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The Women's War of Words according to the 'Codex Leidensis Vossianus Latinus Q7'

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Abbreviations

Codex Vossianus: Stern, Ludw. Chr. 'Fled Bricrend nach dem Codex Vossianus', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 4 (1903) 142-177.

DIL: Quin, E.G. (ed.), *Dictionary of the Irish language*, compact edition (Dublin 1990).

FB: Henderson, George (ed.), *Fled Bricrend, the feast of Bricriu* Irish Texts Society 2 (London 1899).

GOI: Thurneysen, Rudolf, *A grammar of Old Irish*, revised and enlarged ed., vert. D.A. Binchy en Osborn Bergin (Dublin 1946).

Introduction

Fled Bricrenn has received its fair share of scholarly attention in the past.[1] Although the structure of the story, its characters and the story itself have been the subject of several articles, nobody has taken it upon him or her to make a new edition, and so the standard edition is still that by Henderson, written in 1899.[2] This edition was written before there was a dictionary of Old Irish at a time when there was still a lot to be done in the research of Old Irish. After this edition, several translations have been published. Regrettably these are either based on the edition by Henderson or they omit the *roscada*, that form the core of the 'Women's War of Words'. The translation by Tom Peete Cross and Clark Harris Slover, for example, states 'the series of rhetorical speeches in which the women enumerate the virtues of their respective husbands is omitted'.[3] Exceptions to these are the translation in Thurneysen's *Sagen aus dem alten Irland*,[4] but regrettably Thurneysen left out those parts that he considered as later additions, and the Dutch translation *Het feestgelag van Bricriu*,[5] based on the text in *Lebor na hUidre* (LU) only. Since Henderson, most editors have taken LU as their main manuscript, because it is the oldest. *Fled Bricrenn* is found in five manuscripts, which are described below in chapter one of this thesis. No new critical edition has appeared so far. A full edition of *Fled Bricrenn* was an undertaking that was too sizeable for a Master's thesis, so this is only a very small contribution.

The Leiden MS. *Codex Leidensis Vossianus latinus quart. no. 7* (shelf mark VLQ 7)[6] (L.) has received less attention. It was described by Ludwig Christian Stern[7] and later fully transcribed by him.[8] In his description of the manuscript he judges *comparé avec le texte soigneux du Leabhar na huidhre, le texte de Leide est sans doute, il faut le dire, assez mauvais*, 'compared with the careful text of Leabhar na hUidre, the text of Leiden is without doubt, one has to say, rather bad.' He based his judgement on the peculiar orthography of the manuscript. Henderson, too, wrote 'the text is careless, and only by balancing its evidence alongside of *Eg.* and *H* can it throw any light on the difficult passages.' Perhaps these statements are the reason that the manuscript has received so little attention since. Edgar Slotkin discussed L. in his investigation of the structure of *Fled*

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1 See for example Pádraig Ó Riain (ed.), *Fled Bricrenn: reassessments* (London 2000).
2 George Henderson (ed.), *Fled Bricrend, the feast of Bricriu* Irish Texts Society 2 (London 1899).
3 Tom Peete Cross and Clark Harris Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales* (New York 1936) 260. *Fled Bricrenn* can be found on pages 254-280.
4 Rudolf Thurneysen (trans.), *Sagen aus dem alten Irland* (Berlin 1901).
5 Maartje Draak and Frida de Jong (trans.), *Het feestgelag van Bricriu* (Amsterdam 1986).
6 K.A. de Meyier, *Codices Vossiani latini* 4 vols. (Leiden 1975) ii 18.
7 Ludw. Chr. Stern, 'Le manuscrit irlandais de Leide', *Revue Celtique* 13 (1892) 1-31.
8 Id., 'Fled Bricrend nach dem Codex Vossianus', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 4 (1903) 142-177.

Bricrenn.[9] This will be discussed at more length below. Finally, Rijcklof Hofman drew attention to the manuscript in a lecture at the *Keltisch Colloquium* 2004 in Utrecht,[10] but there seems to have been no follow-up from that. Because of that, this thesis consists of an edition and translation of 'The Women's War of Words' according to L.

Of all the strange and colourful events in *Fled Bricrenn*, the so-called *Briatharchath ban Ulad* 'Ulster Women's War of Words' is among the most striking. As Joanne Findon points out in her study of female speech in Irish literature, *Fled Bricrenn* is probably unique in the description of a verbal contest between women.[11] Also it contains a fair amount of rhetorical speech, which makes it an interesting text to translate. Therefore this text was chosen as a subject for this Master's thesis.

The story of *Fled Bricrenn* belongs to the Ulster cycle, which means that it features the heroes from Ulster, especially the hero Cú Chulainn. The full title is *Fled Bricrend ocus in curathmír Emna Macha ocus in Briatharchath ban-ulad ocus tochim Ulad do Chruachnaib Ai ocus Cennach ind Ruanada i n-Emain Macha* 'The feast of Bricriu and the Champion's Portion of Emain, and the Ulster Women's War of Words, and the journey of the men of Ulster to Cruachan, and the champion's wager in Emain Macha.' Bricriu, who is so infamous for stirring up quarrels that he has the nickname *Nemthenga* 'Poison Tongue', has spent a year preparing a feast. He wants the Ulster heroes to come, but they know that he will stir up strife between them if they allow him to and so they refuse. Bricriu, however, threatens that he will stir up quarrels between kings and heroes, between father and son, and between mother and daughter. If none of this convinces the Ulstermen, he threatens to stir up strife between the two breasts of every woman in Ulster, so that they will fight against each other and will rot away. This is apparently convincing enough, and after counsel the Ulstermen decide to go, if Bricriu is not present himself. Bricriu agrees, but builds himself an upper chamber, from which he can follow the festivities. When the Ulstermen are still outside, he approaches the three greatest heroes, Loegaire Búadach, Conall Cernach and Cú Chulainn, and convinces each of them that they have the sole right to the hero's portion, the best part of the meal. Of course, when the hero's portion is given out, the three warriors start to quarrel and physically attack each other. Sencha, the wise man, decides that the portion will be divided between everybody that night, and that the judgement on the best hero will be postponed. Bricriu then proceeds to stir up the women; he tells each of the wives of the heroes, Fedelm Noichride wife of Loegaire, Lendabair wife of Conall Cernach and Emer wife of Cú Chulainn, that she is the most beautiful, with the best husband, and that she deserves to enter the house first. Trying to reach the

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9   Edgar M. Slotkin, 'The structure of *Fled Bricrenn* before and after the *Lebor na hUidre* interpolations', *Ériu* 39 (1978) 64-77.
10 Arwen van Zanten 'Verslag Keltisch Colloquium 2004', *Kelten* 23 (2004) 13.
11 Joanne Findon, *A woman's words; Emer and female speech in the Ulster cycle*. (Toronto Buffalo London 1997) 68.

house first, the women make so much noise that the men think that enemies are attacking. Sencha explains the situation. The men try to allow their wives into the house before the other two women, but Cú Chulainn succeeds when he lifts up the whole house to allow Emer to enter. At that point the so-called 'Women's War of Words' breaks out. Each of the women defends her case in a *rosc*, a rhetoric passage. These will be discussed in greater detail below. After this, the heroes seek judgement from several authorities; king Ailill and queen Medb, Sámera, Cathbad, who is the wise druid of the Ulstermen and Cú Roí. All these judges decide that Cú Chulainn deserves the hero's portion, but the other two heroes accept none of these decisions. The story ends with the most famous episode, the champion's wager. This episode only occurs in one manuscript, *Edinburgh Gaelic MS. XL*, the other four manuscripts break off before the ending, as is described in chapter one, paragraph 1.1. Interestingly, all five manuscripts name the section in their titles. In this episode, a very ugly giant enters the dining hall of the Ulstermen. He proclaims that he has sought the world for a hero who will give him fair play, and that he has heard the fame of the Ulstermen. When he has received a pledge of fair play, he reveals his intention: he is looking for a warrior whose head he may cut off; the warrior may cut off his head the next day. After some counsel it is decided that the agreement is reversed: whoever wishes to offer himself, may cut off the giant's head that evening, and the giant will cut off the warrior's head in turn the next day. Of course, after his head is cut off, the giant recovers and comes back the following morning; three warriors break their word and flee when it is their turn to have their heads cut off, among them Loegaire and Conall, but Cú Chulainn offers the giant his neck. The giant declares that Cú Chulainn deserves the hero's portion, and his wife the precedence over the women of Ulster. The story then reveals that the giant was Cú Roí in disguise.[12]

The reason that this episode is so famous is that it is also found in the Middle English poem 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight'. In this tale, a green giant visits the court of King Arthur. He dares the knights present to cut off his head this night, and come back to have their head cut off a year and a day later. Gawain finally accepts the challenge and cuts off the head of the giant with a single blow. The giant picks up his head and declares that Gawain has to meet him in the Green Chapel a year and a day from that day. Gawain has a long journey full of adventures and finally reaches a castle. The lord of the castle tells him that the Green Chapel is not far away and Gawain should stay at his castle for a while. The lord asks sir Gawain to give him whatever he 'catches' during the night, and in return, he will give Gawain whatever he catches in hunting during the day. At night, the lord's wife tries to seduce Gawain, but all he allows her to give him is a single kiss. He faithfully gives this kiss to the lord in exchange for the profits of the hunt; the next night, the lady

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12 M.A. O'Brien, 'Fled Bricrenn' *Irish Sagas* ed. Myles Dillon (Cork 1970) 67-78: 69-77.

gives him two kisses and these, too, Gawain faithfully gives to the lord. The third night the lady gives him three kisses and a green shawl that will protect him from injuries. Gawain gives the lord the three kisses, but not the shawl. When he arrives at the Green Chapel, the Giant deals him three blows: two of them miss him, but the third injures him slightly. The giant/Green Knight turns out to be the lord of the castle in disguise.[13] It has been suggested that *Fled Bricrenn* was the original source for this motif of the so-called 'Beheading game' and that it spread from *Fled Bricrenn* to the insular Arthur legends.[14] There are more suggestions that Irish sources were used for 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight'. Nicolas Jacobs for example has suggested *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* 'The destruction of Da Derga's hostel' as an influence.[15] It would be beyond the scope of this thesis to enter into this discussion, but it is worth mentioning nonetheless. As stated above, this thesis will focus on another part of *Fled Bricrenn*, namely the Women's War of Words.

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13 The poem is found in J.R.R. Tolkien and E.V. Gordon (ed.), *Sir Gawain and the Green knight* (Oxford 1967), available online via http://name.umdl.umich.edu/Gawain (access 22-06-2009).
14 Draak and de Jong, *feestgelag van Bricriu* 72.
15 Nicolas Jacobs, 'The Green Knight: an unexplored Irish parallel' *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 4 (1982) 1-4.

Chapter One: Textual background

§1.1: The manuscripts

     Fled Bricrenn occurs in five manuscripts, none of them complete. The Women's War of Words is preserved in four of them:

Codex Leidensis Vossianus Latinus Q7 (L.). From this manuscript the text in this thesis was transcribed. The manuscript contains nine folios and it was written on parchment by three scribes. It contains *Fled Bricrenn* and a story about Finn Mac Cumaill. It is a sixteenth-century manuscript.[16] The *Women's War of Words* occurs on f.4r30-f.5r41.

Lebor na hUidre (LU): 'The book of the Dun Cow'. This is an eleventh or twelfth-century manuscript that consists of 67 leaves of vellum. The original manuscript was probably much larger, judging from earlier foliations.[17] The manuscript was transcribed faithfully in the edition of Bergin and Best,[18] and this edition was used to compare the text of L. to the text of LU. 'The Women's War of Words' is on the pages 250-257, f.101a-f.104a in the manuscript. Two hands have been working on *Fled Bricrenn*, the scribe Mael Muire who wrote the largest part of the text, and a later interpolator called *H*.[19] This manuscript was taken as main manuscript by Henderson in his edition of *Fled Bricrenn*, and it represents a different tradition from the other manuscripts, including L.:[20] therefore significant variations from L. in this manuscript have been indicated in the edition.

Egerton MS 93 (Eg.): This fifteenth-century manuscript is in the British Library in London. It was written on vellum. It was written by three different scribes and the most important text in it is the *Tripartite life of St. Patrick.* It also contains a fragment of *Fled Bricrenn* and a fragment of the *Táin Bó Cuailnge* recension III.[21]

H. 3.17 (H.): This manuscript is kept in Trinity College Dublin. It is a sixteenth-century parchment manuscript that contains a miscellany of texts.[22] It has the beginning of *Fled Bricrenn* complete, but, as in all manuscripts, the ending is missing.[23] I had no access to Eg. and H. or microfilms or images of them. As this is mainly an edition of L., they are not included in the comparison.

     The ending of the story of *Fled Bricrenn* is only found in one manuscript, *Edinburgh Gaelic*

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16 K.A. de Meyier, *Codices Vossiani Latini* 4 vols. (Leiden 1975) ii18-20.
17 Thomas F. O'Rahilly et. al., *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy* 30 vols. (Dublin London 1943) XXVII 1228.
18 R.I. Best and Osborn Bergin (ed.) *Lebor na hUidre: the book of the dun cow* (Dublin 1929).
19 Slotkin, 'Structure' 64.
20 Stern, 'Le manuscrit irlandais de Leide' 23.
21 Robin Flower, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the British Library [formerly British Museum]* ii (London 1926, repr. Dublin 1992) 434-436.
22 T.K. Abbott and E.J. Gwynn, *Catalogue of the Irish manuscripts in the library of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin, London 1921) 125.
23 Ibid. 133.

MS. XL, which was transcribed by Kuno Meyer in 1893.[24] However, the Women's War of Words is not in found this manuscript.

§1.2: The Women's War of Words in the Codex Vossianus

As Edgar Slotkin points out in his important article on the structure of *Fled Bricrenn*, L., Eg. and H. represent a different tradition to that of LU.[25] As will be seen even in the short extract of the story discussed in this edition, the structure in L. and the other two manuscripts is much more logical than that in LU.[26] The fact that all four manuscripts lack the ending, although the ending is mentioned in the title, points to the fact that they probably had a common exemplar missing the ending as well.[27] There are important differences between LU and the other three manuscripts, because the text in LU has been interpolated. H. is probably the closest to the original text in LU, and in turn, L. is closest to H.[28] For the 'Women's War of Words', it is interesting to note that, according to Slotkin, the catalogue of women was probably an interpolation.[29] This passage occurs in LU, line 8401-8417 in the edition of Bergin and Best, but it is not in L., as explained in the note on line 160-161 of this edition. The episode directly following it, which is different in L. from the version in LU., is also an interpolation. The passage that forms the end of the text in this edition, which concludes 'the Women's War of Words', is not in LU. According to Slotkin this passage was deliberately erased from the version in LU by the interpolator, in order to accommodate for his alterations.[30] In short, L., together with Eg. and H., is probably closer to the 'original' text, if there was such a thing, than LU, even if LU is the earlier manuscript.[31]

§1.3: The date of the text

In dating *Fled Bricrenn*, allowance must be made for these later interpolations; the interpolations date from the date of composition of LU, the eleventh century at the earliest, while the text underlying it is probably much older. This 'early' text was dated by Thurneysen to the eighth century; but Gearóid Mac Eoin opposes this date, stating that he sees nothing in the text which must be older than 900.[32] Of course the fragment in this edition is rather short compared to the rest of the tale, but some interesting conclusions concerning the date of the tale can be drawn from it.

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24 Kuno Meyer, 'The Edinburgh version of the Cennach ind Rúanado', *Revue Celtique* 14 (1893) 450-459.
25 Slotkin, 'Structure' 65.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid. 66.
28 Ibid. 70-71.
29 Ibid. 70.
30 Ibid. 75.
31 Ibid. 77.
32 Gearóid Mac Eoin, 'The Dating of Middle Irish Texts', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 68 (1982) 109–37: 121.

A very telling feature is the presence of the neuter in the text. This is evident from the nasalization of the adjectives after the neuter, for example *tochim* in line 24-25: *Toċim fosaid n-inmallai n-alainn*, and *a rīḡtec[h] n-uili* in line 32-33. The last example also shows that the neuter article is still in use. Most interestingly, although L. has many occurrences of *an* instead of *a*, for example in the accusative singular *isan tech*, 'into the house' in line 30, for Old Irish *isa tech,* LU has almost without exception *a* in these instances. It can be safely said, then, that the neuter article was still very much alive when the text was composed. It is definitely not the case that the masculine and feminine articles before neuters are more common in the text than the original neuter article, which was the case in Middle Irish.[33]

The form of the article *inna*, which was replaced by *na* already by the end of the Old Irish period, occurs several times, although not as often as *na*. But the masculine nom. pl. is found in the guise of *an* several times, for example in *an fir* in line 133. That this is indeed the original masculine plural article *in* and not a misspelling for later *na* is confirmed by the reading of LU *ind fir.*

This text also preserves preterite forms without *ro*, while in Middle Irish the difference between perfect with *ro* and preterite, without *ro*, disappeared and was replaced by one past tense, with *ro* as preverb.[34] The forms with *ro* are more common in the story. Despite that, this text shows a lot of forms that are genuinely Old Irish, for example the perfect based on the reduplicated preterite in line 134 *russleblaing*. In Middle Irish the s-preterite became the norm even for verbs that in Old Irish would have been inflected with other types of the preterite.[35] The perfect *desiutar* in line 41, a complicated form that takes deponent flexion in the preterite and *de-en* as perfective particle instead of *ro,*[36] also occurs correctly in the text. There are no clear examples of compound verbs inflected as simple verbs in the text.

The only clear Middle-Irishisms in the text are the infixed pronouns, which are not always applied in the same manner as Old Irish: in Middle Irish they were confused[37] and this is also obvious in *Fled Bricrenn*, for example *rusaiṫgned* in line 145, with an infixed pronoun -*s*-, which in Old Irish was the singular feminine and plural infixed pronoun, but refers to Bricriu here and thus ought to be masculine. Already in Old Irish the -s- began to spread to the other genders, and in Middle Irish it becomes regular.[38] Orthographical criteria like the falling together of unstressed short

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33 Liam Breatnach, 'An Mheán-Ghaeilge', *Stair na Gaeilge*, ed. Kim McCone et. al. (Maigh Nuad 1994) 221-333: 258.

34 Ibid. 299.

35 Ibid.

36 GOI §534.

37 John Strachan, 'The infixed pronoun in Middle Irish' *Ériu* 1 (1904) 153-179.

38 Ibid. 157.

final vowels, because they turn to *schwa* in Middle Irish,[39] are of course not revealing; the scribe that wrote the manuscript could easily have altered them.

Apart from the text itself, there is one other indication for the dating of the text: the text occurs under the title *Feis Tige Bricrenn* in List B of the 'Tale lists'.[40] These 'lists' are lists of tales, list B is part of the story *Airec Menman Uraird maic Coisse*,[41] and *Feis Tighe Bricrenn* occurs in the part of the list that, according to Gregory Toner, was integral to the story. The story was probably composed around 1000 A.D. The list must consequently be composed around or before that date.[42] If *Feis Tighe Bricrenn* is indeed the same as *Fled Bricrenn* the story in its oldest form must have been composed in or before the tenth century.

Altogether I would date the text to approximately 900, because the text clearly shows early Middle Irish features like *na* instead of *inna*, the use of the augmented preterite as past tense, and the use of the infixed pronoun *-s-* beyond its proper bounds.

§1.4: The orthography of L.

The orthography of L. is very peculiar. It is described rather pejoratively by Stern, who states that *elle est flottante* 'it is floating'.[43] 'Floating' seems to be an adequate description of the orthographical variations within the text itself. Oftentimes, *q* occurs instead of *c*, for example in *Conqulain* in line 37; *t* is written for *d*, even in verbs, for example in *tēd* in line 10, and the 3 pl. *íadaid* in line 36; *cc* is found instead of *g*, for example in *lāim dercc* instead of *láim derg* in line 53, and *tech rīcc* instead of *tech ríg* in line 85. The scribe writes *de* and *di* instead of *do* and vice versa, for example *dilotar* in line 135 for *dolotar* and *do mnāib* for *di mnáib* in line 7 respectively. Most of the time *a* is written for *i*, especially in the article *in* and the preposition *i*. Examples are *an Lendabair* instead of *in Lendabair* in line 13 and *a crū* in line 103 instead of *i crú*. The opposite happens as well: line 28 *i lēnti* for *a lénti*. This is not surprising in a late manuscript, as *a* and *i* became confused in Middle Irish.[44] *Cech* occurs generally instead of *cach*, but *cach* is found in line 139 *fria cāch* and line 192 *cāch n-aī*, but these are the substantive, stressed forms of *cach*. The forms that are written *cech* are all the adjective forms. This could be written *cech* in Middle Irish[45] and thus this orthographical variant, too, is not surprising in this late manuscript. For *íar* and its derivatives, the scribe is very consistent in writing *íer*, for example *īerom* in line 3 and *īer* in line 4. Lenited *d* and *g* are confused sometimes in the orthography, because their sound had fallen together

39 Breatnach, 'An Mheán Ghaeilge' 230.
40 Proinsias Mac Cana, *The learned tales of medieval Ireland* (Dublin 1980) 67.
41 Gregory Toner, 'Reconstructing the earliest Irish tale lists' *Éigse* 32 (2000) 89-120: 89.
42 Ibid. 96.
43 Stern, 'Le manuscrit irlandais de Leide' 27.
44 Breatnach, 'An Mheán-Ghaeilge' 236.
45 Ibid. 277.

in Middle Irish, for example in line 37 *russaið*.[46] Lenition is marked occasionally, but more often than not a punctum delens or spiritus is omitted. Lenited *b* is sometimes, but not always, written as *ŭ* or *u*. I have not been able to check if Eg. and H. have this orthographical feature, but it occurs in at least one other manuscript, Egerton 1782. For example this manuscript has *rouátar trí mná* instead of *robátar trí mná* on f.41a1.[47] Probably the scribe was trying to make his text look genuinely old, but let the orthography of his own time slip through.

§1.5: Roscada

The *roscada* in the text will be discussed here, as it is more convenient to devote a separate section to them instead of discussing them in the notes.

A *rosc* or *roscad* is *nicht Prosa und nicht reimende silbenzählende Dichtung*,[48] 'not prose and not rhyming syllable-counting poetry' as Liam Breatnach defined it. It is the word used for the obscure passages of speech, highly alliterative and with a lot of rare words.[49] These passages are usually introduced in manuscripts by *.r.*. As Mac Cana points out, L. is a good example of a manuscript that does not consistently introduce passages that could be described as *roscada* with *.r.*[50] As will be seen in the edition, in the text under consideration only one of the *roscada* is introduced with *.r.*, namely the reprimand of Sencha. The rest of the *roscada* are not introduced by any special marker. The word *rosc* is usually translated as 'rhetoric', based on the Irish word *retoiric*, which occurs in later manuscripts sometimes as an expansion of *.r.*.[51] This word was derived from Latin *rhetorice*, but Mac Cana has pointed out that it is more likely that *.r.* originally was an abbreviation of *rosc* or *roscad*, rather than of *retoiric*.[52]

The core of 'The Women's War of Words' consists really of three rather long *roscada*, the speeches of the women. Apart from these there are two other *roscada* in this section, the reprimand by Sencha and Emer's reply. According to Slotkin's analysis, these were invented by the interpolator of LU.[53] In this edition, the *roscada* are printed according to the line division in Bergin and Best's edition of LU. It becomes evident almost immediately that the three speeches of the women are similar in form: they all begin with an introductory sentence, followed by a description of the women themselves and their spouses in alliterating strings of words, concluded by a variant

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46 Breatnach, 'An Mheán-Ghaeilge' 234-235.
47 Kuno Meyer, 'Verschiedenes aus Egerton 1782 (Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften)' *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 9 (1913) 176-177: 177.
48 Liam Breatnach, 'Zur Frage der "Roscada" im Irischen' *Metrik und Medienwechsel : Metrics and media*, ed. Hildegard L.C. Tristram, ScriptOralia 35 (Tübingen 1991) 197-205: 198.
49 Ibid.
50 Proinsias Mac Cana, 'On the use of the term *retoiric*' *Celtica* 7 (1966) 65-90: 69.
51 Daniel A. Binchy, 'Varia hibernica 1: the so-called 'rhetorics' of Irish saga', *Indoceltica: gedächtnisschrift für Alf Sommerfelt* ed. H. Pilch and J. Thurow (München 1972) 29-38: 30.
52 Mac Cana 'On the use of the term *retoiric*' 72.
53 'Structure' 70.

of *hi Tech Midchúarda* 'in the banquet-hall'. Still, the speeches are different from each other. The first speech, that of Fedelm, consists of lines of three or four stressed words. The majority of the lines in Lendabair's speech have three or four stressed words, but there are also lines with two and lines with five stressed words. The same goes for the last and longest of the three, Emer's speech, which even has one line with seven stressed words. Almost every line is linked to the next line by alliteration, except for the four final lines. This feature is common in Irish verse and is called *fidrad freccomail* 'linking alliteration'.[54] Where this linking alliteration is missing, this is usually compensated by parallelism. This feature is called 'compensatory alliteration' and Fergus Kelly has pointed out that this compensatory alliteration occurs in poetry where *fidrad freccomail* is absent.[55] An example of this parallelism occurs in line 90-92:

> *nī frīth cruth na cōire na congruimim,*
> *nī frīt[h] gōes na gart na genus,*
> *nī frīt[h] lūd serce sōerlidii,*

It becomes obvious from this example also that in most of the lines, the words within the line alliterate with each other: ***c**ruth na **c**oire na **c**ongruimim*, ***g**ōes na **g**art na **g**enus, lūd serce sōerlidii*.

The other two *roscada*, Sencha's speech and Emer's reply, differ from each other. Sencha's reprimand also consists of lines of two to four stressed words, but the lines are not as often linked by alliteration as in the other three speeches, although within the line the words alliterate with each other generally. Emer's reply consists of two parts: a string of *cles*, feats, and the praise of Cú Chulainn, beginning with *Ní fuigbidir.* The lines of the praise consist of two or three stressed words, and the words within a line alliterate with each other. These two *roscada*, as Slotkin points out,[56] are not as impenetrable as the three speeches of the women. They contain not as many rare words.

The nature of *roscada* is controversial: as to whether they are the written record of pre-Christian oral transmission, as for example Binchy argues in his article,[57] or if they have been transmitted through writing from the start and as such must have been composed in the Christian period, as Breatnach holds,[58] remains a point of discussion. The discussion is summed up by Johan Corthals,[59] who analyses the nature of the metre of the *roscada* in detail and concludes that they are derived from Latin metres and at the very least influenced by Latin learning. In the 'Ulster Women's War of Words', the *roscada* are clearly integral to the narrative. The story would not be complete

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54 James Carney, 'Linking alliteration ("fidrad freccomail")' *Éigse* 18/2 (1981) 251-262.
55 Liam Breatnach, 'Poets and poetry' *Progress in medieval Irish studies* ed. Kim McCone and Katherine Simms (Maynooth 1996) 65-77: 69.
56 'Structure' 70.
57 Daniel A. Binchy, 'Varia hibernica 1: the so-called 'rhetorics' of Irish saga' in H. Pilch and J. Thurow (ed.) *Indoceltica: gedächtnisschrift für Alf Sommerfelt* (München 1972), 29-38: 31.
58 Breatnach, 'Zur Frage der "Roscada" im Irischen' 198.
59 Johan Corthals, 'Early Irish *Retoirics* and their late antique background' *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 31 (1996) 17-36.

without them and they themselves do not make sense without the prose surrounding it. It seems therefore unlikely that they existed long before the prose text was composed.

Chapter Two: text and translation

§2.1: Editorial policy

The aim was to stay as close to the manuscript text as possible. As indicated in the introduction, the orthography of L. is very peculiar and lenition is often not marked. In words that obviously require an *h* because the form is not complete without it, the *h* is supplied between square brackets, for example *tec[h], cac[h]* but in forms that should be lenited by a preceding word or because they form a compound, lenition is only shown in the transcription when it occurs in the manuscript. Letters and words that are supplied, both in the translation and in the transcription, are supplied between square brackets, words and letters in the transcription that seem to be out of place in the manuscript are placed between round brackets. All expansions from suspension strokes and abbreviations are indicated in italics. If a letter in superscript indicates that an *r* is to be supplied, both the letter in superscript and the supplied *r* are written in italics. If words or letters are written in superscript this is indicated in the notes, but letters in ligature are silently separated. The symbol for *ocus* is presented as 7. The punctum delens is presented as a punctum delens, but the spiritus is presented by an *h* in italics. Exception to this is the spiritus that occurs above a *u* instead of lenited *b* in this manuscript, as explained in the orthography section. This is presented as *ŭ*. Where the manuscript shows a length-mark, this is presented in the transcription as a length-mark. Where the length-mark is missing and the word certainly requires a length-mark, this is indicated by a macron. Compound verbs in deuterotonic form are separated by a hyphen between the preverb and the stressed verbal stem. The punctuation of the manuscript has been retained as much as possible, but where it was necessary punctuation and capitals were supplied. The *roscada* are divided according to the line division in Bergin and Best's edition of LU, with one exception: the editors of LU print the list of feats in Emer's second speech as prose. However, in the manuscript of L. this list is distinguished from the rest of the text because it has a different line division. Thus the line division of the manuscript is kept for this list. The text of the transcription is that of L., but for the sake of comparison, it is indicated in the footnotes where the text of LU differs from that in L. For this comparison, the edition of LU made by Bergin and Best was used because this follows the manuscript faithfully.[60]

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60 R.I. Best and Osborn Bergin (ed.), *Lebor na hUidre; the book of the dun cow* (Dublin 1929). The text of the Women's War of Words is on the pages 251-257.

§2.2: Text

1   Bric*riu* da*no* i*n*a gr*ī*anā*n* 7 a rīg*an*,[61] *b*a fo*d*irc[62] doa[63] asa[64] imd*ai* ṡu*i*dug*ud* an rítiġi[65] am*al*

2rombo*í*[66] and. Ro-scrūit[67] i*n*a men*m*ain cin*n*us no rag*ad*[68] for imcosaīt[69] i*n*a mba*n*[70] am*al* deroine[71]

3i*m*cosaīt i*n*a fer. *An* tan[72] īer*om*[73] ro scāic*h*[74] do Bricr*inn* a scrūta*n* i*n*a men*m*ain, am*al* dorragad[75] airi,

4ba sī sin[76] *ū*air d*i* lluidi*i*[77] Fed*i*lm*m* Nōicridi *coícaid* mba*n*[78] asand *rí*ġtiġ am*m*ach[79] īer trui*m*e ōil.

5Atač*í*[80] Bric*riu* sece.[81] 'Mait[h] si*n*,' a*l* Bric*riu*, 'ano*cht* a be*n*[82] Laog*air*i B*ú*adaig nī lesai*n*m d*i*t

6da*no* Fed*i*lm Nōic*rid*i*i* ar feb*us* do crotai[83] 7 do cēlli 7 do cenīu*i*l. Concoba*r* rī cōic*id* Ul*ad*[84] do a*t*air.

7Loeg*air*i B*ū*adaig do céli[85] *acht* nam*m*ā nīrbo[86] ró lea*m* det cona tīsad be*n*[87] do mnāib[88] Ul*ad* riut h*i*

8te*ċ* midcu*ar*ta 7 com*m*ad doit[89] īa*r*sāla no b*eth* ban*n*tr*ā*cht Ul*ad* u*i*li.

9Ba tū tés[90] isan tech ar tūss anocht[91], do-roimli co aidne[92] āis banrīgnacht ūas band*trā*cht*t*aib[93] Ulad

10uili.' Tēd[94] as Fedilm la sodain tar tēora futairbi ō*n* tiġ.

11   Tic am*m*ac[h] īer*om*[95] Lendab*air ingen* Eog*ain maic* Derto*cht* ben Conaill C*er*naich, at-

61 LU: Bricc*riu* da*no* 7 a rígan ina grianán.
62 LU: foderc.
63 LU: dó.
64 LU: iarom assa.
65 LU: ind rígthige.
66 LU: ro both.
67 LU: ro scrút.
68 LU: doragad.
69 LU: ar imchossait.
70 LU: na mban.
71 LU: dorigni.
72 LU: In tan.
73 LU: iarom. As stated in the notes, the scribe of L. writes ierom and ier where LU has iarom and iar. This is clearly due to the particular orthography of L., there ar no exceptions to this, and therefore it will not be mentioned as a variant anymore.
74 LU: ro scáig.
75 LU: dorragad.
76 LU: *om*. sin.
77 LU: dolluid.
78 LU: ban.
79 LU: ammach.
80 LU: addaci
81 LU: sechai.
82 LU: Maith sin innocht a ben. *om*. al Bricriu.
83 LU: ar febas do chrotha.
84 LU: rí cóicid Her*end*.
85 LU: do chéle.
86 LU: nibo.
87 LU: nech.
88 LU: di mnaib.
89 LU: hit.
90 LU: Bá tú theis.
91 LU: isa tech ar thus innocht.
92 LU: caidche.
93 LU: bantrocht.
94 LU: Téit ass.
95 LU: tic immach iar sin.

12glādustar dano Bricriu co n-epert;

13'Maiṫ sin a Lendabair,' ol[96] se. 'Nī lesainm duid an[97] Lendabair, ad bann lēnnan 7 ad menmarc fer

14ndomain uili ar do āine 7 t'inracus 7 t'irdercus.[98]

15An n-ed ruc do cēli do ōcaib domain ar gaisciud 7 cruṫ rucai-si do mnāib domain 7 Ulad.'

16Gid mōr trā a muinmech dorat-som im Fedilmm, dirad a dā cutramma im Lennubair fon innus

17cēṫno.

18   Do-lluid Emer amach fo sadain coīcaid mban. 'Slān ses[99], a Emer ingen Forcaill Monach,'

19ol Bricriu, 'a ben ind fir is dech and Ēri[100], nī lesainm dit an[101] Emer Foltcaīn; is hūaired[102] do rīgaib

207 rīgdomnaib Ērenn imad[103], a n-edh ruc crīan[104] do rennuib nime, rucu-se[105] do[106] mnāib domain uili

21ar cruṫ 7 cēll 7 ceniul,[107] ar aīde 7 āine 7 airdercus,[108] ar allud[109] 7 ērgnai 7 aurlabra.'

22Cīa ba[110] mōr tra a muinbeċ dirat im Lendubair, dorat a dī cutrama im Emer.[111]

23   Tīagait ass īerom na tíura buidne co mbatar a n-ōenmaigin, .i. tēora fuiṫhirbi on ṫhiċ[112] 7 nī

24fídir nech dib a imcosaīd[113] do Bricrenn. Totēgad[114] dia tiċ la sodain. Toċim fosaid n-inmāllai n-

25ālainn isin cētno futhirŭi,[115] is ing ma ro-uc[116] nech ndib[117] a cois[118] seċ aroilie.[119]

26Ind fuiṫhairbe[120] tānasi immoro ba mīniu 7 ba lūaiti a n-imtecht i suidiu. An[121] fuiṫhairbe ba nesai[122]

27den[123] tich, is amlaid[124] ruc cec[h][125] ben die[126] sētci[127] ar ēcin.

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96 LU: or.
97 LU: ind.
98 LU: ar do aíne 7 t'urdarcus.
99 LU: ban. Slán seiss.
100LU: i nÉre.
101LU: ind.
102LU: húariud.
103LU: immut.
104LU: a n-ed rucc grían.
105LU: rucaisiu.
106LU: de.
107LU: ar chruth 7 deilb 7 cenel.
108LU: ar oíti 7 áni 7 irdarcus.
109LU: allud.
110LU: Cíarbo.
111LU: a mainbech dorat imna m[n]á aile dorat a thri chomméit im Emir.
112LU: on tig.
113LU: n-imchossait.
114LU: Dotháegat.
115LU: Tochim fossad n-álaind n-ínmalla issin chetna fuitherbe.
116LU: rofuc.
117LU: nech dib.
118LU: a choiss.
119LU: araile.
120LU: fuithairbe.
121LU: ind.
122LU: nessu.
123LU: don.
124LU: samlaid.
125LU: cach.
126LU: dia.
127LU: seitche.

28Et tūarc*ab*sed[128] i[129] lēnti co m*m*eld*haib*[130] inda lāarc[131] do imcosn*om*[132] dul isan tec*h*[133] *ar* tūs,[134]

29ū*air* is *ed* adub*air*t[135] Bric*riu* rie[136] ce*ċ*[137] aī[138] timċiul aroili[139]; is h*i*[140] roba[141] ban*n*rīg*an* an cōic*id*[142]

30u*i*li antī[143] ceda-t*ar*gad[144] isan[145] te*ċ*. Ba sī m*ēt* a fot*r*ain*n*[146] t*r*ā oc imt*echt*[147] oc i*m*cosn*am* tosaic[148]

31c*ech* āei[149] rīana cēli[150] am*al* bid fot*r*ann[151] *coīcaid* cairpt*ech*[152] tīs*ad*[153] an*n,* co for*ċ*ro*ṫ*[154] a rīġtec[h]

32n-*ui*li 7 co roeblangat*ar*[155] an[156] lāi*ṫ* ġaili dia *n*-gaisc*iud* co folm*u*star cac[h] dīb [aidid] a cēli[157] isan

33tic*h.*

34   'Anaid,' ol[158] S*en*chai, 'nīdat nā*m*aid tancot*ar* an*n*[159] *acht* is Bric*riu* dirad[160] i*m*cosaīd[161] *eter*

35mnā[162] decót*ar*[163] amac*h.*[164] Tong*u* a to(f. 4v)ingi[165] mo th*ū*ath,' ol[166] *se,* 'man*i* īad*h*tur[167] an[168] tec*h*

128LU: tuargabsat.
129LU: a.
130LU: mellaib.
131LU: a lárac.
132LU: imchosnom.
133LU: isa tech.
134LU: thús.
135LU: atrubairt.
136LU: fri.
137LU: cach.
138LU: ae.
139LU: timchell araile.
140LU: si.
141LU: robad.
142LU: in chóicid.
143LU: inti.
144LU: cétna ragad.
145LU: issa tech.
146LU: fothraind.
147LU: *om.*
148LU: oc imchossnam techta ar thossaig.
149LU: *om.*
150LU: ríana chéli.
151LU: fothrond.
152LU: carp*at.*
153LU: dothisad.
154LU: forcroth.
155LU: roablangtár.
156LU: in.
157LU: díb aidid a chéle. L. omits *aidid.*
158LU: or.
159LU: *om.*
160LU: dorat.
161LU: imcossaít.
162LU: na mná.
163LU: dochótár.
164LU: immach.
165LU: toi*nges.*
166LU: or.
167LU: íatar.
168LU: a.

36frìu, b*it* lía ar[169] m*air*b in̄aid[170] ar[171] mbī.’ Ῑadaid[172] na dorsaid*i* in*a* co*m*la*id*[173] la sod*ain*.

37Russaiḋ[174] Emer ingen Forcaill Monach[175] ben Conqulain[176] ar lúas riesna mnāib aili co tard a druim

38risan[177] comlaid 7 co n-arlusstar ūaiḋi na dorrsaide riesan mbantr*ācht* arcena conērgitis[178] a firu[179] la

39sodain isan tich: gac[h] fer dib de foslucud[180] riana [mn]aī[181] comaḋ[182] a ben tīṡad[183] isan teċ ar tūs.[184]

40‘Bid olc in aḋaich,’ ol[185] Concobor. Benaid a clōua[186] n-arcit rus boī[187] ina lāim risan[188] n-ūaitni

41crēduma ina imdae co n-desiutar[189] na slūag[190] uili[191] ina suidii. ‘Anaiḋ,[192]’ ol[193] Senca[194], ‘ni ba caṫ

42co ngaisciud digentar[195] ann[196] acht bid caṫ co mbrīathraib.’ La sotain[197] do-luid[198] ceċ[199] ben fo

43coim[200] a cēli[201] conad[202] ann sin do-rōnsat an brīatharchaith ban Ulad.

44   As-b*er*t Fed*i*lm Nōc*ri*d*i* ben Laeg*air*i Būad*aig*:

45‘Codum-b*er*t-sa[203] brū sōer

46sr*ui*ṫ dim cloin*n* co*m*cin*ē*oil,

169LU: a.
170LU: and andat.
171LU: a.
172LU: íadait.
173LU: in comla.
174LU: rosaig.
175LU: Mánach.
176LU: Con Cul*aind*.
177LU: frisin.
178LU: conérget.
179LU: a fir.
180LU: do oslugud.
181LU: ríana mnaí.
182LU: combad.
183LU: cetna tísad.
184LU: ar thús.
185LU: or.
186LU: cló.
187LU: ro boí.
188LU: frisin.
189LU: desitar.
190LU: in tslúaig.
191LU: *om*.
192LU: anaid.
193LU: or.
194LU: Sencha.
195LU: dogentar.
196LU: sund.
197LU: sod*ain*.
198LU: tolluid.
199LU: cach.
200LU: fo choím.
201LU: céli ammaig.
202LU: conid.
203LU: Cotomb*er*tsa.

47cinsiu do corp[204] rīgna sceo rīg,[205]

48richt for caīne costud

49conid cruṫ buidech bertar ūaim.

50Nōitim crut[206] caīn,

51co n-sert la feba[207] Fēniu

52fo gart gensiu genuss,

53luċdonn[208] lāim dercc[209] Loecairi

54līn mband mbalc mbūada[210]

55berus[211] ar īaṫ n-Ulad,

56ar-slig[212] crīċa comnāmat,[213]

57imu-s-dīċ, immu-s-tecraṫar, im-goin airri[214],

58airdercai[215] lāechaib Laegairi,

59līn a ŭūaḋai[216] bias ōs[217] ceċ lāech,

60cid na baḋ sī in[218] Fedilmm-si Findcōemh,[219]

61cruṫ-būaduch,[220] buageltach,

62cichsed ria ceċ[221] mnaī

63hi tech medrach midcuarta.[222]’

64   Is-mbert[223] Lendubair ingen[224] Eogain maic Derthacht ben Connaill Cernaig maic

65Aimergin:

204LU: di churp.
205LU: ríg sceó rígnai.
206LU: cruth.
207LU: feba.
208LU: luchthond.
209LU: lámderg.
210LU: lín ṁband mbalcbúada.
211LU: beras.
212LU: áurslaid.
213LU: comnart comnámat.
214LU: arriu.
215LU: airdercu.
216LU: búada.
217LU: úas.
218LU: nabsin.
219LU: Fedelmsa Findchóem.
220LU: chruthbúadach.
221LU: cach.
222LU: hi Tech Midchúarda medrach.
223LU: asbert.
224LU: Lendabair la sodain ingen.

66'Ar is mesi cru*t*, cēll, cong*raim*,[225]

67coble*tar*[226] cēimb c*ru*t, caīn curcastai[227]

68a tech medr*ach*[228] medqu*ar*tai rīġ

69ria mn*āib* Ul*ad*.

70*Ar* is mo cēli cōe*m,*

71Conull coscur*ach* credmaír

72coble*tar*[229] cēm n-*ar*d n-adguiḋe

73i *n*-uchtai[230] ergal err*ind* ria cāċ.

74caīn tin*n*ta[231] cuc*um*[232] co cernaib, co cen*n*aib,

75*co-n* rucai[233] calcae crūaidi com*r*aicti Ul*ad*

76*ar*-said[234] ceċ[235] n-āṫ *con*id dia tul[236] t*ar*glaī

77*ar*-slaiṫ[237] a n-āṫa, *ar*-fic*h* a n-g*r*esae[238]

78com*m*aic*h*[239] lāeich, *ar*abi lecht *líac,*

79laime*tar* m*ai*c āin Ai*m*irgi*n* acollai*m,*[240]

80*ar* is *Con*naill ar līn a c*er*n,[241]

81cingi*us* ria cech[242] lāeċ.

82Q*i*d[243] na bud sī an[244] Lendob*air*-si

83lī sūlaie caiċ

84ciċsid ria ceċ[245] mnaī

85a tec*h* rīcc[246]?'

225LU: choṅgraimmim.
226LU: coiblethar.
227LU: caurchasta.
228LU: *om*
229LU: coibledar.
230LU: n-uchtu.
231LU: tintaí.
232LU: chucum.
233LU: *co* ruccai.
234LU: arsaid.
235LU: cach.
236LU: thuil.
237LU: ar-slaid*h* (*note by the editors:* sic, d *apparently altered from* t *by retracer*).
238LU: a ngressu.
239LU: commaig.
240LU: accaldaim.
241LU: cherd.
242LU: cach.
243LU: cid.
244LU: nabbsin.
245LU: cach.
246LU: ríg.

Asmbert[247] E*mer ingen* F*orcaill* Mon*ach* ben Con Q*uilainn*[248]: (denu*m* ar cuid a scol)[249]

87'Co-tum-gabu-sa[250] cēm[251] c*ruth* cēll[252] cong*raim,*[253]

88cobli*ud* būadai bá*igth*ir cech[254] delŭ caī*n*[255] cuc*om*[256]

89*con*id mo rosc sāer setae[257] doī*ne* dom gn*ūse*[258] gnē,

90nī frī*th* cruth na cōire[259] na congruimim,[260]

91nī f*rī*t[h] gōes na g*art* na gen*us,*

92nī f*rī*t[h] lūd[261] s*er*ce sōerlidi*i,*[262]

93na cēli[263] *con*umticesi,[264]

94ar is im*m*am-sa[265] ochsa*d*ur[266] Ul*ad* u*i*li,

95is me a cnū c*rid*i,

96is glé: d*i*embesi bō*ei* fīad et*arla*m[267]

97nī mā*r* b*id*[268] ben ūaid*i*b lia cēli,

98on t*rā*t[h] sai co laili,[269]

99is Cū Cul*ainn* mo cēli,[270]

100nī cū ces,[271]

101c*ri*tir folai f*or*a crun*n,*

102cub*ur* folai f*or*a claid*i*p,[272]

247LU: asbert.
248LU: Con Cul*aind.*
249LU: *om.*
250LU: cotomgabasa.
251LU: chéim.
252LU: cheill.
253LU: congraimmim.
254LU: cach.
255LU: delbchaín.
256LU: chuc*um.*
257LU: setta.
258LU: gnúis.
259LU: córai.
260LU: congrai*m.*
261LU: luth.
262LU: sóerligi
263LU: celle.
264LU: conom thicse
265LU: immumsa.
266LU: ochsatar.
267LU: fīad etarlu.
268LU: nimmar mbith.
269LU: alaile.
270LU: mo chéle.
271LU: cú ches.
272LU: claediub.

103caīn f*or*ondor a c*rū* a c*or*p,[273]

104cr*ēcht*a i*n*a *caoīn*cnis,[274]

105alta i*n*a toeb li*us,*

106caīn fei[275] a rosc ro ċē*m* in*n*a cin*d*[276] sī*ar,*

107caī*n* fūaloing[277] f*uith*er glai*n*e s*air,*

108sīrd*erc*[278] a seallai[279]

109ōgd*er*g a fondad[280]

110f*or*d*er*cc[281] a f*or*tcai[282]

111*ar*fich ó uib[283] ech 7 anál*aib*[284] [fer]

112fo-ch*er*d īoch n-err*ed* in*n* aoīb[285]

113at-etha cl*es* n*ōn*ŭair[286], cl*es* don*n,* cl*es* dall, cl*es* n-eōi*n*

114im*m*aliġ luái[287] usq*i*[288]

115at-eṫa cl*es* n*ōn*b*air*

116*con*-boi*n*g cat*h*a crō combāġ[289]

117fālgad̄[290] bet̄a borr buidne,

118brisid hūat̄ n-etergnai[291]

119is fer ṡergi*us*sit̄[292] a llidi*i*[293]

120is crōn cutmai[294] qu*air*id*i*i[295]

121is i richt mnā siūil

122segdai[296] Ul*aid* uili

273LU: a chorp hi crú.
274LU: ina chaíncnis.
275LU: feid.
276LU: inna chend.
277LU: fúalaing.
278LU: sírderg.
279LU: sella.
280LU: fonnaid.
281LU: fordeirg.
282LU: fortgae.
283LU: aíb.
284LU: analaib fer.
285LU: ind aíb.
286LU: *om.* cles n*on*ŭair.
287LU: loa.
288LU: usci.
289LU: cróchombág.
290LU: falgai.
291LU: n-adarccna.
292LU: seirgeis.
293LU: i lligu.
294LU: crón chutma.
295LU: cúaride.
296LU: sedda.

123co rrice mo cēli-siu[297] *Coin Cul*ainn

124crō ndon*n*[298] glē sīn samlait*ir*.

125At sal*aig* ūanain*n*[299]

126a*t*[300] anan*n*[301] c*ri*salaich[302]

127at g*air*b cāi*t*lig[303]

128at crona cut*ram*mai

129at crot*li* ga*r*manlīne[304]

130Am[305] būanan*n*[306] bōdelbae

131is i rechtaib bō 7 dau*m* 7 ech

132sedda mnā Ul*ad* u*i*li *con*um*m*ticesi.[307]'

133   La s*odain* don*o*[308] ba e*d* dogensad[309] an fir[310], bāt*ar* isi*n* tic*h*, Laeg*air*i B*ū*adach[311] 7 Con*all*

134C*ern*ach o r*u*ssleblaing[312] a lūa*n* lāich[313] īer clūais[314] i*m*acallmai na mba*n*: Ro bristii[315] cl*et* do[316]

135cle*thaib* an tic*h*i rīgdai[317] foa comardus[318] am*ach*,[319] *con*id sisi*n*[320] *con*uir[321] *d*ilot*ar*[322] a mnā cuqui[323]

136isa tech. Cuq*ui*lann[324] im*moro* tūrcaib[325] a tec*h* ina com*air*[326] a im*m*dai, co*m*tar fodercai renna ni*m*iu

297LU: mo chélese.
298LU: cró dond.
299LU: úantai*n*d.
300LU: at.
301LU: húanaind.
302LU: chrisalaig.
303LU: chaithlig.
304LU: garmilíne.
305LU: at.
306LU: búanaind.
307LU: thicisea.
308LU: *om*.
309LU: dogensat.
310LU: ind fĩr.
311LU: *om*.
312LU: o ro leblaing.
313LU: laith.
314LU: closin.
315LU: ro brisiset.
316LU: di.
317LU: ind rigthige.
318LU: comartus.
319LU: immach.
320LU: sí.
321LU: conar.
322LU: dollotar.
323LU: chucu.
324LU: Cu C*h*ulaind.
325LU: tuargaib.
326LU: i n-aurchomair.

137fon f*r*aicid*h*[327] amac*h*[328] aníos[329],*con*id[330] sisen conair d*i*lu*i*d[331] a ben-so*m* 7 na t*r*ī *coīcad* mba*n*

138im*m*ailli f*r*ia,[332] .i. a *coīca* ban b*u*dén 7 *coīca* ban cecht*ar*de na dā ba*n* oili,[333] c*on*ab*u*d cutr*om*mas[334]

139d*i*si f*r*isna mn*áib*[335] aili, ū*air* niruo[336] cut*rom*mus[337] dia f*ir*si fria cā*ch*.[338]

140Tolleci[339] Cu Q*u*ilainn[340] i[341] rrīg*h*tec[h] sīs īersuid*i*u, *co n*dechot*ar secht fer*cubaid[342] do[343] senamai*n*

141an[344] tici a *n*talmai*n*[345], co f*or*crot a ndaūn[346] uili 7 cort*r*ascair *gr*iānan Bricr*end* f*ri* lāur talm*an*, co

142torchair[347] Bric*r*iu [5v] b*u*dein[348] 7 a rīg*an* co mbāt*ar*[349] isand ot*r*ach cacai *eter* na (na) conaib.[350]

143'Aill amai!' ol[351] Bric*r*iu, 'tancat*ar* nāmaid[352] i ndū*n*,[353]' la h*é*rci[354] sū*a*s co hoba*nn*.[355] Corrola cor

144im*m*ar[356] rīctec*h*,[357] *co n*facai[358] am*ail* ro clōenud*h*,[359] *con* tarlae[360] f*or*a bēol*u* uili.[361] Ad-soirc[362] a

145bossai la sod*ain* 7 lēct*i* isan teg[363] īersuidii 7 nī rubai[364] la hUlt*u* fer r*u*sai*t*gned[365] amail r*us* salch*ad*

146*con*id asa[366] labr*ad* atgenat*ar*.

327LU: fon fraigid.
328LU: immach.
329LU: anís.
330LU: con[*id*], *note by the editors: abbreviation stroke ommitted*.
331LU: dolluid.
332LU: 7 cóeca ban cechtarde na da ban aili 7 .l. ban a mná fodéin.
333LU: *om*. .i. ... ban oili.
334LU: cut*hrum*mus.
335LU: mna.
336LU: nirbo.
337LU: chutr*um*mus.
338LU: dosom fri cách.
339LU: dolleci.
340LU: Cu C*hu*laind.
341LU: a.
342LU: ferchubat.
343LU: di.
344LU: in.
345LU: i talmain.
346LU: a ndún.
347LU: torcair.
348LU: fodein.
349LU: co rrabatar.
350LU: isind otruch for lar ind lis et*er* na conaib.
351LU: for.
352LU: námait.
353LU: i ndún.
354LU: la eirgi.
355LU: opund.
356LU: immán.
357LU: rigthech.
358LU: co n-acca.
359LU: ro clóenad a thech.
360LU: conda tarla.
361LU: fora lethbeólu uli.
362LU: Adsoirg.
363LU: isa tech.
364LU: rabi.
365LU: asaithgned.
366LU: ina labrad.

147   Es-b*ert*[367] Bric*riu* riu[368] īer*om* di l*ā*r an tic*h*i: 'Nī ma tarcomlus-[s]ai[369] f̂l*eid*[370] doibt*ra* a

148Ulto,' ol[371] se. 'Is an*n*sa lim*m*sa mo tec*h*[372] oldas mo treb*ad* u*i*li. Es[373] ges daibt*ra*,' ol Bric*riu*, 'ōl na

149long*ud* na codl*ud*[374] co farcaibsib[375] mo tecsa[376] am*al* fodrarnecbab*air*[377] ar ŭ*ar*[378] cin*n*.' Atarecat[379]

150lāi̇t gaili Ul*ad* uli[380] isin tic*h* la sot*ain*[381] 7 do-b*er*ad[382] trīamni d*in* tic*h*[383] 7 nī t*ū*rcaibset[384] cid co

151tīsiud[385] gáed*h*[386] *eter* é[387] 7 talm*ain*[388]; robo ces[389] d*ano* f*or* Ult*u* a*n*ni sen.[390] '*N*ochon*am-ta-sae*[391]

152sa*m*laid[392] daib,' ol S*en*ch*ai,* '*acht* a*n*[393] *fer* fod*r*acaib clōe*n*,[394] aidcid[395] f*ri*s a f*ā*cb*ā*il d*ī*riuc*h*.[396]'

153   Atmb*er*tatar[397] Ul*aid* f*ri*a[398] Co*in* Cul*aind* īersuidi a tech do dīrg*ud*[399] 7 asmb*ert*[400] Bric*riu*:

154'A rī lāech nĒr*end*,' ol[401] se, 'mani dīrge-se[402] corub[403] cōir, nī*con*[404] fil isan[405] dom*un* nod dīrgi.[406]'

155Doradsad[407] Ul*aid* uli imp*id*i f*air* im tūasluc*ud*[408] na cesta. At*raigh*[409] Cū Cul*ainn* la sod*ain,* na

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367LU: asbert.
368LU: friu.
369LU: toch*o*mlodsa.
370LU: fleid.
371LU: for.
372LU: mo thech.
373LU: is.
374LU: ɫ longud ɫ chotlud.
375LU: co fargbaid.
376LU: mo thecsa.
377LU: fondrancaibair.
378LU: for bar.
379LU: Atregat.
380LU: laith gaile fer nUl*ad* uli.
381LU: la sodain.
382LU: doberat.
383LU: don tich.
384LU: nír thúargaibset.
385LU: co tisad.
386LU: gáeth.
387LU: etorro.
388LU: tal*am*.
389LU: cheist.
390LU: aní sin.
391LU: nochonom thasa.
392LU: *om*.
393LU: in.
394LU: co claen.
395LU: aitchid.
396LU: co diriuch.
397LU: asbertatar.
398LU: fri.
399LU: dirgiud.
400LU: asbert.
401LU: for.
402LU: dirgisiu.
403LU: corop.
404LU: nocon.
405LU: isin.
406LU: nod ndirgi.
407LU: doratsat.
408LU: im thúaslucud.
409LU: afraig.

156bed*is*[410] lucht[411] na fl*ed*i ci*n* ōl, ce*n* tomailt[412]. Dorat īer*om* Cū Cul*ainn*[413] tr*ī*amni[414] don tic*h* d*i*e

157tūr*c*aib[415] 7 for*é*mid.[416] Ro riast*r*ad ime[417] īersuid*i*i, ro bai[418] bandoi[419] folai a[420] mbu*n* ce*ċ*[421] finnai

158doa[422] 7 r*us*sūid[423] a folt i*n*da c*end con nd*er*na sūas moel cas cirdub d*i*a raba f*air*[424] 7 rongab[425] a

159mbri[426] brō 7 ro sīniu[427] īersuid*i*i co taldf*ed*[428] fert*r*oich ferocl*aig et*ir cech[429] da asnai d*i.*[430]

160   Tū*ar*caib[431] a tech īersuid*i*i 7 forruirim[432] co rró*acht*[433] a dīrgiu[434] cednai.[435] Ī*er*sin t*r*a coisc*ter*

161an slū*ag*.[436] B*er*id Senq*h*u br*et* dona mnāib .i. Em*er ar* tūs isa tec*h* 7 in d*i* mnaī ali gūal*aind* f*ri*

162gūal*aind* ind. Rofas da*no* i*n* im*ar*bāid*h* c*ēt*na dona mn*āib* isi*n* tic*h* īer rīachtain an don*aid*. Bat*ar*

163iar*om* in*n* f*ir* do imḟost*ud* 7 an fed, la sod*ain con* ērracht Se*n*ċae:[437]

164   .r. 'Co-taim-sechai*m*[438],' fo*r* se,[439] 'a laīchi*u*sai

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[410]LU: betis.
[411]LU: áes.
[412]LU: tomoltus.
[413]LU: Cu C*h*ulaind.
[414]LU: triam.
[415]LU: dia t*ur*cbáil.
[416]LU: foremmid.
[417]LU: immi.
[418]LU: co rabi.
[419]LU: banna.
[420]LU: i.
[421]LU: cacha.
[422]LU: dó.
[423]LU: ro súig.
[424]LU: a folt inna chend corbo súas maeldub demis chas chirdub ba fo*r*csi fair.
[425]LU: ro gab.
[426]LU: imbri.
[427]LU: ro síni.
[428]LU: taillfed.
[429]LU: cach.
[430]LU: do.
[431]LU: Tancatar a áes c*um*achta 7 a lucht adartha na doch*u*m 7 tuargaib.
[432]LU: forruim.
[433]LU: co ria*cht*.
[434]LU: a dirgi.
[435]LU: fesin inna cetna.
[436]LU: 7 bá sám doib iarom oc tochatim na fledi .i. na ríg 7 na toisig isindarna leith im Concobur clothamra im ardrig n-amra nUl*ad*. Ind rigna im- isind leith araill .i. Mugain Aitencaet*r*ech ingen Echach Fedlig ben Conchobair m*eic* Nesa. Fedelm Noíc*r*othach ingen Concobair .i. noí crotha no tadbantais f*ur*ri 7 bá aildiu cach cruth araili. Fedelm Foltchain da*no* ingen aili Conchobair ben Loeg*air*i Buadaig. Findbec ingen Echach ben Chethirnd m*eic* Fintain. Bríg Brethach ben Celtchair m*eic* Uthichair. Findige ingen Echach ben Eogain m*eic* D*ur*thacht. Findchaem ingen Cathbad ben Amargin Iarngiúnaig. Derb Orcaill ben Lugdach Riab nDerg m*eic* na Tri Find Emna. Emer Foltchain ingen Forcaill Manach ben Con Cul*aind* m*eic* Sualdaim. Lendabair ingen Eógain m*eic* D*ur*thacht ben Conaill Cer*naig*. Niab ingen Celtchair m*eic* Uthechair ben Chormaic Cond Longas m*eic* Concobair. Is lia t*ur*em tra 7 aisneis ina mboí dí degmnáib and chena.
[437]Dorala in tech ina ráithsechaib briathar ocna mnaib doridisi oc imarbaig et*er* a feraib 7 a siat fesni. Co folmaiset ind fir comergi debtha dorísi .i. Conall 7 Loeg*aire* 7 Cu C*h*ulaind. Atracht Sencha m*a*c Ailella 7 ro c*r*oith in c*r*aib Sencha 7 contoíset Ul*aid* uli fris conid and asb*eir*som oc cosc inna mban.
[438]LU: cotobsechai*n*.
[439]LU: *om*. for se.

165āna urdarcai airecdai[440] Ul*ad,*

166anat f*or* mbāg brīat*ra*[441]

167na banaict*er*[442] f*e*rgnūisiu

168i cūr*ad*[443] com*r*aictib

169t*ri*a ūailli āg*h*[444]

170*ar* is t*ri*e ci*n*[445] mba*n*

171bid f*er*na f*er* dloċtai(*n*)

172fír i n-urgal*aib,*

173im*m*ad mār galgat,

174co*m*lūt f*er*cloind*i*i,[446]

175ar is d*i*a ṁbōes*aib* brīgaib[447]

176bes doib do furcbad[448] nad rīccad,[449]

177im*m*sūid*i*ud nad *r*ance*t*.'[450]

178　　　　'D*eí*fir[451] dam*h*-sai[452] a S*e*nchai,' ol Em*er,*[453] 'bam[454] bensai curad cai*n* comr*amaich,*[455]

179cotngab*us* cru*ṫ* cēll, ō radamnad[456] a f*or*cetal ca*n* dīċeld,[457]

180 *eter* cles[458] f*or* anál*aib*

1817 aball cles[459] et sīab*ur* cl*es*

182et cles cūair

183et cles caid[460]

184et d*er*ccfild*iud*[461] err*ed* n*air*

440LU: airegda.
441LU: for mbriat*r*a bági.
442LU: na banaiter.
443LU: ccr*u*adaib.
444LU: tria úalle a nglond.
445LU: tria chin.
446LU: ferglunni.
447LU: dia mbrígaib báesaib.
448LU: dofurcbat.
449LU: nad íccat.
450LU: imsuidet nad rairget/cotobsechai*n* a laicesa/ana urdairci. is and asbert Emer oca frecra.
451LU: deithb*ir.*
452LU: damsa.
453LU: *om.* ol Emer.
454LU: uair isam.
455LU: *om.*
456LU: ro damnad.
457LU: cen dichill.
458LU: eter chles.
459LU: ubullchles.
460LU: cait.
461LU: dergfilliud.

185et gai bulcae

186et bāi braise

187et bruṫ n-gene

188et sían cūrad

189et rothcless[462]

190et fōebur cles[463]

191et drēm fri fogaisd[464]

192et dīrgiud creti for cāch n-aī.

193Ní ḟuigbidir[465] fer and conmesdur[466]

194a ōes 7 a fhās[467] et āinius[468] 7 aurlaŭra,[469]

195a cenēol, a guth, a gāes,[470]

196a gal, a gaisced,[471]

197a bruṫ, a būaidh,[472] a būaidris,[473]

198a foraim, a foimhsidhe[474],

199a fīanchoscur et a dēni co clius nōnbair[475]

200 fri Con Culoinn comcosmail.

201   'Fir, a ben,' or Conall[476] 'tāed[477] ille in gildai[478] clesuch sen, co comairsim.' 'Náidi,'[479] ol[480]

202Cu Culainn, 'am scīt[481] annossai,[482] cond-esar[483] biad 7 coro codlur.'[484] Ba fir do-som[485] anni sen,

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462LU: rothchles.
463LU: faeburchles.
464LU: fogaist.
465LU: faigbistar.
466LU: conmestar.
467LU: a ás.
468LU: a anius.
469LU: *om*. 7 aurlaŭra,
470LU: a guth a gáes a chenel.
    a anius a urlabra.
471LU: a ág a gal a gaisced.
472LU: a búaid
473LU: a búadirse.
474LU: fómsige.
475LU: a déni a tharpige/a fīanchoscur co cles nónbair.
476LU: fīr inna radisiu a ben for Conall Cernach.
477LU: táet.
478LU: in gilla.
479LU: nathó.
480LU: for.
481LU: scith.
482LU: aithbristi.
483LU: conda esur.
484LU: 7 coro chotlur ni dingon comlond.
485LU: ba fīr ém dosom.

203fodaigi*n* is *ed* lā[486] i*n*sin[487] *imm*a com-rainic[488] doso*m* *fr*isan Līad*h* *Macha,[489]* a[490] toib Linde in

204Let*h*.[491] Ro-sealaig[492] Cū *Chulainn* cuci,[493] co t*ar*ad a di lāi*m* i*m*a bráigit[494] co rr*ustair*mceld[495] tīr

205nE*r*enn fon ind*ussin*,[496] co toracht in adaic*h*[497] sen *con*a eoch ríetai les co tec*h* mBric*rend* a ndau*n*

206Rud*raige*.[498]

207   Is and as*mbert*[499] Cū Cula*inn*:[500] 'Ro-siri*us* andú[501] mōrbruġi hErin*n*,' ol se.[502]

208Breġa, Midii, Muiri*usc*, Murteme, Maċae, Magh Med*ŭ*ai, Cu*i*rrech Clet*ech* C*er*nai,

209Aidne, Aidli, Asul, Lia Linde Locharna. Fea, Femen, F*er*cnaie, Corun*n,* U*m*ald Irr*us*s, Cerai, Mao*n*

210Mag, Muc*raim*e Ten Mag*h*, Tulcai, Turedai, Tedba, Tlaċtgai, Tailtiu, Temair, Cualai, C*er*mnaie,

211Roirogneo, Roscre In*nu*.[503] Ferr li*m* cec*h* cl*es* codl*ud*.[504] Dili[505] li*m* longad oltas[506] cec*h* ní.[507]

212Tong*ui*[508] di[509] d*ia* toingi mo tūad[510] m*ad* am sāitiuc*h* bid[511] 7 codultai,[512] is[513] cles lim*m* 7 is[514] cluic*h*i

213dau*m*[515] com*r*ac f*ri*a[516] hōinf*er*.' 'Maid,' ol Concu*bar,* 'is lōr a fod atatai acair i*m*dell Bric*rend*.

214Tuct*ar* biaḋ as tech,' or se, '7 coisct*er* an imf*orr*āi*n* co tair i*n* fliḋ.'

215Dericn*et* sa*m*laid 7 ba sāi*m* doib*h* īersuidiu co cend trī lāa 7 teourai naidce.

486LU: láa.
487LU: andsin.
488LU: immanarnic.
489LU: Liath Macha.
490LU: hi.
491LU: Lindi Leith.
492LU: hi Sleib Fúait. Ro selaig.
493LU: cuci iar tichtain dó asind loch.
494LU: co ragaib etorro oc gleic.
495LU: coro thairmchellsat.
496LU: fon n-innasin.
497LU: in aidchi.
498LU: riata leis co Emain Macha.
499LU: asbert.
500LU: Cu C*h*ulaind ani seo.
501LU: indiu.
502LU: *om.*
503LU: Brega, Midi M*ur*esc M*ur*themni Macha Mag Medba C*ur*rech Cleitech C*er*na Lia Line Locharna Fea Femen
        Fergna Urros Domnad Ros Roigne.
504LU: Ferr ca*ch* cles cotlud.
505LU: diliu.
506LU: oldás.
507LU: cach ni.
508LU: tongu.
509LU: do.
510LU: mo thúath.
511LU:díamsa saithech bíd.
512LU: cotulta.
513LU: conid.
514LU: *om.*
515LU: lim.
516LU: fri.

§2.3: Translation

Bricriu however [was] in his upper chamber with his queen, the palace was observable to him from his compartment, how it was there.

He examined in his mind how he would proceed to incite the women as he had incited the men.

When then Bricriu had completed his examining in his mind, how he would proceed on that, it was that hour that Fedelm of the Noble Heart with fifty women came out of the palace outside after heavy drinking.

Bricriu saw her pass him.

'Well then, tonight,' said Bricriu, 'wife of Loegaire the Triumphant, Fedelm of the Noble Heart is not a nickname for you because of [the] excellence of your form and your intelligence and your tribe. Conchobar king of the province of Ulster [is] your father.

Loegaire the Triumphant [is] your husband but only I think it not too much for you that not a woman from the women of Ulster should come before you in the banquet hall and that the womenfolk of all Ulster should be retinue to you.

It is you who should go into the house first tonight, until aged of years you should enjoy the queenship over the women-folk of all Ulster.'

Fedelm leaves then over the three ridges from the house.

Lendabair daughter of Eogan mac Dertocht wife of Conall Cernach comes out thereafter, Bricriu addressed her thus saying:

'Hail, Lendabair,' said he.

'Lendabair[517] is not a nickname for you, you are the darling of the women and you are the object of desire of all the men of the world because of your splendour and your worthiness and your nobility.

The distance your husband carried to the warriors of the world for valour and form you carry to the women of the world and of Ulster.'

However great the deceit he carried onto Fedelm, he carried twice as much onto Lendabair in the same manner.

Emer came out then with fifty women.

'May you rest safely, Emer daughter of Forcall Monach,' said Bricriu, 'o wife of the man who is the best in Ireland, Emer Fair-hair is not a nickname for you; there is coldness with the kings and princes of Ireland around you, the distance the sun carried to the summit of heaven, you carry to the women of the whole world because of [your] appearance and wit and race, because of youth and splendour and eminence, because of glory and understanding and eloquence.'

However great the deceit he carried onto Lendabair, he carried twice as much onto Emer.

The three companies left then until they were on the same plain, that is, three ridges from

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517*Lénnan* = beloved.

the house and none of them knew the inciting by Bricriu.

They come to their house then.

A steadfast stately splendid procession onto the first ridge, scarcely carried anyone of them their foot beyond the other. The second ridge however was smoother and their proceeding was swifter then.

The ridge that was nearest to the house, this is where each woman kept up with her companion with difficulty.

And they raised their clothes to the rounds of their thighs to strive coming in the house first, because this was what Bricriu had said to each of them concerning the other; it is she who will be queen of the whole province whosoever will come to the house first.

Such was the amount of noise then at proceeding at striving for precedence of everyone of them before her companion as if it was the noise of fifty chariot-warriors who come there, and the whole palace shook and the warriors leaped to their weapons so that each of them came near to [killing] his companion in the house.

'Stop,' said Sencha, 'they are not enemies who came there but it is Bricriu who has brought strife between the women who have gone out. I swear what my tribe swears,' said he, 'if you do not close the house before them, our dead will be more numerous than our living.' The doorkeepers closed the door then. Emer daughter of Forcall Monach, wife of Cu Chulainn reached [the house] on account of [her] swiftness before the other women and put her back against the door and immediately addressed the doorkeepers before the rest of the womenfolk so that their men got up then in the house: every man of them [got up] to open [the door] for his wife so that it would be his wife who would come into the house first.

'The night will be bad', said Conchobar.

He struck his silver spike that was in his hand against the bronze pillar in the compartment so that the whole host sat down in their seats.

'Stop,' said Sencha, 'it is not a battle with weapons that will be done here but it will be a battle with words.'

Thereupon every woman went under protection of her husband and this is where they did the War of Words of the Ulster women.

Fedelm of the Noble Heart, wife of Loegaire the Triumphant, said:

'A free honourable womb conceived me,

from my family of equal standing,

I descended from the body of a queen and a king,

a form gracious of appearance

so that it is a pleasing form that is carried by me.

I am known for a beautiful form,

that was arrayed with the qualities of the Féni,

under honourable behaviour I produced chastity,

Mouse brown red-handed Loegaire,

a great number of vigorous, triumphant deeds

that he secures for the land of Ulster,

he smites the boundaries of common enemies,

he defends them, he protects them, he fights for them,

Loegaire [is] more renowned than warriors,

the great number of his victories that he beats over every warrior,

how could it not be her, Fedelm the Fair,

victorious of form, a guardian,

who should step before every woman

into the merry banquet hall.'

Lendabair daughter of Eogan mac Derthacht wife of Conall Cernach mac Aimergin said:

For I am with form, with wit, with appearance,

who turns a noble step, fair curly-haired,

into the merry banquet hall of the king

before the women of Ulster.

For he is my lovely husband,

triumphant big-bodied Conall

who turns an elevated desirable step

in front of fights pre-eminent before everyone,

He returns back to me beautifully with victories, with heads,

and he carries off swords of harsh battles of the Ulstermen,

he attacks every ford so that it is by his will, through his sword,

he destroys their fords, he fights their attacks,

destroying of warriors, a stone grave awaits

who(ever) dares to address the bright son of Aimergin,

For it is Conall because of the great amount of his victories,

who steps before every warrior.

How could it not be her, Lendabair, the lustre of everyone's eye who should step before every woman into the house of kings?'

Said Emer daughter of Forcall Monach wife of Cú Chulainn: (Let us make our meal, scholar)[518]

'My dignity includes beauty, wit, form,

vigour, accomplishments; every beautiful form is compared to me

so that it is [for] my noble eye that people stand still, for my face [and] countenance,

One does not find form nor correctness nor appearance,

One does not find intelligence nor generosity nor chastity,

One does not find vigour of love of noble lying down,

nor emotion that comes to me,

for it is because of me that all of Ulster sighs,

I am their darling of hearts,

it is clear: if I would be licentious in the presence of opportunity

there would be hardly a woman of them with her husband

from one day to another,

Cú Chulainn is my husband,

he is not a dog of weaknesses,

a drop of blood on his spear,

foam of blood on his sword,

lovely stained in blood is his body,

scars on his fine skin,

wounds on the sides of his thighs,

finely the appearance of his eye going backwards in his head,

finely does the clear eye observe forward,

ever-red [are] his eyes,

completely red [are] his wheel-rims,

very red [are] his saddle-covers,

he fights from ears of horses and breaths [of men]

he makes the salmon-leap of the hero beautifully,

he carries out the nine-men feat, the dark feat, the blind feat, the bird feat,

around his spear splashes of water

he carries out the nine-men feat

he smashes battles of blood strife

prostrating the world's proud bands

He smashes the horror of Adarcna,

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[518]As indicated in the 'Notes', this phrase is not part of the actual text, but a remark by a scribe.

He is the man who wastes away in bed,

He is the pit of the falling twists

It is in the shape of a woman in childbed

that all the Ulstermen sit down,

except my husband Cú Chulainn,

with dark blood, with a clear storm they liken him.

They are dirty foam-white,

they are foam-white impure flesh,

they are coarse chaff,

they are crimes of equal weight,

they are rattles of a weaver's beam's line,

I am ever-white cow-shaped,

it is in the shapes of cows and oxen and horses

that all the women of Ulster sit down except me.'

This then was what the men, who were in the house, did, Loegaire Búadach and Conall Cernach, after their warrior frenzy had sprung upon them after hearing the dispute of the women: They broke one of the poles of the palace opposite them outside, so that that was a road where their women came to them in the house. Cú Chulainn, however, lifted up the house in front of his compartment, so that the stars of heaven outside were visible under the wall from below, so that this was a road where his wife came and the three fifties of women together with her, that is her own fifty women and the fifty women each of the two other women, so that there would not be equality between her and the other women, because there was no equality between her husband and everyone. Cu Chulainn let the palace go down after that, so that seven man-lengths of wickerwork of the house went into the earth, so that the whole fort shook and the upper chamber of Bricriu was knocked down against the surface of the earth, So that Bricriu himself and his queen fell, so that they were on the dunghill of dung among the dogs. 'Alas!' said Bricriu, 'enemies have come to the fort,' as he rose quickly. And he walked around the palace, so that he saw how it was violated, so that it collapsed completely downwards. He beat his palms then and he was allowed in the house thereafter and there was not a man with the Ulstermen who recognised him as he was so soiled, so that it was from his speech that they recognised him.

Bricriu said then from the middle of the house: 'Not well did I prepare a feast for you, Ulstermen,' said he. 'My house is more dear to me than my whole household. It is *geis* for you,' said Bricriu, 'to drink or eat or sleep until you have left my house like you have found it before you.' All the warriors of Ulster in the house rise then and they bring a shaking to the house and they did not lift it up even so that the wind came between them and the floor; that was a debility upon the

Ulstermen then. 'I have nothing for you thus,' said Sencha, 'but the man who left it sloping, request him to leave it erect.' The Ulstermen said to Cú Chulainn then to erect the house and Bricriu said: 'O king of the warriors of Ireland,' said he, 'if you do not erect [it] so that it is even, there is not [anyone] in the world who erects it.' All the Ulstermen begged him to solve the problem. Cú Chulainn rose then, so that the guests of the party would not be without drink, without food. Cú Chulainn gave shakings to the house then to raise it and failed. There was distortion about him then, there was a drop of blood on the root of every hair of him, and he drew in his hair in his head so that the close-cropped head of jet-black curls was made of that [hair] which was on him and he took his striking anger upon himself and he stretched then until there would be room for the foot of a warrior between each of his two ribs.

He lifted up the house then and he placed [it] so that it reached its former straightness. After that the host was chastised. Sencha gave judgement to the women, that is Emer first into the house and the two other women shoulder to shoulder there. The same competition between the women in the house increased then after [they] reached the fort. The men were then restraining [them] and the hissing, then Sencha rose:

'I reproach you,' said he, 'o splendid,
celebrated, excellent warrior-wives of Ulster,
Let your proud words stop,
Let it not turn pale men's faces,
in warrior-battles,
through their proud fighting,
For it is through the crime of women,
that the shields of men are split,
men in conflicts,
strife of great warriors,
setting in motion wrathful indignation,
for it is with their frenzied powers,
it is customary for them that they begin what they do not finish,
that they demand what they do not get.'

'A distinction to me, o Sencha,' said Emer, 'I am the wife of a fine victorious warrior, and I took fine skill, after he conquered his teaching without neglect,
both the feat on breath
and the feat of the apple and the feat of the phantom
and the crooked feat

and the feat of the cat

and the bloody bending of a noble chariot-fighter

and the *gae bolgae*

and the benefit of boasting

and raging of birth

and the howling of warriors

and the disc-feat

and the axe-feat

and the climbing against the spear

and straightening of the body on each of them.

There will not be found a man there who could equal

his age and his growth and his splendour and his eloquence,

his race, his voice, his intelligence,

his valour, his skill at arms,

his fury, his excellence, his frenzy,

his course, his accuracy,

his hunting slaughter and his swiftness with the nine-men feat

against Cú Chulainn.'

'True, woman,' said Conall, 'let that crafty fellow come hither, so that we can meet him.' 'By no means,' said Cú Chulainn, 'I am weary now, until I have eaten food and until I have slept.' That was true to him, because it was that day on which he had encountered with him the Liath Macha, on the side of the Grey Pool.[519] Cú Chulainn crept towards it, and he put his two hands around its neck and they went round the land of Ireland thus, until he arrived that night with his domesticated horse with him to the house of Bricriu from the fort of Rudraige.

It was there Cú Chulainn said: 'I have traversed the great regions of Ireland today,' said he. 'Bregia, Meath, Muiresc, Murthemne, Macha, Mag Medba, Cuirrech Clethech, Cerna, Aidne, Aidli, Asul, Lia Linde Locharna. Fea, Femen, Fergna, Corunn, Umald Irruss, Cera, Maon Mag, Mucraime, Ten Mag, Tulca, Tureda, Tedba, Tlachtgai, Tailtíu, Tara, Cualai, Cermna, Roirogne, Roscre Innu. I prefer sleep to every trick. I choose food over everything. I swear by the god by whom my tribe swears that if I am filled with food and sleep, it is a feat with me and it is a sport to me to fight against one man.' 'Fine,' said Conchobar, 'it is long enough that you are preventing the feast of Bricriu. Let food be brought in,' said he, 'and let the mutual violence be restrained until the feast is finished.' They did thus and it was pleasant to them then until the end of three days and three nights.

519The phrase seems to be referring to a particular pool, which is why it is treated as a placename.

Chapter Three: Notes

Line 1:

gríanán: there is no unambiguous translation for this word in English. It seems to signify an upper chamber exposed to the sun.[520]

doa: The form used, *doa*, looks like *do* with a 3 sing. poss. pronoun. A possessive is untranslatable in this position. One should expect a 3 sing. conj. prep. masculine here. It is possible that this form is in fact a 3 sing. conj. prep. masculine; in Old Irish this is *dó*, but it is possible that the form *doa* was formed in analogy with the forms like occa (from oc), fíada (from fíad) and úasa (from úas). DIL gives an example of *foa* as the 3 sing. conj. prep. of *fo*.[521] In Old Irish this is *fó*. The example in DIL comes from LU, from *Fled Bricrenn*.

imdae: DIL suggests several translations.[522] The translation 'compartment' fits the context better than 'couch' or 'bed', because it seems from the context that both *imdai* and *gríanán* refer to the same enclosed space, namely the hiding place of Bricriu.

rítiġi: One would expect the form *rígthighe*, but the lenited g disappeared.

Line 2:

Ro-scrūit: This perfect from the verb *scrútaid* is not normally written with a palatal final consonant, but rather with a neutral final consonant as in LU. However, the palatal final consonant might be influenced by i-verbs like *léicid*: compare the late form *scruidiset* with palatal *d* in DIL.[523]

imcosaīt: The form is written without lenition of the *c*, instead of the expected form *imchossaít*. However, as will be seen below, lenition is more often than not ignored in the orthography of this manuscript.

deroine: This form is not mentioned by DIL s.v. *do-gní*, but it seems to be a 3 sing. perf. act. v. *do-gní*, compare the form *doróine* given by DIL s.v. *do-gní*. As will be seen below, the scribe often writes *de* or *di* for *do*.

ina mban ... ina fer: LU has *na mban... inna fer.* Note the genuine Old Irish article *inna*.

Line 3:

īerom: The scribe writes *e* for *a* here. He often does this. He is consistent in writing *īer* for *iar.*

Line 4:

di lluidii: This is a clear example of *di* for *do*, as mentioned above. The doubling of the *ll* might be a sign of lenition. It is a relative form of *do-luid*. A relative form for this compound verb is odd, but DIL gives more examples of relative forms for this verb, and notes that it has relative forms influenced by *téit*.[524] The second *i* at the end of *lluidii* is doubtful. The leg of the *d* is long. Often this

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520DIL s.v. *gríanán.*
521DIL s.v. *fo.*
522DIL s.v. *imdae.*
523DIL s.v. *scrútaid.*
524DIL s.v. *do-tét.*

stands for a meaningful *di*, but almost as often it seems that the sign simply signifies a *d*, not *di*. I have expanded this sign to *di* nonetheless, because it is doubtful whether it should be expanded or not and in this case the extra *i* does not influence the form.

ríġtiġ: Note that the lenited *g* is written here where it was omitted in line 1, although this time the lenition of the *t* is omitted.

Line 5:

Ataċí: The infixed pronoun is neuter instead of feminine. However, by the Middle Irish period, the infixed pronouns are confused.[525] Compare the form *addaci* in LU.

sece: There is a rather odd sign at the end of the line in the manuscript, that looks like an *i* or a spiritus, but it is out of line with the rest of the letters and too far away from the *c* to be a spiritus for the *c*. My suggestion is that this is a sign to indicate that speech begins. There are two more occurrences of an inexplicable sign at the end of a line, f.4vb, the eleventh line from below, and f.5rb the eighteenth line from below. The first indicates a new development in the story, the second indicates that speech begins. The form *sece* must be 3sg. conj. prep. masc. of *sech* 'past'. The c is not lenited so it could stand for *secce*, the 3 sing. conj. prep. fem., but as seen before, lenition is not always shown in the MS. and in the context it is more likely that *sece* stands for *sechae*, the 3sg. conj. prep. masc.

Maith sin: *Maith* is taken to be an interjection 'well'.

a*l*: The *l* is in superscript and seems to be in a different kind of ink, although this is difficult to see on the microfilm. This grants credibility to Sterns assertion that a later hand inserted the letter.[526]

Line 7:

céli: Stern does not transcribe the length-mark,[527] but it is definitely in the manuscript, above the l.

do mnāib: here the scribe writes *do* instead of *di*. Compare the note on line 4 *di lluidii.*

Line 9:

co aidne: DIL equals this with *caidche* in the LU version. As *adnae/aidne* seems to mean age(d),[528] *co aidne ais* could mean 'until [you are] aged of years' , in other words 'for the rest of your life'.

Line 10:

Tēd: The scribe often writes a *d* where one would expect a *t,* as is indicated in §1.4, where the orthography of the manuscript is discussed.

Line 11-12:

at-glādustar: The infixed pronoun is neuter instead of feminine; compare the note on line 5 *ataċí* above.

525Breatnach, 'An Mheán-Ghaeilge' 265.
526*Codex Vossianus* 156 n. 1.
527Ibid. 154 §18.
528DIL s.v. *adna(e)*.

Line 18:

Do-lluid: The stem of the *d* is longer here. In some places in the manuscript this means that *di* should be read, but an *i* is meaningless here and this is often the case, as well be seen from the remarks below. I will note places where the stem of the *d* is long enough to justify reading *di*, but where an *i* is meaningless, as is the case here. Compare *di lluidii* in line 4.

mban slān: There is a smear on either the microfilm or the manuscript itself, which makes *mban sla* hard to read. The contours of the letters are however still visible. It must have been hard to read already when Stern did his transcription because he places *an* between brackets,[529] although there seems to be space enough under the smear to justify the reading of *an*. The contours of the letters in combination with the context and the text in LU seems to point to the reading *mban sla*.

Line 19:

huaireᵭ: This word is, like its counterpart *húariud* in LU, named in DIL,[530] but without a definition. I have taken it to be a derivative of the word *úar*, 'cold'. This would fit the metaphor; the kings and princes of Ireland are cold because they are so far away from the sun.

Line 20:

do mnāib: Because the scribe often uses *do* where *di* or *de* is expected, it is tempting to take the reading of LU, *de*, as the correct reading here. But in view of the preceding *do rennaib* (LU) *do rennuib* (L.), it is more likely that *do* is indeed what is intended here.

Line 25:

fut*h*irŭi: The scribe of L. occasionally writes *ŭ* for lenited *b*. This is discussed in §1.4.

Line 28:

i: The scribe here writes *i* for *a*. See the section on orthography in §1.4 of this edition.

Line 29:

rie: L. often has the later form *re* instead of Old Irish *fri*.[531]

Line 32:

[aidid]: LU has *aidid* here, but L. omits this word. The *a* in *a cēli* is written at the end of the line, and *cēli* at the beginning of the next line. It is possible that the scribe had meant to write *aidid*, but moving on to the next line, picked up at *a cēli*. The phrase does not make good sense without *aidid* and therefore the word is supplied here between brackets.

Line 35:

tong*u*: Stern leaves this suspension stroke unexpanded,[532] probably influenced by the edition of Henderson, that reads *tong*.[533] Bergin and Best, in their edition of LU, read t*ongu*, however, and the

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529*Codex Vossianus* 154 §19.
530DIL s.v. *úaired, úairiud.*
531DIL s.v. *fri.*
532*Codex Vossianus* 155 §21.
533FB 20 l. 21.

idiom requires *tongu* here.[534] This phrase is well known from literature. It is the most typical example of the swearing formulae that occur in Irish literature preceding 'a solemn declaration, a promise to perform some deed or (...) a naked threat.'[535] The phrase is discussed in detail by Ruairí Ó hUiginn, who states that the phrase is influenced by Christian culture.[536] John T. Koch, on the other hand, equates the phrase with Welsh and Gaulish cognates and comes to the conclusion that the phrase is pan-Celtic and thus pre-Christian.[537] Whatever the origin of the phrase, the abundance of examples in both articles makes it clear that the phrase is very common in Old and Middle Irish literature and that there is every reason to expand *tong-* to *tongu*.

toingi: The relative form expected in this idiom is *toinges* but *toingi* could be a corrupted form of the relative: compare the example *tonga do dia toingi Ulad* from Yellow book of Lecan reading of TBC2 704.[538] In the TBC2 the relative has a plural subject, *Ulad*; here in *Fled Bricrenn* it has a singular subject, namely *mo thūath*, but the relative used in both cases is corrupt either way, and I have taken *toingi* here as a corrupted form of the 3 sing. relative.

Line 36:

b*it*: Stern expands b*ud*,[539] but I follow LU here and expand to *bit*, a 3 pl. future of the copula, taking *ar mairb* to be a plural subject.

B*it* ... mbī: This seems to be an expression: compare the phrase in Togail Bruidne Da Derga: *Tongu a toinges mo thúath, bid lia a mairb lais na hoirgne andáta a mbí.*[540]

Íadaid: The following subject makes it clear that this verb should be a 3 pl. and that the *-d* stands for *-t* here. As explained in the note on *tēd* in line 10, this is not unusual for this MS.

Line 37:

R*u*ssai*d*: The *d* should probably be read as *gh*. The sound of lenited *d* and lenited *g* fell together so that the letters became confused in Middle Irish.[541]

***Conqu*lain**: The scribe of L. here writes *q* for *c*. This is common in this manuscript, as is explained in the section on the orthography of the manuscript in §1.4.

Line 38:

conē*rgit*is: Stern does not expand this suspension stroke,[542] This suspension stroke is left unexpanded, but it is possible to expand to *conērgitis*, the 3 pl. ind. impf. of *con-éirig* 'arises, gets

534As becomes obvious from the titles alone of Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'Tongu do dia toinges mo thuath and related expressions', *Sages, Saints and Storytellers, Celtic Studies in honour of professor James Carney* ed. Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone, Maynooth Monographs 2 (Maynooth 1989) 332-341. And John T. Koch , 'Further to tongu do dia toinges mo thuath &c.', *Études Celtiques* 29 (1992) 249-260.

535Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'Tongu do dia toinges mo thuath and related expressions', *Sages, Saints and Storytellers, Celtic Studies in honour of professor James Carney* ed. Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone, Maynooth Monographs 2 (Maynooth 1989) 332-341: 332.

536Ibid. 340.

537John T. Koch , 'Further to tongu do dia toinges mo thuath &c.', *Études Celtiques* 29 (1992) 249-260: 260.

538DIL s.v. *tongaid*.

539*Codex Vossianus* 155 §21.

540Eleanor Knott (ed.), *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* Mediaeval and Modern Irish series 8 (Dublin 1983) 24 l. 801.

541Breatnach, 'An Mheán-Ghaeilge' 234-235.

542*Codex Vossianus* 155 §21.

up'.[543]

Line 39:

firu: Note the use of the accusative plural instead of the nominative plural here. The nominative occurs in place of the nominative and vice versa in Middle Irish.[544] Although the accusative is rarely used for the nominative with nouns like *fir* there is at least one other example: in the prose version of *Immram Snédgusa 7 maic Ríagla*, 'The voyage of Snédgus and Mac Ríagla': *gairmthir chuice Firu Roiss*[545] 'and the men of Ross are summoned to him'.[546]

Foslucud: the *f* is inorganic.

ria*n*a [mn]aī: It is clear that something is missing in the text. Rianaai is not a word. Following Stern[547] I supply [mn] here to make the line meaningful.

Line 40:

clōua: This is a form of *clobae* 'nail, spike'[548] with a lenited *b* written as a *u*. This happens often in this manuscript, but usually the lenited b is represented by ŭ, compare the note on *futhirŭi* in line 25, and the section on orthography in §1.4 above. LU reads *cló* 'nail, spike'[549], but in the text *Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDuíl Dermait* the word *clobae* is used for the same instrument.[550] Windisch, in his edition of that text, notes that the instrument is described not only by the words *cló* and *clobae*, but also by *flesc* and *cráeb sída*.[551]

Line 41:

desiuta*r*: This is a perfect of the verb *saidid*, that takes deponent flexion in the preterite and *de-en* instead of *ro*.[552]

Line 42:

sotain: Stern transcribes a *d*,[553] but it is without doubt a *t*. The word should be written *sodain*, but as indicated in the section on orthography in §1.4 above, the manuscript often writes *d* where one would expect a *t*, so it is not very surprising that the opposite occurs as well.

Line 43:

bria*t*harchaith*: Above this word there is some scribbling in the MS. that are impossible to read. I can distinguish an *o*, but that is all I can make of it. Stern does not mention them.[554]

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543 DIL s.v. *con-éirig*.
544 Breatnach, 'An Mheán-Ghaeilge' 242.
545 Whitley Stokes 'The voyage of Snedgus and Mac Riagla' *Revue Celtique* 9 (1888) 1-14: 16.
546 Ibid. 18.
547 *Codex Vossianus* §21.
548 DIL s.v. *clobae.*
549 DIL s.v. *cló.*
550 Kaarina Hollo (ed.), *Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDuíl Dermait and its place in the Irish literary and oral narrative traditions*, Maynooth Medieval Irish Texts II (Maynooth 2005) 52 §3.
551 Whitley Stokes and Ernst Windisch *Irische Texte zweite Serie 1. Heft* (Leipzig 1884) 174 n. 3.
552 GOI §534.
553 *Codex Vossianus* 155 §21.
554 Ibid.

Line 44:

as-bert: Stern transcribes *isbert*,[555] but although the preverb is barely visible in the MS., there is enough room for the expected *as* and I think I see the contours of an a.

Line 45:

codum-b*ert*-sa: According to DIL, *con-beir* is a calque on Latin *concipere*.

Line 53:

luċdon*n*: Thurneysen translates *luchthond*, the version of the word in LU, as *Mäusehaut*,[556] but DIL ranges *luchthond* under *luchdonn*.[557] The form *luchdonn* also appears in the Metrical Dindshenchas about Alend: *Luchdond letrad lecne líach*. Gwynn translates: 'Luchdond, grievous scarring of cheeks,'.[558] In his notes he remarks: 'I have not found the name Luchdond among the Leinster genealogies. It is perhaps rather an epithet than a proper name.'[559] I have translated *luchdonn* rather than *luchthond* because that is what L. has. I think the version in L. must be preferred, because it also occurs in another text.

Line 56:

The reading of this line is different from the reading in LU. *Áurslaid* according to DIL comes from the verb *ar-laide*, but it only gives two examples: one of them is this occurrence, the other one the occurrence later in Fled Bricrenn.[560] *Conmnart*, the word that LU adds or L. omits means 'very strong'.[561] I am not sure why the verb is different. *Ar-slig* seems to be more common.

Line 57:

airri: Final vowels are written with different letters in this text, so that it is obvious that they have already become *schwa*. In Middle Irish all unstressed short final vowels turn *schwa*.[562] Therefore I have translated *arriu* 'for them' rather than *airri* 'for him'. The reading of LU airriu supports this translation.

Line 58:

airdercai: LU has *airdercu*, the comparative of *airderc*, and that is the best way that this form can be explained. The ending *-ai* can be explained by the weakening of unstressed short final vowels.

Line 59:

ŭūaḋai: This is another example of *ŭ* for a lenited *b*. Compare the notes on line 25 and line 40 and of course the section on the orthography of the manuscript in §1.4.

Line 61:

555*Codex Vossianus* 155 §21.
556Thurneysen, *Sagen aus dem alten Irland* 35.
557DIL s.v. *luch*.
558Edward Gwynn (ed.), *The metrical dindshenchas part II* Todd Lecture Series 9 (Dublin 1903) 80-81.
559Ibid. 108.
560DIL s.v. *ar-laide*.
561DIL s.v. *comnart*.
562*An Mheán-Ghaeilge* 230.

buageltach: The meaning of this word is unclear. DIL gives the tentative translation 'guardian'.[563]

Line 67:

cobletar: this form is very unclear. It looks like either a deponent relative form, or a passive relative. Henderson suggests that this is *con-velet-,* connected to Welsh *gweled* 'to see', and translates *should be seen*.[564] Thurneysen translates *die den Edeln Schritt* (...) *zu des Königs Tech Midchuarda lenke*[565] 'who turns the noble step to the king's Tech Midchuarda'. I follow Thurneysen here, because his translation fits the context of both occurrences of this word best. Compare the occurrence of this word in line 72.

curcastai: *Casta* means 'curly'.[566] DIL mentions that it is a term often used when describing hair twists.[567] I have translated 'curly-haired' here.

Line 71:

credmaír: DIL suggests 'big-bodied': *crett + már*.[568] The representation of *tt* with *d* is strange, but *crett* is also found as *creit* or *cret* with a single *t*.[569]

Line 72:

adguide: DIL suggests 'desirable', a meaning that seems the most likely in the light of *guide* 'prayer' and *asa-gúsi* 'desire', that is also found as *ad-gúsi*.[570]

Line 76:

ar-saíd: The lenited *d* makes it possible that one should read *ar-saigh*, 'goes towards'.[571] Although LU also reads *ar-said*, this word has only a tentative translation in DIL as 'holds'.[572] The meaning 'goes towards, attacks' fits the context better and, although this whole phrase is doubtful, it means that this line and line 77 give a more meaningful translation together.

tul: DIL names this phrase as under *tol* 'will' as an example of the idiom *do thoil* 'by the will of...'[573] Another possible explanation is that this is the word *tul* 'shield',[574] which would make a nice contrast with *targlai*, 'through his sword', if the interpretation of that phrase is right. On the other hand, rhetorically 'by his will' is a very strong statement; the fords can only be held if Conall wishes them to be. For that reason the translation 'by his will' is preferred here.

targlai: This phrase is doubtful. *Tar* might be the preposition *tar* 'over, through',[575] but *glai*, LU *glaí*, is more obscure. It can possibly be interpreted as a word meaning 'sword'. DIL refers to *glaí*

563DIL s.v. *bó*.
564FB 159 §23.
565Thurneysen, *Sagen aus dem alten Irland* 35.
566DIL s.v. *casta*.
567DIL s.v. *caurchasta*.
568DIL s.v. *credma(i)r*.
569Ibid.
570DIL s.v. *adguide*.
571DIL s.v. *ar-saig*.
572DIL s.v. *ar-said*.
573DIL s.v. *tol*.
574DIL s.v. *tul*.
575DIL s.v. *tar*.

under the word *gláede* 'dagger',[576] but gives nothing under *glaí*. Because of the context and this connection I translated this word as 'sword'.

Line 77:

ar-slai̇t: although in LU this word apparently also had *arslaith* originally, this word seems to be a compound verb based on the simple verb *slaidid*.[577] *Slaidid* means 'destroys' and this meaning makes good sense in the context.[578] It is possible that the *ar-* was added to create repetition: *ar-sai̇d, ar-slai̇t, ar-fich*.

Line 80:

cern: The reading of L. here is superior to that of LU. LU has *cerd* 'skill, feat'.[579] But *cern* 'victory'[580] is an allusion to the epithet of Conall, 'Cernach'.

denum ar cuid a scol: This line is not in LU. I have not been able to check if the other manuscripts have this remark. The scribe of L. at the very least was aware of the fact that this did not belong to the text; the remark is scribbled at the end of the column, not in line with the rest of the text.

Line 87:

Co-tum-gabu-sa: DIL suggests, with a question mark, that the version of this word given in LU, *cotomgabasa* is a 3 sing. pres. subj. act. from the verb *con-gaib* 'contains, includes, keeps'.[581] In this case, this form would have an infixed pronoun 1 sing. class B and an emphasizing pronoun 1 sing. The reading in L. could, with a different division, be a preterite: *co-tom-gabus-[s]a*. But in that case the infixed pronoun does not make any sense, and from the context it seems that Emer speaks about the present, not the past. I have translated it as a present subjunctive for that reason. The meaning remains rather unclear. *Cēm*, which must be the word *céim* seems to be subject, in the meaning 'dignity',[582] I supply 'my'.

Line 88:

bá*igth*ir: Stern reads bát-*h*ir.[583] He does not expand the suspension stroke. But although the major part of the suspension stroke is above the *t*, it is slightly above the *a* as well. If *ig* is supplied after *bá*, L. has the same reading as LU. Because there is also a length mark, half above the *b* and half above the *a*, it seems likely that the suspension stroke is written a little out of place in order to make room for the length-mark. There is nothing sensible that could be supplied after the *t*, but *ig* after the *a* makes good sense. As Joanne Findon points out, this speech is reminiscent of Emer's speech in *Tochmarc Emire*[584] and this phrase is an interesting example of that: compare the phrase *conid*

576DIL s.v. *gláede*.
577DIL s.v. *ar-slaid*.
578DIL s.v. *slaidid*.
579DIL s.v. 1 *cerd*.
580DIL s.v. 3 *cern*.
581DIL s.v. *con-gaib*.
582DIL s.v. *céim* (h).
583*Codex Vossianus* 156 §24.
584Findon, *A woman's words* 79.

chucum bágthair cach ndelb sóer 'so that every noble form is judged in comparison with mine'.[585] This example is given in DIL as one of the 'miscellaneous' definitions of *báigid*. For that reason I have translated *báigthir* here with 'is compared'.

delŭ: this is the word *delb*, with lenited *b* again written as *ŭ*, compare the notes on line 25, line 40 and line 59, and the section on the orthography of this manuscript in §1.4 above. In Best and Bergin's edition of LU, *delbchaín* is a compound, but in L. there is clearly a space between the two words, so I have transcribed it as two words rather than a compound.

Line 89:

setae: The meaning of this line is obscure. *Setae* as it stands does not make sense at all. The reading in LU *setta* and the occurrences of *sedda* in the last lines of the poem are taken by DIL to be the 3rd plural relative form of *saidid* 'sits down' but also 'stands still'.[586] That is what I have translated, taking *doine* as subject and adding 'for' in the English translation to 'my noble eye'. The idea could be that people stand still to admire Emer, amazed by her beauty, but I am not sure of this line. It is very obscure.

gné: This word, meaning 'form' or 'countenance',[587] seems superfluous after *gnūse* 'face, countenance'.[588] It alliterates beautifully with that word, however, and I have supplied [and] in the translation to make it more meaningful.

Line 90:

In the MS. this line is scribbled between two lines. The correct position of the line is indicated by a round symbol with a dot in the middle.

Line 92:

sōerlidi*i*: here the *d* should probably be read as *g*. The reading of LU supports this reading. This line seems to refer to Emer's qualities in the bedroom. That is not very odd in the light of the following lines. This line as a whole might be an example of a type of alliteration like a chiasm: *lūd* alliterates with *lidii* and *serce* with *sōer*. This type of alliteration is discussed by Kaarina Hollo and David Sproule.[589]

Line 93:

conumticesi: *co* + infixed pronoun 1 sing. The *d* of the infixed pronoun is not visible, but in Middle Irish *-nd-* and *-nn-* fell together and this is occasionally reflected in the infixed pronouns after *co* as well.[590] *tice-si* is an interesting form. It looks like a 2 sing. pres. ind. prototonic of the verb *do-icc* with emphasizing pronoun 2 sing. *-si*. But that makes no sense in the context. LU has *thicse*, which seems to be a 3 sing. ind. pres. act. of do-icc, with an emphasizing pronoun first singular to

585DIL s.v. *báigid.*
586DIL s.v. *saidid.*
587DIL s.v. *gné.*
588DIL s.v. *gnúis.*
589Breatnach, 'Poets and poetry' 70.
590Strachan, 'The infixed pronoun in Middle Irish' 158.

emphasize the infixed pronoun in *conum*. That gives the translation 'that comes to me'. I cannot explain the *e* in L..

Line 96:

etarlam: this is a difficult word. DIL translates it, with a question mark, with 'opportune', but in one of the examples also with 'opportunity'.[591] The latter would fit the context best. *Fíad etarlam* could then mean 'in the presence of opportunity' in other words 'when I have the chance'.

Line 97:

bi*d*: There is an *i* squeezed in between the other letters, after the *b*. According to Stern it was inserted by a more modern hand.[592] On the microfilm it is hard to see, but the ink has a different colour than the rest of the letters and the position of the letter is very odd, so it is likely that this is indeed an inserted letter.

Line 98:

laili: The *a* of *alaile* is elided because of the preceding *co*.

line 100:

cū: Stern remarks in a note:[593] '*cu* MS. *mit einem Zeichen ähnlich einem griech. ω über dem u.*' It seems to me that Sterns ω is *co* written in another hand than the rest of the manuscript: it might be an emendation of *cu* by someone who misunderstood the phrase.

ces: In LU this word is lenited by *cú*, probably because the construction was felt to have the same close semantic relation as *Cú Chulainn*.[594] Because L. does not write lenition consistently, the fact that it does not lenite *ces* does not reveal anything.

Line 101:

crun*n*: this word should be lenited by the 3 sing. masculine possessive in *fora*. But it is unlenited in LU as well. It is possible that the possessive is 3 pl., but that makes no sense in the context.

Line 103:

a crū: the reading in LU gives reason to suspect that *i* is to be read here instead of *a*. Compare §1.4 above and the note on line 28.

Line 104:

Caoin: this word is written in superscript, in a colour of ink that is much lighter than the ink of the rest of the line, and it seems to be written in a different hand as well.

Line 106:

ro ċe*m*: this must be *ro* with the verbal noun of *cingid*, *céim* 'step'. DIL quotes this example. It should probably be translated with 'going' here.

Si*ar*: this word is written in a very thin superscript.

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[591] DIL s.v. *etarlam*.
[592] *Codex Vossianus* 156 n. 2.
[593] *Codex Vossianus*. n. 3.
[594] See GOI §232A.

Line 107:

Fualoing: The dictionary gives this line s.v. *Fúalang* 'frenzy'. However, it also specifically states that this word is never used for martial frenzy. Cú Chulainn's contortions are connected to his martial frenzy and so it is not likely that this word is used. All versions have an *i* in the last syllable, either *fualaing* or *fualoing*. If this is a noun there is no reason for it to be anything else than a nominative in this position. Also, since this line seems to be meant as a parallel to the previous line, one would expect a verb form in this position. Therefore it is more likely that this is the 3 sing. pres. ind. of the verb *fo-loing* 'supports, observes'[595]. That still leaves the a open for explanation. It can hardly be an infixed pronoun. One would expect a prototonic form of the verb, since the verb is not in initial position; compare the line above, *cain fet a rosc*, where *fet* is the conjunct form.

fuither: Stern expands *f-er* as *fider*[596] but it is not clear why. Following LU I have expanded *fuither*. Henderson equates this word with Latin *vitrium* 'glass'.[597] This makes sense in connection with the line before it, glass could be metaphorical for 'eye', and in the light of *glaine* 'clear', although the word is not mentioned as a Latin loan-word by Damian McManus.[598]

Line 108:

sīrderc: In connection with the preceding lines it is tempting to take *derc* as 'glance'.[599] But LU reads *sírderg* and it is clear that *derg* and *dercc* in line 109 and 110 respectively should be read as *derg* 'red',[600] which makes it more likely that the reading here should be 'red' as well. This makes a repetitive sequence of three different kinds of red, a powerful image.

a: This letter is squeezed in between the c and the s.

Line 109:

fondad: DIL remarks that this is some part of a chariot.[601] I have translated it with 'wheel rims' here, following David Greene, who discusses this and other words related to chariots in his article on the chariot in Irish literature.[602]

Line 111:

uib ech: In a light colour of ink an *l* is inserted between *uib* and *ech*. According to Stern this is a later hand,[603] and from the colour of the ink I would agree with him. LU does not have the *l* and it does not seem to belong here. Like *co* above, this is probably an incorrect emendation. As Stern remarks, the fact that the word *fer* is missing in this phrase has probably caused confusion between this phrase and the phrase *dofich uiblich tened 7 andlaich*. This phrase is found elsewhere in *Fled*

595DIL s.v. *fo-loing*.
596*Codex Vossianus* 157 §24.
597FB 160.
598Damian McManus, 'A chronology of the Latin loan-words in Early Irish' *Ériu* 34 (1983) 21-71.
599DIL s.v. 2 *derc*.
600DIL s.v. *derg*.
601DIL s.v. *fonnad*.
602David Greene, 'The chariot as described in Irish literature' *The Iron age in the Irish sea province* ed. Charles Thomas C.B.A. Research Report 9 (London 1972) 59-73: 64-66.
603*Codex Vossianus* 157 n. 1.

Bricrenn, LU l. 8677.[604] The phrase is found in L. in its proper place as well, as can be seen in the transcription by Stern §51.[605]

[fer]: This word is supplied to make the line more meaningful. Compare the previous note.

Line 111:

inn aoīb: *aoīb* is possibly *oíb*, 'beauty'.[606] Although the idiom with adverbial meaning is *co n-aíb*, *inn aoīb* is here translated with adverbial force.

Line 113:

at-etha: Originally this is the verb *ad-etha*, but it is almost always found with the Middle-Irish pre-verb.[607] I have translated 'goes towards' in the sense of 'carries out' here.

cles nōnŭair: This seems out of place. It is repeated in line 115, where it should be according to LU. For the lenited *b* written *ŭ* in nōnŭair, see also the section on orthography in §1.4 and compare the notes on line 25, line 40, line 59 and line 88.

Line 114:

usq*i*: *q* for *c*. See also the section on the orthography of this manuscript in §1.4 and compare the notes on lines 37, 68, 82 and 86.

Line 115:

nōnbair: note that the lenited *b* is written as a *b* here again, as opposed to line 113.

Line 117:

fālgaḋ: This is probably the verbal noun *fálgud* 'prostrating' from the verb *fo-álgi*.[608] The form in LU, *falgai* is more likely the 3 sing. pres. ind. of this verb.[609]

beṫa: The b is written in very small superscript. It is clearly added after the line was written, but judging from the form of the letter and the colour of the ink, it was added by the same scribe that wrote the line, directly after the line as a whole was written. Probably the scribe corrected himself.

Line 118:

n-etergnai: This word is very strange. In LU it is *adarccna*: L. has an *e* where LU has *a*, *t* where LU has *d* and *g* where LU has *c*. These are all orthographical variations that seem to be peculiar for LU. Therefore, following Draak and de Jong as well as DIL,[610] this word is taken as a proper noun.

Line 119:

ṡergi*us* siṫ: Stern transcribes *ṡergui siṫ*,[611] but when I took another close look at the microfilm I had to conclude that what seems like a strange *u* with an *i* in subscript is in fact an *i* with the symbol for *us* (;), which is used often in this text. As *ius* in this manuscript can stand for *es*, compare *cingius*

604*Codex Vossianus* 157 n. 1.
605Ibid. 163 §51.
606DIL s.v. *oíb*.
607DIL s.v. *at-etha*.
608DIL s.v. *fálgud*.
609DIL s.v. *fo-álgi*.
610Draak and de Jong *Feestgelag van Bricriu* 20; DIL s.v. ? *adarcna*.
611*Codex Vossianus* 156 §24.

instead of *cinges* in line 81 and *clius* for *cles* in line 199, *serguis* could be a variant of the 3 sg. pres. ind. rel. of *sergaid* 'becomes obsolete, wastes away, withers away',[612] compare the variant *seirgeis* in LU, which is given as an example under *sergaid* in DIL, and *sergis* in Eg., the variant that Henderson quotes in *FB*.[613] The form in LU is peculiar because it is a form of the variant of the verb *seircid* which occurs in the Old Irish glosses.[614] However, L. has *sit* in superscript in the manuscript. The ink is much lighter and it seems that this is a later addition. It might be that *sit* is to be taken separately as *síth*, 'fairy hill'[615] although it is hard to accommodate this grammatically in the sentence. Another possibility is that this is a form of *sercaigid* 'loves' but none of the manuscripts have the second *g* of this form. I have left *sit* untranslated and translated *sergius* as a present relative of *sergaid*.

a: this should be read as *i* again. See the section on orthography in §1.4, and compare the note on lines 28 and 103.

llidi*i*: Read lligii. See §1.4 and compare the note on line 37 *russaid* and line 92 *sōerlidii*. The second *i* is expanded because of the long stem of the *d* again, but it seems to be without meaning here. Compare the notes on line 4 and line 18. Thurneysen notes that this line refers to the story of *Serglige Con Culainn* 'The wasting sickness of Cú Chulainn'.[616]

Line 120:

crōn: Note that LU has a length-mark for this word. In view of the next word *cutmai* I translated this word not as the adjective 'dark' but the substantive 'pit, hell, abyss'.[617]

cutmai: This is probably the genitive singular of the verbal noun *cutaim* 'falling'.

qu*airidi*i: Note the writing of *q* instead of *c* here again. See also §1.4 and compare the notes on lines 37, 68, 82, 86 and 114. It is surprising that the scribe should write a *q* here because it breaks up the alliteration, visually. The meaning of this word is uncertain. DIL s.v. *cúaride* gives a question mark.[618] I think it is connected with *cúar* 'twisted'. The line as a whole probably describes a story that has not survived into modern times, but that was well known to the contemporary public.

Line 122:

segdai: This is an odd form. Presumably the form in LU, *sedda* is the correct form, the relative of *saidid* 'sits down'.[619] The *-ai* ending could be relative as well, compare the examples given in DIL. But the *-gd-* is odd. This could be due to the confusion of *g* and *d* discussed in the section on orthography in §1.4. Compare the note on line 37 *russaid*, line 76 *ar-said*, line 92 *sōerlidii* and line 119 *llidii*. Alternatively, the form in L. could be the relative present of *saigid*, 'goes towards,

612DIL s.v. *sergaid*.
613*FB* 28 l. 12.
614Ibid.
615DIL s.v. 1 *síd*.
616Thurneysen, *Sagen aus dem alten Irland* 36 note.
617DIL s.v. *crón*.
618DIL s.v. *cúaride*.
619DIL s.v. *saidid*.

attacks'.[620] This would not really make sense, because the Ulstermen do not attack. They cannot attack, because they are in the shape of a woman in childbed. So the translation 'sit down' is to be preferred.

Line 123:

co rrice: this is a petrified form of the 2 sing. pres. ind. of *ro-icc*, meaning 'except'.[621]

Line 124:

crō ndon*n*: the reading of LU, *cró dond*, influenced the division of the words here. The word *crú*, blood, that is probably meant here, is neuter.[622] Therefore it is possible that it nasalizes the following adjective.[623] That is a smooth solution for an otherwise very obscure line, although it is odd that the nasalization is not written in LU, and that the adjective *glé* is written without nasalization. This makes it likely that *glé* does not belong to *cró*, but to *sīn*. *Sīn* could be sín, 'storm, bad weather'.[624] This line and the following lines are very obscure, and the translation can be nothing but tentative.

samlait*ir*: the dot after this word in L. seems to point to a change of theme. Therefore it is possible that the subject of this verb is Cú Chulainn, and that *samlaithir* should be read, a passive singular, instead of *samlaitir*, a passive plural. However, none of the manuscripts have the *h*. It is possible that the verb here is still inflected as a deponent, which was the case in Old Irish.[625] In that case, this could be a 3 pl. ind. pres. dep., 'they liken'. Cú Chulainn could be the implied object of this verb, although it is somewhat strange that there is no infixed pronoun to express this object.

Line 125:

at: this word is taken here and in the following lines as the 3 pl. of the copula, in the form *at* instead of *it*.

uanain*n*: this word is written in superscript in the MS. The meaning of the word is unclear. LU has *úantaind*, but the other MSS. have *uanainn* too, apparently.[626] It might be a compound of *úan* 'foam' and *find* 'white'. There is a name, *Uanfind* or *Úanaind*, that is explained in this way by Meyer.[627] The meaning suits the context 'dirty foam-white' sounds like an insult for women who consider white as the perfect colour for their skins.

Line 126:

cr*i*salaich: it seems clear that the second part of this compound is *salach* 'dirty, foul, (morally) impure'.[628] DIL suggests that the first part is *cris* 'girdle',[629] but 'dirty-girdled' is very odd. It could

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620DIL s.v. *saigid.*
621DIL s.v. *ro-icc* e2.
622DIL s.v. *crú.*
623GOI §237A.
624DIL s.v. 1 *sín.*
625DIL s.v. *samlaid.*
626DIL s.v. *úantaind.*
627DIL s.v. 1 *úan.*
628DIL s.v. *salach.*
629DIL s.v. *cris.*

also be *crí* 'body, flesh, shape',[630] which would make 'foul-bodies' or 'impure-flesh'. It is still obscure, but it seems to fit the context better than 'dirty-girdled'.

Line 127:

caitlig: the first part of this compound is very probably *cáith* 'chaff, rubbish'.[631] The preceding word *gairb*, from *garb* 'coarse',[632] makes this even more likely. *Lig* is less obvious. Possibly it is the nominative plural from *lía* 'stone'[633] but 'chaff-stones' is not really anything. It is not translated.

Line 129:

crotli: *li* is in superscript. I have taken this word to come from *crothal* 'noise, rattle'.[634]

garmanlīne: The version in L. is superior to that in LU *garmilíne*. The first part of this compound is *garman* 'weaver's beam',[635] the second part is probably *líne* 'line' in a number of meanings.[636]

Line 130:

am: in view of the preceding lines, the reading of LU *at* seems to be better. But it is possible that Emer is making a contrast here; as opposed to all the pejorative metaphors she uses for the women, she uses an obscure, but much more positive metaphor here. Note that, according to Henderson, *H* has *am* as well.[637]

buanann: DIL remarks that *búanann* is a fountain or a goddess, but neither seems to be meaningful here. It explains the word as a compound of *búan* 'ever-'[638] and *finn* 'white'.[639] They are ever-white cow-shaped makes sense, if Emer is comparing herself to a beautiful, fertile cow, as opposed to the other women, especially in view of the 'foam-white' in the lines above.

Line 133:

dogensad: L. spells *d* for *t* here again, this is certainly a plural verb. See also §1.4 and compare the spelling in LU and the notes on the lines 10 and 36.

an: this is the genuine masculine plural article *ind* and not the Middle Irish article *na* as is proven by the spelling in LU *ind*.

Line 134:

russleblaing: This is the Old Irish perfect based on the reduplicated preterite from *lingid* 'springs'. Note that it has not been replaced by the past based on the s-preterite yet. Also striking is the fact that L. has the infixed pronoun 3 pl. class C, which is necessary for the sentence, but omitted by LU.

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630 DIL s.v. *crí*.
631 DIL s.v. *cáith*.
632 DIL s.v. *garb*.
633 DIL s.v. *lía*
634 DIL s.v. *crothle*; DIL s.v. *crothal*.
635 DIL s.v. *garman*.
636 DIL s.v. *líne*.
637 *FB* 28 n. 19.
638 DIL s.v. *búan*.
639 DIL s.v. *white*.

lāich: this is another word for 'warrior'[640] than the word that LU uses, *laith*.[641] In combination with *lúan* 'frenzy', the expected word is *láith*.[642]

clūais: this word too is synonymous with *closin* in LU, both mean 'hearing', although judging from the examples *closin* is more rare.[643]

ro bristii: apparently the verb *brisid* 'breaks' also occurred as *bristid*,[644] but that still does not explain the form in L., because it ends in an -*i* and that is not very common for a regular preterite form. The form in LU *brisiset* is a 3 pl. s-pret. ind. conj. of *brisid*. *Bristi* can hardly be anything else than a 3 sing. pres. ind. conj. of *bristid*. That is impossible because it is preceded by *ro* so one would not expect a present tense, and the subject is Conall and Loegaire, so one would expect a 3 pl. verb. The *i* cannot be a suffixed pronoun either, because *bristii* is preceded by *ro* and therefor must be a conjunct form. Suffixed pronouns can only be attached to absolute forms.[645] I have no explanation for this.

do: the scribe writes *do* for *di* here again.

Line 135:

tic*h*i ri*ġ*dai: it is odd that L. has *tichi riġdai,* literally 'royal house' where LU uses a true compound: *rigthige* 'the palace'. L. uses the word *rigthige* in line 1 and 4, so he must have known the word. There is no reason for him to replace it.

d*i*lot*ar*: here the scribe writes *di* instead of *do*. He is not very consistent, but he often confuses the two preverbs or prepositions.

Line 137-138:

7 na t*r*i co͞ícad mba*n* im*m*ailli fr*i*a: this reading differs from that in LU *7 cóeca ban cechtarde na da ban aili 7 .l. ban a mná fodéin* 'and the fifty women of each of the other women and the fifty women of his own wife'.

Line 139:

mn*áiƀ*: the suspension stroke can only be expanded as a dative, because of the punctum delens that is over the suspension stroke. However, after *fri* one would expect an accusative, as is the case in LU. In Middle Irish, the declension of nouns was breaking up, and the cases that follow prepositions are used indiscriminately.[646]

niruo: Note the spelling *u* for lenited *b* here again. Compare the note on line 40 *clōua*.

dia fi*r*si: *firsi* could be from *firse* 'strength', but that is an archaic word.[647] The possessive in *dia* does not lenite, and although lenition is not consistently marked in this MS., the emphasizing

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640DIL s.v. *láech*.
641DIL s.v. *láth*.
642DIL s.v. *lúan*.
643DIL s.v. *clúas*, DIL s.v. *cloisin*.
644DIL s.v. *bris(s)id*, DIL s.v. *bristid*.
645GOI §429.1.
646Breatnach, 'An Mheán-Ghaeilge' 239-240.
647DIL s.v. 1 firse.

suffixed pronoun *si* makes it likely that this is a feminine possessive pronoun 'between her husband'.

fria: the possessive pronoun is probably influenced by *dia* because it has no meaning here.

Line 140:

Tolleci: The *to-* is probably due to the fact that the scribe of L. often writes *t* for *d*. It is not likely that it is a genuinely old form, there are no other examples of *to-* for later *do-* in the part of the text that is edited here.

i: *i* for *a*.

Line 141:

a *n*talmai*n*: the *a* should probably be *i* again here. It is odd that the nasalization is written as *n* before a *t*. It seems as if the scribe knew that *i/a* caused lenition, but he no longer knew how to reflect it in writing. *T* of course would turn into *d* if nasalized, a change that was not reflected in writing in Old Irish.[648]

Line 142:

co mbat*ar*: note that LU has the perfect here instead of the preterite.

isand ot*r*ach cacai: ' on the dunghill of dung', LU: *isind otruch for lar ind lis* 'on the dunghill in the centre of the court'. The reading in LU seems smoother. On the other hand the reading in L. stresses the fact that Bricriu and his queen – the lord and lady of the house – fell in a pile of not simply manure, but moreover *cacai* 'excrements'.[649]

na (na): The first na is the last word of the first line, the second na is the first word of the second line; this is probably an error, there should be one na.

***eter* na (na) conaib**: note that both manuscripts. have the dative plural instead of the accusative plural after *eter*. Compare the note with line 139 *mnáib*.

Line 144:

***co n*facai**: Note the inorganic *f* that is not in LU.

***con* tar*l*ae**: This reading is better than the reading in LU. LU has a meaningless infixed pronoun 3 sing. masc. class B. *Con* is unusual here, but as Thurneysen points out, can be used for *co*.[650]

fora* beol*u: this is idiom for 'face downwards'.[651]

Ad-soirc: The d is in both manuscripts, but I can not explain it. The root verb is a-soirc 'cuts, beats'. Perhaps a confusion of preverbs has taken place here, but

Line 145:

r*u*sai͏̈tgned: From *ad-gnin* 'knows, recognises' with *ro* and the Middle Irish infixed pronoun -*s*-. This is the Old Irish infixed pronoun 3 sing. feminine and 3 plural, but already in Old Irish it began

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648GOI §236.
649DIL s.v. *cacc*.
650GOI §896.2.
651DIL s.v. *bél*.

to spread and in Middle Irish it becomes the regular form.[652] Here it refers to Bricriu and so it is masculine. Compare the form in LU with relative instead of *ro*: *asaithgned*.

r*us* salch*ad*: This form is a 3 sing. pass. ind. pret. conj. from *salchaid* 'soils, dirties',[653] with an infixed pronoun 3 sing. masculine. The infixed pronoun is missing in LU: the infixed pronoun in L. is the Middle Irish pronoun discussed in the preceding note.

Line 147:

riu: this is probably for *friu*. Compare the note on line 29 *rie*.

Nī ma tarcoml*us*-[s]ai[654] f*l*eid: lit. 'not well did I prepare a feast'. This line is reminiscent of Culan's words in *Táin Bó Cuailnge*: *Messe, immurgu, ní mad airgénus fleid*.[655] 'I, however, not well did I prepare a feast' = 'I would that I had not prepared a feast'.

tarcoml*us*-[s]ai: This is a 1 sing. ind. perf. conj. from *do-ecmalla* 'gathers, prepares'.[656] An *s* should be supplied to read an emphasizing pronoun 1 sing. *-sa*.

Line 149:

farcaibsib: This seems to be the 3s. ind. perf. conj. of *fo-ácaib*, 'leaves',[657] with an independent personal pronoun 2 pl. *sib*.[658] It is translated as a 2 pl. perfect. The form in LU is a 2 pl. subj. pres. conj. with perfective stem; that seems more fitting here. This is not the only odd form in this sentence: compare the next note.

fodrarnecbab*air*: This is a very strange form of fo-ricc, 'finds'. The form in LU, *fondrancaibair*, is a corrupted form as well. *-babair* seems to be a late 2 pl. preterite form of *at-tá*.[659] The *d* is an infixed pronoun 3 sing. class B, referring to the house probably. The rest of the form seems to point to a 2 pl. perfective form of the verb *fo-ricc*.

ŭar: Note the use of *ŭ* for lenited *b*; see also §1.4 and compare the notes on line 25, line 40, line 59, line 88 and line 113.

Atarecat: There is clearly a *t* in bold ink. In lighter ink, the opening has been closed so that the letter is corrected to a *d*.

Line 150:

do-b*er*ad: the *d* should be read as a *t*. See §1.4. Compare the reading in LU and the notes on line 10, line 36 and line 133.

Line 151:

tisiuḋ: I take this to be a peculiar spelling for *tised*, the 3 sg. past subj. of *do-icc* 'comes'.[660]

652Strachan, 'Infixed pronoun in Middle Irish' 157.
653DIL s.v. *salchaid*.
654LU: toch*o*mlodsa.
655John Strachan, *Stories from the Táin* 3ʳᵈ ed., rev. Osborn Bergin (Dublin 1944) 9.
656DIL s.v. *do-ecmalla*.
657DIL s.v. *fo-ácaib*.
658GOI §405.
659DIL s.v. *at-tá*.
660DIL s.v. *do-icc*.

talm*ain*: note that L. has the accusative here, what would be expected after *eter*. But LU has the nominative *talam*.

***Nochon*am-ta-sae**: The MS. reads L-· but, since I do not have a better suggestion, I follow Stern[661] and LU in expanding *nochon* here. The first part of this form is *nochon*, a late form of Old Irish *nícon*, a stronger form of the negative;[662] in Middle Irish *nícon* was more often found with *o* in the first syllable and *ch* for historical *c*.[663] -*am* is the 1 sing. infixed pronoun class A. Infixed pronouns after *nícon* are not very well attested in Old Irish,[664] but later they are more common.[665] *Ta* is probably the 3 sg. ind. pres. conj. of *at-tá* 'to be'.[666] Finally, -*sae* must be the emphasizing pronoun 1 sg. The phrase as a whole means 'There is nothing with me', in other words, 'I have nothing'.

Line 153:

fria: the *a* seems to be meaningless here. Compare the note on line 139 *fria*.

Line 154:

nod: Stern ignores the *d* in his transcription,[667] but it is definitely there. This must be an infixed pronoun class C. An infixed pronoun class C is expected here because this is a relative clause. It is odd that the infixed pronoun should lenite in LU, because that would mean that it is masculine, and it refers to *tech*, a neuter word. However, in Middle Irish the neuter was on its way out,[668] so it is perfectly possible that a masculine infixed pronoun refers to a neuter noun.

Line 155:

Doradsad: both the *d*'s should be read as a *t*. See the section on orthography in §1.4.

Line 156:

lucht: this word means 'people, those belonging to',[669] the word *áes* in LU 'people, folk, those who'.[670] The words are synonymous.

Line 157:

tūrcaib: this is a 3 sg. ind. pres. conj. of *do-furgaib* 'lifts, erects',[671] but after *die* one would expect a verbal noun. LU has *turcbáil*, the dative singular of *turcbál*, the verbal noun of *do-furgaib*.[672]

Line 158:

doa: this stands for the conjugated preposition 3 sg. masc. *dó*. Compare the note on line 1 *doa*.

russūiḋ: this should be read as *ro suig*: compare the notes on line 37 *russaiḋ,* line 76 *ar-saiḋ*, line 92 *sōerlidii*, line 119 *llidii* and line 121 *segdai* and see §1.4.

661*Codex Vossianus* 158.
662DIL s.v. *nícon*.
663Breatnach, 'An Mhéan-Gaeilge' 280.
664GOI §420.
665DIL s.v. *nícon*.
666John Strachan, *Old Irish paradigms* 4th ed., rev. Osborn Bergin (Dublin 1949) 68.
667*Codex Vossianus* 158.
668Breatnach, 'An Mheán-Ghaeilge' 241.
669DIL s.v. *lucht* II.
670DIL s.v. 2 *áes*.
671DIL s.v. *do-furgaib*.
672Ibid.

r*uss*ūid a folt i*n*da c*end con* nd*er*na suas moel cas cirdub d*i*a raba fair: LU reads *ro súig a folt inna chend corbo súas maeldub demis chas chirdub ba forcsi fair* 'and he sucked his hear in his head so that it was a close-cropped dark head of tonsured jet-black curls that was overlooking him'.

Line 158-159:

rongab a mbri brō: this phrase is very obscure. Henderson emends this to *rongab imbrith brón*[673] 'taking upon him the motion of a millstone'.[674] There seems to be no evidence for this in any of the manuscripts. Thurneysen, too, translates *er drehte sich wie ein Mühlstein*,[675] 'he turned like a millstone'. DIL s.v. *?imbri* refers to a suggestion by Zimmer, who also emends to *imbrith brón*.[676] It seems rather odd that none of the manuscripts have the *th* after *imbri*, though. At least one other manuscript, *H* has an *a* instead of an *i* according to Henderson: *rongab ambribrofair*.[677] This makes clear that the first part at least is 'he took upon him', with a nasalizing infixed pronoun 3 sing. masculine. It also raises the suspicion that *a* is a nasalizing possessive pronoun 3 sing. masculine. That leaves *bri bró* as two separate nouns. *Bri* could be the noun 'wrath, anger, flame'[678] and *bro* as explained by DIL s.v. 4 *bró* 'striking, cutting'.[679] Alternatively, *bró* could stand for *breó* 'flame',[680] and *bri* could be translated as 'hill'. DIL mentions a phrase *breo os bri* referring to God.[681] In that case the phrase would be 'he took upon himself his flaming hill'. I translated 'he took upon himself his striking anger' because that seemed more apt in the context.

Line 159:

taldfed: this is taken as the same form as the form *tallfed* in LU, but with *-ld-* instead of *-ll-*.

Line 160:

a tech: note the genuine neuter article.

co rróacht: both *rróacht* in L. and *riacht* in LU. are spellings for the 3 sing. ind. perf. conj. of *ro-saig* 'reaches'.[682]

Line 160-161:

īersin t*ra* coisct*er* an slu*ag*: instead of this line, LU adds a long passage, starting with 'and there was peace with them then celebrating the party' followed by the catalogue of women, a long description of all the noble women present in the palace. As explained in the introduction, the passage in LU was probably an addition to the original tale.

Line 161-163:

B*e*rid Senq*h*u (…) erracht S*en*c̣ae: Again, the passage differs from that in LU, that reads: 'The

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673*FB* 32 l. 21.
674Ibid. 33 l. 22.
675Thurneysen, *Sagen aus dem alten Irland* 38.
676DIL s.v. *?imbri*.
677*FB* 32 n. 21.
678DIL s.v. 2 *bri*.
679DIL s.v. 4 *bró*.
680DIL s.v. *breó*.
681DIL s.v. 1 *bri*.
682DIL s.v. *ro-saig*.

house met the babbling of words between the women again at boasting between their men and themselves. So that the men attempted to rise up strife again that is Conall and Loegaire and Cu Chulainn. Sencha mac Ailella rose and shook his staff and all the Ulstermen turned to him and he said there reproving the women.'

dona mnāib: note that here and in the next line the article has lost its dative ending. In Old Irish this would have been *donaib mnáib*, but the dative plural lost its *b* after prepositions in Middle Irish.[683]

imḟost*ud*: Stern transcribes *domi fostud*. It is hard to see whether the MS. reads *mi* or *im*, but it seems to me to be more likely that it reads *im*. Note that the *f* is lenited, which supports the reading of *im*.

Line 164:

Co-taim-sechai*m*: *cotaim*: *co* + infixed pronoun 1 sing. is interpreted as *cotob*, *co* + infixed pronoun 2 pl., following the reading of LU. The scribe writes lenited *b* often as *u*, so he would hardly have had a problem writing it as an *m*. 'I reprove myself' makes no sense. 'I reprove you' makes much better sense.

Line 168:

curad: this is an attributive genitive meaning 'warrior-like'.[684] The form in LU *ccruadaib* is more obscure.

Line 171:

dloċtai(*n*): The suspension stroke indicating the final *n* has a stroke through it, as if it has been crossed out by a later hand, and indeed *dlochtain* makes no sense in this context while *dlochtai* 'split' does.

Line 177:

***ra*ncet**: this is taken to be a 3 pl. form of *ro-icc*, although it is rather odd. The expansion *et* is the most likely, because the manuscript has a *t* in superscript. LU continues after this line with 'I reproach you, splendid celebrated warrior-women.' This is a better ending for the *rosc* because it repeats the first lines of the *rosc*. Then LU has another line that is missing in L. 'It was there Emer spoke to answer him'. L. moves on to Emer's words immediately.

Line 185:

gai bulcae: This is the name of Cú Chulainn's most famous feat. It is generally left untranslated. The nature of the feat is not very well known, but it is better attested than the other feats, because it is a feat that is peculiar to Cú Chulainn. This is shown, for example, by the line in the *Táin Bó Cuailnge* 'The Cattle-raid of Cooley': *Ní baí ic Coin Chulaind cles ná beth aice acht mad cles in gaí bulgai nammá*[685] 'Cú Chulainn possessed no feat that Fer Diad had not, except only the feat of

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683Breatnach 'An Mhéan-Ghaeilge' 259.
684DIL s.v. *caur*.
685Cecile O'Rahilly (ed.), *Táin Bó Cúailnge recension I* (Dublin 1976) 78.

the *gáe bulga*.'[686] The first part is generally accepted to mean 'spear'. For *bulga* or *bolga* different translations have been proposed, ranging from 'bag' to 'lightning'. These suggestions are summarised by O'Rahilly,[687] who himself proposes the theory that *gae bulga* means 'spear of lightning' and that it was originally a weapon that belonged to the Sun-God.[688] From the literature it becomes obvious that it is some kind of spear with hooks on it, as the example from Táin Bó Cuailnge shows:

> 'Fomna an gaí m-bulga!' ol in t-ara. Dolléci n-dó lasan sruth. Gaibthi Cú cona ladair & imambeir do Fir Diad a timthiracht a chuirp. Tochomlai amail óenga co m-ba cethéora randa fichet.[689]

> 'Look out for the gaí bulga!' cried the charioteer and cast it to him downstream. Cú Chulainn caught it between his toes and cast it at Fer Diad into his anus. It was as a single barb it entered but it became twenty-four (in Fer Diad's body).[690]

The term *gae bolga*, however, as becomes obvious from the context in the 'Ulster Women's War of Words', is applied not only to the spear itself, but also to a feat that Cú Chulainn performs with that spear.

Line 186:

bāi braise: The translation of *bai* as *baí*, the plural of *bó* 'cow'[691] delivers a somewhat peculiar translation. It is more likely that this is the word *báe* 'something advantageous, benefit'.[692] *Braise* can mean 'boasting' as well.[693] It is an īa stem, substantive. Because all final vowels fell together in Middle Irish, the paradigm of the io and iā-stems broke down.[694] Thus *braise* can be a genitive singular. In that case the phrase means 'benefit of boasting'. That is a meaningful translation. If Cú Chulainn was very good at boasting, that would certainly give him an advantage over his opponents; he could intimidate them with his confidence.

Line 187:

bruṫ ngene: *bruth* is masculine. The only possible reason for it to lenite *gene* is because all these feats are in the accusative, serving as subject for *radamnad*.

Line 198:

foim*h*sid*h*e: This is another case of *dh* for *gh*.

Line 204:

Ro-sealaig: DIL s.v. *selaigid* notes that Thurneysen suggests *wand (kroch)*.[695] I have followed this

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686Cecile O'Rahilly (ed.), *Táin Bó Cúailnge recension I* (Dublin 1976) 136.
687Thomas F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish history and mythology* (Dublin 1957) 62-63.
688Ibid. 59-74.
689Cecile O'Rahilly (ed.), *Táin Bó Cúailnge recension I* (Dublin 1976) 94.
690Ibid. 207.
691DIL s.v. *bó*.
692DIL s.v. *báe, bá(a)*.
693DIL s.v. *braise* (b).
694Breatnach, 'An Mhéan-Ghaeilge' 246.
695DIL s.v. *selaigid*.

suggestion, because it seems to fit the context.

co rr*us*tair*mceld: It seems as if the ending is missing here. This is a form of the verb *do-airmchella*. In LU the ending is there: *coro thairmchellsat*. Perhaps a suspension stroke is missing in the MS.? *Rrus* probably simply stands for *ro*.

Line 208-211:

Breġa (...) Roscre Innu: Most of the place names in the list are unknown. Note that the list is much shorter in LU: probably some place names were made up for the sake of the alliteration.

Line 212:

Tong*u*i: Stern leaves this suspension stroke unexpanded,[696] but since Cú Chulainn is the speaker, it should be expanded to *tongu*. The *i* is curious, but L. often writes an i at the end of verb-forms ending in a vowel. Considering this particular idiom, compare the note on line 34.

toingi: this is probably a corrupted form of the relative. Compare the note on line 34 *toingi*.

Line 213:

acair: This must be a form of *ad-gair* 'preventing', although officially the verbal noun is *acrae*.[697]

696*Codex Vossianus* 160 §32.
697DIL s.v.

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