John Carey
'The Lough Foyle Colloquy Texts'

THE LOUGH FOYLE COLLOQUY TEXTS:
IMMACALDAM CHOLUIM CHILLE 7 IND ÓCLAIG OC CARRAIC EOLAIRG AND *IMMACALDAM IN DRUAD BRAIN 7 INNA BANFÁTHO FEBUIL ÓS LOCH FEBUIL*

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents new editions, accompanied by translations and textual notes, of two texts associated with the legendary origin of Lough Foyle. These have usually been discussed in terms of their possible relationship with the tale *Immram Brain,* and it has been argued that both once formed part of the lost compilation *Cín Dromma Snechtai*. James Carney has suggested that they date from the seventh century; although they are evidently Old Irish, I can find no clear indications that either was written earlier than the eighth century.

INTRODUCTION

The two brief texts edited below, although they seem to have been transmitted independently of one another from a relatively early date, are naturally treated as a pair. Both allude to a legend (which has not itself survived) according to which Lough Foyle originated in a great deluge which engulfed an ancient kingdom. Both are presented as dialogues, and the wording of their two titles is closely parallel. It has been plausibly argued that both formed part of the lost compilation *Cín Dromma Snechtai* (Thurneysen 1921a, 17–18; Mac Cana 1975, 37–8; Carney 1976, 175). James Carney held on linguistic grounds that the two texts 'should be dated at latest to the early seventh century' (Carney 1976, 181 n. 19). In a recent article I followed this view, using Carney's dating to support my own hypothesis regarding the relationship between these texts and other parts of the *Cín Dromma Snechtai* collection (Carey 1995, 77–80, 91). In light of considerations presented below, I now find it more difficult to be confident that the colloquy texts are earlier than the eighth century: this may have wider repercussions for the scenario I have proposed for *Cín Dromma Snechtai*'s evolution.

In what follows, it will be obvious that I owe much to those who have worked with this material before me, most particularly to Paul Grosjean and James Carney. On this occasion I have sought only to provide editions of the two texts, and have made no attempt to interpret them in thematic terms or to elucidate their background. For some discussion of these wider issues the reader may consult Meyer 1899, 317–20; Mac Cana 1975; Carney 1976; Carey 1982, 36–8; Carey 1995; and Carey 1999, 3–7.

As the texts are quite short it has been possible to include full

(f) $o < a$: *bod < bad* 2, *o* (A) $< a$ 3.

(g) $ou < o$: *oul* 7.

(h) $u < b, f$: *anuhis/anufis < anfis* 6, *uasiu/uaisi < basa* 11, 12.

(i) Falling together of lenited *d* and *g*: *diult < giult* 10, *doraighe <   >
     /diraighedh < ro ráided* 29.

A multitude of individual forms common to A and B will be evident in
the diplomatic texts below. Note for instance *Mogg <   >/
Moggan < Mongán* 2; *fóat/foat < fót* 5; *mboidhe/mboideai < mbuide* 13;
timtach < timthach 15; *daumhda/daumdai < damdai* 19; *eithdiu < echdai*
20; *Oruip < Eoraip* 20; *glais(s), inbir < glas, inber* 21; *ebert/epert < epirt*
29. The number of shared errors and innovations is so great, and the
readings of the two manuscripts are for the most part so similar, that
there can be no doubt of their close relationship.

Various estimates have been made of the date of *ICC*'s original
composition. Meyer (1899, 314) held that it 'cannot have been later than
the ninth century and may even be assigned to the eighth'. Mac Cana
(1975, 37–8) observed that 'there does not appear to be any serious
objection to this, or to an even earlier dating, on linguistic grounds', and
made the persuasive suggestion that the tale had once formed part of the
lost collection *Cín Dromma Snechtai*. Grosjean (1927, 77) refrained from
any detailed analysis of the language, but suggested a date in the middle
of the eighth century. Discussing instances in *Immacaldam in Druad Brain*
of a usage which in his view belonged 'at latest to the early seventh
century', James Carney (1976, 180–1 n. 19) remarked in passing that 'a
number of comparable forms' occur in *ICC* (cf. remarks on 7 *robo* in the
textual notes below).

Allowing for the eccentric orthography of the manuscripts, and the fact
that even their joint testimony can scarcely take us further back than the
fifteenth century, the following indications of *ICC*'s age appear
significant:

(j) Strong forms of the preterite are consistently preserved; note
     particularly *mbeba, ngénir* 5; *giult* 10; *senas, ráth* 11; *coímnacuir*
     28.

(k) Survival of the neuter gender is reflected in lenition after the infix in
     A *re henaus < ro senas* 11 (*sic leg.*; see note); in nasalization of *buide*
     and *glas* (though not, in the MSS, of *derg*) after *seól* 12, 13, and of
     géim after *bind* 19; and in the article *a* preceding *mmuir* (*sic leg.*)
     16. On the strength of this evidence I have ventured to restore the
     old form of the neuter article before *loch* at 7–8; the archetype's
     tendency to replace nasalising *a* with *in* has extended to the
     conjunction *a* 'when, while' at 11–12, and to replacement of *forsa*
     'on which' with *forsin* at 5.

(l) *Fil* takes accusative 'subjects' at 18–20.

(m) The augmented preterite appears to be used in the sense of a perfect
     or pluperfect, with the exception of *óro bátar* 24.

(n) *U*-affection is preserved in *-fesur* 5, *ro giult-sa* 10–11, *ferunn* 21, *chobrunn* 24 and 28, *neuch* 29.

(o) As Meyer noted, B preserves the reading *in tain* 27, where the slender final consonant is characteristic of the glosses; nasalization of the verb following this conjunction also appears to be an Old Irish feature.

(p) Both MSS read *fóo, búu* 18–19, reflecting a convention for indicating the length of vowels in final syllables which is well represented in the Würzburg glosses (*GOI* §27).

(q) The spelling *lour* preserved in B at 22 is common in the glosses, but not attested in later sources, so far as I can tell.

(r) *Déicsiu* is given a short dative in *oca ndéicsi* 25 (but contrast *ndécsin* 22).

Later forms not necessarily dependent on spelling are, however, also present:

(s) The text has *na* rather than *inna* for the gen. pl. definite article 23; this form is, however, already attested in the Würzburg glosses (Wb. 12c11, 16a12 and 18d14).

(t) *Ro* + 3sg. neut. infixed pronoun is *ro*, not *ra* (10–12), reflecting a development not attested before the end of the Old Irish period (*GOI* §415; McCone 1987, 183). For the variant spelling in *re henaus* A, *re< >naus* B 11, see discussion in the textual note below.

(u) The word used for 'salmon' is *é* 11, a by-form of *eó* not otherwise attested before the ninth century.

(v) A petrified 3sg. neuter infix is present in *at-chiam* 8.

Of these points, (s) is not inconsistent with an eighth-century date, but would be less plausible earlier; (t)–(v), however, point to *c*. 900 or later, as does *óro bátar* 24 mentioned above (but cf. textual note below). One would expect that so late a date of composition would be reflected, at least to some extent, in the verbal system: I am therefore inclined to regard these later forms as being results of *ICC*'s transmission, rather than original features of the text.

I cannot, however, see any linguistic indication that *ICC* should be assigned to a period earlier than that of the Würzburg glosses. The isolated spellings *ingnath* 21 (vs. *ingnadh/ingnadu* 4) and *tul-/taul-* 27 (vs. *dolod* 3) exhibit features that are characteristic of, for example, the Cambrai Homily, but are by no means limited to 'archaic' sources (for a discussion of final *-th* after an unstressed syllable in ninth- and tenth-century documents see Ó Máille 1910, 115). Pretonic *to-* can be parallelled in works probably dating from the ninth century, such as *Do Bunad Imthechta Eóganachta* (Meyer 1912a; e.g. *to-bretha* 312.21, *tos-cumlat* 313.3) and *In Tenga Bithnua* (Stokes 1905; e.g. *tom-raid* §9, *to-gluaise* §33).

The above considerations suggest that *ICC* was composed not later than the eighth century, copied at least once *c*. 900 or later, then copied

again into a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century manuscript immediately or virtually immediately antecedent to A and B. In the edition which follows I have normalized the text in accordance with 'standard' Old Irish spelling, but have retained such readings as *ro* for *ra* and *na* for *inna*. At certain points in the notes I have suggested readings anterior to those of the earliest reconstructible exemplar (see notes on *ní* [*ansa*] 18, *uathmara alachtmara* 19, *óro bátar* 24); but I have not incorporated these in the edited text.

DIPLOMATIC TEXTS

A: Dublin, TCD MS 1319, p. 178b

[Note: The right edge of the page is considerably darkened, and some of the text has been lost due to clipping. I have not always been able to make out letters which Grosjean believed he could see.]

I*M*Maccallaim*mh* col- cille & an od< >
ocarric holairc asb*er*at alaile bod mogg< >
iac- asbert ql- q*u*ildi[1] fris c*an* dolotca o aglac< >
q*u*ildi. Rospon- inuenios dodechsa oul ind ocl< >
iriu*h* ingnad*h* atioriu*h* gnat*h*acha cofess*ur* u< >
fóat f*or*si*n* meaou*h*a ag- fout f*or*angenuir fis< >
anu*h*is Rospon- inue*n*ios ces oul col- q*u*illea co< >
rou*h*io.[2] Riaom*h* indlochsa ætcím. Roespon-< >
uenios Rosf*7ur*sa aonnisein babuid*h*e bao sc< >
t*h*ach baglas batilcuc*h*[3] // Rodiultsa inu*h*a< >[4]
Baholaich bahossrac*h* bah*air*gtech ua cairptech
re henaus[5] indbasi hée *7*nuasí.[6] Ronrothrat< >[7]
inuasiu q all- imrul- inuasiu duinei Rogab< >
fotrib*h* seoluib*h* siul mboid*h*e[8] beres seol ṅglas
bad*h*us seol d*er*g focom*b*reth- feule. Roiechtsat
mnao dinim*h* ac*h*t naet*h*fiter[9] aoth*ar* maoth*ar* cidbe< >
ac*h*t colub*h*uirr[10] fridaoine bíuu cotimtach fri ma< >
Asbiurt[11] col- q*u*ilde ait*h*arrach frissind oclidg
osaininirsie friu*nn* aanouir cid[12] fot*h*ao Ni fri< >

[1] The *di* digraph is written as if it were *q* with a superscript *i*.

[2] The marks „ appear between this word and *uenios* in the line below. Although they are clearly deliberate, I cannot make any suggestion regarding their significance.

[3] Grosjean here read *tilcauch*, but what he took to be a subscript *a* is in fact the *spiritus asper* in *bahossrach* in the line below. Grosjean himself interpreted it in this way when he reached the latter word.

[4] It is just possible that *si* can be made out here.

[5] There is a dot either beneath the *u* in this word or above *q* in the line below; Grosjean's *qu′* appears to reflect the latter interpretation.

[6] As Grosjean noted, *7* has here been written in error for *i*.

[7] The letters *ra* can perhaps be made out here.

[8] Read as *mbodhe* by Grosjean.

[9] Read as *naeth it*er by Grosjean.

[10] The barred *i* representing *ir* looks as if it may be the work of a second hand.

[11] Read as *Asbuirt* by Grosjean.

[12] The *d* in this word appears to have been written over an earlier *a*.

sgaort in ocl-. fil fiuru foundmra foltl< >
fóo. Fil búu huat*hmar* aolaocht máora fo< >
asau*h*int ngeine fil daom*h*a daum*h*da fil
eocha eit*h*diu. fil deichcenda. filtrechen*n*< >
anoruip inaisía itiriu*h* ingnat*h* hif*er*un< >
glais osimil imel coinbir lorgosin ol[13] col-< >
Atraig*h* .c.c. ocandesin a m*t*e leis f*or*leit*h* dia
acallui*m* 7 dafi*ar*f-[14] nao ruon ne*m*da 7 talman*n*< >
orobad*ar* hisi*n* cou*h*run l7*h*e laoi naoiouoin
tr*ath* cor.íí. muint*er* .cc. ocandeisi dietirq*h*e< >
orogléi incubr- *con*acad*ar* tailmid*h*e docel*ur*< >
indogl- nifet*ar* cid[15] luid*h*i nótul- tan mbao
am*t* ogguid*h*i .cc. arafaiollsieg*h*e doib*h* Ni don[16]
coubrun*n* asb*er*t col- q*u*ille friu nat caom*n*ac< >
cid*h* aoen*n* br-ir daeb*er*t f*r*iu do neoch doraig*h*e< >
f*r*is oc*us* asb*er*t ua móa doles dodaoiniu*h* an< >
faisneus doib*h* =f=i=n=i=t=a=m=e=n< >

B: Dublin, TCD MS 1337, pp. 555b–556a

IMacaldaim calldaoim cill- 7 indoclaig oi
cartt heolarc asb*er*at alailiu bode mogga*n*
m- fichnaoi aisb*er*t coldam .ć. fris can do
lotsa aóclouig ol .c.c. respon-< >iuéinís[17]

[p. 556a]

dodechusa oul indoclauch atirib ing
nadu atirib gnath cai fes*ur* uoitsiai f
oat f*or*sin mebai acaus fout f*or*au nge
nir fis 7[18] anufis respon- .c.c. cescc
oulcolum cidle coiuch reboi riam in*n*[19]
lochsae aetcium respon-< >iuenís.[20] r
of 7*ur*sae aenísein bae bouide baiscot*h*
ach baglas batilc*h*uch baholaich bahos

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[13] These two letters are written together as a digraph, almost resembling the letter *d*.

[14] The letters *da* read as *dia* by Grosjean.

[15] The *d* in this word has been written over an earlier *a*.

[16] Read as *du*n by Grosjean.

[17] There is an erasure here, and Grosjean speculated that the original reading was *iuueinis*. But the first minim in the word as it now stands does not resemble the final stroke of *u* as this appears elsewhere in the text. It could however be the final stroke of an *n*: cf. the reading *inuenios* in A.

[18] There appears to be an erasure here, around the edges of which, however, the 7 is still visible.

[19] In the left margin opposite this and the preceding line are the words 7 *fot fors/ anadnuic*; see textual note below. Grosjean took this to be the work of the scribe of the main text, but it is not clear to me that this is the case. Not only is the writing considerably scratchier here, but the top stroke of each *f* is rounded, rather than rising into a peak as it does in the body of the text; and the second *a* of *anadnuic* has an open top, whereas the main scribe writes an *a* in which the left ascender not only meets that on the right, but extends beyond it.

[20] The situation here is the same as that described in footnote 17 above.

rach bahairgdech bacarbt*h*ech rodiu
ltsea inbasiu as re< >naus[21] indbasi hée
7 inuuisi ronrothrathrath[22] inuaisi q́
alldaich immorul- inuaisi douiniu ro
gabus fuaithrib seoluip siul mboid
eai beris seoul nglaus badus seul.[23] se
ol d*er*g focombreth- feula. roiechtsat
mnae dimm *acht*naetfeiutir ath- m-r ci
db*e*r atcutlub rur fridoine biu co
timtach f*r*imarbu. Asb*er*t colldam cid
le aithairrauch f*r*isi*n*noicluigi. Osaíni
nirsi[24] f*r*iun anuir cid fotha ní. f*r*isgart
indóiclauch fil firu fondmuriu fo
ltliubru fóó fil buu huathm*a*ru alac
htmaru fóó assabint ngeime filda
mai daumdai fail euchu eithdiu fiul
déichendua fiuil tréch*e*ndi indoruip
inaisia itirib ingnath hferund glaiss
osa< >ilimel[25] coainbir. lour co siun óul
.c.c. atr*a*ig .c.c. ocandesin am-t-e[26] leis fo
rleith diaacalldaim 7 doiarfuid- nar
ún nemdai 7 talmandai orubat*ar* hisi*n*
cobrun*n* l7*h* laí noi ointr*a*th coraile mu
innntir .c.c. ocandeicsi dietarch*e*ín
O roglei ind cobrunn *con*acat*ar* ta< >lmidu[27]
docel*ar* erru indoclach nif7aut*ar* cialu
id ł ciataul- intain mboei amueintar
ogaguidea coll- cidlea arafaillsigh7*h* do
eib ní don*n*cobrun*n* asb*er*t .c.c. friu natca
eumnicair cid aeonbr-ir doep*er*t f*r*iu do
neuch diraigh7*h* fris oc*u*sasb*er*t bamoud
diles dodaeinib anea*m*aisneis doib. F.Ī.

[21] Here there is an erasure large enough to accommodate two letters. If the text originally read *re senaus* here, *se-* could have been mistaken for *re-* and then erased as a dittography: cf. at 24< >*ilimel* B vs. *imil imel* A, where perceived dittography may also lie behind the erasure. What look like the ends of at least two long descenders project below the erasure's lower edge; Grosjean interpreted these as *puncta delentia*.

[22] Given as *ro*; *rothrathrach* by Grosjean.

[23] Beneath this word are a series of *puncta delentia* in drypoint. Grosjean held these to be 'iisdem forma et atramento ac puncta quae adhuc leguntur sub duabus litteris erasis ante vocem *naus*' ('of the same form and ink as the points which are still read beneath the two letters erased before the word *naus*'; cf. footnote 21 above): this does not seem to me to be the case.

[24] As Grosjean has noted, the *n* has been added here in the left margin, apparently by the original hand.

[25] Here there is another erasure, which seems to afford space for two letters: cf. discussion in the textual notes.

[26] Lines have been written across the words *ocandesin am-t-e*, as if to delete them. *Pace* Grosjean, the second word contains only one *t*.

[27] The letter *i* can still be discerned in the erasure here.

EDITED TEXT

Immacaldam Choluim Chille 7 ind óclaig oc Carraic Eolairg; as-berat
alaili bad é Mongán mac Fiachnai.

    As-bert Colum Cille fris: 'Can do-lod-su, a óclach?' ol Colum Cille.

    Respondit iuuenis: 'Do-dechad-sa,' ol ind óclach, 'a tírib ingnad, a
tírib gnáth, co fesur uait-siu fót forsa mbeba ocus fót fora ngénir fis 7   5
anfis.'

    Respondit Colum Cille: 'Cesc,' ol Colum Cille; 'cóich robo riam, a
lloch-sa at-chiam?'

    Respondit iuuenis: 'Ro-fetur-sa aní-sin. Ba buide, ba scothach, ba
glas, ba tilchach, ba ólach, ba osrach, ba airgtech, ba cairptech. Ro giult-   10
sa a mbasa os; ro senas a mbasa é, a mbasa rón; ro ráth a mbasa cú
allaid; imma-rulod a mbasa duine. Ro gabus fo thríb seólaib: seól
mbuide beres, seól nglas bádas, seól nderg foa combretha feóili. Ro
iachtsat mná dím; acht nád fitir atharmáthair, cid beras: co lubair fri
doíni bíu, co timthach fri marbu.'   15

    As-bert Colum Cille aitherruch frisin n-óclaig .i. 'Os a mmuir-se frinn
anair, cid fo-thá?'

    'Ní [ansa],' fris-gart ind óclach. 'Fil firu fonnmaru foltlibru fóo. Fil
búu uathmara alachtmara fóo asa mbind ngéim. Fil damu damdai. Fil
echu echdai. Fil déichendai, fil trechendai, i nEoraip, i nAisia, i tírib   20
ingnath, i ferunn glas, asa imbel imbel coa inber.'

    'Lour co sin,' ol Colum Cille. At-raig Colum Cille, oca ndécsin a
muintire, leis for leith dia acaldaim 7 dia iarfaigid na rún nemdae 7
talmandae. Óro bátar isin chobrunn, leth lai nó ó oentráth co 'raile,
muinter Choluim Chille oca ndéicsi di etarchéin.   25

    Óro glé, co n-accatar talmaidiu do-celar erru ind óclach. Ní fetatar cia
luid nó can to-luid. In tain mboíe a muinter oca guidi Choluim Chille ara
foillsiged dóib ní don chobrunn, as-bert Colum Cille friu nád coímnacuir
cid oenbréthir do epirt do neuch ro ráided fris; ocus as-bert ba móu do
les do doínib a nemaisnéis dóib. Finit.   30

TRANSLATION

The conversation of Colum Cille and the youth at Carn Eolairg; some say that he was Mongán mac Fiachna.

Colum Cille said to him: 'Whence do you come, youth?' said Colum Cille.

Respondit iuuenis: 'I come,' said the youth, 'from lands of strange things, from lands of familiar things, so that I may learn from you the spot on which died, and the spot on which were born, knowledge and ignorance.'

Respondit Colum Cille: 'A question,' said Colum Cille. 'Whose was it formerly, this lough which we see?'

Respondit iuuenis: 'I know that. It was yellow, it was flowery, it was green, it was hilly; it was rich in liquor, and strewn rushes, and silver, and chariots. I have grazed it when I was a stag; I have swum it when I was a salmon, when I was a seal; I have run upon it when I was a wolf; I have gone around it when I was a human. I have landed there under three sails: the yellow sail which bears, the green sail which drowns, the red sail under which bodies were conceived (?). Women have cried out because of me, although father and mother do not know what they bear, with labour for living folk, with a covering for the dead.'

Colum Cille said again to the youth: 'And this sea to the east of us, what is under it?'

'Not hard to answer,' said the youth: 'there are long-haired men with broad territories beneath it; there are fearsome greatly-pregnant cows beneath it, whose lowing is musical; there are bovine oxen; there are equine horses; there are two-headed ones; there are three-headed ones—in Europe, in Asia, in lands of strange things, in a green land, whose border is a border as far as its river-mouth (?).'

'That is enough,' said Colum Cille. Looking toward his followers, Colum Cille arises and went aside with him, to speak with him and to ask him about the heavenly and earthly mysteries. They were conversing (?) for half the day, or from one day to the next, as Colum Cille's followers watched them from a distance.

When [the conversation] ended, they suddenly saw that the youth was hidden from them. They did not know whither he went nor whence he came. When Colum Cille's followers were asking him to reveal to them something of the conversation (?), Colum Cille told them that he could not tell them even a single word of anything that he had been told; and he said that it was better for mortals not to be informed of it. *Finit.*

TEXTUAL NOTES

1. *ind óclaig*: In this instance the word *óclach* is clearly treated as a masc. *o*-stem, but in the body of the text the balance of the evidence seems to point to its flexion as a fem. *ā*-stem. Thus, of the word's three occurrences in nom. sg., those at 4 and 26 are preceded in both MSS by the article *ind* rather than *int*, while that at 18 has *in* in A and *ind* in B. In the acc. sg. example at 18, the final velar appears to be slender in both MSS (*oclidg* A, *oicluigi* B). The voc. sg. instance at 3 is less conclusive, with *aglac<   >*pointing to fem. *óclach* in A, and *óclouig* pointing to masc. *óclaig* in B.

Opinion is divided as to whether the masculine or the feminine treatment of *óclach* is the earlier (see *DIL* s.v. *óclach*; *LEIA*, M-50, O-3); but this uncertainty has no real implications for the dating of our text, as both forms seem to have been current throughout the medieval period. What does appear significant is the noun's differing treatment in the text proper and in its title: this suggests that the latter is a secondary addition.

1–2. *Carraic, Mongán*: Meyer (1899, 314) took *Cartt* (in B) and *Moggan* (reflected in both MSS) to be 'genuine archaic spellings'. In fact, however, they are evidently examples of the late, exotic orthography common in our text: the odd *cartt* probably reflects earlier *carnd* for *carn* (cf. *uhint*, *bint* for *mbind* 19); while *gg* for *ng* is a spelling also characteristic of the notorious Harleian MS 5280 (e.g. *loggaib*, *imscigg*, *cumagg*: Gray 1982, ll 23, 237, 318).

1–2. *as-berat alaili bad é Mongán mac Fiachnai*: This statement, to which nothing in the body of the text corresponds, may perhaps be viewed as an addition—cf. the discussion in Carney 1976, 192; Carey 1995, 82–3; and the note on *ind óclaig* at 1 above.

5. *fót forsa mbeba 7 fót fora ngénir*: B here adds in the margin the phrase *7 fot forsa n-adnuic*; there are, however, no reference marks to show where this should be inserted in the text. The literal meaning seems to be 'and the spot upon which buries', giving little sense—one might have expected *7 fót foa n-adnacht* 'and the sod beneath which was buried'. The awkwardness of the diction, and the way in which the use of *for* and of an active verb echo *forsa mbeba* and *fora ngénir* to the apparent detriment of sense, incline me to see this phrase as secondary—perhaps indeed the work of another hand (cf. footnote 19 above).

5. *mbeba*: I have understood this verb to be preterite. As Liam Breatnach has pointed out to me, however, the conjunct 3sg. future has the same form, raising the possibility that we should translate it as 'the spot on which will die'.

5. *ngénir*: Meyer also included *ngenir* B (cf. *ngenuir* A) in his short list of 'genuine archaic spellings'—cf. the note on 1–2 above. But even if B's reading reflects the archetype here, the *a*-glide is often omitted in e.g. the Würzburg glosses when indicating an unstressed vowel between a non-palatal and a palatal consonant (*GOI* §102.5; McCone 1996, 33).

7. *cóich*: Rendered 'what' by Meyer and Mac Cana, and 'quid' by Grosjean. Mac Cana (1975, 37) points out that although in the older language *cóich* generally means 'whose is?', it appears to be used to mean 'who?' in *Amra Coluim Chille*. On the other hand, a question beginning 'whose?' is not inappropriate when the subject is a vanished kingdom; cf. *Immacaldam in Druad Brain* below (especially §1*ab*), where reminiscences concerning the antecedents of Lough Foyle deal largely with that kingdom's former rulers.

7. *robo*: As noted in the introductory remarks above, James Carney (1976, 180–1 n. 19) held that *ICC* contains forms comparable to the 'very archaic' usage in which 'the copula is indistinguishable from the substantive verb': this usage was in his opinion to be assigned 'at latest to the early seventh century' (cf. further discussion below in the note on *Immacaldam in Druad Brain* §1*c*). The potential examples in our text are *rouhio* A, *reboi* B here; and *ba buidhe, bao sc< >thach* A, *bae bouide, bai scothach* B at 9. The other instances of the 3sg. pret. copula in this sentence are given as *ba* in both MSS. As is apparent from the discussion of orthography above, these unusual spellings are very likely late elaborations rather than archaic survivals: see especially the examples collected under heading (a).

10. *osrach*: Meyer did not translate this word; Grosjean tentatively rendered it 'ostreus', comparing Modern Irish *oisre* 'oyster'. But the latter seems likeliest to be a borrowing from French or English; *DIL* is surely correct in recognising *osrach* as an adjective derived from *osair* 'a litter, bed of rushes', with the sense 'abounding in litter (rushes, bracken, etc.)'. Mac Cana translates *Ba osrach* as 'It had abundance of rushes (or "of rush beds", i.e. of hospitality)'.

10–11. *ro giult-sa*: MSS *rodiultsa* A, *rodiultsea* B. Meyer hesitantly proposed a translation 'I abandoned it (?)', as if from a univerbated form of *do-sluindi*; it was Grosjean who recognized that the verb must be a form of *gelid* 'grazes'.

11. *ro šenas*: MSS *re henaus* A, *re< >naus* B. Rendered 'natavi' by Grosjean: this appears to be the only attestation of the regular Old Irish reduplicated *s*-preterite of *snaïd* 'swims'.
Re in the MSS represents *ro* + 3sg. neut. infixed pronoun, which would be *ra* in standard Old Irish. But the adjacent forms *ro giult-sa* and *ro ráth* exhibit the development *ra* > *ro* which begins to be attested in texts of the

ninth century (cf. (t) in the introductory remarks above); I have normalized following their example. *Re* for *ro* is a specimen of the fanciful orthography affected by the late exemplar shared by A and B, comparable to the use of *de* for proclitic *do* which is so common in Harleian MS 5280 (e.g. *debert, derat*: Gray 1982, ll 16 and 110); cf. in *ICC* itself B's reading *reboi* for *robo* 7.

11. *ro ráth*: This plausible emendation of *rothrat< >*A, *rothrathrath* B was suggested by Mac Cana (1975, 36 n. 10). Meyer had emended to *rothrachtach*, which he translated 'of great strength'; Grosjean (who gave B's reading as *rothrathrach*) recognized that a verb was probably present, but did not speculate as to its identity.

The absence of an accompanying prepositional phrase indicates that this verb, like the two which precede it, is to be understood as having an infixed object: Mac Cana accordingly proposed 'I have coursed over it'. The transitive use of *reithid* in this sense does not appear to be otherwise attested, but can perhaps be postulated by analogy with other verbs of motion—cf. *co luid Moisi Muir Romuir* 'until Moses crossed the Red Sea' (*SR* 2310).

12–13. *seól mbuide beres, seól nglas mbádas*: Meyer translated this 'a yellow sail, it carried a green sail, it drowned', but *beirid* should have a dental preterite in an Old Irish text. Grosjean proposed 'velo flavo, ursino, velo viridi (vel cinereo colore), quod in unda mergit' ('with a yellow, ursine sail, with a green (or ash-coloured) sail, which sinks in a wave'), evidently taking *beres* to be connected with Modern Irish *béar* (<English *bear*). Mac Cana's 'a yellow sail which bears [one forth] (?), a green (*glas*) sail which submerges (?)' seems to point in a more promising direction.

13. *foa combretha feóili*: My understanding of this phrase, which previous translators have refrained from rendering, takes *feóili* to mean 'bodies'. Cf. its use to mean 'carcasses' elsewhere in the language (*DIL* s.v. *feóil*, col. 79.75–80), with metaphorical extension to human bodies in the later versions of *Audacht Morainn* §37 (Thurneysen 1917, 85; Kelly 1976, 66). The use of Greek *sárx* and Latin *caro* in the sense 'body' seems comparable (Bauer 1979 s.v. *sárx* (2); Glare 1982 s.v. *caro* (2); Souter 1949 s.v. *caro*)— cf. for instance John 3:6: *Quod natum est ex carne caro est* ('What is born from flesh is flesh').

13–14. *ro iachtsat mná dím*: Previously this has been translated 'Women shouted to me' (Meyer), 'Clamaverunt feminae ad me' (Grosjean), 'Women have cried out to me' (Mac Cana); both Grosjean and Mac Cana acknowledge that the preposition poses difficulties for this rendering. *Iacht* 'cry' and its derivatives appear to be mainly used of lamentation for the dead, usually by women. Another instance of the verb's use with *de* occurs in a *retoiric* in the tale *Brislech Mór Maige Muirthemne*: *Iactbadir cind de sein* 'Heads will be mourned because of

him' (*LL* 13927), where *iactbadir* is evidently future passive like the immediately following verb *ailfitir*, not deponent as suggested by *DIL*. In the seventh-century poem 'Fo réir Choluimb céin ad-fías', the phrase *íachtais de* 'she screamed from him' is used of a woman's cry in her labour pains (Kelly 1973, 12–13 §8 and note). *Iachtaid de* can accordingly be used of a woman's shrieks on occasions of both birth and death: in the present case, where the youth is claiming to have passed through many lives, this ambiguity may be deliberate.

14. *atharmáthair*: I have taken the MS readings (*aothar maoth*ar A, *ath- m-r* B) to reflect a dvandva compound, subject of the singular verbs *-fitir* and *beras* (cf. Meyer 1912c; *GOI* 164; McCone 1994, 128). Alternatively, we could understand an asyndetic pair *athair máthair*. In this case *-fitir* would be singular by agreement with the first of the two nouns which follow it; cf. e.g. *cotagart Badb 7 Bé Néit 7 Némain forru* 'B. and B. N. and N. shrieked above them' (*TBC* 1 3942; cf. 4033). But it seems unlikely that the singular number of *beras* could be accounted for in the same way: contrast the treatment of the verbs in the sentence **Dolluid** *Conchobar 7 Fergus mac Róig 7 mathi Ulad olchena asin cluchemaig ammuig co* **ndesetar** *thall isin Craebrúaid Conchobair* (*Fled Bricrenn, LU* 9178–80).

14. *cid beras*: MSS *cid be< >acht* A, *cid berat* B. The reading of B seems to make good sense here, but the grammar is problematical: in Old Irish one would expect either *cia berat*, with the unstressed form of the interrogative pronoun acting as a conjunct particle, or *cid* (*m*)*berte*, with stressed pronoun and absolute flexion of the verb. It is also hard to see how *berat*, if it stood in the original, could have given rise to the reading of A. I have accordingly restored 3sg. pres. subjunctive *beras*, agreeing in number with the putative compound *atharmáthair* (see preceding note). According to this interpretation the reading of A would represent no more than a misplaced suspension mark—for what it is worth, the same MS has another stray mark above the *s* in *iechtsat*—while the plural ending in B can be taken as a *lectio facilior*.

The basic idea being expressed here seems to be echoed in the opening of *Longes Mac nUislenn*, in which a pregnant woman asks the druid Cathbad to predict the future of her child: *Ar nád fitir banscál cia fo- brú bí* 'For a woman does not know who is within her womb' (Hull 1949, 43.27–8).

14–15. *co lubair fri doíni bíu, co timthach fri marbu*. This phrase has been previously rendered 'I speak (?) to living men…to the dead' (Meyer), 'etsi loquor ad homines vivos, ut commercium habeam cum <hominibus> mortuis' ('although I speak to living men, so that I may have dealings with dead <men>') (Grosjean), 'I speak (?) to living men as well as (?) to the dead' (Mac Cana). These translations evidently take

colubhuirr A, *cutlub rur* B to represent *labrur* 'I speak'. The clear parallelism between the two clauses would accordingly require *timtach* AB to be a verb as well, but the only comparable word known to me is in fact a noun *timthach* 'covering; garment, equipment'.

I have accordingly understood the first clause to contain not a verb but the noun *lubair* (< Latin *labor*); I cannot, however, account for the form in B. Following this interpretation, the two clauses appear to be a characterization of mortal existence as consisting of toil during life followed by return into the earth at death. Cf. Genesis 3:17, 19: *In laboribus comedes eam* [sc. *terram*] *cunctis diebus uitae tuae…donec reuertaris in terram de qua sumptus es* ('in toil you will eat it [sc. earth] all the days of your life…until you go back to the earth from which you have been taken').

16. *frisin n-óclaig .i.*: I have conjectured that the *-i* of *oicluigi* in B reflects an earlier *.i.* Perhaps, however, the *-i* is secondary, and A's *oclidg* should be seen as a better representative of the original reading.

16. *os a mmuir-se*: MSS *osaininirsie* A, *osaíni nirsi* B; the emended reading postulated here requires the elimination of one minim. For the usage of *os* 'and' to introduce a fresh subject, which is then made the subject of a question, cf. the legal treatise *Bretha Comaithchesa*: *Os airm i mbiat da comorbu…cid dognither*? 'And in a place where there are two heirs…what is done?' (*CIH* 75.24; cf. 198.34, 579.25).

This translation diverges from the line of interpretation which has been followed hitherto. Meyer gave the text of B as *O saini* (?) *innsi* (?) *friun anair* which he translated '…islands to the west of us'. He observed in a note that 'the MS. has plainly *anuir* "to the east"', but this would seem a mistake for *aniar*', comparing the couplet *Fil trí coíctea inse cían / isind oceon frinn aníar* in his own edition of *Immram Brain* (Meyer 1895, 12 §25). Grosjean gave the text as *Osain inirsie friunn a anouir* A, *Osain inirsi friun anuir* B, but did not advert to any implications which this improvement on Meyer's reading might have for his translation: he rendered the words '…insulae…ad orientem a nobis' ('…islands…to the east of us'), mentioning Meyer's proposed emendation of *anuir* to *aniar* in a footnote. Mac Cana (1975, 36 n. 12) followed the lead of his predecessors, but called further attention to the line's obscurity: 'There are several textual difficulties here: the opening words are unclear…and the evidence of other texts and traditions suggests that one should read *aniar* "to the west" for *anuir*…Nevertheless, I am not entirely convinced that this emendation is necessary'.

A difficulty with all of these interpretations is that none provides a reconstruction of the original text to which the translation is supposed to correspond. Nor would it be easy to do so, since all of the translations are based on Meyer's faulty reading of B.

17–18. *cid fo-thá? Ní [ansa]*: MSS *cid fothao ni* A, *cid fotha ní* B. Meyer translated these words as 'What is underneath them?', Mac Cana as 'What is beneath them?': these renderings appear to interpret *fotha(o)* as 3pl. accusative of *fo* (cf. *fóthu, LL* 8416, 10598). It is by no means clear that third-person forms of *fo* with -*th*- antedate the Middle Irish period, and a further problem with such a rendering is that for 'under them' in a locative sense one would expect *foib*, the 3pl. dative form (cf. Sg. 4a13). When a conjugated form of *fo* does appear at lines 18–19 (see note below), this is 3sg. masc./neut. dative *fóo* (it occurs twice: MSS *fóo, foo* A; *fóó, fóó* B). This provides further support for the view that the latter preposition refers to neuter *muir*, not to feminine *inis* or *insi*.

Mac Cana also noted the difficulty of interpreting the final *ní*. Grosjean took this to be the 1pl. emphasising pronoun, and emended accordingly to *Cid fo-n-tá-ni*, which he translated 'Quid quod est sub nobis?' ('What is it which is under us?'). While I believe that Grosjean was correct in recognising the presence here of the verb *fo-tá*, I find it problematic that the subject of Colum Cille's question should be located simultaneously 'to the east of us' and 'beneath us'. In a footnote, Grosjean made the alternative suggestion that *ní* represents *.nī.*, the standard abbreviation for *ní ansa* 'not hard to answer'. This latter hypothesis seems to me more plausible, and removes the necessity for restoring an infixed -*n*- in *fo-tá*.

It does, however, raise a further problem, as Liam Breatnach has pointed out to me: the placing of a verb of speech between *ní ansa* and the statement which the latter introduces would be a very curious construction, for which, indeed, there may exist no parallels. If I am correct in supposing that our text's *ní* reflects earlier *.nī.*, then the latter should probably be seen as a secondary addition, presumably written at first between the lines or in the margin and subsequently inserted in the text at the wrong place.

Finally, it should be noted that the object of *fo-thá* is not expressed. This may always have been the case; or perhaps the original reading was *fod-tá*.

18. *fonnmaru*: Meyer and Grosjean render this adjective 'tuneful' and 'canori' ('melodious') respectively; Mac Cana suggests 'tuneful (pleasant)'. To judge from *DIL*, however, it is not clear that *fonnmar* is attested in this sense before the later Middle Irish period at the earliest. I suggest that the first element of the adjective is in the present case not *fonn* 'desire, pleasure, melody' but *fonn* 'bottom, base', hence 'ground, territory'.

An extended use of this postulated *fonnmar* 'having broad territories' to mean 'extensive, far-flung' may be reflected in *in firmimint fonnmar* (Meyer 1912b, 232 §8), and in chevilles referring to the fame of battles and strongholds: *fúaim fondmar* (*Corp. gen.* 404) and *rofes co fonnmar a clú* (Gwynn 1903–35, vol. 2, 78.7)—I would propose translating these phrases respectively as 'the vast firmament', 'a noise afar', and 'its fame

was known far and wide'. In the latter two cases one could perhaps argue
that since fame is a pleasing sound it could be described as musical, but
I am not aware of other instances of such a usage with either *clú* or *fuaim*.
Calling the firmament 'tuneful' would imply a knowledge of the classical
concept of the 'music of the spheres', for which I have not found other
evidence in early Irish sources.

18–19. *fóo* (twice): Conjugated forms of *fo* are relatively rare in the
glosses. The form attested for the 3sg. neuter is usually *fou, fóu* etc. (Ml.
35b16, 64a10, 98c10); *fo* (Ml. 37a14) evidently stands for *fó*. The spelling
in our text presumably reflects the latter: the diphthong *óu* had in any
case fallen together with *ó* in the course of the eighth century (*GOI* §§69,
72).

19. *uathmara alachtmara*: My translation follows those of Meyer and
Grosjean, and this is clearly the sense of the text as it stands. Meyer
evidently felt some uncertainty concerning the hapax *alachtmar* 'greatly-
pregnant': citing the well-attested adjective *lachtmar* 'abundant in
milk'—but acknowledging that emending to *lachtmara* would destroy
alliteration with *uathmara*—he suggested that 'perhaps *lúthmara,
lachtmara* was the original reading' (Meyer 1899, 316 n. 9). This
emendation has been adopted by Mac Cana. In fact, however, there is
relatively little alliteration in this paragraph, so that retaining it here may
not be a matter of overriding concern. As Professor Mac Cana has
pointed out to me, there is also a morphological difficulty with
alachtmara, in that adjectives with *-mar* as their second element normally
begin with a noun rather than with an adjective.

Moreover, it seems odd that productive and melodious cows should be
described as 'fearsome'. I suggest that *uathmara* reflects reinterpretation
of original *uthmara*, nom. pl. of an otherwise unattested *uthmar* 'great-
uddered'. A collocation *uthmara lachtmara* 'great-uddered, abundant in
milk' would make excellent sense.

19. *asa mbind ngéim*: Although neither MS shows mutation of *bind*,
it must have been nasalized originally following the 3pl. possessive
pronoun in *asa*. For the final word the MSS have *ngeine* A, *ngeime* B; this
suggests a genitive, which would here be syntactically impossible.
Perhaps the spellings reflect misinterpretation of original *ngéim* as *ngeini,
ngemi* respectively.

19. *damu damdai*: Meyer rendered this phrase 'herds of deer', as if the
first word were acc. pl. of *dám* 'troop'; Grosjean offers 'cervorum…
greges' ('herds…of stags') in a footnote. But *dám* does not appear to be
used of groups of animals elsewhere, and in any case parallelism with
echu echdai (MSS *eocha eithdiu* A, *euchu eithdiu* B) in the following clause
indicates that the adjective should be directly derived from the noun.
Grosjean's preferred translation 'cervi cervini' ('staglike stags') (cf. Mac

Cana's 'deerlike deer') is clearly preferable. In translating *dam* as 'ox' rather than 'deer' I have adopted the second of two well-attested alternatives: either could equally easily be correct.

20. *fil déichendai, fil trechendai*: After describing the positive features of the mysterious regions concerning which Colum Cille has inquired, the youth gives some account of their more sinister side. Many-headed monsters are not especially common in Irish legend, but some parallels can be cited. Thus the giant Garb Glinne Rige, defeated by Cú Chulainn, has two heads (*LL* 12868); Loeg speaks of having encountered the two-headed snakes of Mag Denna on his way to the Otherworld in *Serglige Con Culainn* (*LU* 3747–8); a highly destructive monster called *in tellén trechend* 'the three-headed *tellén*' is said to have emerged from the cave of Cruachu in *Cath Maige Mucraime* (O Daly 1975, 48.168); a trio of Fomoiri in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* are described as a *triar úathmar anetargnaid trecheann* 'three fearsome, strange, three-headed men' (Knott 1936, 27.903); and an enormous hundred-headed worm figures in an incidental anecdote in *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne* (Ní Shéaghdha 1967a, 62). Many-headed monsters bulk particularly large in apocalyptic literature—cf. the discussion in Borsje 1996, 288–306.

In reading *déichendai* I follow Meyer and Mac Cana in opting for the reading of B; Grosjean's 'decacephali (homines?)' ('ten-headed (men?)') reflects the *deichcenda* of A.

21. *asa imbel imbel coa inber*: Meyer's rendering 'above its many borders (?) to its estuary (?)' (so also Mac Cana) and Grosjean's 'ex quo sunt multi limites (?) usque ad aestuarium (vel stagnum)' ('from which there are many borders (?) as far as the river-mouth (or pool)') both take as their point of departure the version in B, printed by Grosjean as *osa ilimel coa inbir*. Against this interpretation is the fact that B has an erasure big enough for two letters after *osa*: it looks as if B originally had something like the *os imil imel co inbir* of A, but the first *im-* was for some reason deleted (cf. note above on *ro senas* 11). I therefore follow A in this respect, although I have followed B in reading *asa* (for MS *osa*) and *coa*. With the proposed interpretation of *osa* as reflecting rel. copula + poss. pron. *asa*, cf. *bod* AB for *bad* 2, *o* A for vocative *a* 3, *olaocht-* A for *alacht-* 19.

24. *óro bátar*: Various problems attach to this form. To begin with, this is the only instance in the text of an augmented preterite which does not have perfect or pluperfect sense but is used as a simple narrative preterite, appearing to reflect the Middle Irish loss of a semantic distinction between augmented and unaugmented preterites (McCone 1987, 200–1). It looks, in other words, later than most of the rest of the language of the text.

A second difficulty is the use here of the conjunction *ó* 'when, while, since'. A clause governed by *ó* should be subordinate to another clause,

as in *Hó bói mo chland 7 mo chenéel, is oc frecur céill Dæ atáa* 'Since my clan and my kindred came into being, it has been engaged in worshipping God' (Wb. 29d6), but there is no such second clause here. The phrase *muinter C. C. oca ndéicsi di etarchéin* could conceivably be turned into one by supplying *boí*, but this would destroy its evident parallelism with *oca ndécsin a muintire* at 22–3 above. Some corruption seems to be present.

These considerations suggest that *óro* may be intrusive here, and that the sentence originally began simply with *bátar*: my translation reflects this conjecture. The addition may have been made involuntarily, by a scribe whose eye skipped ahead to *óro glé* at the beginning of the following sentence.

24. *isin chobrunn*: Cf. *don chobrunn* at 28 below. The word is translated 'conversation' by Meyer and Mac Cana, 'colloquium' by Grosjean; this is certainly the sense suggested by the context. *DIL* takes it to be an instance of *comrann* 'sharing, share, alliance', but this seems never to be used to mean 'conversation'—and is moreover an *ā*-stem, while the spelling of both MSS (for what it is worth) consistently points to an *o*-stem here. Might this be the unique attestation of a word **com-ronn* 'shared bond, link'? There is presumably some connection, even if only on the level of semantic overlap, with *cobrae* 'conversation, speech'.

25. *muinter*: Meyer (1899, 314) proposed that the spelling *mueintar* in B 'represents a mixture of the oldest form of the word, *montar* (Wb 7c5), and the later *muinter*'. This is an intriguing possibility, especially as the spelling in B is even closer to that of the better attested variant *muntar* (Wb. 21d1, 26a12, 27d12 etc.). At the same time it remains possible that the spelling *mueintar*, hybrid at best, represents no more than an idiosyncrasy of the scribe. I have therefore given the more familiar form in the edited text.

Of the word's three occurrences in *ICC*, two are abbreviated in A and one in B (23 *m^{t}e* A, *m-t-e* B; 25 *muint*er A, *muinnntir* B; 27 *m^t* A, *mueintar* B). This raises the possibility that the word may have been consistently abbreviated in their shared exemplar, casting further doubt on *mueintar*'s usefulness as an indication of date.

29. *ro ráided*: The MSS have *doraighe< >*A, *diraighedh* B, readings which could represent *doráided*, preterite passive of an otherwise unattested **do-ráidi*. Given the evidence that AB share a relatively late exemplar, however, it seems simplest in this instance to see *do/di* as reflecting earlier *ro*, suggested perhaps by the *do* which occurs two words earlier. A form with *ro* would also suit the pluperfect sense required by context. Cf. in the Harleian MS 5280 copy of *Tochmarc Emire* the forms *donraidius-sai* (vs. *ro raidiusa* in RIA MS D.4.2), *ndoraid* (vs. *ro raid LU* 10480–1) (Meyer 1901, 238, 261).

29–30. *ba móu do les*: Meyer translates 'it was a proper thing',

Mac Cana 'it was proper'; both evidently take *ddiles* in B to represent the original reading. It is hard, though, to see why the author would not simply have written *ba dílsiu* if he wished to give *díles* comparative force, rather than employing a periphrasis with *móu*. I prefer to adopt the *doles* of A, and Grosjean's rendering 'magis prodesse' ('to be more beneficial'): cf. B's use of *di* for *do<ro* in the form discussed in the preceding note.

II

Immacaldam in Druad Brain 7 inna Banḟátho Febuil ós Loch Ḟebuil (hereafter *IDB*) survives, like *ICC*, in two manuscripts: these are Dublin, Trinity College MS 1363 (formerly H.4.22; hereafter H), p. 48, written in the sixteenth century (Abbott and Gwynn 1921, 202); and Dublin, National Library MS G 7 (hereafter N), cols 9–10, from the sixteenth or seventeenth century (Ní Shéaghdha 1967b, 36–8; cf. Carney 1976, 175). Meyer (1913) printed the text of H; Carney (1976) furnished diplomatic texts from both manuscripts, together with a critical edition, translation and extended commentary, including a few notes dealing with linguistic issues. My own treatment of the poem takes Carney's work as its point of departure: in the orthography of the edited text and the wording of the translation I have differed from him only when there seemed to be some specific reason for doing so. In the diplomatic texts I have called attention in the footnotes to certain points where my readings differ from Carney's, but have not done so when this involves no more than missing marks of length and punctuation, questions of word division, and inconsistent notation of the *spiritus asper*.

N exhibits eccentricities of orthography comparable to those found in the surviving copies of *ICC* (cf. the discussion above); H's spelling, by contrast, is for the most part conservative, with only a few late features (thus *and* for *ind* §1d, *luig* for *lluid* §2c). As Carney (1976, 175) observed, 'the two versions, despite the pseudo-archaic orthography of N, are so close that derivation from a common original is to be regarded as probable'. By contrast with *ICC*, such apparently secondary features as the two copies have in common do not point to a very late date for this shared exemplar:

(a) Fluctuation of *d* and *t*: *tuaid* for *tuaith* §4c; *conint/conit* for *conind* §5b; *reithmis/rethmíss* for *réidmis* §6a. Comparable spellings are already attested in the glosses: thus *tuad* Wb. 4d1.

(b) *Inid* for earlier *indid* §7c was probably a possible spelling in the Old Irish period: it appears, for example, in all manuscripts of *Echtrae Chonnlai*, suggesting that this form was already present in the (eighth-century?) exemplar (McCone 2000, 139–40).

(c) Confusion of unstressed *-e* and *-i* (in the exemplar shared by H and N, as distinct from the original poem; cf. (h) below): *-si* for *-se* §§1c, 5c; *maigi/muichi* for *maige* §5d; *choíne* for *choíni* §7a; *ndoine/ndane*

for *ndoíni* §7*b*. According to Carney's analysis, this phenomenon is already clearly attested in the rhymes of *Saltair na Rann* (Carney 1983a, 197).

(d) Other shared readings, such as *clochach/clochuch* for *chlochach* §7*c*, are too trivial to serve as evidence in this regard. Faintness of suspension marks in the exemplar is probably the reason why both manuscripts fail to show nasalization of *mbímmis* §2*a*, *nglan* §3*a*.

Carney (1976, 180–1 n. 19) proposed that *IDB* should be dated 'at latest to the early seventh century' on the basis of various linguistic features: *ni bá-se* rather than *nipsa* in a context calling for use of the copula (§§1*c*, 5*c*); inflection of *tipra* as a masculine noun (§3*a*); use of the words *al* and *foth* (§4*cd*); and scansion of -*domuin* as a monosyllable (§4*d*). These points are discussed individually in the notes below. Speaking generally, it may be said that only the treatment of -*domuin* looks like strong evidence for a seventh-century date, and that even there we are dealing with poetic diction rather than with an archaic linguistic stratum *per se*. That three of Carney's five archaic symptoms are bunched together in a single couplet could be a further indication that these features represent a self-consciously old-fashioned style, rather than an unusually early date of composition.

Even if the case for such a date is less unequivocal than Carney believed, there seems to be no doubt that the poem is written in conservative Old Irish. The following aspects of the language may be noted:

(e) Strong verbs consistently exhibit their Old Irish flexion: thus past *s*-subjunctive *fessed* §1*b* and *tesstis* §7*b*, reduplicated preterite *nenaisc* §2*c*, BIV preterite passive *con-bíth* §3*c*.

(f) Although the orthography of N, as already noted, exhibits an artificial striving after archaic effects, certain spellings in H may hark back to an Old Irish exemplar. Noteworthy are the preservation of the clusters *ld* in *imacaldaim* [title] and *mb* in *imbiric* §1*d*; consistent use of -*o* in gen. sg. of *i*-stems (*banfáitho* [title], *fesso* §1*c*); *u*-affection in *fius* §§2*d*, 3*a* (cf. *fiur* in both MSS, §3*d*).

(g) Hiatus is present in *oöl* §2*b*.

(h) There is no evidence of the confusion of final unstressed -*e* and -*i* (in the original poem, as distinct from the exemplar of the surviving copies; cf. (c) above). Note the rhymes *dí/rígi* §4*cd*, *choíni/ndoíni* §7*ab*, *rí/frithissi* §8*cd*. In §5*cd*, uncertainty concerning the declension of *Fuindsidi* makes its rhyme with *inbi* inconclusive as evidence.

(i) *Már*- §3*d* shows the adjective's older vocalism.

(j) *As-mbered* §8*c* shows relative nasalization.

(k) The article consistently exhibits Old Irish forms: fem. gen. sg. *inna* [title]; masc. gen. sg. *ind* before a vowel §1*d*; dat. sg. *isind* before a vowel §2*b*; masc. nom. pl. *int* before *s*- §4*a*; neut. nom. sg. *a* §§6*cd*, 7*d*.

(l) A neut. 3sg. Class A infix is preserved in leniting *na* at §7*a*. A Class C infix appears in *fod-ngébad* §3*d* (masc. 3sg.); possibly also in *conid-gaireth* §5*b* (neut. 3sg.; see textual note).

(m) The relative form *file* appears at §4*b*.

Taken in the aggregate, these features suggest that the poem is unlikely to have been composed later than the eighth century. That it may have been composed before then seems possible in light of the treatment of -*domuin* already alluded to, but the linguistic evidence appears to me to be inconclusive in this regard.

The metre of the poem is largely *deibide scaílte*, with *deibide nguilbnech* couplets however at §§3*ab*, 4*ab*, 5*ab*, 6*ab* and *cd*, 7*ab*, 8*ab*. The rhymes reflect Old Irish treatment of unstressed vowels (cf. the discussion of point (h) above). As Meyer (1913, 339 nn 3–4) noted, the metre requires elision in *mo fius* §2*d* (contrast §3*a*), and *do fiur* §3*d*: it is interesting that in N a point has been placed beneath the vowel to be elided in both cases. Where elision is again required in *nó al* §4*c*, N omits the following *a*.

DIPLOMATIC TEXTS

H: Dublin, TCD MS 1363, p. 48

[column a, line 18]
IMbumese imbumé nadfessed auircdine
nibasi fer fesso bic comaidm *form* andi*m*bir
ic. Anubi*m*mis i dún braín icol isi*nn*uargaim fiadu*m* ne
naisc triu*n*u dialuig mofius coard níúl-. Rosaig
mofius tiprait glan hfil sais curi cét mbanse
uít inban*ch*uir- co*n*bit*h* dofiur fudgebad bidmár
frit*h* // ain nusóirfed tuaid no aladí fod sloig
Aritamri intséuit glain file htoíb sruibebr
oldomanm^c rigi Finit ame*n* Fi*n*it asan .l.c.na
IMacaldaim andruag brain 7 i*n*nani banfáitho febuil
hoasloch febuil

[column b]
asi*n* .l.   respoin*n*dit inbanfáith[28]
Febul fortemen graigech
hicoimnu conintgairet ni
basidichoím inbi larig maigi
fuinnside
Aildéi maigi noreithmis
ailditire noteigmisalai

[28] These two phrases are both in the upper margin. In the second, the final three letters are only barely legible.

nd atir adscuirmisalaind
aceol nocluinmis. // e ara
Mad *f*rignat*h*u na choin
teistis arndoine ínid gl
ass force cloc*h*ach mag
febuil a fíndscothach.
Batír aildi buidne ban
oenaig himbímis labr
an babind asmbered*h*
ínri citeit tait f*r*it*h*isi.[29]

N: Dublin, NLI MS G 7, columns 9–10
   [column 9, line 19]
   cucul- 7 *cetera* // a a*i*rcdíne. nipasi fer
      mpamissi[30] impamé. nat fessiuth
      fessa bic. comaidm form indim =
   airic // argaim*h*. fiad*h*únib nenaisscc
   A nubimaíss indun broin. icóol issindu
   t*r*iúna dialluith mufiss[31] co hairdníula
   Rasaig mufiss tipprait glan. hifil
   sásschu*r*e cet mpan. seuit inpanch-i
   conbith. dafiur[32] fot ngebat patt
   már frith // srúm*h*e prain no sro =
   Arit amrae intseuit glain. fili hitoib*h*
   irfed tuaid noaldí. fot*h* sloig oldam*h*an
   m-c rí.[33] Rispo*n*dit inpanfaith /////////
   Feb*h*- fort*h*eme*n* graidech. hicoimna *con*it

   IMacall- ind*r*uad brai*n* 7 na ba*n*fat*h*a feb- os lo-*h* feb-
   ind si*n* tuas[34]

   [column 10]
   ngair-*h* nipasi di *ch*oiminbí. la rich mui =
   chi fuinsidiu // notegmiss. aulint hi
   Aildiu ínuchiu norethmíss. alte tiriu
   tír atscurmíss aulint inceul neo cl =

---

[29] Carney here adds the phrase *Aed*h *indu* (I would rather read either *æd*h *indno* or *æd*h *induo*). This, in fact, appears in the right margin, and seems to be written in different ink; it is closely similar to other nearby *probationes pennae* and stray notes.

[30] As Carney has observed, there is a large space here for an illuminated initial which was never added.

[31] There is a point under the *u*, evidently indicating elision.

[32] There is a point under the *u*, evidently indicating elision.

[33] Carney printed this as *m-crí*g, stating in a footnote that 'an effort has been made to erase *g* but it is still legible'. So far as I can tell from examining the manuscript under magnification, however, the word ends not with the remains of a *g* but with a raised point.

[34] These two lines are in the lower margin.

uínmiss // isstis arndane initglass
Mauth frie gnautha nachoíne arate =
farciu clochuch mag feb- anfinnscoth-
Pater aldi pugne pan. aenaich himbí =
miss lia praun pa bint issmperiutt
indrí. cia teit taet hifrithisi Hosini m-

EDITED TEXT

Immacaldam in druad Brain 7 inna banfátho Febuil ós Loch Ḟebuil.

§1. Imbu messe, imbu mé
     nad fessed a aircdíne?
     Ni bá-se fer fesso bic
     co maidm form ind imbairic.

§2. A nu mbímmis i ndún Brain,
     oc oöl isind uargaim,
     fiad fiadnuib nenaisc tríunu
     dia lluid mo ḟius co ardníulu.

§3. 'Ro-saig mo ḟius tiprait nglan
     hi fil sáss cuiri chét mban.
     Séuit in banchuiri, con-bíth:
     do ḟiur fod-ngébad bid márḟríth.

§4. 'Ar it amri int śéuit glain
     file hi toíb Srúbe Brain:
     no soírfed tuaith nó al a dí,
     foth slóig olldomuin, macc rígi.'

Respondit in banḟáith:

§5. Febul fortemen graigech,
     i coímnu con-indgaireth;
     ni bá-se díchoím inbi
     la ríg Maige Fuindsidi.

§6. Áildi maige no réidmis,
     áildi tíre no téigmis,
     álaind a tír ad-scuirmis,
     álaind a ceól no cluinmis.

§7. Mad fri gnáthu na choíni,
     ara tesstis ar ndoíni,
     inid glassḟairrce chlochach
     Mag Febuil, a findscothach:

§8. Batir áildi buidnea ban
     oenaig i mbímmis la Bran;
     ba bind as-mbered in rí:
     'Cia téit, taet a ḟrithissi.'

TRANSLATION

The conversation of Bran's druid and Febul's prophetess above Loch
Febuil.

Was it myself, was it I,
that would not know its warrior race?
I was not a man of little knowledge
until I was defeated in battle.

When we used to be in Bran's stronghold,
drinking in the cold winter,
when my knowledge went to the high clouds,
it bound strong men in the presence of witnesses.

'My knowledge reaches a pure well
in which is the snare of a troop of hundreds of women.
The treasures of the woman-troop, which was shaped:
it would be a great find for the man who would find it.

'For wonderful are the pure treasures
which are beside Srúb Brain:
it would ennoble a *tuath*, or more than two (*tuatha*),
the equivalent of the host of the great world, of scions of
kingship.'

Respondit the prophetess:

Febul, dark and rich in horses,
used to proclaim [it] at the merrymaking:
I was not bereft of worth
in the eyes of the king of Mag Fuindsidi.

Beautiful the plains we used to ride over,
beautiful the lands to which we used to go,
beautiful the land where we used to encamp,
beautiful the music which we used to hear.

If it be to companions that you lament it,
that our people fled,
since Mag Febuil of the white flowers
is a stony grey sea:

Beautiful were the companies of women
of the assembly (in) which we used to be with Bran.
Sweetly the king used to say,
'Though he goes, let him come back again.'

TEXTUAL NOTES

[Title]: The title is displaced in the manuscripts. In H the druid's speech concludes with the words *Finit amen Finit asan libur cétna* 'Finit amen finit from the same book', followed by the title itself, at which point the bottom of the column is reached. The following column begins *asin libur* 'from the [same] book', then continues with the heading *respoinndit in banfáith*. In N formulae of the *asin libur chétna* type are absent, and the title occurs in the margin below the first column containing the text: *IMacall- indruad brain 7 na banfatha feb- os lo-h feb- ind sin tuas* 'That above is "The conversation of Bran's druid and Febul's prophetess above Loch Febuil"'.

Both manuscripts presumably reflect the situation in a shared exemplar, in which the layout on the page was not very different from that in the surviving copies. I would guess that the title in this exemplar was written in the lower margin, as in N; the scribe of H, coming to the end of one of the two poems just before the end of a column, incorporated the title in the main text at that point.

§1b. *aircdíne*: Carney translated this as 'kingly generations', interpreting it as 'a compound of *argg* "chieftain" and the acc. pl. of the neut. io-stem *díne*, "generation"'. In all essentials this is clearly correct, but it may be noted that *arg* is regularly attested in the sense 'warrior', sometimes 'nobleman', but never so far as I can tell 'king, prince'. For *díne* in the sense 'race, tribe, group of persons connected by descent', see *DIL* s.v. *díne*, col. 126.6–12. Especially interesting is the example cited from a poem on the Airgialla (*LL* 44098 = *Corp. gen.* 416), where the closely similar compound *gargdíne* (: *ardríge*) occurs in the line *don gargdíne ón tuile thiar* 'to the rough race from the flood in the west': since it was Lough Foyle which bounded the Airgialla territories on the west, there is the tantalising possibility that our own poem may be obliquely reflected here.

In the context of the poem itself, the druid seems to be responding to a question like that uttered by Colum Cille in *ICC*: 'Whose was it formerly, this lough which we see?'.

§1c. *ni bá-se*: Carney used this spelling in the note in which he discussed the form, but gave *ni ba-se* in his edited text here and at §5c below; the latter spelling is presumably no more than a slip on his part. He commented 'This is a very archaic form where the copula is indistinguishable from the substantive verb; the regular O. Ir. form would be *nipsa*. This suggests that the poem should be dated at latest to the early seventh century' (Carney 1976, 180–1 n. 19). He went on to observe that 'a number of comparable forms' appear in *ICC*; as I have remarked above, however (textual note on *robo* 7), the forms there in question seem almost certainly to reflect late orthography rather than archaic morphology.

Even if the comparanda in *ICC* must be withdrawn, the instances of *ni bá-se* in *IDB* are certainly striking. But are they 'very archaic'? In fact I am aware of only three notably early texts which contain such forms: *Amra Coluim Chille*, where *boe* (and in one instance *bia*) appears for *ba* (Stokes 1899, §§24–7, 40, 65, 74–5, 78–81; contrast *ba* §§41, 47, 83–6, 126, *bu* §97); a stanza attributed to Colmán mac Lénéni, where the line edited by Thurneysen as *Ó ba mac cléib* 'Seit er ein Wiegenkind war' appears as *O bi* [*leg. boí*?] *mac cleib* in both manuscripts (Thurneysen 1932, 199–200; Calder 1917, 266; contrast *ropo* in Thurneysen 1932, 200, 203); and the (probably) early unedited poem 'Huait a meic huí Moguirne', where the line *biait betha airchind* has been rendered in *DIL* as 'they will be chieftains of the world' (*Corp. gen.* 79; *DIL* s.v. *attá*, col. 474.12). (A fourth possible instance, proposed by Binchy (1952, 46), is inconclusive: on metrical grounds he restored *boíe* with hiatus where both manuscripts read *ba*, but then in a note proposed *ba-a* as a possible alternative.)

Relevant to this question is the extensive evidence (presented in *DIL* s.v. *attá*, col. 474.17–47) that the substantive verb could be immediately followed by an adjectival predicate in texts of the eighth century and later: note, for example, *amal nombemmis érchoílti* 'as if we were destined' (Wb. 9a3), *Bía slán* 'You will be whole' (*Serglige Con Culainn*; *LU* 3344) and *Do badus-*[*s*]*a clam* 'I was leprous' (*PH* 2790). The example in §5*c*, where the predicate is the adjective *díchoím*, exhibits precisely this construction; that in §1*c*, where the predicate is a substantive, may represent no more than an extension of the same usage.

§1*d.* *co maidm form ind imbairic*: Carney translated this line 'until I was defeated in the contest', commenting that 'the "contest" was probably a learned one, perhaps with the prophetess, concerning genealogical lore'. My own more forceful rendering is suggested by *immairecc*'s use in other sources specifically in the context of fighting. For the collocation with *maidid* cf. *maidm n-imairic* in the sense 'battle-rout' in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (Knott 1936, 19.623). In the present instance the reference may be to the coming of Christianity, often portrayed as the warlike overcoming of druids and the Devil (cf. e.g. Stokes and Strachan 1901–3, vol. 2, 322); compare perhaps *brister immairecc fairsom* 'let him [i.e. Satan] be crushed in conflict', as part of a gloss on the line *Deus autem pacis conterat Satanam sub pedibus uestrís uelociter* 'May the god of peace, then, swiftly trample Satan beneath your feet' (Wb. 7c4).

§2*c.* *fiad fiadnuib nenaisc tríunu*: The manuscripts differ significantly here, with *fiadum nenaisc triunu* in H and *fiadhúnib nenaissc triúna* in N. Carney read *fiad doínib nenaisc tríunu*, which he translated as 'bound strong men in the presence of people', understanding the subject of the verb to be *mo fius* 'my knowledge' in the following line. This interpretation postulates, among other things, the spelling of *doínib* with *u*, by contrast with *ndoine* H, *ndane* N for *ndoíni* at §7*b* below. It also

seems curious that so straightforward a reading should have been so garbled by H.

I would like to supplement Carney's interpretation with another: that the poem originally contained the phrase *fiad fiadnuib* 'in the presence of witnesses', attested in the law text *Berrad Airechta* (Thurneysen 1928, 17 §53; *CIH* 595.19). Haplology would readily have led to the omission of the first *fiad*, and reinterpretation of minims could have changed *-nuib* to *-únib* in N, and to *-umb* > *-um* in H. This suggestion is of necessity a very tentative one, however, and in sense it departs only very slightly from Carney's reading.

§3a. *ro-saig*: Note the shift to the present tense here; this is maintained throughout the rest of the druid's speech. We are evidently to take the third and fourth quatrains to be a direct quotation of words uttered by the druid in the past, presumably on the occasion when he exhorted Bran to go in quest of the treasure in the well (following the interpretation of Carney 1976, 184–5).

§3a. *tiprait nglan*: In arguing for the poem's early date, Carney (1976, 181 n. 19) pointed out that *tiprae* appears here as a masculine noun: 'The Contributions have no such example; one is found, however, in the archaic poem *Ba mol Midend midlaige* attributed to Lucreth [moccu Chiara], c. 600: *maidm tiprait* (*leg. tiprat*) *mair*' (cf. Meyer 1912a, 308).

This second instance adduced by Carney, from an evidently early source, is a striking one. But even if it be concluded that *tipra*'s treatment as a feminine noun is secondary, it does not necessarily follow that the absence of that development is evidence of an 'archaic' date. Indeed, none of the clearly feminine instances of *tipra* cited by *DIL* is earlier than the Middle Irish period, and examples of the word's inflection as a masculine or neuter noun can be adduced from late Old or early Middle Irish. Thus *Sanas Cormaic* includes an entry *Tipra quasi tobra .i. tobruchta uisci as* 'Spring (*tipra*) as if (*tobra*), i.e. water gushes (*tobruchta*) from it', where the conjugated preposition is masculine or neuter (*Corm. Y* 1217). In the first recension of *In Tenga Bithnua*, *tipra* is referred to by a 3sg. fem. infixed pronoun in the verb *arinda-fogbad*, but elsewhere in the same text by the conjugated prepositions *fair* and *ann*, and by a 3sg. neut. infix in *rot-blaisi* (Stokes 1905, 112–14 §§36, 39; cf. Hull 1941). That this last instance points to neuter rather than masculine gender is interesting, as all of the other evidence for *tipra*'s not having been originally feminine could be interpreted in the same way—with the single exception of the example in our poem. That *tipra* is clearly masculine here may, in other words, be evidence which undermines rather than supports the view that *IDB* is a composition of great antiquity.

§3b. *sáss*: Carney followed N in adopting this reading (contrast *sais* H); he rendered the word 'equipment', evidently taking it to refer to

the treasures described below. As I have noted in an earlier discussion, however, this word appears 'in the Old Irish period... to have been used exclusively in the sense "snare"; and even when its usage broadened considerably later it seems still to have been employed to mean specifically "tools, implements", not equipment in a more general sense' (Carey 1995, 79 n. 41). The emendation to *sous* 'wisdom, knowledge, inspiration', which I went on to propose, however, departs sharply from the testimony of the manuscripts, and is in any case unsatisfactory on metrical grounds: *sous* still shows hiatus in *Fél. Óeng.* March 13, and hiatus is present in our poem in *oöl* §2b. Since hiatus would result in a hypermetric line in the present instance, the suggestion must be withdrawn.

This leaves us again with *sáss*. I am now inclined to take it simply in the sense of 'snare'. 'The snare of a troop' could be either what ensnares a troop, or what a troop uses as a snare. Apparent parallelism with the phrase *sét in banchuiri* in the next line would favour the former interpretation: the beautiful women and their treasures are a lure and a trap. Cf. the expression *én immo n-iada sás* 'a bird around which a snare closes' used to describe a sinful man (Stokes and Strachan 1901–3, vol. 2, 294.26) and also applied to the rebellious Israelites (*SR* 4723). A Middle Irish poem appears to use *sás* of the prison of this life (*Fél. Óeng.* 246). The word can further be used of a formidable military antagonist: regarding the target of a curse attributed to Moling, it is said *Ni ba sás for sluaga* 'He will not be a snare upon hosts' (Stokes 1908, 31 §2), and *Saltair na Rann* says that *tor troeta tríath, sas na slóg / ro iad im Nas ri Ammón* 'a troop subjugating rulers, a snare of the hosts, closed around Nahash king of Ammon' (*SR* 5579–80; cf. 1 Samuel 11:11). Yet another example occurs in a poem concerning Mag Slecht: here a cheville makes the comment *buan in sás* 'enduring the snare' concerning the deaths of the worshippers of the idol Cromm Cruaich (Gwynn 1903–35, vol. 4, 20.39).

§3c. *con-bíth*: I follow Carney in taking this to be sg. pret. pass. of *con-ben*—he translated *in banchuiri con-bíth* as 'the shapely company of women', supplying the more literal 'that was shaped' in a footnote. Such a usage seems odd for the early language: all other attestations of *con-ben* appear to refer directly to cutting or hewing. Even the later univerbated form *cummaid*, although its application is considerably broader, is still consistently used of various kinds of artificial contrivance. The verbal noun *cummae* 'cutting; forming, shaping' had already acquired the extended sense 'likeness, sameness' in the Old Irish period, as can be seen from such idiomatic usages as *nita chumme-se friu-som* 'I am not the same as they' (Wb. 20c25); but *DIL* seems to furnish no examples of its use to designate personal appearance which antedate the later Middle Irish period. Contrast the phrase *crotha cummai* 'maimed figures'(?) in *Bretha Crólige* (Binchy 1934–8, 52 §64 and note); and *cuimt(h)e*, participle of

con-ben, glossing 'eunuch' in the Book of Armagh (Stokes and Strachan 1901–3, vol. 1, 496.37): here *cummae* refers not to the beauty of the body, but to its disfigurement through violence.

This said, it is difficult to see how else the verb is to be construed. I have accordingly given it the most literal possible rendering, remaining agnostic as to the poet's precise intention.

§4c. *no soírfed*: Carney translates this as 'it would ransom'. While there are many examples of *soeraid* in the sense 'rescues', none of those cited by *DIL* appears to involve ransoming as such. It seems possible, accordingly, to consider as an alternative the verb's sense 'raises to free (*saer*) status; ennobles, exalts'.

§4c. *nó al a dí*: Elision is required between *nó* and *al* here in order to secure the correct syllable count. Regarding the construction, cf. *tar seilb no tar a di* 'across a property, or across two' in the law text *Bretha Comaithchesa* (*CIH* 75.15, 198.14). Carney characterizes the use of *al* here as 'archaic', and *DIL* describes *al* as being 'obsolescent even in O. Ir. period', but its meaning was not entirely forgotten in the later language. Thus the Middle Irish poem 'Arsaid sin, a éoin Achla' contains the line *ar toidhecht dom all* [*dar* in one MS] *muir móir* 'as I came across the great sea' (Meyer 1907, 26 §15; cf. Meyer 1905, 87–8), and the prophecy at the end of *Cath Maige Tuired*, which does not seem notably early in its language, includes a phrase *ilmoigi beola*, which I take to represent *al maige béola* 'across the borders of plains' (Carey 1989–90, 66–7; remarks on the language are at p. 61).

§4d. *foth*: Carney characterized this word as 'archaic', without further comment. It figures frequently in the legal literature, but its sense appears to have been obscure to the later commentators. Thurneysen, who adduced another example from the Cambrai Homily, proposed that it designates 'etwas…was für etwas anderes stehen oder eintreten kann' (Thurneysen 1921b, 302).

§4d. *olldomuin*: Carney took this to be the form lying behind *oldoman* H, *oldamhan* N, noting that it must be reckoned as a disyllable if the line is to scan correctly. With this he compared trisyllabic *fáeburamnus*, *otharlige* in *Verba Scáthaige* (see now Henry 1990, 200–1); monosyllabic *ndomuin* (MS *ndoman*) in *Tiughraind Bhécáin* (Kelly 1975, 85 §22; cf. 66–7); and monosyllabic *credail* in the poem 'A maccucáin, sruith in tíag' (Carney 1983b, 35 §16). In these forms he identified an archaic prosodic feature, asserting that 'a rule may be stated thus: in the earliest stratum of Old Irish verse words of a certain structure which have come to be written as disyllables may be treated as monosyllabic. These are words where the first syllable ends in a spirant consonant followed by an apparent syllable ending in *l*, *n*, or *r*' (Carney 1976, 181 n. 19; cf. Carney 1978–9, 426–7, where as a further instance apparently monosyllabic *athar* is cited from the poem 'Dind Ríg ruad tuam tenbath'). As such forms

would reflect a stage of the Irish language antedating the appearance of secondary vowels through anaptyxis, a development tentatively assigned by McCone (1996, 127) to the period *c.* 550–650, disyllabic *olldomuin* could be seen as providing the best evidence that our poem is very early in date. (For other instances of *ol(l)domun* in early poetry see *Corp. gen.* 2: *sir methrai oldomun, oldomun crich Crothomuin.*)

Such a statement requires some qualification, however. *Credail* in the poem 'A maccucáin' is not scanned as a monosyllable for historical reasons, because it derives from Latin *credulus*—as Carney (1983b, 40) himself observed, it is so treated only by analogy with words like *domun*. But an analogy of this kind could not have existed before **domn* had become *domun*: it is a matter not of phonology, but of poetic convention. (Our own poem may provide further evidence of this. The name *Febul* is scanned as a disyllable at §§5*a* and 7*d*; however, if O'Brien (1971) was correct in taking it to be cognate with Welsh *gwefl* 'lip', it would have been pronounced as a monosyllable at the same period that *domun* was.) How long such a convention could have survived is an open question: anaptyxis in Welsh had already appeared by the ninth century (thus *reatir* for *rhaeadr* 'waterfall' in the Juvencus manuscript, cited in Jackson 1953, 337), but is not recognized in conventional Welsh prosody down to the present day.

In this connection, it is worth noting Henry's claim that dat. sg. *tabernacuil* scans as a trisyllable in *SR* 4864 (Henry 1990, 195 n. 10). The example which he cites is inconclusive, as *isin tabernacuil* there may well stand for *'sin tabernacuil*, as at line 4513 earlier in the document (and cf. further examples of *'sin* following a consonant at 4320, 4389 and 4996). But no such explanation will hold at 4366, where the line in its entirety reads *fri soimsi 'sin tabernacuil*. Here *-ber-* appears to be scanned as *-br-* in a Middle Irish poem, just as *Verba Scáthaige* treats *-bur-* as *-br-* in the case of *fáeburamnus*.

In translating, I have differed from Carney only in taking the string of genitives after *foth* to constitute two parallel phrases—'of the host of the great world, of scions of kingship'—rather than following him in seeing *slóig olldomuin* as a preposed genitive dependent on *macc rígi*.

§5*b*. *i coímnu*: Carney's rendering 'guardingly', which takes *coemnae* in its original sense 'protection', fits in well with his interpretation of the following verb but involves unusual syntax. My own translation understands the word in its secondary sense 'entertainment, refection', a meaning best attested in the later language but discernible in earlier sources as well. Thus *coemnae* is equated with *cothad* 'food, maintenance' in *Corm. Y* 303, and in an early Leinster poem the phrase *coemna coecat bliad-*, in apposition with *dál Temra, toccaid cain* 'assembly of Tara, fair good fortune', is probably best translated 'a feast of fifty years' (*Corp. gen.* 70). The poem 'Suidigud taige midchúardda' says of various baser functionaries that *drond dia caemnu cuit* 'the chine [is] the portion

[allotted] for their refection' (*LL* 3761); for other examples of the word's use in this sense in *LL* cf. 25935, 36298.

§5b. *con-indgaireth*: Carney took *conintgairet* H, *conit ngair-h* N to reflect earlier *con-indgaireth*, which he translated 'herded'; apparently he postulated an otherwise unattested verb **con-in(d)gair* broadly synonymous with *in-gair* and *do-ingair*, both meaning 'herds, protects'. But compounds of *gairid* with a preverb *in(d)*- need not have this sense: *do-ingair* can also mean 'calls, names', and there is a verb *for-dingair* 'signifies'. My own translation reflects the guess that **con-indgair* might have had essentially the same meaning as *con-gair* 'calls, cries, shouts'.

Another possibility would be to understand *Febul* not as a *nominativus pendens* but as the fronted subject of a cleft sentence with a relative verb. We could then take the verb to be *con-gair* itself, with a Class C infix and relative nasalization: *conid-gaireth* 'he used to proclaim it'. (On the form *conid-* itself see *GOI* §413.2.)

§5c. *inbi*: Carney took this to be *in bí*, which he translated 'of the stock', but I can find no other evidence that *beó* could be used as a collective noun in this way. I suggest that the word is *inbi*, gen. sg. of *in(d)be*, a neuter *io*-stem derived from *indeb* 'wealth'. It must be acknowledged that all of the examples cited in *DIL* s.v. *indme* 'wealth, heritage; state, rank, condition' are late; however, the fact that the word exhibits syncope points to its early formation. Use of *díchoem* in this context can be compared with the statement *díles cach rochóem, indles cach díchóem* 'everything precious is exempt, everything without [great] value is liable' in *Críth Gablach* (Binchy 1941, 9.221–2).

§6c. *ad-scuirmis*: Carney (1976, 182 n. 21) rendered this verb as 'we thronged (?)', observing that it 'does not seem to be instanced, and the suggested meaning "thronged" is based on *tascor*'. My own translation has its point of departure in the rare word *ascor*, evidently the verbal noun of *ad-scuiri* itself and apparently meaning something like 'dissolution': at Wb. 25d16 *cen ascur sáitha* has been plausibly rendered 'without remission of tribulation' by Stokes and Strachan, and *ascur tigi* 'destruction of a house' (?) is included in a litany of disasters in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (Knott 1936, 32.1055). A sense 'dissolves, dismantles' is reasonably close to the meaning 'unyokes (horses)', hence 'encamps', which is amply attested for the simplex *scuirid*; and such an interpretation would fit the present context.

§7a. *mad*: Carney translated this as 'well', evidently taking it to be the proclitic form of *maith* in tmesis with *-choíni*; but in this case one would not expect the verb to be immediately preceded by *no*+infixed pronoun. It seems simpler to interpret the form as *má* 'if'+3sg. present subjunctive copula, fronting the phrase *fri gnáthu*.

The second clause of this conditional statement is not directly expressed: after conceding the disastrous consequences of the flood

which created Lough Foyle, the prophetess goes on to speak in §8 of the beauty of the troop of women to which she had once belonged. The sense may be that her memories of a happy past provide some consolation for the sorrows of the present: '(Even) if you lament it ... beautiful were the companies of women'.

§8d. *téit*: Carney (1976, 182 n. 22) took this to be an example— apparently unparalleled—of the absolute 2pl. present indicative of *téit*. As I shall argue in the next note, however, it seems best to take it and following *taet* as 3sg. forms.

§8d. *a friṫhissi*: In Old Irish, *friṫhissi* is normally used with a posses- sive pronoun whose person and number correspond to those of the subject of the associated verb: thus *co tís a lloch mo friṫhisi* 'until I may come into the lough again' (Shaw 1934, 63 §13), *ara tísam ar friṫhisi* 'so that we may come back again' (*TBC I* 28). If the verbs in this line are, as Carney took them to be, 2pl., we would accordingly expect *for friṫhissi* here; use of *a* (or *do*) irrespective of subject seems to be a development of the Middle Irish period, or of late Old Irish at the earliest.

An alternative interpretation accordingly seems preferable. The *a* which presumably stands behind N's *hi* could, all else being equal, be any of the third person possessive pronouns, but if it were plural the associated verbs would necessarily be *tiagait, taegat*. The subject must therefore be taken to be either 3sg. fem. or masc. 'Though she goes, let her come back again' could refer to the prophetess specifically, corroborating her assertion of the esteem in which she was held at §5*cd* above. 'Though he goes, let him come back again' suggests a scenario like those in the stories of Connlae Caem and Loegaire mac Crimthainn, in which a king witnesses his son's departure into the Otherworld (McCone 2000, Jackson 1942). Provisionally, I have favoured the second of these possibilities in essaying a translation.

ABBREVIATIONS

Corm. Y   Kuno Meyer, 'Sanas Cormaic', *Anecdota from Irish manuscripts*, vol. 4 (Halle 1912).

Corp. gen. M.A. O'Brien, *Corpus genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin 1962).

Fél. Óeng. Whitley Stokes, *Félire Óengusso Céli Dé: the martyrology of Óengus the Culdee*. Henry Bradshaw Society 29 (London 1905; reprinted Dublin 1984).

PH   Robert Atkinson, *The passions and the homilies from Leabhar Breac*. Todd Lecture Series 2 (Dublin 1887).

SR   Whitley Stokes, *Saltair na rann* (Oxford 1883).

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