An Old Irish Poem about Mug Ruith

By JOHN CAREY

Mug Ruith is a unique and rather mysterious figure in medieval Irish tradition: a great druid, whose character included aspects which were both sinister and heroic. As ancestor of the Fir Maige Féne, the population group from which Fermoy derives its name, he figures prominently in the genealogies; and his role as the saviour of Munster from the aggression of Cormac mac Airt was still remembered in the seventeenth century.[1] Yet the Irish had reason to curse his memory, as it was believed that a special doom was reserved for them as a vicarious punishment for his having been the pupil of the heresiarch wizard Simon Magus, and the executioner of John the Baptist.[2]

A truly comprehensive study of Mug Ruith has still to be undertaken: even a full dossier of references to him in the literature has not yet been compiled. Most discussions refer to the collection of excerpts assembled by Käte Müller-Lisowski in 1923.[3] In 1926-7, Marie-Louise Sjoestedt published an edition (with French translation) of the late Middle Irish or early Modern Irish saga *Forbais Dromma Damgaire* ('The Siege of Druimm Damgaire'; hereafter *FDD*), in which Mug Ruith is the central figure;[4] and T.F. O'Rahilly's brief analysis of the legend cited several further passages.[5] Remarkably, none of these scholars – nor, so far as I can tell, anyone else who has written about Mug Ruith – appears to have noticed the poem edited below, although it has a page to itself in one of the most celebrated of medieval Irish manuscripts. My purpose here is simply to make this interesting document more readily available: I have made no attempt to recapitulate the full range of the evidence relevant to Mug Ruith, or to provide any fresh interpretations.

To the best of my knowledge, the poem 'Mug Ruith, rígfhili cen goí' is attested only in the Book of Lecan (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS 23.P.2; cat. 535), where it is found on the *verso* of folio 124. It follows an extensive prose section dealing with Mug Ruith's genealogy (fos 123vb-124rb), other versions of which are found in Dublin, Trinity College MS 1298 (shelfmark H.2.7), pp. 142-3;[6] and in the Book of Uí Maine (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS D.ii.1; cat. 1225), fo. 19v.[7] The subsection immediately preceding the poem, headed *De fabulis Moga Ruith* ('Concerning the legends of Mug Ruith'), gives a brief and often garbled account of Mug Ruith's career, including his exploits at the siege of Druimm Damgaire. TCD MS 1298 provides a copy of *De fabulis Moga Ruith* which is in many instances clearer than that in the Book of Lecan; the scribe of the Book of Uí Maine, perhaps taken aback by some of the obscurities of the text, broke off his own transcription of this section after the first eight lines. Neither manuscript includes the poem, which the Book of Lecan introduces with the

terse formula *Amal asbert an fili* ('As the poet said').

The only other traces of our poem which I have encountered occur in *Forbais Dromma Damgaire*, where the author has inserted versions of our §§13 and 16: in both cases the text has been somewhat simplified and modernised.[8] Each quatrain bears a different ascription: §13 to Cormac mac Cuilennáin, the talented bishop-king of Cashel who died in 908; and §16 to *Daniel fili*, perhaps to be identified with the abbot of Lismore who died in 863 and who is credited with composing the well-known poem 'A ben, bennacht fort – ná ráid!'.[9] Obviously, both ascriptions cannot be correct, and it may be that neither is: but neither of them is implausible. As we shall see, the language suggests a date of composition in the ninth century. Cormac was a Munster king who lost his own life resisting the hegemonic claims of the king of Tara in the battle of Belach Mugna; he was also an antiquary, and Mug Ruith is mentioned in *Sanas Cormaic* ('Cormac's Glossary'), a compendium of lexical and other lore which he may have compiled and with which he was in any case closely associated.[10] Daniél was also a Munster cleric and poet, whose monastery lay just east of the territory of the Fir Maige Féne.

The poem is written in a metre which could be described as *cró cummaisc etir rannaigecht ocus lethrannaigecht móir*.[11] quatrains whose first and third lines have seven syllables each, while the second and fourth lines, with five syllables each, end in rhyming monosyllables. The principal ornament employed is linking alliteration between the quatrains, present in almost all instances. There is moreover a strong tendency for internal alliteration to be present in the shorter lines; it is also to be found, but less frequently, in the longer ones.

Although later spelling conventions and frequent corruptions serve to obscure the fact, there can be no doubt that the poem was written in the Old Irish period. This is apparent on consideration of the following linguistic features:

(a) The old initial cluster *mr-* survives in *mruigib* §11c, and perhaps in *mrogsait* §20a. On the evidence of the *Annals of Ulster*, Tomás Ó Máille argued that 729-834 was the period in which *mr-* became *br-*.[12]

(b) *Már* rather than *mór* is reflected by the spelling at §21b, and is consistently present where it can be confirmed by rhyme (§§23d, 26b, 36d). *Mór* is already the preferred form in the Würzburg glosses.

(c) Hiatus is present in *uä* §§6b, 26a, *druäd* §13c, *uï* §14d, *druïd* §16a, *diä* §§17d, 19c, *Cliäch* §20d, *Diä* §29b (unhistorical), *deäc* §29c; but absent in *suí* §§1b, 6a, *druí* §1d, *dia* ('god') §8d, *dóib* §9d, *dia* ('to / from his') §§22d, 23a, 24c, *fria* §28c. In the poetry of Blathmac (mid-eighth century), James Carney has noted instances of contraction in *dóib* (133, 455), *druí* (27) and *suí* (28);[13] 'prepositions ending in a vowel, followed by the possessive pronoun *a*, are usually monosyllabic'.[14]

(d) The genitive plural ending *-(a)e* for *u*-stems is preserved in *ndánae* §6a.

(e) The short dative is present in *aí* §4a.

(f) The old nom. pl. masc. of the definite article is preserved in *ind Érennaig* §8c; the nom. / acc. sg. neut. article seems to be present in *a tír* §11d, *a n-ard* §16b, *a n-oen* §28b.

(g) Usage of infixed pronouns conforms to Old Irish norms: Class A 3 pl. *fos-fácaib* §33a; Class B 3 sg. masc. *adidn-opart* §34c; Class C 3 sg. masc. *rod n-alt* §3b (but see note), *dod-mbert* §29b, *rod melt* §29d, *rod n-ort* §30c.

(h) A suffixed pronoun appears to be present in *luidi* §5a.[15]

(i) The nasalising relative clause is still employed: *ro-ngabsat* §1c, *as-mbiur* §2a, *fo-ngeglainn* §4a, *bid n-ae* §11c, *do-nge-gad* §11d.

(j) Neither pretonic *di-* in *di-rig* §16c nor pretonic *to-* in *to-rorbai* §36a has yet become *do-*.

(k) The deponent is preserved: *-génair* §8b, *airlistir* §10a, *-corastar* §15a, *lámair* §21a.

(l) The reduplicated secondary future is preserved: *do-ngegad* §11d.

(m) There is still extensive use of the absolute preterite, e.g. 3 sg. *sénais* §7a, *-génair* §8b, *airlistir* §10a, *-corastar* §15a, *milt* §18d, *dolbais* §17c, 3 pl. *dolbsait* §17a, *mrogsait* §20a, passive *gabtha* §3a.

(n) Strong preterites are conjugated as in Old Irish: *fo-ngeglainn* §4a, *sénais* §7a, *-génair* §8b, *do-génsat* §8c, *do-bertatar* §10c, *do-memaid* §15c, *milt* §18d, *lámair* §21a, *at-condarctar* §21c, *-nenaisc* §28a, *dod-mbert* §29b, *-melt* §29d, *-ort* §30c, *adidn-opart* §34c, *to-rorbai* §36a, *-cleth* §37d.

(o) The conjunction *ó* does not seem yet to be a conjunct particle in *ó ba* §6a.

Some features in the language would be compatible with a date in the later rather than the earlier Old Irish period, but do not in themselves constitute evidence for such a dating.

(p) Elision is present in *delbdae a* §2a (but avoided in *gabthae a* §3a, *cethorcho ar* §13d, *má as-bermis* §25b, *siniu intí* §33c, *to-rorbai in* §36a): that this was already permissible in the eighth century is evident from the Blathmac poems.[16] The same corpus provides instances of the types of elision seen in *d'ág* §3b, *d'fhorcetul* §§5b, 6c, *d'Eógan* §23d, *d'Fhiachaig* §24b;[17] in *dó 's* §22d;[18] and in *fors' mboí* §33d.[19]

(q) *Na* consistently appears rather than *inna*: §6a, §6c, §18c. James Carney attempted to provide a survey of the

chronology of the *inna > na* shift, concluding that 'the graph of *inna* falls slowly and regularly from 100% in the seventh century to zero from about 900 onwards': Blathmac's poems have 14 instances of *na* vs. 6 of *inna*; and Carney counted 16 *na* and 5 *inna* in the Prologue and Epilogue of *Féilire Óengusso*.[20] Where only 3 instances are present, however, such a statistical analysis cannot be applied.

(r) A sort of univerbation is present in *tuc* §32a. This is, however, one of the 'anomalous independent prototonic forms' discussed by Kim McCone: as he notes, 'any tense or mood of [verbs] with prevocalic *to*, *fo* or *ro* as first preverb... may be prototonic in independent position'.[21] An example of this usage can already be cited from the seventh-century poem 'Fo réir Choluimb céin ad-fias';[22] and there are many more in the poetry of Blathmac.[23]

(s) Of the instances of *ro*, a perfect or pluperfect sense is not obviously appropriate in *ro gellad* §11a, *ro nenaisc* §28a, *rod melt* §29d, *rod n-ort* §30c, *robo* §§34b, 35a, *to-rorbai* §36a. (In §§29d, 30c, *ro* may have been substituted in the course of transmission for earlier *no*). But while it is in general true that Old Irish observed a distinction between narrative past (simple preterite) and perfect (augmented preterite), and that the erosion of this distinction is one of the features of the transition to Middle Irish, McCone cautions that even in Old Irish 'between these areas of reasonably close semantic correspondence there is a substantial gap where translation of an Old Irish augmented preterite rather than a simple past is at best unnatural, at worst impossible'.[24] Once again, the poems of Blathmac are a convenient source of examples.[25]

In those parts of the poem which I can interpret with any confidence, there are, however, two words which do suggest a

date in the ninth century rather than in the eighth: these are *mílid* §19d and *táir* §36b (see discussion in the notes). On balance, a date in the latter part of the Old Irish period seems accordingly most probable; but it should be borne in mind that the evidence for this relative lateness is fairly slender. Further research may well render it possible to refine or adjust this estimate. It seems clear, however, that this poem (together with *De fabulis Moga Ruith*) constitutes evidence that many of the details of Mug Ruith's epic defense of Munster were known many centuries before the story assumed the form in which it is familiar to us thanks to the flamboyant pages of *FDD*.

As will be obvious, the text has come down to us in a corrupt state. Besides such minor alterations as normally attend the transmission of an Old Irish text in the Middle Irish and Modern Irish periods, there has been considerable obfuscation thanks to wholesale confusion of lenited *d* and *g*,[26] distorted readings reflecting the falling silent of lenited *d*,[27] metathesis,[28] confusion or miscounting of minims,[29] omission of words or syllables,[30] and hypermetric additions.[31] It has been my aim to present the poem in a version which is as close to its original form as I am capable of achieving, but I have not wanted to obscure the vagaries of the surviving text. I therefore provide both a normalised and a diplomatic version: in the former, passages which I have not been able to construe are (of course) left in their original spelling, and attention is called to them by italics. (In these cases the italicised text will be unexpanded, with the letters grouped as in the manuscript — a treatment more conservative than that adopted in the diplomatic text itself). I hope, and am confident, that difficulties which have defeated me will not prove to be so difficult of solution for others.

EDITED TEXT

§1. Mug Ruith, rígfhili cen goí,
   ba breithem, ba suí
ro ngabsat Goídil ar [...]
   Níba rí, ba druí.

§2. Delbdae a athair, fír as-mbiur,
   do chlaind Cheithirn chain.
Ba rígéices Ulad ndil
   Cuinnesc mac Fir Glain.

§3. Gabthae a ainm do Mug Ruith
   d'ág ba Roth rod n-alt.
A máthair, dia n-eprem cert,
   ingen Chathmainn Cacht.

§4. Céne fo-ngeglainn fo aí
   fón nÉrinn, ní gó,
conná boí la Goídelu
   éices bad uais dó.

§5. De sin luidi co Buanainn
   d'fhorcetul ind airm.
Iar sin bera ais Er- uill
   bahAlb- aainm.

§6. Ó ba suí na ndánae-sin,
   uä fial Fir Glain,
d'fhorcetul na druídechtae
   luid co Símón sair.

TRANSLATION

§1. Mug Ruith, a royal poet without falsehood, was a judge and a sage whom the Gaels took ... He was not a king, he was a druid.

§2. Shapely was his father, I tell the truth, from the offspring of fair Cethern. He was royal poet of the dear Ulaid: Cuinnesc son of Fer Glan.

§3. His name was taken by Mug Ruith because it was Roth who had fostered him. His mother, if we speak aright, [was] Cathmann's daughter Cacht.

§4. He studied poetry so long throughout Ireland, it is no lie, until there was not among the Gaels a poet who was his superior.

§5. Thence he went to Buanann to study weapons ...

§6. When he was a sage of those arts, the noble grandson of Fer Glan, he went to Simon in the east to learn druidry.

DIPLOMATIC TEXT

§1. Mog ruith rigf*h*ile gan gai. / ba breitheam ba sai. / ron gabsad gæidil ar / niba rig rob drai.

§2. Dealbda athair fir ambir / do cloi*nd* ceithir*n* cain. / ba rigeigeas ulad ndil / cui*n*deasg m*ac* f*h*ir glai*n*.

§3. Gabtha ain*m* do mog ruith. / daid ba roth rod nalt. / a m*átha*ir dia neprem ceart. / i*n*gen cathmai*n*d cacht.

§4. Cene fongeaglai*nd* fo ai. / fon er*inn* ni go. / *con*a bai la gaidelu / eiceas badh uas dó.

§5. De si*n* luide co buanai*nd*. / do certa li*n* tair*m*. / iar si*n* bera ais er*inn* uill / ba halb*a* a ainm.

§6. O raba sai na ndana si*n*. / h*ua* fial f*h*ir glai*n*. / d'oircedal[1] na d*r*aige*ch*ta / luig co si*mon* sair.

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[1] doircedlal *with punctum delens under first* l.

§7. Sénais tair in conflicht-sin
         la Símón, sír gairm,
     fri Petar ar bendachtain
         gaíse ⁊ airm.

§8. Con-uargab in conflicht[-sin]
         diná génair glé.
     Do-génsat ind Érennaig
         dia ndruídechtae dé.

§9. *Con mid gart sad* tuascertaig
         co Mumain máir na *nom*
     atas rubart mair
         nabad dliged dóib.

§10. De sin airlistir Mumu
         airli comnart cruith.
     Do-bertatar ó Dairbriu
         a ssenóir Mug Ruith.

§11. Ro gellad dó re tuidecht
         comall, comnart bríg:
     bid n-ae de mruigib Muman
         do-ngegad a tír.

§12. Tócbad fora fhén Mug Ruith
         indaclad ard uad
     conro domnid riam
         ni bobobar ceard.

§7. He waged that struggle along with Simon – enduring the report – against Peter, for the sake of a blessing on [his] wisdom and weapons.

§8. He raised up that conflict from which no brightness was born. The Irish made of him a god of druidry.

§9. . . . the northerners to great Munster of the . . . that it was not incumbent on them.

§10. Hence Munster advised a strong clever plan. From Dairbre they brought their elder, Mug Ruith.

§11. Fulfilment was promised to him before he came, a powerful advantage: that there would be his, from the territories of Munster, the land which he would choose.

§12. Mug Ruith was lifted onto his cart . . .

§7. Seanastair *con*flicht si*n*. / la si*mon* sir gair*m*. / f*r*ia pedar ar ben*nach*tai*n* / gaisi ⁊ air*m*.

§8. *Con*ur*nn*gab i*n con*f*h*licht. / di- na genair gle. / dode*n*sad in er*enn*aig. / dia draideacht dé.

§9. *Con* mid gart sad tuaisce*r*taigh. / co m*uma*i*n* moir na no*m*. / atas rubart mair / nabad dligead doib.

§10. De si*n* airlistir mu*m*u. / airli co*m*nart cruith. / dob*er*tada*r* o d*air*b*r*i / a ssenoir mog ruith.

§11. Ro geallad dó re tuide*cht*. / co*m*n*ar*t brig *nó* co*m*all brig.² / bidne de mbruigib m*um*an / do*n* ge dad a tir.

§12. Togbadar fei*n* mog ruith. / indaclad ard. uad / *con*ro do*m*nid. riam / ni bobob*ar* ceard.

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² nó comall brig *above line.*

§13. Comnart a theglach do grés,
  do niurt gae for sét:
im charpat ind rígdruäd
  cethorcho ar chét.

§13. His household was always mighty, with strength of spears upon the way: around the chariot of the royal druid were a hundred and forty.

§14. Con-sáidset a n-inadu
  i toeb Chláiri chéir
do fhorgull in márchatho
  frisna Uü Néill.

§14. They pitched their camping-places in the slope of dark Cláire, to proclaim the great battle against the Uí Néill.

§15. In airm i corastar sleig
  Mug Ruith, ráides laíd,
asa láthrach do-memaid
  tipra Cennmair chaín.

§15. Where Mug Ruith, of whom the poem tells, planted his spear, from that spot there burst the spring of fair Cennmar.

§16. Con-dolbsat druïd Dáil Chuinn
  a n-ard comard mbil;
di-rig anál Moga Ruith
  cona druídecht dil.

§16. The druids of Dál Cuinn enchanted the fair equally-high height; Mug Ruith's breath strips [it] away, with his precious magic.

§17. Dolbsait teóra cauracha
  forsa mboí uath áig.
Dolbais Mug Ruith ruirerach
  cona diä chnáim.

§17. They enchanted three sheep on which there was the horror of battle. Mug Ruith, the great elder, formed hounds from his bone.

§18. Co lluid Colpthach allmuire
  uaidib isin n-áth
ar lobrai na márMuman,
  milt a chruas for cách.

§18. When Colptha the foreigner went from them into the ford to bring weakness upon great Munster, he inflicted his valour upon all.

§13. Co*mm*art a teaglach do g*rés*. / do n*iur*t gæd f*or* sed. / i*m* c*ar*pad an rigdruad / .xl. ar .c.

§14. *Con*saidsead a nuamada. / i tæb claire cheir. / do oircill i*n* morchatha / f*r*isna hu neill.

§15. In air*m* i corastair sleig. / moga r*uith* raidiss laid. / asa lathrach domebaid / tip*r*a cenmair cai*n*.

§16. *Con*doilbsead d*r*uid dail cui*ind*. / an*ar*t co-*m*ard mbil. / direg andal moga r*uith* / co *n*d*r*aidecta dil.

§17. Doilbsead teora c*ur*cha mæla / fo*r*sambai uatha ag. / dolbais mog r*uith* ruirer / *con*u dia cnam.

§18. *Co* luid colptach allmuiri / uaidib isi*n* ath. / ar lobra[3] na mormu*m*an / milt a c*r*ais fo*r* cach.

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[3] blobra *with punctum delens under first* b.

§19. Co foíd Mug Ruith a daltae
   Cennmar, cain *co narb*,
  diä comrac isind áth
   boí in mílid marb.

§19. When Mug Ruith sent his fosterling, fair Cennmar . . . the warrior was dead from their combat in the ford.

§20. Mrogsait i nDruim nDamgaire,
   sluag tuaiscertach drong.
  Is fri suide as-berar
   Cliäch lethnae Long.

§20. They advanced into Druim Damgaire, the northern army of troops. It is that which is called broad Long Cliach.

§21. Lámair in sruith isind fhén
   fri Mumain máir muaid.
  A n-at-condarctar Síl Néill
   lotar as fothuaid.

§21. The sage in the cart ventured in front of great noble Munster. When Síl Néill saw him they went away from him northward.

§22. Do-breth dó-som iar tíchtain
   asin chath do chách
  soerdílse Maige Mac nEirc
   dó 's dia chlaind co bráth.

§22. There was given to him, after all had come from the battle, the free possession of Mag Mac nEirc for himself and for his descendants forever.

§23. Ba dia thecosc, colgda bríg,
   conid cland ríg rán –
  máthair Fhiachach Muillethain
   do breith d'Eógan Már.

§23. It was from his advice, a warlike advantage, that it is a race of splendid kings – to bring Fiachu Muillethan's mother to Eógan Már.

§24. Mad-airled a thecosc-sain
   d'Fhiachaig, adlaic mbuaid.
  [. . .] nó chís dia chlaind:
   bieit for Érinn n-uaig.

§24. It is well that his instruction was sought by Fiachu, a pleasing virtue. . . . nor tribute from his offspring: they will be over all Ireland.

§19. *Co* faid mog r*uith* a dalta. / cenmair cai*n co n*arb. / dia co*mr*ag isi*nn* ath / bai i*n* milig marb.

§20. Ma rugsat i nd*r*uim ndamgaire. / sluag tuaiscertach drong. / is f*ri*s suidiu asb*erar* / cliach lethn*æ* long.

§21. Lamair in sruith isi*n* fen / re mumai*n* m*ai*r muaid. / a nat*conar*ctar sill neill[4] / lot*ar* as fotuaid.

§22. Dobreath do so*m* iar tia*cht*ain / asi*n* cath do cach. / s*æ*rdilsi muigi m*ac* nerc[5] / do is da cloi*n*d co brat*h*.

§23. Ba dia teagosg colgda brig. / *con*id cland[6] rig ran. / m*átha*i*r* fiachach muillethai*n* / do breith d'eog*an*. mar.

§24. Mad airlead a theagasg si*n* / d'iachaid adlaith mbuaid / no cis dia cloi*n*d / bit rig f*or* er*inn* nuaid.

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⁴ neill *above line.* ⁵ nercae *with two puncta delentia under final syllable.* ⁶ cland *above line.*

§25. Is oendán in dola-sin,
    má as-bermis fír,
táirciud do Dál Moga Ruith
    soíre fora tír.

§25. Providing Dál Moga Ruith with freedom for their land is, if we should tell the truth, the sole payment for that proceeding.

§26. Do-luid Cormac uä Cuinn
    co mac nEógain Máir.
Do-bert, ara dul fothuaid,
    a giall ina láim.

§26. Cormac grandson of Conn came to the son of Eógan Már. When he went northward, he gave his hostage into his hand.

§27. Luid fo inber [in] choiri
    la giallu, gním sruith,
forangrein Dal Araidi
    ar breith Moga Ruith.

§27. He went under the cauldron's spit with hostages, a venerable deed . . . at the judgment of Mug Ruith.

§28. Ro nenaisc ar dul fothuaid
    aithirriuch a n-oen;
conid fria chlaind do-benar
    cach ae, teclaim soer.

§28. Upon going northward he has pledged the same thing again; so that it is from his descendants that each of them is exacted, a noble selection.

§29. Saegul Moga Ruith, rád cert,
    ba Diä dod-mbert:
aimser nónbuir [ríg] deäc,
    conid é rod melt.

§29. The span of Mug Ruith, a correct statement, it was God who gave it: the time of nineteen kings, so that that is what he lived out.

§30. Molbthach maicne Moga Ruith,
    radar na uad huag:
Glas Caech miscadach rod n-ort,
    Fer Corb 7 Buan.

§30. Illustrious were the sons of Mug Ruith . . . Glas Caech the accursed, who slew him, Fer Corb and Buan.

§25. Is æn nan*n* i*n*dola si*n* / ma asbe*r*mis fir / tairci. do dail moga ruith / s*ai*re fo*r*a tir.

§26. Doluid corm*ac* h*u*a cui*n*d. / co m*ac* eog*ain* m*air*. / dobe*rt* ara dul lais fothuaid / a giall ina lai*m*.

§27. Luid fo i*n*ber cairi / la giallu gni*m* sruith. / fo*r*angrei*n* dal araidi / ar breith moga r*uith*.

§28. Ro nenais ar dul fotuaid. / aith erread a n-æn. / *con*id f*r*ia clai*n*d dobenar / ca*ch* ai tecland saer.

§29. Sægal moga r*uith* rad ce*rt* / bad iad dodm-be*rt* / ai*m*sear nae*n*ur deg / *con*ad ed rod melt.

§30. Molbthach m*ai*cne moga r*uith* / radar na uad huag / glas cæch miscadach rod morg / fear corb 7 buan.

§31. Ba sí máthair in Glais Chaích
  Emnae, adlaic mbuaid,
ingen Oenguso Tírig
  don Déis Tuaiscirt thuaid.

§32. Tuc máthair Fhir Chorb la Buan,
  [Dron, ba] dígrais bríg:
ingen Oenguso Echdach
  Láiréne, luad fír.

§33. Fos-fácaib fo bendachtain,
  Buan ⁊ Fer Corb.
Acht ba siniu intí Buan
  fors' mboí ordan ord.

§34. Is sí bendachtu Fhir Chorb
  robo bráthair Buain:
a n-adidn-opart fo láim
  in Táilcinn oc Ruaim.

§35. Robo díchra do-rat dó
  Mug Ruith, rád cen chiúin,
bendacht gaíse for gnúis mBuain
  ⁊ taise triúin.

§36. To-rorbai in bendachtu
  do Buan, buaid cen táir,
conid [é ba] chomairlid
  lasin Mumain máir.

§31. The mother of Glas Caech was Emnae, a pleasing virtue, daughter of Oengus Tírech of the Déis Tuaiscirt in the north.

§32. He married the mother of Fer Corb and Buan, Dron, it was an earnest advantage: the daughter of Oengus [son of] Eochaid Láiréne, a true remark.

§33. He left them under a blessing, Buan and Fer Corb. But Buan was the elder, upon whom was dignity of ranks.

§34. This is the blessing of Fer Corb, who was Buan's brother: when he offered himself, beneath the hand of the Adze-head at Rome.

§35. It was zealously that Mug Ruith gave to him, a speech without quietness, a blessing of wisdom upon the countenance of Buan, and the weakness of a strong man.

§36. The blessing came to Buan, a victory without shame, so that it is he who was counsellor to great Munster.

§31. Ba si m*áthai*r i*n* glas chaich / emnai adlaid buaid / i*ngen* æ*ngus*a tirig / do*n* deiscirt[7] tuaiscirt thuaid.

§32. Tug m*áthai*r fir corb la buan / dig*r*ais b*r*ig / i*ngen* æ*ngus*a echdach / lairene luag fir.

§33. Fosfagaib fo bend*ach*ta*i*n / buan ⁊ f*er* corb. / *acht* ba si*n*e i*n* bua*n* / fo*r*smbai ordan ord.

§34. Is i ben*nacht*u f*h*ir corb / robo brath*ai*r buain. / inido*m*pe*r*t[8] fo laim / in tailci*n*d oc ruai*m*.

§35. Robo dic*r*a do dart. / moga r*uith* rad cen ciuil. / ben*nacht*[9] gaisi f*or* gnuis mbuai*n* / ⁊ taisi t*r*iui*n*.

§36. Tororbai in bend*acht*u / do buan buaid gan tair. / *con*id co*m*airlid / lasi*n* M*um*ai*n* m*ai*r.

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[7] deiscirct *with second syllable underlined and a punctum delens under the second c.*
[8] nó b *written over* p.
[9] *A* b *with a bar through its ascender and a punctum delens beneath it occurs before this word.*

§37. Acht mad ainm ind fhir as-mbir,
    odbgó, tuinne tul:
 fo-gníthe, ní fognad nech –
    ní cleth nárbo mug.

§37. But if it be the man's name that you utter, a knotty falsehood, crest of a wave: he used to be served, he did not serve anyone – it was not hidden that he was no slave.

§37. Ac*h*t mad ain*m* in f*h*ir asambir / oidbgo tui*n*di tul. / fognithi ni f*h*ognad nech / ní cleth n*a*r*bo mug. .M.U.G.R.

TEXTUAL NOTES

§1.

– While Mug Ruith is of course prominent as a druid in the tales in which he figures, it is more curious to find him described here as a poet and a lawgiver. The poem goes on to say that his father was royal poet of the Ulaid (§2), and that he himself gained mastery as a poet (§4). According to a poem in *Acallam na Senórach*, Mug Ruith was one of the five best druids (*druid*) and the five best poets (*filid*) in Ireland.[32]
– The third line lacks a syllable, and is as it stands very obscure. A possible emendation would be to add *aí*, yielding the sense 'The Gaels took him, however'; but it is not clear what sense this could yield.
– A form *rob* would not be expected in the 3 sg. aug. pret. of the copula in early Irish, especially when followed by a consonant (contrast *raba sai* in §6a, *robo brathair* in §34b, *robo dicra* in §35a). I have emended to *ba* on the strength of the other instances of this form in this quatrain, and in §§2c, 23a, 29b, 31a, 33c below; and cf. the proposed emendation of §6a.

§2.

– Mug Ruith is often said to have been the son or descendant of Fergus mac Roich.[33]

The statement that his father was Cuinnesc mac (Fir Thechet maic) Fir Glain, descended at several removes from Fergus, is also, however, to be found in the genealogical literature.[34] In the tract *Imthechta Moga Ruith*, Mug Ruith's father is called *Cuindeasg mac Fhir Glain do sil Fergusa meic Rosa d'Ulltaib*, and is said to have been a poet (*éices*) at the court of Roth mac Ríguill, king of Ireland.[35]
In an alternative genealogy, however, which in several manuscripts immediately follows that just discussed, it is the Ulster warrior Cethern mac Fintain who is Mug Ruith's father.[36] Our poem seems to conflate this doctrine with that which made him son of Cuinnesc.

§3.

– Both of the doctrines articulated in this quatrain are frequently to be found elsewhere; thus the genealogical material in Oxford, Bodleian MS Laud 610 includes the statement that 'Cacht daughter of Cathmann king of the Britons was mother of Mug Ruith. Roth mac Ríguill fostered him (*ro n-alt*)'.[37] *Imthechta Moga Ruith* relates that Cacht (whose name means 'captive') had been seized on a raid on the Britons of the Isle of Man, and that

she was a slave in the house of Roth; it explains the circumstances under which her child came to be called Mug Ruith ('Slave of Roth').[38]

– The correct Class C 3 sg. masc. infixed pronoun is used in *rod n-alt*, but this is not of great significance: the same form recurs in several other accounts of Mug Ruith, many of them of clearly Middle Irish date; and it is also found in *Lebor Gabála*, in an account of the childhood of Lugaid Mac Con.[39]

§4.

– *Céne* has the attested meanings 'for as long as, while'; here the context would make a sense like 'so long' appropriate.

– *Fo aí* seems to mean 'concerning poetry', and to be an instance of the short dative. I have not, however, been able to find any other instances of *fo* being used in precisely this sense.

– The expression *bad uais dó* is unusual: the syntax is the same which is found in the phrase *trí húais dóib* 'three difficult things for them',[40] but the sense of *uais* itself seems closer to the meanings 'noble', 'height', or indeed to that of the preposition *ós / uas* 'over'.

§5.

– Mug Ruith is said in *FDD* to have learned the *foghluim na .uii. ceidbliadhan* in *Sith Cairn Breacnatan* from *Ban Buanainn bandrai ingen Dergdhualaigh* (§56; cf. §§78, 108). Sjoestedt translated this phrase as 'la science des sept siècles'; but it may rather refer to the seven 'first years' of a *filî*'s training. In our poem, however, Buanann is an instructress in arms, a function which she also exercises in *Corm.*:

Buanann was foster-mother of the *fianna* . . . Just as Anu was mother of the gods, so Buanann was like the mother of the *fianna* . . . Buanann: i.e., she was a good mother in giving the *fianna* instruction in arms.[41]

An anecdote in a legal manuscript states that Cú Chulainn learned his martial skills from Buanann as well as Scáthach;[42] elsewhere, *Buanann* is used as an epithet of Scáthach's.[43] An Old Irish treatise on the seating arrangements in a king's hall assigns a prominent place to *Buanond*, identified in a gloss as 'queen [and] female ruler'.[44]

– I take MS *luide* to represent *luidi* (with suffixed pronoun) rather than *luid é*: there are no other traces of the independent subject pronoun in the poem. On the form, see Breatnach, 'Suffixed Pronouns', n.15; of the parallels which he cites, note in particular *luidi síar co Cruachain*, 'he went westward to Cruachu' (*LU* l. 1640, *Táin Bó Flidais*).

– Radical emendation has been necessary in the second line. Cf. *d'fhorcetul na druídechtae* §6c below; and the phrase *ac foircetal gaiscid* in Cormac's account of Buanann, cited above.

§6.

– There are many references to Mug Ruith's having sought instruction from Simon.[45] According to *De fabulis Moga Ruith*, 'Mug Ruith settled in Tairbre [sic] when he came from learning with Simon Magus, in the conflict against the apostles'.[46]

– For emendation of *raba* to *ba* here, see note to §1 above.

– *Forcetul* is rare in the sense 'learning': but cf. *luid Cu Cul- do forceatal gaiscid la Scathaig nUanaind* 'Cú Chulainn went to learn arms from Scáthach Uanann' in a very similar context in the tale *Aided Oenfhir Aífe*.[47]

§7.

– That Mug Ruith assisted Simon Magus in his struggle against Peter is mentioned in most of the sources cited in the preceding note. That he did this in

exchange for a blessing, as stated here, may be reflected in his assertion in *FDD* §59 that he has the word of Simon son of Goll son of Iargoll (and of Peter!) that 'my arts will not be turned upon me for as long as I am alive'.[48] It is curious that our poem, although it mentions Mug Ruith's alliance with Simon against Peter, says nothing of the tradition that Mug Ruith beheaded John the Baptist, or of the eschatological beliefs which came to be associated with him.

– I take MS *seanas* to represent *sénais*, the otherwise unattested absolute 3 sg. preterite of *sniid* (cf. preterite *con-sénai* from *con-sní*). Alternatively, *seanas* together with following *tair* could be explained as 3 sg. preterite of *sénaid* 'blesses', inflected as a deponent; cf. rel. *sénastar* in 'Broccán's Hymn'.[49] But we have no other instances in the poem of the spread of deponent endings to originally non-deponent verbs; and the context appears also to favour the interpretation advanced here.

§8.

– The first line of this quatrain is hypometric as it stands. I have supplied *-sin* by analogy with §7a.

§9.

– I am unable to translate much of this quatrain, but it evidently has to do with the demands for tribute, and the subsequent invasion of Munster, by Cormac mac Airt. Besides the account of these events in *Forbais Dromma Damgaire*, mention of the invasion is made in a brief passage in the Book of Lecan,[50] in the genealogical material in Laud 610,[51] and in *De fabulis Moga Ruith*. In the last of these sources it is stated that:

Cormac ua Cuinn alighted upon it. He sought hostages from Munster. He encamped in Druimm Damgaire, in Long Cliach. Fiachu Muillethan came, so that he was at Cláire.[52]

– In *con mid gart sad* the second two elements look as if they represent *-gartsat*, with Middle Irish addition of a weak verbal ending to a dental preterite stem. So late a form would, however, be difficult to reconcile with the language of most of the rest of the poem, and indeed with what immediately precedes it in the line: I take *con mid* to derive from the nasalising conjunction *co* 'until, when', followed by the correct Old Irish form of the Class C 3 sg. masc. infixed pronoun, thus originally *condid-n-* (cf. e.g. *conid-nderoímed* Ml. 55d4). Reinterpretation of minim sequences, carelessness in minim counting, and interchange of *nn* and *nd* could easily lead from this to what appears in the MS. If the line did begin with *condid-ngart-*, however, what follows must have been so radically altered that it is doubtful whether the original reading can be recovered. Kevin Murray has made the attractive suggestion that the form to be restored is *con-aimdetar* 'they (have) ruled'.

– It would be tempting to emend *na nom* in the second line to *na noem* 'of the saints'; but this would not give correct rhyme with *dóib*.

– It is also hard to know how to interpret *atas rubart* in line c: this appears to contain the Middle Irish infixed pronoun *-tos-*, created from the contamination of Class B *-ta-* by the more distinctive *-s-* of Class A. Since the line as a whole remains obscure, however, it seems safer to assume corruption here than to draw conclusions bearing upon the language of the poem as a whole.

§10.

– That Mug Ruith's home prior to the siege of Druimm Damgaire was in Dairbre (Valencia Island, Co. Kerry) is stated in

FDD §§57-63 and confirmed by other sources.[53]

– *Cruith* as a laudatory adjective is mentioned twice in *Corm.*: *cruith cech cro(c)dae* (§247) and *cruith .i. cailg nō glic nō crodœ* (§386).

§11.

– Every account of the siege mentions this offer of territory as the condition for Mug Ruith's involvement. The emendation of *don ge dad* to *do-ngegad* is supported by the use of the related word *rogu* in other descriptions of the agreement: *Is di thecosc in chatha sin focres rogu do Mug Ruith do thirib Muman* (Laud 610),[54] *Tucad do a roga do thirib Muman ar thoideacht don chath* (Book of Lecan).[55]

– The second line is too short by 2 syllables: I have drawn upon the gloss in order to fill the gap.

§12.

– The emendation in the first line is necessitated by syllable count; but I can make sense of almost nothing else.

§13.

– In *FDD* §63, a version of this quatrain is attributed to Cormac mac Cuilennáin: *Ba forneirt a theglach / o theighedh for set / im carpat an rigdruad / .xxx. fer ar ced.*
– For the idiom *do niurt* 'of strength', hence 'strong', cf. *TBCL* ll. 4626, 4677.[56]

§14.

– For the arrival of Mug Ruith and his retinue at Cenn Cláiri, where the troops of Fiachu Muillethan were already encamped, cf. *FDD* §72. *De fabulis Moga Ruith* also states that 'Fiachu Muillethan came, so that he was at Cláire' (*Do-lluid Fiacha Mullethan co bui hi Clariu*).[57]
– The verb *con-sáidi* normally has the senses 'complains, incites'; the translation here is based on the meanings of the simplex *sáidid*. The latter is normally

used of pitching tents in time of war.[58]
– *Uamada* looks like a Mid. Ir. acc. pl. of *uam* 'cave'. But the morphology seems much too late for this poem, nor does 'cave' seem to make sense in context. I propose emending to *inadu* '(dwelling-) places', on the hypothesis that *n-uamada* goes back to dittographic *n-ininada*, the original corruption having been perhaps facilitated by the sequence of five minims at the beginning of *n-inadu*.

(It may be worth noting that *sáidid* often takes acc. pl. *sosta* as its object, while instances of the placing of *inad* and *sosad* in apposition can be cited from *Saltair na Rann* and *Fís Adomnáin*).[59]
– The normal sense of *forgell* is 'testifying, bearing witness'.

§15.

– The event spoken of here is recounted in *FDD* §74: Mug Ruith makes a hole with his *sleagha draidhechta* or 'magic spears', and then asks Cennmar to dig on the spot. '"What will be my payment?" said Cennmar. "Your name on the stream", said Mug Ruith' (*'Loighidhecht dom?' ar Cennmar. 'H'ainm for in sruth', ar Mogh Ruith*). *De fabulis Moga Ruith* also speaks of *Tipra Cenmairr*, but associates it only with Cennmar's killing of Colpthach (§19 below).[60] According to Eugene O'Curry:

The place in which the arrow fell is still pointed out in the parish of *Imleach Grianan*, in the county of Limerick; and the well remains still under the ancient name of *Tobar* (or *Tipra*) *Ceann mōir*, that is, Well of Great Head, or Spring; and a river that issues from it is called *Sruth Cheanna Mhōir*, or the Stream of Great Head.[61]

§16.

– A version of this quatrain is cited in *FDD* §101, where it is ascribed to *Daniel fili*: *Condailset draithi dhail Cuind / os ard comar min / soidhis Mogh Ruith da*

anail ain / an draidhechta dhil.

– For the magical elevation of Druimm Damgaire by Cormac's druids, and its lowering by Mug Ruith, see *FDD* §§42, 77; he plunges the invaders into confusion by breathing on the hill at ibid. §§80-1.

§17.

– In *FDD* the sheep are not produced by the magic of Cormac's druids, but are transformed women of the *síd* (§§21, 48-50, 96-103); and Mug Ruith produces the hounds not 'from his bone' but with a flint and tinder (ibid. §§97-8).

– The first line is 1 syllable too long. Correct syllable count could be obtained by emending *curcha mæla* to *mælchurcha*; but it is hard to see why such a form would have been so altered. I have preferred to see *mæla* as intrusive, and to restore an unsyncopated *curacha*: such lack of syncopation in the velar declension is unusual, but cf. *muiriuchaib* (v.l. *murechaib*) in *Cáin Domnaig*.[62] The word is normally *caíra*: for the vocalism of the first syllable, cf. *cauru* in the Bodleian copy of *Sanas Cormaic*.[63] A by-form *cúra* is attested in the later language.[64]

– The third line is 1 syllable too short. I have rectified the count by emending the anomalous *ruirer* to *ruirerach*: intensive *ro-* + *rerach* 'patriarch, ancient'.

§18.

– *De fabulis Moga Ruith* agrees with our poem in giving the name of Cormac's most formidable warrior as *Colpthach Allmuire*:[65] he is there described as a *trénfher* or 'champion', and is said to have killed one of the Munstermen in combat every day.[66] In *FDD* this character is named *Colptha*, and is not a foreigner but a druid from the *síd* (§§21, 44).

– For the idiom *melid X for Y*, see *DIL* s.v. *meilid*, col. 82.78ff., especially *inriuth*

Lindmuine . . . milt a crúas for comaithchu from the genealogical material in Laud 610;[67] I have emended the puzzling *crais* (as if for *craes* 'gluttony') accordingly.

§19.

– Cennmar also plays a prominent role as Mug Ruith's principal disciple in *FDD*. In *De fabulis Moga Ruith* he is identified as *Cennmar maccu Lugni*.[68]

– The conjunct 3 sg. pret. of *foídid* is regularly *-foídi* in the glosses; for variable usage in verbs of this type in the Old Irish period see *GOI* §678.

– The phrase *co narb* is as it stands obscure. The existence of an adjective *narb* meaning something like 'excellent' could be inferred from a couple of instances of an abstract noun *narbus* (glossed *uasal maith* 'lofty [and] good'); from the laudatory compound adjective *narbchellach* in the Stowe recension of the *Táin*; and from the personal name *Fir Nairb* (gen. sg.) mentioned at one point in *Acallam na Senórach*:[69] but these attestations are not only scattered but also late. An alternative possibility would be to emend to *co garb* 'harshly'.

– For use of the substantive with the sense of the copula when it is separated from the predicate by the subject, see *GOI* §774.2.

– Nom. sg. *mílid* also appears in 'Sanctán's Hymn' (*Thes.* ii, 353.6), dated by Stokes and Strachan (p. xxxix) as 'probably ninth century'.

§20.

– That the first line of this quatrain is corrupt is evident both from its obscurity and from the fact that it is 1 syllable too long. Linking alliteration is retained, and the line shortened by a syllable, if *marugsat* is emended to *mrogsait*.

– The reason why Druimm Damgaire

gained the name of Long Cliach is explained in *FDD* §40. Cf. *De fabulis Moga Ruith*: *Ba fidbad Cliu huile in tan-sin. Ba Druim Damgaire Long Clioch. Ba Druim Eugabail Áne* ('All Cliu was a wood at that time. Long Cliach was Druimm Damgaire. Áine was Druimm Eógabail').[70] – In the final line, *lethnae* only makes sense as fem. gen. sg. of *lethan*, modifying *Cliäch*. According to the dictionaries, *cliu* is a masculine noun; but I can see no evidence for this in the forms which are cited.

§21.

– Mug Ruith's advance against the northern army in his chariot (or 'wagon'; note that it appears also to be called *fén* at §12a above) is described in *FDD* §118.
– Use of the verbal stem *lam-* without the preverb *ro* is a feature of earlier Old Irish according to Thurneysen (*GOI* §543).

§22.

– *Cailli Mac nEirc* is given as the former name of Mag Féne in *FDD* §66.

§23.

– There are several other accounts of the conception of Fiachu Muillethan, said to have taken place when a druid offered his daughter to Eógan Már so that he should sleep with her on the eve of the battle in which he was to lose his life. In none of these, however, is there any mention of Mug Ruith's involvement.[71]

§24.

– Mug Ruith is called Fiachu's fosterfather (*oidi*) in *FDD* §56.
– I have conjectured that MS *adlaith* represents *adlaic* 'pleasing'; note that the same cheville recurs as *adlaid buaid* at §31b below. For nasalisation by a preposed *i*-stem adj., cf. the form *inmain n-ainm*, cited from the Codex Sancti Pauli in *GOI* §237.1.

– The third line is incomplete in sense, and is too short by 3 syllables. One can only guess at what has been lost; the phrase *Ní fil cáin* 'There is no levy' would for instance fit in well with the rest.
– The fourth line is hypermetric as it stands in the MS. I have emended *bit rig for Erinn* 'they will be kings over Ireland' to the more elliptical *bieit for Érinn* 'they will be over Ireland'; note that *bieit* here lacks the hiatus which it has in Blathmac (472).
– I take MS *n-uaid* to be a form of the adjective *óg, uag* 'intact, whole, virgin'. The vocalism is usually *ó* in earlier texts, but note comparative *uagu* in *Félire Oengusso*.[72] *DIL* s.v. suggests that the phrase *Ériu óg*, so frequent in poetry, originally meant 'the whole of Ireland', and was only subsequently reinterpreted to mean 'virgin Ireland'.

§25.

– I take MS *tairci* to represent *táirciud*, verbal noun of *do-áirci*: the form in the surviving text could have arisen from loss of the final *d* through haplography with following *do*. Alternatively, it can be seen from the citations in *DIL* s.v. *táirciud* that gen. sg. *táircthe* was often simplified to *táirce*: it would have been easy to re-analyse the latter as an abstract noun in the *iā*-declension.
§26. That the king of Tara should be constrained to give hostages to the king of Munster was so radical a reversal of the conventional model of royal hierarchy that it is not surprising that it is emphasised in the sources. *FDD* §120 relates how the men of Leth Cuinn were obliged to yield 'every hostage, and every tribute, and every tax which the men of Munster wished' (*gac giall ⁊ gac cain ⁊ gac cis bud ail d'feraibh Muman*); and the brief account of the siege of Druimm Damgaire in the Book of Lecan includes a poem,

attributed to Feidlimid mac Crimthainn (†847), about Cormac's giving of hostages to Fiachu.[73] That Feidlimid was one of the kings of Cashel who most violently resisted the Uí Néill's claims to supremacy makes this ascription at any rate an appropriate one.

– I have omitted MS *lais* in the third line for the sake of the syllable count.

§27.

– Hogan lists *Inber Cairi* as a placename, but evidently knew of it only from our poem.[74] In a forthcoming article, however, Margo Griffin-Wilson makes the ingenious and persuasive suggestion that this statement corresponds to a passage in *Iomarbhágh na bhFileadh*, where it is stated that Cormac was placed after his defeat at Druimm Damgaire *fo ghabhail coire* 'under the cauldron's hanger'.[75] The line is one syllable short in the MS, and I have accordingly supplied an article in the edited text.

§28.

– *DIL* notes two instances of the variant *aitherread* for *aitherrach / aithirriuch* in the *Annals of the Four Masters*.[76]

– For use of the verb *do-eclainn* and its verbal noun *teclaim* in speaking of the selection of persons for particular purposes, see *DIL* s.vv. The MS reading seems to be due to reinterpretation of minims, with a sequence *teclaim* > *teclann* > *tecland*.

§29.

– With this statement compare that by Gilla in Choimded (*LL* 17951-2): *Ré noí ríg déc diaid i ndiaid / saegul Moga Ruith ra gliaid.* The doctrine was evidently intended to resolve the chronological anomaly involved in Mug Ruith's being a contemporary of Simon Magus and the apostles on the one hand, and of Cormac mac Airt and Fiachu Muillethan on the other.

Counting inclusively backward from Cormac, using the king-list in the first recension of *Lebor Gabála*, nineteen reigns lead not to Roth mac Ríguill (who does not seem to be attested apart from references to Mug Ruith himself), but to Eterscél, the king supposed to have been reigning over Ireland at the time of the birth of Christ.[77] If Mug Ruith were Christ's contemporary, it would have been possible for him to have known the biblical figures with whom legend associates him.

– It is on the basis of Gilla in Choimded's couplet that I have restored *ríg* in line c, which is otherwise too short by a syllable even if *deäc* is accorded hiatus.

– In the last line I have emended *ed* to *é*, referring to Mug Ruith; *ed*, referring to Mug Ruith's lifespan, would be redundant next to the infix in *rod melt*.

§30.

– The emendation in line c is a tentative one: I know of no other evidence for a tradition that Glas Caech killed his father. Mug Ruith is on the contrary said to have died of old age (*críne*) in the poem 'Cnucha cnoc ós cionn Life'.[78] I am grateful to Kevin Murray for the alternative suggestion that the original reading was *rod-mert* 'who betrayed him'.

§31.

– On Mug Ruith's marriage at an advanced age to *Eimhne ingen Aenghasa Tirig*, see *FDD* §72. The genealogical material preceding *De fabulis Moga Ruith*, by contrast, states that *Aemhne ingen Oengusa Tirich* was the wife of Forgo, son of Mug Ruith's son Buan, and speaks of Glas Caech as having been another of Buan's sons.[79] Glas Caech is, however, said to have been the son of Mug Ruith in the tale *Tucait Indarba na nDéise*, where he figures as the ancestor of the

Roithrige.[80] Yet another doctrine, that Buan married Eimne, may be reflected in *FDD* when it has Mug Ruith offer Eimne the choice of sleeping with Buan rather than with himself, only to have her say, 'The one who is most cunning, and whom the men of Munster serve, and who gives benefit to everyone: it is with him that I shall sleep'.

§32.

– The standard genealogical doctrine was that Der Draigen of the Corcu Bardéne was the mother of Buan and Fer Corb, while Mug Ruith's chief wife was Dron daughter of Láiríne of the Érainn.[81] But *Imthechta Moga Ruith* names the mother of Buan and Fer Corb as *Dron ingen Oengusa meic Echach Lairen*;[82] and this matches the statement in TCD MS 1298 – contradicting its earlier assertion that they were the sons of Der Draigen – that Buan and Fer Corb were the offspring of *Dron ingen Lariene de Hernaib*.[83]
– The second line is two syllables too short; and the name of Dron, which all of the comparanda cited above would lead us to expect, is missing from the quatrain. This has suggested restoring the words *Dron ba* at the beginning of the line, an addition which also provides alliteration.

§33.

– That Buan was Mug Ruith's eldest son is also apparent from *Imthechta Moga Ruith*;[84] and it is implicit in Mug Ruith's offering Buan to Eimne as a substitute for himself in *FDD* §72.
– I have emended line c to secure correct syllable count.

§34.

– I am not aware of any other allusions to this story about Fer Corb: it may perhaps be compared with the paradoxical tradi-

tion that Mug Ruith was blessed by Peter (cf. n. 48).

§35.

– I have ventured several fairly bold emendations in lines a and b: those in the former have been suggested by syllable count, while *ciuil* has been changed to *ciúin* in order to secure a better sense. For *ciúin* as a substantive, cf. the aphorism *Cach ciúin celar* ('Every quiet thing is concealed') in the tale *Siaburcharpat Con Culainn* (*LU* 9303).
– Note use here of the *ā*-stem *bendacht* by contrast with the *n*-stem *bendachtu* in §§33a, 34a, 36a.
– *Taise triúin* may be an allusion to the idea that eloquence and wisdom are superior to physical force. But there are other possibilities: *taise* can also mean 'mercy' or 'corpse, relics'.

§36.

– Cf. Mug Ruith's demand in *FDD* §60 that one of his descendants was always to be 'a man of counsel and secrecy . . . with the king of Munster' (*fer comhairli 7 sanais . . . ag rígh Muman*). The treatise on the *frithfolaid* or 'counter-obligations' of the king of Cashel edited by J.G. O'Keeffe lists the *frithfolaid* of the Fir Maige (Féne) as being 'a druid from them to the king; the best man of them is united in secrecy with the king of Cashel' (*drui uaidib don ríg. fer bes dech dib is oen i sanais la rí Caisil*).[85]
– *Tár* appears originally to have been an *o*-stem; and the examples cited in *DIL* give no clear indication that its inflection as (apparently) a feminine can be traced to before the end of the Old Irish period (at earliest).[86] Acc. sg. *táir*, confirmed by rhyme, is one of the strongest pieces of evidence against a dramatically early dating for the poem.
– I have made a minor emendation to

supply the 2 syllables missing in line c.

§37.

– The crux in this quatrain comes in the second line. *Oidbgo* could conceivably be emended to *ba gó* 'it was false': this would give good sense, but seems a rather violent change. I have accordingly done my best to render the text as it stands, clumsy though the resulting translation seems. If I am correct in seeing the word *gó* here, its use in this final quatrain is evidently an echo of its occurrence in the first.

–*Tuindi tul* presumably represents the phrase *tul tuinne*, with preposed genitive; I have not encountered this elsewhere as a cheville. It is attested with the sense 'crest of a wave', and in references to the surging of the sea: as a place name, it designates a mountain whose top was supposedly not covered by the waters of the Flood.[87]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 Thus ITS 8.318-20 (Keating, *Foras Feasa*); 11.110 (Dáibhidh Ó Bruadair); 20.26 §64, 50-2 §§174-9, 68-70 §§119-24, 142 §55 (*Iomarbhágh na bhFileadh*).

2 Discussion in K. Müller-Lisowski, 'La légende de St Jean dans la tradition irlandaise et le druide Mog Ruith', *ÉtC* 3 (1938) 46-70; cf. A.M. O'Leary, 'Mog Ruith and Apocalypticism in Eleventh-Century Ireland', *CSANA Yearbook 1: The Individual in Celtic Literatures*, ed. J.F. Nagy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001) 51-60.

3 'Texte zur Mog Ruith Sage', *ZCP* 14 (1923) 145-63.

4 'Forbuis Droma Damhghaire', *RC* 43 (1926) 1-123, 44 (1927) 157-86. A Modern Irish version, with accompanying English translation, has recently been produced by Seán Ó Duinn: *Forbhais Droma Dámhgháire: The Siege of Knocklong* (Cork, 1992). A story with this title is already mentioned in one of the Middle Irish tale lists: P. Mac Cana, *The*

Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland (Dublin, 1980) 45, 94.

5 *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin, 1946) 519-22.

6 In fact, treatment of Mug Ruith's connections begins on a vellum slip which has been inserted between pages 141 and 142. An excerpt of this section, ending just prior to the *De fabulis Moga Ruith* subsection to be discussed below, has been published with translation by Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Creating the Past: The Early Irish Genealogical Tradition', *Peritia* 12 (1998) 177-208, at 194-5. For this passage, Ó Corráin proposes a date in 'the middle third of the seventh century' (196).

7 Portions of this material appear in other genealogical collections: *CGH* 279-80, 285-6; K. Meyer, ed. 'The Laud Genealogies and Tribal Histories', *ZCP* 8 (1912) 291-338, at 332, 334; *LL* ll. 43668-81, 42697-715.

8 Sjoestedt, 'Forbuis Droma Damhghaire', 64, 98.

9 On the ascription, see G. Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics* (Oxford, 1956) 176.

10 K. Meyer, ed. 'Sanas Cormaic', *Anecd.* iv (Halle, 1912) [hereafter *Corm.*], §598. On the question of Cormac's responsibility for *Sanas Cormaic*, see P. Russell, 'The Sounds of a Silence: The Growth of Cormac's Glossary', *CMCS* 15 (Summer, 1988) 1-30, at 10-11, 13-14; and L. Breatnach, 'An Edition of *Amra Senáin*', in D. Ó Corráin et al. (eds), *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney* (Maynooth, 1989) 7-31, at 23.

11 Cf. G. Murphy, *Early Irish Metrics* (Dublin, 1961) 56 §30. Another example of this metre appears in idem, *Early Irish Lyrics*, 28-31 §12.

12 *The Language of the Annals of Ulster* (Manchester, 1910) 95.

13 Cf. instances of monosyllabic *suí* in W. Stokes, ed. *Félire Óengusso Céli Dé* (London, 1905) Sept. 10, 30; this poem was composed around the year 800.

14   *The Poems of Blathmac Son of Cú Brettan*, ITS 47 (Dublin, 1964) xxviii.

15   For the attestation of suffixed pronouns virtually exclusively in texts of the Old Irish period, see L. Breatnach, 'The Suffixed Pronouns in Early Irish', *Celtica* 12 (1977) 75-107.

16   Some examples are listed in Carney, *Poems of Blathmac*, xxxi.

17   *th'ógai* 8, 656, *d'ég* 399, *d'ó* 406.

18   Thus the vowel of *is* must be elided in lines 752, 913, 915, 953, 957.

19   *fors' tulaid* 441. Before the substantive verb (as in the present instance) this elision is already attested in the glosses: Thurneysen cites *fris' mbiat* from Sg. 202b3 (*GOI* §492).

20   'The Dating of Early Irish Verse Texts, 500-1100', *Éigse* 19, ii (1983) 177-216, at 199.

21   *The Early Irish Verb* (Maynooth, 1987) 3-4.

22   F. Kelly, ed. 'A Poem in Praise of Columb Cille', *Ériu* 24 (1973) 1-34, at 8-9 §2b: *tindscan* (MS *tindscain*).

23   *taithsloic* 249, *tesartis* 299, *tindnacht* 351, 357, *tecomnacht* 421, *rucais* 623, *ríseth* 676, *tucad* 700, *táraill* 705, *tánaic* 865, *tárbas* 885, *ránaic* 896, *tuargaib* 909.

24   McCone, *Early Irish Verb*, 99.

25   Thus in the first of his poems I can see no reason to assign a perfect sense to the verbs in lines 119, 131, 223, 242, 246, 265, 442, 451, 453, 460, 515.

26   Thus *daid < d'ág* §3b, *luig < luid* §6d, *dodensad < do-génsat* §8c, *don ge dad < do-ngegad* §11d, *luag < luad* §32d.

27   Thus *gæd < gae* §13b, *tairci < táirciud* §25c.

28   Thus *do certa l < d'fhorcetul* §5b, *-idompert < -adidn-opart* §34c.

29   Thus *nuamada < n-inadu* §14a.

30   Thus *draideacht < druídechtae* §8d, *inidompert < a n-adidn-opart* §34c, missing syllables in §§1c, 11b, 24c, 29c, 32b, 36c.

31   Thus *mæla* §17a, *lais* §26c.

32   W. Stokes, ed. 'Acallamh na Senórach', *IT* iv, 1 (Leipzig, 1900) ll. 2544, 2552.

33   Thus *CGH* 279, 285, 385.

34   Thus *CGH* 285-6, 385; Meyer, 'Laud Genealogies', 334; Book of Lecan fo. 124ra34-9.

35   Müller-Lisowski, 'Texte', 154.

36   Thus *CGH* 286; Meyer, 'Laud Genealogies', 334; Book of Lecan fo. 124rb21-2.

37   Meyer, 'Laud Genealogies', 332. Cf. e.g. *CGH* 279; *LL* ll. 43672-3; Book of Lecan fo. 124ra6-8; Book of Uí Maine fo. 19va7-8; Müller-Lisowski, 'Texte', 159.

38   Müller-Lisowski, 'Texte', 154.

39   R.A.S. Macalister, ed. *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, 5 vols, ITS 34-5, 39, 41, 44 (London, 1938-56; repr. Dublin, 1993) v, 66 §427 (D), 92 §455, 100 §467.

40   K. Meyer, ed. *The Triads of Ireland* (Dublin, 1906) 30 §235. Thurneysen suggested rendering *uais do* as 'zu hoch' ('Aus dem irischen Recht V', *ZCP* 18 (1930) 353-408, at 373).

41   *Corm.* §104: *Buanand mumi na fian ... Amail robo mathair dea indi Anu, sic Buanand quasi mater erat na fian ... Buanand .i. daghmathair ac foircetal gaiscid do fianuib.*

42   R.I. Best, ed. 'Cuchulainn's Shield', *Ériu* 5 (1911) 72.

43   *LL* l. 10886 (*Táin Bó Cuailnge*); ll. 12542-3 (*Scéla Chonchobuir*). In *Imthechta Moga Ruith*, Scáthach rather than Buanann instructs Mug Ruith in arms (Müller-Lisowski, 'Texte' 154).

44   M. O Daly, ed. 'Lānellach Tigi Rīch 7 Ruirech', *Ériu* 19 (1962) 81-6, at 83 §8.

45   *CGH* 279-80; Meyer, 'Laud Genealogies', 332; *LL* ll. 43668-71; Müller-Lisowski, 'Texte', 155; E. Gwynn, ed. *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, 5 vols (Dublin, 1903-35) iv, 186-8; *FDD* §59.

46   TCD MS 1298, p. 143a5-10: *Suidigsir Mug Roith hi Tarbri a dolluid o foglaim la Simon*

Mag acon conflicht frisna apstalu. Cf. Book of Lecan fo. 124rb32-3; Book of Uí Maine fo. 19vb11-13.

47 K. Meyer, ed. 'The Death of Conla', *Ériu* 1 (1904) 113-21, at 114.3.

48 *Uair ita briathar mh'oidi-se, .i. Shimoin meic Guill meic Iarguill, 7 Petair ris na soeid-fider orum mo dana cein bear beo.* In *Iomarbhágh na bhFileadh*, Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh indignantly rejects a tradition that Peter told Mug Ruith that 'Your druidry will endure forever' (*Méaraidh choidhche do dhruidheacht*, ITS 20.70 §123).

49 *Thes.* ii, 339.1. This poem has been variously dated: D.A. Binchy, 'Bergin's Law', *StC* 14-15 (1979-80) 31-53, at 46; Carney, 'Dating', 182-3.

50 W. Stokes, ed. 'A Note about Fiacha Muillethan', *RC* 11 (1890) 41-5, at 42.

51 Meyer, 'Laud Genealogies', 314.

52 TCD MS 1298, p. 143a34-b11; cf. Book of Lecan fo. 124rb39-42.

53 Thus Meyer, 'Laud Genealogies', 314; Stokes, 'A Note', 42; Müller-Lisowski, 'Texte', 155.

54 Meyer, 'Laud Genealogies', 314.

55 Stokes, 'A Note', 42.

56 Ed. C. O'Rahilly (Dublin, 1970).

57 TCD MS 1298, p. 143b8-11; cf. Book of Lecan fo. 124rb41-2.

58 K. Mulchrone, ed. *Bethu Phátraic* (Dublin, 1939) l. 435; *LL* l. 22985 (*Cath Ruis na Ríg*); K. Meyer, ed. 'Die Geschichte von Philipp und Alexander von Macedonien aus dem Lebar Brecc', *IT* ii, 2 (Leipzig, 1887) 1-108, at 63.701.

59 W. Stokes, ed. *Saltair na Rann* (Oxford, 1883) l. 436; *LU* l. 2000.

60 TCD MS 1298, p. 143b32; cf. Book of Lecan fo. 124rb47.

61 *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History* (Dublin, 1861) 272.

62 Ed. J.G. O'Keeffe in *Anecd.* iii (Halle, 1910) 21-7, at 23.1.

63 W. Stokes, ed. 'On the Bodleian Fragment of Cormac's Glossary', *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1891-4) 149-203, at 174. Contrast the readings *caora* (YBL), *caera* (LB).

64 Speaking of the alternation *ao / ú* in this word and some others, T.S. Ó Máille noted that 'Tharla gur focla cuid acu seo atá le fáil sa dá chuma i bhfilíocht na mbard, fágann sin go dtéann an t-athrú ar ais go dtí an 13ú céad, nó chomh fada leis an Meánghaeilge féin' ('Glac Bheag Focal Nuaghaeilge', *Éigse* 11, iv (1966) 229-41, at 231).

65 These two texts are also the only sources in which I have encountered the variant *allmuire* for *allmuir* 'foreigner'.

66 TCD MS 1298, p. 143b11-16; Book of Lecan fo. 124rb42-3.

67 Meyer, 'Laud Genealogies', 308.

68 TCD MS 1298, p. 143b27-9; cf. in the Book of Lecan the reading *Cenmar mac Ulaigne* (fo. 124rb46).

69 All references in *DIL* s.v. *narbus.*

70 TCD MS 1298, p. 143a28-33; cf. Book of Lecan fo. 124rb37-9.

71 For example, *Cath Maige Mucrama*, ed. M. O Daly, ITS 50 (London, 1975) 50 §§39-43; and *Scéla Eógain inso 7 Cormaic*, ed. T. Ó Cathasaigh in *The Heroic Biography of Cormac mac Airt* (Dublin, 1977) 119.

72 Stokes, *Félire Óengusso*, Nov. 30.

73 Stokes, 'A Note', 42.

74 'N. of Druim Damghaire, Lec. 270' (*OnomG* s.n.).

75 ITS 20.16, 21.190. For further instances of this ritual humiliation see *DIL s.v.* 'gabul', col. 8.11-15.

76 *AFM* iv, 1050.3; vi, 2140.21.

77 This synchronism is found, for example, in Macalister, *Lebor Gabála Érenn* v, 298 §580.

78 Ed. M. Power, *ZCP* 11 (1917) 39-55, at 44 §53.

79 TCD MS 1298, p. 42d7-8, 15-17. Cf. Book

of Lecan fo. 124rb23-5; Book of Uí Maine fo. 19va64-vb3.

80   K. Meyer, ed. 'The Expulsion of the Dessi', *Y Cymmrodor* 14 (1901) 101-35, at 126; idem, ed. 'The Expulsion of the Déssi', *Ériu* 3 (1907) 135-42, at 139.

81   *CGH* 279; *LL* ll. 43674-7; Meyer, 'Laud Genealogies', 332; Book of Lecan fo. 124ra8-14 (adding the information that Dron was mother of Labraid mac Moga Ruith); Book of Uí Maine fo. 19va8-12, 19-20.

82   Müller-Lisowski, 'Texte', 155.

83   TCD MS 1298, p. 142d9-14.

84   Müller-Lisowski, 'Texte', 155.

85   J.G. O'Keeffe, ed. 'Dál Caladbuig', *Irish Texts* 1 (1931) 19-21, at 20 §8.

86   Of the instances cited, the most suggestive might seem to be the occurrence of *tháir* (v.ll. *thár*, *tháini*) in Thurneysen's edition of the later recension of *Audacht Morainn* ('Morands Fürstenspiegel', *ZCP* 11 (1917) 56-106, at 11 §34). But cf. F. Kelly's edition, where it is evident that the correct reading is *athaír* (*Audacht Morainn* (Dublin, 1976) 65 §34f).

87   Thus Macalister, *Lebor Gabála Érenn* v, 34 §390 (citing the authority of *Lebur Dromma Snechta*).