stanza 33, has *éist uaim scéala an phótaire*, 'hear from me the stories of the drunkard'. There is also one example from an Early Modern Irish text quoted in *eDIL* which involves a passive form of *éistid*: *labra uaidhe ní héistior* (O'Grady 1926: 466) 'an utterance from her is not heard' (my translation). In both of these examples, the patient of the hearing/listening is clear: *scéala* in the first example and *labra* in the second. In addition, the prepositional pronouns based on *ó* clearly express the source of these patients, that is, the person who is telling the stories in the first case and (not) making the utterance in the second. The command *éistig*h *úan* does not have an overt object; rather, the *áes dána* is being exhorted to listen to the pronouncements of the poem in general.

Despite the lack of parallels, a possible explanation for this is that *úan* is replacing a form of *fri*, which would be the usual preposition found expressing the object of *in·túaisi*. This raises the question why the poet did not use a form of *fri*. It is possible that he chose *ó* for the sake of alliteration; a form of *fri* would reduce the alliteration in the line. That said, not every stanza of this poem has alliteration in the final line. *Úan* also rhymes with *dúan* in the line above. However, there is very little internal rhyme elsewhere, so this was seemingly not a major concern of the poet.

The interpretation chosen for the translation is that what is being listened *to* is not expressed, but implied; the audience is being asked to listen to the poem or the question. With that, *úan* is expressing the source of what they are hearing. This interpretation is more in line with the role of *ó* in a construction with *éistid* from the few and late examples presented here, but cannot comfortably account for the lack of an object that would normally be introduced by *fri* or a direct accusative object.

14b. *Gáilía*n: despite the usual spelling of this word having short vowels, both in manuscripts and *eDIL* (*eDIL* s.v. *Gailioin*), both syllables were long in the Middle Irish period, which can be confirmed by rhyme. This was discussed by Pokorny (1925) and O'Rahilly (1946: 22 n. 3, p. 459), who both offer rhyming examples. To these examples I can add the rhyme with *dían* here and the following from *MD* and *LGÉ*: *Gaileoin* : *lán-réir* : *dírím* : *gád-méin* (*úaithne*) (*MD* ii, 46); *gíall* : *Galían* (*MD* ii, 66); *cían* : *Galían* (*MD* iii, 162); *scíam* : *Galían* (*MD* iii, 164); *ríam* : *Galían* (*LGÉ* v, 430).

15b. *nī·ḟetat*ar: the lenition on *·ḟetat*ar resembles the effect of a neuter infixed pronoun referring back to *ainm*. It is more likely that *ní* itself is causing the lenition, and no pronoun was intended here, especially considering that that particular Middle Irish development is found as early as *Saltair na Rann* (Breatnach 1994: 278–9).

15c. *ce[n] mafath*: (E/G: *cema⌊fath*, T: *cena fath*) I have made a significant emendation to the text of E here, the addition of an *-n* to the *ce* of the manuscript. In the *dindṡenchas* of Tulach Eogain, there is a couplet with the rhyming pair *mafad* : *ríg-thatham*, where Gwynn translates *cen mafad* as 'without question'. It happens that the line in this *dindṡenchas* poem is nearly identical to 15c of *DxlC*: *ainm a muimme cen mafad* / *Rechet, ruc in ríg-thatham*, 'his nurse's name, without question, was Rechet, who slept among kings' (*MD* iv, 286–7). There is no discussion of the term in the notes to the poem, but from the index it is apparent that Gwynn was linking this word to *matha*, which is a very rare word, three of the four examples in *eDIL* being from glossaries (*eDIL* s.v. 1 *matha*). In these glossary examples, it is glossed with *cuntabart*, 'doubt', and there are three spellings: *matha*, *mathadh* and *mathfadh*. The exact form that Gwynn has in the *dindṡenchas* poem is under a different *eDIL* entry, where it erroneously has a long vowel and no translation or discussion (*eDIL* s.v. *máfad*?). The fourth example in *eDIL*, from *Timna Cathaír Móir*, was amended to *maithe* 'goodness' by Dillon (1962: 150) and may be excluded from consideration.

The word *mafad* has advantages in that it rhymes perfectly with *degathar* and provides the line with alliteration, but its disadvantage lies in its obscurity. Attempts at finding an etymology for it have thus far been unsuccessful. This edition follows Gwynn in his interpretation discussed above, as it makes sense in the context. Both metrical examples of *mafad* are found in chevilles, preceded by *cen*, and this context could indicate that Gwynn's interpretation of the term was on the right track. It is very common to find phrases in chevilles in Middle Irish poetry which begin with the preposition *cen* and assert the truthfulness of what is being said in the stanza.[40] It is possible that *cen mafad* was a set phrase in the inventory of some Middle Irish poets, perhaps fossilising a word that otherwise did not survive. Further, O'Davoren's glossary headword *mathadh* includes the citation *cen matha[d] f*or *marb*u *marus .i. cin* con*ntab*air*t*, 'without *mathad* he remained (leg. *marais*) on the dead', i.e. without doubt' (Stokes 1904: 415), while O'Cleary's glossary also gives *gan mathfadh .i. gan chonntabhairt* 'without doubt' (Miller 1881–3: 22) as an example of the word's use. If we are to follow Gwynn in linking *mafad* to these glossary entries, they further support the idea that *cen mafad* was a set poetic phrase.

16a. *a ndīl*: *díl* has a number of possible meanings here. Besides meaning 'fate', it is also a legal term referring to the 'act of discharging' and outside of legal sources it can mean 'recompense, reparation', 'satisfaction, act of satisfying' or 'complement, guarantee, what is fitting', to quickly summarise its long *DIL*

[40]To give just a few examples, *cen imroll* 'without mistake' is found in *DxlC* stanza 7 and we find further examples under *eDIL* s.v. *imroll* from *Saltair na Rann*, *Félire Óengusso*, and *Suidiugud Tellaig Temra. Cen gói* (*nglé*) 'without a (clear) lie' is found in texts such as *Saltair na Rann*, ll. 283, 7043, 7395 (Stokes 1883: 5, 103, 108) and a number of *dindṡenchas* poems including *Sinann I* (*MD* iii, 288), *Benn Étair II* (*MD* iii, 116) and *Ráth Crúachan* (*MD* iii, 352). The noun *acht* is almost exclusively found in the cheville phrase *cen acht*, which is 'usually translated "without doubt" ' (*eDIL* s.v. 4 *acht*).

entry (*eDIL* s.v. *díl*). The interpretation 'fate' fits best in this context, especially as it is followed by the phrase *ō s[h]in allē* 'from then until now'.

Abbreviations

DxlC *Dúan in chethrachat cest*
LGÉ i–v *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, vols 1–5 (Macalister 1932–42)

Manuscripts
E British Library, Egerton MS 1782
G National Library of Ireland, MS G 130
T Trinity College Dublin, MS H 5. 12 (1384)

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