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'Scél Tuáin meic Chairill'

First published in Ériu 35 (1984), 93-111.

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SCÉL TUÁIN MEIC CHAIRILL

Scéil Tuáin meic Chairill (ST) is found in five MSS: Laud Misc. 610 (L) 102b14–103b21; TCD H.3.18 (H) 38a1–39b3; an acephalous text in the Book of Fermoy (F) 155a1–156a24;² Rawl. B 512 (R) 97vb1–99a3 (intercolumnar foliation); and Lebor na hUidre (U) 15a34–16b41, by far the oldest MS. In U the first page of our tale is in the A-hand (U₁), while the second is the work of the interpolator H (U₆): as Best and Bergin have noted, page 16 was entirely erased and rewritten, and another page was presumably inserted to accommodate the (now missing) conclusion.³

An edition and translation by Kuno Meyer appeared in 1897 as an appendix to the second volume of Alfred Nutt’s The voyage of Bran. Meyer took U as the basis of his critical text, giving variants from H and R and supplying a separate transcription of the version in L; since U is incomplete at the end, the final section was based on R, with variants from H. Meyer also provided a translation, adding a few footnotes on matters of linguistic interest.⁴

Such a treatment of ST fosters certain misconceptions. It discourages consideration of L in close conjunction with the other MSS, and implies that an attempt to correlate all the versions would be impractically cumbersome; this led Best and Bergin to call L ‘a different recension’,⁵ while Vernam Hull referred to it as ‘the second recension’.⁶ But although HFRU indeed differ markedly from L, the actual interrelationships of the MSS are more complex: H repeatedly agrees with L against FRU, and LHFR frequently disagree with U; each MS seems to reflect a different stage in a single line of development.⁷ U (especially U₆) represents in fact the latest, most expanded version of ST, so that its adoption as basis for an edition seems difficult to justify; but discussions of the story have invariably taken U as the primary text,⁸ and van Hamel actually asserted that its ‘earliest version occurs in a fragment in LU’.⁹

¹Abbreviations are as in DIL, together with the following: CGH Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae, ed. M. A. O’Brien (Dublin, 1962); HB Historia Brittonum; Lang. AU The Language of the Annals of Ulster, Tomás Ó Máille (Manchester, 1910); LG Lebor Gabála; ST Scéil Tuáin meic Chairill; Trip. Bethu Phátraic, ed. Kathleen Mulchrone (Dublin, 1939).
²The existence of this version was pointed out to me by John Armstrong; it is not mentioned by Meyer.
³Lebor na hUidre (LU) (Dublin, 1929), p. xxix; the next text, Dá Brón Flatha Nime, is acephalous.
⁵Loc. cit. They are in error when they assert that H and R agree with U against L in all respects save the inclusion of the poems interpolated by U₆.
⁶Celtica v. 135.
⁷The situation is not quite as simple as this, as we shall see when we come to consider the interrelations of FRU; but the point is a valid one.
⁸This is the practice of Nutt (op. cit., pp 77–9) and of d’Arbois de Jubainville, The Irish mythological cycle, trans. R. I. Best (Dublin, 1903), pp 24–38.
⁹ZCP x, 153.
Meyer's apparatus occasionally fails to indicate divergences between HR and U, making it still more difficult to understand the ways in which the MSS are connected. It is my hope that the study of ST will be assisted by an edition using all of the MSS, and based primarily upon L.

A survey of the apparatus will show that when L agrees with only one other MS, that MS is usually H; when with more, generally with HFR. U agrees most closely with FR, and HFRU share many readings not found in L. Exceptions to this pattern are for the most part trivial, and most easily explained as due to chance; others are due to individual innovation on the part of one of the MSS or its exemplar.

Such a situation suggests that each of the MSS represents a different stage in the linear evolution of the text. When the variant readings are examined in detail, it becomes clear that L is closest to the tale's earliest recoverable form, followed by H, FRU\(^a\), and finally U\(^b\). The accumulation of interpolations and later forms, of which examples are given below, begins with the readings shared by HFRU and culminates with the interpolations in U\(^b\).

(I) HFRU

(a) Decay of infixed pronouns: 5 dosorificba, 24 dosánaic.
(b) Loss of relative nasalization: 15 ná airbéarais, 19 ro gabad, 28 ro bál, 67 ro bátar, 71 ro bá.
(c) Loss of short dative: 20 dílinn; 72, 74, 79 Érinn.
(d) Insertion of conjunctions and connective phrases: 3, 8, 31 7; 7 moch; 7, 38 iar sin; 13 i.; 15 coro innised dóib senchasa Érend; 19 ol sé; 26 ol seseom; 31, 33, 42 iarom; 34 7 ba; 60 dano; 64 co mbá ann.
(e) Substitutions for older or less common words: 3 saidbir for sommat; 3 coro throiscset for docinet; 5 innisfes for adñí; 29, 42 7 sentath for assennath; 35, 45 toisech and ruech for urrae; 41 abaithatar for dorrobitatar; 78 loss of clause containing the verb ar-utáing.
(f) Later forms: 6 loss of file; 9, 13 ro iarfaig for imcomairec (?) and rosiacht; 14 ná for nad; 16 archuad su for adcois; 65 no élaind for adluinn; 80 ro n-accaillestar for attraglastar.
(g) 71 7 rl. in L seems to reflect a lost passage; there is no trace of this passage in HFRU, where 7 rl. itself is omitted.

(II) FRU\(^a\) go back to a further, less significant revision; some of FR's features are shared by U\(^b\) (see (a) below), so that it too must derive from this stage of the text's development. Besides numerous trivial variants, the principal alterations are as follows:

(a) Added words and phrases: 23 dano, 32 liath, 38, 7. In U\(^b\): 44 i suidiu 7 mé óc, 63 rotuit cotlad form.
(b) 24 co n-erblatar vs. earlier co n-erbalatatar H.
(c) 20 nis ragbad with meaningless -s-.

\(^{10}\)Thus he does not indicate that H does not contain the phrase 7 as cech airrcets .i (65; op. cit., p. 292).
FR share a few readings found in none of the other MSS (e.g. 35 ba, 51 uaremedus, 62 lim, 66 beos). These were perhaps to be found in Uⁿ as well: it seems at any rate significant that FR disagree with Uʰ but never with Uⁿ.

(III) Independent innovations similar to those enumerated above are made by each of the MSS. Most significant is a series of interpolations found in Uʰ: the noteworthy additions are the following:

(a) The poems mentioned in the apparatus at lines 34, 44 and 55. I have not reproduced them here, as they are adequately edited by Best and Bergin, and edited with translation by Meyer. They do not seem particularly early: the verb fil is inflected (filim, LU 1273), etir consistently takes the dative (1287, 1296, 1304, 1335), sind occurs as an object pronoun (1294), and there are some rather late forms such as ciarsam (1310) and biatsa (1338).

(b) Added words and phrases: 35 iar sudiu oro bá i rricht sètha ŋ bòí, 35 cuch conair no thegind, 37 a murchoblach, 39 ñ d’íthaíd, 40 iar sin ŋ ro chlannaigestár, 48 is air sin no thathigind sea in n-inad sin beus do idnaití ind athnugthí, 50 i n-insi sea fri ré, 51 no gniind remi do dènám, 53 amal dogniind dogres, 54 mé for cach réit, 58 ara n-engnaití 7 ar febaí a n-eolais, 65 7 as cech airrcéis .i.

The following stemma seems to me to represent the most economical interpretation of this evidence:

The language of X, as reflected primarily in L, may for the most part be characterized as late Old Irish, although some Middle Irish features show that it must have been revised in the latter period.

(IV) Early characteristics may be listed as follows:

(a) Usage of infixed pronouns conforming to OIr throughout; note in particular the preservation of the correct petrified infix in 24 conid apthatar, and infixed -b- for 2 pl. obj. in 5 nob didnabhar.

(b) Nasalizing relative clauses: 14 nad n-airbérírs, 19 ro ngabant, 28 ro mbúí, 67 ro mbár, 71 ro mbá.

(c) Relative file 6; this form is not attested in the Vita Tripartition (Trip.).

(d) Old forms of the definite article: fem. gen. sg. 5, 61, inna (vs. fem. gen. sg. and nom. pl. na 20, 48, 59); neut. acc. sg. 11 cussa n- (vs. 38 in muir); masc. nom. pl. (?) 57 in. Ó Máille (Lang. AU §136) notes the last occurrence of inna in AU at 771, of a n- in 859, and of in in 999; fem. gen. sg. na first appears in 682, nom. pl. na in 923, neut. acc. sg. in in 916.
(c) Short datives: 20 dile; 72, 74, 79 Ére. Ó Máille notes that ‘the non-nasal dative seems to have been giving place to the nasal one early in the 10th century’ (ib. §161).

(f) Consistent use of infixed –ro–: 20 normalta, 36 dorumalt, 40 fororbairt, 41 doroirbatar, 51 foréimduí, 59 toramalt, 80 attraglastar. ST’s language is in this respect earlier than that of Trip., where such forms as 93 ro eroslaichti, 185 ro taiselbath and 222 ro aisnéid are common.

(g) 22 már, 54 már, 59 mára.

(h) Deuterotonic forms are generally preserved; e.g. 3 docinet, 16 adcois, 78 arutnghiter.

(i) Nasalized n-i (11).

(V) Of the later features, some presumably reflect no more than orthographic practice or scribal error:

(a) Inorganic -f- in 7 dosfice (cf. SR 1687 dosfáníć).

(b) 14 forcoemmacair for earlier forcommacair (cf. SR 1544 forcoemmacar).

(c) Use of conjunct endings such as 60 gabsat vs. 23 trebsit.

(d) 27 ocom vs. oc mo at 68.

(e) 63 iaich for iach. An o-stem iach occurs in many of the glossaries, but seems to be attested in no early source.

(f) 74 ropsam LH vs. robsa R; the latter is the OIr form, although LH generally agree on the older reading. Perhaps the present instance represents a coincidental innovation by both.

(g) 38, 68 in each for OIr i each.

(VI) Other forms, however, require more careful consideration:

(a) Throughout ST perfective forms of the preterite far outnumber merely narrative forms. This is indeed a late feature, but is one which also characterizes Trip. (cf. K. Mulchrone, ZCP xvi. 420–37) and the poems ascribed to Maelmuru Otha (ob. 887; see for instance ‘Can a mbunadas na nGaedel’, Todd Nenn. 220–87).

(b) Univerbation: 5 nob dídnábal, 47 no claemcloind sea. Cf. in Trip. the instances of no preceding a compound verb cited by Mulchrone (ZCP xvi. 73); to these may be added 334 no choscerad.

(c) 51 foréimduí: This verb and the related émid seem otherwise unattested earlier than Trip. (1496 fémithit); although compounds from mid-, they are not inflected as deponents.

(d) 66 filet with flexional ending. The same form occurs Trip. 1119, Maelmuru (LL line 16020), S Canno 96, 331.

(e) 70 nom ithend: According to Thurneysen the suffix -enn arose c. 1000 (Indogermanische Forschungen 1. 330); he used its appearance in the poem ‘Sect o.f.n.’, ascribed to Cinaed ua hArtucáin (fl. 950: as mberam, risa mbenand, ram héileann Ériu vii. 219–20), as one of his arguments against the attribution (ZCP x. 438–40). But adranm occurs in another poem ascribed to Cinaed (Met. Ds. 2. 40), and Carney has noted medram in a poem ascribed to Dallán mac Móire (c. 900; Êigse xix. 206); this renders more probable the
Rawl. reading *dia n-adrann* SR 3308 (vs. *LB* 115 b *dia n-adrad*). It should be noted that these are all cases in which MacNeill’s Law could have played a part. The present form seems to belong to *MIr*; its isolation here is puzzling, and suggests that it originated as a gloss on some earlier word.

The language of *ST* is in most respects very close to that of *Trip.*; some features suggest that it should be placed somewhat earlier. All of the evidence taken together seems to point to a date in the second half of the ninth century. Such *MIr* forms as the text contains can be best explained as the work of a redactor; I see no evidence that he need have written later than *Saltair na Rann.*

Tuán’s father Cairell, who appears in *ST* as king of the Ulaid at approximately the time of their conversion, is evidently to be understood as Cairell son of Muiredach Muinderg, one of the first recorded kings of the Dál Fiatach of Ulster; this identification is in fact provided by HRU. Muiredach is the first king of the Ulaid in the regnal lists and synchronisms, and tradition asserted that he had been blessed by Patrick. Cairell is elsewhere said to have accepted Christianity. Cairell’s son Baetán (*ob. 581*) was powerful enough to invade the Isle of Man, and Baetán’s brother D Emmán (*ob. 572*) was founder of the subsequent dynasty.

Tuán’s friendship with Finnia, Finnén or Findbarr (*ob. 579*) similarly connects him with the Dál Fiatach’s ecclesiastical origins. Finnia was the founder of Mag Bile, a monastery rivalled only by Bangor for primacy among the houses in Dál Fiatach territory. Unlike Bangor’s founder Congall, moreover, Finnia was himself of the Dál Fiatach, and Mag Bile has been characterized by J. F. Kenney as ‘the site of (the Ulaid’s) chief church’. *ST* accordingly links Tuán with the beginnings of the Dál Fiatach polity and church in the later sixth century.

The only source earlier than *ST* in which I have been able to find him mentioned is the eighth-century *Martyrology of Tallaght (Tall.*), which includes *Tuan mac Cairill o Thamlachtain Bairchi* among the saints whose feasts were celebrated on the first of April. It is noteworthy that here, as in *ST*, he is associated with the Bairche region; but this cannot be taken as corroboration of any of the story’s other details. Although written a century

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11Similar cases of Old Irish tales revised by Middle Irish scribes are discussed at some length by D. A. Binchy (*Scana* xiv).
12It was to the Dál Fiatach that the tribal designation *Ulaid* originally belonged; see T. F. O’Rahilly, *Early Irish history and mythology* (Dublin, 1946) pp 346–52.
13LL line 5783, *ZCP* ix 484, xix 85.
14*CGH* p. 408; cf. *ZCP* viii 338, xiii 336, xix 85.
15*CGH* p. 322, *Trip.* 2663.
18The sources for the early history of Ireland (New York, 1929), vol. 1, p. 390.
19*Mart. Tall.* Ap. 1; the other martyrologies contain similar entries for the same day, although metrical exigencies seem to have excluded Tuán from the original verse of *Féilere Oengusso.*
20Cf. textual notes, line 11.
or more before ST, Tall. is still separated from the later sixth century by an even greater interval. Nor can we be certain that ST’s identification of Tuán’s father as Cairell mac Muireadaig is correct. The latter was probably the most celebrated bearer of that name, particularly among the Ulaid, so that there would be nothing strange in the son of an obscurer Cairell being fathered on him: a particularly striking parallel is provided by the case of Daig mac Cairill, a saint of the Úi Néill who is made Baetán mac Cairill’s successor in two of the Ulster regnal lists.  

We cannot therefore exclude the possibility that Tuán was an entirely fictitious figure, or at least of a date and ancestry different from those assigned him by ST.  

The legend of his transformations is evidently a later addition: the early version of Irish pseudohistory preserved in the Historia Brittonum (HB) maintains that no one survived the plague which overtook Partholón’s followers. The idea of Tuán as a lone survivor might conceivably have been inspired by the fact of his residence at the otherwise unknown site of Tamlachtae Bairichi: some versions of Lebar Gabála (LG) speak of Partholón’s plague as a támlacht, and Samas Chormaic understands the name Tamlachtae (perhaps best rendered ‘burial ground’) as if it were támshlechta ‘plague-smitings’:

> That is, plague smote the people in that place, that is, a great pestilence (duinebad). The tribes came into great plains so that they were waiting in one place, so that they might be buried in these plains by the one whom the pestilence did not take . . . .

The words which I have italicized certainly suggest the role which is in ST filled by Tuán. References in the subsequent literature are rare. The Mir tale Suidigud Tellaig Temra characterizes Tuán as one who ‘went into many shapes’ (dochuaid isna hilrechaith), and introduces an idea not found in ST when it includes him among the ‘five elders of Ireland’ (cócic sinsir Érrenn). Eochaíd ua Flainn alludes to him as a source of ancient tradition, but does not include him in his accounts of Ireland’s early history; and Tuán does not seem to have been mentioned in the oldest versions of LG. FR (perhaps originally U as

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23 ITS 39, 18.

24 DHL., s.v.


26 Ériu iv 126. A similar allusion in the first dindshenchas poem on Tara (Met. Ds. 1. 2) is presumably derived from this tale.

27 ITS 41, 282: Tuán mac Cairill chétaig / condaecaid do Finnia.

28 The summary in the first-recension version of LG (ITS 35, 272) is probably an addition; further references to Tuán do not appear outside the composite third recension.
well) add a poem ‘Tuán mac Cairill ro clos’ to the text of ST. Otherwise I know of only a few scattered passages referring to him, all quite possibly derived from LG.

I have proposed above that the Old Irish version of ST underwent at least three revisions before the writing of U: X, Y and Z. It must have been a relatively popular text in the early Middle Irish period, and it doubtless owed this popularity to the same antiquarian enthusiasm which inspired the compilation of LG. ST and LG spring from the same OIr pseudohistorical tradition, a tradition also reflected in HB. LG proved to be a far more influential work; it is interesting to observe the ways in which it affected the successive revisions of ST.

HRU make Partholón the son of Sera. The doctrine that both Partholón and Nemed were the sons of Agnoman is mentioned in the third-recension text of LG contained in the Book of Lecan; and Partholón appears as the son of Agnon in interpolated passages in Lebor Bretnach and LG. That this idea was indeed present in X, and not an innovation by L, is shown by the fact that Tuán, one of the race of Partholón, refers to Nemed in all MSS as bráthair athar dam sa (31). HFRU also add the detail that Nemed wandered upon the Caspian Sea (38; cf. LG, ITS 39. 120, 128), and name Finnia’s monastery (2) and Tuán’s grandfather (10). The number of Partholón’s followers at the time of his death is given as five thousand (23; cf. LG, ITS 35. 272, 39. 20). L claims that Ireland was empty for thirty-two years after Partholón’s death (28; cf. LG, ITS 39. 120, 126); this may perhaps be an adoption of LG doctrine on its part, as HFRU reckon twenty-two years.

In RU the elimination of the statement that no one occupied Ireland before the Flood (19) is evidently intended to accommodate the legend of the antediluvian settler Cesair (LG, ITS 35. 176–228). The anomalous statement that the Gáileóin occupied Ireland along with the Tuatha Dé (57) is omitted by FRU, but only U inserts the Gáileóin in their orthodox position with the Fir Bolg and Fir Domnann (50).

Other aspects of the tale will be of particular interest to scholars examining the sources of Irish pseudohistory. I should like to call attention to the fact that the Tuatha Dé are not euhemerized in ST, but conjectured to have been fallen angels; it is also noteworthy that the tale contains no trace of the LG doctrine that the Fir Bolg and the Tuatha Dé are descended from Nemed. More generally, ST helps us to appreciate the sources on which LG drew, the intellectual climate in which it took shape, and the literary influence which from the first it appears to have exercised.

29ZCP iii 31; an inferior version is found in the third recension of LG (ITS 39. 80–2).
30ZCP iii 15; ITS 4. 150–4; MS Mat. p. 555. Giraldus Cambrensis, who appears to have had access to a first-recension text, calls him Ruanus (Topographia Hibernica, ed. J. F. Dimock in Giraldii Cambrensis Opera. London 1867, 3. 142). The implications of ST for the study of Celtic mythology have been discussed among others by Nutt and d’Arbois de Jubainville; cf. note 8 above.
31ITS 39. 152.
32Lebor Bretnach p. 5; cf. Geneal. Tracts C 157, ITS 44. 182.
In the edition which follows I have attempted to reconstruct as nearly as possible the readings of X. The orthography is based on that of L, with modifications from U. I have as a rule preferred L’s readings where grammatical considerations do not oppose them. Additional phrases which occur only in L, and add little or nothing to the sense, have however been generally omitted; there seems no reason not to view them in the same light as the passages interpolated in the other MSS. Doubtful cases are discussed in the textual notes.

I have tried to include in the apparatus all variant readings which are not merely orthographic; many instances of omitted or incorrect lenition or nasalization have not been noted, as their randomness suggests that they have little significance. Arbitrary rearrangement of word order, when occurring only in a single MS, has not seemed worth recording in cases where it does not reflect the affiliation of the MSS (e.g. 3 cuice isin les H vs. isin les cuci RU; 32 trogh nocht R vs. nocht trógh LHU). Certain consistent variations may be noted here rather than in the apparatus: HFRU have Finnén for Finnia; H has ar sé or or sé instead of ol sé; and HFRU have a far greater tendency than L to elide a possessive pronoun before a following vowel. F and R are so similar that I have not noted the former’s many illegible passages, save in cases where there is some genuine question of the proper reading.

I should like to express my thanks to Professor John Armstrong, whose helpful criticism has been indispensable throughout my work on this edition; and to the Board of Trinity College Dublin, the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, and the Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian for permission to cite the MSS on which the text is based. I am also grateful to Professor E. G. Quin, whose many corrections and suggestions have greatly aided me in preparing the final version.
INCIPIT IMACALLAM TUÁIN FRI FINNIA


‘Doluid críne form sa assennath 7 bá sa for techud re ndoínib 7 chonaib altaib. Bá sa aidchí and i ndorus uama. Cupam lim 7 rofetar
dul asin richt i n-araill. Lot sa i ndeilib tuirc allaíid. Éim lim ón dano 7 maith lim mo menma 7 basa urrae do thrétaib torc nÉrend 7 doimchellind Érind 7 ro buí dúras lim beós d'athigid issín crích sea Uład i n-aimsir mo chríne 7 mo thróge. Ar is i n-oenmagin no claemcloing sea na delba so uili.


‘Gabais Beothchech mac Iordanen in n-insi seo forsná cenélá bátar intí. Is dib in Gáliún 7 Tuatha Dé 7 Andé dona fes bunadus lasin n-ois n-cóilais. Acht ba dóiich leo bith dinn longís dodeochaid de ním dób.

‘Bá sa trá amsera mára i ndeilib in tséga co tormált na cenélá so uili ro gabsat tír nÉrend. Gabsat meic Mileth for Tuatha Déá in n-insi se ar éicín. Lot sa fecht i ndeilib inna sága i rraba co mbá i cuas chraind for sruth. Tuirseach mo menna. Adóru luamain 7 addágin éonu aile.

‘Ro aínius nómaid and 7 lot so i ndeilib iaich abae. Domchuirethar Dia isin n-abaind. Amrae lim ón dano 7 basa setrech sáitheach 7 basa urrae snáma. Adluinn as cach gábud: a llámaib línáige 7 a crobaib sága 7 a gaaib iasaíre, co fileit a chréitcha indúm.

‘Fecht and, in tan romba mithig la Dia mo chobair sea 7 ro mbátaí biasta oc mo ingreim 7 romfínnad cach línáige in cach lind, dombert línáige and do mnaí Chairíll rí[g] in tíir sea. Cuman lim dano co ndombeir in fer 7 fomnóir, 7 nom ithend in ben a oenur co mbá ina broind. Cuman lim dano ind aíre to mbá ina broind 7 rl. 7 an nó ráideadh cách ria chéile isin taig 7 a ndorónad in nÉire ind eret sin. Cuman lim dano amal domáina labrad amal cach nuídín 7 rofinnaind cach réit dochtíte i nÉire 7 robsa sáith 7 dobreth ainm dom .i. Tuán mac Cairill.

Co tánic iarom Pátraic co creitem. Aes már dam i ssúidiu 7 rom báisted 7 ro creites im oenur Ríg na n-úilí cona dúilib.’

Dogniat iarom celebrid 7 tiagait i praintech Finnia cona muntir 7 Tuán. Arutgíther co léir dóib. Anait sechtmain i ssúidiu oc imaccallaim. Nach senchas 7 nach genelach fil i nHéire is ó Thuán mac Cairill a bunadus. Attraglastar Pátraic ri sin 7 atcuaid dó 7 atraglastar Colum Cille 7 atcuaid Finnia dó i fiadnaíochta in tíre 7 torgaid Finnia comad fris no beith a phorth 7 ni étas fair som. ‘Bith oirdnide do loch so,’ol Tuán.
1. Incípít . . . Finnia. Scél Tuain meic Cairill (ins. inso H) do Finnán Maige Bile (ins. inso sís U) 
HU: om. R.

2. Finnio: Finnán Maige Bile HRU. Ísochél: ins. lás L. nulaith: Uladh HRU; ins. antairnith
HRU, relic: réile L. lece R. side: siden H. om. RU. i tech cucci: isin lecsui HRU. docinet; coro
t(h)roisetch HU, coro troisetch R. lás: aici HRU. 4. domnach: ins. fo bith L, 7 U. ní: ní HRU. fria:
ins. a H. 5. doibfä: dotifca L, doforfiób HU. rob didhnhair: nofordaidh H, nofordina
RU. addú: indifhres H, innifaíd U. senchasa: senchasa HU. inna: om. HRU. 6. file ó cetagabhat:
oret cegabad cusaídu H, om. RU.

moch HU. 8. oI s: om. HU. disurt: ins. ol sé HU. lotar: ins. iar sin. R. lás: ins. 7 HU. urdu:
iar fáig Finnch HU. R adds de. slonnud: ins. 7 R, de U. 10. i sund .1.: ol sé HU. Cairill:
Acarillus R. mo ainin: meic Muireadad Munideig mesr a sé H, mesi meic Muredig Munderc
meic Sera mac brathar Parthalad R ob é slonnud tall a rús HU.

12. roscacht: iar fáigad HU, ro fáifraidh R. coibsenú . . . imihecthaib: de imihecta HU. 
HRU, ins. 7 HU. red n-airbértis: n-airbértis HU, 15. chuect: aice coro cimisid dòib senchasa 
Érend HU; H substititges go grimm for the last two words. fri Finn: om. H. namnumetar . . . sin:
om. HU. 16. is: om. H. diliu: ansu HU. briathar: cen bréithir HU. Dèi: n'de HR. adeicel:
achuadad HU, achadausad R. dait: ins. siu HU. 17. dano: trá HU. ol Finn: om. H. fàdaim:
fein HU; ins. or Finnch H. imthùs na: imihectha L, intusua na H, imthus n-R. do: d'H 18. colise:
uitad R, om. U.

R. cossin: . . . iar ndile: iar ndilin RU. ní raghab: ní gabad HU. ní ndile: ndilin HR. 20. ní
raghab: ní gabad danu HU. ní raghab: ní ndilin RU. ní raghab: ní ndilin HU. co tormaida: coro cataife 
chennél: Sèa HFRU. 22 dolotar: dóluid HFRU. ar is már: nirbu (nibo R) mor HFRU. 23. treisit:
treisit HFRU. mubú: mibár cóc HFRU. chlaisd: sal an HFRU. 24. dosnic: dosnaisic HU, tainic 
F; ins. dana H. duneba: dunebad HFRU. conír apathar: co-erbaltat H, conerblata HFRU; 
F. trichiát: fichit HFRU. ro mbiti: ro bá HFRU. iom. HFRU. 29. form: cemc sa HFRU. 
assenhact: 7 senth (sentu H, seamndacht F) HFRU. addró imechti: om. HFRU. secondy: ins. i 
ne- HFRU. thirdy: ins. forèmed (foremede) imte û HFRU. 30. lim: ocum HFRU.

31. rosc gab: ro gab HFRU; ins. iarum Nemed HFRU. Agnomain: ins. iarum L. dam sa: ins. 7 
HFRU. attacinn: atacinni L, atacilin H, atagilin F, atacum RU. sidi: se HFRU. 32. n-
imagabail: imagábal HFRU. crín: ins. itath FLU, nocht: om. F. 33. n-and: and iarum HFRU. kod 
sa: mo du HFRU. 34. iarum basa: 7 mé HFRU. oc: ins. 7 ba HFRU. mo menna lim: lim me 
memna HFRU; U begins here, and inserts a poem introduced by the phrase Ins and sin ro raduisa 
(altaih B) Hèrend HU. 7 domchellind Hèrend 7: iar sudiu oilo bá i rícht sétia òb HU. 36. alma: 
ala FUL, ossiaib: ins. alta U, immom: ins. nach conair no this guiud JU. 36. doraimát: ins. sa 
U, trá: iar sin H, om. FR, iarom U. in n-aimsir sin: m-aimsir HFRU, fri . . . chlain: fri hamris a chlain 
Nemidch 7 fri re Nemidch HU, iar sin fria haimsir Nenimidh fria haimsir a cloide tara eis F, iar sin 
fria haimsir Nemid 7 fria claind dara heisi H, amlaid sin fri hamris Nemid 7 fri amsir a clainid U. 
Heirenm LF, nÉrenna FR; ins. a murchobach U. second ar om. HFRU. 38. triché: ins. fer L, immrusur 
a: consorala HFRU, muir: ins. for seachan HFRU; U adds fr ré, second 7: co HFRU. 

42. dolud: iarom U. form sa asennacht: formas 7 sentu (sendacht F, sentath R) HFRU, 7 
ndorus: ins. mo HFRU, uama: huaima L, lim: ins. beos H. 44. dut: techt HFRU, assin: as cech R. n-
araíil: n-aírali HFRU; ins. beos H. lot sa: luithsia F; ins. iarom HFRU allaid: U adds a poem


THE COLLOQUY OF TUÁN WITH FINNIA

When Finnia had come with the gospel into the land of Ireland and the territory of the Ulaid, he went to the house of a rich man there. He did not admit them. They fast against him all Sunday. The man’s faith was not good. Finnia said to his followers, ‘A good man will come to you. You will be comforted, and he will tell you the history of Ireland since first it was taken.’

Next morning a venerable cleric comes to them. He bids them welcome. ‘Come with me to my hermitage’, said he. ‘It is fitter for you’. They went with him. They perform the offices of Sunday, psalms and preaching and mass. (Finnia) asks his lineage. He said to them, ‘I am of the Ulaid of this region: my name is Tuán son of Cairell. I have assumed my father’s inheritance, from Mag nÍtha to this hermitage, to Benna Bairche.’

Finnia asked him for tidings of Ireland, all that had happened since the time of Partholón son of Agnoman. Finnia said that they would not taste food until (he told them). Tuán said to Finnia. ‘Let me not be constrained on that account. We had rather contemplate the word of God, which you may relate to us.’ ‘Nevertheless,’ said Finnia, ‘you must tell us your own adventures, and the history of Ireland.’

‘Ireland, then’ (said Tuán), ‘has up until now been settled by five settlements. It was not settled before the Flood, nor was it settled after the Flood until one thousand and two years had passed since the Flood went from the land. Then there landed the son of Agnoman son of Starbui, of the race of the Greeks. They came as twenty-four couples, for great was the sharpness of each of them toward the other. They dwelt in Ireland until he had a thousand descendants. A plague came upon them from one Sunday to the next, so that all save one man perished. For it is not usual for there to be a calamity without a fugitive (escaping) from it to tell the tale thereafter. I am that man.

‘Then I was (fleeing) from refuge to refuge and from cliff to cliff, protecting myself from wolves. Ireland was empty for thirty-two years. Age came upon me at last, and I could no longer travel. I was in cliffs and in wildernesses, and I had caves of my own.

‘The son of Agnoman landed, my father’s brother. I used to see them from the cliffs, and hid from them: I was shaggy, clawed, wrinkled, naked, wretched, sorrowful. I was asleep one night. I saw that I went into the shape of a wild stag. I was there thereafter: I was young, and in good spirits, and the lord of a herd, and I made a circuit of Ireland with a great herd of stags around me. Then I spent that time, Nemed’s span and the span of (Ireland’s) settlement by his offspring. For when Nemed came to Ireland they were
thirty-four ships in number, and thirty in each ship. The sea tossed them for a
year and a half. They were drowned and died of hunger, save for four couples
including Nemed. Their race increased in Ireland until there were four
thousand and thirty couples there. Then they all died.

‘Age came upon me at last, and I fled from men and wolves. I stood one
night at the entrance of a cave. I remembered, and I knew how to go from one
shape into another. I went into the shape of a wild boar. I found that swift,
then, and I was in good spirits, and I was lord of the boar-herds of Ireland,
and I used to make a circuit of Ireland. And I had furthermore a dwelling in
this region of the Ulaid, which I visited in the time of my old age and
wretchedness. For it is in one place that I used to change all these shapes.

‘Sémión son of Stairai took this island. Of them are the Fir Domnann and
the Fir Bolg. They dwelt in Ireland. Age came upon me, and my mind was
sorrowful, and I could not keep company with the boars and the herds, but
was alone in caves and cliffs. I went ever to my dwelling. I remembered every
shape in which I had been. I fasted my three days’ fast. I had no strength. I
went into the shape of a hawk, that is, a great muirre. I was content with that.
My spirit was very mighty. I was happy, eager. I flew across Ireland. I learned all
things.

‘Beothecht son of Iordanen took this island from the peoples that were in it.
Of them are the Gállióin, and the Tuatha Dé and Andé, whose origin the men
of learning do not know; but they thought it likely that they are some of the
exiles who came to them from Heaven.

‘Thereafter I was for ages in the hawk’s shape, until I had outlived all the
peoples who had settled in the land of Ireland. The sons of Míl conquered this
island by force from the Tuatha Dé. Once I journeyed in the hawk’s shape in
which I was to the hollow of a tree, above a stream. My mind was sorrowful. I
could not fly, and I feared other birds.

‘I fasted an enned then, and went into the shape of a fresh-water salmon.
God puts me into the river. That was wondrous for me then, and I was
vigorous and happy, and I was a master of swimming. I escaped from every
peril: from the hands of fishermen and from the claws of hawks and from the
spears of fishers, so that the wounds of them are in me.

‘When God decided that it was time to help me, and beasts were harrying
me, and every fisherman in every pool had learned of me, a fisherman brought
me to the wife of Cairell, king of this land. I remember then how the man takes
me and cooks me, and the woman alone eats me so that I was in her womb. I
remember then the interval when I was in her womb, etc., and what everyone
said to his fellow in the house, and what was done in Ireland during that time.
I remember then how speech came to me as to every infant, and I found out
everything that was done in Ireland, and I was a prophet, and a name was
given to me, that is, Tuán son of Cairell. Then Patrick came with the Faith. I
was very old then, and I was baptized, and of my own accord I accepted belief
in the King of All, with His creatures.’
Then they offer mass, and go into (Tuán's) refectory: Finnia with his followers, and Tuán. They are well refreshed. They remain there for a week, conversing. Whatever history and genealogy there is in Ireland, its origin is from Tuán son of Cairell. Patrick had spoken with him before that, and he related it to him; and Colum Cille had spoken with him; and Finnia related it to him in the presence of the folk of the land. And Finnia offered that he should dwell with him, but that was not obtained from him. 'Your house will be illustrious', said Tuán.

Textual Notes

2. cosín tűscélu: The tradition that Finnia brought the gospels to Ireland finds its fullest expression in the commentaries to Félire Oengusso, where it is cited in explanation of the statement that Finnia came 'across the sea with law' (tar sál co rrecht; Sept. 10). Thus Laud Misc. 610 explains that 'it was Finnian of Mag Bile who brought the law of Moses (recht Moisii) into Ireland prius. Or else it is to the gospels (soiscela) that they give the name 'law' here, for it is Finnia who brought totum evangelium ad Hiberniam prius' (p. 204; this tradition is accepted as historical by J. Ryan, Irish Monasticism, London 1931, p. 125). The preface to Mugint's Hymn states that Finnia studied in Britain (Lib. Hymn. 1. 22).


sommai: Outside the glosses I know of no instance of this word's adjetival use apart from the Old Irish tale Ces Noïinden Ulad (Celtica viii 28).

5. doicfa: L reads doticfa here, and HRU doforicfa: each form appears to represent a different choice of infixed pronoun. The adjacent nob dídnabhar indicates that the OIr 2 pl. –b– was still in use at the time of ST's composition, and I have accordingly adopted it here.

nob dídnabhar: Although the univerberation of do-dona 'comforts' is a relatively late feature, the infixed –b– seems older; cf. preceding note.

adfiit: 3 sg. reduplicated s-future of ad-féit.

7. sruithe[h]léirech: That LH agree on this form is strong evidence for its presence in X; otherwise one would be inclined to follow Meyer in adopting the RU reading and understanding a genitive of apposition.

8. dóibh: For dūib.

9. incomairc cith: L reads imchomairc, which looks like a 3 sg. pres. ind. of a strong verb univerberated from imm-comairc 'asks'. But there is very little evidence for univerberation of this kind elsewhere in our text; the modified reading which I have adopted was suggested to me by Liam Bretnach. The word is at all events attested only in L. Ro iarfaig in HRU (cf. 13) indicates that the Y-revision probably postdated SR, where iarmi-foich still has a dental preterite (iarfacht 5529).
10. *Tuán*: This name is disyllabic in verse, and rhymes with *rán*, *rád*, and gen. *báin* (*ZCP* iii 31, *ITS* 41. 282, *Met. Dinds.* 1. 2, *Gorm. Apr.* 1). John Armstrong has suggested to me that the first element in *Tuán* is a hypocoristic form of some such name as *Tuathal* or *Tuathchar*; cf. *Mo Luia* < *Lugaid*. Three saints named *Tua* are in fact listed in the tract *Comainnnog Noem Hérend* (*Arch. Hib.* 1. 352); cf. *Tuau m. Aodha m. Colgan m. Tuathail Cruinneboil*, *Gen. Reg. et SS* p. 72. Hypocoristic names with diminutive suffixes are rare according to O’Brien (*Celtica* x 221); but it is noteworthy that one of the examples which he cites is the name of Tuán’s putative brother *Demmán*, where *Demnae/Dimmae* is a hypocoristic version of *Diarmait*.

Another possibility would be to view the name simply as an -án diminutive from *taue* ‘silent’, with *áu* > *ó* becoming *ú* in medial position and shortening in hiatus (*Thurn. Gramm.* §§47, 69). Semantically cf. such names as *Dallán*, from *dall* ‘blind’; and perhaps *Tae* in the early genealogical poems (*CGH* pp 4, 6, 201).

11. *a Ítha*: A puzzling phrase, quite possibly responsible for the omission of this passage by HRU. I have supplied dat. sg. *Maig*, which could easily have been accidentally omitted by X if abbreviated *m.* or *m̄*. There are several places in Ireland named Mag *nítha*, but none in or near the territory of the Dál Fhiatach; of these it is the best known which is presumably intended here, a tract of land situated southeast of Lough Foyle. The area bounded by this Mag *nítha* and Benna Bairche would include all of the Ulaid territories, as well as Airgialla and Tír Éogain; but even this is considerably more modest than the traditional borders of the *cóiced nUlad*, extending from the valley of the Drobaís (flowing into Donegal Bay) to the estuary of the Boyne (e.g. *ITS* 41. 72).

*cussa ndisert n-i sin*: Literally ‘as far as that hermitage’; but apparently they have already arrived there. (Cf. H’s *indisipur sa itai siu* ‘this hermitage in which you are’.) Demonstrative pronouns seem to be loosely used throughout the text.

*Bennaib Bairche*: The Mourne Mountains in County Down. As I have noted in the introduction, Tuán is associated with the Bairche region in the martyrologies.

15. *nammuiregar sa*: Hull (*Celtica* v 135 n. 5) suggests emending to *nachamm-fuíregar-sa* ‘let me not be held back (delayed, hindered)’, with the ipv. pass. sg. of *fo-rig*. The difficulty of the verbal form is presumably the reason for the omission of the sentence by HRU.

*imin les sin*: For use of *imm* with *les* cf. *Is i dias as dech fil i nÉrinn im les a tigerna* (*BDD* 1220). Otherwise the phrase seems to occur only in the laws, where *les* has its earlier sense ‘redress, business, affair’, e.g. *Cach duine uma less fadeisín* (*Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, ed. D. A. Binchy, Dublin 1978, 45. 3–4). In our text the meaning seems to be vaguer: ‘For the sake of that, in that business’.

16. *adcois*: Perfective pres. subj. of *ad-fét*; in his discussion of this sentence
Hull renders it ‘It is more agreeable for us to meditate upon the Word of God which thou mayest be able to relate to us’ (Celtica v 135). I am inclined to follow him, ascribing use of the subjunctive to the verb’s occurrence in a relative clause referring to the tentative future (cf. Thurn. Gramm. §517 (b)). Professor Quin has suggested to me that *adcois begins a fresh sentence, hence perhaps ‘Relate your discourse to us’.

17. ِimthús na Hérend: Although found only in U, this reading seems best able to account for those of the other MSS.

20. ِtormalta: This looks like the perf. pl. pass. of do-meil: cf. caithtea HRU. The form should properly be *-tormlatha; the word as we have it may be due to analogy with narrative -tomalta.

*dí bliadhain ar míle: U reads dí blia-.xii. ar .ccc. If this was the work of the A-scribe, it would be the only point at which U" differs significantly from all the other MSS including R; but since .xii. and .ccc. are written in rasura, it seems safest to view the divergence as due to U".

23. ِamainse: This word may have the extended meanings ‘harshness’, ‘cleverness’, and ‘cunning’; none gives a clear sense here. Perhaps the lectio facilior of HFRU should be adopted, and the passage taken to refer to the mutual affections of the couples: ‘For there was no great harshness between them’.

24. ِní gnáth orcaín cen scéola n-eisi: John Armstrong has suggested to me that this phrase is proverbial, and the do innísín scél dara n-éisi which follows an intrusive gloss; this would seem to be borne out by the occurrence of the statement *Ní bi orgain cen oensciula in the dindschenchas of Tipra Sengarman (RC 15. 447); the phrase sciula orene occurs twice in Sanas Chormaic s.v. Breccán (Anecd. 4. 28).

Thurneysen suggested taking scéola(e) as an io-stem, rendering it ‘Zeuge, Berichterstalter’ (ZCP xi 34); DIL explains the apparently synonymous sceolang, sciulang as a back-formation from the late plural sceolanga, itself derived from Mi r sceleanna.

28. ِi fás: Fás is here to be taken substantivally, so that the phrase may mean something like ‘in desolation’. The essential meaning seems simply to be ‘empty’, and hence synonymous with simple fás (cf. e.g. LL 474 ba fás tra Heriu); HFRU may be correct in omitting i.

29. ِaddró imtecht: The similarity of this phrase to others later in the tale makes it seem unlikely that it was added here independently by L; while the interpolation of forémed imtecht by HRU immediately below looks like an attempt to make up for a previous omission. It would seem (despite DIL, s.v. at-roí) to be an example of the verb’s original usage as proposed by Lewis and Pedersen, in which ‘the person who failed was the object, and what he failed to achieve the subject’ (Concise comparative Celtic grammar, Göttingen 1974, p. 398); here the object is obscured by the petrified infix.

36. ِdorumalt: Formally the perf. 3 sg. of do-meil, but presumably to be understood as representing 1 sg. doromult (cf. Thr. Ir. Gl., Cormac, s.v.
fogamur): the third person would require an otherwise unattested intransitive usage of the verb. The ambiguity of the form as it stands is presumably responsible for the array of variants in the different MSS. Cf. 59 tormalt below.

38, 40. tríchait: For thríchait.

41. dorroibtatar: The Olr form should be doroibatar; -tæ- in L may have arisen from confusion with the synonymous dobathatar (cf. atbathatar HFRU), augmented by the intrusion of a dental pret. ending.

46. d’athigid: The syntax here is peculiar, and does not seem to accord with the attested usages of do + v.n. The form d’athigid occurs only in L; the in tan ticend of the other MSS may well gloss an earlier reading rathigid ‘I used to frequent’. D and t are often very similar in L, and the -n- could easily have been expressed by a suspension-stroke lost in transmission.

54. murrech: My treatment of this word is very tentative. The readings muirfeich in L and muirriach in R both suggest that the word is a compound muir + fiach (cf. muirbran, fiach mara); this is the view adopted by DIL, s.v. But fiach is a hiatus-word, so that the -e(í)- of the second syllable is hard to account for — the spellings of L and R should probably be understood as secondary guesses. It is also noteworthy that only L places the word in the gen., although its spelling of the adjective (máir) seems early. This had led me to the hypothesis that X read murrech máir, modified by L according to the adjective’s case, by HFRU according to the apparent case of the noun. A genitive murrech would point to nominative *muirre, perhaps a compound originally meaning ‘sea-king’, but all of this is extremely conjectural.

54. sáithech: It is puzzling that F’s sathach should agree with LH against sir(a)tech RU*: all our other evidence links it most closely with the latter MSS.

57. in Gálúin: Both of the MSS which retain this name here end it with a broad consonant; it seems possible that the scribe of X, misinterpreting the Ol nom. pl. masc. article in, concluded that the noun was singular.

59. tormalt: The readings in HU indicate that Y modernized a form which it took to be perf. 1 sg.; this should properly be tormalt (cf. Wb 18 a 10), but the loss of u-colouring is presumably only scribal (cf. 36 dorumalt above).

62. addró, etc.: For a detailed discussion of the variants here see Hull, Celtica v 138–40.

63. nómaid: Probably a period of three days; cf. 53 thredan above, and Stokes, RC 12. 122.

65. adhuinn: From a-su. DIL sees a petrified infixed pronoun here (cf. the petrified infix in 29, 62 addró), but the form may equally easily reflect confusion of ad- and as-, found already in the Olr glosses (e.g. ad-gúí Sg 148 a 4).

69. condombeir in fer 7fomnóí: Although this is for the most part the reading of L, I have modified it in three respects. (a) Since the non-nasalizing conjunction co is unknown outside the Olr glosses, I have replaced it with co n-; the latter could easily have been interpreted as the former via the
compendium 3. (b) I have corrected domber to dombeir. (c) L has the late reading fomuid me, with univerbation and an object pronoun; I feel justified in correcting to fomnoid in light of the HR reading rom imain.

71. 7r.l.: As I have noted in the introduction, this phrase seems to indicate the omission of a passage present in X's exemplar, presumably the description of Tuán's birth.

81. torgaid: Retention of t- where to- precedes a stressed vowel is discussed by McCone, Eriu xxx 4-8.

82. beith: Should be beth.

(Ending): Each of the MSS concludes the tale differently. U breaks off incomplete. H ends with Ni maith in ni sinfinit, indicating presumably that the original was in some way unsatisfactory at this point. F simply gives Finit, while R has a cryptically abbreviated phrase, itself probably corrupt, which should perhaps be expanded Quia hic locus (referring to loc/tech in the preceding sentence?); FR both add thereafter the Middle Irish poem 'Tuán mac Cairill ro clos', also found in an inferior version in the third recension of LG (ITS 39. 80-2; R's text has been transcribed by Meyer, ZCP iii 31). L has a brief paragraph in Latin and Irish: Tuán fuit in forma uiri centumannis in Héri iar Finian. Fiacha blia in forma porci. lxxx. anni in forma cerui. Centum anni in forma aquilae. xxx. blia- fo lind in forma pi[s]cis. Iterum in forma hominis co sentaith co haimisir Finnio mc. Hui Fiatach. Finit.

Was it this passage which Y failed to transmit correctly? The short dative Héri suggests that it is of approximately the same date as the rest of the text; but the reference to Fintan, a figure belonging to LG tradition but not mentioned in ST, and the order of the metamorphoses, are inconsistent with what has gone before. The scribe of L wrote in the margin Mā ta in scel so fa do sa lebur so, ni dermat fodera he aeb a febas ata se and so 'If this story occurs twice in this book, it is not through forgetfulness but because of the excellence in it'; this shows that he viewed the final paragraph as a reduplication (as Dillon apparently failed to recognize, Celtica vi 149 n. 1), but does not enlighten us as to its original relationship with the rest of ST.

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