

# Ingen ríG Ghréic: The Greek king's daughter

An edition and translation of this Middle Irish story

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I hereby declare that I did not commit plagiarism while writing this MA thesis.

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## Preface & Acknowledgements

Time flies when you are having fun. I started studying Celtic languages and culture at the University of Utrecht in December 2004, but it does not seem so long ago to me. I have fallen in love with the Celts and their stories from the first day onwards. For my MA thesis I thought it would be nice to make an edition and translation of an Irish text that has not really been touched upon before. After having searched for some time to find a suitable text, Ranke de Vries and I stumbled upon the story *Ingen ríG Ghréic*, ‘The Greek king’s daughter’. This is the text that I will edit and translate here.

I would like to thank Ranke de Vries for her help, guidance and support. Besides Ranke, I would also like to express my gratitude to Mícheál Ó Flaithearta, Bart Jaski and Peter Schrijver. Studying Celtic would not have been the same without them.

## Introduction

### The manuscript

The story *Ingen ríg Ghréic*, ‘The Greek king’s daughter’, is found in only one manuscript, that is the Book of Leinster (MS H 2.18, cat. 1339), which is now in the library of Trinity College, Dublin.<sup>1</sup> The manuscript consists of 187 leaves, each approximately 33 cm by 23 cm. A note in the manuscript suggests that unfortunately, 45 leaves have been lost. The Book of Leinster is one of the most important sources of medieval Irish literature, mythology and genealogy that has come down to us. It contains many important texts that have been edited and translated into English, such as *Lebor Gabála*, ‘The Book of Invasions’, the most complete version of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, ‘The Cattle-raid of Cúailnge’ and *Fingal Rónáin*, ‘The Kin-slaying of Rónán’. The manuscript is a composite work; more than one hand appears to have been responsible for its production. The principal scribe and compiler was apparently Áed Ua Crimthainn, whose signature can be read on folio 32r (page 313): *Aed mac meic Crimthaind ro scrib in leborso 7 ra thinoil a llebraib imdaib*, ‘Áed Húa Crimthaind wrote this book and collected it from many books’.<sup>2</sup> From annals recorded in the manuscript, it can be concluded that it was written between 1151 and 1201, with the bulk of the work probably complete in the 1160s.<sup>3</sup>

### The text

A couple of universal literary motifs can be found in the story *Ingen ríg Ghréic*. For example: “Land of India (Greece) as otherworld”.<sup>4</sup> “Victim lured by kind words approaches trickster and is killed”<sup>5</sup> and “Fatal game: rolling down hill on barrel”.<sup>6</sup> These two motifs refer to the girl and the *bachlach*. “Girl hides lover under clothing upon which she sits”.<sup>7</sup> “Vow never to remarry”<sup>8</sup> and “Children born on same night betrothed”.<sup>9</sup> These motifs refer to the

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.isos.dias.ie/libraries/TCD/TCD\\_MS\\_1339/english/index.html](http://www.isos.dias.ie/libraries/TCD/TCD_MS_1339/english/index.html). Pages 279<sup>a</sup>35-280<sup>a</sup>42.

<sup>2</sup> R. I. Best, Osborn Bergin and M. A. O'Brien, *The Book of Leinster, formerly Lebor Na Núachongbála* (Dublin 1954), volume 1, xv.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> F130.1. Tom Peete Cross, *Motif-index of early Irish literature* (Indiana [1952]) 231.

<sup>5</sup> K815. Ibid., 372.

<sup>6</sup> K866. Ibid., 373.

<sup>7</sup> K1892.2. Ibid., 380.

<sup>8</sup> M135. Ibid., 390.

custom that “a boy who was born on the same night as a girl, each of them was betrothed to the other. Even if one of them died immediately, the one who would survive then had to remain chaste forever, without coming together with anyone else.”<sup>10</sup> “Punishment: imprisonment”.<sup>11</sup> This motif refers to the girl who was imprisoned in a house made of oak-wood. “Murder by drowning”.<sup>12</sup> This motif refers to the drowning of the handmaid. “Confessor as “soul-friend” (*anmchara*).”<sup>13</sup> This motif refers to the cleric that served as a confessor to the girl.

The story *Ingen rí Ghréic* is set in Greece. This country was probably chosen because it was far from Ireland and because it was seen as an exotic place. *Ingen rí Ghréic* is not the only story in which Greece or the king of Greece plays a role. In *Eachtra Chonaill Ghulban*, ‘The adventures of Conall Gulban’, for example, Eithne, princess of Leinster, is abducted by the king of Greece.<sup>14</sup> Athens, referred to in Irish as *Cathair na hAithne*, is described in the story *Eachtra Iollainn Airdheirg*, ‘The adventures of Iollann of the Bloody weapons’, but the description is that of a great hall rather than a town: a thousand cubits square, with 900 glass windows and 500 tables in it.<sup>15</sup> This description may be original, but it is obvious that this view of Athens (or Greece) is imaginary and not based on reality.

It does not seem that the story *Ingen rí Ghréic* is a translation of a classical tale, but it seems that the story is an exemplum. In medieval literature, an exemplum is a short narrative or reference that serves to teach by way of example.<sup>16</sup> It is often a short tale embedded in a longer sermon to emphasize a moral or to illustrate a point of doctrine. Fables, folktales and legends were gathered into collections for the use of preachers. As said, an exemplum teaches by providing an exemplar. This can be done by showing a model of behavior that the reader should imitate, or by showing bad behavior that the reader should avoid. Such exempla often provided the germ or plot for medieval secular tales in verse or prose.<sup>17</sup> This seems to be the case here, for the story *Ingen rí Ghréic* is a short medieval secular tale that contains a moral.

<sup>9</sup> T61.5. *Ibid.*, 482.

<sup>10</sup> “Mac berar i n-oenaidchi fri ingin ernascar, cehtar n-ái di araili. Cid marb nechtar de fo chétóir, int-í méras and dia chongbáil co idan do grés, cen chomrac ri nech aile.” Line 5-7 of the story *Ingen rí Ghréic*.

<sup>11</sup> Q433. Cross, *Motif-index*, 447.

<sup>12</sup> S131. *Ibid.*, 473.

<sup>13</sup> V20.1.2. *Ibid.*, 502.

<sup>14</sup> Alan Bruford, *Gaelic folk-tales and mediæval romances : A study of the early modern Irish ‘romantic tales’ and their oral derivatives* (Dublin 1969) 72-73.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 22, 30.

<sup>16</sup> *Exemplum* is Latin for ‘example’.

<sup>17</sup> See for more information about the medieval exemplum Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, authority, and power : the medieval exemplum and the Chaucerian tradition* (Cambridge 1994).

*Ingen ríg Ghréic* was edited and translated by Standish H. O'Grady in 1892.<sup>18</sup> Although O'Grady's edition of the text is useful, it is not flawless. He omitted words like *dó* 'to him' and *didiu* 'then' in his transcription, he added glide vowels to many of the words, he often neglected to separate words and he transcribed words incorrectly. O'Grady translated the story into Latin, instead of English, probably because he thought the text was too vulgar. In this thesis, I will make a new edition and an English translation of the text *Ingen ríg Ghréic*, including notes. I will also attempt to date the text.

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<sup>18</sup> Standish H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica: A collection of tales in Irish* (London and Edinburgh 1892), transcription in: *Irish text (volume 1)*, 413-415, translation in: *Translation and notes (volume 2)*, 449-452.

## An attempt at dating the text

In the introduction to this thesis, I have noted that the Book of Leinster is a Middle Irish manuscript. We cannot assume right away that the story *Ingen rí Ghréic* is written in the Middle Irish period, usually dated to 900-1200,<sup>19</sup> simply because the text is found in a Middle Irish manuscript. Because there are no other extant copies of the story and because there is no external evidence from historic figures, place names or events, we have to rely on internal linguistic evidence alone. It is therefore important to look at the words in the story, to investigate if the text is indeed Middle Irish or rather Old Irish. I will do so in this chapter of my thesis.

Damian MacManus states his definition of Middle Irish in his unpublished article *Introduction to Middle Irish* as follows:

“Middle Irish marks the transition from the classical standard of Old Irish (the language of the Glosses, the *Félire Óenguso*, the law tracts and the earliest Sagas) to the classical Modern standard of the Bardic poets. One does not speak of classical Middle Irish as the language was in a state of flux from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries when the fixed standard of Bardic poetry was laid down. In some respects Middle Irish showed relatively little development from Old Irish (sound changes and orthography, for example); in others the changes were considerable. The verbal system, for example, underwent a major overhaul during Middle Irish, reducing the extremely complicated system of Old Irish, which makes that stage of the language so seductive, to the relatively simple system of the modern language. ... Many of the developments which we associate with the Middle Irish period can be seen in their embryonic stage already in Old Irish.”<sup>20</sup>

It is not easy, maybe even impossible, to date the text precisely, but it should be possible to establish an approximate date. I have noticed that the story contains many words that are typically Middle Irish or in any case later than the Old Irish period, which excludes the text from being classical Old Irish. Below I will give a list of the words that can be classified as belonging to the Middle Irish period:<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Damian MacManus, *Introduction to Middle Irish* (unpublished work) 2 and Gearóid Mac Eoin, ‘The Dating of Middle Irish Texts’, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 68 (1982) 109–37: 109.

<sup>20</sup> MacManus, *Middle Irish*, 2.

<sup>21</sup> The list is not exhaustive.



1. *baí* (line 1, 14, 35 and 56) and *buí* (line 9, 18 and 22) for Old Irish *boí*, 3 singular preterite of the verb *a-tá*, meaning: ‘he, she, it was’, due to the falling together of diphthongs.<sup>22</sup>
2. The falling together of unstressed vowels in final position. This is found in *togai* (line 56) for Old Irish neuter *toga*, *togu*.<sup>23</sup> *togai* is originally a declined *io*-stem neuter.<sup>24</sup> During the Middle Irish period, final *-(a)e* and *-(a)i* fell together in *io*-stems, because the distinction between short unstressed vowels in final position was lost. All cases except for the dative plural became thus identical in Middle Irish and *togai* became an indeclinable noun.<sup>25</sup> We also find this in *doíne* (line 54) for Old Irish *dóini*, *io*-stem masculine nominative plural, meaning: ‘men’<sup>26</sup> and in *dénam* (line 46 and 59) for Old Irish *dénum*, *dénom*, verbal noun of the verb *do-gní*, meaning: ‘act of doing’.<sup>27</sup>
3. Confusion of *nn* and *nd* in writing as a result of *-nd-* > *-nn-*<sup>28</sup> is found in *cend* (line 36) for Old Irish *cenn*, *o*-stem neuter, later *o*-stem masculine, meaning: ‘head’.
4. The reduced form ‘*sin* (line 32) for Old Irish *isin*, consisting of the nasalising preposition *i* combined with the definite article *in*, meaning: ‘in, into the’, followed by the dative or the accusative.<sup>29</sup>
5. *thair* (line 1) for Old Irish *tair*, adverb, meaning: ‘in the east, easterly’.<sup>30</sup>
6. *or*,<sup>31</sup> occasionally *ar* (line 4 and 24) for Old and Middle Irish *ol*, defective verb, 3 singular preterite, meaning: ‘said’.<sup>32</sup>
7. *broind* (line 3) for Old Irish *brú*, *n*-stem female, meaning: *womb*.<sup>33</sup>
8. The simplification of compound verbs was one of the most profound developments in the verbal system in Middle Irish. They had been simplified and followed the pattern of the weak simple verbs of Old Irish.<sup>34</sup> This is the case here with *cure*

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<sup>22</sup> MacManus, *Middle Irish*, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Rudolf Thurneysen, *A grammar of Old Irish*, revised and enlarged edition, translated by D. A. Binchy and Osborn Bergin (Dublin 1946) 217.

<sup>24</sup> DIL s.v. *togai*.

<sup>25</sup> MacManus, *Middle Irish*, 9, Liam Breatnach, ‘An Mheán-Ghaeilge’, *Stair na Gaeilge: in ómós do Phádraig Ó Fiannachta*, ed. Kim McCone, et al. (Dublin 1994) 221-333: 230 and Mac Eoin, ‘Middle Irish Texts’, 110.

<sup>26</sup> DIL s.v. *duine*.

<sup>27</sup> DIL s.v. *dénum*.

<sup>28</sup> MacManus, *Middle Irish*, 6.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 and DIL s.v. *i*.

<sup>30</sup> DIL s.v. 1 *tair*.

<sup>31</sup> Found in line 3, 5, 16, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, 38, 43, 44, 46, 49, 50, 51, 52, 57, 60 and 61.

<sup>32</sup> DIL s.v. 6 *ol* and 3 *ar*.

<sup>33</sup> DIL s.v. *brú*.

<sup>34</sup> MacManus, *Middle Irish*, 16-17.

(line 21), *cuirí* (line 21), 2 singular imperative of *cuirid* from Old Irish *fo-ceird*, *do-cuirethar*, meaning: ‘put, place, (over)throw!’,<sup>35</sup> with *tuillfem* (line 47), 1 plural future of the Middle Irish simplified verb *tuillid* from Old Irish *do-slí*, meaning: ‘deserves, merits, earns’,<sup>36</sup> which fits best contextually, but *do-lína*, meaning: ‘we will increase’,<sup>37</sup> or *do-alla*, meaning: ‘fits, finds room (in), is contained (in)’<sup>38</sup> are also possible, and with *eirgg* (line 51), 2 singular imperative of the Middle Irish simple verb *éirgid*, but this verb is already used in this way in the Old Irish period, meaning: ‘rise!’ or ‘go!’,<sup>39</sup> but note that the Old Irish verb *at-raig* is still used in this text as well (line 16 and 34). Another possible example (though ambiguous) is *oslaicid* (line 16), 2 plural imperative of the verb *oslaicid*, meaning: ‘open!’.<sup>40</sup>

9. *farrad* (line 18) for Old Irish *arrad*, meaning: ‘beside’,<sup>41</sup> where a non-radical f is added in initial position.<sup>42</sup>
10. Once *ri* (line 7) for Old Irish *fri*, preposition with the accusative, meaning: ‘with, against’ is used. In all other instances in the text Old Irish *fri* is written.<sup>43</sup>
11. *ro fóí* (line 15), 3 singular perfect of the verb *foaid*, meaning: ‘he, she has spent the night’. The perfect tense is used here, where you would expect a preterite in Old Irish.<sup>44</sup> The past tense was being replaced by the perfect; the augment *ro* was being generalized in the past.<sup>45</sup> It became the standard form and almost completely annihilated the unaugmented form.<sup>46</sup> In the story *Ingen rí Ghréic* we often find these perfect forms, but the preterite forms are still in use as well.
12. *saide* (line 25) for Old Irish *side*, a form of the anaphoric pronoun *suide*, meaning: ‘this, that, the thing or person just mentioned’ is used once.<sup>47</sup> In all other instances Old Irish *side* is used.
13. *in mbáis* (line 45). *bás* was in Old Irish treated as an *o*-stem neuter, the verbal noun of the verb *baíd*, meaning: ‘death’.<sup>48</sup> In Middle Irish it became an *o*-stem

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<sup>35</sup> DIL s.v. 1 *cuirid*.

<sup>36</sup> DIL: s.v. *do-slí*.

<sup>37</sup> DIL s.v. *do-lína*.

<sup>38</sup> DIL: s.v. 2 *do-alla*.

<sup>39</sup> Thurneysen, *GOI*, 472, MacManus, *Middle Irish*, 18 and DIL s.v. *at-raig*.

<sup>40</sup> DIL s.v. *oslaicid*.

<sup>41</sup> DIL s.v. *farrad*.

<sup>42</sup> MacManus, *Middle Irish*, 6.

<sup>43</sup> Thurneysen, *GOI*, 514-515 and DIL s.v. *fri*.

<sup>44</sup> DIL s.v. *foaid*.

<sup>45</sup> MacManus, *Middle Irish*, 22.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>47</sup> DIL s.v. 2 *side*.

masculine, because of the demise of neuter gender.<sup>49</sup> The article *in* shows that *bás* is here treated as an *o*-stem masculine, which makes it a Middle Irish form, because if the noun was still treated as neuter, the article *a* had been used.

14. *noco* (line 47 and 58) for Old Irish *nícon*, adverb of negation, a strengthened form of *ní*, meaning: ‘not in any way, by no means’.<sup>50</sup>
15. *ro* was no longer treated as a preverb in the Middle Irish period, but as a conjunct particle, in order to keep *ro* out of the verbal form.<sup>51</sup> We thus find forms like *níro phendsemmar* (line 47), 1 plural perfect from the verb *pennaid*,<sup>52</sup> meaning: ‘we have not done penance’, and *níro lil* (line 47), 3 singular perfect from the verb *lenaid*,<sup>53</sup> meaning: ‘he has not persisted’.

Some of the words in the text seem to belong to the Old Irish period:

1. *inna* (line 35) for Middle Irish *na*, found in line 2, 19, 49 and 64. *inna* is a form of the definite article *in*.<sup>54</sup> In Middle Irish, *inna* was replaced by *na*. This development had already begun in Old Irish, but *na* is the standard form in Middle Irish. The old form is found exceptionally.<sup>55</sup> This could be the case here.<sup>56</sup>
2. The distinctive form of the article, *ind*, before lenited *f*, *l*, *r*, *n* and vowels is lost in Middle Irish.<sup>57</sup> In the story we find forms like *ind ingen* (line 4, 8, 15, 16 and 24), *ind rí* (line 41), *ind óthigern* (line 7), *ind lánamain* (line 31), *ind anmcharat* (line 48) and *ind inailt* (line 35). We also find *isind aracul* (line 16) and *assind iænai* (line 34-35). The distinctive form is thus still in use here. We find Old Irish *dond rí* (line 48) and Middle Irish *don rí* (line 2, 42, 48-49, 50 and 55) in the text close to each other. It seems that these forms are used indiscriminately.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> DIL s.v. 1 *bás*.

<sup>49</sup> MacManus, *Middle Irish*, 7-8.

<sup>50</sup> DIL s.v. *nícon*.

<sup>51</sup> Breatnach, ‘Mheán-Ghaeilge’, 299.

<sup>52</sup> DIL s.v. *pennaid*.

<sup>53</sup> DIL s.v. *lenaid*.

<sup>54</sup> DIL s.v. *in*.

<sup>55</sup> MacManus, *Middle Irish*, 7 and Breatnach, ‘Mheán-Ghaeilge’, 259.

<sup>56</sup> See also Thurneysen, *GOI* 293-294.

<sup>57</sup> MacManus, *Middle Irish*, 7.

<sup>58</sup> Breatnach, ‘Mheán-Ghaeilge’, 259.

3. *Co ndernai* (line 54), 3 singular present subjunctive with infixed *ro* from the verb *do-gní*,<sup>59</sup> meaning: ‘she may have made’, *ari nderna* (line 62), 3 singular present subjunctive with infixed *ro*, or 3 singular perfect, from the verb *do-gní*, meaning: ‘so that she could do’ and *corbo* (line 56), 3 singular perfect from the copula, meaning: ‘so that it was’,<sup>60</sup> are Old Irish forms, because *ro* was infixed in compound verbs in the Old Irish period,<sup>61</sup> as opposed to the Middle Irish forms found above where *ro* was being kept out of the verbal form (*níro phendsemmar*, *níro lil*).

As a conclusion, I think we may say that the story *Ingen ríig Ghréic* belongs to the early Middle Irish period. A lot of Middle Irish forms are found in the text, but some Old Irish features survive as well, but this is not uncommon in Middle Irish texts, for the ‘mix’ of old and new forms is characteristic of Middle Irish.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> DIL s.v. *do-gní*.

<sup>60</sup> John Strachan, *Old-Irish paradigms and selections from the Old-Irish glosses : with notes and vocabulary* (Dublin 1970) 72-73.

<sup>61</sup> MacManus, *Middle Irish*, 19.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 and Mac Eoin, ‘Middle Irish Texts’, 137.

## Editorial policy

In my transcription I expand every abbreviation and suspension stroke and everything that is written in subscript and superscript in *italics*. I put accents on the right vowels if they are already there in the manuscript and I put macrons on the vowels if the accents are absent, but should have been there.

The beginning of a new column or folio is indicated by inserting the number in [square brackets]. Prefixed *h-* is combined with the word it is prefixed to. I attach nasalization that occurs before consonants to the next word. I separate nasalization that occurs before vowels, as well as demonstrative pronouns and infixes, suffixed and emphasizing pronouns from the rest of the word by a hyphen.

Pre-verbal particles *ro* and *no* are separated from the following verb by a space. I underline lenited and nasalized consonants that are indicated in the manuscript by a dot over the letter (a punctum delens). It is not indicated when the scribe has written an open *a* or long *i*.

I have added capitals at the beginning of the sentence and in names and I inserted punctuation marks. Lastly, I have divided my transcription and translation into paragraphs.

## Transcription & Translation

### Ingen ríG Ghréic - The Greek king's daughter

1. §1. [279a] Baí<sup>63</sup> rí amra do Grēcaib i ndūnud fecht and. Dūnad<sup>64</sup> dana lasna rīgu thair do
2. grés. Oc ól immorro<sup>65</sup> 7 oc tomait bíte na ríGna i foss. Tic fis scél don ríG. 'Ordan 7
3. airechas duit, a rí! Rucad ingen duit arráir.' 'Rop sén slán,' or in rí. 'Bendacht for broind
4. rod-uc!' 'Ordan duit, a rí!' ar ócthigirn and. 'Rucad mac dam-sa arráir.' 'Tabar ind ingen dó
5. dana,' or in rí. Bes dóib dana do grés: mac berar i n-oenaidchi fri ingen ernascar, cechtar n-
6. ái di araili. Cid marb nechtar de fo chétóir, int-í méras and dia chongbáil<sup>66</sup> co idan do grés,
7. cen chomrac ri nech aile. Airnascar dana do mac ind ócthigern ingen in ríG.

§1. Once upon a time, a wonderful king ruled over the Greeks in a fort. The kings of the east always had a fort. The queens were always drinking and eating there. Knowledge of a story came to the king. 'Honour and sovereignty to you, king! A girl was born to you last night.' 'May it be a sound omen,' the king said. 'A blessing on the womb that carried it!' 'Honour to you, king!' said a young lord then. 'A boy was born to me last night.' 'Let the girl be given to him then,' the king said. That was indeed a custom of theirs forever: a boy who was born on the same night as a girl, each of them was betrothed to the other. Even if one of them died immediately, the one who would survive then had to remain chaste forever, without coming together with anyone else. The daughter of the king was then betrothed to the son of the young lord.

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<sup>63</sup> The capital B is decorated.

<sup>64</sup> It could be an accent that is written above the u, but this is hardly legible.

<sup>65</sup> I transcribed the Middle Irish form *immorro*, instead of the Old Irish form *immurgu*, which would have fit as well, because I think the text is rather Middle Irish than Old Irish (see also chapter 'An attempt at dating the text' in this thesis).

<sup>66</sup> There could be a punctum delens above the n, but it is more probable that it is a stain in the manuscript.

8. §2. Ro alt *trá* ind ingen co *dīgrais fri légend* 7 *gáis* 7 *eladain* co *mba frie* no *bīd*  
 9. *imchomarc* a *hathar* 7 a *chomairle*. I *n-aracul*, *fō leith ón*. 7 *ú* *buí* *nec h* no *lāmad techt* i  
 10. *sodain*, *acht nech* no *bíd oca timthirecht*. Is<sup>67</sup> *ísi dana* no *dáled* [279b] *in dáil ndēdenaig*  
 11. *cech n-aidche*, co *mbad chomman* 7 *cretair*, *ciped dosnecmad ōn tráth* co *araile*. Do-  
 12. *thēiged* i *n-a mælossaib*, co *ngeibed in n-escra* co *ndáled isna curnu*. *Imdasōad immach iar*  
 13. *sin*.

§2. So he educated the girl confidently in Latin learning and intelligence and science so that it was to her that her father came for questioning and advice. She lived in a little house, separately. And there was no one who dared to go inside, except for someone who served her. It was she then who poured the final drink every night, so it was a communion and a relic, whatever should befall her from one day to another. She used to come in her broad-toed sandals, grasp the vessel and pour it out into the drinking horns. She returned after that.

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<sup>67</sup> This is written in capitals.

14. §3. Ros-carastar-si didiu gilla cáem, ro baí issin tegluch. Do-churedar side fecht and cosna  
 15. ingena isa tech. Nī thudchid assa tig comtar carait 7 ind ingen. Fecht and ro fóí in gilla  
 16. lasin n-ingin isind aracul. Dolluid in rí don dorus. 'Oslaicid!' or in rí. At-raig ind ingen 7  
 17. do-beir in colcaid dar in gilla. Gaibid in rí co ndessid forsin cholcid. Dessid-si dana i n-a  
 18. farrad co mbātar i n-imacallaim co tráth nóna. Luid in rí immach. Marb in fer buí fñ  
 19. cholcaid. Ba tor dona ingenaib aní-sin. Dolluid dana bachlach mór do dorus tige na n-  
 20. ingen. Gāirit chucu. Do-berat biad dó. 'Beir úan in faistin ucut. Rot-bia a lóg.' Cengaltair  
 21. iarum. 'Cure úait fñ all. Bid ferdde dia ndig usa let,' or-sisi. Tēit-si les-seom. 'Cuirí úait  
 22. fñ all.' A mbuí in bachlach oc suide, do-beir-si dí láim friu a ndís, co ndarala fón nglend.  
 23. 'Bid fer de do rún,' or-si.

§3. A beautiful boy loved her then, who served in the household. Once upon a time she invited him with the girls into the house. He did not come out of the house until he and the girl were lovers. Once upon a time the servant slept with the girl in the little house. The king came to the door. 'Open the door!' the king said. The girl got up and placed the quilt over the servant. The king started to sit down on the quilt. She sat down as well beside him and they were in conversation until the evening. The king left. The man who was under the quilt was dead. The girls were sad about that. A big peasant came then to the door of the house of the girls. He shouted at them. They gave him food. 'Carry from us yonder parcel. You shall have a reward for it.' They are bound after it. 'Put him away under the hill. It will be better if I go with you,' she said. She went with him. 'Put him away under the hill.' While the peasant was doing that, she placed two hands against them both, so that he ended up under the valley. 'Your secret will be the better for it,' she said.



24. §4. 'Maith *trā*,' ar int ócthigern, 'is mithig ind ingen don mac-sa.' 'A tabairt dó dana,' or in  
 25. rí. 'A-tā sunn út ingen: óc, ālaind, *co ndag-cenúil*<sup>68</sup> 7 *co ndag-légund*.' Do-tháet saide dana  
 26. do f̄eis lee. 'Cid do-gén-sa?' or-sisi. 'Ro-festar form-sa mo bét 7 nom-loscfider f̄o chētóir.  
 27. Déni mo *chobair*,' or-si *fria sētchi*,<sup>69</sup> .i. foí lassin fer im richt-sa.<sup>70</sup> Dia comair frit iarum,  
 28. *co ndechusa*<sup>71</sup> dar th'ēsi.' 'Dom-ratad-sa dana do fhir,' or-si-side. 'Do-bēram comairli dana  
 29. fair-sin dorísi.' Bertair-seom i tech cucai-seom, .i. tech dorcha,<sup>72</sup> *conná* 'monacced dóib co  
 30. arna bārach. Lēict hir-seom chucu. 'Fo chen duit!' or-si. 'Tair cot ócrígain. Do maith 7 líth  
 31. dúib 7 maccaib 7 ingenaib.' Fōid-si f̄o leith, *co comarnaic ind lānamain*. Ō ro chotail in  
 32. gilla, 'nom-lēic-se 'sin n-inad-sin,' or-si, 'a fecht-sa.' 'Níthó,' or a sétig. 'Co n-accara cách in  
 33. fer *condrānic frim*.' 'Maith,' or-sisi. *Contolat*. Luid-si *immach co ndaig-caindil* 7 dos-beir  
 34. f̄o dúpla in taige, coro lassa a tech. At-raig in gilla do thessarcain in tige. 'Usce assind  
 35. iānai!' or-si *frisín n-inailt*. Luid side dond iānai. Gaibid-si inna diaid. Ō ró bá i nd inailt  
 36. oc tairniud *forsín* n-uscí, gaibid-si a dā cois, coro *fhurim* a cend fon uscí, *conda* ro marb:  
 37. nis tarlaic súas. Riasū rised-si, ro *thessairc* in gilla. 'Ca-tá mo inailt-se?' or-si. 'Monuar'<sup>73</sup>  
 38. *māsu bādud* ro bāded.<sup>74</sup> *Cond-accatar* marb. Feccaid-si *fora cóene*. 'Cuma lat?' or in  
 39. gilla. Fōid-si les-seom iar sin.

§4. 'Well then,' the young lord said, 'it is time to give the girl to this boy.' 'Let her be given to him then,' the king said. 'Here is the girl in question: young, beautiful, of good race and of good Latin learning.' He came thereupon to spend the night with her. 'What shall I do?' she said. 'My misdeed will be discovered and I will be burned immediately. Help me,' she said to her female companion, 'that is, sleep with the man in my stead. When he is in your company, I may go after you.' 'I have been given your husband then,' she said. 'We will then take counsel on that matter again.' They are brought into a house to him, that is, a dark house, so that they could not see each other until the next morning. He was left behind to them. 'Welcome to you!' she said. 'Come to your princess. Wealth and luck to you and to your sons and daughters.' She spent the night separately, until the married couple arrived. After the servant had fallen asleep, she said: 'Let me into that room now.' 'No,' her female companion said.

<sup>68</sup> It could be *ndag-cenēlaib* as well.

<sup>69</sup> It seems as if something is written above the e, but this is hardly legible.

<sup>70</sup> .i. *foí lassín fer im richt-sa* is an incorporated gloss.

<sup>71</sup> The last three letters are not very legible.

<sup>72</sup> .i. *tech dorcha* is an incorporated gloss.

<sup>73</sup> *Moruar* is written in the manuscript. This is probably a scribal error for *monuar*.

<sup>74</sup> The e is written above and in between the two d's; it seems the scribe forgot to write it.

'Until everyone can see the man who came to me.' 'Fine,' she said. They fell asleep. She went outside with a lit candle and she placed it under the ceiling of the house, so that the house was on fire. The servant got up to save the house. 'Bring water from the pool!' she said to her handmaid. Her handmaid went to the pool. She went after her. When the handmaid was bending down over the water, she grasped her two feet, and she placed her head under the water, and killed her: she did not let her go up. Before she could arrive, the servant had saved the house. 'Where is my handmaid?' she said. 'Woe if she has drowned.' They saw her dead. She began to lament her. 'Are you sad?' the servant said. She spent the night with him after that.

40. §5. Téit leis dochum a thíre. Marb a hathair-si iar sin. Ro gab ardrí aile is tír. Marb dana a  
 41. céli-si. Mór a orddan ind rí ro gab and. Mór [280a] dana a horddan-si. Con-gaired-si  
 42. dana don rí, do thabairt ascada di. Tānic-si cosin rí. Feraid in rí fáilti móir frie. Bíd for  
 43. tomaltaib immalle fri suide. 'In<sup>75</sup> fail anmcharait ocut-su?' or-si. 'Fil immorro,' or in rí, 'fer  
 44. amra.' 'Bid hé bas anmchara dam-sa,' or-sisi. Téit-si didiu do gabāil anmcharddi. Carttair  
 45. cách immach. Do-beir-si a coibsena cen fhorclith. Ō ro-chuala in fer gráid in mbáis do  
 46. dēnam di, 7 i ndelb ro-chæm ro fhecc fora guide. 'Nithō,' or-si. 'Cid a ndo-rōnad<sup>76</sup> and? Do  
 47. báis bes, nīro phendsemmar ind. Noco tuillfem dana fris.' Nīro lil didiu in clērech isna  
 48. coibsenaib. Cēlebraid-si dond rí. Téit in rí iar sin do acallaim ind anmcharat. Ad-fēt don  
 49. rí coibsena na caillige. 'Olc sin,' or in rí.

§5. She went with him to his country. Her father died after that. Another high-king took control of the country. Then her husband died. Great was the honour of the king who seized the kingdom then. Great was her honour then. She was summoned to the king then, so that he could give her presents. She came to the king. The king gave her a warm welcome. A feast was held along with that. 'Do you have a confessor?' she said. 'Yes indeed,' the king said, 'a wonderful man.' 'Let him be my confessor,' she said. She went then to obtain spiritual guidance. They were all sent away. She made her confession without concealment. When the ordained man heard of the murder that had been committed by her, he began to solicit her in a very noble way. 'No,' she said. 'What should one do then? For the murder indeed, we have not done penance for it. We will not deserve that then.' The cleric did not persist in the confessions then. She said goodbye to the king. The king went afterwards to converse with the confessor. He told the king the confession of the nun. 'That is bad,' the king said.

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<sup>75</sup> This is written in capitals.

<sup>76</sup> The second a is written a little lower.

50. §6. Con-gairther in ben doridisi don rí. 'Maith, a ben,' or-se. 'In dartais do choibsena?'  
 51. 'Tó,' or-si. 'In<sup>77</sup> rot-guid-siu in clērech?' 'Nī ba mē as-béra.' 'Olc sin,' or in rí. 'Eirgg ass, a  
 52. chlērig!' or-se. 'Bale nā clór-sa th'imrádud.' Rucad leis in ben, co ndernad tech ndarach di  
 53. for comruc tēora sliged, cen dorus ass, acht senistri beca. Forrácbad-si and sin. Do-bertīs  
 54. doíne irescha mīrend beca di innund. Secht mbliadna di fōnd alt-sin. Co ndernai  
 55. iachtlaind, cáil trúaig di. Ad-fiadar don rí bith di i mbethaid beus. Oslaictիր furri, co  
 56. rrucad i n-ucht leis, co rrabas coa lessugud, corbo hí as mór-āilliu ro baí. 'Togai do rí trā,'  
 57. or in rí hí-sin, 'co ndigis chucai. 7 bia-sa fōt anmcharde.' 'Dom-ratus-sa do rí,' or-sisi,  
 58. 'i. don chomdid.<sup>78</sup> 'Nípa ferr in rí cosa ragthar and. Noco chloemchlód de<sup>79</sup> céin ba mbéo.  
 59. Dīsert 7 eclas do dēnam dam-sa let-so.' Do-gnīth ón. Ro līnad in dísert do búai 7 damaib  
 60. 7 echaib 7 ór 7 argut. 'Tair dot dentu trá,' or in rí, 'co ndig clērech remum ind.' .i.  
 61. anmchara.<sup>80</sup> 'Cóich side?' or in rí. 'Mo anmchara féin,' or-sisi, 'ro n-imderggus.' Noíb side  
 62. immorro i suidiu, ari nderna d'athrige. Co tudchaid chuire. Batar didiu ina ndísiurt, co  
 63. ndeochatar dochum nime 7 co ndēntais ferta móra erthu. Conid sī cathir attaig as dech fil  
 64. la Grécu. In chathir ro gabad impu. Rop é trá iartaige na hingine colaige do Grécaib in  
 65. sin.

§6. The woman was summoned back to the king. 'Alright, woman,' he said. 'Have you given your confession?' 'Yes,' she said. 'Has the cleric solicited you?' 'It will not be me who will say it.' 'That is bad,' the king said. 'Go away, cleric!' he said. 'To a place where I cannot hear your discussion.' The woman was brought with him, so that a house of oak-wood was made for her on the meeting of three ways, without an exit, except small windows. She was left there. Pious men gave her small portions of food there. She remained seven years in that condition. And she made a mass of groans, subtle and sad to her. The king of the land was told that she was still alive. The house was opened for her, and she was brought before him, so that she was cured, so that it was she who was the most beautiful there was. 'The choice of your king then,' that king said, 'so that you may go to him. And I will be your confessor.' 'I have given myself to a king,' she said, 'that is, to the Lord.' 'One could be married to no better king then. No changing of it as long as I will be alive. Let a solitary place and a church be built by me

<sup>77</sup> This is written in capitals.

<sup>78</sup> .i. don chomdid is an incorporated gloss.

<sup>79</sup> This is not very legible.

<sup>80</sup> .i. anmchara is an incorporated gloss.

together with you.' That was done. The solitary place was filled with cows and oxen and horses and gold and silver. 'Come to your building then,' the king said, 'with the potion of the cleric before me there.' That is, the spiritual guidance. 'Whose is that?' the king said. 'It belongs to my own confessor,' she said, 'whom I have rebuked.' There was a saint then, so that she could do penance. And she came to him. They were then in their solitary place, until they went to heaven and until great miracles were done on their account. So that it was the best monastery of refuge that the Greeks had. The monastery was settled around them. That then was the fate of the sinful girl of the Greeks.

## Textual notes

## §1

line 1: *dúnad*. *Dúnad* has different meanings. It can be translated as 'fort, encampment,'<sup>81</sup> which I think fits best in the context, but it can also be translated with a medical use as 'obstruction, congestion'.<sup>82</sup>

line 4: *rod-uc* 'that carried it'. The infixed pronoun 3 singular neuter (-d-), refers to the girl who was born.

## §2

line 8: *ro alt* 'he educated'. Usually, the verb *ailid* means 'nourishes, rears, fosters',<sup>83</sup> but here 'educates' fits better.

line 8: *légend* (or *léigenn*), verbal noun of *légaid* (Latin: *legendum*) originally means 'act of studying, reading', but it is often associated with clerical students and doctrine,<sup>84</sup> which makes the translation 'learning' or 'Latin learning' also possible. This translation fits best here.

## §3

line 19: *Ba tor dona ingenaib aní-sin*. Literally: 'That was a sorrow to the girls.'

line 19: *bachlach*. *Bachlach* has different meanings. It can be translated as 'rustic, servant, labourer, serf, bondman or (shep)herd', which I think fits best in the context, because he is carrying a parcel, but it can also be translated as 'clown, ignorant person or churl' or 'monk'.<sup>85</sup> The word *bachlach* is used to describe certain figures in early Irish narratives. For example, Cú Roí of Munster appears in disguise as a *bachlach* in the story *Fled Bricrend*, 'The feast of Bricriu', to determine in a contest who is the greatest of the three heroes Conall, Lóegaire and Cú Chulainn.<sup>86</sup> A *bachlach* also appears in the story *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, 'The destruction of Da Derga's hostel'. Here a *bachlach* greets and entices Conall Cernach on his way to the hostel.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> DIL s.v. 1 *dúnad*.

<sup>82</sup> DIL s.v. 2 *dúnad*.

<sup>83</sup> DIL s.v. *ailid*.

<sup>84</sup> DIL s.v. *léigenn*.

<sup>85</sup> DIL s.v. *bachlach*.

<sup>86</sup> Maartje Draak and Frida de Jong (trs.), *Het feestgelag van Bricriu* (Amsterdam 1986).

<sup>87</sup> Maartje Draak and Frida de Jong (trs.), 'De verwoesting van Dá Derga's Hal,' *Van helden, elfen en dichters: De oudste verhalen uit Ierland* (Amsterdam 1979) 148-201.

line 20-21: *Cengaltair iarum*. ‘They are bound after it.’ This refers to the agreement that was made: the peasant would carry the parcel (that is, the dead man) and they would give him a reward for it.

line 22: *A mbuí in bachlach oc suide*. This can be translated as ‘When the peasant paused’ (literally: ‘When the peasant was at the pausing’), but it could also be translated as ‘While the peasant was doing that (that is, carrying the parcel)’ (literally: ‘While the peasant was thereat’), because *oc suide* can be interpreted as *oc* + the verbal noun *suide* of the verb *saidid* ‘to sit, stand still, pause’,<sup>88</sup> or as *oc suide* in the meaning ‘therein, in this matter, in this case, engaged in that task’.<sup>89</sup> I chose to translate ‘While the peasant was doing that’, because I think this fits best contextually.

line 22: *Do-beir-si dí láim friu a ndís*. This can be translated literally as ‘She placed two hands against them both (that is, the dead body and the *bachlach*),’ but it can also be translated as ‘She rejected them both from her’, for *do-beir láim fri* is a fixed phrase.<sup>90</sup> Because she is throwing the *bachlach* and the dead man from the hill, I think the literal translation fits best.

#### §4

line 24: *A tabairt dó dana*. Literally: ‘Her giving to him then.’

line 29: *conná ‘monacced dóib* ‘so that they could not see each other’. ‘*monacced* is a contracted form, 3 plural past subjunctive of the verb *imm-acci*.<sup>91</sup> *Imma n-* is a reflexive and reciprocal preverb used before compound verbs to form new compounds. It is used impersonally and often with the preposition *do*, as is the case here.<sup>92</sup>

line 32-33: *in fer condrānic frim* ‘the man who came to me’. That is, the man who slept with her.

line 33: *Contolat*. ‘They fell asleep.’ This refers to the husband and the female companion.

line 33: *Luid-si immach co ndaig-caindil*. This can be translated as ‘She went outside with a lit candle,’ but it can also be read as *Luid-si immach. Condaig caindil*. Put it this way,

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<sup>88</sup> DIL s.v. *saidid*.

<sup>89</sup> DIL s.v. 1 *suide*.

<sup>90</sup> DIL s.v. *lám*.

<sup>91</sup> DIL s.v. *imm-acci*.

<sup>92</sup> DIL s.v. *imma n-*.

it has the meaning ‘She went outside. She sought a candle.’ *Condaig* is 3 singular present indicative of the verb *con-déig* ‘to ask, seek, demand’.<sup>93</sup>

line 35: *icénai*. This word is found in DIL as ‘water-tank’ with a question mark.<sup>94</sup> It is not attested in other texts. O’Grady translates it as ‘piscina’.<sup>95</sup> I follow O’Grady and have thus translated it as ‘pool’.

line 35: *inailt* ‘handmaid’. Her female companion is meant here.

line 37: *monuar*. *Moruar* is written in the manuscript. This is probably a scribal error for *monuar*. *Moruar* is not found in the dictionary; *monuar* has the meaning ‘woe, grief, alas’.<sup>96</sup>

line 37-38: *Monuar māsū bādud ro dāled*. Literally: ‘Woe if it is a drowning she drowned.’ This is a *figura etymologica*: a rhetorical figure in which words with the same etymological derivation are used adjacently. To count as a *figura etymologica*, it is necessary that the two words are genuinely different words and not just different inflections of the same word.<sup>97</sup>

line 38: *in gilla* ‘the servant’. The servant who is speaking here is the one who saved the house.

## §5

line 40: *is tír*. This is translated as ‘in, into the land (country)’,<sup>98</sup> but *in tír* ‘the country’ (accusative singular) makes more sense here. It could be that the article *in* was meant, instead of *is*.

line 45: *fer gráid* ‘ordained man’. A *fer gráid* is a man of rank, a person in holy orders. Probably a cleric, for this man is called a *clérech* in line 47.

line 45: *in mbáis*. This is usually translated as ‘the death’ (accusative singular),<sup>99</sup> but here it can also be translated as ‘the murder’, because she has committed a murder.

line 46: *Nithó*. ‘No.’ *Nithó* is a particle of negation, used occasionally instead of *náthó* in replying to a question, statement or request.<sup>100</sup> The girl says ‘no’ in order to refuse the offer of the confessor.

<sup>93</sup> DIL s.v. *con-déig*.

<sup>94</sup> DIL s.v. *icénai*.

<sup>95</sup> O’Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, volume 2, 451.

<sup>96</sup> DIL s.v. *monuar*.

<sup>97</sup> See for more information about the *figura etymologica* in the Irish language Breatnach, ‘Mheán-Ghaeilge’, 332 and Ruairí Ó hUiginn, ‘On the old Irish *figura etymologica*’, *Ériu* 34 (1983) 123-133.

<sup>98</sup> DIL s.v. 1 *tír*.

<sup>99</sup> DIL s.v. 1 *bás*.



line 47: *Noco tuillfem dana fris*. ‘We will not deserve that then.’ This probably means that it is not right to get away with this crime without being punished for it.

line 49: *caillige* ‘nun, woman in religion’.<sup>101</sup> This is a flash forward. No mention has been made before that the girl will become a nun later on.

## §6

line 55: *íachtlaind*. This word is found in DIL as ‘a mass of groans’ with a question mark.<sup>102</sup> It is not attested in other texts. It is probably a compound, consisting of *íacht*, meaning: ‘a loud cry, a shout, a groan, a sigh’,<sup>103</sup> and *lán* ‘full, complete, abundance, plenty’.<sup>104</sup>

line 56: *Togai do rí g trá*. This can be translated as ‘Fit for a king then’,<sup>105</sup> or as ‘The choice of your king then’. Both translations fit well in the context. The girl is so beautiful, she can choose to marry any king she wants.

line 57: *fót*. *Fót* is translated as ‘under your’, consisting of *fó* and the possessive pronoun 2 singular. This does not fit in the sentence. It is therefore more probable that *fót* is a scribal error for *for* ‘your’.

line 58: *Nípa ferr in rí cosa ragthar and. Noco chloemchlód de céin ba mbéo*. ‘One could be married to no better king then. No changing of it as long as I will be alive.’ The king of the land is speaking here. If she gives herself to the Lord, her choice will be definite and unchangeable.

line 59: *dísert*. *Dísert* originally meant ‘deserted place’ (a place in the desert), but the word became used for a solitary place (retreat, asylum, heritage) as well.<sup>106</sup>

line 60: *dentu*. *Dentu* can be read as *dénta*, a particle of *do-gní*, used as a substantive with the meaning: ‘building, structure’.<sup>107</sup>

line 63: *cathir attaig*. This phrase is found in DIL as ‘city of refuge’.<sup>108</sup> *Cathir* itself has many translations, such as ‘(stone) enclosure, fortress, castle, dwelling, (fortified) city, monastic settlement, monastery’.<sup>109</sup> All of these translations fit in the context, but monastery

<sup>100</sup> DIL s.v. *níthó*.

<sup>101</sup> DIL s.v. *caillech*. The translation ‘hag, witch, crone’ or ‘elderly woman, housekeeper’ does not fit.

<sup>102</sup> DIL s.v. *íachtland*.

<sup>103</sup> DIL s.v. *íacht*.

<sup>104</sup> DIL s.v. *lán*.

<sup>105</sup> DIL s.v. *toga*.

<sup>106</sup> DIL s.v. *dísert*.

<sup>107</sup> DIL s.v. *dénta(e)*.

<sup>108</sup> DIL s.v. *attach*.

<sup>109</sup> DIL s.v. 1 *cathair*.

probably fits best, because of the secular twist in the tale. Besides, Irish romantic tales virtually ignore the existence of towns. They are seldom important to the story, but it could also be that their absence reflects the townless society of early Ireland.<sup>110</sup> Because of these arguments, I chose to translate ‘monastery of refuge’ instead of following DIL’s translation ‘city of refuge’.

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<sup>110</sup> Bruford, *Folk-tales*, 22.

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