

The origin of the *bórama* tribute

A discussion of the tale concerning Túathal Techtmar's daughters Fithir and Dáiríne as found in various medieval and early modern sources

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Abbreviations

AS	Acallam na Senórach, Colloquy of the Ancients
BB	Leabhar Bhaile an Mhóta, Book of Ballymote; RIA 23 P 12 (536)
BL	Leabhar Mór Leacain, Book of Lecan; RIA 23 P 2 (535)
BS	Bansenchas, Lore of Women
CA	Cóir Anmann, Fitness of Names
CGH	Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae, M.A. O'Brien
DIAS	Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies
DIL	Dictionary of the Irish Language
DS	Dindsenchas, Lore of Places
EIF	Early Irish Farming, Fergus Kelly
EIHM	Early Irish History and Mythology, T.F. O'Rahilly
FD	'Fithir 7 Dáiríne'
FF	Foras Feasa ar Éirinn, Seathrún Céitinn; History of Ireland, Geoffrey Keating
ISOS	Irish Script on Screen, DIAS
LGÉ	Leabhar Gabhála Éireann, Book of Invasions
LL	Leabhar Laighneach, Book of Leinster; TCD H.2.18 (1339)
LMG	Leabhar Mór na nGenealach, Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh
MG	'Mór in gním'
Rawl. B 487	Rawlinson B 487; Bodleian Library, Oxford
Rawl. B 502	Rawlinson B 502; Bodleian Library, Oxford
Rawl. B 503	Rawlinson B 503; Bodleian Library, Oxford
Rawl. B 512	Rawlinson B 512; Bodleian Library, Oxford
RIA	Royal Irish Academy, Dublin
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
UM	Leabhar Ua Maine, Book of Uí Maine; RIA D.ii.1

Introduction

This thesis will focus on the beginning of the Middle Irish narrative text known as the *Bórama* or *Bórama Laigen*, characterized by Eleanor Knott and Gerard Murphy as one of the ‘origin tales in the King cycle’ of Irish literature.¹ It describes the history of the *bórama* tribute imposed on Leinster by the high-kings of Tara in the first centuries AD, down to the moment when, by means of a clever verbal trick from saint Mo Ling, it was remitted by king Fínnechta in the seventh century AD.² The *Bórama* encompasses prose passages interspersed with poems which may consist of more than thirty quatrains but generally contain around ten stanzas. Up to the present day, two different versions of the text are known to exist: the earliest of these is found in the Book of Leinster (LL), a twelfth century manuscript;³ the second one appears in the Book of Lecan (BL), which dates from the early fifteenth century.⁴ The aim of this study is to provide additional background information on the history of the *bórama* and to bring together the various other sources for this tale, from the medieval as well as the early modern period, and to examine and compare their contents, in order to shed some more light on the tradition surrounding the origin of this tribute.

Since some of the passages to be used in this study are not readily available, all Irish texts of relevance in this context which are too long to be incorporated in the body of the thesis have been brought together in the Appendices, accompanied by an English translation, coming from the same editor wherever possible, so that those sections quoted throughout the text may be placed in their context more easily. Of two poems from the *Bórama* relating to the central topic, an edition from LL with translation is also provided in the Appendices.⁵ Indications of editorial changes such as letters in italic print and footnotes with variant or manuscript readings have not been included for any of the texts, as they are not necessary for the present discussion.

¹ Eleanor Knott and Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Literature* (London 1967), pp. 136-7.

² Fínnechta was king of Ireland from 675-95 AD, EIHM, p. 165; for a more extensive summary of the text, cf. Myles Dillon, *The Cycles of the Kings* (Oxford 1946), pp. 103-14; Douglas Hyde, *A literary history of Ireland* (London 1980), pp. 393-4.

³ Thomas Kingsmill Abbot and Edward John Gwynn, *Catalogue of the Irish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College Dublin* (Dublin 1921).

⁴ Thomas F. O’Rahilly (et al), *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, 30 vols. (Dublin 1926-70).

⁵ For a complete edition of these poems, ‘Mór in gním’ and ‘Fithir 7 Dáiríne’, as well as a textual and linguistic commentary, cf. Desirée Goverts, ‘Mór in gním: An edition of some poems from the *Bórama*, with translation and textual notes’, *Unpublished MA thesis* (Utrecht University 2009).

The *bórama*

Tradition holds that the first to levy the *bórama* was Túathal Techtmar, king of Tara in the first or perhaps second century AD.⁶ According to O’Rahilly, the name Túathal, from ‘*Teuto-valos, means ‘ruler of the people’, and is a name devoid of mythical associations’.⁷ The epithet Techtmar is offered various explanations in two of the three versions of *Cóir Anmann* ‘Fitness of Names’ (CA), a collection of personal names together with their proposed etymologies. The earliest version, CA2, probably compiled in ‘the latter part of the twelfth century’,⁸ includes a short passage on Túathal:

177. Tuatal Tectmar .i. is e ro bean a cind do (cug) cóicedhaib Erenn ar tus riam .i. in Midi. No ar imad a šelb. No ar tectad gach maitiusa ria remis i nErinn. Nó ar tectad caich co coitceann dosum. Oir nír fáccaibsium in foichni fogla[s] i nErinn gan tectadh flata.

177. Tuathal Techtmar [< *techtaigid* ‘appropriates (land)’], i.e. he cut the heads off the provinces of Ireland for the first time ever, i.e. [to make] Mide. Or [< *techt* ‘possession(s)’] because of the abundance of his possessions. Or [< *techtad* ‘having’] because every good thing was had during his reign in Ireland. Or [< *techtad* ‘subjugating’] because he subjugated all others in general. For he did not leave a green-tinged blade of corn in Ireland that was not subject to rule.⁹

On the basis of certain sources which were probably used in the compilation of CA3, the ‘long version’, it is dated to ‘the thirteenth century, perhaps the first half’.¹⁰ The entry found here is largely the same except that it leaves out the first observation regarding the provinces of Ireland:

110. Túathal Techtmur .i. ar imat a šealbha. Nó ar thechtadh cach maithiusa fría reimhis a nErinn asberar Techtmur dæ. Nó ar theachtadh cháich co coitchinn dósom. Ar nír fâgaibhsium in foich[ne] foghlas a nErinn gin rechthi flatha.

110. Tuathal Techtmar [< *techt* ‘possession(s)’], i.e. because of the abundance of his possessions. Or he is called Techtmar [< *techtad* ‘having’] because every good thing was had during his reign in Ireland. Or [< *techtad* ‘subjugating’] because he subjugated all others in general. For

⁶ His death is variably dated to 106, 183, or 135 (or 235) AD; cf. Thomas F. O’Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin 1946), p. 154.

⁷ EIHM, pp. 169-70.

⁸ Sharon Arbuthnot (ed.), *Cóir Anmann: a late Middle Irish treatise on personal names*, 2 vols. (London 2005-7), vol.1, p. 72.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 117, 152.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

he did not leave a green-tinged blade of corn in Ireland that was not under the authority of a lord.¹¹

Acallam na Senórach ‘the Colloquy of the Ancients’ (AS), dating from the twelfth century, also briefly refers to the explanation of Túathal’s epithet:

(...) iss e in Tuathal sin do ben a cind do choic cóicedaib Eirenn, corub uimmi raiter Tuathal Techtmar de ón techtad tucusdar ar Eirinn 7 don techtad tuc ar choicedaib Eirenn re Temraig na rig da foghnam.¹²

(...) which Tuathal it was that from the provincial kings of Ireland took their heads; so that from this *techtadh* or ‘appropriation’ that he made of Ireland, and exercised upon her provincials for Tara to serve himself, men called him Tuathal *techtmhar* or ‘the acquisitive’.¹³

O’Rahilly does not attach great value to the etymologies proposed here when he states that the ‘epithet *Techtmar* is unique in Irish tradition; its meaning was forgotten, but the simplest and most natural explanation of it is to refer it to *techt*, ‘going’ (...), and to interpret it as meaning ‘of the great journeying’, i.e. ‘voyaging from afar’, or the like’.¹⁴

In these sources regarding Túathal, his power and rule over Ireland are brought to the attention, yet no mention is made of any tribute he may have levied. Despite the fact that the origin tale of the *bórama* concerning Túathal’s daughters is to a large extent fictional, O’Rahilly provides several considerations which lead him to assume that there is a core of historical reality to be found in the extensive tradition surrounding Túathal,¹⁵ while Cornelius Buttimer is of the opposite view.¹⁶ Túathal Techtmar appears several times in the genealogical tracts from in Rawl. B 502 and LL, but no traces of the *bórama* are found there, nor of his daughters. Instead, the names of his two sons are given as follows in LL: *Dā mac la Tuathal Techtmar: Feidlimid Rehtaid et Fiacha Crisse Argait dia tá Dál Fiachach Éle*; BB gives the names as: *Dā mac la Tuathal Techtmar .i. Feidlimid Rechtmar 7 Feidlimthe Cris Argaid dia tā Dāil Fiatach Éle*.¹⁷

¹¹ Arbuthnot, *Cóir Anmann*, vol. 2, pp. 30, 105.

¹² Whitley Stokes and E. Windisch, *Irische Texte* 4.1 (Leipzig 1900), p. 117; for the translation, cf. Standish H. O’Grady, *Silva Gadelica, II Translation and notes*, pp. 109-10.

¹³ O’Grady, *Silva Gadelica II*, p. 109.

¹⁴ EIHM, p. 170.

¹⁵ EIHM, pp. 161-70.

¹⁶ Cornelius G. Buttimer, *The Bórama: Literature, history and political propaganda in early medieval Leinster* (Harvard 1983), pp. 111-27.

¹⁷ CGH, pp. 121, 159, 394.

The prose *Bórama* lists the various goods which had to be paid to Túathal:¹⁸

12. Is í seo immorro inn éraic .i.

Tri choicait cét bó.

Tri cóicait cét mucc.

Trí cóicait cét lendbratt.

Tri cóicait cét slabrad argit.

Tri cóicait cét molt.

Tri cóicait cét coire uma.

Cóire mór uma i téigtís da muic déc 7 dá ag dec i tech Temrach fein.

Tricha bó find óiderg col-lóegaib a comdatha 7 co nascaib créduma 7 co mbuargib créduma 7 cona cóidib creduma fair sin anuas.

12. Now this is the eric:

Thrice five thousand cows:

Thrice five thousand swine:

Thrice five thousand mantles:

Thrice five thousand chains of silver:

Thrice five thousand wethers:

Thrice five thousand caldrons of brass:

A great caldron of brass whereinto twelve swine and twelve beeves would go in the house of Tara itself.

Thirty white, red-eared cows with calves of the same colour, and with ties of bronze and with tethers of bronze, and with their milkpails (?) of bronze in addition thereto.¹⁹

In ‘Mór in gním’ (MG), the value of the *bórama* is specified as well, and in addition its distribution is given as follows:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 29. <i>Trīcha bó findfergga</i>
- bat imlána, <i>óidergga</i> -
<i>noí míle bó</i> do rí Breg
i n-éaraic a dā ingen. | <i>Thirty white-angry cows</i>
- they were perfect, <i>red-eared</i> -
<i>nine thousand cows</i> to the king of the Brega
as the <i>éaraic</i> of his two daughters. |
| 30. <i>A trīan isin Temuir truim</i>
- is amlaid rainnit Leth Cuind -
<i>a trīan i nEmain cen acht,</i>
<i>a trīan i Crúachain Connacht.</i> | <i>A third of it into heavy Temair</i>
- it is thus that they divided Leth Cuind -
<i>a third of it into Emain</i> without doubt,
<i>a third of it into Crúachu of the Connachta.</i> |

Comram na Cloenfherta ‘The Triumph of the Sloping Mound’ has a brief description:

Is ed in so a mmet na hercca: *lll. bo 7 .lll. mucc 7 .lll. brat 7 cach hae inna bliadna, conid de as-berar Borroma Lagen.*

¹⁸ For a discussion including some additional poems, cf. Buttimer, *The Bórama*, pp. 134-43.

¹⁹ Whitley Stokes (ed.), ‘The Borama’, *Revue Celtique* 8 (1892), pp. 40-1.

Here is the amount of the éraic: *one hundred and fifty cows*, and one hundred and fifty pigs, and one hundred and fifty cloaks, all of them each year. And that is called *bóraime Laigen*.²⁰

A similarly short account is found in the *Annals of Inisfallen*:

(7 b)a he (dano in bo)roma, .i. *trí coecait cet bo 7 tri c(oecait) cet torc 7 tri coecait (cet) lend. Cach) ae dib sein ina bliadain beos. Is amlaid (do) hicta in cís.*

This, moreover was the Bóroma: *thrice five thousand cows*, and thrice five thousand boars, and thrice five thousand mantles. Each of these also [to be paid] yearly. It was thus the tribute used to be paid.²¹

In *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, ‘the History of Ireland’ (FF), a work by Geoffrey Keating from the early seventeenth century, it is spelled out in more detail:

Ag so suim na cána do díoltaoi lé Laighnibh do ríoghaibh Éireann gacha dara bliadhain i ndíol bháis chloinne Tuathail, mar atá *trí fichid céad bó*; trí fichid céad uinge d’airgead; trí fichid céad brat; trí fichid céad torc; trí fichid céad molt; is trí fichid céad coire umha. Agus is í roinn do bhíodh ar an gcáin sin, *a trian d’fearaibh Connacht, a trian d’Oirghiallaibh, agus a trian do Uíbh Néill.*

The following is the amount of the tribute that was paid every second year by the Leinstermen to the kings of Ireland as a penalty for the death of the children of Tuathal, namely, *three score hundred cows*, three score hundred ounces of silver, three score hundred mantles, three score hundred hogs, three score hundred wethers, three score hundred bronze caldrons. And this tribute was thus divided: - *a third part of it to the men of Connaught, a third to the Oirghialla, and a third to the Ui Neill*.²²

The *Annals of Clonmacnoise* again show a different number:

(...) whereupon the K. of Ireland well Pondering or weighing the Grievousness of that fact ordered that the king of Leinster & all the Inhabitants of that province for the time being for euer should henceforth yield & pay yearly to himselfe, his heires, and successors for ever in Recompense of the s^d offence the number of *150 Cowes*, 150 Hoggs, 150 Couerlets or peeces of Cloth to couer beds withall, 150 Cauldrons, wth 2 passing Great Cauldrons consisting in Breath & Deepness five fists for the kings one Brewing, 150 Couples of men & women in servitude to Draw water on their backes for the said Brewing, together with 150 maides with the K. of Leinsters one Daughter in the like Bondage & servitude. All which was accordingly paid yearly to the s^d king Twahall & his successors

²⁰ Brian Ó Cuív, ‘Comram na Cloenfhera’, *Celtica* 11 (1976), pp. 171-2.

²¹ Seán Mac Airt (ed.), *The Annals of Inisfallen* (Dublin 1951), pp. 53-4: par. 364.

²² Patrick S. Dinneen (ed.), *The History of Ireland by Geoffrey Keating* (London 1914), vol. 2, pp. 254-7.

for the time being for the space of about 500 years until K. Fineaghty ffeleacagh his time. (...) which fine in the Irish tongue was called Borohua, which as soone as it was taken up, and Divided into *three partes*, whereof one was to the Connaught men, & another to those of Uriell, & the third to the K. of Taragh and the sept of the O'Neals, because the said three tribes of septs among whome the said Borohua was Divided were Dessended of the said K. Twahall.²³

The fact that cows lie at the basis of a tribute such as this is hardly unexpected in a society where 'wealth is not spoken of in terms of money, which was not in circulation, nor of ownership of land, but primarily in terms of livestock and chiefly of cows (...) which, according to the lawmen, formed the property qualifications of the various orders of society'.²⁴ The white, red-eared cows mentioned in the *Bórama* also figure elsewhere in Irish literature, and 'they appear in all manner of contexts, early and late, sacred and profane'.²⁵ As is pointed out by Lucas, '[i]n the *Tochmarc Étaíne* or 'Wooing of Étaín', Midir and Eochaidh play at chess and among the things which Midir, who is a magical personage, promises in his stake are, '...fifty white red-eared cows with white red-eared calves and a bronze spancel on each calf'.²⁶ This not only echoes the passage from the prose *Bórama*, but it is also another instance where this type of cows is connected to a *tochmarc*.

Lucas also observes that in the majority of cases where white, red-eared cows play a part, 'the contexts have been frankly otherworld or in some other sense unreal; the general impression being that such cattle were figments of the imagination, having no relevance to any actual breed that might have been in existence. This conclusion might well be justified were there not cattle of precisely this colouration forming small true-breeding populations in Britain', of which several examples are given, which may either have been brought to Ireland at a certain time, or 'knowledge of them may only have been by way of travellers' tales retailed by visitors to Britain, where, to judge by the Welsh evidence, they were regarded as something out of the ordinary. This would explain the otherworld atmosphere that surrounds them in Irish sources, the physical remoteness having been transformed into a supernatural one'.²⁷

One of the law tracts contains a story which stipulates the fine for satirizing a king of Ulster as follows: 'What he says here is: seven ounces and a half of silver, and seven white

²³ Denis Murphy (ed.), *The Annals of Clonmacnoise being Annals of Ireland* (Dublin 1896), p. 53-4.

²⁴ A.T. Lucas, *Cattle in ancient Ireland* (Kilkenny 1989), pp. 223-4; for examples of other cow-tributes, paid to saints or ecclesiastical authorities, cf. pp. 226-8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 240; cf. DIL, s.v. *4 erc*.

²⁶ Lucas, *Cattle in ancient Ireland*, p. 241.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 243-5; cf. Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming* (Dublin 1997), pp. 33-4; Osborn Bergin, 'White red-eared cows', *Ériu* 14 (1946), p. 170.

cows with red ears (that is, two *cumals*), a purple cloak with seven ounces of silver...'²⁸ *Cumal*, the word for 'female slave, bond-woman', assumed a 'technical meaning as the highest unit of value used in ordinary reckoning. Normally one *c.*=six *séts* [another unit of value] but it is sometimes reckoned at a higher value'; it is also equated with three milch cows.²⁹ The plural form is used to denote the *bórama* in the *Annals of Inisfallen* in the wider sense of 'fine, compensation':

Cumala da ingen Thua(thail) í sein ros marb Eoch(u m)acc (Echach), ri Laigen, tria bais.

That was *the recompense* for the two daughters of Tuathal, whom Eochu son of Eochu, king of Laigin, wantonly killed.³⁰

If seven white, red-eared cows are considered to equal two *cumala*, thirty of these would amount to a value of around nine *cumala*, which is a rather generous taking of the *éraig* of a freeman, which was fixed at seven *cumala*, and this does not yet incorporate the large amounts of other goods which Túathal demanded from Leinster.

The law tracts also describe severe punishments for killing or injuring women:

In early Irish law, a crime against a woman is normally regarded as a crime against her guardian (husband, father, son, head of kin) and consequently the culprit must pay him his honour-price or a proportion thereof. The Church sought to make it a more serious offence to kill a woman than to kill a man. *Cáin Adomnáin* (...) lays down very heavy penalties for the murder of a woman. The culprit has a hand and foot cut off, is then put to death and his kin pays 7 *cumals* (the normal *éraig* of a freeman). Alternatively, he may do 14 years' penance and pay double *éraig* of 14 *cumals*. The fines for injury to a woman are similarly heavy. Whether the church actually succeeded in increasing the fines for violent offences against women is unknown, as no records of particular cases have been preserved.³¹

The fine laid out as the *bórama* seems unusually heavy and its composition has no doubt been influenced by stylistic features and literary conventions, but as compensation for the death of two daughters of a high-king and a tribute from Leinster after having been defeated, it may not be as excessive as it appears to be.

²⁸ Lucas, *Cattle in ancient Ireland*, p. 243.

²⁹ Daniel A. Binchy, *Críth Gablach* (Dublin 1979), pp. 81-2, 105-6; cf. DIL, s.v. *1 cumal*; EIF, pp. 587-99. FD mentions a *cumal* regarding the payment of a dowry when Eochu marries the second daughter, here Fithir: *ara tindsca nár tubad / cumal cach lesa i Laiginib* 'for her dowry which was not opposed, a *cumal* of every dwelling in Laigin' (B6cd).

³⁰ Mac Airt, *The Annals of Inisfallen*, pp. 53-4: par. 364.

³¹ Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin 1988), p. 79.

Tribute terminology

The word *bóraime*, which in the *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (DIL) is assigned the meaning ‘tribute’ or ‘cattle tribute’, has been analyzed by Kuno Meyer as ‘a compound of *bó* and *ríme*, a feminine *iā*-stem, cognate with *rím*, so that the original meaning is ‘cattle-counting’. It denoted a place where the cattle-tribute was collected and counted’, but then also came to be used ‘to denote the tribute itself’.³² According to him, ‘*bórim* is undoubtedly the oldest form’, where the palatal quality of the lenited *m* is confirmed by rhyme, but, Meyer continues, ‘[w]e also find a de-palatalized form *bórama* rhyming with *tóroma*’.³³ According to DIL, in most of its attestations the word is used ‘[s]pecifically of the *bórama* or Leinster tribute imposed on the Leinstermen by the Tara kings’.³⁴

The *bórama* found its origin as the *éraig* or body fine of Fithir and Dáiríne, the two daughters of the king of Tara:

11. O thati fógmair co tati samna do Leith Cuind ac inriud Lagen,
co ndernsat Lagin síd fadeóid ra Túathal .i. *eraic a ingen dó*.

11. From the beginning of autumn to the beginning of All-hallowtide Leth Cuinn was raiding Leinster, till at last the Leinstermen made peace with Tuathal (and agreed to give) him *the eric of his daughters*.³⁵

Éraig is the verbal noun of *as-ren* ‘pays away (of compensation)’,³⁶ translated by Daniel A. Binchy as ‘“wergild”, the fixed penalty for homicide, amounting to seven *cumals* for every freeman irrespective of rank. (...) It is probably of later date than the system of compensation based on honour-price (...), which continues to exist side by side with it’, where this honour-price, the ‘most important element in the legal status of every freeman, (...) varies according to rank’.³⁷ The word *éraig* is only rarely found in the non-narrative sources concerning the *bórama* and does not usually stand on its own to denote payments such as the one implied here which had to be made to a particular family for a number of successive generations. Instead, it appears mostly by way of explanation of the *bórama*, in order to define the latter term. MG has: *ruc leis éraig cen imsním* ‘he took with him an *éraig* without trouble’ (28d)

³² Kuno Meyer, ‘Brian Borumha’, *Ériu* 4 (1910), pp. 72-3.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 72, n. 1; cf. Hyde, *A literary history of Ireland*, p. 30.

³⁴ DIL, s.v. *bóraime*.

³⁵ Stokes, ‘The Borama’, pp. 40-1.

³⁶ DIL, s.v. *éric, éraig*.

³⁷ Binchy, *Críth Gablach*, pp. 84-6; cf. Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, pp. 79, 126; J. Loth, ‘Un genre particulier de compensation pour crimes et offenses chez les Celtes insulaires’, *Revue celtique* 48 (1931), pp. 333, 345.

and, giving the numbers of cows he received *i n-ēraicc a dā ingen* ‘as the *éraic* of his two daughters’ (29d). According to A.T. Lucas, it is no surprise to find that cows had to be paid in compensation for a crime, since they ‘feature prominently in fines amerced for various reasons’, and examples are given of *éraic*-fines consisting of 120, 168, or even as many as 340 cows imposed between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries.³⁸

Another word appearing in the texts which is used to describe this tribute is *cáin*, which usually means ‘law’, but can also be used in the sense of ‘fine, tax, tribute’.³⁹ In the annals, the word *cáin* usually refers to ecclesiastical laws, which ‘were promulgated by a prominent ecclesiastic or by a king, or in some cases by an ecclesiastic and a king together’,⁴⁰ but according to Binchy in the law tracts it could have ‘a number of meanings’ and ‘may mean simply ‘tribute’ (from the members of the *túath* to the king, which was perhaps its original meaning), or it may be identical with *rechtge*’, a term which ‘seems to be used as a general term for all the law in force within a given jurisdiction, whatever be its source’.⁴¹ *Cáin* is one of the words used in the BL *Bórama* to describe Túathal’s tribute: *do thobach na Boroma bai o Laignib* ‘na cain ‘to levy the Boroma which had been payable as a tribute’.⁴² The word is also found in the closing line of MG: *is and berair in cháin mór* ‘it is then the great law was brought’ (31d). Similarly, in the version of the story from FF, the tribute is repeatedly referred to as such a ‘law’ or ‘tax’, but it is also described as the *éraic* for the death of his daughters again, although the word itself is not mentioned:

Is é an Tuathal Teachtmhar-so ar a bhfuilimid ag tráchtadh do cheangail an Bhórimhe ar Laignibh *mar cháin* i ndíol bháis a dhá inghean .i. Fithír is Dáirine a n-anmanna.

(...) do aomhadar *cáin* do dhíol uatha féin is ó n-a sliocht ’n-a ndiaidh *i n-íoc bháis na mban soin* do Thuathal is da gach rígh da dtiocfadh ar a lorg.

Ag so *suim na cána* do díoltaoi lé Laignibh do ríoghaibh Éireann gacha dara bliadhain *i ndíol bháis chloinne Tuathail* (...) Agus is í roinn do bhíodh *ar an gcáin sin* (...).

Is don *cháin sin* do gairthí *Bórimhe Laighean* (...)

Do bhíodh iomorro *an cháin sin* seal ’ga díol go humhal ag Laigneachaibh.

³⁸ A.T. Lucas, *Cattle in ancient Ireland* (Kilkenny 1989), pp. 230-1.

³⁹ DIL, s.v. *cáin*.

⁴⁰ EIF, p. 13.

⁴¹ Binchy, *Críth Gablach*, p. 79, 104; cf. M.A. O’Brien, ‘Etymologies and notes’, *Celtica* 3 (1956), p. 172; T.M. Charles-Edwards, ‘The Early Mediaeval Gaelic Lawyer’, *Quiggin Pamphlets on the sources of mediaeval Gaelic history* 4 (1999), pp. 42-63.

⁴² Stokes, ‘The Boroma’, pp. 64-5.

It was this Tuathal Teachtmhar of whom we are speaking who imposed the ‘Boraimhe’ on the people of Leinster, *as a tax* to avenge the death of his two daughters, whose names were Fithir and Dairine’.

(...) they agreed to pay a *tribute*, themselves and their descendants after them, to Tuathal, and to each king who should succeed him, as a *retribution for the death of these ladies*.

The following is *the amount of the tribute* that was paid every second year by the Leinstermen to the kings of Ireland as a *penalty for the death of the children of Tuathal* (...) And *this tribute* was thus divided (...).

This was *the tribute* called *Boraimhe Laighean* (...)

The Leinstermen paid *this tribute* submissively at times.⁴³

In the LL *Bórama*, the term *cís*, Latin *census*, ‘tax, tribute, cess, rent’,⁴⁴ occurs twice describing Túathal’s tribute; with negative connotations in the first instance: *...dontí thicfa do díchur in chísa dochraid-se de chóiciud Lagen* ‘...to him who shall come to cast off this grievous tribute from the province of Leinster’;⁴⁵ *na hingena triasa mberar in cís-sa a Laignib* ‘the maidens because of whom this tribute is taken from Leinster’.⁴⁶ In another passage, Brandub, king of Leinster, says: *dochúadus i mBretnaib do thobuch císá 7 cána* ‘I have gone into Britain to levy rent and tribute’.⁴⁷ The *Annals of Inisfallen* seem to be the only other text using this word to indicate the *bórama*:

(7 b)a he (dano in bo)roma, .i. trí coecait cet bo 7 tri c(oeait) cet torc 7 tri coecait (cet) lend. Cach) ae dib sein ina bliadain beos. Is amlaid (do) hictha in *cís*.

This, moreover was *the Bóroma*: thrice five thousand cows, and thrice five thousand boars, and thrice five thousand mantles. Each of these also [to be paid] yearly. It was thus *the tribute* used to be paid.⁴⁸

The term *bo chis* ‘a cow for rent’ appears in a passage from the laws and is ‘clarified by the corresponding category in Heptad 41, which is defined as *bo cīss flatha nō eclasa* ‘a cow intended as rent (*cís*) for lord or church’’.⁴⁹

The compilation entitled *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach*, ‘The Great Book of Genealogies’ (LMG), compiled by Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh in the seventeenth century,

⁴³ Dinneen, *The History of Ireland*, vol. 2, pp. 254-5.

⁴⁴ DIL, s.v. *cís*.

⁴⁵ Stokes, ‘The Boroma’, pp. 44-5.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 48-9.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 56-7.

⁴⁸ Mac Airt, *The Annals of Inisfallen*, pp. 53-4: par. 364.

⁴⁹ EIF, pp. 522-4.

although providing an extensive list of battles fought and won by Túathal Techtmar, does not devote more than a few words to the tribute which was to be paid to him after his victories:

Iarsna cathaibh sin do rónadh Fes Teamhra la Tuathal, agus tánghattar fir Ereann agus a mná dha ionsoighidh, <agus> tugsad rátha fris na ndúl aicsidhe agus neamhaicsidhe agus gach gradh fuil fo nimh agus in neam nach ereochdaois 'na aghaidh, na in aghaidh a chloinne go brath.

As íad so iomorra na tuatha as a ffuil *daoirchíos* for Erinn o sin ale:
(...)

Conidh amhlaidh sin ro fodhladh na tuatha, agus do cuireadh *cíos Ereann* orra, conadh xlvii. tuatha re a n-áiremh uile.

After those battles Feis Teamhra [=the Feast of Tara] was celebrated [*lit.*, made] by Tuathal, and the men of Ireland and their women came to him and they gave sureties by the elements, visible and invisible, and [by] every grade that is under heaven and in heaven that they would not rise up against him, nor against his offspring forever.

These are the tribes from whom there is [paid] *servile rent* throughout Ireland since then.

(...)

And it was thus that the tribes were divided out, and the *tribute of Ireland* was imposed on them and, if all are reckoned, they are forty-seven tribes.⁵⁰

It is remarkable that Mac Fhirbhisigh gives no specification of this tribute whatsoever. In the first instance it is called *daoirchíos* ‘servile rent’, paid by all the tribes listed which were defeated by Túathal. When the term is repeated, the word *cíos* appears again, but this time defined as *cíos Ereann* ‘the tribute of Ireland’, which suggests a very specific meaning, in exactly the same way that *bórama* was used more or less as a title to denote the Leinster tribute.

⁵⁰ Nollaig Ó Muraíle, *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach* (Dublin 2003), vol. 1, pp. 214-7, 220-1; italics added.

Branches of the tradition

Every single retelling of Fithir and Dáiríne's story follows its own lines which, to a greater or lesser extent, are different from any of the other sources. The bare bones of the tale nevertheless usually remain intact, starting with Eocho mac Echach Domlén, king of Leinster at the time of Túathal Techtmar, who marries one of the high-king's daughters. After a while, however, he goes back to Tara and, telling Túathal that the first daughter has died, asks for the hand of the second one. This request is granted, but when he brings his new wife home with him, the sisters see each other and realize what has happened. One of them subsequently dies from shame; the other dies immediately afterwards of grief for the death of her sister.

Tale lists

The Middle Irish period saw the compilation of so-called tale lists, in which titles of tales, sorted by theme or genre, were collected. The two main lists are generally referred to as A and B, 'variant derivatives of a common prototype, which purport to register the complete repertoire of the *ollam filidechta*, the fully qualified master of traditional learning', and thus 'to be an index of traditional narrative literature'.⁵¹ The first of these appears in two manuscripts, LL and TCD manuscript H.3.17; the second survives in three separate copies, where it forms part of a larger text, probably composed around the year 1000.⁵² In addition, there are 'two minor lists, one from a fifteenth-century manuscript in the National Library of Scotland, Gaelic MS. 7, fo. 7r, b, the other from the late introduction to the *Senchas Már*. Neither of these appears to be derived from the other, but their close similarity even in the matter of corruptions leaves little doubt that they have a common source'.⁵³

While Fithir and Dáiríne's story has not survived independently but always forms part of a larger collection, tale list A does mention a tale entitled *Tochmarc Fithirni 7 Darine da ingen Tuathail* in LL, which takes the form *Tochmarc Figiri 7 Dairine da ingein Tuathail* in H.3.17.⁵⁴ In the two shorter lists, the story is referred to as *Tochmarc Fithire 7 Dairine da ingin Tuathail Techtmair* and *Tochmarc Fithir 7 Dairine da ingin Tuathail* respectively.⁵⁵ In

⁵¹ Proinsias Mac Cana, *The learned tales of medieval Ireland* (Dublin 1980), p. 30.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-5.

the prose *Bórama* from LL, the genitive of the first name is found as *Fithirne*.⁵⁶ BL seems to use *Fider* as the nominative, *Fidir* as the genitive.⁵⁷

The word *tochmarc* ‘act of wooing, courting’ can also have the meaning ‘wedding, marriage’,⁵⁸ which seems a more appropriate possibility in this context where the emphasis is not placed so much on the period before the wedding as on the marriage itself. According to Mac Cana, often ‘in the *tochmarca* the man is the active suitor and generally he carries off the woman without the consent of her kinsmen, though with her own collusion. Predictably, since these are mythic narratives, neither *tochmarc* nor *aithed* [‘elopement’] reflect the normal marriage favoured by social and pragmatic usage (...), though evidently the latter was once well enough attested in practice to be accorded recognition in traditional law.’⁵⁹ In the *Bórama*, the word appears once in the LL version of the poem ‘Fithir 7 Dáiríne’ (FD):

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4. Fithir álaind inmálla,
ingen ardríg na Temra,
ro bí a tochmarc díngbála,
in ben dorat rí Berba. | Lovely, stately Fithir,
daughter of the high-king of Temair,
her wooing was worthy, the woman
whom the king of the Berba gave. |
|---|---|

In this manuscript, Fithir is the first daughter to be married to Eochu, before any of the later difficulties take place, which would allow the term *tochmarc* to be applied to both the wooing, if anything like it happened at all, and the subsequent marriage, for as long as it lasted. The word also appears in *Comram na cloenfherta*, a short text from Rawl. B 502 which contains a passage on the origin of the *bórama*. Here again it is used in connection with Fithir, but this time in reference to the second marriage:

(...) do-breth Darfíne do, 7 do-bert Eochu miscais di. Luid *do thochmarcc inna hingine ba so* .i. Fithir, 7 as-bert ba marb Darfíne. 7 do-bretha Fithir do.

(...) Dáiríne was given to him, and Eochu took a dislike to her. He went *to woo the younger daughter*, that is Fithir, and he said that Dáiríne was dead. And Fithir was given to him.⁶⁰

It is remarkable that in these summaries of the tale lists, this story is one of the six *tochmarca* which has been included here. The fact that Túathal was a well-known and important king in the history of Ireland may also account for the relatively prominent place

⁵⁶ Stokes, ‘The Borama’, p. 38.

⁵⁷ Cf. FD; gen. in B9b.

⁵⁸ DIL, s.v. *tochmarc*.

⁵⁹ Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, p. 74.

⁶⁰ Ó Cuív, ‘Comram na Cloenfherta’, pp. 171-2.

taken up by the title *Tochmarc Fithirne 7 Darine* in the tale lists. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the title does not appear in list B, but the latter only contains references to three *tochmarca* in Rawl. B 512, two in each of the other manuscripts.⁶¹ About the *tochmarca* from list B, Mac Cana notes that '[s]ince they are linguistically old, it seems most probably that the three tales common to both lists were already included in X', the parent list, while the rest of the titles from list A, including *Tochmarc Fithirne 7 Darine*, 'have no doubt been added by the compiler of A', which, he points out, would 'suggest the manipulation of a written tradition rather than the recording of an oral one'.⁶² Gregory Toner, on the other hand, argues that 'the whole of X was virtually identical to List A', which 'was compiled some time before the appearance of List A in the Book of Leinster in the latter half of the twelfth century'.⁶³ This *Tochmarc* has not survived as an independent tale and it may be questioned whether it ever existed as such, since it could well be the case that it was included in the list as an important and well-known episode of a larger whole.⁶⁴ Mac Cana, however, assumes that 'the Irish lists deal in whole narratives' as opposed to the Welsh triads which seem to be 'concerned rather with persons, incidents and other individual elements excerpted from such narratives'.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, p. 56.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 68-9, 73.

⁶³ Gregory Toner, 'Reconstructing the earliest Irish tale lists', *Éigse* 32 (2000), pp. 97, 113.

⁶⁴ For the discussion of a similar case, cf. Mícheál Ó Flaithearta, 'Echtra Nerai, Táin Bó Regamna und ihr Verhältnis zu Táin Bó Cuailgne', Hildegard L.C. Tristram, *Deutsche, Kelten und Iren: 150 Jahre deutsche Keltologie* (Hamburg 1990), p. 155-76.

⁶⁵ Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, p. 31.

Bansenchas

Whereas Túathal Techtmar has found a place in CA, his daughters are not mentioned there either independently or in relation to him. They are, however, included in the *Bansenchas*, ‘the History of women’,⁶⁶ ‘a list of famous married women in Irish literature and history’ of which ‘both metrical and prose versions’ exist.⁶⁷ The earliest metrical composition, created in 1147 by Gilla Mo Dutu, has come down in LL and it contains a few lines on Fithir and Dáiríne, also stating that the *bórama* was imposed on their account.:

Fithir is Dárini datta, di dag-ingin Tuathail tall,
mná Echach mic Echach adblig. Bretach for Lagnib na lland.
Díb ra bóí in Bórama o Lagnib – tóroma do chaingnib cland.

Pleasant Fithir and Darini were two fine daughters of that Tuathal,
wives of Eochu son of terrible Eochu judging Leinster of the blades.
The Borama from Leinster arose from them: a service of the family tribute.⁶⁸

In addition to this, their names also occur in the prose versions found in BL and the Book of Uí Maine (UM),⁶⁹ the first of which gives the passage:

Fider 7 Dairine, da ingen Tuathail Techtmair:
di mnai Eachach m. Echach Ainchind rig Laigen.
Is trithu fo snaidmead in Borama for Laignib.⁷⁰

Fithir and Dáiríne, the two daughters of Túathal Techtmar:
the two wives of Eochu son of Eochu Ainchend king of Leinster.
It is through them that the *bórama* was imposed on Leinster.

UM on the other hand provides very minimal information and does not contain any new details compared to BL. Besides that, the spelling in these lines leaves much to be desired:

Fidean Dairine, da ingen Tuthail,
da mnai Eatach m. Eatech Aincínd rig Laigean.⁷¹

Fithir [and] Dáiríne, the two daughters of Túathal,
the two wives of Eochu son of Eochu Ainchend king of Leinster.

⁶⁶Margaret C. Dobbs (ed.), ‘The Ban-shenchus’, *Revue Celtique* 47 (1930), pp. 283-339; 48 (1931), pp. 163-234; 49 (1932), pp. 437-89.

⁶⁷Dobbs, ‘The Ban-shenchus’, *Revue Celtique* 47 (1930), p. 283.

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 300, 325; a line of similar construction to *Bretach for Lagnib na lland* is found in MG: *Brister ar Laignib na llong* ‘The Laignin of the ships were defeated’ (27a).

⁶⁹Dobbs, ‘The Ban-shenchus’, *Revue Celtique* 48 (1931), pp. 175, 211.

⁷⁰Dobbs, ‘The Ban-shenchus’, *RC* 48, p. 175.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 211.

In her article on the *Bansenchas*, Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin points out that Gilla Mo-Dutu used a list of the high-kings of Ireland when composing this poem and that he generally paid little attention to women not related to one of those.⁷² This would suggest that the entry concerning Fithir and Dáiríne also found its way into the *Bansenchas* compilation by virtue of the ladies' connection with high-king Túathal Techtmar.

⁷² Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin, 'An Bansheanchas', Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, *Léachtaí Cholm Cille XII: Na Mná sa Litríocht* (Maynooth 1982), p. 7.

Acallam na Senórach – A Dindsenchas story

Stokes and Windisch characterize AS as ‘what Germans call a *rahmenerzählung*, that is to say, it co[n]sists⁷³ of a number of stories enclosed in the framework of a single narrative. The framing story, in the present case, tells how two old heroes, Ossian and Cálte, (...) meet with St. Patrick, and how Cálte wanders with him over Ireland, recounting legends connected with the hills, forts, woods, lakes, fords, wells, cairns and so forth, to which they come’.⁷⁴ The complete passage concerning Fithir and Dáiríne, referred to by the editors as ‘The story of the Rough Washing (Garbthanach)’, occurs in three of the four manuscripts containing fragments of AS, while the fourth manuscript preserves only part of the beginning. The sections from the Book of Lismore were edited and translated by O’Grady,⁷⁵ and while Stokes and Windisch were not impressed by the Irish text, they state that ‘the translation (...) deserves high praise. So excellent it is, on the whole, as to justify me in dispensing with a version of the greater part of the text printed in this volume, and in giving translations only of the parts of the *Acallam* not found in the Book of Lismore’.⁷⁶

The etymological explanation of the place name Garbthanach forms a more or less important part of the various longer narratives about the sisters, with the exception of FF, where it does not appear at all, yet nowhere does it play a more vital role in its context than in AS. Geraldine Parsons briefly draws attention to its significance in her study of this text: ‘the structural function of *dinnshenchas* is very clear: the story of the sisters is enveloped by the question concerning the toponym and its answer; (...) we see here another example of an apparently pre-existing tale being incorporated into AS by means of an onomastic formula’.⁷⁷ Yet nothing relating to Fithir and Dáiríne seems to be included in either the metrical or prose versions of the *Dindsenchas* texts, where it might be expected to appear. In AS, Saint Patrick requests the elucidation of its meaning from Cálte and thus provides the motivation for the telling of this story:

Ocus tangadur reompo assa haithle sin co Carnn na curad, risa raiter in
Garbthanach ind Uaib Muiredaig issin tan-so. ‘Ocus indis duind, a

⁷³ Spelled ‘cousists’ in the edition.

⁷⁴ Stokes and Windisch, *Irische Texte* 4.1, p. ix.

⁷⁵ O’Grady, *Silva Gadelica I*, pp. 94-233; *II*, pp. 101-265.

⁷⁶ Stokes and Windisch, *Irische Texte* 4.1, p. xi.

⁷⁷ Geraldine Mary Parsons, ‘A Reading of *Acallam na Senórach* as a Literary Text’, *Unpublished doctoral dissertation* (University of Cambridge 2006), pp. 101-2.

m'anam, a Chailti,' ar Patraic, 'cid imam tucad in Garbthanach ar in n-inad sa?'⁷⁸

After which they proceeded to *carn na gcuradh* or 'the cairn of the heroes', at this time called the *garbthanach* or 'cruel burial', in Hy-Murray.

"Tell us, Caeilte," said Patrick, "for what reason the name of an gharbthanach or 'the cruel burial' was conferred on this spot?"⁷⁹

This element is also picked up in MG:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 7. <i>Daníther tanach co trén
i tig maic Echach Domlén
d'ingenaib in ríig co rath,
conid de atá Garbthonach.</i> | <i>The washing of the dead is done bitterly
in the house of Eochu Domlén's son
to the daughters of the king with grace,
so that it is called Garbthonach from it.</i> |
|--|---|

With respect to the explanation given in the text, Stokes and Windisch note that 'garbthanach' 'rough washing' is rendered by 'cruel burial' in SG. II 205, 206. But the *tanach* (better *tonach*, root *nig*) means the washing of the two girls' corpses in the ford'.⁸⁰ Parsons, however, terms this 'an apparent example of a creative approach towards a common place-name element in order to maximise its narrative potential, since it is more likely that the second element is in origin *tonnach* 'bog, swamp' than *tonach* 'act of washing, preparing for burial''.⁸¹ It is nevertheless understood as such in the sources concerning Túathal's daughters.

⁷⁸ Stokes and Windisch, *Irische Texte* 4.1, p. 117.

⁷⁹ O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica II*, p. 109.

⁸⁰ Stokes and Windisch, *Irische Texte* 4.1, p. 310.

⁸¹ Parsons, 'A Reading of the *Acallam*', pp. 101-2, note: For a possible identification of the site see J.H. Todd, ed. and trans., *Cogadh Gaedhel re Galluib: The war of the Gaedhil with the Gaill or The Invasions of Ireland by the Danes and Other Norsemen*, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores*, or *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages*, 48 (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1897), p. clxiv, n. 1.

Annals

Many of the collections of annals referring to Túathal Techtmar also mention the *bórama* in one way or other. The *Annals of Ulster* contain a brief passage on the subject:

4076 32. .iiiiimlxxui. Kl. Enair, .ui. f., l. .iiii. Fiacha Finnfolaid interfectus est hi Temraig † hi mMaig) Bolg, ut alii aiunt, o Eilim mc. Conrach o righ Uladh.

33. Kl. Kl.

4079 34. .iiiiimlxxix. Kl. Enair .iii. f., l. .iiii. Cath Aichle hi torchair Eilim mc. Conrach la Tuathal Techtmar mc. Fiachach Finnfolaid, 7 Tuathal regnauit annis .xxx. 7 is do cetna ·ronaisced 7 fris ro hícad in *Borama Laghen*.

4076 32. Kalends of January sixth feria, fourth of the moon. Fiachu Findfolaid was killed in Temair or in Mag Bolg, as others say, by Éllim son of Conrí, king of Ulaid.

33. Kl. Kl.

4079 34. Kalends of January third feria, fourth of the moon. The battle of Aichle in which Éllim son of Conrí fell by Tuathal Techtmar son of Fiachu Findfolaid, and Tuathal ruled for thirty years, and it is to him that *the cattle-tribute of the Laigin* was first pledged and paid.⁸²

The first fragment of the *Annals of Tigernach*, as edited by Stokes, uses largely the same words in the entry on Túathal's reign,⁸³ and very similar entries also appear in what Stokes referred to as 'the Dublin fragment' of the *Annals of Tigernach*.⁸⁴

The LL *Bórama* makes use of a few different phrases to describe the taking of the *bórama*, among which: *ruc in mBorama* '[he] levied the Boroma', *bái oc iarraid na Borama* 'he was seeking the Boroma', *robói ic tobuch na Borrroma* 'he was demanding the Boroma',⁸⁵ *do brith na Bórrama* 'levy the Boroma',⁸⁶ *[n]i rucad tra in Bóroma iar sain* '[n]ow after that the Boroma was not levied', *roathsnaidmed in Bóroma doridisi* 'the Boroma was again imposed on Leinster',⁸⁷ *do thobuch na Bóroma* 'to levy the Boroma', *na tobechad tri bithu in mBorama* 'he would never demand the Boroma', *da toboch* 'to demand it', *tobgid in mBórama* '[he] demands the Boroma',⁸⁸ *no thobgítis tra na rí g nogebtís Themraig in*

⁸² Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (eds.), *The Annals of Ulster* (Dublin 1983), pp. 6-7.

⁸³ Cf. Whitley Stokes (ed.), 'The Annals of Tigernach. First fragment', *Revue Celtique* 16 (1895), pp. 418-9 (repr. Felinbach 1993).

⁸⁴ Idem., 'The Dublin fragment of Tigernach's Annals', *Revue Celtique* 18 (1897), pp. 375-6 (repr. Felinbach 1993).

⁸⁵ Stokes, 'The Boroma', pp. 40-1.

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 46-7.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 50-1.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 52-3.

mBorama ‘the kings who took Tara used to demand the Boroma’,⁸⁹ *ni thuc in mBorama* ‘he brought not the Boroma (away from Leinster)’, *[f]acthair in Boromai ac Lagnib* ‘[t]he Boroma is left with the Leinstermen’,⁹⁰ *berid in mBóroma fódi cen fresabra* ‘[he] carries off the Boroma twice without resistance’ *dá tobuch* ‘to levy it’.⁹¹ In most cases, a form of the verb *do-boing* ‘plucks, breaks; exacts, levies’, verbal noun *tobuch*, or the later verb based on it, *toibgid*, *tobaigid*⁹² features in this context, but forms of *beirid* ‘carries (off)’ are found as well: *ruc*, *rucad*.⁹³

Further into the chronology of the *Annals of Ulster*, a small reference in Latin to the *bórama* appears:

458 Kl. Ienair, .iiii. f., l. i. Anno Domini .cccc .l .uiii., iiiimdcxii.
Cath Atho Dara for Laighaire re Laighnibh in quo ipse captus est, sed tunc dimissus est, iurans per solem 7 uentem se *boues* eis dimissurum.

458 Kalends of January fourth feria, first of the moon. AD 458, [AM] 4662. The battle of Áth Dara [was won] by the Laigin over Laegaire, and in it he himself was taken prisoner, but was then freed on swearing by sun and wind that he would remit to them *the cattle-tribute*.

Other than this, the levying of the tribute by Túathal’s successors is not mentioned in the *Annals of Ulster*, but at Fínnechta’s death it is told how Mo Ling recited a poem in his honour which briefly refers to the *bórama*:

Ba dirsan do Fínsnechta,
indiu laigid crolige;
ra mbe la firu nime
dilgud ina boraime.

Alas for Fínnechta,
Today he lies in a gory bed;
May he have among the men of heaven
[reward for] *remitting the cattle-tribute*.⁹⁴

After this remission, the *bórama* nevertheless returns at least one more time, in the eighth century, when a king attempts to exact the tribute again. This results in a battle known as *Cath*

⁸⁹ Stokes, ‘The Boroma’, pp. 54-5.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 96-7.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 98-9.

⁹² DIL, s.v. *do-boing*; *tobach*, *tabach*.

⁹³ DIL, s.v. *beirid*.

⁹⁴ Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, *The Annals of Ulster*, pp. 154-7.

Almaine, ‘the last historical event about which a saga was composed in Ireland’,⁹⁵ which may be considered a sequel to the *Bórama*. The *Annals of Ulster* contain short references to these events:

721 1. Kł. Ianair. Anno Domini .dcc.xx. (...) 8. Innred Laighen la Fergal 7 maidm inna Boraim 7 maidm n-aggiallne Laghen fri Fergal mc. Maile Duin.

722 1. Kł. Ianair. Anno Domini .dcc.xx.i. (...) 8. Bellum Almuine .iii. Id. Decimbris die ui. ferie in quo ceciderunt Ferghal mc. Maele Duin.

721 Kalends of January. AD 720. (...) 8. An invasion of the Laigin by Fergal, and *the cattle-tribute was imposed* and the hostages of the Laigin secured for Fergal son of Mael Dúin.

722 1. Kalends of January. AD 721. (...) 8. The battle of Almain on the third of the Ides [11th] of December, the sixth feria, in which fell Fergal son of Mael Dúin.⁹⁶

In his edition of *Cath Almaine*, however, Pádraig Ó Riain expresses serious doubts about the authenticity of this reference to the *bórama*:

Whatever the nature and basis of the so-called *bórama* tribute, it is evident from the annals that there was a strong element of ancestral enmity in the relations between the Uí Néill and the Leinstermen. This dated no doubt from the period in which the Leinstermen lost their grasp on large tracts of land between their later boundary and the Boyne. (...) It was not the kings of Leinster that the myth of ‘high-kingship’ came to surround, however, with its associations of submission on a national scale. Accordingly, no effort was made by later historians to ‘rationalize’ the series of forays made by the kings of Leinster into the Uí Néill lands of Brega. It was sufficient to pretend that the Uí Néill, heirs to the ‘high-kingship’, had a traditional right to submission from the Leinstermen, and it was deemed expedient that this should be known as the *bórama* tribute.

With this in mind, later historians set about correcting the early annals. Strong kings of the Uí Néill, it was felt, should be seen to have exacted the *bórama* from the Leinstermen at least once. Fergal was no exception. (...) Interference of this nature with the history of his reign is, perhaps, nowhere more transparent than in the following entry for the year 721:

Innred Laighen la Fergal, ocus maidm [sic, leg. naidm] inna boraim, ocus maidm [sic, leg. naidm] na ggiallne Laghen fri Fergal mac Maileduin. (The wasting of Leinster by Fergal and the exaction of the ‘borama’ and the exaction of the hostages of Leinster, by Fergal, son of Maelduin.)

⁹⁵ Patrick K. Ford, *The Celtic Poets* (Belmont 1999), p. 56; cf. Francis John Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (London 1973), p. 146.

⁹⁶ Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, *The Annals of Ulster*, pp. 174-7.

The language of this passage, being Old Irish, shows that the historians had set to work at an early period. The language also betrays, however, the interpolated nature of the passage, since it is the only entry in Irish in the whole series for 721. Furthermore, to accept it as genuine would be tantamount to casting doubt on the genuineness of the Latin entry of the following year in AU which records the battle of Allen. For why should Fergal have to impose the tribute again a mere year after he had exacted it? Alternatively, how could the Leinstermen have succeeded in recovering so well from the tremendous imposition made on them in the preceding year, as to be able not alone to meet Fergal in battle but also to defeat him? The *bórama* entry for 721 is no doubt to be viewed as a later interpolation, and as part of the *bórama* legend. Fergal's first, and only, attempt to exact tribute from the Leinstermen culminated in his defeat at the battle of Allen.⁹⁷

Yet as the *bórama* is only mentioned in the 721 entry and does not form part of the record of *Cath Almaine* in the *Annals of Ulster*, there is no reason to exclude the possibility that this was his 'first, and only, attempt' to levy it from Leinster, which caused the battle to be fought a year afterwards.

An even more remarkable reappearance of the *bórama* is found in the entry under the year 797 AD in the *Annals of Ulster*:

798 1. Kł. Ianair. Anno Domini .dcc.xc.uui. (...) 2. Combustio Inse Patraicc o genntibh, 7 *borime na crich* do breith 7 scrin Do-Chonna do briseadh doaibh 7 innreda mara doaib cene eiter Erinn 7 Albain.

798 1. Kalends of January. AD 797. (...) 2. The burning of Inis Pátraic by the heathens, and they took *the cattle-tribute of the territories*, and broke the shrine of Do-Chonna, and also made great incursions both in Ireland and in Alba.⁹⁸

The phrase *borime na crich* 'the cattle-tribute of the territories' is very specific, but it is nevertheless used in a context which is substantially different from the passages seen earlier. The situation here is not one of a tribute paid to a high-king by his subjects, but rather the spoils of war being gathered by an army of invading Viking forces which do not have any such relationship with the people from whom it was taken. This, therefore, seems to be the first instance where *bórama* began to take on a slightly different meaning and was no longer solely applied to the tribute due to the king of Ireland. Another entry, not entirely related to this matter but interesting to compare as a parallel situation:

⁹⁷ Pádraig Ó Riain, *Cath Almaine* (Dublin 1978), pp. xvii-xix.

⁹⁸ Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, *The Annals of Ulster*, pp. 252-3.

853 1. Kł. Ianair. Anno Domini .dccc.l.ii. (...) 2. Amhlaim m. righ Laithlinde do tuidhecht a nErinn coro giallsat Gaill Erenn dó, 7 *cis* o Goidhelaib.

853 1. Kalends of January. AD 852. (...) 2. Amlaíb, son of the king of Lochlann, came to Ireland, and the foreigners of Ireland submitted to him, and he took *tribute* from the Irish.⁹⁹

Here the more neutral word *cis* is used to denote the unspecified tax that was paid to Amlaíb by his Irish subjects at this time. In the later sections of the *Annals of Ulster*, the term *bórama* appears in the context of cattle raids a number of times with the modified meaning referring to the amount of cattle taken away after such a raid (*crech*), irregardless of the people affected, which did not necessarily have to be the Leinstermen, similar to the way in which it is used to describe the Viking invasion:

999 1. Kł. Ianair. Anno Domini .dcccc.xc.uiii., alias 999. (...) 7. Indredh H. nEchach la hAedh m. Domnaill co tuc *borroma* mor ass., .i. in *creach* mór Maighi Cabha.

999 1. Kalenda of January. AD 998 alias 999. (...) 7. Aed son of Domnall plundered Uí Echach and took away a great *tribute in cows* – i.e. the great *raid* of Mag Coba.¹⁰⁰

1009 1. Kł. Ianair .iii. f., l. i. Anno Domini M.uiii., alias 1009. (...) 6. *Crech* la Flaithbertach H. Neill co firu Breg co tuc *borroma* mor.

1009 1. Kalends of January seventh feria, first of the moon. AD 1008 alias 1009. (...) 6. Flaithbertach ua Néill made a *raid* as far as Brega and took a great *tribute in cows*.¹⁰¹

1044 1. Kł. Ianair, .i. f., l. xx.uiii. Anno Domini M.xl.iiii. (...) 4. *Crech* la Niall m. Mail Sechlainn, la righ nAiligh, for Huib Meith, 7 for Chuailge co ruc *da .c. déc bo* 7 sochaide di brait i ndighail saraighthi Cluicc ind Edachta. *Crech* .ii. dono la Muirchertach H. Neill for Mughdorna co tuc *boroma* 7 brait i ndighail saraighthi in Chluic cetna.

1044 1. Kalends of January third feria, ninth of the moon. AD 1044. (...) 4. Niall son of Mael Sechnaill, king of Ailech, made a *raid* on Uí Méith and Cuailnge and took away *two hundred cows* and a large number of captives in revenge for the profanation of the Bell of the Testament. Muirchertach ua Néill moreover made another *raid* on the Mughdorna and took away a *cow-tribute* and captives in revenge for the profanation of the same bell.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 312-3.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 428-9.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 440-1.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 482-3.

1083 1. Kł. Ianair .i. f. l. ix. Anno Domini m.lxxx.iii. (...) 6. Domnall H. Lochlainn do ghabail righi Ceniuil Eogain. *Crech righ* lais for Conaillibh co tuc *boroma* mor 7 co taraidh tuarustal *don creich sin* do feraib Fernmuighi.

1083 1. Kalends of January first feria, ninth of the moon. AD 1083. (...) 6. Domnall ua Lochlainn assumed the kingship of Cenél Eógain. He carried out a *king's raid* on the Conaille and carried off a great *prey of cattle* and gave stipends *from that prey* to the men of Fernmag.¹⁰³

1115 1. Kł. Ianair ui. f. l. ii. Anno Domini m.c.x.u. (...) co rucsat *borroma* diairmhidhe.

1115 1. Kalends of January sixth feria, second of the moon. AD 1115. (...) and brought away countless *cattle*.¹⁰⁴

There does not seem to be a difference in connotation from phrases describing similar events without using the word *bórama*:

951 1. Kł. Ianair. Anno Domini .dccc l. alias .dccc .51 (...) cum maxima *praeda bouum* 7 equorum, auri 7 argenti.

951 1. Kalends of January. AD 950 alias 951. (...) and a great *spoil of cattle* and horses and gold and silver was taken away.¹⁰⁵

1012 1. Kł Ianair .iii. f., l. iii. Anno Domini M.x.i., alias M.12. (...) co tuc *boghabhail* moir.

1012 1. Kalends of January third feria, fourth of the moon. AD 1011 alias 1012. (...) took a great *spoil of cows*.¹⁰⁶

Instead, it appears to be a matter of personal taste which of the constructions is used in a particular entry and whether the specific number of cows is given. The variant phrases are found in a single entry under the year 1044: ‘took away two hundred cows’ and ‘took away a cow-tribute’, and both are equally frequent throughout the annals.¹⁰⁷ Fergus Kelly draws attention to the great importance of cattle in early Irish society and also mentions the occurrences of cattle-raids in the annals, whose purpose ‘was doubtless to some extent economic: the simple acquisition of further wealth. But a successful cattle-raid also served to

¹⁰³ Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, *The Annals of Ulster*, pp. 516-7.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 556-9.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 396-7.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 442-3.

¹⁰⁷ For the other references to *bórama* (*mór*) in the *Annals of Ulster*, cf. the appendix infra.

demonstrate a king's military and political power, and was frequently employed as a means whereby a recently inaugurated king could establish a reputation for himself'.¹⁰⁸

It is only in the *Annals of Inisfallen* and the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* that the connection between the *bórama* and Túathal's daughters is made explicit as well. The first of these two, which survived in Rawl. B 503, contains the following small sections on Túathal:

248. Tuathal Techtmar regnait annis .xxx. Is do cetarescomrad *Boroma Laigen*.

356. Aed Alláin adronaisc *boroma Lagen*, regnait annis .uiii.

364. Finnachta Fledach mc. Dunc(ha)da, is hé ro maithe *boroma Lag(en)* do M'Liñg Luachra ar duain do(rigni) Mo-Liñg do, ar is remes da (.xx. ríg ro) iccad, .i. othá Thuathal Techtmar (co) Finnachta. Cumala da ingen Thua(thail) í sein ros marb Eoch(u m)acc (Echach), ri Laigen, tria bais. (7 b)a he (dano in bo)roma, .i. trí coecait cet bo 7 tri c(oecait) cet torc 7 tri coecait (cet) lend. Cach) ae dib sein ina bliadain beos. Is amlaid (do) hictha *in cís*. In Finnachta sein regnait annis (.x.)

248. Tuathal Techtmar reigned 30 years. It is to him the *Bóruma Laigen* was first paid.

356. Aed Alláin, who imposed the *Bóruma Laigen*, reigned 7 years.

364. Fínnechta Fledach, son of Dúnchad: it was he who remitted the *Bóruma Laigen* to Moling of Luachair for a poem which Moling had composed for him. For during the reign of forty kings it was paid, viz. from Tuathal Techtmar to Fínnechta. That was the recompense for the two daughters of Tuathal, whom Eochu son of Eochu, king of Laigin, wantonly killed. This, moreover was the *Bóruma*: thrice five thousand cows, and thrice five thousand boars, and thrice five thousand mantles. Each of these also [to be paid] yearly. It was thus the tribute used to be paid. This Fínnechta reigned ten years.¹⁰⁹

Remarkably enough, it is not until the remission of the *bórama* is described that a number of additional details are given, such as the origin of the tribute as well as the value assigned to it, thus connecting it more closely to Fínnechta than to Túathal himself.

The *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, which only survive in copies of an English translation of a lost Irish original, provide a more elaborate retelling of the daughters' tale. The copy made in 1684, edited from TCD manuscript F.3.19 by Denis Murphy, recounts the history of Túathal Techtmar, spelled as Twahall Teaghtwar, and the origin of the *bórama*:

At that time Eochye Anchean was K. of Leinster & was suiter to one of the K. of Irelands daughters named Darynna, whose request was

¹⁰⁸ EIF, pp. 27-8; for a discussion of *crech ríg* 'king's raid' (AD 1083) as part of a king's inauguration, cf. Pádraig Ó Riain, 'The 'crech ríg' or 'regal prey'', *Éigse* 15 (1973), pp. 24-30.

¹⁰⁹ Mac Airt, *The Annals of Inisfallen*, pp. 34, 43, 53-4: par. 248, 356, 364.

presently Granted, whereupon the marriage after the heathen manner was concluded with such Royalty as belonged to their greatness. Soon after the said marriage the K. of Leinster brought her to his own house of Naase, & when the nobility of Leinster saw their Dutchess soe Deformed they were very grievous at it, Reprehending their K. for making such a Choise, the K. of Ireland having a fayrer Daughter & better nurtured & brought up. At which Reprehension & mistaking the K. was very sorry & said y^t he would goe back to the K. & crave his other Daughter in marriage, and withal would mak his Majestie believe, that his other Daughter was Dead; w^{ch} he accordingly told & did, whereupon the K. Immediately Granted his other Daughter to the said K. Eochye, w^{ch} he accordingly married & brought home to his house of Naase afores^d.

When Darinna saw her sister ffyher (for soe shee was called) come upon her in that nature, shee of very spight, jealousy, & shame Dyed out of hand, Because shee conceived soe much sorrow thereat, soone after when the heavy newes of his Daughters Death & his own Deceit came to the kings eares, he was much Grieved, & gathered together all his Royall army & forces, with whome the king in his one person marched towards Leinster to be Revenged on them.¹¹⁰

The celebration of the Feast of Tara as described in LMG and all of Ireland swearing allegiance to Túathal after he has conquered the country precede Fithir and Dáiríne's marriages to Eochu and his subsequent treachery, for which Túathal demanded the payment of the *bórama* from Leinster. For this reason, even though the terms *cís* and *cáin* seem to be used interchangeably in some sources, they probably do not refer to exactly the same tribute, since they are found in different contexts. *Cíos Ereann* therefore signifies the tax paid to a high-king by his subjects, while *bórama Laigen* more specifically indicates the fine placed on Leinster for defiling the high-king's honour by causing the death of his daughters, which is more than simply a tribute which would be due to any overlord.

The *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland*, also known as the *Annals of the Four Masters*, have a record of Túathal's birth, reign and death, but do not mention any form of tribute in relation to him, although the taking of the *bórama* is noted for one other king:

Aois Criost, cúig céad nochat a cethair. Iar mbeith seacht mbliadhna fichit i righe nEreann dAodh, mac Ainmirech, mic Seatna, torcair la Bran Dubh, mac Eathach, i ccath Duin Bolcc i lLaighnibh, ar ndol dAodh do thabhach na boromha, 7 do dhioghail a mhic Chomuscchoigh forra.

The Age of Christ, 594. After Aedh, son of Ainmire, son of Sedna, had been twenty-seven years in the sovereignty of Ireland, he was slain by Bran Dubh, son of Eochaidh, in the battle of Dun-bolg, in Leinster, after

¹¹⁰ Murphy, *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 53.

Aedh had gone *to exact the Borumha*, and to avenge his son Comusgach upon them.¹¹¹

While numerous references to Fínnechta and the events occurring during his reign appear in these annals, no attention is paid to the fact that he is supposed to have put an end to the levying of the *bórama*. In general therefore, the assertion found in various narrative texts that the *bórama* was exacted from Leinster during the reigns of forty kings, from Túathal Techtmar to Fínnechta, does not seem to be extensively supported by other sources such as the annals or the genealogies.

¹¹¹ John O'Donovan (ed.), *Annala Rioghachta Eireann : Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland* (Dublin 1856), pp. 98-101, 218-21.

Inversion of the roles

The role that either of Túathal's daughters plays in the story is not consistent throughout the various sources. When they are mentioned together, the phrase used is invariably *Fithir 7 Dáiríne*, and there is only one exception to the general tendency to present their names as such, namely in the MG poem, but this is doubtless a stylistic feature:

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|--|--|
| <p>3. Dā ingin ic Tūathal trén:
 <i>Fithirt is Dáiríne</i> adér,
 <i>Dáiríne is Fithirt</i> cen ail,
 dā ingin Tūathail Techtmair.</p> | <p>Strong Túathal had two daughters:
 <i>Fithir and Dáiríne</i> I will say,
 <i>Dáiríne and Fithir</i> without reproach,
 the two daughters of Túathal Techtmar.</p> |
|--|--|

Despite the fact that this order is never changed anywhere else, there is a certain disagreement regarding the question which of the two is the elder one. becomes very clear from the prose passage at the beginning of the *Bórama*, describing their marriages to Eochu. In Stokes's edition from LL it runs as follows:

4. Batar dano dá ingin gradacha la Túathal .i. *Fithir 7 Dairine a n-anmand*. Co tarat Eochu mac Echach Domlén rí Lagen *in n-ingen ba siniu .i. Fithir*. (...) *Dalta dil immorro do rí Connacht ind ingen sin Tuathail*. (...)

5. Tucad dó iarsin *ind ingen aile .i. Dáirine – dalta* sede dano *do rí Ulad – ocus dos-rat leis co Ráith Immil, áit imbái ind ingen aile ara cind*. (...)

6. Ránic íarsain firindi in scéoil sin co Temraig co Túathal. Rucad físs iartain o Thuathal *co rí Connacht .i. co haite Fithirni, ocus co rí Ulad .i. co haite Dáirine*.

4. Now Tuathal had two lovable daughters *whose names were Fithir and Dárfíne*. And Eochu son of Eochu Domlen, king of Leinster, took to wife *the elder daughter, even Fithir*. (...) Now that daughter of Tuathal's was a beloved *fosterchild of the king of Connaught*. (...)

5. Thereafter there was given to him *the second daughter, even Dárfíne – she was fosterchild of the king of Ulaid – and Eochu brought her to Raith Immil, the place wherein the other daughter was before her*. (...)

6. Thereafter the truth of that story came to Tara unto Tuathal. Afterwards the news was sent by Tuathal *to the king of Connaught Fithirne's fosterfather, and to the king of Ulaid the fosterfather of Dárfíne*.¹¹²

As has been pointed out already by R.A. Stewart Macalister, in the BL *Bórama*, 'differing in many respects from Stokes's version', it is not Fithir who is first given to Eochu in marriage,

¹¹² Stokes, 'The Borama', pp. 36-9.

but Dáiríne. This ‘error’, as it is termed by Macalister,¹¹³ can clearly be observed in the corresponding passage from BL, which, while generally displaying close similarity to the LL text, shows a consistent inversion of the names Fithir and Dáiríne:

4. Badar daingin oc Tuathal Techtmar .i. Fider 7 Dairfine a n-anmanda. Co tard Eochaid mac Eachach Doimlen .i. rig Laigen in ingen fa sine dib .i. Dairfine. (...) Dalta dil immorro do rig Connacht an ingen sin Tuathail. (...)

5. Tucad do iarsin in ingen aile .i. dalta rig Ulad, Fider a hainm, 7 dorad leis co Raith Imil, ait imbui an ingen aile ara cind. (...)

6. Ranic iarsin firindi in sceoil sin co Temraid co hairm ambai Tuathal. Rucad fis iarsin o Thuathal co rig Condacht .i. co hoidi Dairfine.¹¹⁴

Whereas Fithir is clearly mentioned as being the eldest daughter in LL, and foster child to the king of Connacht, BL changes around the names in this section, turning Fithir into the younger sister, foster child to the king of Ulster. The second time, however, only Dáiríne’s foster father is mentioned in BL; Fithir’s foster father is left out of this passage. All this is particularly remarkable because apart from these significant details, which seem to be more than mere errors, the text from BL corresponds closely to that of LL and is an almost exact copy in terms of word choice and phrasing.

Despite this contrast between the prose sections in the two manuscripts, the poem MG, following the tradition of the LL prose without change of names, nevertheless contains the same quatrains in both manuscripts and gives the following information on the two marriages in LL as well as BL:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>4. <i>Tucad d’Eochaid Fithirt find</i>
i Temraig ós ráenaib rind;
ba roga nūachair cen ach
ingen Tūathail na Temrach.</p> | <p><i>Fair Fithir was given to Eochó</i>
in Temair of the rows of spear points;
the choice of spouse without a doubt
was the daughter of Túathal of Temair.</p> |
| <p>5. <i>Ceisid in rí ar Fithirt find</i>
- ropa gním ēcóir imgrind -
<i>nó co tuc Dáríne lais</i>
anall ó Themraig thāebglais.</p> | <p><i>The king despised fair Fithir</i>
- it was an unjust, very fierce deed -
<i>so that he brought Dáiríne with him</i>
thither from green-sided Temair.</p> |

¹¹³ R.A. Stewart Macalister (ed.), *Lebor Gabála Éirenn : The Book of the taking of Ireland* (Dublin 1938-56), Part 5, p. 309.

¹¹⁴ Transcription from BL 295rb1-31, following Stokes’s paragraph division; capitalization, word division and punctuation added.

11. *Dalta ríġ Connacht na cath
rop hí Fithirt na p̄mrath;
dalta ríġ Ulad na n-ech
rop hí Dáiríne dondgel.*

*The fosterling of the king of the Connachta of the
battles was Fithir of the greatest virtues;
the fosterling of the king of the Ulaid of the horses
was noble, fair Dáiríne.*

In MG4 it is said that Fithir was given to Eocho as wife, but in the next verse it is told that he despised her, for which reason he brought the other daughter, Dáiríne home with him as well. Yet in the FD poem, BL once again is very clear when stressing the fact that Dáiríne was definitely the first to marry Eocho: *Dáirfíne thuc ar thosaich / Eochaig* ‘It was Dáiríne whom at first Eocho took’ (B3ab). This same manuscript nevertheless also contains MG11, where Fithir is described as the foster child of the king of Connacht while Dáiríne is connected to the king of Ulster, which conforms to the information provided in the LL prose, but not in the corresponding passage from BL.

The notion of this inversion was picked up and more elaborately discussed by Ó Cuív when he published *Comram na cloenfherta*, which contains a short account of Fithir and Dáiríne’s marriages to Eocho:

1. Boe ri hi Temair, Tuathal mac Fiachach Findfolaid. Bae rigan leis. i. Baine ingen Scail. Birt di ingen dond rig. .i. *Fithir 7 Darfíne*. Comluid Echu Anchenn ri Lagen do chuingid ingine dib 7 *do-breth Darfíne do*, 7 *do-bert* Eochu miscais di. Luid *do thochmarcc inna hingine ba so* .i. *Fithir*, 7 *as-bert* ba marb Darfíne. 7 *do-bretha Fithir do* 7 luid dia chrich fein.

1. There was a king in Tara, Tuathal son of Fiachu Findfholaid. He had as a queen Báine, daughter of Scál. She bore the king two daughters, *Fithir and Dáiríne*. Eochu Áinchenn, king of Leinster, came to ask for one of the daughters and *Dáiríne was given to him*, and Eochu took a dislike to her. He went to woo the younger daughter, that is *Fithir*, and he said that Dáiríne was dead. And *Fithir was given to him* and he went to his own territory.¹¹⁵

Here again it is made explicit that Dáiríne was the first to marry and Fithir is the younger sister whom Eocho takes as his wife afterwards.

Another difference between the various sources describing these events is found in the influence that the Leinstermen have on Eocho’s decision to go back to Tara to ask for the other daughter as his wife.¹¹⁶ The *Bórama* text from LL, as well as that of BL, states that the people from Leinster made it known to their king that the daughter he left was actually better than the one he married:

¹¹⁵ Ó Cuív, ‘Comram na Cloenfherta’, pp. 170-2, 174.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Buttimer, *The Bórama*, pp. 128-30.

Dos-rat iarum Eochu a mnái leis co Ráith Immil il-Lagnib. (...) *Atbertatar immorro Laigin friss 'is ferr ind ingen rofhácbaís*'. Conid iarsain dochúaid-sium fothúaid aridisi co Temraig, co n-erbairt fri Tuathal, 'Marb', ar se, 'ind ingen rucusa lem, 7 ba hail lem th'ingen-su aile do thabairt'.

Then Eochu brought his wife to Raith Immil in Leinster. (...) *Howbeit the Leinstermen said to Eochu: 'Better is the daughter whom thou leftest*'. Wherefore he went northwards again to Tara and said to Tuathal: 'The daughter whom I wedded is dead, and I desire that thine other daughter be given to me'.¹¹⁷

The text first presents the fact that Eochu took the eldest daughter, Fithir, as his wife according to the custom at that time, without giving any implication that he may be discontent with this practice. Yet after this it continues to relate how his people's observation apparently caused him to change his mind and return to Tara in order to ask for the second daughter's hand. Inventing the alleged death of his first bride and presenting this to Túathal as the reason for his request nevertheless remains his own responsibility. In contrast with this approach to the matter, the FD poem expresses a different idea when it mentions that Eochu took Fithir, in this case his second wife, home with him, *cīarbo rithir le muintir* 'although it was bitter with his people' (B5d). Yet the line from the next quatrain: *ara tindscna nār tubad / cumal cach lesa i Laiginib* 'for her dowry which was not opposed, a *cumal* of every dwelling in Laigin' (B6cd) would seem to imply no reservations of the Leinstermen regarding their king's second marriage.

In the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, the harsh judgment on the first bride again lies entirely with the Leinstermen:

At that time *Eochye Anchean was K. of Leinster & was suiter to one of the K. of Irelands daughters named Darynna, whose request was presently Granted*, whereupon the marriage after the heathen manner was concluded with such Royalty as belonged to their greatness. Soon after the said marriage the K. of Leinster brought her to his own house of Naase, & when *the nobility of Leinster saw their Dutchess soe Deformed they were very grievous at it, Reprehending their K. for making such a Choyse, the K. of Ireland having a fayrer Daughter & better nurtured & brought up. At which Reprehension & mistaking the K. was very sorry & said y^t he would goe back to the K. & crave his other Daughter in marriaage, and withal would mak his Majestie believe, that his other Daughter was Dead; w^{ch} he accordingly told & did, whereupon the K. Immediately Granted his*

¹¹⁷ Stokes, 'The Borama', pp. 36-9.

other Daughter to the said K. Eochye, w^{ch} he accordingly married & brought home to his house of Naase afores^d.

*When Darinna saw her sister ffyher (for soe shee was called) come upon her in that nature, shee of very spight, jealousy, & shame Dyed out of hand, Because shee conceaved soe much sorrow thereat.*¹¹⁸

This account takes a different view on the sequence of marriages, stating that it was actually Eochó's own choice to request Dáiríne as his wife at first, although it does not become clear whether she was the eldest one or not. It is only when he came home that his people expressed their misgivings about the lady he wedded, apparently because there was a physical blemish on Dáiríne, which does not feature in any other version of the tale. On hearing this reproach, Eochó, being 'very sorry', was nevertheless the one responsible for coming up with a feasible excuse for going back to her father and asking for his 'fairer daughter'. Túathal here, as in the *Bórama* but contrary to AS, did not hesitate for a moment to give Fithir to him. New in this context as well are Dáiríne's 'spite and jealousy' when she realizes she is being supplanted as the king's wife, which are mentioned in addition to the shame and sorrow usually present in the rest of the tradition. Fithir's subsequent death is ignored completely. Nothing is said in FF about the reaction of the Leinstermen, either approving or disapproving of their king's behaviour.

The verses in MG do not directly contradict the LL prose, but they place more emphasis on the king's decision than on his people's ideas:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 5. <i>Ceisid in rí ar Fithirt find</i>
- ropa gním ěcóir ingrind -
<i>nó co tuc Dáríne lais</i>
anall ō Themraig thāebglais. | <i>The king despised fair Fithir</i>
- it was an unjust, very fierce deed -
<i>so that he brought Dáiríne with him</i>
thither from green-sided Temair. |
|---|--|

Comram na Cloenfherta similarly notes Eochó's dissatisfaction with his first wife, although her name is different here:

Comluid Echu Anchenn ri Lagen do chuingid ingine dib 7 do-breth Daríne do, 7 do-bert Eochu miscais di. Luid do thochmarcc inna hingine ba so .i. Fithir, 7 as-bert ba marb Daríne. 7 do-bretha Fithir do 7 luid dia chrich fein.

Eochu Áinchenn, king of Leinster, came to ask for one of the daughters and Dáiríne was given to him, and *Eochu took a dislike to her*. He went to woo the younger daughter, that is Fithir, and he said that Dáiríne was dead. And Fithir was given to him and he went to his own territory.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Murphy, *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 53.

¹¹⁹ Ó Cuív, 'Comram na Cloenfherta', pp. 170-2.

Parsons, working from the AS version of the story, gives the following summary of this section of the tale: ‘Cailte tells how the King of Leinster, Eochaid mac Echach Ainchind, sought Fithir, daughter of Tuathal Techtmar in marriage, but was given instead, her elder sister Dáiríne. Having married Dáiríne, Eochaid travelled back to Tuathal and reported her death and asked for, and was granted, Fithir in her place. When the two sisters meet, as wives to a single husband, their shock, shame and sorrow cause their immediate deaths’:¹²⁰

Ocus do badur dono da ingin tsoinemla aici .i. Fithir 7 Dáiríne a n-anmanna, 7 tainic rí Laigen d’iarraid indarna hingen díb .i. Eochaid mac Echach Ainchind rí Laigen, 7 do fíarfaig rí Eirenn: ‘cá hingen dona hingenaiib is áil let, a rí Laigen?’ ‘Fithir,’ ar rí Laigen. ‘Ac um,’ ar rí Eirenn, ‘ní thibersa in soisser í fiadnaissi in tseindsir do fír.’ Ocus tucad Dáiríne ingen Tuathail do Eochaid do rí[g] Laigen, 7 tucusdar cét da cach crud ina tindsca na hingine, 7 ro bóí re bliadain aici issin baile seo, 7 nirb’ inmain le rí[g] Laigen hí, 7 ro córig ceilg 7 eladhain adhaig n-aen ina imdaid aici féin .i. ingen rig Eirenn do breith co lar in fédha diamair, 7 a tšlechtadh uimpi, 7 tech derraith daingen do denam ann, 7 naenbur comalta do bóí aici lé, 7 a radha a héc ann.

Ro gabad a eich don rí 7 ro hindled a charpat, 7 tainic reime do accallaim rig Eirenn co Temraig, 7 do fíarfaig rí Eirenn scela de. ‘Scela olcca,’ bar rí Laigen, ‘in ingen maith tucaissi duind a héc araeir accaind.’ ‘Ocus créd má tangaisi dom indsaigidsi?’ ar Tuathal, ‘uair ní chuala-sa scel is doilgi lem ina in scel sin.’ ‘Tánagsa d’iarraid na hingine aili ort, a rí,’ ar eissium, ‘uair ní háil lem scarthain ret charadrad.’ ‘Dar ar mbreithir am,’ ar rí Eirenn, ‘ní thaispen ann sáimi na subha damsa m’ingen do tabairt duit.’ ‘Ní haccumsa ro bóí comus a hanma,’ ar rí Laigen. (...)

Ocus tuc[ad] in ingen aile dósum,’ ar Cailte, ‘7 tuc leis dochum in baile seo ar a tamaíd hí.¹²¹

and he had two daughters: Fithir and Dairine were their names. *The king of Leinster, Eochaid son of Eochaid ainchenn came to sue for one of them, and Tuathal questioned him: ‘whether of the two girls wouldst thou?’ ‘I would fain have Fithir,’ said the king of Leinster. But the king of Ireland replied that the younger he would not give away before the elder, therefore to the king of Leinster Tuathal’s daughter Dairine was given; for whose bride-gift he assigned of every kind of stock an hundred. In this place for a year she was by him, but he loved her not; one night therefore in his bed he framed within himself a snare and artifice, which was this: to carry the king of Ireland’s daughter into mid-forest, to fell it round about her and, nine foster-sisters that she had being with her, to construct for her a secret and secluded house; then to say that she was dead. His horses were harnessed for the king, his chariot was made ready, and he reached Tara to confer with the king of Ireland. The latter asked him for news, and he said: ‘great and evil tidings I have – that the daughter thou gavest me died last night with us.’ ‘Wherefore then art thou come to seek me?’ asked Tuathal;*

¹²⁰ Parsons, ‘A Reading of *Acallam na Senórach*’, pp. 101-2.

¹²¹ Stokes and Windisch, *Irische Texte* 4.1, pp. 117-8.

‘for a tale more grievous than that is to me I have not heard.’ The king of Leinster said: ‘I am come to solicit of thee the other daughter, for I would not be severed from thine alliance.’ ‘By my word,’ exclaimed Tuathal, ‘the giving of my daughter to thee augurs me neither peace nor pleasure.’ The king of Leinster answered: ‘not I it was that had power of her life.’ *So the other daughter was given to him,*” Cailte went on, “and he brought her to this town.¹²²

It is clear in this text that Eocho had the intention to marry Fithir from the beginning; Túathal even asks him which of the daughters he would prefer, only then to say that in fact he cannot marry the younger of the two.

The third question to which different answers are given is related to the first one and concerns the deaths of the two women. In LL, the eldest daughter, Fithir, dies upon seeing Dáiríne arrive as Eocho’s new wife and her sister soon follows:

Amal atchondairc immorro Fithir Dáiríne *atbail Fithir de náire* fochetóir.
Amal atchondairc sede éc a sethar *atbail de chumaid*.

But when Fithir beheld Dáiríne *she dies at once of shame*. When Dáiríne beheld her sister’s death *she dies of grief*.¹²³

The passage in BL again shows an inversion of the names, but the word *náire* ‘shame’ does not occur:

Amal adchondairc Dairíne Fithir a siur *adbail Dairíne* fochetóir. Amal adchondairc Fider immorro ec a setur *adbail dia cumaig* fochetóir.¹²⁴

In MG6 the description is in perfect correspondence to the LL prose text:

6.	Mar dorocht Dáiríne dond - rop adbol int anforlond - <i>marb Fithirt de náire de;</i> <i>marb do chumaid Dáiríne.</i>	As noble Dáiríne arrived, - great was the plight - <i>Fithir died of shame from it;</i> <i>Dáiríne died of grief.</i>
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The first quatrain of the FD poem in LL, which is also found in the BL version, repeats these phrases, including the words *náire* for ‘shame’ and *cumaid* for ‘grief’, which tend to be connected to Fithir and Dáiríne respectively:

¹²² O’Grady, *Silva Gadelica II*, pp. 109-11.

¹²³ Stokes, ‘The Boroma,’ pp. 38-9.

¹²⁴ BL 295rb17-20.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Fithir is Dáiríne,
dā ingin Tūathail turaig:
<i>marb Fithir do náríne;</i>
<i>marb Dáríne dá cumaid.</i> | Fithir and Dáiríne,
the two daughters of princely Túathal:
<i>Fithir died of shame;</i>
<i>Dáiríne died of her grief.</i> |
|--|--|

While various references to Túathal Techtmar are contained in the genealogical tracts, it is not entirely surprising that no mention of either Fithir or Dáiríne may be discovered there, as few women's names find their way into these accounts. LMG is no exception to this, but nevertheless contains an interesting phrase regarding another woman: *agus do chumaidh Dairfhine ingene Daire do chuaidh* 'and she died of grief for Dáirfhine d. Dáire',¹²⁵ where the connection between the name Dáiríne and *cumaid* 'grief' is made as well.

In FD from BL, Fithir also dies first, and Dáiríne dies after that upon seeing the death of her sister, which shows a different order to what this manuscript had in the prose section earlier:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 8. <i>Tic Fider a bēl re lār</i>
- nīrbe in caridrad comlān -
cor' bris a cridi 'na clī,
ruc a nert uili ar nemthnī. | <i>Fithir's mouth came against the ground</i>
- the friendship was not perfect -
so that her heart broke in her body,
all her strength took on nothingness. |
| 9. Mar adchondairc Dāirfīne
dīth Fidir ic en ātha,
is and <i>adbath Dāirfīne</i>
dā seirc d'ingin na flatha. | As Dáiríne saw
the loss of Fithir at the water of the ford,
there <i>Dáiríne died</i>
<i>for her love of the daughter of the ruler.</i> |

The word used here is *serc* 'love' for Fithir, rather than *náire* 'grief', but the general idea is the same. Dagmar Bronner also briefly addresses the question and notes that the most commonly found situation in the various sources seems to be Dáiríne marrying first, while Fithir is the first to die,¹²⁶ as is the case in AS and *Comram na Cloenfherta*, where Fithir is explicitly said to be the youngest daughter:

Do-luid Darfīne for ciunn a sethar do fáilte frie, ar ní fitir a bith 'na lepaid.
Ba marb ind osar .i. Fithir ar nare amail it-chonnaircc a siair. *Ba marb dano Darfīne dia cumaid-side.*

Dáiríne came to meet her sister to welcome her, for she did not know that she was supplanting her. *The younger [of the two], that is Fithir, died of shame when she saw her sister. Then Dáiríne died of grief for her.*¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Ó Muraíle, *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach*, vol. 2, pp. 496-7.

¹²⁶ Dagmar Bronner, 'Die Überlieferung um Tuathal Techtmar', Helmut Birkhan, *Kelten-Einfälle an der Donau* (Wien 2007), pp. 84-5.

¹²⁷ Ó Cuív, 'Comram na Cloenfherta', pp. 171-2.

The notion that Dáirine had no idea about Eocho's marriage to her sister and thought she was only coming to visit is not found in any other source.

The inversion of the daughter's roles is reproduced also in FF, which contains a section on Túathal Teachtmar's rise to power and his subsequent reign and continues:

Is é an Tuathal Teachtmhar-so ar a bhfuilimid ag tráchtadh do cheangail an Bhórimhe ar Laighnibh mar cháin i ndíol bháis a dhá inghean .i. *Fithír is Dáirine a n-anmanna*. Rí iomorro do bhí ar Laighnibh dar bh'ainm Eochaidh Aincheann agus *tug sé Dáirine inghean Tuathail Teachtmhair do mhnaoi*, agus rug leis i Laighnibh da longphort féin .i. i Maigh Luadhat í. Agus i gcionn aimsire da éis sin téid go Teamhraigh agus nochtais do Thuathal *go bhfuair Dáirine bás*, agus iarrais *an deirbhshiúr oile* .i. *Fithír* air, go dtug Tuathal dó í, agus beiris leis go Laighnibh da longphort féin í. Agus *mar do chonnairc Fithír a deirbhshiúr Dáirine roimpe beo do ling a hanam go hobann aiste tré náire*; agus *táinig Dáirine da caoineadh agus fuair bás do láthair da cumhaidh*; gonadh da fáisnéis sin do rinne an file an rann-so:

Fithír agus Dáirine,
Dá inghin Tuathail turaidh,
Marbh Fithír do náirighe,
Marbh Dáirine dia cumhaidh.

It was this Tuathal Teachtmhar of whom we are speaking who imposed the 'Boraimhe' on the people of Leinster, as a tax to avenge the death of his two daughters, *whose names were Fithir and Dairine*. Now, there was a king over Leinster whose name was Eochaidh Aincheann, and *he married Dairine, daughter of Tuathal Teachtmhar*, and took her to Leinster to his own fortress, that is to Magh Luadhat; and some time after that he went to Tara, and told Tuathal *that Dairine had died*, and asked him to give him *his other daughter, that is Fithir*, and Tuathal gave her to him, and he took her to Leinster to his own fortress; and *when Fithir saw her sister Dairine alive before her, her soul quitted her body suddenly through shame*; and *Dairine having come to lament her died of her grief on the spot*. And it was to relate this that the poet composed the following stanza:

Fithir and Dairine
Two daughters of princely Tuathal;
Fithir died of shame,
Dairine died of her grief.¹²⁸

The section from FF relates how Eocho first marries Dáirine, but after a while goes back to Tara to ask for the other daughter, telling Túathal that the woman he married has died. Túathal then gives him Fithir as wife and he takes her home with him. Fithir here, as well as in the

¹²⁸ Dinneen, *The History of Ireland*, vol. 2, pp. 254-5.

version from LL, is the first one to die of shame when she sees her sister still alive, and Dáirine soon afterwards dies of grief. The order of marriage, on the other hand, corresponds to most of the other versions of the tale, but not to LL. This therefore means that rather than taking the LL *Bórama* as the basis and terming all deviations from it ‘errors’, it may be more sensible to allow the variant traditions to exist in their own right.

The problem of sequence is solved in a simple way in the two *Bórama* poems; in FD it is said: *D’ōenlámnad ructhasom / dā ingin Tūathal trétaig* ‘Of one birth were born the two daughters of Túathal, abounding in flocks’ (L3a),¹²⁹ avoiding the question of which of the girls is older, while MG states: *ropsat mairb and fri oēnūair* ‘they died there at the same time’ (1d). It becomes clear from the text that the deaths of the two sisters shortly followed each other, which is probably what is meant by *óenūair*, but they did not die simultaneously, for the story also tells that the second daughter saw the death of the first and consequently dies of grief for her.

¹²⁹ Cf. Ó Cuív, ‘Comram na Cloenfherta’, p. 174, n. 6.

The verses

Most of the quatrains from the two poems under discussion here do not seem to appear outside the *Bórama*, but there are a few exceptions concerning FD. This is an interesting but also slightly problematic poem, since it consists of only six stanzas in LL but has fourteen in BL, of which four correspond to each other. In addition to this, the spelling practices of BL may present difficulties of interpretation in some places. Probably the most important verse of the poem is the first stanza from LL, which is the second in BL:

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|--|---|
| <p>1. Fithir is Dáiríne,
dá ingin Túathail turaig;
marb Fithir do náiríne;
marb Dáiríne dá cumaid.</p> | <p>2. Fider 7 Dáirfíne,
dá ingin Túathail toraid;
marb Fider do náirfíne;
marb Dáirfíne díá cumaid.</p> |
|--|---|

This quatrain is also found in AS,¹³⁰ in Rawl. B 512, and other manuscripts, as part of LGÉ,¹³¹ as well as in FF:¹³²

Fithir ocus Dáirin[e].	Fidir 7 Darine	Fithír agus Dáirine
da ingin Tuathail tubhaig,	da ingein Tuathail turaid	Dá inghin Tuathail turaidh
marb Fithir do náirine.	marb Fidir do nairine	Marbh Fithír do náirighe
marb Dairfíne da cumaid.	marb Dairine dia cumaid.	Marbh Dáirine dia cumhaidh.

From its structure and contents, it seems logical that this is the most frequently cited quatrain of the poems, giving the shortest summary possible of the daughters' tale. Bronner mentions these appearances of the same stanza as an example of single verses which could be extracted from their context to be used as illustration of a prose text elsewhere.¹³³

In FF this verse immediately follows the death of the two sisters, introduced by the following words: ... *do rinne an file an rann-so* '... the poet composed the following stanza'.¹³⁴ Only then does it continue describing how Túathal received the news of this and what his reaction was, while in the prose text from the *Bórama* preceding this poem, it is said that Túathal himself was the one composing the poem; LL: *Is amlaid rabói 'ca rád 7 doringni láid* 'Thus he was speaking, and he made a lay'¹³⁵ and BL: *Is amlaid robai 'ca rada 7 adbeart and na briathrasa* 'Thus he was speaking and then he said these words'. Among the examples

¹³⁰ Stokes and Windisch, *Irische Texte* 4.1, p. 118.

¹³¹ Transcription from Rawl. B 512 fol. 86rb16-18; capitalization added; the manuscripts Stowe D.4.3. and TCD E.3.5. are not available online; cf. Macalister, *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, Part 5, p. 326.

¹³² Dinneen, *The History of Ireland*, vol. 2, pp. 254-5.

¹³³ Bronner, 'Die Überlieferung um Tuathal Techtmar', p. 85.

¹³⁴ Dinneen, *The History of Ireland*, vol. 2, pp. 154-5.

¹³⁵ Stokes, 'The Borama', pp. 38-9.

of ‘recurrent Middle Irish phrases’ cited from LL by Uáitéar Mac Gearailt is also: *is samlaid ro boí ca rád 7 atbert na briathrasa and*, which he considers to be ‘taken over from the oral tradition’ in the tenth and eleventh centuries.¹³⁶ AS simply says: *Cailte cecinit ‘Cailte sang’*.¹³⁷

A quatrain similar to B5 is found in one of the manuscripts containing AS:¹³⁸

Nír an cāch iarraich Eochaid, is catōga mar cluintir; co ruc Fithir leis dā tig, cīarbo rithir le muintir.	Nir’ sgar re hiarraid co nocht. is re tacrad co torocht, co ruc Fithir leis da thigh. cerba rithír le muinntir.
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Since this quatrain does not appear in the Book of Lismore version of AS, it is not included in O’Grady’s translation. The last two lines neatly correspond to each other in both versions, and are easily interpreted: ‘and he took Fithir with him to his house, although it was bitter with the people’. The first two lines, however, differ so much in either manuscript that it makes comparison impossible. Especially the first line in BL poses several editing problems and it is not entirely clear whether this word division is correct.¹³⁹ The beginning of the verse in AS may mean something like: ‘he did not depart before asking openly and before pleading perfectly’.

A variant form of verse B8 also appears in AS:¹⁴⁰

Tic Fider a bēl re lār - nīrbe in caridrad comlān - cor’ bris a cridi ’na clī, ruc a nert uili ar nemthnī.	Tuc Fithir a bēl re lar nir’b é in caradrad comlán, cor’ brised a craide ar tri is ruc a nert ar nemfní.
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Apart from the quatrain introducing Fithir and Dáiríne which is cited in several other manuscripts and seems to be the best-known verse of all, the reasons for including this stanza and the one discussed before in the AS narrative are not so easily detected. In contrast with most of the poems in the *Bórama*, the contents of this last quatrain are not repeated in the prose text of AS, and thus is needed for the continuity of the story, but why the compiler chose to tell this section of the story in verse is unclear.

Macalister, in his edition of *Leabhar Gabhála Éireann* (LGÉ) from BL, draws attention to the fact that passages from the *Bórama* have been inserted into *Réim Ríogaide*,

¹³⁶ Uáitéar Mac Gearailt, ‘On textual correspondences in early Irish heroic tales’, Gordon W. MacLennan (ed.), *Proceedings of the first North American congress of Celtic Studies* (1988), pp. 344, 349.

¹³⁷ Stokes and Windisch, *Irische Texte* 4.1, p. 118.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 118; manuscript in the Franciscan Monastery, Merchants’ Quay, Dublin, cf. pp. xi-xii.

¹³⁹ Cf. Goverts, ‘Mór in gním’, pp. 59-60.

¹⁴⁰ Stokes and Windisch, *Irische Texte* 4.1, p. 118.

‘the Roll of the Kings’ in various places. *Réim Ríograide* appears at the end of LGÉ and gives an account of the reigns of the various kings of Ireland, focusing in particular on the battles they fought, naming many of them, and on the warriors who died there; the abstracts from the *Bórama* are found in the section describing the life of Túathal Techtmar. Macalister chooses not to print them, because they do not belong to LGÉ in his opinion, but ‘appear to be makeshift repairs in *Réim Ríograide*, and have no radical connexion with it’.¹⁴¹ In general, it would seem that the compilation of FD in BL is in line with the redactor’s treatment of LGÉ in the same manuscript, thus creating a text containing sections from different origins.

¹⁴¹ Macalister, *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*, Part 5, p. 309; on the structure of LGÉ generally, cf. R. Mark Scowcroft, ‘*Leabhar Gabhála*, Part I: the growth of the text’, *Ériu* 38 (1987), pp. 81-142, Idem., ‘*Leabhar Gabhála*, Part II: the growth of the tradition’, *Ériu* 39 (1988), pp. 1-66.

External correspondences

In Tom Peete Cross's *Motif-index of early Irish Literature*, the main theme of Fithir and Dáiríne's tale is formulated thus: 'Second daughter won by falsely representing first as dead'.¹⁴² This element is linked to another, closely related motif: 'Younger child (daughter) may not marry before elder'.¹⁴³ While the second statement is not necessarily made explicit in all texts giving an account of the daughters' marriages to Eocho, it is probably understood as the reason why the king of Leinster could not marry the woman of his choice, if his preference is stated at the beginning of the tale. A number of different works are cited for these elements in the *Motif-index*, but these all point to one of the versions of this same story.¹⁴⁴

Byrne also discusses the *Bórama* and describes the opening passage of the text as follows: 'Eochu king of Leinster (...) obtained the hand of [Tuathal's] daughter Fithir in marriage. Then he decided that he had made the wrong choice and, telling Tuathal that Fithir had died, married her sister Dáiríne. The two princesses died of shame when they met (this part of the story probably owes much to the classical myth of Procne and Philomela)'.¹⁴⁵ This assumed connection between the two tales is not explained any further nor does it seem to be mentioned anywhere else. The story is about one of two sisters, Procne, who marries Tereus of Thrace and they have a son together. After some time, however, when Tereus returns to Procne's home to bring her sister Philomela to her for a visit, he is enchanted by the woman and locks her in a cabin in the woods, rapes her and cuts out her tongue in order to prevent her from telling anyone. Philomela nevertheless manages to weave her story into a cloth which she sends to Procne, who subsequently comes to find her and takes her to Tereus's home. There they kill Procne's son and serve him to his father in revenge of his wrongs. When Tereus realizes this, he tries to kill the women, but this does not succeed because both turn into birds.¹⁴⁶

It may be true that parts of Procne and Philomela's story sound similar to Fithir and Dáiríne's in certain respects, but the correspondences nevertheless do not go beyond the general idea that one man is illegitimately bound to two sisters. Remarkably enough, AS

¹⁴² Tom Peete Cross, *Motif-index of early Irish literature* (Bloomington 1952), p. 375.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 485.

¹⁴⁴ Of the two references for the second motif mentioning different sources, the first is unavailable here (*Archaeological Review* 1, p. 150), and the second instance appears in Eleanor Hull, *The Cuchullin saga in Irish literature* (London 1898), p. 68.

¹⁴⁵ Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings*, p. 144.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. William S. Anderson (ed.), *P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoses* (Leipzig 1977), *Library of Latin Texts – Series A* <<http://clt.brepolis.net.proxy.library.uu.nl/llta/Default.aspx>>; A.D. Melville (trans.), *Ovid, Metamorphoses* (Oxford 1986), pp. 134-42.

contains an additional element not mentioned anywhere else which finds its close parallel in the classical tale: one of the women is locked up in a secluded dwelling in a forest:

Ocus tucad Dáirine ingen Tuathail do Eochaid do rí[g] Laigen, 7 tucusdar cét da cach crud ina tindsca na hingine, 7 ro bóí re bliadain aici issin baile seo, 7 nirb' inmain le rí[g] Laigen hí, 7 ro cóirig ceilg 7 eladhain adhaig n-aen ina imdaid aici féin .i. ingen rig Eirenn do breith co lar in fédha diamair, 7 a tslechtadh uimpi, 7 tech derraith daingen do denam ann, 7 naenbur comalta do bóí aici lé, 7 a radha a héc ann.¹⁴⁷

therefore to the king of Leinster Tuathal's daughter Dairine was given; for whose bride-gift he assigned of every kind of stock an hundred. In this place for a year she was by him, but he loved her not; *one night therefore in his bed he framed within himself a snare and artifice, which was this: to carry the king of Ireland's daughter into mid-forest, to fell it round about her and, nine foster-sisters that she had being with her, to construct for her a secret and secluded house;* then to say that she was dead.¹⁴⁸

Apart from these similarities, however, there are a number of features which are not so easily reconciled with each other. Tereus and Procne's marriage is described as happy and it is Procne who asks for her husband to bring her sister to her for a visit; Tereus had never any intention of marrying someone else until he saw Philomela and became filled with passion for her. Yet perhaps the most important discrepancy between the two narratives is the general position of the women and their opportunities to exert influence on their own lives and the people around them, which differ greatly in both tales. At the very beginning of MG, the direct relationship between men making decisions and the sad events resulting from them is made clear:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Mór in gním daringned sund
mā fūaratar fir forlund,
dā ingen rí[g] Temrach túaid
ropsat mairb and fri ðenūair.</p> | <p>Great is the crime which was done here
if men obtained domination,
the two daughters of the king of Temair in the
north, they died there at the same time.</p> |
|--|---|

Whereas both Procne and Philomela, though restricted in their actions, resolutely take their fates into their own hands and manage to take revenge on the man who insulted them, Fithir and Dáirine's roles in the tale are entirely passive and they are portrayed as no more than tragic victims of their husband's treachery. In the FD poem, where Túathal is speaking, it is explicitly stated: *is dimsa tic a dígail* 'it is from me that their revenge comes' (L5d/B11d); the daughters are powerless and unable to defend themselves.

¹⁴⁷ Stokes and Windisch, *Irische Texte* 4.1, pp. 117-8.

¹⁴⁸ O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica II*, pp. 109-11.

Although it has to be admitted that a small number of features in both tales correspond to each other, a direct connection remains hard to prove. From an examination of the available sources, it becomes clear that the core of the narrative tradition relating to Fíthir and Dáiríne centered around the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when most of the texts referring to their story were composed. While there are various different versions of the tale in existence and the tradition seems rather wide-spread in that respect, it is nevertheless confined to literary sources of a certain type and is not supported by other collections such as the genealogies or the annals, with the exception of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, which in itself has the appearance more of a narrative text than of a historical account. The details are subject to a certain degree of variation in most cases, but the pieces of evidence gathered together suggest that the tale of Túathal's daughters and the origin of the *bórama* was a relatively well-known part of Ireland's early history at this time.

Appendices

Annals of Ulster

1015 1. Kł. Ianair .iii. f., l. iiiii. Anno Domini M.x.u. (...) co tuc *boroma* mor.

1015 1. Kalends of January seventh feria, fourth of the moon. AD 1015 (...) and brought away a great *tribute in cows*.¹⁴⁹

1027 1. Kł. Ianair .i. f., l. xx. Anno Domini M.xx.iii. (...) 6. *Crech* la Cenel Eogain for Ultaibh co tucsat *boroma* mór.

1027 1. Kalends of January first feria, twentieth of the moon. AD 1027. (...) 6. The Cenél Eógain made a *raid* on the Ulaid and took away a great *tribute of cows*.¹⁵⁰

1059 1. Kł. Ianair .ui. f. l. x.iii. Anno Domini m.l.ix. (...) co tucsat *boroma* mor.

1059 1. Kalends of January sixth feria, thirteenth of the moon. AD 1059. (...) and they carried off a great *cattle-prey*.¹⁵¹

1084 1. Kł. Ianair ii. f. l. xx. Anno Domini m.lxxx.iiii. (...) co tucsat *boroma* mor.

1084 1. Kalends of January second feria, twentieth of the moon. AD 1084. (...) and they carried off a great *prey of cattle*.¹⁵²

1112 1. Kł. Ianair ii. f. l. xx.ix. Anno Domini m.c.x.ii. (...) co tuc *boroma* mor.

1112 1. Kalends of January second feria, twenty-ninth of the moon. AD 1112. (...) and he brought away a great *herd of cattle*.¹⁵³

1122 1. Kł. Ianair i. f. l. xx. Anno Domini m.c.xx.ii. (...) co tucsadur *boroma* diairmhidhe.

1122 1. Kalends of January first feria, twentieth of the moon. AD 1122. (...) and brought away an innumerable *spoil of cattle*.¹⁵⁴

1126 1. Kł. Ianair ui f. l. iiiii. Anno Domini m.c.xx.ui. (...) co tuc *boroma* diairmhidhe.

1126 1. Kalends of January sixth feria, fourth of the moon. AD 1126. (...) and brought away a countless *spoil of cattle*.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, *The Annals of Ulster*, pp. 450-1.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 464-5.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 496-7.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 518-9.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 552-3.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 566-7.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 570-1.

The Bórama

4. Bátor dano dá ingen gradacha la Túathal .i. Fithir 7 Dairine a n-anmand. Co tarat Eochu mac Echach Domlén rí Lagen in n-ingen ba siniu .i. Fithir, ar ní ba gnáth sósar d’fheiss i fiadnaisi shinsir intan sin i nHerinn. Dos-rat iarum Eochu a mnái leis co Ráith Immil il-Lagnib. Dalta dil immorro do rí Connacht ind ingen sin Tuathail. Atbertatar immorro Laigin friss ‘is ferr ind ingen rofhácbaís’. Conid iarsain dochúaid-sium fothúaid aridisi co Temraig, co n-erbairt fri Tuathal, ‘Marb’, ar se, ‘ind ingen rucusa lem, 7 ba hail lem th’ingen-su aile do thabairt’. Atrubairt immorro Tuathal: ‘Da mbeth’, ar se, ‘ingen ar chóicait acum doberthá duit-siu co tormalta ben díb.’

5. Tucad dó iarsin ind ingen aile .i. Dáirine – dalta sede dano do rí Ulad – ocus dos-rat leis co Ráith Immil, áit imbái ind ingen aile ara cind. Amal atchondairc immorro Fithir Dáirine atbail Fithir de náre fochetóir. Amal atchondairc sede éc a sethar atbail de chumaid. Doringned iarsain a tanach na da ingen [i n-Áth Toncha], co n-aprad cách ‘is garb in tonachsa’. Conid aire ráter Garb-thanach.

6. Ránic íarsain firindi in scéoil sin co Temraig co Túathal. Rucad fiss iartain o Thuathal co rí Connacht .i. co haite Fithirni, ocus co rí Ulad .i. co haite Dáirine. Rathinolsat-saide a slúagu leo co áit i mbái Tuathal Tectmar. O rachomraic immorro dóib i n-oeninud atbert Tuathal: ‘Is mór’, ar se, ‘in t-écht doringni rí Lagen, bás mo dam ingen do thuidecht trina cheilg.’

7. Is amlaid rabóí ‘ca rád 7 doringni láid:

Fithir is Dáirine, 7rl.

(...)

11. O thati fógmair co tati samna do Leith Cuind ac inriud Lagen, co ndernsat Lagen síd fadeóid ra Túathal .i. eraic a ingen dó.

12. Is í seo immorro inn éraic .i.

Tri choicait cét bó.

Tri cóicait cét mucc.

Trí cóicait cét lendbratt.

Tri cóicait cét slabrad argit.

Tri cóicait cét molt.

Tri cóicait cét coire uma.

Cóire mór uma i téigtís da muic déc 7 dá ag dec i tech Temrach fein.

Tricha bó find óiderg col-lóegaib a comdatha 7 co nascaib créduma 7 co mbuargib créduma 7 cona cóidib creduma fair sin anuas.

4. Now Tuathal had two lovable daughters whose names were Fithir and Dárfine. And Eochu son of Eochu Domlen, king of Leinster, took to wife the elder daughter, even Fithir, for at that time it was not the custom in Erin for the younger to be married before the elder. Then Eochu brought his wife to Raith Immil in Leinster. Now that daughter of Tuathal’s was a beloved fosterchild of the king of Connaught. Howbeit the Leinstermen said to Eochu: ‘Better is the daughter whom thou leftest’. Wherefore he went northwards again to Tara and said to Tuathal: ‘The daughter whom I wedded is dead, and I desire that thine other daughter be given to me’. So Tuathal answered and said: ‘If I had one and fifty daughters, they would be given to thee till one of them were enjoyed as a wife’.

5. Thereafter there was given to him the second daughter, even Dárfine – she was fosterchild of the king of Ulaid – and Eochu brought her to Raith Immil, the place wherein the other daughter was before her. But when Fithir beheld Dárfine she dies at once of shame. When Dárfine beheld her sister’s death she dies of grief. Thereafter the washing of the two

maidens was performed in Áth Toncha ('Ford of Washing'), so that every one said: 'Rough is this washing!' Hence (the neighbouring fortress) Garb-thonach 'Rough Washing' is so called.

6. Thereafter the truth of that story came to Tara unto Tuathal. Afterwards the news was sent by Tuathal to the king of Connaught Fithirne's fosterfather, and to the king of Ulaid the fosterfather of Dárfine. They mustered their armies (and led them) to the place wherein Tuathal Techtmar was biding. Now when they met in one stead Tuathal said: 'Awful is the deed which the king of Leinster has done, the death of my two daughters through his treachery'.

7. Thus he was speaking, and he made a lay:
Fithir and Dárfine, etc.

(...)

11. From the beginning of autumn to the beginning of All-hallowtide Leth Cuinn was raiding Leinster, till at last the Leinstermen made peace with Tuathal (and agreed to give) him the eric of his daughters.

12. Now this is the eric:

Thrice five thousand cows:

Thrice five thousand swine:

Thrice five thousand mantles:

Thrice five thousand chains of silver:

Thrice five thousand wethers:

Thrice five thousand caldrons of brass:

A great caldron of brass whereinto twelve swine and twelve beeves would go in the house of Tara itself.

Thirty white, red-eared cows with calves of the same colour, and with ties of bronze and with tethers of bronze, and with their milkpails (?) of bronze in addition thereto.¹⁵⁶

4. Badar daingin oc Tuathal Techtmar .i. Fider 7 Dairfine a n-anmanda. Co tard Eochaid mac Eachach Doimlen .i. rig Laigen in ingen fa sine dib .i. Dairfine, uair ni ba gnath sosar d'fes a fiadnaisi sinnsir intan sin a nErinn. Dosrad iarum Eochaid a mnai lais co Raith Imil i Laignib. Dalta dil immorro do rig Connacht an ingen sin Tuathail. Adbertadar Laigin fris: 'is ferr an ingen do fagais'. Conad iarsin dochoidsin fothuaid doriisi co Temraid, co ndebairt fri Tuathal, 'Marb', ol se, 'in mnai rucasa leam, 7 fa hail dam h'ingen aile d'fagbail'. Adubairt immorro Tuathal: 'Dia mbeith', ol se, 'ingen ar chæcaid acum dobertha duidseo co toirmealta ben dib.'

5. Tucad do iarsin in ingen aile .i. dalta rig Ulad, Fider a hainm, 7 dorad leis co Raith Imil, ait imbui an ingen aile ara cind. Amal adchondairc Dairfine Fither a siur adbail Dairine fochetoir. Amal adchondairc Fider immorro ec a setur adbail dia cumaig fochetoir. Dorigned iarsin tanach na da ingen, co n-aprad cach 'is garb in tanachsa'. Conad airi sin aderar Garbthanach ria.

6. Ranic iarsin firindi in sceoil sin co Temraid co hairm ambai Tuathal. Rucad fis iarsin o Thuathal co rig Condacht .i. co hoidi Dairfine. Rothinoilseadside a sluagu co hairm imbi Tuathal. O rochomraic doib i n-æninad adbert Tuathal: 'Is mor', ol se, 'na hechtasa dorigni rig Laigen, .i. bas mo da ingen do theacht triana chelgaib.'

7. Is amlaid robai 'ca rada 7 adbeart and na briathrasa:
Fider ocus Dairfine, etc.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Stokes, 'The Borama', pp. 36-41.

¹⁵⁷ Transcription from BL 295rb1-31.

Comram na cloenfherta

1. Boe ri hi Temair, Tuathal mac Fiachach Findfolaid. Bae rigan leis. i. Baine ingen Scail. Birt di ingen dond rig. .i. Fithir 7 Darfine. Comluid Echu Anchenn ri Lagen do chuingid ingine dib 7 do-breth Darfine do, 7 do-bert Eochu miscais di. Luid do thochmarcc inna hingine ba so .i. Fithir, 7 as-bert ba marb Darfine. 7 do-bretha Fithir do 7 luid dia chrich fein. Do-luid Darfine for ciunn a sethar do failte frie, ar ni fitir a bith 'na lepaid. Ba marb ind osar .i. Fithir ar nare amail it-chonnaircc a siair. Ba marb dano Darfine dia cumaid-side.

2. At-chuas do Thuathal post anisin 7 teit for sluagud hi Laigniu 7 nassaid eraicc a ingen for Laigniu. Is ed in so a mmet na hercca: III. bo 7 .III. muc 7 .III. brat 7 cach hae inna bliadna, conid de as-berar Borroma Lagen.

1. There was a king in Tara, Tuathal son of Fiachu Findfolaid. He had as a queen Báine, daughter of Scál. She bore the king two daughters, Fithir and Dáirine. Eochu Áinchen, king of Leinster, came to ask for one of the daughters and Dáirine was given to him, and Eochu took a dislike to her. He went to woo the younger daughter, that is Fithir, and he said that Dáirine was dead. And Fithir was given to him and he went to his own territory. Dáirine came to meet her sister to welcome her, for she did not know that she was supplanting her. The younger [of the two], that is Fithir, died of shame when she saw her sister. Then Dáirine died of grief for her.

2. Afterwards that was told to Tuathal and he went on a hosting into Leinster and he bound the *éraic* for his daughters on the Leinstermen. Here is the amount of the *éraic*: one hundred and fifty cows, and one hundred and fifty pigs, and one hundred and fifty cloaks, all of them each year. And that is called *bóraime Laigen*.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Ó Cuív, 'Comram na Cloenfherta', pp. 170-2.

Acallam na Senórach

Ocus tangadur reompo assa haithle sin co Carnn na curad, risa raiter in Garbthanach ind Uaib Muiredaig issin tan-so. ‘Ocus indis duind, a m’anam, a Chailti,’ ar Patraic, ‘cid imam tucad in Garbthanach ar in n-inad sa?’ Fregrais Cailte in ceist sin .i. ‘Airdrí ro gabustar Eirinn .i. Tuathal Techtmar mac Fiachach Findalaid meic Feradaig Fíndfechtnaig, 7 iss e in Tuathal sin do ben a cind do choic cóicedaib Eirenn, corub uimmi raiter Tuathal Techtmar de ón techtad tucsdar ar Eirinn 7 don techtad tuc ar choicedaib Eirenn re Temraig na rig da foghnam. Ocus do badur dono da ingin tsoinemla aici .i. Fithir 7 Dáirine a n-anmanna, 7 tainic rí Laigen d’iarraid indarna hingen díb .i. Eochaid mac Echach Ainchind rí Laigen, 7 do fíarfaig rí Eirenn: ‘cá hingen dona hingenaiþ is áil let, a ri Laigen?’ ‘Fithir,’ ar rí Laigen. ‘Ac um,’ ar rí Eirenn, ‘ni thibersa in soisser í fiadnaissi in tseindsir do fír.’ Ocus tucad Dáirine ingen Tuathail do Eochaid do rí[g] Laigen, 7 tucsdar cét da cach crud ina tindscra na hingine, 7 ro bóí re bliadain aici issin baile seo, 7 nirb’ inmain le rí[g] Laigen hí, 7 ro cóirig ceilg 7 eladhain adhaig n-aen ina imdaid aici féin .i. ingen rig Eirenn do breith co lar in feda diamair, 7 a tseleachtadh uimpi, 7 tech derrraith daingen do denam ann, 7 naenbur comalta do bóí aici lé, 7 a radha a héc ann.

Ro gabad a eich don rí 7 ro hindled a charpat, 7 tainic reime do accallaim rig Eirenn co Temraig, 7 do fíarfaig rí Eirenn scela de. ‘Scela olcca,’ bar rí Laigen, ‘in ingen maith tucassid duind a héc araeir accaind.’ ‘Ocus créd má tangaisi dom indsaigidsi?’ ar Tuathal, ‘uair ní chuala-sa scel is doilgi lem ina in scel sin.’ ‘Tánagsa d’iarraid na hingine aili ort, a rí,’ ar eissium, ‘uair ní háil lem scarthain ret charadrad.’ ‘Dar ar mbreithir am,’ ar rí Eirenn, ‘ní thaispen ann sáimi na subha damsá m’ingen do tabairt duit.’ ‘Ní haccumsa ro bóí comus a hanma,’ ar rí Laigen. [Cailte cecinit:

Nír sgar re hiarraid co nocht . is re tacrad co torocht,
co ruc Fithir leis da thigh . cerba rithír le muinntir – Fr. 49b].

Ocus tuc[ad] in ingen aile dósum,’ ar Cailte, ‘7 tuc leis dochum in baile seo ar a tamaid hí, 7 amal doriacht inn ingen sin,’ ar Cailte, ‘chum in baile, is ann ro bóí ingen aile rig Eirenn isin tigh ara cind.’ Cailte cecinit:

Tuc Fithir a bél re lar . nir’b é in caradrad comlán,
cor’ brised a craide ar tri . is ruc a nert ar nemfní.

Ocus ó’tonnairc in ingen aile sin .i. a siur do éc ina fiadnaissi marsin, fuair bas do chumaid a sethar fochetoir. Cailte cecinit:

Fithir ocus Dáirin[e] . da ingin Tuathail tubhaig,
marb Fithir do náirine . marb Dairfine da cumaid.

Ocus dorigned a tanach ann seo ac rí[g] Laigen, 7 isbert in ri: ‘IS garb in tanach,’ ar sé. Conid uad sin atá ‘Garbthanach’ ar in n-inad so daneis. Ocus ro cuired issin fert fóthaig seo iat a n-aenuaig, 7 iss é in scél ro fíarfaigis dim, a naemPátraic,’ ar Cailte.

‘Adrae buaid 7 bennachtain, a m’anum, a Chailti,’ ar Pátraic, ‘is maith in scel ro indsis duind.’¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ Stokes and Windisch, *Irische Texte* 4.1, pp. 117-8.

After which they proceeded to *carn na gcuradh* or ‘the cairn of the heroes’, at this time called the *garbthanach* or ‘cruel burial’, in Hy-Murray.

“Tell us, Caeilte,” said Patrick, “for what reason the name of an *gharbthanach* or ‘the cruel burial’ was conferred on this spot?” and Caeilte answered that:

“It was a monarch that swayed Ireland: *Tuathal techtmhar* son of *Fiacha findolach* son of *Feradach finnfechtnach* (which Tuathal it was that from the provincial kings of Ireland took their heads; so that from this *techtadh* or ‘appropriation’ that he made of Ireland, and exercised upon her provincials for Tara to serve himself, men called him Tuathal *techtmhar* or ‘the acquisitive’), and he had two daughters: Fithir and Dairine were their names. The king of Leinster, Eochaid son of *Eochaid ainchenn* came to sue for one of them, and Tuathal questioned him: ‘whether of the two girls wouldest thou?’ ‘I would fain have Fithir,’ said the king of Leinster. But the king of Ireland replied that the younger he would not give away before the elder, therefore to the king of Leinster Tuathal’s daughter Dairine was given; for whose bride-gift he assigned of every kind of stock an hundred. In this place for a year she was by him, but he loved her not; one night therefore in his bed he framed within himself a snare and artifice, which was this: to carry the king of Ireland’s daughter into mid-forest, to fell it round about her and, nine foster-sisters that she had being with her, to construct for her a secret and secluded house; then to say that she was dead. His horses were harnessed for the king, his chariot was made ready, and he reached Tara to confer with the king of Ireland. The latter asked him for news, and he said: ‘great and evil tidings I have – that the daughter thou gavest me died last night with us.’ ‘Wherefore then art thou come to seek me?’ asked Tuathal; ‘for a tale more grievous than that is to me I have not heard.’ The king of Leinster said: ‘I am come to solicit of thee the other daughter, for I would not be severed from thine alliance.’ ‘By my word,’ exclaimed Tuathal, ‘the giving of my daughter to thee augurs me neither peace nor pleasure.’ The king of Leinster answered: ‘not I it was that had power of her life.’ So the other daughter was given to him,” Caeilte went on, “and he brought her to this town; to which when the girl was come, there her sister was before her.

Caeilte *cecinit*.

“Her mouth Fithir laid to the ground (no perfect alliance this for Leinster’s king); and so her heart was broken into three, for her strength was vanished into nothing.

“And when the other daughter saw that she too died, for sorrow of her sister: -

“Fithir and Dairine, jovial Tuathal’s daughters twain: Fithir expired for very shame, Dairine died of grief for her.”

“By the king of Leinster their laying out was performed here, and the king said: ‘it is a cruel burial’, whence the name *garbthanach* cleaves to this place; and in this sodded grave, holy Patrick, they were laid together,” ended Caeilte.

“Success and benediction be thine, Caeilte, my soul,” cried Patrick: “that is a good story!”¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ O’Grady, *Silva Gadelica II*, pp. 109-11.

Foras Feasa ar Éirinn

Is é an Tuathal Teachtmhar-so ar a bhfuilimid ag tráchtadh do cheangail an Bhóirime ar Laighnibh mar cháin i ndíol bháis a dhá inghean .i. Fithír is Dáirine a n-anmanna. Rí iomorro do bhí ar Laighnibh dar bh'ainm Eochaidh Aincheann agus tug sé Dáirine inghean Tuathail Teachtmhair do mhnaoi, agus rug leis i Laighnibh da longphort féin .i. i Maigh Luadhat í. Agus i gcionn aimsire da éis sin téid go Teamhraigh agus nochtas do Thuathal go bhfuair Dáirine bás, agus iarrais an deirbhshiúr oile .i. Fithír air, go dtug Tuathal dó í, agus beiris leis go Laighnibh da longphort féin í. Agus mar do chonnairc Fithír a deirbhshiúr Dáirine roimpe beo do ling a hanam go hobann aiste tré náire; agus táinig Dáirine da caoineadh agus fuair bás do láthair da cumhaidh; gonadh da faisnéis sin do rinne an file an rann-so:

Fithír agus Dáirine,
Dá inghin Tuathail turaidh,
Marbh Fithír do náirighe,
Marbh Dáirine dia cumhaidh.

Mar do chualaidh iomorro Tuathal bás na deise ban, do ghabh fearg mhór é, agus do chuir teachta uaidh do gach leith go huaislibh Éireann do chasaoid na feilbheirte do rinne rí Laighean air; agus uime sin tugsad uaisle Éireann congnamh sluagh is sochaidhe do Thuathal ré díoghail an mhíghníomha soin; agus mar do bhreathnuigh Tuathal Laighin d'argain is do chreachadh agus gan iad ionchathuighthe ris, do aomhadar cáin do dhíol uatha féin is ó n-a sliocht 'n-a ndiaidh i n-íoc bháis na mban soin do Thuathal is da gach rígh da dtiocfadh ar a lorg.

Ag so suim na cána do díoltaoi lé Laighnibh do ríoghaibh Éireann gacha dara bliadhain i ndíol bháis chloinne Tuathail, mar atá trí fichid céad bó; trí fichid céad uinge d'airgead; trí fichid céad brat; trí fichid céad torc; trí fichid céad molt; is trí fichid céad coire umha. Agus is í roinn do bhíodh ar an gcáin sin, a trian d'fearaibh Connacht, a trian d'Oirghiallaibh, agus a trian do Uíbh Néill. Ag so mar adeir an Stair da ngoirthear Bóirime Laighean sna rannaibh-se síos:

(...)

Is don cháin sin do gairthí Bóirime Laighean agus do bhí sí ag a tabhach ré linn dá fíthead ríogh dar ghabh flaitheas Éireann mar atá ó aimsir Thuathail Teachtmhair go haimsir Fíonnachta do bheith i bhflaitheas Éireann, amhail adeir an file san rann-so:

Ceathracha rígh do rala
Lé rugadh an Bhóramha
Ó aimsir Thuathail Tlachtgha
Go haimsir Fíir Fíonnachta.

Is é Moling fuair maitheamh uirre san chaired fuair ó Fíonnachta go Luan, agus is é Luan do thuig Moling Luan Laoi an Bhrátha. Do bhíodh iomorro an cháin sin seal 'ga díol go humhal ag Laighneachaibh; agus uair eile nach aomhdaois a díol, go dtigeadh de sin iomad cogaidh is coinbhleacht do bheith eatorra leath ar leath gur thuiteadar mórán d'uaislibh Éireann ar gach taoibh ann. Agus is le Mál mac Rochruidhe do thuit Tuathal Teachtmhar.

It was this Tuathal Teachtmhar of whom we are speaking who imposed the 'Boraimhe' on the people of Leinster, as a tax to avenge the death of his two daughters, whose names were Fithir and Dairine. Now, there was a king over Leinster whose name was Eochaidh Aincheann, and he married Dairine, daughter of Tuathal Teachtmhar, and took her to Leinster to his own fortress, that is to Magh Luadhat; and some time after that he went to Tara, and told Tuathal that Dairine had died, and asked him to give him his other daughter, that is Fithir, and Tuathal gave her to him, and he took her to Leinster to his own fortress; and when Fithir saw her sister Dairine alive before her, her soul quitted her body suddenly through shame; and Dairine having come to lament her died of her grief on the spot. And it was to relate this that the poet composed the following stanza:

Fithir and Dairine
Two daughters of princely Tuathal;
Fithir died of shame,
Dairine died of her grief.

Now when Tuathal heard of the death of the two ladies he became enraged, and sent out messengers in all directions to the nobles of Ireland to complain of the treachery which the king of Leinster had practiced against him; and accordingly the nobles of Ireland gave aid in warriors and auxiliaries to Tuathal with a view to avenge this outrage; and when Tuathal resolved to plunder and despoil the people of Leinster though they were unable to meet him in the field, they agreed to pay a tribute, themselves and their descendants after them, to Tuathal, and to each king who should succeed him, as a retribution for the death of these ladies.

The following is the amount of the tribute that was paid every second year by the Leinstermen to the kings of Ireland as a penalty for the death of the children of Tuathal, namely, three score hundred cows, three score hundred ounces of silver, three score hundred mantles, three score hundred hogs, three score hundred wethers, three score hundred bronze caldrons. And this tribute was thus divided: - a third part of it to the men of Connaught, a third to the Oirghialla, and a third to the Ui Neill. The tract entitled Boraimhe Laighean speaks thus in the following verses:

(...)

This was the tribute called Boraimhe Laighean, and it was in force during the reigns of forty kings who ruled Ireland, that is from the time of Tuathal Teachtmhar to the time that Fionnachta held the sovereignty of Ireland, as the poet says in this stanza:

There were forty kings
Who carried off the Boramha
From the time of Tuathal Tlachtgha
To the time of Fear Fionnachta.

It was Moling who got it remitted by means of the respite until Monday which he got from Fionnachta; but the Monday Moling meant was the Monday of the Day of Judgment. The Leinstermen paid this tribute submissively at times, but at other times they would not consent to pay it, whence arose much strife and conflict between both parties, in which a great number of the nobles of Ireland fell on either side. And Tuathal Teachtmhar fell by Mall son of Rochruidhe.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Dinneen, *The History of Ireland*, vol. 2, pp. 254-9.

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Butt now let us Returne to our History; When K. Twahall was thus established in the quiet Possession of the Crowen & kingdom, & had brought the whole K. dom into his subjection, he kept the Great feast of Taragh Called feis Tawra, whereunto all the nobility of Ireland men & women yonge & ould came, & after banqueting the K. being merry among his nobles wth a Company of chosen men for the purpose, enjoined all the nobility & caused them to swear by the sonne & moone, and all other oaths which they then had in use, never to gainsay himself nor any of his posterity, or that would linally succeed him in the government of Ireland, & to Disclaime all their one tytles & Interests unto the premises for euer, as long as the land of Ireland would be Compass'd with the seas, & that none of them or any of them would make claim to the Crowen or any of their heires and posterityes, notwithstanding their Rights thereunto were as good as his, soe as if their posterityes had then after Groon more potent & of Greater abilitie than his, notwithstanding their potency they should he quite excluded from the tyme of that oath for euer from claiming any (Right) or title thereunto, & that they should suffer him & his heirs & successors quietly to enjoy the Crowen for euer, & doe him and them all services due to a king, which oath was duely & voluntarily sworn by them & every one of them one after another.

At that time Eochye Anchean was K. of Leinster & was suiter to one of the K. of Irelands daughters named Darynna, whose request was presently Granted, whereupon the marriage after the heathen manner was concluded with such Royalty as belonged to their greatness. Soon after the said marriage the K. of Leinster brought her to his own house of Naase, & when the nobility of Leinster saw their Dutchess soe Deformed they were very grieueous at it, Reprehending their K. for making such a Choyse, the K. of Ireland having a fayrer Daughter & better nurtured & brought up. At which Reprehension & mistaking the K. was very sorry & said y^t he would goe back to the K. & crave his other Daughter in marriaage, and withal would mak his Majestie believe, that his other Daughter was Dead; w^{ch} he accordingly told & did, whereupon the K. Immediately Granted his other Daughter to the said K. Eochye, w^{ch} he accordingly married & brought home to his house of Naase afores^d.

When Darinna saw her sister ffyher (for soe shee was called) come upon her in that nature, shee of very spight, jealousy, & shame Dyed out of hand, Because shee conceived soe much sorrow thereat, soone after when the heavy newes of his Daughters Death & his own Decept came to the kings eares, he was much Grieved, & gathered together all his Royall army & forces, with whome the king in his one person marched towards Leinster to be Revenged on them, the Leinstermen seeing themselves unable to Resist the K^s power & fearing to be held as traytors to the Crowen, did advise their K. to submit themselves to the K. of Irelands clemency & submissively to Cry for mercy at his hands, w^{ch} he at their Request did, whereupon the K. of Ireland well Pondering or weighing the Grievousness of that fact ordered that the king of Leinster & all the Inhabitants of that province for the time being for euer should henceforth yield & pay yearly to himselfe, his heires, and successors for ever in Recompense of the s^d offence the number of 150 Cowes, 150 Hoggs, 150 Couerlets or peeces of Cloth to couer beds withall, 150 Cauldrons, wth 2 passing Great Cauldrons consisting in Breath & Deepness five fists for the kings one Brewing, 150 Couples of men & women in servitude to Draw water on their backes for the said Brewing, together with 150 maides with the K. of Leinsters one Daughter in the like Bondage & servitude. All which was accordingly paid yearly to the s^d king Twahall & his successors for the time being for the space of about 500 years until K. Fineaghty ffleacagh his time, who for the Great Reverence he bore to St. Moling Lauchra (a man famous for holiness of life) at his request in a learned sermon he made in the s^d K. Fyneaghties presence, of the unjustness of y^t taction, was content of his Bounty and devotion to the said Saint to Remitt it for euer after, this was paid by y^c Leinstermen for &

during the reigns of 40 kings & monarchs of Ireland from the year of the Incarnation of our Lord 134 to the year of the said sermon 693 which fine in the Irish tongue was called Borohua, which as soon as it was taken up, and Divided into three partes, whereof one was to the Connaught men, & another to those of Uriell, & the third to the K. of Taragh and the sept of the O'Neals, because the said three tribes of septs among whome the said Borohua was Divided were Dessended of the said K. Twahall, & when K. Twahall had reigned 30 years he was slaine by Male m^cRochrye, king of Ulster, at Dalnary in Ulster.¹⁶²

¹⁶² Murphy, *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp. 52-4.

‘Mór in gním’

1. Mór in gním daringned sund
mā fūaratar fir forlund,
dā ingin ríḡ Temrach túaid
ropsat mairb and fri ōenūair.
Great is the crime which was done here
if men obtained domination,
the two daughters of the king of Temair in the
north, they died there at the same time.
2. Eocho mac Echach na n-āth
rānic reme tech Temrach;
ropa chlīamain, ro baí than,
do ríḡ Themra, do Thūathal.
Eocho mac Echach of the fords
came to the house of Temair;
he was a son-in-law, once upon a time,
to the king of Temair, to Túathal.
3. Dā ingin ic Tūathal trén:
Fithirt is Dáiríne adér,
Dáiríne is Fithirt cen ail,
dā ingin Tūathail Techtmair.
Strong Túathal had two daughters:
Fithir and Dáiríne I will say,
Dáiríne and Fithir without reproach,
the two daughters of Túathal Techtmar.
4. Tucad d’Eochaid Fithirt fínd
i Temraig ōs ráenaib rind;
ba roga nūachair cen ach
ingen Tūathail na Temrach.
Fair Fithir was given to Eocho
in Temair of the rows of spear points;
the choice of spouse without a doubt
was the daughter of Túathal of Temair.
5. Ceisid in rí ar Fithirt find
- ropa gním ēcóir imgrind -
nó co tuc Dáiríne lais
anall ō Themraig thāebglais.
The king despised fair Fithir
- it was an unjust, very fierce deed -
so that he brought Dáiríne with him
thither from green-sided Temair.
6. Mar dorocht Dáiríne dond
- rop adbol int anforlond -
marb Fithirt de náre de;
marb do chumaid Dáiríne.
As noble Dáiríne arrived,
- great was the plight -
Fithir died of shame from it;
Dáiríne died of grief.
7. Daníther tanach co trén
i tig maic Echach Domlén
d’ingenaib in ríḡ co rath,
conid de atá Garbthonach.
The washing of the dead is done bitterly
in the house of Eochu Domlén’s son
to the daughters of the king with grace,
so that it is called Garbthonach from it.
8. Rasoich Temraig fis in scéoil
- ropa gním áigsech acbéoil -
trīcha ar trī cóicdaib – ammaig -
marba do mnāib dā cumaid.
News of the story reaches Temair
- it was a dreadful, harsh deed -
thirty on three times fifty – outside -
of women died of grief for them.
9. Érgit slúraig Ulad inn áig
7 a n-ardrí d’óenláim;
érgit slúraig Temrach na tlacht
7 slúraig cóicid Connacht.
The hosts of the Ulaid of the battle arose
and their high-king at the same time;
the hosts of Temair of the ornaments arose
and the hosts of the province of the Connachta.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 10. Conrach mac Deirg ba trén smacht,
is é ropa rī Connacht;
Fergus Febail, fáth co ngail:
is é ropo rí d’Ultaib. | Conrach mac Deirg who was strong of rule,
he was king of the Connachta;
Fergus Febail, wisdom with valour:
he was king to the Ulaid. |
| 11. Dalta ríg Connacht na cath
rop hí Fíthirt na prīmraith;
dalta ríg Ulad na n-ech
rop hí Dáiríne dondgel. | The fosterling of the king of the Connachta of
the battles was Fíthir of the greatest virtues;
the fosterling of the king of the Ulaid of the
horses was noble, fair Dáiríne. |
| 12. Rí Temrach dá míle déc
iss ed tānic sund ar sét;
sé míle d’Ultaib cen ach,
sé míle do slūag Connacht. | The king of Temair of twelve thousand
came here on his way;
six thousand of Ulaid without doubt,
six thousand of the host of Connachta. |
| 13. Comraicit i Temraig tréin,
immon ngním n-áigsech n-acbéil;
danīat comairle co mblad
la ríg Temra, la Tūathal. | They met in strong Temair,
on account of the dreadful, harsh deed;
they took counsel with fame
with the king of Temair, with Tūathal. |
| 14. ‘Is ferr lemsa [síth] ¹⁶³ nā cath,’
atubairt rí na Temrach,
‘ní háil dam cath co crúadi
do slúag Berba brattúani.’ | ‘I prefer peace over battle,’
the king of Temair spoke,
‘I do not wish a battle with harshness
against the host of the green-cloaked Berbae.’ |
| 15. Atubairt rí na Crúachna
a aithesc febda fūachda:
‘nība coma acht cath mór mer
gēbat ō rígraid Lagen.’ | The king of Crúachu spoke
his excellent, sharp reply:
‘it will not be terms but a great, furious battle
that I will get from the kings of the Laigin.’ |
| 16. Atrubairt rí na hEmna
a athesec fūachda febda:
connā gébad acht mad cath
ō Lagnib arna bārach. | The king of Emain spoke
his sharp, excellent reply
that he would not get but a battle
from the Laigin on the morrow. |
| 17. Ro rāid rí Temrach cen tár
athesc allata imlán:
‘tāet cāch úaib ina chomair
fo Lagnib in lāechdolaid.’ | The blameless king of Temair spoke
a famous, perfect answer:
‘let each of you come forward
against the Laigin of the warrior-damage.’ |
| 18. Ro gabsat slúaiḡ na Crúachna
dar Gúalu - ba gním fúachda -
ráncatar Nás línaib n-āth
’sin matain arna bārach. | The hosts of Crúachu proceeded
over Gúalu – it was a keen deed –
they reached Nás with the multitudes of fords
in the morning the next day. |

¹⁶³ BL Is fearr leam síth ina cath

19. Ro gabsat slūaig na Temrach
dar Grafrend - ba gním febda -
dar Mag Múagend - líth nād lac -
dar (sruth) Rige,¹⁶⁴ dar Mag Nūadat.
- The hosts of Temair proceeded
over Grafrend – it was an excellent deed –
over Mag Múagend – a success which was not
weak - over (the river) Rige, over Mag Nūadat.
20. Ro gabsat slūaig Ulad ré cách
dar Ésa, dar Odba ñgnáth,
dar Fichart cusna fonna,
dar fäenlgeraib Fäendromma.
- The hosts of the Ulaid proceeded before
everyone over Ésa, over well-known Odba,
over Fichart with the foundations,
over Fáendruim with the outstretched hillsides.
21. Cengait Lagin ina ndáil
fo chomrepind, fo chombáig,
coro thuitt Fergus - fāth ñguba -
arin leirg ós Lethduma.
- The Laigin proceeded to meet them under
mutual tearing, under mutual contending,
until Fergus fell – the cause of lamentations -
on the battlefield above Lethduim.
22. Innister do ríg Themra
mar dorochair rí Emna;
iss ed atrubairt rí Breg:
'is ascult ríg a muntir.'
- It was told to the king of Temair
as the king of Emain fell;
this is what the king of the Brega spoke:
'it is scarcity of a king for his people.'
23. Loiscther Nás is Ailend án;
loscther Maistiu mīlib dāl;
loscther Róiriu ba rúad d'fúil
7 múrther Barc Bresail.
- Nás and splendid Ailend were burned;
Maistiu with thousands of tribes was burned;
Róiriu which was red of blood was burned
and Barc Bresail was destroyed.
24. Gabsatar na slúaig ĩar sain
co ráncatar Ráith Immil,
slúaig na Temra tōlaib tlacht
7 slúaig cóicid Connacht.
- The hosts proceeded after that
until they reached Ráith Immil, the hosts of
Temair with abundance of ornaments and the
hosts of the province of the Connachta.
25. Ceñgait Lagin ina ndáil,
da ríg Temra, ba trénbáig,
coro fērsatar cath crúaid
ra Ráith nImmil anairtúaid.
- The Laigin proceeded to meet them,
to the king of Temair, it was strong
contending, until they waged a hard battle
before Ráith Immil from the northeast.
26. Tinól Lagen - lāthar ñglē -
cōic mīle is cethri mīle,
dā mīle dēc - mór ind neim -
is sē mīle 'na n-aigid.
- The assembly of the Laigin - a clear
arrangement - five thousand and four thousand,
twelve thousand – great the virulence –
and six thousand against them.
27. Brister ar Laignib na lloñg
úair fūaratar ēcomlond;
marbthair rí Lagen 'sin chath
7 térnaid rī Temrach.
- The Laigin of the ships were defeated
for the odds were against them;
the king of the Laigin was killed in the battle
and the king of Temair escaped.

¹⁶⁴ BL dar Rigi

28. Impáid rí Temrach fa thúaid
co ríacht Temraig in tromslúaig;
tár marbad in fíchet rí, g,
ruc leis éraic cen imsním.
- The king of Temair returned to the north
until he reached Temair of the heavy host;
after the twenty kings had been killed,
he took with him an *éraic* without trouble.
29. Trícha bó findfērgga
- bat imlána, óidergga -
noí míle bó do rí g Breg
i n-éraicc a dā ingen.
- Thirty white-angry cows
- they were perfect, red-eared -
nine thousand cows to the king of the Brega
as the *éraic* of his two daughters.
30. A trían isin Temuir truim
- is amlaid rainnit Leth Cuind -
a trían i nEmain cen acht,
a trían i Crúachain Connacht.
- A third of it into heavy Temair
- it is thus that they divided Leth Cuind -
a third of it into Emain without doubt,
a third of it into Crúachu of the Connachta.
31. Mór de rígaib tār 7 tair
ras¹⁶⁵ teclaim co Temraig
int sechtmad blíadain - ba brón -
is and berair in chāin mór.
M.
- Many kings of west and east
he gathered to Temair
the seventh year – it was sorrow –
it is then the great law was brought.

¹⁶⁵ BL *rodus*

‘Fithir 7 Dáiríne’

LL

1. Fithir is Dáiríne,
dā ingin Tūathail turaig:
marb Fithir do náríne;
marb Dáiríne dá cumaid.
2. Ataidbli na hécóra,
atberim ropa détla,
attromma na tuicthena
a tabairt i ndáil n-éca.
3. D’ōenlámnaid ruchtasom
dā ingin Tūathail trétaig;
attréna na tuicthena
inn úair aile la hécaib.
4. Fithir¹⁶⁶ álaind inmálla,
ingen ardríg na Temra,
ro bí a tochmarc diñgbála,
in ben dorat rí Berba.

BL

1. Fider ocus Dáiríne,
dā ingin Tūathail Teachtmair;
sochaidi darsad dainim,
tucsad Laigin ’na leachtmaig.
2. Fider 7 Dáiríne,
dā ingin Tūathail toraid:
marb Fider do náríne;
marb Dáiríne dā cumaid.
3. Dáiríne thuc ar thosaich
Eochaig fa fer co [so]sthaib,
cor’ indiseig Dáiríne:
nírba i[n]gine dā muintir.
4. Adaidbli na hēgōra,
adberim robo dēdla,
attruma na taigena
a tobairt i ndáil n-ēga.
5. Nír an cāch íarraich Eochaid,
is catōga mar cluintir;
co ruc Fithir leis dā tig,
cīarbo rithir le muintir.
6. Tuc Tūathal tre thairisi
in mnaī d’Eochaid co n-anraib;
ara tindscna nār tubad
cumal cach lesa i Laignib.

¹⁶⁶ MS Fithit/ir

5. Má dorochair Dárīne
ac rīg Lagen do línib,
atbiursa ní máigīne
is dimsa tic a dígail.
6. Mā ra thuit in ingenrad
- rádīm rib; nī rád clīthi -
dígēltar ar Lagnechaib
ar na lāechaib a Llifī. F.
7. Dorad imdeargad d'Fidir¹⁶⁷
- nīrb' imdergad re ūabar -
Dāirfīne, d'aicsin a col,
a purt mōr Muigī Nūadan.
8. Tic Fider a bēl re lār
- nīrbe in caridrad comlān -
cor' bris a cridi 'na clī,
ruc a nert uili ar nemthnī.
9. Mar adchondairc Dāirfīne
dīth Fidir ic en ātha,
is and adbath Dāirfīne
dā seirc d'ingin na flatha.
10. Dorīacht fis na heasbada
co Temraid, co teach Tūathail,
scēla mar cuiread cēt cath
fada amach nem a nūachair.
11. Mar adrochair Dāirfīne
ac rīg Laigen dīb līnaib,
adbiursa ní¹⁶⁸ māigīne
is dimsa thic a ndīgail.
12. Mar do thoit an ingenraid
- rē dīamraib nī rád clīthi -
dígēltar ar Laignechaib
ar na lāechaib a Lifi. F.
13. Dearg rūathar Tūathail Teachtmair
sochaidi dā tuc imned,
gul cacha leasa i Llaignib,
tuc fa anraib a ingen.
14. Tuc les cuirp āilli a ingen
Tūathal - do chardais filig -
co Findcharn faichgi in broga
cor' chuir orro co frithir. F.

¹⁶⁷ MS did·fir

¹⁶⁸ MS ni ní

Fithir and Dáiríne

LL

1. Fithir and Dáiríne,
the two daughters of princely Túathal:
Fithir died of shame;
Dáiríne died of her grief.
2. The very greatness of the injustice,
I say it was reckless,
very heavy the fate
their bringing towards death.
3. Of one birth were born
the two daughters of Túathal, abounding
in flocks; very strong the fate
at another time in death.
4. Lovely, stately Fithir,
daughter of the high-king of Temair,
her wooing was worthy, the woman
whom the king of the Berba gave.

BL

1. Fithir and Dáiríne, the two daughters
of Túathal Techtmar; a multitude
over which was a blemish, which the
Laigin brought in their grave-strewn plain.
2. Fithir and Dáiríne,
the two daughters of princely Túathal:
Fithir died of shame;
Dáiríne died of her grief.
3. It was Dáiríne whom at first
Eocho took, who was a man with abodes,
so that Dáiríne would say:
she was not a daughter to her people.
4. The very greatness of the injustice,
I say it was reckless,
very heavy the fate
their bringing towards death.
5. Eocho was not the one asking,
it is deception as it is heard
and he took Fithir with him to his house,
although it was bitter with the people.
6. Túathal gave through confidence
the woman to Eocho with indignation;
for her dowry which was not opposed, a
cumal of every dwelling in Laigin.
7. She gave shame to Fithir
- it was not shame on account of pride -
Dáiríne, seeing her wrongs,
in the great place of Mag Núadat.

5. As Dáiríne fell at the hand of
the king of Laigin on both sides,
I say it is not desolation
it is from me that their revenge comes.
6. If the daughters fell
- I speak to you; speech is not hidden -
they will be avenged on the Laigin,
on the warriors from the Life.
8. Fithir's mouth came against the ground
- the friendship was not perfect -
so that her heart broke in her body,
all her strength took on nothingness.
9. As Dáiríne saw
the loss of Fithir at the water of the ford,
there Dáiríne died
for her love of the daughter of the ruler.
10. News of the loss came to Temair,
to the house of Túathal, tidings of how a
hundred battles were sent far out, on
account of the shame of her spouse.
11. As Dáiríne fell at the hand of
the king of Laigin on both sides,
I say it is not desolation
it is from me that their revenge comes.
12. As the daughters fell
- against secrets speech is not hidden -
they will be avenged on the Laigin,
on the warriors from the Life.
13. Bloody the attack of Túathal Techtmar
a multitude which he gave suffering,
weeping of every dwelling in Laigin, he
gave for the indignation of his daughters.
14. Túathal – whom poets used to love - took
with him the lovely bodies of his daughters
to a fair tomb of the green of the land
and he buried them bitterly.

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