

Connachta cid dia tá int ainm



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CONNACHTA CID DIA TÁ INT AINM¹

ABSTRACT

The *dindsenchas* poem *Connachta cid dia tá int ainm*, found in the Book of Leinster and the Book of Uí Maine, has not been edited hitherto. Considerations are advanced in support of the view that it and another *dindsenchas* poem, *Mide maigen na marc mer*, were both the work of a single author, Áed Ollbarr Úa Carthaig, who made similar use of Muirchú's *Vita Sancti Patricii* in the two compositions. Áed, who seems to have been active in the mid-to-late twelfth century, belonged to a family which had supplied *ollamain* to the kings of Connacht; his own claims to this dignity were however probably only aspirational.

If the title *Lebor Gabála Érenn* is (following general scholarly usage) taken to apply, not only to the main Middle Irish account of the early settlements of Ireland and the origins of the Gaels, but also to the ensuing catalogues of kings extending down to 'the reigns and times of Ireland after the Faith',² then the poem presented here is the second text in the Book of Leinster. Despite having such a prominent position in such an important manuscript, *Connachta cid dia tá int ainm* has attracted remarkably little scholarly attention: its inclusion in the diplomatic edition of the Book of Leinster has (so far as I am aware) been the only occasion of its seeing print hitherto,³ and a critical edition and translation are still lacking.⁴ Although not perhaps aesthetically arresting,

¹This poem was studied in the postgraduate research seminar of the Department of Early and Medieval Irish, University College Cork, during the academic year 2018–19. I am grateful to the participants: Máire Herbert, Seán Ó Coileáin, Kevin Murray, Caitriona Ó Dochartaigh, Emma Nic Cárthaigh, Riona Doolan, Philip Healy, Ksenia Kudenko, Andrea Lane, Iordanis Notaridis, Cian Ó Cionnfhaoilaidh, Ken Ó Donnchú and Tadhg Ó Siócháin. I am further grateful to Kevin Murray for his kindness in reading a draft of the present edition, to Ruairi Ó hUiginn and Barry Lewis in their editorial capacity, and to an anonymous reader: their perceptive comments have rescued me from several mistakes and oversights. All remaining errors and infelicities are my own.

²Thus Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Zu irischen Handschriften und Litteraturdenkmälern: Zweite Serie', *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse, neue Folge* 14.3 (1913), 3–9; R. A. S. Macalister, *Lebor Gabála Érenn: The Book of the Taking of Ireland*, ITS 34, 35, 39, 41, 45 (London, 1938–56), vol. i, xxv–xxix; R. Mark Scowcroft, 'Leabhar Gabhála – part I: the growth of the text', *Ériu* 38 (1987), 79–140.

³*LL*, i, 100–2.

⁴A synopsis of the poem's content was provided by Eugene O'Curry, *On the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, 3 vols (London, 1873), ii, 10–11.

the poem does afford some points of interest, which I shall endeavour to address in what follows.

MANUSCRIPTS

I know of only two copies of our poem: besides that in the Book of Leinster there is another, to which my attention has been called by Marie-Luise Theuerkauf, in the Book of Uí Maine.

In the Book of Leinster, the text appears on p. 27a; it is in the hand recently identified by Elizabeth Duncan as T2.⁵ According to Duncan's analysis, T2 was the latest of the manuscript's scribes by a significant margin, active in a period between the extreme limits 1181 × 1224;⁶ nevertheless, he 'either thought himself part of the original compilation or at least wished posterity to think this'.⁷ T2 also wrote the conclusion of the immediately preceding final section of *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*, and the *senchas* poetry which occupies the next few pages, indicating that he intended our poem to occupy its present position in the manuscript; Dagmar Schlüter, noting that in *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* the regnal section 'originally closed with the high-king Ruaidrí mac Tairdelbaig Ua Chonchobuir from Connacht', suggests that 'beginning [the subsequent] section with a poem on Connacht thus ensures a smooth transition from the *Lebor Gabála* to the series of poems'.⁸

In the Book of Uí Maine our composition belongs to the group of poems, called an 'appendix' by E. J. Gwynn, that is found at the end of that manuscript's collection of *dindšenchas* texts.⁹ It is found on fol. 112r, in the hand of Adam Cusin, one of the manuscript's two named scribes, and credited by William O'Sullivan with being the 'real architect' of the manuscript, 'who turned Muircheartach [Ó Ceallaigh]'s collection of loose texts into an impressive volume'.¹⁰ Although this version of the poem is generally inferior to that in the Book of Leinster,¹¹ it occasionally supplies useful variants; it is provided in its entirety (as *UM*) below.

⁵Elizabeth Duncan, 'Turning over a new leaf: the manuscript context of *Leabhar na Nuachongbhála*, commonly known as the Book of Leinster', *Ossory, Laois and Leinster 5* (2012), 146–86, at 155.

⁶Elizabeth Duncan, 'A reassessment of the script and make-up of *Lebor na Nuachongbhála*', *ZCP* 59 (2012), 27–66, at 54–5. As Duncan notes, however, T2 need not have been active later than 1201.

⁷Duncan, 'Turning', 183.

⁸Dagmar Schlüter, *History or Fable? The Book of Leinster as a Document of Cultural Memory in Twelfth-Century Ireland*, Studien und Texte zur Keltologie 9 (Münster, 2010), 116.

⁹E. J. Gwynn, 'The Dindšenchas in the Book of Uí Maine', *Ériu* 10 (1926–8), 68–91, at 71.

¹⁰William O'Sullivan, 'The Book of Uí Maine formerly the Book of Ó Dubhagáin: scripts and structure', *Éigse* 23 (1989), 151–66, at 156, 158.

¹¹Speaking of the *dindšenchas* poems in the Book of Uí Maine generally, Gwynn observed that the scribes (he used the singular 'scribe') were 'abominably careless. Of all texts of the Dindšenchas this has the lowest intrinsic value' (*MD*, v, 5). A more detailed discussion is forthcoming: Marie-Luise Theuerkauf, 'The *Dindšenchas* in the Book of Uí Maine', in Elizabeth Boyle and Ruairí Ó hUiginn (eds), *The Book of Uí Maine*, Codices Hibernensis Eximii 3 (Dublin).

CONTENT

The poet begins by asking rhetorically why Connacht is so named: if none of the learned know this then he, Áed Ollbarr ‘ollam of Crúachu and of Ireland’, can supply the information. Once the king of the province was one Conn, youngest son of Ceithrenn. When the Túath Dé Danann used to come, he would oppose them with freezing snow, and with heaps of stones and trees to which he would set fire. No druid had greater power than he; and he brought injury to the Túath Dé Danann, carrying off their cattle and destroying their fortresses without their being able to retaliate.

The Túath Dé Danann (who are at this point called ‘the men of Ireland’) then appealed to Dálach – Conn’s uterine brother, and possessed of power equal to his own – to oppose Conn on their behalf. Dálach replied that he would need three hundred white-faced, red-eared cows from every herd. The cows were to be slaughtered, and their ears all brought together in one place: in this way Dálach would gain the knowledge that he needed. When these things were done, he proceeded to the plain where the army was, and melted the magical snow. Hence Mag nAí (interpreted as *Mag nÓe* ‘Plain of Ears’) and Connachta (interpreted as *Conn-snechta* ‘Conn-snow’) derive their names.

The logic of the narrative is not always easy to follow: in particular, it seems odd that Conn should be making use both of snow and of fire, especially as the melting of the snow appears to lead to his defeat. A simpler version of the story, apparently the only other reference to it that is attested, appears in the ‘long version’ of *Cóir Anmann*:

Connachta: cidh dia ta? Ni ansa. Imurbhadh dhruidhechta dorala iter dá dhruí do Thuaithe Dé Danann .i. Cithnellach druí 7 Conn draí a n-anmanna. Dorat Conn sneachta mór a timchell Connacht 7 co mba de sin ro lean int ainm. Is Connachta in cóigedh o sin gus aníú .i. Cuinn-sneachta .i. sneachta Cuind druídh.

‘Connachta [$<$ Conn + *snechta* “snow”]: how did it come about? It is not difficult. A contest of magic took place between two druids of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Their names were Cithnellach the druid and Conn the druid. Conn brought a heavy fall of snow around Connachta and that was why the name stuck. The province has been Connachta from then until today, i.e. Conn’s snow, i.e. the snow of Conn the druid.’¹²

Here it is not only noteworthy that the *Cóir Anmann* account is shorter and less complex, but also that it assigns a different name to Conn’s antagonist.

¹²Sharon Arbuthnot, *Cóir Anmann: A Late Middle Irish Treatise on Personal Names*, ITS 59–60 (London, 2005–7), ii, 24 (text), 100 (trans.). On p. 169, Arbuthnot calls attention to the similarity of the story in our poem. *Cóir Anmann*’s version of the story is alluded to by Geoffrey Keating: David Comyn and P. S. Dinneen, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn: The History of Ireland by Geoffrey Keating, D.D.*, ITS 4, 8, 9, 15 (London, 1902–14), i, 116.

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No Áed Ollbarr figures as *ollam* of Crúachu, let alone of Ireland, in the annals. A poem on the rights of the Connacht dynasty of Mac Diarmada, however, beginning *Atá sonn sochar na ríogh*, gives the poet's name in the concluding quatrain as *Aodh Ollbharr [...] ollamh Cruachna*,¹³ in the accompanying prose, the poem's author is designated *Aodh Ollabhair Ó Carrthaigh*.¹⁴ Katharine Simms is inclined to regard *Atá sonn* as a composition of the twelfth century, noting that features indicative of a later date in the prose are not found in the verse, and that 'the loose metre, *ógláchas* of *deibhidhe*, includes some rhymes between monosyllabic and trisyllabic words [...] more characteristic of the twelfth century than later versification'.¹⁵ Mícheál Hoyne, by contrast, regards the poem as being 'falsely attributed', but does not state his reasons for this judgement.¹⁶

Kuno Meyer proposed that 'Aedh Ollabhar ua Carthaigh' was identical with the Áed Úa Carthaig who composed the *dindsenchas* poem *Mide magen na marc mer*:¹⁷ the copy of the latter in the Book of Leinster carries an ascription to *Aed h- Carthaig*, and the final quatrain in all copies requests a prayer for his soul.¹⁸ If Áed Ollbarr, Áed Ollbarr Úa Carthaig and Áed Úa Carthaig are indeed all the same person – and this would certainly seem to be the most natural interpretation of the evidence – then there are two further compositions which can be attributed to our poet. How plausible are these attributions?

The most straightforward criterion is afforded by the testimony of the poems themselves: in both *Connachta* and *Atá sonn*, the author identifies himself as Áed Ollbarr, and claims to be *ollam* of Crúachu. Both compositions are evidently being assigned to a single poet, whether or not one or both of these attributions may be spurious. For the identification of Áed Ollbarr with Áed Úa Carthaig, by contrast, the sole explicit evidence is found in later ascriptions: that attached to the copy of *Atá sonn* in the seventeenth-century RIA MS A iv 3 (743); and that in the prose tract accompanying the poem, attested only in manuscripts of the eighteenth century.

¹³Nessa Ní Shéaghda, 'The rights of Mac Diarmada', *Celtica* 6 (1963), 156–72, at 163. Two copies of the poem occur independently of the prose tract, both carrying ascriptions to Áed: that in RIA MS A iv 3 (743), a manuscript of the seventeenth century, names him as *Aodh Ollbharr Ó Carthaigh .i. Ollamh Crúachan*; while the nineteenth-century RIA MS 4 A 28 (1099) names him simply as *Aodh Ollbhair Ó Carthaigh*.

¹⁴Thus the copy in RIA MS 23 M 23 (340): T. F. O'Rahilly et al. (eds), *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, 27 fasc. (Dublin, 1926–48), viii, 945. In the other copy of the prose, in NLI MS G 18, the name is given as *Aodh Ollbharr Ó Conáin* (Ní Shéaghda, 'The rights', 160).

¹⁵Katharine Simms, *From Kings to Warlords: The Changing Political Structure of Gaelic Ireland in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1987), 133 and n. 33.

¹⁶Mícheál Hoyne, *Fuidheall Áir: Bardic Poems on the Meic Dhiarmada of Magh Luirg c. 1377–c. 1637* (Dublin, 2018), 44. I am grateful to Ken Ó Donnchú for calling my attention to Hoyne's discussion. For 'Aodh Ollabhar O'Carthach' as the author of *Atá sonn*, see already Edward O'Reilly, *A Chronological Account of Nearly Four Hundred Irish Writers*, Transactions of the Ibero-Celtic Society 1:1 (Dublin, 1820), lxxxvi.

¹⁷Kuno Meyer, *A Primer of Irish Metrics* (Dublin, 1909), 27.

¹⁸*MD*, ii, 42–5; *LL*, iv, 941–2.

Another approach is afforded by Brian Ó Cuív's study 'Some developments in Irish metrics', in which he proposed that increasing adherence to three of the requirements for *deibide* verse in Classical Irish *dán díreach* – these being *rinn-airdrinn* rhyme; internal rhyme of all stressed words (other than the last words in their respective lines) in the second couplet of a quatrain; and alliteration in each line, with alliteration of the last two stressed words in a quatrain's final line – can be traced in the course of the Middle Irish period.¹⁹ According to this reckoning, *Connachta* has a percentage of 42.4%, *Atá sonn* a percentage of 51%, and *Mide* a percentage of 63.5%.²⁰ There is nothing here to suggest shared authorship.

A more differentiated look at the statistics, however, suggests a somewhat different picture. The contrast between the figures for *Connachta* and *Mide* is due to their sharply divergent treatment of internal rhyme (4.8% vs 35%): they resemble one another closely in their use of *rinn-airdrinn* rhyme (73.5% and 77%) and alliteration (79% and 77%). If we were to limit ourselves to these two criteria, the figures would be *Connachta* 77.5%, *Atá sonn* 60.6%, *Mide* 76.9%. And a further aspect of the treatment of internal rhyme in the three poems may also be significant. While *Mide* has far more internal rhymes in second couplets than has *Connachta*, it nowhere observes the rule that all stressed words save the last in line *c* must rhyme with words in line *d*. In *Atá sonn*, on the other hand, this rule is either observed (in the sequence qq. 3–7), or else it is ignored entirely: the only exceptions are q. 8 (*dul* : *cur*, but no other rhymes) and q. 11 (the *caoch* rhyme of *fiaghuin* and *fiaghain*). Thus where the first two poems appear to be oblivious of the rule for internal rhyme in *dán díreach*, the third poem shows awareness of it even though it is generally not observed. There is also a disparity between the figures for alliteration in *Connachta* and *Mide* (79% and 77%) and that in *Atá sonn* (57%). As far as they go, then, these indications would seem to be consonant with a shared authorship for *Connachta* and *Mide*, while pointing to a noticeably different poetic practice on the part of the author of *Atá sonn*.

With these reflections as background, we can now compare the subject matter of the two *dindsenchas* poems. The protagonist of *Mide* is Mide son of Bráth son of Deáith, who lit a 'secret fire above the descendants of Nemed' that burned for seven years, granting him the right to tribute of a measure of meal and a white pig from every household in Ireland. Seeing this fire, the druids of Ireland described it as a 'bad smoke' (*mí-dé* = *Mide*). Mide gathered the druids together into a single house, cut out their tongues, and then buried the tongues at Uisnech, enthroning himself above them as 'chief sage and chief historian'. His fostermother declared to Mide that their house was built 'above something' (*ós nech* = *Uisnech*).

¹⁹Brian Ó Cuív, 'Some developments in Irish metrics', *Éigse* 12 (1967–8), 273–90.

²⁰In arriving at these figures, I have only counted as *rinn-airdrinn* rhymes those in which the second rhyming word has only one syllable more than the first. For internal rhyme, I have reckoned a ratio between stressed non-final words in *c* which have rhymes in *d*, and those that do not.

Donnchadh Ó Corráin, who dismissed *Mide* as ‘inept’, astutely noted that it is ‘built about a conceit borrowed from Muirchú’s work on St Patrick [...], re-positioned in remote pagan times’.²¹ The derivation is indeed unmistakable: when the eponymous *Mide* is described as kindling a fire which is regarded as an affront by the druids of Ireland, we can see an echo of the Easter fire kindled by Patrick at Slane; while the primacy which that fire is said to have had over every hearth in the country is evidently modelled on that of Lóegaire’s fire at Tara in the same episode of Muirchú’s *Vita Sancti Patricii*.²² The central image in *Connachta* appears to have been arrived at in the same fashion: with the fall of magic snow, produced as a hostile act by the druid Conn but then melted by the superior magic of his rival Dálach, may be compared the fall of magic snow produced by the druid Lucet Máel as a challenge to Patrick, but then melted by the saint.²³

There are further parallels between the poems. Both are situated within the framework of the legendary settlements of Ireland: Conn son of Ceithrenn opposes the arrival of the Túath Dé Danann, while *Mide*’s patronymic *mac Brátha* would make him the uncle of Íth, the first of the Gaels to set foot in Ireland. But neither *Mide* son of Bráth nor Conn son of Ceithrenn is otherwise attested in pseudohistorical lore: the only other reference to *Mide mac Brátha* known to me is in the prose version of the poem *Mide*, and the only other reference to Conn the druid is the passage in *Cóir Anmann* cited above. Together with this creative intervention in the tradition, the two poems also share the theme of a protagonist who triumphs by assembling objects acquired through wholesale mutilation: the ears of cattle are brought together into a single place by Dálach, the tongues of druids by *Mide*.²⁴

When these narrative parallels are taken together with the prosodic parallels already discussed, it does indeed seem likely that *Connachta* and *Mide* are the work of a single poet, Áed Ollbarr Úa Carthaig. As we have seen, however, metrical considerations appear to tell against the same individual having composed *Atá sonn*. Why, if this be the case, this poem was attributed to such an apparently obscure figure cannot be determined with any certainty:²⁵

²¹Donnchadh Ó Corráin, *Clavis Litterarum Hibernensium: Medieval Irish Books and Texts* (c. 400–c. 1600), Corpus Christianorum Claves 1, 3 vols (Turnhout, 2017), iii, 1565.

²²Ludwig Bieler, *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10 (Dublin, 1979), 84–7. The poet presumably drew on a vernacular retelling of Muirchú’s account, e.g. the version in Whitley Stokes, *Three Middle-Irish Homilies on the Lives of Saints Patrick, Brigit and Columba* (Calcutta, 1877), 20–3.

²³Bieler, *Patrician Texts*, 94–5; cf. Stokes, *Three Middle-Irish Homilies*, 24–7.

²⁴I am grateful to Daniel Watson for pointing out to me a striking parallel (perhaps an influence) in 1 Sam. 18:25–8: here David presents Saul with the foreskins of a hundred Philistines as dowry for his daughter Michal.

²⁵Although I do not know of any other evidence that later poets actively identified themselves as Áed Ollbarr, Kevin Murray has called my attention to a poem falsely attributed to *Aodha Ollbhar Ó Carrthoidh ollamh na Cruachan* in one eighteenth-century manuscript: this is *Tosach féile fairsinge*, a poem in praise of a Mac Diarmada chieftain who died in 1458. Discussion in Katharine Simms, ‘*Gabh umad a Fheidhlimidh*: a fifteenth-century inauguration ode?’, *Ériu* 31 (1980), 132–45, at 138.

perhaps its author was familiar with our poem, and felt that the self-styled *ollam Crúachan /is Hērend* would be suitably authoritative as a mouthpiece for the rights of the Meic Dhiarmada.

While I am not aware of any references to Áed Ollbarr Úa Carthaig apart from the three poems discussed above, the surname Úa Carthaig was born by various high-ranking Connacht poets in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries: Muirchertach Úa Carthaig, ‘chief author and chief *ollam* of Connacht’ (died 1064);²⁶ In Drúth Úa Carthaig, ‘*ollam* of Connacht’ (died 1097);²⁷ and Fer Dána Úa Carthaig, ‘*ollam* of Connacht’ (died 1131).²⁸ This family does not however figure subsequently in the annals: the next two men to be called *ollam* of Connacht, a father and son, both bore the surname Úa Clúmáin.²⁹

Áed Ollbarr Úa Carthaig claims to be *ollam* of Crúachu, the traditional stronghold of the kings of Connacht: he surely belonged to the same family. Why is he not mentioned in the annals? In the absence of evidence, we can only speculate. One possibility might be that Áed wrote after the prerogative of supplying the *ollam* of Connacht had been assumed by the Uí Chlúmáin: in *Connachta* (where his assertion of the superiority of his own knowledge of Connacht’s past to that of other men of learning may be aimed at professional rivals), he would have been attempting to lay claim to a status which he was no longer in a position to possess.³⁰ Speculating further, it could be that *Mide*, with its concluding reference to the king of Mide, represents Áed’s search for another patron following the failure of the attempt to re-establish himself in Connacht.³¹

DATE

Connachta must antedate its earliest copy, in the Book of Leinster; as noted above, Elizabeth Duncan has argued that this is the work of a scribe who may have been writing as late as 1224. The conjectures advanced in the last few paragraphs suggest that our poem may be the work of an author writing after the Uí Charthaig had ceased to supply the *ollam* of Connacht, c. 1130. I do not see anything in the poem’s language that is not consonant with a date in the mid-to-late twelfth century. That the poem is Middle Irish

²⁶William M. Hennessy, *Chronicum Scotorum: A Chronicle of Irish Affairs from the Earliest Times to A.D. 1135* (London, 1866), s.a.: *prim ughdar ocus prim ollamh Connacht*. Cf. *AFM* s.a. 1067, where he is called *primh druith 7 primh ollamh Connacht*.

²⁷*AFM* s.a. 1097.

²⁸*AFM* s.a. 1131; cf. Hennessy, *Chronicum Scotorum*, s.a. 1127.

²⁹*AFM* s.a. 1143, 1170.

³⁰For further possible allusions to this state of affairs in the poem, see the notes on §2c *dīlse rand* and §3b *innúathad*.

³¹Whatever about Ó Corráin’s view that the poem as a whole is ‘inept’, Áed’s application to Mide and to its king of the epithet *midcharthach* ‘mead-loving’ (*MD*, ii, 44.38, 52) is ingenious. Possibly a coinage of the poet’s own, this compound adjective combines the poet’s own surname with the first syllable of the region with whose ruler he is seeking to ingratiate himself.

is obvious e.g. from use of *ar* for *for* (§3*d*, §4*d*, §5*c*); from the independent object pronoun *īat* (§8*c*); from the use of the new 1st singular future ending in *ragat* (§12*a*); and from the adoption of a deponent ending by the 1st singular subjunctive in *co fagbur* (§12*c*) and *coro c(h)uiriur* (§14*d*). Notably late features, discussed in the textual notes, are: intensive use of *im-* (§3*b*); the independent subject pronoun in *Do-beired sē* (§5*a*; but note *sin* in the Book of Uí Maine); the dental suffix in accusative plural *ndindgnada* (§9*d*); relative *-s-* in *ros car* (§10*c*); use of *cascrad* in a sense otherwise only attested of the related word *coscairt* in the later language (§13*c*); and *séin* with a long vowel (§17*c*).

I have noted above that, while use of internal rhyme varies sharply between *Connachta* and *Mide*, the treatment of *rinn-airdrinn* rhyme and alliteration is closely similar, yielding (if we limit ourselves to these two criteria) figures of 77.5% and 76.9% respectively. These are fairly high percentages in Ó Cuív's terms, and can be compared with the 79% that he assigns to *Éire óg inis na náem*, by Gilla Mo Dutu Úa Caiside (*fl.* 1147); as Ó Cuív goes on to observe, however, 'It would be reasonable to conclude that in spite of the tendency to increase ornamentation, twelfth-century poets generally considered themselves free to follow their own inclinations'.³²

Also compatible with this suggested dating (but perhaps only coincidentally so) is the circumstance that the only other instances of the adjective *oll-barr* listed in *eDIL* are found in the *Martyrology of Gorman*, composed 1166 × 1170/1174 (see textual note on §2*d*).³³

EDITION AND TRANSLATION

Below, I present the text as it appears in the Book of Leinster (*LL*), followed by the text from the Book of Uí Maine (*UM*). Unambiguous contractions are expanded silently, and missing letters are supplied in square brackets. Long vowels in *LL* that are not so marked in the manuscript are provided with macrons, and elided vowels are indicated with a subscript dot; other letters to be omitted are enclosed in round brackets, while square brackets are used for letters that are to be supplied. Problematical readings are discussed in the textual notes.

³²Ó Cuív, 'Some developments', 287; cf. Kevin Murray, 'Gilla Mo Dutu Úa Caiside', in John Carey, Máire Herbert and Kevin Murray (eds), *Cin Chille Cúile – Texts, Saints and Places: Essays in Honour of Pádraig Ó Riain* (Aberystwyth, 2004), 150–62.

³³Pádraig Ó Riain, *Feastdays of the Saints: A History of Irish Martyrologies*, Subsidia Hagiographica 86 (Bruxelles, 2006), 148–9.

TEXT

1. ‘Connachta’: cid dia tā ìnt ainm,
a eòlcho Fàil, re sírgairm?
In fail acaib, túaid nā tess,
eòlach aca fail a eòlass?
2. Mani fuil acaib uile,
a eòlcho betha(d) buide,
da-gēna dúib dīlsi rand
int eòlach ān Æd Ollbarr.
3. Æd Ollbarr, ollam Crūachan
is Hērend, ní immūathad:
iss é sluinness, síd re lá,
mar áta ārin crích ‘Connachta’.
4. Cond – cā cumachtach rap fērr? –
sósar molbthach mac Cet[h]rend.
Is hé ro gab rīg[e], can acht,
ar cōiciud cendfīnd Connacht.

TRANSLATION

1. ‘Connachta’: whence is the name, learned men of Fál, as a lasting proclamation? Is there among you, north or south, a learned man who has knowledge of it?
2. If you all do not have it [i.e. such knowledge], learned men of the yellow world, the splendid scholar Áed Ollbarr will make for you (its) truth in verse.
3. Áed Ollbarr, *ollam* of Crúachu and Ireland (it is no great innovation): it is he who declares, peace in his day, how ‘Connachta’ is [the name] upon the territory.
4. Conn – what powerful one could be better? – [was] the praiseworthy youngest of the sons of Ceithrenn. It is he who assumed kingship, without doubt, over the fair-headed province of Connacht.

TEXT FROM *UM*

1. Connacht cræd ma buil int ainm | a eolcha fail re fírgairm. | in fuil agaibh tuaidh na thæis | eolach ga fuil a theolas.
2. Muna fuil agaibh uili | a eolcha in beatha buidhe | dogeansa dhibh díslí in rann | int eolach an æd ollbharr.
3. [as final quatrain in the poem] Æd ollbarr ollamh cruachan | is eirenn ní thim<>uathad | is se sloindeas lith re la | mar ata in crích connachta.
4. Cond ca cumachtach bhu fēarr | soiser menmnach mac n-eithleand | <>s e ro gabh ríge gan acht | ar coigeadh ceindfind connacht.

5. Do-beired sē, ba slicht fīr,
snechta nemi, co nertbríg,
ar lár a thíri, co tend,
tan tictis Túath Dē Danand.
6. Craind 7 clocha in domain
da chur ind 'na urchomair.
Ra loisced, lór a chrúade,
re haidbri[ti]ud ōenūaire.
7. Tess gréne and dó fadéin,
ba hīgnad re cāch do chéin.
Nī dērna druí, dían ngarta,
a chobēs do chumachta.
8. Do-rīngni immarbáig n-aird
re Túaith [n]Dé Danann [n]drechgairg,
co n-airgfed iat tōlaib crand,
's nā airgfitis a fērand.
9. Arna bārach dádaig dó,
ra airg cāch uili i n-ōenló.
Ra loisc ar mbreith a mbó trā
a ndúni 's a ndindgnada.

5. He used to bring (it was an account of truth) freezing snow, with mighty force, upon the surface of his land, strongly, when the Túath Dé Danann used to come.

6. Putting the trees and stones of the world into it [*i.e. his land?*] to oppose them: it [*i.e. his land?*] was burned, its harshness was great, in a moment of a single hour.

7. The heat of the sun was in it, for him himself: it was a wonder for everyone, from afar. No druid, swift (and) generous, (ever) wrought so great (a feat) of power.

8. He waged a great struggle against the Túath Dé Danann of harsh countenance, so that he would destroy them with multitudes of trees, and they would not destroy his territory.

9. On the night of the next day, he destroyed all of them in a single day. Moreover, after carrying off their cattle, he burned their strongholds and their fortresses.

5. Dabhereadh sin fa sleict fīr | sneachta nimhe gu neartbrigh | ar lár a thiri gu teand | in tan tigdis .t.d.d.

6. Croind 7 clocha in domhain | do cur ind i n-ænconair | do loiscfeadh iad leor druagi | re thalamh 'na ænfuaire.

7. Teas grene and do bhudhein | dob ignadh le cach do cein. | nír thualaing drai diangharta | a cobheis do cumachta.

8. Connachta ocoindneachta cuind | o neas [al- o drobais *sup. lin.*] gu leim con cuilind. | on cond is o tsneacta | ata connachta for connachta. Connacht<>

9. —.

10. Mac māthar Cuind, nír chlecht góe,
Dálach, lethet cech lán[n]óe.
Inund cumachta ros car,
inund úaill, inund borrfad.
11. Tecait fir Hērenn uili
co Dálach in degruiri,
da guidi co tīsad leō,
corō chuired re Cond cóemgleó.
12. ‘Ragat-sa lib imbárach,
cid duilig lim,’ ar Dálach,
‘ac[h]t co fagbur, feib as dlecht,
cach ní ari ndiṅgén druīdecht.
13. ‘Trī chét da chrud cach elgga,
’s íat aigfinda óidergga:
a cascrad, is celgg calma,
can fascin, can erlabra.
14. ‘Tab(a)r[aid] a n-oī lib ille,’
ar Dálach, ‘i n-óenbaile,
co nn-eōlór leo, lāthar ṅglond;
corō c(h)uiriur cath is cæmChond.’

10. The son of Conn’s mother (he did not practise falsehood), was Dálach, expanse of every ample fame. Equal was the power which he loved, equal the pride, equal the fury.

11. All the men of Ireland come to Dálach the fair over-king, to entreat him that he should come with them, so that he might wage a fair battle against Conn.

12. ‘I will go with you tomorrow, although I may find it troublesome,’ said Dálach, ‘provided that I obtain, as is right, everything for the sake of which I will perform wizardry.

13. ‘Three hundred of the cattle of every nobleman (?), and they with white faces and red ears: that they be slaughtered (it is a bold trick) without looking, without speaking.

14. ‘Bring their ears with you hither,’ said Dálach, ‘into one place, so that I can find my way with them, a bold course; so that fair Conn and I may wage battle.’

10. Mac mathar cuind nar cleacht ṅgæi | dalach leithit gu langnaidh. | inand cumhachta roscar. | inand uaill inand ægnadh.

11. Tegaid fir eirenn uile | gu dalach gun deagdhuine | da guigi gu dísadh leo | gu gureadh re cond cruaidhgleo.

12. Racatsa lib amareach | gi doli [dam *sup. lin.*] ar dalach | ach gu fagar fibh istleacht | gach ní le nigein draeiacht.

13. .IX.c. do cru gach tsealga | siad comhfind cluasdearga | acasgradh is cealg calma | ganfaisgin [f *appears to be added sec. man.*] gan urlabra

14. Tabraidh fein anæi uile | lib anænaitt nænmaigi | gu neacaind leo lathir ghlond | gugurind catha is cæmcond.

15. Do-bertar a n-óe uile
i n-óenáitt, i n-óenbuile,
cor gab don maig i mbuī in slūag,
coró leg in snechta sīrbúan.
16. Ō sain immach is Mag nOí
in mag-sain, can imargoí.
Is ōn dáil-sin, dían in smacht,
atá Cōiced Ól nĒcmacht.
17. ‘Connsnecta’ ō snechta Chuind
is ó fertaib, co hālaind.
A hśéin dúib, aní dia tá
‘Connachta’ for Connachta.

15. All their ears are brought into one spot, into one place, so that he went to the plain in which was the host, so that he melted the long-enduring snow.

16. Since then that plain is Mag nAí, without great falsehood. And from that assembly, forceful the dominion, there is Cōiced Ól nĒcmacht.

17. ‘Conn-snechta’ is [so called] from the snow of Conn, and from his magical deeds, pleasantly. Thence is the reason for you, for which Connachta is called ‘Connachta’.

15. Daberar a nēi uile | du dhalach dundegdhuine | gurgabh in magh a mbi sluagh | gur leadh in sneacta sithbuan.

16. Ošin mach is mag e | in magh sin gan inmagæ | is odail sin dian indsmacht | ata coigead ol negmact.

17. *UM* has here the quatrain which appears as §3 in *LL*.

TEXTUAL NOTES

1b: For *sírgairm*, *UM* has *fírgairm*. This gives alliteration, and arguably also gives preferable sense: ‘for true naming’. On the other hand, *gá sírgairm* appears as a cheville rhyming with *ainm* (with alliteration with *Shláinge*) in *Eachtra Thaidhg mheic Céin*.³⁴

1d: *aca* must here be read as *’ca* for correct syllable count; cf. *ga UM*.³⁵

2b: *LL* has *bethad*, gen. sg. of *bethu* ‘life’, when the sense calls for *betha*, gen. sg. of *bith* ‘world’; *bith buide* is a frequent collocation in poetry.³⁶ Cf. *beatha UM*.

2c: *UM* has 1st sg. *do-gēan-sa*, requiring line *d* to be in apposition to the subject of the verb.

2c *dīlsi rand*: My rendering ‘(its) truth in verse’ is very free; more literally, perhaps something like ‘propriety of quatrains’. Cf. *disle an sgéil*, apparently

³⁴Standish Hayes O’Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, 2 vols (London, 1892), i, 348.2.

³⁵Discussion of this type of elision in Cáit Ní Dhomhnaill, *Duanaireacht: Rialacha Meadarachta Fhilíocht na mBard* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1975), 33 (§60).

³⁶Thus *eDIL* s.v. 1 *buide* speaks of this adjective as being ‘freq. in vague sense with *bith*’, giving examples from Whitley Stokes (ed.), *Saltair na Rann* (Oxford, 1883), l. 7513; and (citing O’Donovan’s edition) from Ruth P. Lehmann (ed.), *Fled Dúin na nGéd*, Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series 21 (Dublin, 1964), l. 520.

meaning ‘the truth of the story’, in the poem *Cúig cáis ‘na raibh Muire mhór*, variously attributed to Donnchadh Mór Ó Dálaigh (died 1244) and to Aonghus na Diadhachta Ó Dálaigh.³⁷ That *dílse* is also used of the properties and claims to which one is legally entitled may also be relevant, given that Áed asserts his status of *ollam* – although, as suggested above, he may well not have possessed it in fact.

2d: The instances of *ollbarr* in *eDIL* are all from the twelfth-century *Martyrology of Gorman*;³⁸ see the discussion of dating above.

3b: I take *imnúathad* to be *núadad* ‘renewal’ with intensive *imm-*; according to *eDIL* s.v. 2 *imm*, the intensive use of this prefix is rare in the early language but ‘becomes very common in EModIr’. In saying that his rank as *ollam* is ‘no great innovation’, Áed may allude to the fact that his family had supplied at least three *ollamain* of Connacht in the past.

3c: *síd re lá* ‘peace in his time’ (*UM: lúth re lá* ‘prosperity in his time’/‘a festival for a day’). One reading would give alliteration with *sluinnes*, the other with *lá*. Other examples of *re lá* meaning ‘in the time of’ are found in a range of Middle Irish texts: *Serglige Con Culainn*, *Cocad Gáidel re Gallaibh*, and the poems *Fil súil nglais* (in the copy in *An Leabhar Breac*) and *Sciath rígh Gáela, glantar hí*.³⁹

3d: *atá* and *arin* must both undergo elision to yield correct syllable count in the line. Liam Breatnach observes: ‘Is annamh a chailltear an chéad síolla neamhaiceanta de *atá*, m.sh. *tá sund* ... LL 26037 (*MD*), *tá sin tochur* ... LL 26033 (*MD*)’.⁴⁰ Both of the instances to which he refers occur within a single poem; and they may be a special case, as the poem in question plays upon the words *táthum* ‘I have’ and *tátham* ‘sleep, death’.⁴¹

4a: With *cā cumachtach rap ferr*, cf. *ca sēn dob ferr* ‘what could have been more fortunate?’ in the thirteenth-century poem *Mór loites lucht an indluig*.⁴² *Cumachtach* may well here have the connotation ‘possessor of magical power’. Several instances of its use in this sense (and of *cumachtae* in the sense ‘magical power’) are furnished in *eDIL*: note for instance the pairing of *cumachtach* with *bantuathaid* ‘witch’ in the tale *Aided Chrimthainn meic*

³⁷The first quatrain, in which this phrase occurs, is printed in Standish Hayes O’Grady, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1 (London, 1926), 540; the entire text is given as §567 in the Bardic Poetry Database, on the website of the School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

³⁸Whitley Stokes (ed.), *Féilire Húi Gormáin: The Martyrology of Gorman* (London, 1895), sub 10 May, 4 September, 7 October.

³⁹Myles Dillon (ed.), *Serglige Con Culainn*, Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series 14 (Dublin, 1953), l. 756; James Henthorn Todd (ed.), *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh: The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (London, 1867), 110.19; RIA MS 23 P 16 (1230; *Leabhar Breac*), p. 239c, final line; Kuno Meyer, ‘Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften’, *ZCP* 8 (1912), 102–20, 195–232, 559–65, at 227.10.

⁴⁰*SnaG*, 323.

⁴¹*MD*, iv, 286.40, 44.

⁴²Eleanor Knott (ed.), ‘Address to David O’Keeffe’, *Ériu* 4 (1908–10), 209–32, at 224 q. 45. Knott was unable to identify the dedicatee; I discuss the identification, and the consequent dating, in a forthcoming essay.

Ēidaig; and the pairing of *bancumachtach* with *bandrai* ‘witch’ in *Tochmarc Cruinn ocus Macha*.⁴³

4b: That *Cet[h]rend* is a variant of the genitive of *Eithliu* is confirmed by *Eithleand UM*; cf. *Loga m. Cethnenn* in a genealogy of the Benntraige, where the Book of Lecan reads *Eithlend nó Cethrend*.⁴⁴ *Eithliu* is portrayed as an ancestress of the Túatha Dé Danann in general in a poem in the second recension of *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*, where the Dagda, Dían Cécht, Creidne, Luichne, Núadu Argatlám, Lug mac Céin and Goibniu, figures widely scattered in the genealogies of the Túatha Dé, are all collectively designated ‘the seven noble great sons of Eithliu’.⁴⁵

4b: Instead of *molbthach*, *UM* has *menmnach* ‘spirited’.

4c: That *rig* should be emended to *ríge*, suggested in seminar by Kevin Murray, is confirmed by the reading of *UM*. For other instances of *is* as ‘s’ preceding a vowel at the beginnings of lines, cf. e.g. *LL* 21361, 27170 (written *is*), 21712 (written ‘s’).⁴⁶ Cf. also ‘s’ at the beginning of §8*d* below.

5a *sē*: This appears to be an instance of an independent pronoun used as the subject of an active verb; according to Kim McCone, this was the latest of the Middle Irish extensions of the usage of the independent pronoun.⁴⁷ Breatnach too characterises this usage as ‘déanach’; almost all of the examples that he gives are taken from *LL*, with only a few from *LU*.⁴⁸ Since this is the only example in the poem of an independent pronoun being used in this way, it may be worth considering *UM*’s reading *sin* as an alternative: if the latter were understood as *sin*, the text could be translated as ‘He used to bring a storm [...] of freezing snow’.

5a *ba slicht fír*: *Fír* must be understood here as genitive singular of the word employed as a substantive, not as a nominative singular adjective, in order to have rhyme with dative singular *nertrbrig* in the following line.

5b *snechta nemi*: I am grateful to Ruairí Ó hUiginn for pointing out to me that this expression, meaning literally ‘snow of poison’, appears to have been used to designate snow associated with intense cold. This is evidently the sense of *sneachta neime* in the *Annals of Loch Cé* and the *Annals of Connacht* for 1245; *snechta na nemi* is recorded in the *Annals of Boyle* for 1179.⁴⁹

6b ‘*na urchomair*’: Although the possessive pronoun is singular here, I translate ‘them’ as I take the reference to be to the (grammatically singular but semantically plural) Túatha Dé Danann. This interpretation assumes that the

⁴³Whitley Stokes (ed.), ‘The Death of Crimthann son of Fidach, and The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Muigmedón’, *RC* 24 (1903), 172–207, at 178 (§7); Rudolf Thurneysen (ed.), ‘*Tochmarc Cruinn ocus Macha*’, *ZCP* 12 (1918), 251–4, at 252.15.

⁴⁴M. A. O’Brien, *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1962), 92.

⁴⁵Macalister, *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*, iv, 246.

⁴⁶Cf. *MD* i, 48.33; ii, 4.41; iii, 78.5.

⁴⁷Kim McCone, *The Early Irish Verb*, second ed. (Maynooth, 1997), 177.

⁴⁸*SnaG*, 272.

⁴⁹Discussion in Seán Mac Airt, ‘Lexicographical notes’, *Celtica* 3 (1956), 262–71, at 262.

h- prefixed to a vowel following the 3 sg. feminine possessive pronoun has not been written here, following the older spelling convention.

6c *Ra loisced*: Cf. *ra airg* §9b, *Ra loisc* §9c. *Ra* for earlier *ro* is frequently found in the Book of Leinster.⁵⁰

6d: *LL*'s *haidbriud* is presumably to be emended to *haidbritiud*, as suggested in *eDIL*, to provide the correct number of syllables. All of the other instances noted in the dictionary are trisyllabic: *aibritid*, *aibritiud*, *aibrithiudh*. *UM*, perhaps finding this word obscure, reads instead *do loiscgfeadh iad* [...] *re thalamh* 'he would burn them [...] to the ground'.

7c *dían ngarta*: For the adjective *gartae* 'generous', not listed in *eDIL*, see e.g. *Audacht Morainn* §55(g).⁵¹ Cf. the compound noun *dían-garta* in the poem *Bairend Chermain cid dia tá*, translated 'ready hospitality' by Gwynn.⁵² I do not understand the basis of the nasalisation here; it may be an instance of the ungrammatical nasalisation that is sometimes found in chevilles.⁵³ Contrast *diangharta UM*, where the lenition indicates that the scribe takes the elements to comprise a compound; but this reading goes against the metre.

8–9. *UM* here substitutes a single quatrain, which may be translated as follows: "Connachta" is from the Conn-snow of Conn, from the waterfall ['otherwise, from Drobaís' added above the line] to Léim Con Culainn. From Conn, from his snow, "Connachta" is upon Connacht.'

8c *co n-airgfead íat*: There is already an instance of this vocalism of *orgaid* in *Saltair na Rann*, l. 6729. Otherwise the earliest examples noted in *eDIL* appear to be in *LL*; in our poem, it recurs in §9b. Note the independent object pronoun, a usage held by Liam Breatnach to be attested from the eleventh century onward.⁵⁴

9a *dádaig*: This word usually appears as *dadaig*; but cf. *dádaig* in *LL* 11305.⁵⁵

9b *cách uili*: This is an example of the use of *cách* 'with follg. emphasizing word' noted by *eDIL*. Cf. *cách uile* translated 'everyone' in 'A narrative of the Caesarian tax and the birth of Christ' in *An Leabhar Breac*.⁵⁶

9d *ndindgnada*: An instance of the characteristically Middle Irish dental flexion of original *io*-stems. David Greene held that there are no 'examples available from texts which might with some confidence be dated to the eleventh century. On the other hand, there are plenty of examples quotable from

⁵⁰Several examples are listed by Breatnach: *SnaG*, 279.

⁵¹Fergus Kelly (ed.), *Audacht Morainn* (Dublin, 1976), 16. There are further instances in *eDIL* s.v. 1 gart: J. Carmichael Watson (ed.), *Mesca Ulad*, Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series 13 (Dublin, 1941), l. 405; L. McKenna (ed.), *Iomarbhágh na bhFileadh*, ITS 20–21 (London, 1918), i, 4 (§8).

⁵²*MD*, iii, 88.2.

⁵³A few further examples from *dindsenchas* poems are *co neim n-úr* (*MD*, i, 2.7), *nib adba mbróin* (*MD*, ii, 20.34), *ba gním nglé* (*MD*, iii, 10.107), *ní hicht mbille* (*MD*, iii, 54.3).

⁵⁴*SnaG*, 271.

⁵⁵Cf. *TBC LL*, l. 3868.

⁵⁶Martin McNamara et al. (eds), *Apocrypha Hiberniae I: Evangelia infantiae*, Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum 14 (Turnhout, 2001), 573 (§4.5).

twelfth century texts'.⁵⁷ Kenneth Jackson dated *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne* to the eleventh century, and consequently regarded this as evidence that this usage of dental endings was already current then; but he acknowledged that it 'is very little found before PH, which has many exx [...] and is common in LL'.⁵⁸ Breatnach notes that there are no examples in *Saltair na Rann*.⁵⁹

10a *nír chleacht góe*: *UM* has relative *nar cleacht ngæi* 'who did not practice falsehood'.

10b *Dálach*: Could use of this rare name here be intended as an allusion (presumably playful) to the learned family of the Uí Dhálaigh? That they were already eminent in the twelfth century is apparent from the obit of Cú Chonnacht na Sgoile Ua Dálaig, *ard-ollam le dán*, in 1139.⁶⁰ According to the *Leabhar Mór na nGeinealach*, Cú Chonnacht's son Tadhg Doichleach founded the Uí Dhálaigh Bréifne.⁶¹ I do not believe that there are any indications of relations, whether friendly or otherwise, between the Uí Dhálaigh and the Uí Charthaig; so this suggestion can only be put forward extremely tentatively.

10b *lethet cech láng[n]óe*: I have emended on the strength of *langnaidh*, the reading of *UM*. Cf. the line *ro leth a ngnaī sund co sāl* 'their fame here extended as far as the sea', in the poem *Do-luid Mílid asin Scithia*, in the second and third recensions of *Lebor Gabála Érenn*.⁶²

10c *ros car*: Note relative *-s*. According to Jackson, this is 'largely a feature of the later MI period [...] likewise common in PH'.⁶³

11a *degruiri*: The accusative singular of *ruiri* is regularly *ruirig*, which would not give rhyme with *uili*; the problem is avoided by *UM*, which reads *deagdhuine* here.⁶⁴ I am grateful to Barry Lewis for noting that *degruiri* could be an instance of the relatively rare use of the nominative in apposition to a noun in an oblique case.⁶⁵

11d *coro chuiread*: This form yields an 8-syllable line; contrast *gureadh* in *UM*. I take it that *cor* is to be understood here; cf. *cor gab* §15c. The same emendation is required in order to secure correct syllable count at §14d, §15d.

⁵⁷David Greene, 'Distinctive plural forms in Old and Middle Irish', *Ériu* 25 (1974), 190–9, at 196.

⁵⁸Kenneth Jackson (ed.), *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne* (Dublin, 1990), 82. PH = Robert Atkinson (ed.), *The Passions and the Homilies from the Leabhar Breac: Text, Translation, and Glossary* (Dublin, 1887).

⁵⁹*SnaG*, 246.

⁶⁰*AFM* s.a. 1139.

⁶¹Nollaig Ó Muraile (ed.), *Leabhar Mór na nGenelach: The Great Book of Irish Genealogies Compiled (1645–66) by Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh*, 5 vols (Dublin, 2003), i, 320–21 (§133.2–5).

⁶²Macalister, *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, ii, 110 q. 7.

⁶³Jackson, *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne*, 95.

⁶⁴Cf. the closely similar variant reading in *UM* at §15b.

⁶⁵*GOI* §247(c). The single example that Thurneysen provides (from *Thes*, ii, 240.13) resembles the present instance in that a nominative form is in apposition to an accusative.

12c *feib as dlecht*: For the relative of the copula after a conjunction, and indeed for a comparable phrase, cf. *mar as dlecht* in the poem *Éistid a Laigniú na llecht*, apparently of the eleventh century.⁶⁶

12d *ndingén*: Cf. in *Fled Bricrenn* the phrase *ni dingon comlond*, where *dingon* is presumably a slip for *dingén*.⁶⁷

13a *elgga*: I am grateful to Seán Ó Coileáin for the suggestion that this could be an error for *elba* ‘herd’; this would make excellent sense, but the rhyme would be imperfect as *elba* has a lenited *b*. As a further alternative, Kevin Murray suggests *elta* ‘flock, herd’. It is hard to see what the *UM* variant *tsealga* ‘of a hunt’ would mean in this context. Tentatively, I accept Keating’s assertion that *ealga* is a synonym for *uasal* ‘lofty’, i.e. a variant of *elg* ‘noble, distinguished’.⁶⁸ Alternatively (and perhaps preferably), *elgga* could simply be the genitive of *elg*; note *Elga* as the genitive of *Elg* ‘Ireland’ (*eDIL* s.v.).

13c *casgrad*: The usual medieval sense of *cosgrad* is ‘destruction’. Another instance of its application (in the later form *coscairt*) specifically to the killing of cattle occurs in the tale *Eachtra Airt meic Cuind*: *an bó do cascairt* ‘slaughtering the cow’.⁶⁹ This is a standard sense of *coscairt* in the modern language.

14a *Tab(a)r[aid]*: *LL*’s *tabar* appears to be imperative 2 sg. of *do-beir*; but the use of *lib* here and at §12a above indicates that Dálach is addressing people in the plural. If the verb is taken as representing the passive imperative *tabarr* (cf. *MI* 104^b2), there is still the problem that the referent (*oí* in this case) is plural. Imperative 2 pl. *Tabraidh* in *UM* is accordingly preferable.

14a *oī*: O’Curry translates this as ‘livers’,⁷⁰ thinking perhaps of the derivation of the name *Crúachna Aí* from *áe* ‘liver’ in the Book of Leinster *Táin*.⁷¹ But various medieval explanations for the toponymic element *Aí* existed, so that there is no need to regard this one as having been prevalent to the exclusion of others.⁷² In the present case, understanding *oī* as ‘ears’ is strongly indicated by the circumstance that the cows from which they are taken are red-eared (*óidergga*; §13b).⁷³

14c *co nn-eólór*: Here it seems necessary to postulate an otherwise unattested denominative verb: **eólaid* from *eól* ‘knowledge (of the way)’, hence ‘so that I may find my way’. *UM*’s *gu neacaind* is presumably for *co ndeachainn*,

⁶⁶*MD*, iii, 20.255; discussion of date on p. 471 (and cf. Ó Corráin, *Clavis*, 1601–2, with references to further scholarship).

⁶⁷George Henderson (ed.), *Fled Bricrenn: The Feast of Bricriu*, ITS 2 (London, 1899), 38.19; cf. *LU* 8457.

⁶⁸Comyn and Dinneen, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 98.6; as cited in *eDIL* s.v. 2 *Elg*. For this sense, see e.g. *do cach elc oirrdric* ‘to every conspicuous noble’, in Macalister, *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*, ii, 120.634; also in George Calder (ed.), *Auraicept na n-Éces: The Scholar’s Primer* (Edinburgh, 1917), l. 2294.

⁶⁹R. I. Best (ed.), ‘The Adventures of Art son of Conn, and the Courtship of Delbcham’, *Ériu* 3 (1907), 149–73, at 160 (§13).

⁷⁰O’Curry, *On the Manners and Customs*, ii, 11.

⁷¹*LL TBC*, l. 4902.

⁷²Thus *MD*, iii, 380 (from the name of a chieftain), 404 (from the name of a hound).

⁷³Red-eared cows are frequently mentioned in Irish sources; discussion in Osborn Bergin, ‘White red-eared cows’, *Ériu* 14 (1946), 170; Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming* (Dublin, 1997), 33–4; Jessica Hemming, ‘*Bos primigenius* in Britain: or, why do fairy cows have red ears?’,

with 1 sg. subjunctive imperfect of *téit*. It is hard to see which has the better claim to be regarded as the preferable reading.

14c *lāthar nglond*: Seán Ó Coileáin suggests: ‘What if *lathar nglond* is not a cheville for a change, but rather the object of the verb? We might then translate “the place of (heroic) deeds” or some such, i.e. the place of battle, to which he duly proceeds having been directed by the magic ears, in the following quatrain’.

14d This line has 8 syllables in *LL*, so that elision of the final syllable of *coro* is called for; cf. *gu UM*.

15b *i n-óenáitt, i n-ōenbuile*: Here *UM* reads *du Dhalach, dun degdhuine* ‘to Dálach, to the good man’; cf. its reading *gu Dalach, gun deagdhuine* at §11b above. This reading gives a better rhyme with *a*; while the wording of *LL* is so close to that of §14b as to seem like a partial dittography. *UM* may preserve the original reading, or else may have sought to improve upon its exemplar.

15c *cor gab don maig*: I here take *gaibid* in the sense ‘goes’, and *do* as ‘to’ of destination; it may be noted however that *co* is the preposition usually employed with *gaibid* in this way (cf. *eDIL* s.v. *gaibid* II(a)). *UM* reads *gur gabh in magh* ‘so that he reached the plain’, which is perhaps preferable.

17c *A hséin*: The form of the demonstrative is peculiar here. According to *eDIL* (s.v. 1 *sin*), *séin* with a long vowel ‘occurs only in bardic verse and is usually introduced for the sake of the rhyme’; but here it is found in a Middle Irish manuscript, in non-rhyming position, in a poem which is clearly not aspiring to meet the standards of *dán díreach*. Also curious is the spelling *hš-* for lenited *s-*, as well as ungrammatical lenition after the preposition *a*. I think that it is necessary to take *a* as a slip for *ó* here: cf. *Ó šain immach* in §16a above.

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